



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Mission Vision & Identity.



Vice-Chancellor's introduction

It is a privilege to be Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield. This is a University with a richly deserved international reputation for outstanding research and teaching, and over a century of achievement across the full spectrum of academic life which, in its turn, has directly enhanced the lives of people all over the world.

During these challenging times, it is more, not less, important to have a clear understanding of what motivates our work, our values and our ambitions. As I have spoken in depth to colleagues and students about our vision for the University, I have been impressed by a common thread of determination to seek knowledge which makes a difference, to answer difficult questions and to open up understanding.

Our mission, vision and identity act as a commonly held explanation of our journey through understanding to knowledge, our definition of who we are, what values we have and our ideas of where we are going. It is this which informs our plans and priorities, as we translate our ideals into reality.

This vision chimes completely with our University of Sheffield motto which is taken from Virgil – “Rerum Cognoscere Causas”. Two millennia after Virgil considered man's practical and political struggle to live well in the world, we continue to agree that a crucial element in human success is the process of ongoing discovery, of understanding underlying causes.

Our founding principles have of course found their application in contemporary times, but they continue to hold true in our teaching, and in our individual and interdisciplinary work. The University of Sheffield remains, as its founders hoped, a constructive and powerful community of scholarship with real benefits for individuals and society beyond.

We can all be proud that we are part of a University driven by a desire to make a difference in the world. We are confident that the knowledge we generate is important to all aspects of modern life and civilisation and our graduates go on to make a powerful, positive, contribution all over the world.

Our achievements are only made possible by having a clear understanding of who we are and the value of our contribution. This vision outlines the principles given practical meaning in this Strategic Plan and beyond that how we allocate our resources and plans at Faculty and departmental level.

I would like to thank all who contributed to the process of defining our values and vision, and who have considered in detail what these mean for our corporate planning. The University of Sheffield has a proud story to tell and our staff and students have a significant contribution to make. It gives me great confidence in our future to know that we will approach our opportunities and face challenges together in the light of an enduring vision.

Professor Keith Burnett
Vice-Chancellor



The University's identity

The University of Sheffield has roots going back to 1828 and was founded formally in 1905 via penny donations from the local citizens. The aim was to bring higher education within reach of the children of the people working in the great industries of Sheffield, to give support to those industries and to serve as a centre for the study of diseases. The University is proud of its origins and continues to value the role it has come to play in its city and region.

From its earliest days the city of Sheffield has been renowned for its steel. Its hallmark – for technical innovation and guaranteed quality – is the 'Made in Sheffield' stamp. Its many innovations in steel were rooted in practice, prompted by observation and made possible by understanding. They frequently changed the world.

The University's culture was endowed from the start with the best qualities of the city – excellence and innovation, curiosity, friendliness, independence of thought, and a preference for action over rhetoric. Combined over time with a determination to make a significant impact on global as well as local and regional challenges, these longstanding characteristics have created a distinctive identity for the University.

The University has expanded from its original intake of 114 students to nearly 25,000, who now study across a broad range of areas spanning arts and humanities, social sciences, medicine, science and engineering. We promote the potential for higher education to transform people's lives and welcome a hugely diverse range of staff and students from around the world to our city. We recognise too that

some issues of international importance in the 21st century are entirely different from those of the past. We seek to play a leading role in the research and teaching needed to address the biggest issues facing our world today.

Over the years the growing extent of our ambition and the increasing number of exchanges of people and ideas has developed the University's reach. We are now a truly international university with a world-wide reputation.



The University's vision

The University of Sheffield will be one of the best universities in the world, renowned for the excellence, impact and distinctiveness both of its research and its research-led learning and teaching. This vision is grounded in a strong belief in a culture of higher education built on a positive interaction between learning, teaching and research.

The University's mission

Our purpose has long been to improve the world by seeking to understand it better. The University's motto, "Rerum Cognoscere Causas", comes from Virgil's Georgics and means 'to know the causes of things'. We now define the University's mission in more contemporary language as 'to discover and understand'. We remain committed today to the goal of changing the world for the better through the power and application of ideas and knowledge.

The University's guiding principles

There are six guiding principles that underpin the University's mission and inform all our strategic decisions. They are:

Achieving Excellence

Cultivating Ambition

Making a Difference

Working Together

Protecting the Future

Leading the Way

They combine to constitute a shared framework for our activities.

Achieving Excellence

Excellence indicates the very highest quality, significantly exceeding the norm, as reflected by the 'Made in Sheffield' stamp. It reflects a refusal to accept the ordinary. We aim to create an environment that supports and promotes success, encouraging staff and students to achieve and excel.



JessicaEnnis.net



Cultivating Ambition

We set challenging and important goals. We are willing to grapple with the most difficult intellectual and practical problems of our time and are not easily daunted. We want to attract and retain people with ambition and to provide them with the opportunities to realise their dreams and develop their talents.



Making a Difference

Universities are one of society's engines of change. We seek to create, discover, share and apply knowledge through teaching and research in ways that make a difference and ensure that our work has a genuine cutting edge. We also want to make the experience of being part of the University something that shapes the life and prospects of everyone who comes here.

Working Together

Solutions to important problems depend increasingly upon collaboration: between staff and students, across disciplines and in partnership with others locally, nationally and internationally. We aim to build inclusive teams, maximising the benefits of difference and drawing on the skills and potential of the widest possible range of colleagues.



Protecting the Future

We have to think beyond the short term. In order to safeguard our core academic activities and the student experience for the future, we must ensure that our research and teaching are sustainable. We need to use resources effectively, transparently and responsibly and to be resilient and adaptable in the face of change.



Leading the Way

We believe that universities have a responsibility to look ahead to important new problems and to offer intellectual leadership to society in response to them. We expect our staff to be leaders both in their fields and in the governance of the University and we encourage our students to think how they too can shape the world both now and into the future.

The University's strategic planning

This document describing the University of Sheffield's mission, vision and identity frames our approach to strategic planning. Although our guiding principles need to be applied to changing situations and conditions, and to chart new ways of working, we see them as enduring over time. They stand as the touchstone of the kind of university we aspire to be, guiding the choices we all make in our daily work.



The
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Case Studies.

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Breakthrough in photosynthesis research

We know that photosynthesis is essential for life on Earth. The food we eat, the air we breathe and the fuels we burn all depend on this process. But until recently, we didn't understand how it worked.

Working as part of an international team, scientists from the University of Sheffield have helped to pinpoint how the component parts of photosynthesis fit together as a system. Understanding how nature harnesses the power of sun could help us tackle the problem of how to meet people's food and energy needs at a time of global environmental change.

This breakthrough also has implications for the future of molecular science, paving the way for scientists to learn more about a large number of biological systems and processes.

Our work on photosynthesis is part of Project Sunshine, page 5.



Positive action for public health

Changing Families, Changing Food was a three-year inter-disciplinary research programme, led by the University and funded with £1.2m from the Leverhulme Trust.

It examined recent changes in the form of family life and how those changes have affected patterns of food consumption. Its findings challenge the assumption that healthy eating is primarily a matter of individual choice.

Researchers from Human Nutrition, East Asian Studies, Geography, Nursing and Midwifery, the School of Health and Related Research and Sociological Studies worked on the project in collaboration with colleagues in Health and Social Care at Royal Holloway, University of London.

This research is particularly relevant to policy makers. The findings indicate that tackling the problem of obesity will require action at all levels: from individuals, families, communities and government.



Research and teaching: the ideal balance

The Department of Politics at Sheffield has an international reputation for research excellence. In the 2008 RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) it was ranked first equal among all politics departments in the UK.

Research is part of the department's curriculum at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Students are taught by leading researchers who are experts in their field. This means they learn to think effectively, to ask the right kinds of questions and to get results.

It's an active learning experience, one that produces confident, independent graduates with the skills to tackle big projects, on their own or as part of a team.

All students are expected to undertake their own research. But this doesn't mean they spend all their time in the library. For example, a third year student might write a dissertation based on a work placement or a project with an external partner such as a local authority, charity, NGO or political party.

This balance between academic research and real-life learning helps to produce well-rounded graduates with the mix of skills, experience and knowledge that employers are looking for.

Cultivating Ambition

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The biggest challenge under the sun

Led by the Faculty of Science, Project Sunshine exemplifies the University's commitment to cultivating ambition. It brings together researchers of all levels from across the science and engineering disciplines to focus on the biggest question facing the world today: how can we use the sun's energy more efficiently to increase food production and provide more renewable energy?

It's a huge challenge but Project Sunshine stands for optimism. Sunshine's scientists believe that by pushing themselves and by pushing the traditional disciplinary boundaries they can achieve anything. Together they inspire each other to excel in a way that will influence a new generation of scientists.



Recognising potential, raising aspirations

The University of Sheffield's Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme (SOAMS) targets young people with the academic potential to study medicine and encourages them to consider university as an option. Staff from the University's Outreach and Access team and the Medical School work with students for up to five years, until they're ready to apply to university.

The SOAMS scheme includes sessions to familiarise young people and their parents with higher education and how the system works. There are team-building and problem-solving workshops, a residential summer school and a work placement.

SOAMS students also benefit from mock interviews, study skills and revision sessions. This helps them write good applications, handle interviews confidently and do their best in exams.

Saima Khan was the first person in her family to go to university. She is now a junior doctor. Saima's medical degree establishes her as a role model for her community in Firvale, helping to raise the aspirations of other young people.

Jenna Carr, an undergraduate who came to the Medical School through SOAMS says:

"If you come from an area like mine, the most people really expect you do to is pass five GCSEs. SOAMS demonstrates that medicine isn't just for the wealthy."

Making a Difference

Universities are one of society's engines of change. We seek to create, discover, share and apply knowledge through teaching and research in ways that make a difference and ensure that our work has a genuine cutting edge. We also want to make the experience of being part of the University something that shapes the life and prospects of everyone who comes here.



Technology to improve lives

An interdisciplinary research team at the University is leading the field in the development of assistive technology to meet the needs of an ageing population.

Already available free to download from the internet is MAAVIS (Managed Access to Audio, Visual and Information Services), a program that enables the elderly and disabled to use computers.

The simple touch screen programme enables the user to access Skype, play music, view photos and watch videos, without having prior knowledge of computer systems.

Residents at one care home have already embraced MAAVIS, increasing their social interaction and communicating regularly with their families.

The University's Assistive Technology team of nurses, social scientists, psychologists, information specialists, medical engineers, clinical scientists and allied health professionals, continues to research and develop technologies to support the elderly and people with disabilities or long term health conditions.



Opening doors

Storying Sheffield is a unique course that sees students working together with service users from Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust (SHSC).

On the course, second-year English Literature undergraduates work with groups such as long-term users of mental health services, to tell the stories of their lives. The paintings, films, poems and other artworks they produce form a moving and remarkable record of everyday life in the city.

The course has already attracted interest from other SHSC service users and providers, and from students at the University who are keen to get involved.

By opening its doors and by giving people a platform to express themselves, the University is making a lasting difference to lives, and encouraging students to make a positive impact in the community.

“This course has given me confidence to express myself in ways I never thought possible. I have been astounded by the enthusiasm, determination and empathy shown by the students we have worked with. It’s been six years since I last worked. Storying Sheffield has given me the confidence to apply for jobs, at which I’ve been successful. I hope this course runs every year so that more people can benefit from it.”

Kathryn Littlewood

Working Together

Solutions to important problems depend increasingly upon collaboration: between staff and students, across disciplines and in partnership with others locally, nationally and internationally. We aim to build inclusive teams, maximising the benefits of difference and drawing on the skills and potential of the widest possible range of colleagues.



Entertaining, engaging, stimulating debate

Arts-Science Encounters is an annual series of public events combining the aesthetic with the scientific. This unique series engages artists and scientists in public dialogue to shed light on the links between the two disciplines.

The series makes a strong contribution to the city's vision of creative and cultural excellence. Each encounter is designed to entertain and to stimulate debate:

For Darwin, Creativity and Truth, the poet Ruth Padel, Darwin's great-great-grand-daughter, and the historian Mark Greengrass explored the connections between science and poetry. In the Cellist and the Brain Scientist, Bernard Gregor-Smith (Dante Quartet) played pieces by Bach and talked about his evolving approach to music. Professor Lawrence Parsons (Psychology) talked about performance and emotion from the point of view of the brain.

Arts-Science Encounters attract members of the public, University staff and students. Ideas are illuminated. New research collaborations are initiated. At venues – often sold out – in the city and on campus, our academics appear alongside renowned artists from around the world.



Students of the real world

We work with business and industry to ensure our students benefit from an education that combines academic excellence with practical skills. The Department of Mechanical Engineering's Technology Strategy and Business Planning module is one example of this approach.

The module enables final-year engineering students to collaborate with partners from business and industry, including manufacturers, marketers and bankers. The students develop solutions to real commercial problems and write accompanying business plans.

Many of their ideas are developed into prototypes and functional products. For example, a walking frame for children with brittle bones was designed by engineering students and is now being used by Sheffield Children's Hospital. This kind of real-world experience puts our students ahead of the game when it comes to applying for jobs.

"The business planning module is in my view a shining example of how to give students an awareness of the way that academic knowledge needs to be combined with practical application and business knowledge in order to achieve success in the demanding 21st-century marketplace."

Peter Crawford
Taylor & Emmett

Protecting the Future

We have to think beyond the short term. In order to safeguard our core academic activities and the student experience for the future, we must ensure that our research and teaching are financially sustainable. We need to use resources effectively, transparently and responsibly and to be resilient and adaptable in the face of change.



A sound investment

The Soundhouse is part of our recent investment in new facilities for the arts and humanities. The building incorporates recording studios, composition spaces and a computer laboratory. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Department of Music benefit from its state-of-the-art soundproofing and acoustic design.

The University of Sheffield Sound Studios (USSS), based in the Soundhouse, supports open source audio-visual software. Studio staff collaborate with colleagues from the Information School and Department of Computer Science on the design and production of new software tools.

Ongoing work in this area includes the development of free, easy to use learning packages. The aim is to make the technology in the Soundhouse accessible to other musicians and the wider public as well as students.



The model partner for industry

Run by the University in partnership with industry, the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) with Boeing combines our science and engineering expertise with the technological innovation of some of the world's leading aerospace and advanced manufacturing companies.

The centre develops high-tech solutions for materials and machining for aerospace and other industries. It helps fuel the national economy, positioning the UK as a major player in advanced manufacturing. It's also the base for a new Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre which will provide manufacturing expertise for the new generation of civil nuclear energy facilities.

Over 140 highly qualified researchers and engineers from around the globe are employed at the centre. They work with over 60 businesses, from global leaders such as Boeing, Rolls-Royce, Messier Dowty and BAE Systems to local SMEs.

The AMRC is an internationally recognised centre of excellence, the preferred model for industrial and academic collaboration by both Boeing and Rolls-Royce. In recognition of this achievement, the University was awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2007 – the highest honour for a UK university.

In October 2010, Prime Minister David Cameron identified the AMRC as a role model for a new generation of government-backed technology and innovation centres.

[“We believe that the University of Sheffield is one of the few universities that really understands the link between research and industrial application.”](#)

Sir Roger Bone
President, Boeing UK

Leading the Way

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Student volunteering is flourishing

Our volunteering programme SheffieldVolunteering is one of the largest of its kind in the UK and a model of best practice. It gives students the chance to work with individuals and groups in the local community such as the homeless, refugees, young people and the elderly.

In the Students' Union Activities Awards for 2009–10, the Best SheffieldVolunteering Project of the Year Award went to Flourish. Students taking part in Flourish spend one afternoon a week working with people who have suffered traumatic brain injuries, resulting in difficulties such as memory loss and speech problems.

Flourish has attracted volunteers from across the student population. It's particularly popular with students from departments such as Psychology and Human Communication Sciences, who get the added benefit of work experience related to their subjects.



Enhancing health services

Experts in our Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health continue to push the boundaries of health research, developing new tools and techniques to help reduce the cost and improve the effectiveness of healthcare in the UK.

One example of this is FRAX®. This is an online calculator that helps doctors assess whether or not a patient may be affected by an osteoporotic fracture later in life. It was developed for the World Health Organisation (WHO) by a team of Sheffield scientists led by Emeritus Professor John Kanis.

The calculator, which can also be used by patients, takes into account factors such as age, sex, body mass index and parental history of hip fracture to predict the risk.

Where risk is identified, doctors and patients can take preventive measures. Fewer people suffer and the burden on health services is reduced.

The calculator is already available in several different languages, and has also been developed as an iPhone application.



Powering the global energy market

The pioneering Sheffield-Siemens Wind Power Research Centre is the first of its kind in the UK. It brings together world-class academics, researchers and experts from industry to develop wind turbine generators for wind power systems, on and offshore.

The University was chosen by Siemens on the strength of the theoretical and applied research conducted in the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering. The centre specialises in the technology, architecture and design of wind turbine generators to generate electrical energy for the global market.

“Partnerships such as this are essential to maintain our leading position in producing more efficient and reliable wind turbine technologies. Our constant dialogue with the University’s experts will translate into real world solutions with benefits to both the wind industry and the environment.”

Christoph Ehlers
Managing Director,
Siemens Wind Power in the UK



Influencing policy through research

The School of Health and Related Research (SchHARR) is the UK's most powerful department for health services research. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, 90 per cent of the work assessed in SchHARR was rated internationally recognised, internationally excellent or world-leading.

The school's health services research includes emergency and urgent care, public health, primary and community care and mental health. This work is taken up by both healthcare providers and policy makers seeking ways to improve care and use resources more efficiently.

SchHARR employs around 200 staff and attracts over £6 million per year in external funding. Research themes include health inequalities, alcohol policy, patient safety and quality improvement, healthcare for an ageing population and obesity research – some of the biggest challenges facing healthcare today and in the future.

This document is set in the University's own fonts, **Stephenson** and **Blake**.

The Stephenson serif font (this one) is a modified version of a design by Sheffield company Stephenson & Blake Co. Typefounders, established in 1818. At the height of Sheffield's power as a producer of steel, Stephenson & Blake was the world's largest manufacturer of metal type.

Sir Henry Stephenson, co-owner, was one of the University's founding fathers. In 1895, he became part of a hugely important movement that saw the wealthy and the powerful join forces with the ordinary working people of the city to create a university for the good of everyone.

Stephenson and its sans serif companion Blake (this one), were chosen with the assistance of the National Type Museum in London and redrawn for us by renowned type experts House Style Graphics. In their modernised, digitised form, they are the copyright property of the University of Sheffield – our unique signature, our hallmark, our stamp.

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