



December 2015

In Brief

Strategic Update

Our vision:

"By pioneering exceptional industry partnerships we will lead the way in real world experiences preparing students for life."

Our mission:

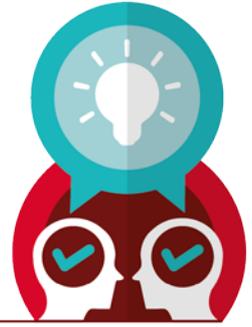
Transforming lives. Stimulating discovery.
Realising potential.

Our values:

- 1 We act with HONESTY, INTEGRITY and RESPECT
- 2 We are PROUD of who we are and we ENJOY what we do
- 3 We are committed to QUALITY and where we fall short we work hard to make things right
- 4 We embrace DIFFERENCE and dare to be different
- 5 We are FRIENDLY and WELCOMING, creating an environment where people feel safe to work, study and grow together
- 6 We are individually ACCOUNTABLE for what we do and collectively RESPONSIBLE for our University's success.

In Brief

Strategic Update



Highlights

- Council approves strategy next steps
- Space utilisation still a major issue
- Review of our home undergraduate cycle 2015/16
- Major focus on student progression and continuation
- Preparing for NSS 2016
- New Research Centres up and running
- Centralised Travel Office opens in New Year
- Highlights from our Schools: Quarter 1 (August - October 2015)



Your Strategic Update

In Brief is the University's core brief and replaces the Leadership Update and Talk Time. It provides you with a summary of high-level, key messages and news to support you with your face to face communication.

In Brief is issued by the Internal Communications (IC) team to all University Management Team (UMT) members following the monthly UMT meetings for onward cascade.

Please summarise where appropriate and deliver in a way you are most comfortable with. In Brief should not be presented verbatim. Please use the briefing session as an opportunity to invite questions and feedback as well as an opportunity to network.

There is a section on page 11 that enables you to add your own content if you wish and a section to capture feedback.

Would briefers please include information relating specifically to their individual Schools and Professional Services directorates where relevant.

In Brief is issued by the IC team who welcome any feedback: Internalcomms-uos@salford.ac.uk



Core brief

Key messages

- We're making good progress on our new strategy with Council approving our four Academic Sub Strategies that form a key part of our Strategic Plan
- The five Key Functional Strategies have now been approved by the University Management Team (UMT) and will be presented to Council for approval on 18 December
- Work continues on the development of our one strategic priority – the creation of our four ICZs
- International recruitment is below target and will impact upon School and Professional Services budgets
- Our focus must be on improving our student progression and continuation, which in turn impacts on our NSS scores
- 2016 National Student Survey starts 8 February

Strategy Update

Council approves strategy next steps

The University has been making steady progress in the development of its strategy which has at its heart four Industry Collaborative Zones (ICZs).

In July, Council approved our new vision and in September gave us the go-ahead to create four ICZs. In November, Council approved our four Academic Sub Strategies, which identify our academic priorities and are the critical focus, together with the ICZs.

Further engagement around the five Key Functional Strategies – Marketing, Finance, Estates and IT, HR, and Finance - took place early October and The KF strategies were approved by the UMT at its meeting on 7 December. The strategies will be presented to Council on 18 December.

Our vision and strategy completely aligned to Government agenda

The long awaited Green Paper on Higher Education titled “Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice” was discussed at the UMT.

The Green Paper signals perhaps the biggest shift in the national framework for higher education, in England, for a generation with a series of measures intended to “raise teaching standards, provide greater focus on graduate employability, widen participation in higher education, and open up the sector to new high-quality entrants”.

Our new vision and support strategies, the short term actions within the Annual Operating Plan, and the ‘planning challenges’ for 2016/17 are all aligned to the government agenda.

We're going to support UUK and the University Alliance in formulating their responses in addition to making our own submission which will be co-ordinated by Planning and signed off by VCET.



We're committed to delivering our key objectives which are relevant to the Teaching Excellence Framework:

- Deliver significant year on year improvements in student satisfaction, progression, and graduate employability, including specifically targeting areas which are poor for widening participation students.
- Proactively develop our teaching portfolio and teaching standards, consulting closely with students.
- Be clear about those areas that we believe we can sustain /develop to be 'excellent' for teaching, and ensure alignment between these and our 'peaks of excellence' in research and academic practice as the underpinning differentiators for our teaching quality.
- Align all of the above to the ICZ agenda and prioritise ICZ delivery.

Business updates

Annual Operating Plan 2015/16

The University Management Team (UMT) is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the University's performance. Every month UMT reviews progress against the annual operating plan; reviewing the academic sub strategies and the key functional strategies. Below are some of the highlights.

Review of home undergraduate cycle 2015/16

The 2015-16 Home UG recruitment cycle was broadly successful with positive indicators in terms of demand although a large proportion of students in most Schools were still recruited through Clearing.

A review of UG applications found that nearly 1 in 4 students are rejected immediately because their predicted grades are not within 20 or 40 points of the programme tariff.

This severely reduces the pool of students to whom the University currently makes an offer. Therefore, for 2016/17 entry – with the exception of highly selective programmes – students will be “kept warm” with an offer and final decisions on offers will be delayed until the grades are known.

January 2016 student intake for international students – all levels

Our mid cycle recruitment figures for January are 115 against a target of 217. The shortfall of 102 is down to significant changes to UKVI regulations which have impacted on the sector as a whole. The sector is expecting a further tightening of UKVI regulation in 2016, which may have an impact on recruitment for the remaining entry points in 2016.

School Quarterly Highlight Reports 2015/16, Quarter 1 (August - October 2015)

(Would Deans please communicate the information which relates to their own particular Schools and also share the highlights of the other Schools)

Arts and Media

- over the next three years we will adopt best practice and establish a new culture which is appropriate for our School
- the four original Directorates established in September 2012 were too large and adjustments have been made to reduce the size and increase the number of Directorates to seven. This is now nearing completion with only one Director to be appointed.
- we will continue to prioritise student satisfaction and retention



- we have approved three new UG programmes: Film and TV Set Design; English Language and Creative Writing; Film Production.
- improvements have also been made in terms of NSS and the School will continue to prioritise student satisfaction and retention this period.

Computing, Science and Engineering

- continued growth in overall UG student numbers and good progress towards the School's strategic plan to develop the "Engineering Showcase":
- refurbishment of computing laboratories and space on the second floor has been well received by students
- four of 13 programmes achieved 100 per cent student satisfaction in the NSS, though the performance of four programmes also declined and needs addressing.
- the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) outcomes showing improvement from 82 per cent to 86 per cent. A School of Computing, Science and Engineering Careers Fair with over 40 companies has taken place to support increased employability.
- the progression outcomes for 2014-15 are disappointing for the School given the efforts made in 2014-15 to address a declining trend.
- an initial meeting with the PVC Academic and Dean of Students to review programme groups has been held to look at the data and discuss a plan of action.

Environment and Life Sciences

- there was a nine per cent increase in NSS last year reaching 87 per cent overall satisfaction across all programmes. The priority this year is to even out performance across all programmes focusing on assessment and feedback and organisation and management (under 80 per cent).
- retention: there was an approximate three per cent improvement last year and we again focus on areas below 80 per cent.
- there is good progress in terms of student satisfaction progression, but work needs to be done to embed and sustain this progress.
- submitted new UG (Archaeology and Geography) and PG (Wildlife) programmes
- PGT and international recruitment is a challenge and we need to refresh our strategy this year (Q2)

Health Sciences

- progress made in all areas of School's operational planned activity for 2015/16 although international recruitment has been a challenge with an associated shortfall in income generation.
- action is being undertaken to address £158K shortfall in this financial year.
- new programmes planned for 15/16 approved. First intake of Psychology and Psychology & Criminology at Salford City College recruited. PG Cert Public Health due to run in February 2016.
- research income on track with recent major grant success with research bids submitted in Q1 worth £1.87 million.
- partnership with Manchester Institute for Health and Performance nearing formal sign off



- the School will be meeting with programme teams to review student continuation and progression in more detail and identify what needs to be done

Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work & Social Sciences

- good progress has been made in achieving our Operational Plan objectives for 2015/16. Changes to the School management and governance structures and process were completed and both the Dean of School Executive Team (DoSET) and School Management Team (SMT) groups are functioning effectively
- student progression outturn for 2014/15 was published in-quarter, highlighting an improvement by 0.9 per cent and exceeding 2014/15 target.
- the School will be meeting with the PVC Academic and Dean of Students to review student continuation and progression in more detail and identify further areas for improvement.
- first tranche of MSc students from China have started their studies
- School Academic Staff Demographic - pace of changes increased as more staff reach retirement age

Salford Business School

- student progression outturn for 2014/15 was published in-quarter, highlighting a fall of 2.25 per cent to 72.9 per cent. The School will be meeting with programme teams and with the PVC Academic and Dean of Students to review student continuation and progression in more detail and identify improvements
- UG recruitment in strong position
- increased engagement with Middle East region through guest speakers at key events
- sports zone: a number of parallel developments with Salford College, Salford Community Campus, Co92 as well as internally all accelerate the development of the Sport ICZ business plan.
- appointment of Professor in Sports Enterprise.

Salford of the Built Environment

- student progression outturn for 2014/15 was published in-quarter, highlighting an improvement of 2.38 per cent to 70.8 per cent, although falling short of target.
- the School will be meeting with programme teams and with the PVC Academic and Dean of Students to review student continuation and progression in more detail and identify improvements.
- continuing strong demand in China, India, Malaysia and East Africa
- excellent progress has been made in all aspects of its research portfolio and it needs to capitalise on these recent successes with further engagement with industry through its Energy House, Think Lab and KPI Engine. A major project for Energy House 2 is proposed.
- highest PG student satisfaction in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) from all participating institutions for Architecture, Building and Planning, also highest overall satisfaction in the University
- Architecture, Design and Technology achieved 100 per cent overall satisfaction in NSS



Salford Languages

- one of the biggest challenges has been the design and implementation of the new structure which included the English Language Centre and the administration team.
- the re-approval of the International Foundation Year programme for a further five years will allow us to establish international partnerships and deliver the IFY globally
- we have been improving our processes and procedures to ensure we meet the regulations of the Home Office and that we are fully compliant
- English Study programmes had a poor intake in September, however it is hoped that numbers will be recouped across the remaining intakes in-year and that the best estimate will be a shortfall of 155k for the whole year.

Major focus on student progression and continuation

(Would Deans please communicate the information which relates to their own particular Schools and also share the highlights of the other Schools).

The progression rate of full time, first degree, undergraduate level 4 students from 2014/15 into level 5 in 2015/16 has dropped since last year, by one per cent to 78 per cent, falling short of the target of 80 per cent by two per cent. This is the lowest performance for the University in four years.

In contrast, the University's continuation rates have improved by 2.4 per cent since last year, due to a 3.4 per cent increase in the number of repeating students, in particular in CSE and the Business School. The improvement means that the University is now only 1.3 per cent under the lower quartile boundary. While the improvement in continuation is good, the decline in progression indicates that we are failing adequately to support students to succeed in continuing without retake.

The PVC Academic and Dean of Students will meet with School Deans and Associate Deans Academics to review NSS action planning and attrition/ progression/ continuation data.

Student Progression Assistants will continue to work with School Deans, Academic leads and Personal Tutors to monitor and respond to participation and attrition data. Given the seriousness of the retention issue, a review of the year one undergraduate curriculum will be carried out to measure how effective it is in delivering the best experience for our students.

Preparing for National Student Survey 2016

Plans are in place for the National Student Survey (NSS) 2016 and raising student satisfaction scores is a key priority for the organisation. Last year our institutional NSS score rose by five percentage points to 83 points – making us the second highest climber in the UK and our scores improved across nearly all Schools! This year our response rate target will be 80 per cent (last year we achieved 76.8 per cent).

The NSS runs for a maximum of 12 weeks, with a similar approach to last year being adopted by the University – individual schools will host their own intensive periods with students primarily encouraged to complete the NSS in their own time. However, PC suites will be booked across campus for the remaining students to complete the survey at scheduled times. Student champions will be on hand to support.



The survey officially starts across the sector on 11 January, 2016. But following discussions at the Student Survey Group it was agreed that our official start date would be 8 February, 2016. This is to minimise the risk of students being contacted several times by Ipsos MORI - who run the survey – before academics have had a chance to engage them with the NSS through tailored school-based activities.

Improving space utilisation

Space utilisation - a measure of whether and how space is being used – continues to be a problem and a priority.

Current timetabling information shows a lack of substantial improvement in utilising teaching space which is likely to lead to the University falling short of its target of 21 per cent for 2015/16 - a key KPI target which is reported to Council.

Room audits have taken place across the University and Estates are working with Timetabling and the Schools to look at any issues or problems with utilisation. As well as unused rooms, occupancy is also a major concern with 70 per cent of rooms under 50 per cent occupied.

Deans are working collaboratively with Estates and Timetabling to address these areas of concern.

New Research Centres up and running

The University's nine re-launched Research Centres are now fully up and running. Based within Schools, Research Centres are built around the University's areas of research strength, capacity and excellence, and are the driving force for supporting academics and research colleagues to undertake high-quality research and generate income.

With 440 research-active academics and over 900 PhD students, we have a lively and creative research and learning environment. Our world-class research spans areas as diverse as computer security and disaster management. The revised network of Research Centres is part of the University's 2014-2020 Research Strategy, which has already led to investment in 14 new research posts, around 70 PhD studentships and research infrastructure.

The Research Centres will align with the Industry Collaboration Zones (ICZs), and will work towards achieving the University's 2014-2020 Research Strategy aims, which include generating £8.1m research income by 2017/18, achieving the target of 70 per cent of on-time full-time PGR completion (submission within four years) and submitting at least 25 per cent of staff to REF with a minimum GPA of 3.0.

Engineering Showcase progress – Newton Building and extension

There has been a successful bid of £3m for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding, on top of the £2.5m HEFCE matched contribution for the work on the Newton Building and extension, which would support activity in the Engineering and Environments zone. A project team has been set up with Dr Neil Currie as the academic lead to develop the strategy to deliver the HEFCE proposal with funds expected by end of March 2016.

A list of aspirations and equipment is currently being compiled, including a PG space on the 1st floor, with PG students currently being consulted.



Alternative to SEEK being explored

The University currently uses a bespoke system, SEEK – the Salford Environment for Expertise and Knowledge - to record information about research activity (projects, outputs and other esteem related activity), and display this in the form of online profiles for our research active academics. This system has reached the end of its useful life, and the University no longer retains the expertise required to keep it up to date. Critically, SEEK is unable to support the preparation for the next REF submission, or to provide the detailed information to underpin the Research & Enterprise strategy.

Authorisation and funding have been agreed by the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) to undertake business analysis and requirements modelling to identify the needs of research information management support in the future, and potential solutions. This information will form the basis of an options/solutions appraisal and a further submission to SIG.

Athena SWAN application submitted

The University has submitted an application for the Athena SWAN Charter Bronze Award, following an unsuccessful application last April.

Significant work has been done to update and improve the application and action plan which have included more engagement with employees. The action plan has been created following a rigorous evaluation of our gender equality data, in consultation with Schools, HR and Research and Enterprise.

The Athena SWAN Bronze University award – which most UK HEI's now have – recognises that a University is committed to eliminating gender bias and developing an inclusive culture that values all employees. The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Athena SWAN charter encourages and recognises commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research.

The results are expected in April/May 2016.

New centralised Travel office opens in the New Year

A new in-house University Travel office is set to go live in the New Year and will manage and book all travel for University employees – booking directly for straight-forward journeys, or using either suppliers from the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium's (SUPC) framework or a new contract let by the University for more complex travel arrangements.

Business travel within the University is one of the largest single expenditure items. Prior to the current contract, travel requirements were made by travellers themselves and spend was made across a variety of suppliers. There was no control of spend, no awareness of where anyone was at any given time and management information was difficult to collate.

This will introduce a level of competition and value for money previously missing from the current arrangements. Not only that, it means that there will be a co-ordinated approach to the amount of business travel in the organisation, visibility of who is doing what and when internationally as well as enabling the organisation to exercise its duty of care for people travelling - particularly internationally.



As part of the new arrangements line managers will approve on line the travel as appropriate. If it involves international travel, the International Business Development Office (IBDO) will need to be aware so that it can co-ordinate international activity; holidays must be approved at the same time, if taking time off after business activity and reasons for travel will be a mandatory element of the travel request.

The travel office will implement a check list for all travel requirements which would include insurance, finance, health and safety, as well as any marketing material required.

In addition to these changes, all expenses will be moved online – based in Agresso. The benefits include: an audit trail of requests and approvals, ability to enquire where employees are at any given time, reduction in costs, ensuring Health & Safety and Risk Assessments are undertaken when appropriate and a reduction in processing times for expenses forms.

The proposed date for the Travel Office to go live for the International Business Development Office (IBDO) is 1 February, 2016, followed by the rest of Professional Services, then a phased roll out by School.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor appointed

Professor Richard Stephenson has been appointed as our new Deputy Vice-Chancellor. A Chartered Physiotherapist, Professor Stephenson has more than 25 years' experience in higher education.

He is currently interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Plymouth University, after having held the posts of Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean since 2009.

He has significant leadership experience at senior level and has demonstrated considerable success in delivering challenging strategic priorities. As Deputy Vice-Chancellor, our Deans of School will report directly to Richard and he will have overall responsibility for our ICZ strategy and our Academic Growth and Diversification and International sub-strategies. He joins us on 1 March, 2016.

Previous issues of In Brief can be accessed [here](#)





Local brief

Main Header

Sub header

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Questions and feedback

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