



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Employability Strategy

2022-2026

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The University of Wales Trinity Saint David welcomes comments on all aspects of this plan, both in what it contains and what it may not make clear enough about the work we intend to do.



This is a new strategy for the University that builds on the significant work already undertaken in relation to supporting students to succeed and progress, during and from their time at University. Supporting students is a key priority for the University and deeply embedded in the University’s values. Taking our lead from the Welsh Government, HEFCW and Advance HE, the University is totally committed to fully prepare all of its students for progression into employment and sustainable careers in their chosen field. The universally applied, whole system approach outlined in this strategy is grounded in our mission to Transform Education and Transform Lives and is fully supported by our governors, senior leadership team and the staff of the University. As Vice-Chancellor of UWTSd, I am particularly proud of our commitment to supporting learners and students at all stages of their career, whilst at University and equally as Alumni of the University.

Whilst, to date, we have always ensured the relevance and currency of the core elements of our qualifications, we have become increasingly aware of the wider competencies sought by employers. It is incumbent upon us to provide our students with every advantage in securing worthwhile employment. This strategy establishes a shift change in our support for students with the adoption of a broad range of initiatives, beyond the core curriculum, to create highly competent, employment ready individuals. We fully appreciate that the nature of employment our students progress into varies significantly, be it employment in large, multi-national organisations, small to medium enterprises or self-employment as entrepreneurs. The opportunities created by the adoption of this strategy will ensure that all of our students will achieve their full potential in their chosen career. Students progress into employment across the whole of the UK, we are however conscious that many students, notably from our Wales based campuses secure employment in Wales. We are totally committed to meet the workplace linguistic requirements of employers and support our students in developing appropriate Welsh language skills to succeed in such bilingual work environments. I would like to thank our staff, stakeholders, learners and students for their input into this key, Employability Strategy.

Professor Medwin Hughes, DL
Vice-Chancellor

SECTION 1

ABOUT US

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) is part of the UWTSD Group (the Group), a multi-institutional collaborative venture owned and governed by the University, with Coleg Sir Gâr (CSG) and Coleg Ceredigion (CC) as constituent colleges. The Group has campuses in Carmarthen, Lampeter, Swansea, Birmingham and London, each with their own distinct identities. It also has learning centres in Cardiff and outreach community centres throughout South Wales, which help to deliver our strategic focus on widening participation. HE and FE provision is offered at several further locations within South and West Wales through its constituent and partner colleges.

Transforming education, Transforming lives.

Our vision is to be a University for Wales, with a commitment to the wellbeing and heritage of the nation at the heart of all that we do.

Our Strategic Plan defines seven key values:

1. **Excellent teaching, informed by scholarship and research, and applied research**
2. **Inclusivity**
3. **Employability and creativity**
4. **Collaboration through strategic partnerships**
5. **Sustainable development**
6. **The concept of global citizenship**
7. **Wales and its distinctiveness**

Central to our vision is the promotion and embedding of a dual-sector educational system which educates learners of all ages and backgrounds and contributes to the economic development in our regions, across Wales and beyond. This commitment to the employability of our learners and development of our regions is also reflected in our Strategic Plan by the emphasis on **employability and creativity** and **collaboration through strategic partnerships** as key values. This Strategy is an important strategy to support our institutional Strategic Plan in relation to our KPIs and targets relating to employability.

Section 2 details the data and resources that provide the background and context behind the objectives outlined in this strategy, it gives further details about the sector documents that we have considered in developing this plan.

Section 3 outlines the domains, objectives and the associated SMART targets.

Section 4 explains how this strategy will be delivered, monitored and evaluated in partnership with staff and students.

Whole University Approach Key Resources

This strategy focuses on the development of the employability skills of our students in order to prepare them for sustainable careers. The strategy will ensure that employability is embedded at the core of our learning and teaching, enabling students to be lifelong learners and to succeed in their chosen employment path. The strategy outlines the University's inclusive approach in supporting all students to succeed.

In deploying this strategy, the University will work across the academic departments, professional services and with our partnerships to identify innovative approaches and develop enhanced support mechanisms. The strategy will impact on all students at all levels of undergraduate and postgraduate study.

For this strategy we have set 22 high-level strategic objectives, which have been mapped to the four key domains (Infrastructure, Skills, Engagement, Collaboration & Future Development). This large number of objectives reflects the broad area and the diverse range and choice of opportunities available for students to engage in to develop employability skills. Due cognisance has been provided to the recommendations of the Advance HE review of employability within the university and good practice which exists in the sector.

To develop the objectives for this plan, we have taken into account:

Welsh Government Guidance:

- Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales— a plan for employability and skills
- Wales 4.0 – Delivering Economic Transformation for a Better Future of Work
- Aligning the Apprenticeship Model to the needs of the Welsh economy
- Unis Wales:
- Skills for the Future

Other Guidance

- Skills: The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.
- Advance HE Employability in the Curriculum.
- HEFCW: Insight into Employability: how universities hone graduate skills
- HEFCW: Higher Education for the Nation: Embedding Skills and Employability shows
- Regional Learning & Skills Partnerships (Education & Skills Reports)
- Worldskills UK Employability Skills Checklist
- UK Government: Skills for Employment
- CBI Skills Framework
- NCFE Employability Skills
- QAA (2018) framework for enterprise and entrepreneurship education.
- Cymraeg 2050 . A million Welsh speakers.
- Cymraeg 2050: Welsh language strategy action plan 2022 to 2023
- Welsh language technology plan



PURPOSE OF THE EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY

Individuals choose to study at University for a number of diverse reasons, increasingly however students specifically seek the opportunity to secure a foundation for sustainable employment , a stepping stone between education and the world of work. A world of work which is rapidly changing. Emerging from a global pandemic, the impact of Brexit and the effects of a war on the European mainland have had a profound influence on the nature of employment in the United Kingdom. At the same time, we are in the midst of the fourth Industrial Revolution with the greatest period of change ever occurring in employment arising from new and emerging digital technologies.

Employers increasingly call for our graduates to be competent in addition to being qualified. They seek students possessing a broad range of employability skills, beyond a core or technical qualification and to be “work ready” upon completion of their studies. It is incumbent upon the University to develop these competencies in our students and to prepare them as lifelong learners. The continuing impact of ongoing technological and digital developments will demand students of the future to have a number of different careers in their working lives.

In addition, the University is increasingly involved in the continuous professional development and upskilling of employed status personnel attending University on a part time basis. Such employer designed programmes also demand competency development in employability skills.



Workforce of the Future

In our role of developing the workforce of the future, it is important to appreciate the difference between employment and employability. Employment is having secured a work role whilst employability is the possession of a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace. (CBI)

Within a University context, employability attributes may be acquired through a myriad of different opportunities during a period of study. Examples of opportunities include exposure to work placement, internships or volunteering. Alternatively, students may gain access to enterprise activities or work-related provision as part of their programmes or as extra- curricular activity . Currently, we do not have a fully coordinated, all University approach to the development and acquisition of employability skills.

Evidence exists of the significance placed by students, seeking a University at which to study, on the acquisition of employability skills as an integral part of their studies. Whilst a number of strategic interventions exist within the University to support development of employability skills, a cohesive strategy is sought to ensure coordination, transparency, currency and equality of opportunity. In 2022 the University benefitted from a review by Advance HE of its employability and skills provision with the emerging recommendations influencing the development of this strategy.

The strategy seeks to ensure that all students, in the pursuit of their academic studies achieve competency in a range of current, employer influenced employability skills. Due reference will be afforded to the language skills demanded by employers to ensure our learners can transition into and communicate appropriately in a Welsh medium and bilingual work environment.

The strategy will define the range of opportunities available and develop the appropriate infrastructure to support students whilst ensuring accurate reporting and evidencing of achieved outcomes. These outcomes will not only assist students in their career choice but also inform potential employers of competencies possessed by our students.

SECTION 2: KEY DATA AND METRICS

Student Profile

The tables below show that other undergraduates (OUG) at UWTSd have grown in terms of numbers and the percentage these students make-up of the total student body, over the last 3 years:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
All	11,135	12,700	14,795
OUG	3,635	4,585	5,550
1st degree	5,135	5,595	6,465
Foundation Degree	490	500	415
Higher degree (research)	275	330	335
Higher degree (taught)	1,075	1,220	1,500
Other postgraduate	530	470	525

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
All	11,135	12,700	14,795
OUG	33%	36%	38%
1st degree	46%	44%	44%
Foundation Degree	4%	4%	3%
Higher degree (research)	2%	3%	2%
Higher degree (taught)	10%	10%	10%
Other postgraduate	5%	4%	4%

Progression

Specific targets were not set for outside of the UWTSd Group, with the exception of 2019/20 with a target of 450. As an alternative to a specific target, the Senior Directorate team expressed a requirement to seek continuous year on year improvement in this area.

Progression from FE to HE:

	Within UWTSd Group	Outside of the UWTSd Group			
	CC / CSG (targets)	Gower	NPT	Pembrokeshire	Total
2017/18	356	230	251	124	605
2018/19	359 (250)	388	255	123	766
2019/20	454 (326)	452	254	130	836 (450)
2020/21	378 (375)	431	214	123	768

Apprenticeships

The total number of higher apprenticeships offered by the UWTSd group has remained the same and below target for the last three years. In contrast, the total number of degree apprenticeship programmes that UWTSd offers has gradually increased over the last three years and every year, has exceeded the target.

Number of programmes and students enrolled on Degree Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships:

	Higher Apprenticeships		Degree Apprenticeships	
	UWTSd Group		UWTSd	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
2019/20	16	12	6	10
2020/21	17	12	8	14
2021/22	17	12	10	19

The total number of apprentices studying across the UWTSd Group stood at 1,080 in 2020/21, significantly up from 639 in the previous year. The most significant increases have been experienced in the Police-funded degree apprenticeships. Equivalent figures for 2021/22 are currently being collated and will be presented later in the year.

	Apprentices studying across UWTSd group
2019/20	639
2020/21	1,080

Accreditation

The total number of apprentices studying across the UWTSd Group stood at 1,080 in 2020/21, significantly up from 639 in the previous year. The most significant increases have been experienced in the Police-funded degree apprenticeships. Equivalent figures for 2021/22 are currently being collated and will be presented later in the year.

	Programmes with PSRB accreditation	
	Target	Actual
2017/18	59	77
2018/19	62	64
2019/20	65	84
2020/21	66	74
2021/22	67	85

Graduate Outcomes

The percentages of UWTSd's 2019/20 graduates with positive outcomes, in highly skilled employment or in further study in 2021/22 is presented below. Positive outcomes at UWTSd are significantly lower than benchmark while the rate in further study is above benchmark.

2019/20	Positive outcome	Highly skilled	In further study
Benchmark	81%	80%	13%
All UWTSd	68%	61%	15%
OUG	62%	47%	19%
1st Degree	66%	57%	13%
Other higher degree	77%	80%	14%
Doctorates	-	-	-
Other PG	93%	94%	4%

Graduate Start-ups

UWTSd are leaders in the UK for the number of Graduate Start-ups in still active after 3 years. HEBCI data in relation to new graduate start-ups, graduate start-ups still active after 3 years and active graduate start ups:

	Graduate Start-ups		Number in operation after 3 yrs	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
2017/18	55	30	-	413
2018/19	60	93	-	556
2019/20	65	51	-	627
2020/21	70	55	-	784
2021/22	75	-	-	-

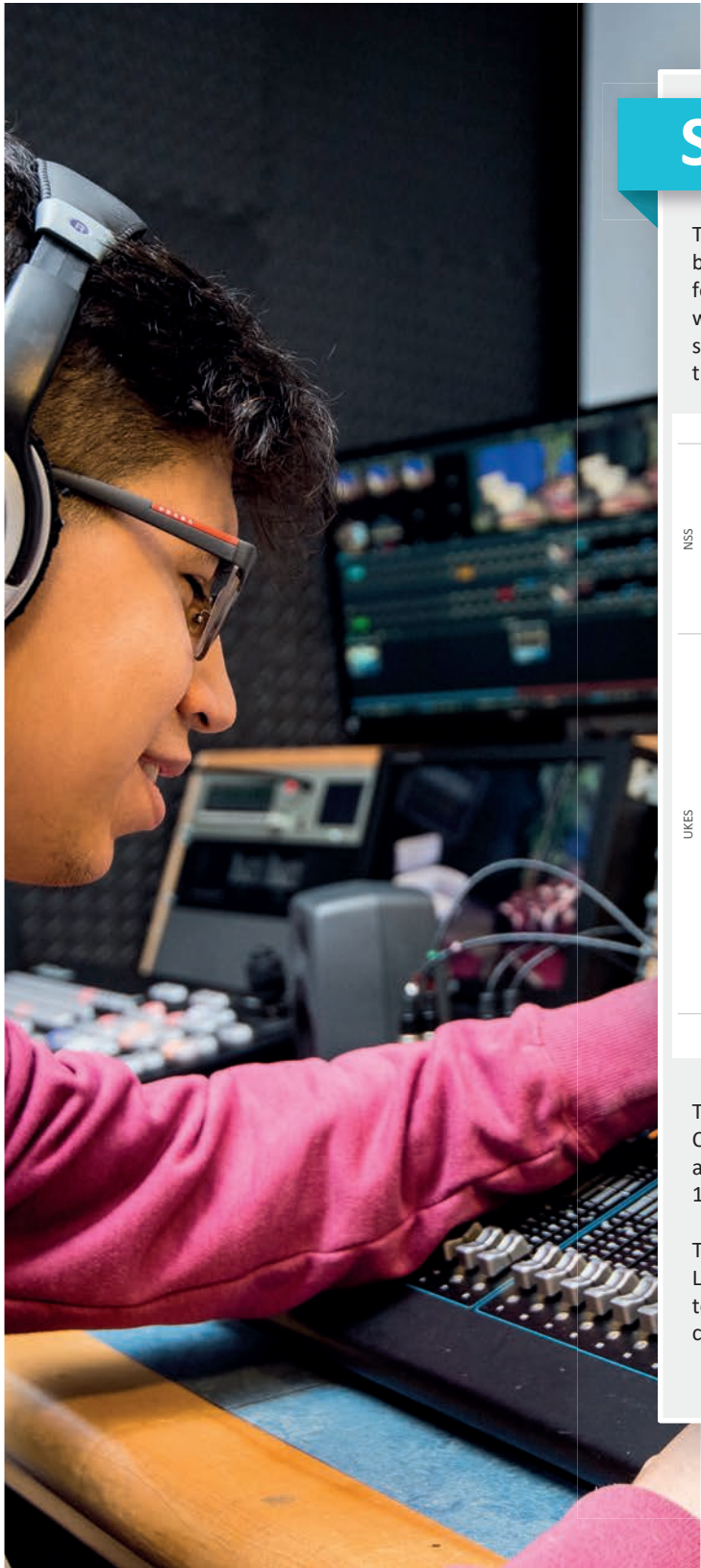
Careers Service

The UWTSd Careers service is supported by an online platform called Abintegro. This platform provides a wide range of resources and tools to support students' in their career exploration and development. To date 32,238 students have been registered on the platform with 3,439 actively logging in and using the platform.

	Active Users	Logins	Activities
2020/21	2,098	11,423	38,893
2021/22	1,587	7,246	22,034
All Time	3,439	19,884	64,793

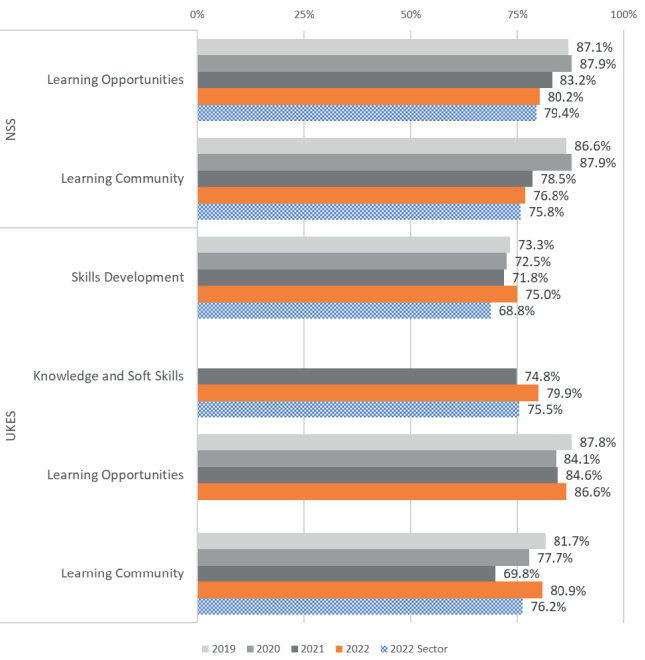


SECTION 2: KEY DATA AND METRICS (cont.)



Student Feedback

The University takes part in a number of national surveys to benchmark its performance with the sector. The student feedback data from the UKES and NSS provide the University with key insights in the development of its undergraduate students in terms of learning opportunities, skills development, transferable skills, and knowledge and soft skills.



The UWTSD scores for Learning Opportunities and Learning Community on the NSS 2022 (majority final year students) are at their lowest in 4 years. However, they are still approximately 1% above the Sector this year.

The UWTSD scores for UKES in the areas of Skills Development, Learning Opportunities and Learning Community have returned to near pre-pandemic levels. UWTSD scores for 2022 are also considerably higher than the Sector

GO Wales

The GO Wales programme supports students by organising and funding work experience and providing ongoing coaching and mentoring to make sure students get as much as they can from the experience. The current project ends on October 31st 2022 and has hit targets for participants accepted and taking part. Some further outcomes for NEET ('Not in Employment, Education, or Training') are expected before this project ends. The University has submitted a bid for continued Student Employability Support Funding to HEFCW, prioritising as part of this bid students who are at risk of lower employability outcomes.

	Achieved (target)
Participants accepted	223 (223)
Participants taking part in work experience	190 (190)
Participants at reduced risk of NEET	131 (170)

Placements

Placements provide students with key opportunities to gain first hand experience of the sector they wish to work in prior to employment. Studies show that students who have had placement experience have an enhanced chance of finding employment. UWTSD offers a range of programmes with placements. For a number of programmes, placements are a mandatory component, for other programmes, placements are optional. A number of programmes offer programmes that are fully embedded within employment; these offer extended period of placements with theory and practice closely interlinked.

	Number of programmes with placements ('22) excluding collaborative partners
Mandatory:	63 programmes
Optional:	18 programmes

Enterprise

Inspire coordinates enterprise education for the University as part of UWTSD's Future Pproofing of Education.

UWTSD Future Proofing Education: The Entrepreneurial Imperative:

		2019	2020	2021
Engage	Students engaged in activities to raise awareness of start-up as a career option	1,712	3,000	3,500
Empower	Students empowered by workshops to increase their entrepreneurial capacity	608	484	420
Equip	Students equipped to test their business ideas	300	34	23
Endorse	Students and graduates received support to take forward their own businesses	93	217	56
Enhance	Started a business either whilst studying or after graduation	72	50	45
Enable	Academic Champions of Enterprise enabled to enhance curriculum and extra curricula activity	12	15	16

Skills Competitions

UWTSD students consistently compete in Skills Competition Wales and Worldskills UK National Competitions. The table below shows the skills areas where our students have competed and the outcomes they have achieved. Outcomes for the 2021/22 Worldskills UK National competition are pending at the time of this publication.

	Skill Areas	Outcomes	
		2020/21	2021/22
Skills Competition Wales	CNC Milling IT Software Solutions Cyber Security	Five competitors 1 Gold 1 Silver 1 Bronze	Ten competitors 2 Gold 2 Silver
Worldskills UK National Competitions	CNC Milling CNC Turning Cyber Security Network Infrastructure Technician Network Systems Administrator	Seven competitors 2 Gold	Sixteen Competitors Pending results (Nov 2022 Finals)

Please note:

The University will be closely monitoring student participation in international mobility opportunities offered by the new Turing (UK Gov) and Taith (Welsh Government) schemes from this year, 2022-23.

SECTION 3: EMPLOYABILITY OBJECTIVES 2022-2026

Domains:



Infrastructure

1. Develop a culture whereby Employability is integrated into all aspects of learning and teaching.
2. Ensure inclusivity by engaging all students in the development of employability skills and professional attributes during their time in the University.
3. Through innovative, employer influenced curriculum design ensure employability is integrated into all programmes of study.
4. Develop a dynamic, web based tracking system enabling students to monitor their progress in the achievement of employability skills.
5. Introduce a staff development programme to support staff in the integration and delivery of employability skills.
6. Re-develop and re-shape the University's existing Careers Service as a key enabler of this strategy, working in partnership across the full spectrum of academic activity, collaboratively with our students.
7. Establish and maintain a student Volunteering, Internship, Project and Part time work support infrastructure within the student experience domain.



Skills

1. Maintain a central graduate attribute framework and repository for access by staff and students.
2. Develop, in all programme areas, progression pathways to provide for students a lifelong learning continuum influencing employability.
3. Integrate enterprise and entrepreneurship activity opportunities into the graduate attribute framework for universal employability access.
4. Where relevant, ensure engagement of students in Worldskills competition activity on a regional and national level.



Engagement

1. Embed formal placement periods into programmes of study wherever possible.
2. Where placement cannot be achieved, a programme of work related activity is to be included for all programmes of study.
3. All curriculum areas of the University to report annually on progress of introducing work-based learning programmes. (Apprenticeships etc.)
4. All curriculum areas to work with the Wales Global Academy to consider and support student engagement with relevant mobility programmes focussed on international employability.



Collaboration & Future Development

1. Ensure all curriculum areas of the university maintain effective employer liaison groups or alternative mechanisms to guarantee the employer voice is heard and influences employability of our students.
2. Further enhance and ensure completion of tripartite employability partnership agreements for all student engagements.
3. Increase number of programmes of study achieving Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body recognition.
4. Effectively engage with the university's Alumni network to support the employability agenda.
5. Influence the development of the university's client management system to ensure its effective utilisation for all employability activity including the awareness of opportunities available.
6. Establish protocols to ensure horizon scanning, at a curriculum area level, to identify new and emerging employability influencers.
7. Coordinate the dissemination of the outcomes of research and development activity related to the use of new and emerging immersive learning technologies impacting upon employability.

Objective 1: Develop a culture whereby Employability is integrated into all aspects of learning and teaching.

With the changing emphasis and increased significance of employability on progression of students post study, it has been agreed that a unified, whole university approach on employability is required in order ensure consistency of opportunity, inclusivity and improved outcomes. A cultural shift is sought such that employability is integrated into all aspects of teaching & learning. Such a culture will demand engagement from all academic and professional services personnel in the university in addition to the students union. The University's current strategic plan identifies that we offer attractive and relevant academic programmes that enable our learners to develop the skills they need for employment. The next iteration will be more specific in respect of employability which will ensure universal compliance across all programmes of study.

To achieve the shift change sought it is critical that employability is embedded at all levels of study on the students journey in the University. It cannot be allowed to be perceived as a bolt-on or optional, employability is to be purposely built into all aspects of teaching & learning in order to continuously improve our graduate's prospects. Employability skills can be developed through a number of different engagement options such as placement, volunteering, work related experience, internships, etc. It is critical that the strategy ensures not only accessibility to all options but also ensures that evidence is gathered and verified.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Identify all forms of employability skills development opportunities available to students.
- Develop a road map illustrating to staff and students how to navigate the available opportunities and resources available to achieve the impact on employability sought.
- Ensure advice and guidance on developing and embedding employability is developed as part of the UWTSD Learning Design Framework.
- Employability has a high visibility presence on every campus, exploiting signage, digital opportunities and hard copy matter.
- Ensure the Welsh language has equal visibility in line with the University's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards
- Embed employability into all aspects of the student journey, beyond the curriculum, from welcome talks to graduation ceremonies.
- Ensure stakeholder engagement to maintain the currency of the employability offer is always relevant in a constantly changing and evolving landscape.

Objective 2: Ensure inclusivity by engaging all students in their development of employability skills and professional attributes during their time in the University.

Students are at the heart of the University and it is essential that the University develops provision that is reflective of its student body so that all students are engaged and supported to achieve their potential. We wish all students to be successful irrespective of their programme of study or career route choice. Evidence identifies students place employability high on their criteria in selecting a place of study. In a climate of volatility in employment opportunities we have a duty to ensure equal access to employability skills to all our students. Increasing the numbers of students engaging in employability skills development will have a direct and positive impact on the number of students attaining relevant graduate employment. It is critical that the university develops innovative solutions to engage all students in employability provision. Every programme of study will have a guaranteed minimum level of opportunity built in. This opportunity will be supported by extensive resources available to all students.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Ensure all students engage in the development of their employability skills and professional attributes irrespective of their chosen programme of study.
- Identify the importance to students of taking responsibility for their career development whilst in university.
- Provide appropriate support mechanisms for students to guarantee success including access to Welsh language skills development.
- Opportunities to be afforded to all undergraduate and postgraduate students.



Objective 3: Through innovative, employer influenced curriculum design ensure employability is integrated into all programmes of study.

To guarantee employment success for our students the University must work closely with employers to ensure they influence curriculum design to guarantee relevance and currency. The University has long established procedures and proven good practice in employer engagement influencing curriculum design. However, this has invariably been in relation to core programme or technical content and not in relation to employability skills (often referred to as softer skills). Employer intelligence in respect of employability skills identifies that such skills are not sector specific and can thus be shared across a broad range of university provision. This reduces the burden upon programme developers and information gleaned can be shared across the Institutes of the university. The emergence of the fourth industrial revolution and rapid adoption by employers of all things digital will demand more regular contact with employers to glean current information and identify emerging trends.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Establish protocols that all curriculum provision incorporates a minimum level of employability skills development.
- Ensure all such curriculum is influenced by employers, is relevant, current and identifies the linguistic requirements of employers.



Objective 4: Develop a dynamic, web-based tracking system enabling students to monitor their progress in the achievement of employability skills.

It is being increasingly reported that employers demand evidence of students employability skills prior to employment as opposed to allowing them to prove competence in post. Invariably, certification alone does not provide the breadth of evidence sought. In addition, due to the diversity of provision across the university and the broad spectrum of opportunities and resources potentially accessed by students, a tracking and recording system is to be employed to capture all engagement and outcomes achieved.

The system has to be able to monitor activity as diverse as accessing and completing a specific resource on moodle to tracking a student's placement or internship with an employer. Reports generated from the systems dashboard will significantly enhance the student's profile when presenting for interview or application for employment. The system will also be used to monitor progress of a student when on programme and subsequently influence progression. A critical component of the system is the ability of the student to add feedback at strategic points having reflected upon their own experience.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Develop and embed a web-based tracking and reporting system to record student progression and outcomes of employability skills.
- Undertake staff and student training sessions in the use and application of the system.
- Establish links between the system and the university's CRM system for the identification of employer opportunities.

Objective 5: Introduce a staff development programme to support staff in the integration and delivery of employability skills.

In line with the University's values, strong academic support networks are essential to ensure student success. The university also recognises the need for staff to be appropriately trained and qualified in order to deliver a high quality experience for our students. In the majority of instances staff are clustered in relation to the core programme of delivery and reflect their skills, knowledge and expertise in that specific area of activity. Consequently, the support network afforded is generally reflective of the core programme requirements. Employability is generic and transcends all programme areas, impacting on all students irrespective of their core programme of study. The University has consciously decided, based on evidence, not to create a central University team of employability practitioners but to invest in all staff to **embed, engage, enthuse and enable** student success in employability within their respective programmes of study.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Introduce a comprehensive staff development programme to support staff in the integration and delivery of employability skills in all programmes of study.
- Introduce employability within all staff induction programmes.
- Employability staff development to be made available to professional support staff in addition to academic staff.
- Establish a multi-disciplinary cadre of Employability Advocates across all academic institutes and professional services units to advise on developments and to support the embedding of employability.
- Ensure dissemination of good practice at dedicated events and the annual Nexus programme.

Objective 6: Re-develop and re-shape the University's existing Careers Service as a key enabler of this strategy, working in partnership across the full spectrum of academic activity, collaboratively with our students.

The University has a comprehensive careers service offering information, advice and 1 to 1 guidance in relation to careers. The service, in conjunction with Abintegro, offers students access to a digital platform My Career. The service afforded covers a wide ranging offer to students, is available online and with a physical presence available on every campus. In seeking to embed employability for all students, the current service provision is to be extended to incorporate an employability portal, linking to all opportunities and resources and to the bespoke web-based tracking system.

In order to support the delivery of the strategy the Service will be reviewed and developed with a focus on the key themes and objectives outlined within the strategy. Service activities and resources will be further developed around academic portfolios with the provision of embedded and enhanced curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Additionally, the Service plays a key role in the institutional delivery of the national HEFCW Student Employability project providing specific opportunities for students facing identified additional barriers to success.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Complete a service review of the Careers Service, re-organising and re-developing the Service to deliver the key aims of the strategy.
- Develop and implement a bespoke employability skills diagnostic tool to be utilised to assess skills competencies of students on entry to the University and upon completion of their programme of study. Application of the diagnostic tool to be overseen by the University's Careers Consultants during their planned engagement with students with outcomes recorded in the web-based tracking system.
- Establish a funding protocol within the University to maintain the successful GO Wales: Achieve through Work Experience project post the current, externally funded period.
- Establish, for all students, access to a "job hunting support" programme delivered by the University's Careers Consultants. The component elements of the programme to be incorporated within the University's Graduate Attribute Framework.
- Ensure consistency of opportunity for all learners by ensuring relevant employer events and job fairs occur, to an agreed schedule, on all of the University's campuses.
- Fully embed student voice in the planning and delivery of Service activity, creating and encouraging opportunity for co-creation, collaboration and feedback.
- Introduce an employability portal to the University's Careers Service web presence enabling seamless links to resources and tracking system.

Objective 7: Establish and maintain a student Volunteering, Internship, Project and Part time work support infrastructure within the student experience domain.

The University recognises the importance of the wider experiences achieved by its students on an extra-curricular, hobby or direct employment basis and the benefits such opportunities provide in respect of employability. In academic year 2021/22, supported by HEFCW HEIR funding, a volunteering programme was successfully completed which introduced students to volunteering opportunities in public sector organisations. Whilst significant numbers of students engage in a broad range of work related and employability activity there is currently no formal University system for recording such activity. Research has identified that our students would be provided with a significant advantage if such a recording system was available. The system, in order to be recognised by employers would require authentication of evidence and would have to be capable of recording a broad spectrum of relevant activity such as, but not limited to-

- Volunteering activity,
- Relevant part time, paid employment,
- Internships, as part of or independent of their University study,
- Experience gained on University managed project activity linked to employers.

Such a system could also be used for monitoring and tracking of placements and University managed employer based activity undertaken by students as a formal part of their study.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Develop and maintain a web-based tracking, recording and verification system for students undertaking relevant employment experiences.
- Once established the ownership of recording is with the student but has to be verified by relevant University staff.
- Enable the system for progress and outcomes to be shared with potential employers.



Objective 1: Maintain a central graduate attribute framework and repository for access by staff and students.

As a result of the global Covid-19 pandemic the University reviewed all programmes of undergraduate study for delivery in academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 and, for the majority of programmes, introduced, at all levels, graduate attribute modules. The graduate attribute modules are primarily focussed on employability and skills in order to provide our students with the best advantage when entering the world of work upon completion of their studies. As we emerge from Covid restrictions and the reduction in interruption to study the University has reviewed its position with regard to the graduate attribute modules providing an interim optional choice position for 2022/23 and the introduction of a Graduate Attribute Framework for 2023/24. The framework will allow individual Institutes and programmes to determine how the existing modules are embedded into their programme of study. If not selected for formal inclusion as a core element of the programme of study the modules may be identified as extra-curricular. Of significance however is the availability of the significant resources developed by the university for the delivery of the graduate attribute modules. In addition to the development of the framework the University will develop a bespoke moodle repository for the extensive employability resources developed in support of the graduate attribute modules. Staff and students can thus access full employability module content or elements thereof and integrate into other core modules as part of a programme of study.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Develop a Graduate Attribute Framework defining options for inclusion of graduate attribute modules in programmes of study.
- Establish a regular review methodology for the framework influenced by employers and stakeholders.
- Develop and maintain a repository of resources accessible to staff and students to utilise as required to support the development of the employability skills of students, at all levels. The repository to include appropriate Welsh language resources.
- Within the graduate attribute framework repository provide signposting and relevant links to internal University resources and external organisations supporting the development of Welsh language skills for use in the workplace.

Objective 2: Develop, in all programme areas, progression pathways to provide for students a lifelong learning continuum influencing employability.

It is now recognised that, arising from the rapid developments in technologies, notably digital, individuals will have a number of different careers during their working lives. It is incumbent upon the University to develop in their students the ability to become lifelong learners with the resilience to adapt to rapidly changing environments and work practices. In addition to developments in the student's core area of study, the nature of employability skills will also be subject to continual change. The University recognises the importance of providing, for all its students, progression opportunities to higher levels of study and professional development. Progression pathways are thus to be developed for all programmes to provide a lifelong learning continuum for students, influencing employability and skills development to flourish in their careers.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Map progression pathways for all programmes of study, at all levels, inclusive of employability skills development.
- Ensure currency of employability development offered through regular employer and stakeholder engagement.



Objective 3: Integrate enterprise and entrepreneurship activity opportunities into the graduate attribute framework for universal employability access.

The University has an enviable record in the delivery of enterprise and entrepreneurship education. In 2022 the University achieved the accolade of the European Entrepreneurial University of the Year. In 2021/22 the University was also recognised for - **Being the 1st in the UK for graduate start ups remaining in business after three years.**

The University supports the Advance HE policy of embedding enterprise and entrepreneurship in the curriculum and adopts extensively the EntreComp framework. In some programmes of study the activity is fully embedded as an integral element of the programme, in others it is developed on an extra-curricular basis. Enterprise activity is available for all students but currently only 50-60% engage effectively. With regards entrepreneurship engagement it is significantly lower at approximately 10-15% of students.

To ensure equity and inclusivity the University seeks to make available a minimum element of enterprise and entrepreneurship activity for all its students. A enterprise and entrepreneurship framework is to be developed embedding the EntreComp framework competencies as advocated by Advance HE. The enterprise and entrepreneurship framework to be a key element of the graduate attribute framework with the relevant resources housed in the moodle repository. Programmes can thus be designed incorporating the agreed minimum content and students can access further resources should they wish to expand their knowledge and skills.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Conduct an audit of existing embedded and extra-curricular enterprise and entrepreneurship activity undertaken.
- Establish a minimum standard of enterprise and entrepreneurship content to be attained by all students, incorporating the EntreComp competencies.
- Establish an enterprise and entrepreneurship framework within the graduate attribute framework for access by all students and in line with the requirements of the QAA (2018) framework for enterprise and entrepreneurship education.
- Develop and locate relevant enterprise and entrepreneurship resources in the graduate attribute moodle repository.
- Ensure adequate entrepreneur representation in all employer fora within the university influencing curriculum design and delivery
- Ensure that student and graduate start ups continue to be supported post initial start up in order to develop their resilience to ensure sustainability.
- Ensure high visibility and profiling of enterprise and entrepreneurship activities within and external to the University.

Objective 4: Where relevant, ensure engagement of students in Worldskills competition activity on a regional and national level.

The University is continually challenged by employers to develop graduate competencies ensuring a smooth transition into employment. Employers increasingly demand employability competencies in addition to core programme competencies. Engagement with Worldskills skills competition activity is proven to enhance participants competency in a broad range of technical and employability skills. Participants are challenged, competitively, to complete high level skills tasks in realistic, commercial working environments. Engagement of our students in skills competitions has proven to be of huge benefit to them, not only making them work ready but significantly impacting upon personal attributes such as confidence, time keeping etc. It has also proven to be of significant benefit as staff development for University staff who have been supporting students through a competition cycle. Current levels of success in WorldSkills competition activity are indicated in the data section of this strategy.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Identify programmes of study which align with Worldskills UK skills competitions.
- Undertake staff development for staff in aligned programmes in embedding skills competitions.
- Encourage engagement of all students in aligned programme areas in local and regional competitions.
- Provide appropriate funding to support such engagement.
- Ensure high visibility and profiling of skills competitions within and external to the University.



Objective 1: Embed formal placement periods into programmes of study wherever possible.

In 2022, Advance HE, on behalf of HEFCW conducted a review of Employability in the University. In the review they identified an area of good practice in relation to the availability of work placements as an integral element of a programme of study. Advance HE recommends that this good practice be extended, as a priority across the University.

Employer feedback is very positive from those who have employed students completing a work placement as part of their University programme. It is also clearly evidenced that employers utilise work placement as part of their recruitment process to identify talent and offer employment to placement students.

Current numbers of programmes with mandatory or optional placement activity are indicated in the data section of this strategy. The University seeks to increase the number of programmes offering a formal placement period as part of the programme of study. Where this is not possible a further review will occur to identify opportunities for work related experience activity.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Undertake a review of all undergraduate and postgraduate provision to identify programmes of study that would be suitable for and be of benefit to students by having a formal placement period.
- Establish an annual cycle of adoption of placement periods within identified programmes of study.
- Undertake staff development for all staff engaged in the monitoring of students within work placement.
- Establish a whole University network of local, regional, national and international placement employers prepared to accept and support placement students.
- Ensure students are prepared for placement through agreed in-programme activities including Welsh language skills development.
- Ensure students have access to a tracking, monitoring and verification system to record placement outcomes.
- Ensure high visibility of the work placement opportunity in all programme marketing and communications.

Objective 2: Where placement cannot be achieved a programme of work-related activity is to be included for all programmes of study.

The University recognises the benefits to students of completing work placement as part of a student's programme of study. However, the inclusion of a formal, embedded work placement is not possible or appropriate for some programmes of study. In instances where a work placement is not possible students are to be exposed, as part of embedding employability, to a programme of work-related activity. The work-related activity is to be fully integrated into the programme of study with assessment of the opportunity incorporated. The nature of the activity will differ depending upon the nature of the programme, the student will record the outcomes achieved as part of their employability skills tracking which will be available for future employer scrutiny.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- As part of the programme review for potential inclusion of work placement identify programmes suitable for the alternative inclusion of work-related activity.
- Undertake staff development for all staff engaged in programmes embedding work related activity.
- Establish an annual cycle of adoption of work-related activity within identified programmes of study.
- Ensure students have access to a tracking, monitoring and verification system to record work related activity outcomes.
- Ensure work-related activity resources are located on the central graduate attribute framework repository.
- Ensure high visibility of the work-related activity in all programme marketing and communications.



Objective 3: All curriculum areas of the University to report annually on progress of introducing work-based learning programmes. (Apprenticeships etc.)

In meeting the University's mission of transforming education, transforming lives, the nature of the University's provision is rapidly changing with innovative solutions emerging in respect of programme duration, nature of delivery and, increasingly, being very responsive to employer demands. The University is currently the largest provider of Welsh Government/ HEFCW funded Degree Apprenticeships in Wales. Funding availability is currently restricted to Digital and Advanced Engineering only but high demand from other industry sectors has been identified. Additionally, the University delivers a range of Higher Apprenticeship programmes in a number of industry sectors. True to its mission the University is responding to the employer voice and developing professional development programmes for employed status personnel. Current data for Higher and Degree Apprenticeship numbers can be found in the data section of this strategy.

A significant development and investment by the University has been the establishment of Microcredential qualifications. A bespoke, pan University system has been developed establishing a quality assurance framework enabling the credit accumulation of microcredentials into full, accredited qualifications in a broad range of employment sectors.

Such employer led and work-based provision is significant in some areas of the University and potential exists for wider adoption in other areas of the University. The University seeks to address this situation by encouraging greater engagement with employers and to introduce an increasing range of work-based learning programmes in all of the University's Institutes.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Conduct an initial census of existing work-based learning provision and publicise, through internal communication mechanisms, to all staff.
- In order to develop continual growth, establish procedures for all of the University's curriculum areas to report annually on progress of introducing work-based learning programmes.
- Establish an annual cycle of increasing work-based learning programmes.
- Continually invest in the development and delivery of microcredential qualifications to support the work based students.

Objective 4: All curriculum areas to work with the Wales Global Academy to consider and support student engagement with relevant mobility programmes focussed on international employability.

The University appreciates the significant advantage afforded to its students by their ability to pursue careers anywhere in the world. The existence of the Wales Global Academy within the University provides support for staff and students to engage in mobility programmes offering exposure and work experience in an international context. Such opportunities expand upon students experiential learning whilst also exposing them to language and cultural developments, developing a global mindset. Mobility programmes can provide opportunities to link with international organisations offering graduate employment experience in their UK operations. Such engagement also influences our curriculum design by being informed of global employability requirements. The University continues to be successful with active engagement in the UK Government sponsored Turing Scheme and the Welsh Government sponsored Taith schemes. The University will monitor closely the participation levels of students international mobility opportunities offered by the new Turing and Taith schemes and data will be included in future impact assessments of this strategy. Of increasing significance is the ability to support our international students in their acquisition of relevant, international employability skills.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Ensure all curriculum areas engage with the Wales Global Academy to consider and support student engagement with relevant mobility programmes focussed on international employability in order to increase outbound travel by students.
- Ensure students have access to a tracking, monitoring and verification system to record employability experiences and outcomes linked to engagement with mobility programmes.

Objective 1: Ensure all curriculum areas of the university maintain effective employer liaison groups or alternative mechanisms to guarantee the employer voice is heard and influences employability of our students.

The University has very effective engagement with employers in a number of employment sectors as a result of key strategic partnerships such as its Blue Light Academy, the Construction Wales Innovation Centre, the Athrofa Schools Network (APLP). There also exists employer engagement through a number of regional and national fora such as Regional Learning & Skills Partnerships, Industry Wales, Welsh Automotive forum etc. Whilst every Institute engages comprehensively with employers, the University seeks to ensure engagement at a curriculum area level to influence every programme of study in respect of employability.

Employer engagement within the University takes many forms, the most effective however stem from the development of long-term relationships where employers contribute to established liaison groups, influencing all aspects of provision related to their employment sector. Such groups, comprising employers and other stakeholders are consulted on programme design, offer student visits and contribute as presenters. The University recognises the importance of ensuring the voice of employers is heard.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Conduct an audit and maintain a register of existing employer liaison groups across the University.
- Ensure all curriculum areas maintain effective employer liaison groups or alternative mechanisms to guarantee the employer voice is heard and influences employability of our students.
- Establish reporting protocols such that the outcomes of employer liaison groups are reported to Institute Boards for subsequent progression to the Senate of the University.
- Ensure the linguistic requirements of employers are captured and the benefits of enabling our students to contribute in a bilingual environment are advocated.

Objective 2: Further enhance and ensure completion of tripartite employability partnership agreements for all student engagements.

Critical to the success of our students in the development of their employability skills is the relationship with participating employers. The University seeks to maintain long term, effective relationships with employers for the benefit of its students. Employers play a key role in offering a number of opportunities such as work placements and internships whilst also influencing curriculum design and affording intelligence in respect of current trends and demands in respect of employability.

In order to ensure transparency in all engagement and to maintain ongoing relationships it is critical that all parties are aware of individual responsibilities and expectations. The University thus seeks to employ a tripartite employability partnership agreement between the Employer, the University and the Student. A standard template is to be derived which will be subsequently adapted for individual circumstances. The agreement to clearly identify the outcomes to be achieved and timescales involved.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Further enhance the tripartite employability partnership agreement to be utilised in all circumstances of student engagement with employers.
- Embed protocols to ensure universal adoption of the agreement.



Objective 3: Increase number of programmes of study achieving Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body recognition.

The advantage afforded to the students of the University through the successful completion of study of a programme recognised by a relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) is well recognised. Such recognition ensures that students have completed a programme highly relevant to the employment sector concerned and meet the needs of the employers through the requirements established by the PSRB.

Many, but not all of the University's programmes have secured PSRB recognition. The data section of this strategy contains the latest data in relation to the number of programmes with PSRB recognition. The University seeks to continually increase the proportion of its portfolio holding formal PSRB recognition.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Conduct an audit and maintain a register of existing PSRB recognised programmes across the University.
- Establish a rolling five-year plan identifying programmes of study targeting PSRB recognition.
- Amend existing validation documentation to seek reasoning for the non-adoption of PSRB recognition for all new programme validations.



Objective 4: Effectively engage with the University's Alumni network to support the employability agenda.

The University, following the re-structure of its marketing operation is establishing a revised Alumni engagement strategy. The higher education sector in the UK and internationally recognises the significance of establishing and maintaining contact with its Alumni. Alumni engagement takes many forms but, to date, the University has not adequately exploited the opportunities afforded in respect of employability. Initial evidence suggests that Alumni, notably as employers, recognise the benefits to themselves and their organisations through engagement with current students as the potential workforce of the future.

In meeting our commitment to support and develop lifelong learners the University will introduce engagement initiatives to maintain contact with our Alumni to offer provision to further their careers

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Develop an Alumni engagement strategy in order to influence the development of employment skills of students.
- Ensure students have access to a tracking, monitoring and verification system to record employability experiences and outcomes linked to engagement with organisations linked to Alumni.
- Establish engagement protocols to maintain whole life Alumni contact to promote lifelong learning and the offer of support and relevant continuous professional development provision.

Domain: Collaboration & Future Development (cont.)

Objective 5: Influence the development of the University's client management system to ensure its effective utilisation for all employability activity including the awareness of opportunities available.

Within the University a number of alternative client management systems have existed in support of specific activity. Arising from the re-structure of its marketing function the University is investing in a new, unified, client management system with functionality for all nature of clients and activity. It is imperative that any such development provides the ability for the system to identify employability opportunities for students and their relevant programmes of study. Such a development would ensure that all opportunities identified were captured and effectively communicated, ensuring impact on the student experience.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Ensure the emerging development of a University client management system is designed to incorporate the identification and dissemination of employability opportunities for students with clients contained within the system.
- Ensure effective engagement of the employability function by all users to maximise benefits for students.

Objective 6: Establish protocols to ensure horizon scanning, at a curriculum area level, to identify new and emerging employability influencers.

The nature of employment is subject to rapid change due to the pace of advances in technologies, notably in respect of digital technologies. The nature and range of employability skills reflects the trend in employment and the University, in preparing its students for sustainable careers, must be cognisant of such trends. Employers increasingly reference requirements of employability skills and attributes as key requisites for employment. It is incumbent upon the University to ensure its provision is current and reflective of emerging trends in order to develop its students appropriately.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Establish, at curriculum area level, horizon scanning protocols to identify new and emerging trends in respect of employability.
- Ensure intelligence is disseminated appropriately and influences relevant provision.

Objective 7: Coordinate the dissemination of the outcomes of research and development activity related to the use of new and emerging immersive learning technologies impacting upon employability.

In keeping with the rapid pace of change in technologies applied in the workplace, learning and teaching within the University is subject to significant development arising from the emergence and utilisation of immersive learning technologies. Advances in the use and application of virtual and augmented reality technologies influence the development of employability skills whilst also preparing students for the workplace of the future. Within the University there exist numerous pockets of activity utilising a range of immersive learning technologies. It is critical that all learning emerging from these activities is captured and appropriately disseminated in order to impact upon employability skills development.

In order to complete this objective, the University will;

- Ensure employability impacting outcomes arising from University led R&D related to new and emerging immersive learning technologies are disseminated and relevant resources located in the graduate attribute moodle repository.



SECTION 4

HOW WE WILL DELIVER AND MONITOR THE PLAN

The actions within the Employability Strategy will be delivered through an operational implementation plan.

The annual implementation plan sets out the key priorities to be delivered for each of the coming 4 years with key milestones set for each target. Implementation plans are renewed each year following reflection on the impact and effectiveness of actions during the previous year of delivery of the strategy. The delivery of this implementation plan is coordinated by a steering group and supported by strategic action plans at Institutes and relevant professional unit level to ensure embedding of the priorities throughout the Group. There will be an annual review of progress made in relation to the annual implementation plan which will be reported to Senate and Council. In addition to monitoring progress against its priorities, the implementation plan will also:

- facilitate coordination of cross cutting strategies and plans;
- enable auditing of the impact and effectiveness of the strategy;
- monitor delivery of employability related objectives and priorities within relevant units;
- provide an opportunity to reflect on the appropriateness of targets;
- ensure that the strategy can be reactive to changes in context or other sector developments;
- engage staff and students in the delivery, implementation and review stages.

