

Transforming Lives



Inspiring Change

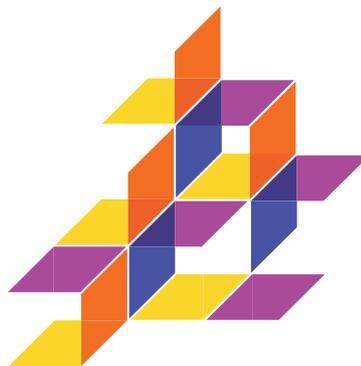
Strategic Plan 2015-2020

**'For things to stay the same,
things will have to change.'**

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*

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Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

By 2020 we are positioned at the heart of Northamptonshire, intellectually, culturally and economically. Our student experience is outstanding, motivated by a desire to set exceptional standards for ourselves and others, enhanced by cutting-edge digital technologies and a unique learning and teaching 'Blue Ocean' model that sets us apart from the rest. In line with our mission and values to provide the best possible life chances for those who study and work with us we are recognised locally and internationally for our leadership of and commitment to social value creation. Our impact and support for public and private sector enterprise and skills development, purposeful research and professional practice is acknowledged as world leading.

Mission

Transforming Lives + Inspiring Change

Values

Delivering: a student experience of the highest quality

Entrepreneurial: the commitment to innovation, value for money and financial sustainability

Valuing: opportunity, diversity, a global perspective, inclusion and equality for all

Enabling: a culture of empowerment, responsibility, tolerance and excellence

Leading: enhancing the economic, social, cultural and creative life of those we work with across the world

Openness: transparency, adaptability, resilience, celebration of success

Performance: through continuous staff development and investment

Why mission and values matter

Our mission and values answer three vital questions: who we are, where we come from and what we stand for. Our values are not just a random list of words, they serve a useful purpose in decision making at all levels of the organisation and provide a glue and moral framework that binds people around a common purpose. They define culture and ethos. Their shared understanding and associated behaviours promote a more productive and happier workplace.

Our mission is simple – just four words that speak volumes about who we are and how we want to be seen by the world.



Introduction

This document sets out the strategic direction that will ensure the University of Northampton remains a successful and diverse organisation in the five year period to 2020. It builds on its predecessor *Raising the Bar* by seeking to strengthen those things we already do well, stripping out complexity and thinking radically about how to create a University that competes with the world on its own terms, not those dictated by others.

A summary of the challenges facing the University is given below. **Transforming Lives + Inspiring Change** is our response. A fundamental aim is to develop a culture intolerant of excess complexity. This is challenging in an environment where regulation plays a key role in maintaining quality and accountability. Internal complexity turns organisations into lumbering dinosaurs, something we are small enough to avoid if we have the courage to think and do things differently. UK higher education has become a crowded 'Red Ocean', increasingly competitive and for some, resource restricted. In order to thrive we must keep on seeking opportunities in uncontested (Blue Ocean) space.

As educators, it is imperative we motivate and engage students' imaginations and nurture their critical thinking, creativity and capacity for knowledge creation in preparation for an uncertain future world of work. As researchers and leaders in professional practice we will build on our success in the Research Excellence Framework 2014 and outcomes of

external and internal assessments to invest in developing Intellectual Capital. This will involve working in collaboration both in the UK and overseas with key strategic partners through alliances that add value. And because we have embarked on a highly ambitious relocation project we must ensure we remain financially robust.

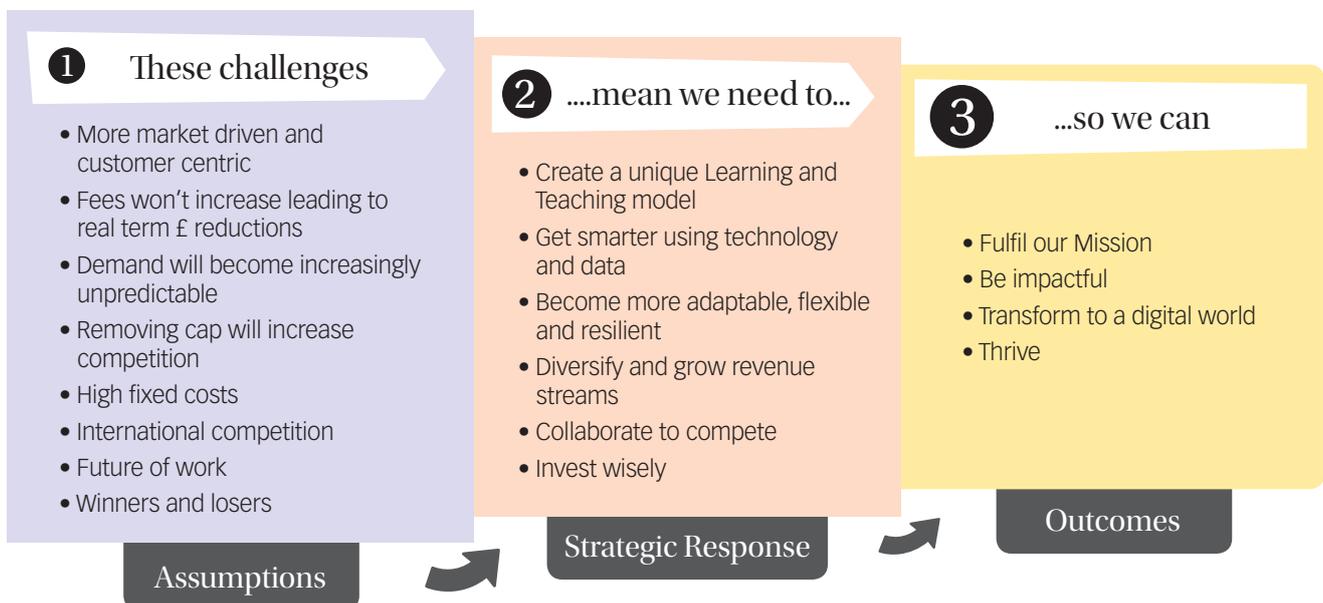
We need also to focus on value creation by exploring connections between subject areas instead of focusing exclusively on the silo of a single discipline. This is because the jobs of tomorrow will demand skilled individuals who are flexible problem solvers, whether school leavers or working adults. In the digital world, network effects, complements and unbundling are disruptive forces that provide both risk and opportunity for traditional higher education. Our Waterside relocation project will act as the stimulus to embrace positively this new world. We must continue to invest in our academic and professional services staff in an environment where outward looking individuals are empowered to exceed

expectations in teaching and research and flourish as colleagues. Finally, we are a unique and privileged force for good in society. Our Changemaker+ Challenges encapsulate the courage in leadership needed to achieve that end.

What this strategy is and is not:

Strategy is about how your University will fulfil its mission, live its values and target its resources in some areas not others. It is the map that sets out our vision for the future and; more importantly, how we will get there.

This strategy is not about trying to be number one for lots of things, or playing the league table game (important as that may be). It is a creative answer to the question of why we come to work.



Strategic Response: Critical Success Factors, the basic units

Create a unique Learning and Teaching model

Student Experience

Student Experience is core to what we do. We aim not just to meet expectations but exceed them. Outperforming national quality benchmarks (eg NSS and QAA) is vital but the student experience is more than that. It is, at its heart, fundamentally about providing a personalised, emotional connection that transcends quality to transform individuals for the betterment of themselves and society. Employability and the Changemaker+ Challenges are key enablers. It is the bedrock on which we judge ourselves and are ourselves judged.

Underpinning values: *Delivering, Valuing, Leading*

Be more adaptable, flexible and resilient

Intellectual Capital

The sum total of the creative output of the University by its staff and students. It spans research (2020:200:20 plan), enterprise, consultancy, Intellectual Property, professional practice and innovation in teaching and learning. Intellectual Capital is an inclusive activity providing all staff (academic and professional) as well as students through project work the opportunity to develop and make valuable contributions. The annual review of staff objectives is a key element of its management.

Underpinning values: *Enabling, Performance, Openness*

Collaborate to compete

Strategic Alliances

We will develop longer term alliances with those key strategic partners, including but not restricted to higher education, to create significant and sustainable value. Education with others – allying with high quality partners – will drive student number growth, transform lives and inspire change on a global scale. It will facilitate excellent student experiences and enhance employability while affording national and international opportunities for innovative research, enterprise and social impact.

Underpinning values: *Delivering, Leading, Entrepreneurial*

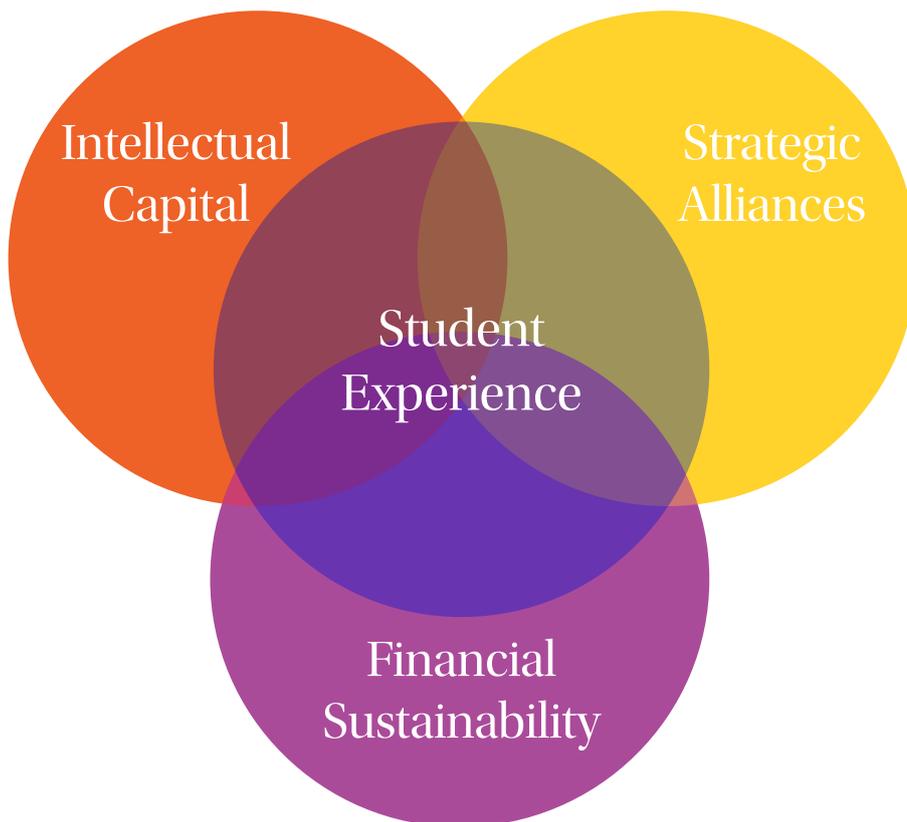
Invest wisely - diversify and grow revenue

Financial Sustainability

No organisation can fulfil its mission without the resources to succeed. Maintaining income whilst managing efficiency and effectiveness is core to our ability to remain competitive. The need to generate cash surpluses to fund Waterside and invest in staff and students requires a focus on revenue growth from a diversity of sources in addition to UK undergraduate fee income.

Underpinning values: *Entrepreneurial, Leading Change*

Strategic Response: Fitting it together in a unique way



Each CSF forms a basic unit of competitive advantage. The way they fit together in a sustainable way makes our strategy unique. By keeping (and deepening) them we are making a clear statement: while continued change is inevitable, continuity is also essential. The Student Experience lies at the core, supported and complemented by Intellectual Capital, Strategic Alliances and Financial Sustainability. By combining our CSFs in this way we define a strategic response to the challenges posed and an intellectual framework for achieving success.

Critical Success Factors:

What do they mean?

Those critical activities that individually and collectively provide the fundamental rationale for strategic success. They are the same four that guided *Raising the Bar* over the last half-decade and allowed the University to focus on a series of core activities that defined our competitive advantage.

What are the elements that make up a Critical Success Factor (CSF) and how am I involved?

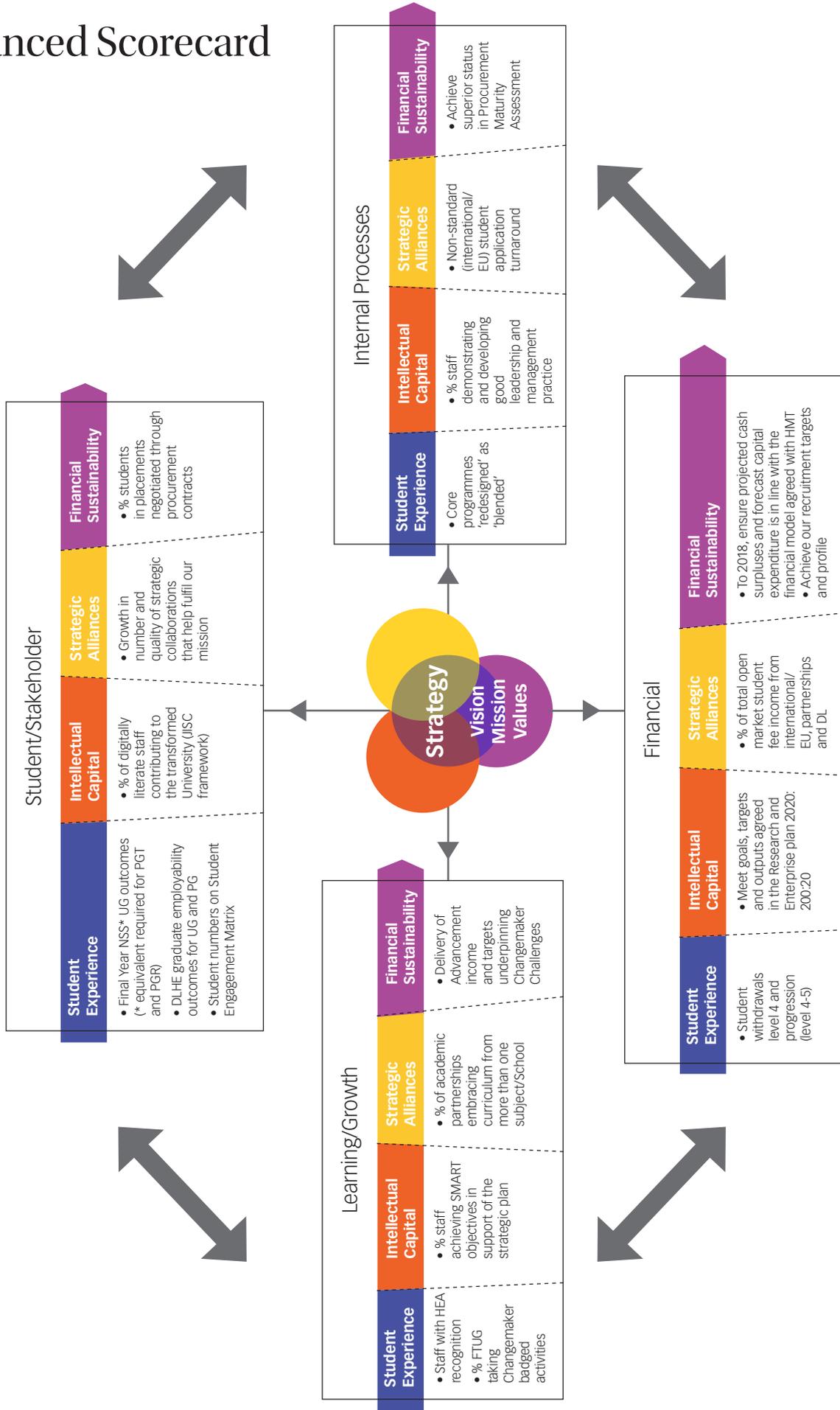
Each CSF is the sum of a bundle of activities. They have been broken down into a number of constituent parts (measures) that are set out in full in the Operational Plan. These measures make up the Balanced Scorecard for each CSF and form the basis for a revised annual Performance and Development Review.

What is the relationship between Financial Sustainability and the other three CSFs?

This is not a finance-first strategy. Revenue (FS) depends ultimately on our ability to provide an excellent student experience (SE), forge alliances (SA), and unlock our intellectual capital (IC).

$$FS = f(SE, SA, IC)$$

Balanced Scorecard



Social Impact



In *Raising the Bar* we set out to become the number one university in the UK for Social Enterprise by 2015. We achieved this ambition. For 2015 – 2020 Social Impact (social value creation) provides an expanded narrative and logical progression that transcends our previous goal. By combining learning, teaching and research informed and inspired by AshokaU Changemakers, social impact provides a superior and unique outlet for our Mission. Moreover, social value creation gives us strategic justification and focus for our Advancement and Philanthropic goals.

Social Impact plays to our strengths in community based research identified in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework as world-leading in terms of its originality, significance and rigour. It is a uniting force that brings together all four Critical Success Factors, and projects them externally as a major force for good. It links the University to the external world, provides a sense of overarching purpose for students and staff and a template for future organisational design. Our students have a key role to play in helping design and implement the challenges. The social value they create through Changemaker in the curriculum adds to their employability skills and connects with alumni and our international partners in AshokaU.

Changemaker+ Challenges

Our Social Impact agenda comprises four interrelated Changemaker+ Challenges that extend our core competences in teaching and learning, research and social enterprise for the betterment of Northampton, Northamptonshire and the wider world through Local2Global. The Challenges are multi-disciplinary, long-term, real-world projects with targets that take us to 2020. The Challenges commit us to determined and effective internal and external partnership working and to delivering high-impact positive change.

Each challenge will be managed and resourced through the operational plan with a dedicated staff team and fundraising targets reviewed annually.

Challenge 1 - Make Northamptonshire the best county in the UK for children and young people to flourish and learn

Challenge 2 - Make Northamptonshire the leading county in the UK for Health and Wellbeing

Challenge 3 - Build the cultural and heritage traditions of Northamptonshire into world class attractions

Challenge 4 - Make Northamptonshire the best county in the UK to start, build and run a business



What is Social Impact?

Social Impact has many overlapping definitions but is taken here to mean 'the cumulative positive effects of the University on the social and economic fabric, health and wellbeing of communities we serve'.

How can the University make a difference?

One word; Leadership. We are already a pioneer in Social Enterprise in the UK. Our membership of AshokaU as our primary mission group means we are part of an international network of likeminded organisations committed to Changemaker values which resonate clearly with our own. Each Challenge links to an enhanced student experience and to alumni providing opportunities for Advancement and Philanthropy.

What does best practice in Social Impact look like?

In their 2012 book *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-impact Non-Profits*, Crutchfield and McLeod Grant list the following six activities:

- Advocate and Serve
- Make Markets Work
- Inspire Individuals
- Nurture Non-profit Networks
- Learn to Adapt
- Share Leadership

Operations and Governance

Single Business Plan

There is only one strategy – **Transforming Lives + Inspiring Change**. The risk of running a myriad of sub strategies is that they disrupt and divert the overall sense of strategic direction and add unnecessary complexity. Instead the unique interrelations and activities that underpin it are captured in a single Business (operational) Plan. This is a fundamental document owned by the Senior Team that drives and executes our Mission and strategic response.

Balanced Scorecard

We will use the Balanced Scorecard method to translate strategy via each Critical Success Factor into a coherent and interrelated set of performance measures to guide the Business Plan for operations. The Balanced Scorecard captures a broad range of metrics that reflect our diverse activities and outputs and provides forward (lead) indicators in addition to more traditional financial and quality input data. The Balanced Scorecard for the University and its comprising elements and high level measures are shown as part of the strategy map. The high level measures will be reviewed annually by the Board and Senate and modified where appropriate.

Ownership and Accountability

Balanced Scorecard metrics will be cascaded through the organisation via the annual Staff Performance and Development Review (PDR). Maintaining clear line of sight between strategy and operations via the PDR is key to successful implementation. The Senior Team are responsible collectively and accountable collectively for a) managing the cascade process through the University and b) delivery against targets.

Risk and Opportunity Management

The broad assumptions and challenges faced by the University are set out in the introduction. Operational risk management is governed by the University's Senior Management Teams and monitored at Board level through monthly meetings. The Audit Committee and Project Assurance Committee, with support from internal and external auditors and sector regulated bodies, provide additional assurance.

How the strategy will be implemented and monitored

Strategy will be implemented through a single Business Plan. Each of the four CSFs have a dedicated set of scorecards covering Student/ Stakeholder Perspective (how are we seen), Internal Processes (efficiency and effectiveness), Learning and Growth (knowledge and innovation) and Financial Perspective (how we manage our resources) that monitor performance over time.

Role of the Board of Governors

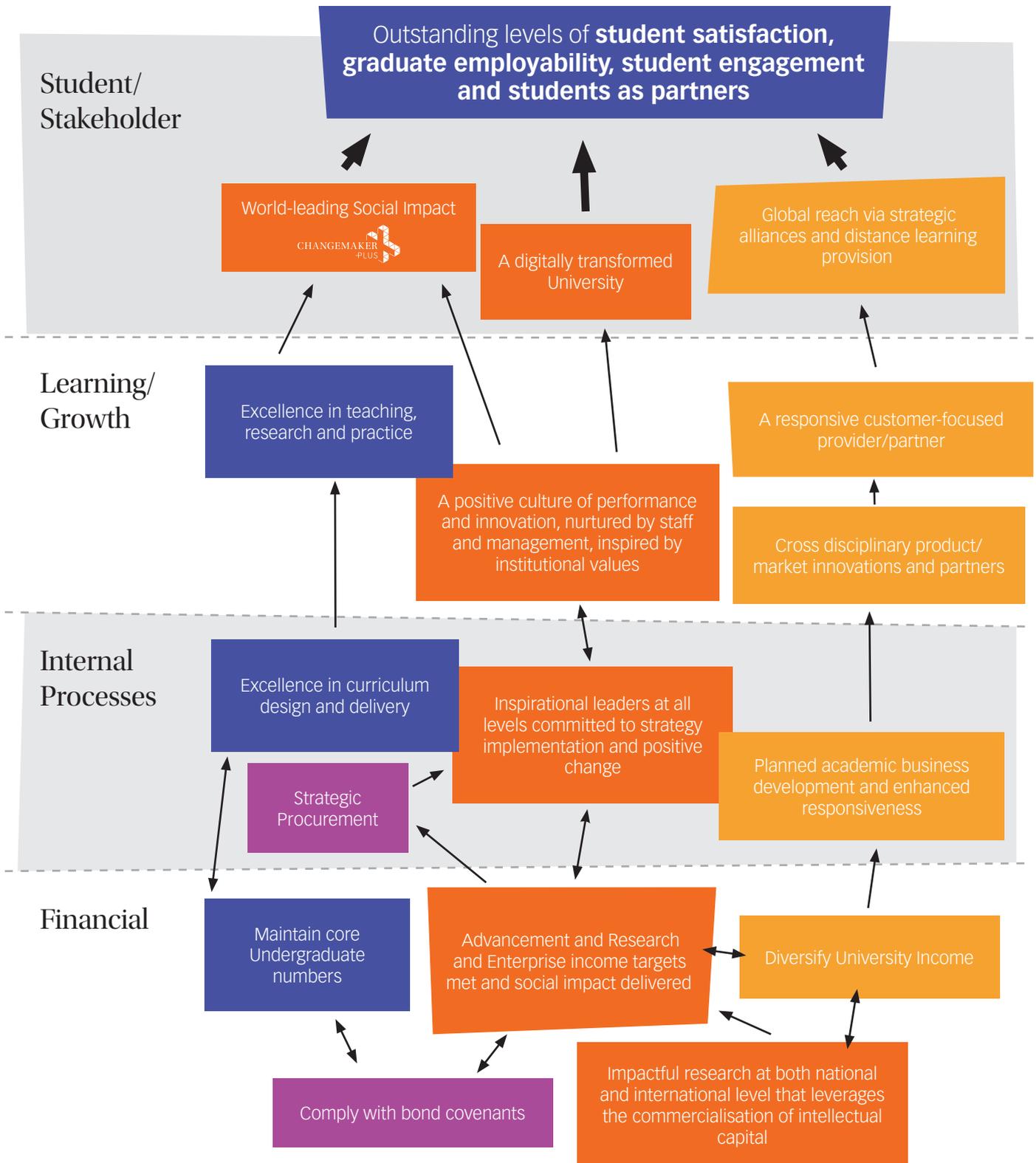
The Board of Governors approves the strategic plan and direction of the University. They hold the executive to account in all matters relating to the good running of the University. The Board meets monthly.



“Keep the ship out of the surf and spray”

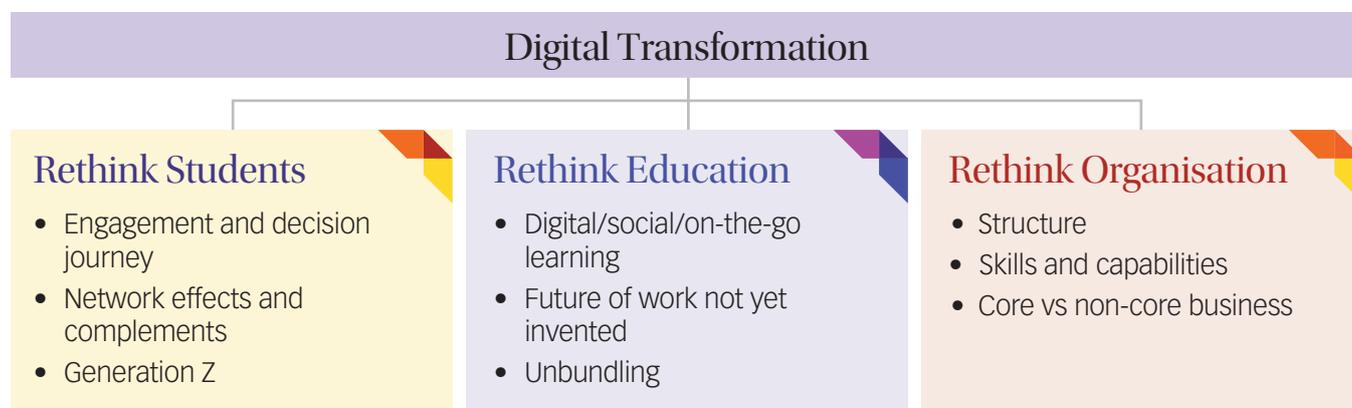
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Strategy Map



Our Mission, 2020 Vision and Values are the foundation of all we do

Appendix: Enabling Activities



Digital Transformation

The world is undergoing a technical revolution. Universities as originators and consumers of technology are not immune. This is a world beyond MOOCs and online lectures. By 2020 school leavers born around the start of the Millennium will be entering university. Known as Generation Z they are already the most tech networked ever and pose a challenge for traditional modes of learning delivery.

The Waterside project gives the University an unrivalled opportunity to embrace the digital age by creating a learning space and pedagogy fit for the new era. Taking the initiative will be central to success as others are already in this space. Rather than waiting to be dislodged by the dazzling innovation of others, as happened in the music and publishing industries, we will use Waterside as our internal source disruptive innovation to transform lives and inspire change.

Local2Global

Place has always been important for universities and especially so for us because of our position as the only university in the county. Rather than diluting our focus on local and regional needs, adopting a local to global outlook provides greater employability opportunities for our students and enriches our brand in terms of visibility, engagement and impact. Our focus on Strategic Alliances assumes an explicit international dimension and focus on global partnerships that will drive new revenue streams in the medium term. Such partnerships and alliances take time to develop and mature and require resourcing even if the payback is not immediately clear. Evidence from employers supports the idea that students with an international outlook and experience, through for example placements or volunteering and exchange visits are valued more as members of the workforce. Innovations developed in Northamptonshire through the Changemaker+ Challenges need not stay there - leadership in this space is about making connections and sharing knowledge as widely as possible.



And this is what we will do.



Transforming Lives  Inspiring Change



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