



March 2016

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:

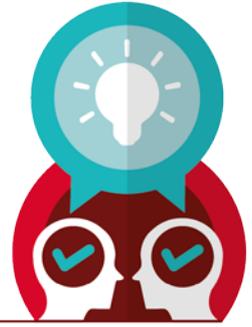
Transforming lives. Stimulating discovery.
Realising potential.

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

- **Best Companies survey results now available and action planning underway**
- **Finalised Strategic Plan document will soon be available**
- **New undergraduate prospectus launched**
- **NSS response rate at healthy 51.2 per cent**
- **Changes to pensions on the way**
- **Latest recruitment activity for 2016/17**
- **UMT workshop focuses on progression and retention**



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

- All the elements of our strategy for 2016 to 2021 have now been brought together in one document;
- Work on our Industry Collaboration Zones (ICZ) continues with a new team in place and work progressing on the programme brief;
- Our continued focus is on student progression and retention which remains a top priority and was the subject of a UMT workshop;
- 2016 National Student Survey response rate at 51.2 per cent – with plenty of time to go to reach a response rate of 80 per cent;
- Recruitment activity for 2016/17: we're performing well;
- Best Companies survey results now available with teams starting to develop action plans.

Strategy updates

All the elements of our strategy now brought together in one document

Following an in depth engagement programme over the last year, involving colleagues, students, external partners and stakeholders, Planning have pulled together the various elements of our strategic plan – vision, four academic sub strategies, five key functional strategies and the key performance indicators (KPIs) - into one single document. Our strategic plan for 2016 to 2021 will soon be made available to our colleagues and students as well as external stakeholders, such as potential industry partners.

Industry Collaboration Zones: programme starting to take shape

Key appointments in the ICZ Programme Team have been made with the team now based in Alumni House, Acton Square. A Thought Leader Group (TLG) has replaced the traditional Programme Board and held its first meeting on 23 February. Progress has been made on the ICZ programme brief which includes objectives, governance, programme structure and work streams which will be presented to the UMT in April.

Best Companies survey results now available

Over the next few weeks, all UMT members will be making arrangements to discuss the Best Companies survey results with their teams; share the local results in detail and identify key actions to address areas of concern. The overall Best Companies Index (CI) score was 577.0 for Salford, which was below the “ones to watch” (typically, 600.0 to 659.0) and insufficient to receive accreditation but which provides a useful benchmark for future surveys. The next survey will take place in October.



The University took part in the survey in October/November 2015 and we had a 63 per cent response rate. It will enable us to better understand current levels of colleague engagement across the University and to identify where we need to focus our attention and make improvements.

As a UMT we are committed to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to see the results and is able to ask questions; involving our teams in action planning at every step of the way. We want to work with you to improve the workplace around you and your experience of working here – making our University a great place to work.

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 key points.

Student Recruitment update 2016/17

Home undergraduate recruitment is performing well against target and compared to our competitor set we appear to be gaining some market share. We continue to receive between 100 and 200 applications per week and remain slightly ahead of last year (21,976 vs 21,920). Marketing are continuing to deploy a number of initiatives to generate further applications ahead of clearing.

Both firm and insurance acceptance rates remain significantly ahead of last year (by 17 per cent and 9 per cent respectively) and the number of firm accepts now stands at 1065 – which is excellent news!

And on another successful note, Home PGT recruitment (applications and offers) continue to rise and remain ahead of last year, 15 per cent (579 vs 504) and 20 per cent (249 vs 208) ahead respectively.

The final numbers for the recent Postgraduate Open Day are being calculated but approximately 220 students (about 50 per cent of those registered) attended. All non-attendees are being contacted and other ways of engagement considered.

UG International recruitment applications are slowly improving - now 14 per cent behind compared to 17 per cent a few weeks ago - (1,069 vs 1,255) and at PG level we remain 14 per cent ahead of target, however it is still early in the cycle.

There's a decline of 52 per cent (189 vs 393) in PGR applications although we anticipate this to change because of the GTS deadline. This will be the focus of marketing and recruitment over the coming weeks.

Launch of new undergraduate prospectus

The new-look 2017 undergraduate prospectus was launched at a number of careers fairs across the country and colleagues were able to see it for themselves recently at a launch event in Chapman Building.



The design of the prospectus evolves around the theme of “hands that change the world” which directly relates to our focus on working with industry and providing valuable, real-world experience for students to equip them for the world of work. Elements of the new brand proposition are also starting to appear such as the use of Practical, Technical and Professional. The prospectus was designed in-house using our graduates who feature on the cover. There are plans for an online interactive version of the prospectus.

New structure for fees set for 2017/18 academic year

The University is looking to adopt a new academic fee structure for 2017/18, reflecting similar moves by other universities. It will look to rectify pricing anomalies and competitively position Salford. The new simple to understand fees structure – and example of which is given below - will allow Academic Schools to position their fees based on a general view of the course type and the nature of the course delivery.

Sample

Fee level	Description
Band 1	Programmes that are mainly classroom based that do not have any specialist equipment or facilities
Band 2	Programmes that have elements of laboratory / studio based activity or require specialist equipment/facilities
Specialist	Professional programmes that have the ability to attract a market premium because of the nature of the programme and the type of students on those programmes.

At the same time the University will carry out a review of its Scholarships and Bursaries packages to ensure that our financial incentives attract particular target groups of students to help us achieve our enrolment objectives and also ensure we maximise our tuition fee revenues.

New mechanism for space fining being considered

Our performance in utilising the estate remains extremely poor. A recent audit revealed that our space utilisation stands at 15 per cent compared with the sector best practice of 35 per cent. This is why it is one of our strategic priorities for the year and why we have set a challenging target of 21 per cent utilisation to be met by November 2016.

A series of constructive meetings have taken place between timetabling, Estates and Schools, which are intended to improve the position from the start of the next academic year. The UMT agreed to consider how a “space fining” system could work if it was introduced and whether a clearer indication of the savings a School could make - if it could see the financial cost of unused space - would improve utilisation.

Continued focus on improving Student Progression and Retention

The UMT held the first of a regular series of workshops as part of its monthly meeting. This month the focus was student retention, and the workshop was led by Paul Rowlett, PVC Academic, and Sam Grogan, Dean of Students.



Student retention is currently one of the University's top-three risks. Our retention rates are poor and not improving and have an impact on our position in several league tables, and consequently are potentially a threat to our performance in the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

The workshop looked in detail at a range of data covering the downward trend in first-year UG progression and continuation, and, looking at all levels and modes of study, the worrying increase in in-year attrition. It was also shown how, for this year alone the students who have left the University represent lost revenue of over £4.2m.

The workshop then went on to consider action to improve retention rates, focusing on how students' needs change as they transition into, through and out of successive stages of the student journey.

Some of the ideas which will be taken forward from the session include increasing the number of student progression assistants, additional support for students returning to repeat modules, improved support and options advice for struggling students, enhanced welcome and induction support for programme groups with poor retention, and for students entering via Clearing, and a review of support and provision in the period between Semester one and Semester two teaching.

Sustainability strategy signed off

A new sustainability strategy has been developed which recognises economic, social and environmental aspects of the sustainability agenda and aims to embed sustainability principles into all the University does – giving our employees an understanding that enables each individual to contribute to a sustainable future.

The Strategy prioritises building a culture of sustainable behaviour at the University, managing the University's use of carbon, and embedding sustainability across the University's core academic work with colleagues, students, and industry partners. All decisions taken by Council, VCET and UMT will consider the impact on sustainability.

National Student Survey response rate

During the first week in March we reached a significant milestone in our National Student Survey (NSS) campaign with 51.2 per cent of our eligible students completing their NSS. We've broken the required threshold for publishing the University's results – but there is still time to encourage more of our students to give their feedback and to hit the target completion rate of 80 per cent.

Some individual programmes have already reached 80 per cent completion and many more are close. At the same stage last year we had only achieved 33.3 per cent response rate.

Enabling the Student Journey (ESJ)

The ESJ project comprises two projects – the Student Information System (SIS) project (Banner upgrade) and the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database.



The SIS project phases one and two are progressing to plan. The team have identified a catalogue of Banner specific business processes and are about to start validating those processes already mapped and begin the mapping of any process gaps.

Data cleansing is well underway with the members of this work stream working closely with the nominated people to ensure data integrity is maintained moving forwards. The first of the IT test environments for the upgrade is already completed in line with planned dates.

Work is also continuing in the area of Graduation. We plan to trial a proof of concept for our summer Graduation with a view to going live with the final solution later in the year to coincide with our winter Graduation ceremony.

A CRM project manager has now been recruited and planning is taking place to determine the next steps. Five vendors have now been selected to take us through to the next stage in the procurement process with vendor demonstrations taking place during the first week of April with a view to awarding the contract to the successful supplier at the end of April.

Restructuring our China Operations

Following an in-depth review, the University has restructured its China operations. After five years, the independent Representative Office in Beijing will close and be replaced from 1 March by a new operation in a locally-managed workspace (known as a Launchpad) also in Beijing.

We continue to remain committed to China and our current partners and agents and there remains significant potential for business development and student recruitment in this important market.

Our priorities and those of the team in the new Launchpad is to provide: excellent service to partners, support for education agents, direct advice to prospective students and applicants, a point of contact for Salford alumni and provide day-to-day support for our activities in China as appropriate.

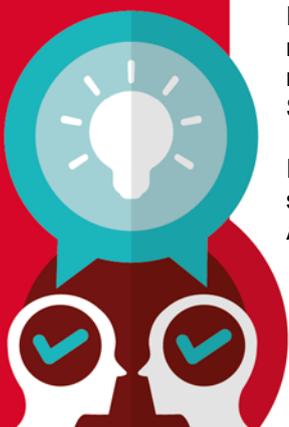
The team will report to the International Business Development Office (IBDO) who will oversee its in-country operations, ensuring objectives are understood and delivered. IBDO will also enable effective working and communications between the Launchpad and other key areas of the University, including Schools and the International Recruitment and Admissions teams within Marketing & Student Recruitment.

The India Launchpad is now operational with a standard set of KPIs and targets aligned with other overseas office operations in China and Abu Dhabi.

Changes to pensions

From April, the Government is making a change to the State Pension. This will mean an increase in National Insurance contributions for all employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, Universities Superannuation Scheme or Teachers' Pension Scheme.

In addition to the increase in National Insurance contributions, there will also be significant changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) from April.



USS currently has two contribution rates for members; 7.5 per cent for final salary scheme members and 6.5 per cent for career revalued benefits scheme members. From 1 April, all members will pay the new 8 per cent rate. The employer contribution is currently 16 per cent and this will go up to 18 per cent.

To find out more about what these changes mean to you, please take a look at the information on the Pay and Pensions webpages which can be found by [clicking here](#). You can find details of how much extra National Insurance you are likely to pay and if you are a member of USS, the online calculator will also show you the additional pension contribution you will pay.

For more information on the USS pension changes, you can access a [dedicated webpage](#) on the USS site.

Finance Update

At quarter 2 our operating performance is broadly on track and remains on target for a surplus of £11.7 million. This is the amount reported at quarter 1 end and has included a package of savings measures to mitigate against the pressure on budgets which occurred in the first quarter.

School Quarterly Highlights Reports 2015/16, Quarter 2 (November 2015 to January 2016)

(Would deans please include in this section the information which relates to their own particular School and also share the highlights of the other Schools. There are some suggested bullet points below)

Arts and Media

- January School Congress focus on NSS, Retention and Progression, ICZ agenda and Research Ethics
- New Programmes Approved; BA Hons Digital Media, BA Hons Film and TV Set Design; BA Hons Film Production
- Growth in planned numbers for BA Film Production; target of 28 increased to 80 due to higher number of applications than expected (550 plus)
- Operational Planning 2016/17, student numbers and budgets broadly agreed pending adjustments for BA Film
- Production and final sign off of School Plans
- New Adelphi timetabling and move is progressing well and on target for August completion

Computing, Science and Engineering

- The School continues to make good progress towards achieving its aims for 2015-16, with the contribution rate on track to exceed the target rate, UG numbers growing by 6.6 per cent over 2014-15 and data showing that registered PGT students exceed the planned intake.
- Research awards and bidding are on target
- The School successfully attracted a HEFCE award of £50,000 to develop a new MSc in Data Science and received approval for a business case for the MSc in Cyber Security and Forensics



- There has been good progress on the Engineering Showcase with utilising the HEFCE award with equipment tenders for £1.2 million put out to industry and total capital expenditure expected to reach the HEFCE £2.5 million award by the end of this month.
- A detailed plan and the case for further development has been presented to VCET.

Environment and Life Sciences

- A special event, attended by over 300 people, was held on 24 February to celebrate the official opening of the £3m state-of-the-art Megalab in Cockcroft: The Bodmer Laboratories, named after our former Chancellor, FRS (Fellow of the Royal Society) and renowned geneticist, Sir Walter Bodmer.
- The majority of academic appointments have now been made with staff in place and we are now introducing them to contribute to teaching whilst maintaining student satisfaction.
- The challenge is to raise the overall satisfaction NSS to 90 per cent for 2016. There are a number of initiatives already in place before the start of the NSS, including discipline levels “get-togethers” to enhance our students’ sense of belonging

Health Sciences

- Progress has been made in addressing the £158K shortfall for this current financial year.
- BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy ICAN agreement has been signed off by both parties with planned delivery in September 2016
- Approval received for the following programmes: BSc Public Health and public health with placement (three year sandwich) 2017 start, BSc Sport and Psychology, 2017 start, MSc Performance Analysis, 2017 start, MSc Applied Psychology (Addictions), 2016 start and BSc EPAH with Bolton College 2016 start,
- Pay cost savings, an initial review of non-pay costs and an increase in research income has improved the School's contribution rate from 49 to 50 per cent
- Further increase in total U/G registrations (FTE) to 1877 and PGT registrations (FTE) to 233
- School Progression and retention plan in place.

Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work and Social Sciences

- The simulation centre has been completed – attracting media attention - and the build of the counselling centre is underway and will be completed by mid-April.
- The School continues to make good progress and has shown significant growth in planned outcomes in the operational plan submitted in 2015.
- Space utilisation is being reviewed in line with University guidance
- Extra resources have been identified for a recruitment drive in May



Salford Business School

- There has been progress in new programme developments and accreditations.
- Key projects for improvement initiated in the areas of teaching and learning.
- Improved research bidding activity.
- There are concerns around the ongoing prospects for international recruitment over the remainder of the academic year and the need to establish permanent executive management arrangements.
- Turnaround times for assessment feedback have been met.
- New partnerships in Penang and Sri Lanka launched.

School of the Built Environment

- Performance for Q1 shows improvement in student recruitment and number of applications
- International recruitment is also better than expected.
- TNE numbers in Mauritius and Sri Lanka are showing healthy improvement.
- Research has shown excellent performance in Q1 with year targets already met.
- The School has made excellent progress in all aspects of its research portfolio including external competitive research grants, excellent enterprise, and much improvement of PGR completion rate (note the target was doubled from last year actual for both FT and PT PGR completion).
- Major projects for Energy House 2 as well as Think Lab expansion have been submitted
- The development of the Trimester system aims to increase market share as well as improve flexibility and students' experience

Salford Languages

- The design and severely delayed implementation of the new structure of the English Language Centre in particular continues to have an adverse effect on the day-to-day running of Salford Languages.
- The overhaul and implementation of quality-assured processes across Salford Languages (to align and reflect those of the University) is progressing well, including increased awareness amongst the staff group of UKVI legislation and its impact upon Salford Languages.
- Recruitment to the English Study Programme for Semester 2 was very poor, and a targeted marketing approach to boost recruitment to the Summer English Study Programmes (SESP) is now underway.

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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