

# PEOPLE WITH PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY



PEOPLE  
STRATEGY



**The University's People Strategy builds upon the 'Empowering our People' section of Strategy 2020 which articulates the University's recognition of, and commitment to, its talented employees. The strategy sets out five goals designed to ensure that this commitment is realised and details how the Talent and Organisational Development (Talent and OD) function will facilitate the implementation of the strategy through the provision of a range of services and expert advice.**

## Overarching Aim

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The overarching aim of the People Strategy is to stimulate a friendly, open and inclusive working and learning environment where people feel valued and respected, and are empowered to work together to give of their best and shape the University's future.

## Our People Matter

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Higher Education is an intensely people centred business and our people really do matter. We are absolutely clear that harnessing the talent and passion of our employees in line with Strategy 2020, is the means by which we will deliver the University's ambitions and realise our mission to advance knowledge and transform lives through education and research.

We recognise the need for every member of the Plymouth team to consistently deliver excellence and we place a high value on self-leadership because we employ smart people who have what it takes to succeed. We also appreciate the pivotal role that the University's leaders play in navigating through ambiguity and providing inspirational leadership to their teams. This is more critical than ever in these changing times and our People Strategy ensures that our leaders are clear on what is expected of them and are equipped with what they need to carry out their work.

We understand the value we create as a University through our approach to enterprise, partnership and sustainability and our role as a catalyst in advancing knowledge in order to transform lives. And we understand our role as one of the region's largest employers and as a magnet for international and diverse talent to come into the region. Our commitment to the principles of equality and inclusion remain resolute and are firmly integrated into our Human Resources (HR) and leadership policies and practices. We also appreciate the power of the Plymouth University Employment Brand, our commitment to staff health and wellbeing and our unswerving belief in offering excellent employment opportunities within an open and stimulating learning environment.

## **Context**

The Higher Education (HE) sector is experiencing a period of unprecedented change and the University is forging a clearly differentiated path through our challenging operating environment in order to realise our vision to be *the* Enterprise University. Increased competition and the marketisation of HE provide an opportunity for us to reaffirm all that is distinctive and great about Plymouth University. The autumn 2013 announcement by the Coalition Government to abolish student number quotas by 2015/16 is a defining moment for HE and Plymouth is determined to thrive within a marketised environment.

## **The Changing Nature of Work**

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These radical changes within the sector have a significant impact upon our organisation and the way that we employ and reward our staff. The historical distinctions between public and private providers will become increasingly blurred and the University must be at the forefront of forging partnerships, alliances and delivery networks to supplement our institutional centred provision. In order for us to retain our competitive edge, shared services, insourcing and outsourcing are all areas that will need to be explored over the coming years.

Furthermore, the nature and speed of work itself is being influenced by all manner of factors such as technology and shifting student expectations.

We have already witnessed the increased expectations of our students following the introduction of the new funding regime and we expect students to become more focused on ensuring that their learning and other needs are met during their time with the University.

Workforce demographics are changing as increasing numbers of women are actively pursuing careers and as we experience the dual influence of an ageing workforce and the increasing impact of younger employees who have grown up in a technology-led world. And as organisations increase the numbers of staff they employ from overseas, and develop overseas operations, the benefits of cultural diversity are twinned with the requirement to ensure that employment policies are developed with an international audience in mind.

In summary, change is the new normal and our People Strategy sets out to address this central issue by acknowledging that dynamic conditions necessitate a more responsive approach to the attraction, retention, development and engagement of people.

## Goals and Actions

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Our People Strategy articulates five goals. The following section outlines the priorities for the Talent and OD function in order to realise these goals. In addition there is a commitment to increase the University's capability in the area of change management and to introduce a more integrated approach to talent management.

**Goal 1: Sustain a culture of empowerment, accountability, transparency and trust that enables effective leadership and promotes great decision-making at the appropriate level supported by highly effective governance arrangements.**

To achieve this goal we commit to:

- create a range of educational materials and tools to support the implementation of the University's leadership philosophy of Empowerment, Accountability, Transparency and Trust and to increase our leadership capability to exercise sound commercial judgement when making decisions;
- review the University's leadership roles in order to ensure that accountabilities are clear and that leaders know what is expected of them;

- develop our Employer Value Proposition and Employment Brand;
- develop and embed clear timeframes for critical people related processes such as performance management, succession planning and reward;
- work with our leaders on staff survey data for their areas, to ensure appropriate actions are integrated into the local level business plans and to develop a university wide action plan to facilitate organisational changes highlighted by the survey feedback;
- ensure that every member of staff has a generic job description;
- ensure that organisational structures are fit for purpose and cost effective;
- develop our approach to the systemisation and reporting of HR related data by developing and implementing the University's HR Information Strategy.

**Goal 2: Ensure that the right people are in the right roles at the right time with succession plans in place for all key positions.**

To achieve this goal we commit to:

- develop our approach to the recruitment of talent, using data from our workforce and succession plans and ensuring that we continue to diversify our staffing base;
- review our approach to recruitment advertising in line with the University's Employment Brand, including better utilising social media as a talent attraction tool ensuring an excellent experience for prospective employees supported by a highly effective process;
- increase our capability in the area of international sourcing and resourcing;
- develop guidelines and processes to support staff posted to work overseas for short or medium term assignments;
- embed the University's approach to Succession Planning and refine the Talent Review process to form an integral part of the University's approach to Integrated Talent Management;
- develop a framework to support new entrants in to the employment market through Apprenticeships, Internships and Graduate Training;
- create and implement a framework for temporary staffing resources in order to reduce spend and increase efficiency. Consider the commercial and other opportunities that may flow from developing our own bank of temporary staff;

- continue our work to reframe and mainstream Equality and Diversity as part of culture change and leadership;
- ensure that the principles of supporting women in the workplace, as exemplified in the Athena Swan principles, are embedded in to the University's business.

**Goal 3: Cultivate and sustain a culture of self-leadership and trust where people take responsibility for what they need to do, are clear on what success looks like in their role and understand how best to contribute to the core strategy of the University.**

To achieve this goal we commit to:

- embed our Performance Development Framework and develop the methodology to calibrate and collate performance ratings at the organisational level as an enabler of enhanced individual and team performance and productivity;
- develop our Behavioural Framework and integrate the concept of leadership levels within it so that colleagues are clear on what is expected of them at each level;
- develop our approach to employee health and wellbeing and provide a clear gateway to all wellbeing related activities and opportunities;
- design and implement a suite of updated Academic contracts, fit for the needs of the University's business;
- develop a range of easily accessible and simple to understand people related policies and procedures designed to clearly state organisational boundaries and empower staff to make the right decisions.

**Goal 4: Foster self-development by providing an environment where people have the tools, resources, feedback and leadership they need to enjoy and be successful in their work.**

To achieve this goal we commit to:

- roll out a revised leadership development framework to support the on-going learning of our leaders at all levels in the organisation, drawing on the principles of authentic leadership, self leadership and the University's philosophy of Empowerment, Accountability, Transparency and Trust;

- develop and implement an Institutional staff training and development plan to provide staff with the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful, for instance in the areas of self leadership, business process re-engineering and digital competence;
- create a series of tools and 'How To' guides for leaders to support them in every aspect of their people leadership responsibilities;
- enhance the University's induction programmes for new staff at both central and local levels;
- review our approach to Industrial Relations, continuing to work with our recognised Trades Unions;
- develop transparent and easy to navigate career pathways for Academic and Professional Services staff.

**Goal 5: Recognise and reward individual and team contributions through processes such as an effective Performance Development Review procedure and the Vice-Chancellor's Enterprise Awards.**

To achieve this goal we commit to:

- develop our approach to rewarding and recognising the contribution of our staff, providing leaders with the required tools and data to support reward conversations with their direct reports;
- develop the University's Benefits Strategy focusing on maximising our investment and introducing a menu approach to staff benefits where staff can exercise a level of choice in accord with their circumstances and needs;
- create a Total Compensation Framework to educate employees on the value of their compensation and benefits;
- implement a revised and consistent approach to job evaluation for the University's senior management roles to enhance the University's ability to set fair, transparent and sustainable reward;
- strengthen the University's approach to flexible working with a view to broadening the appeal of the University as an Employer of Choice, retaining talent and focusing resourcing in a way that meets customer requirements and delivers best value for money.

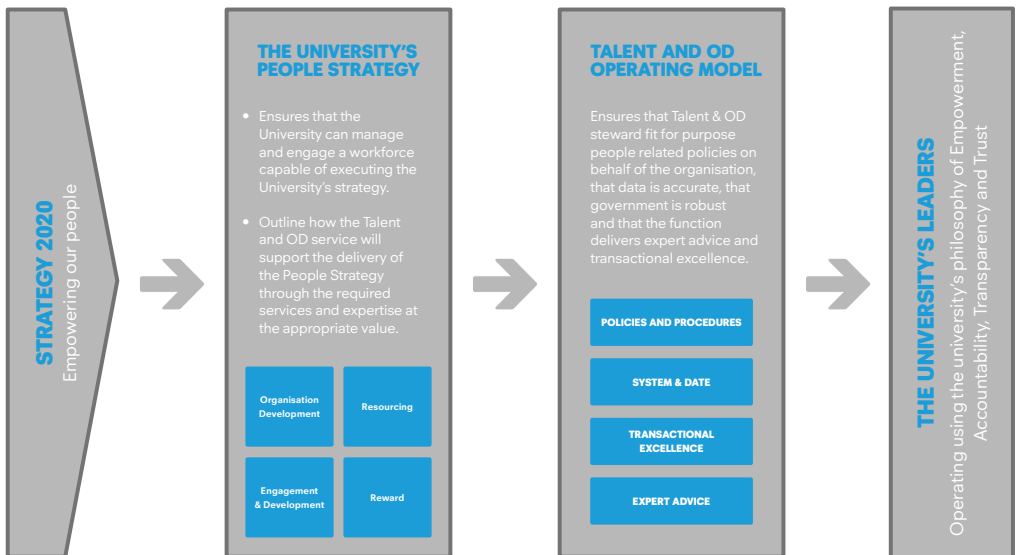


# Delivering our People Strategy

The Talent and OD function is leading the delivery of the People Strategy on behalf of the University but we recognise the criticality of the University's leaders in delivering much of the work and have positioned their role accordingly. Their commitment to the organisation is therefore two-fold:

- to equip University leaders with what they need to navigate through ambiguity and provide inspirational leadership to their teams, such that every employee is empowered and accountable and can give of their best; and
- to co-create and steward the University's people related processes and tools, ensuring that they are fit for purpose, simple to use and easy to navigate.

The figure below details how Talent and OD's operating model will support the effective delivery of our People Strategy through and with the University's leadership community.



The Talent and OD Service is organised in a way that enables ongoing delivery of operational and transactional services as well as transformational HR aligned to Strategy 2020. We have differentiated our services in the following way:

- HR Centres of Expertise offer in depth expertise in the specialist functions of OD, Employee Relations and Compensation & Benefits;
- HR Shared Services deliver customer focused and efficient administration and processes;
- HR Information Services enable accessible management information and reporting to support leaders in their people related decisions;
- HR Business Partners work in partnership with senior leaders across the University facilitating joined up people strategies that deliver on the critical priorities within the context of Strategy 2020.

Key to successful delivery is our ability to integrate these differentiated services so that customers experience a solutions focused service relevant to their needs.

## Reviewing and renewing our People Strategy

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The University's People Strategy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose in our fast moving and dynamic environment.

There are 50 Measures of Success that have been identified to track progress against the actions outlined in section four of this document and the Talent and OD Service will be monitoring these on an annual basis. A number of these are critical indicators, and are worthy of call out here:

### **Salary Costs**

- salary costs will decrease from 57% to 53% of income by the year 2020.

### **Sickness absence**

- sickness absence reporting will increase whilst the proportion of sickness absence that is long term will reduce from 47% to 46% (sector average 48.4%).

## **Employee engagement**

- based on the 2013 survey results, there will be an increase in the percentage of staff indicating that they feel:
  - Part of the University (67% to 77%)
  - Valued by the University (49% to 59%)
  - Proud to work for the University (83% to 88%)
- and employees indicating the University is a good place to work will be maintained at the sector average of 89% or better (88% in 2013 survey).

## **Coaching and Feedback**

- the percentage of employees that had a PDR meeting report in the University's staff survey and report that they found it useful will increase from 68% to 75%.

## **Succession planning**

- there will be at least 2 people identified as potential backfills for the roles of Head of School, Head of Service, Dean, Director, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

## **Equality of opportunity**

- the percentage of female professors will rise from 19% - 25%.

We also commit to keep in touch formally and informally with customers throughout the year to hear feedback in relation to how our operating model and service is experienced in practice.

# Translating the strategy through the University

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Our strategy is translated and delivered from high-level ambitions to local level actions throughout the University and with our partners. It is a process that connects strategy to people, offering sufficient freedom and flexibility to capture creativity and sustain enterprising behaviours.

Guided by our values and leadership principles, Plymouth University's Strategy 2020 will help deliver strong performance and sustainable outcomes that result in reputational gain as we deliver on our mission of 'Advancing knowledge and transforming lives through education and research'.

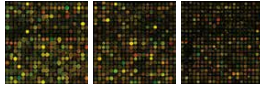


**TEACHING  
& LEARNING  
WITH  
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TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE  
STRATEGY

**RESEARCH  
& INNOVATION  
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**RAISING  
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