EDUCATION STRATEGY

2018 - 2022

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Education strategy

Students come here, to the University of Surrey, to gain our highly regarded qualifications and the interwoven professional experiences we provide to help unlock doors to future careers. But they are also driven by anticipation of new challenges, relationships, adventures, and opportunities – and rightly so. The fusion of academic study with these wider life experiences has the potential to enhance students' personal, social and intellectual confidence in ways which enrich their own lives and enable them to contribute strongly and effectively to society.

Our ambitious new Education Strategy has as its bedrock our longstanding commitment to teaching and professional training of the highest calibre. Informed by the ideas, experience, and expertise of academic and professional staff from across the University, and by extensive dialogue with students, it draws on our phenomenally diverse and vibrant culture to create a forward-looking and multidimensional learning environment, which gives equal prominence to academic and professional learning, personal development, and social understanding.

We want all these aspects of our education to be accessible to, and engage, all our students - whether they live on campus or commute, whether they come from nearby or from other parts of the world, and whatever their age, gender, or sociocultural background.

We believe strongly that the diversity of their life experiences and personal characteristics should be a powerful asset in their own learning and that of others. We will, therefore, provide the flexibility, technological innovation, resources and support to enable every individual student to respond capably and confidently to academic or personal challenges, achieve their potential, and contribute to an interactive learning culture.

Inclusivity and connectedness runs through our strategy. The more diverse the students we reach and draw in to our academic community, the richer the learning for all our staff and students. At Surrey, education does not occupy a silo distinct from research, or professional services, or the 'wider student experience': all are intertwined, and the present strategy sits in a nexus with many others which, collectively support the University's overall mission to 'transform lives and shape the world for a better future'.

The strategy has been forged through dialogue and consultation, and it has at its heart every one of the University's values: excellence, ambition, integrity, respect, and - perhaps most of all – collaboration. It is the joint creation of many colleagues, and it is through our combined efforts and partnership with students that we will deliver a truly life-changing education.

Jane Powell
Vice-Provost Education

Context and links

The corporate University Strategy for 2017-2022 outlines our ambitious educational vision as follows:

▶ Our graduates will be exceptional and highly sought-after: they will think critically and differently, and make a real impact on society

▶ Our teaching and learning environment will be student-centred and enriching, with an emphasis on practice-based learning

The Education Strategy has been developed to deliver this vision, strongly informed by a survey of our students' hopes and expectations of the time they spend here. This highlighted three important aspects of their education and personal development:

▶ knowledge and skills, including professional experience

▶ self-confidence, social networks, independence, social life, developing interests

▶ exposure to international academics and cross-cultural networks / knowledge

Development of the strategy involved consultation with many individuals and groups of staff and students across the university.

It is closely inter-connected with other strategies, some shown here, which all support one another to achieve key university aims.

EDUCATION STRATEGY

RESEARCH & INNOVATION STRATEGY

GLOBAL STRATEGY

ESTATES STRATEGY

DIGITAL STRATEGY

WELLBEING STRATEGY

STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

The three strands

We will create the conditions for our students, at every level of study and from all backgrounds, to:

▶ flourish in, draw inspiration from, and contribute to our culturally diverse and dynamic academic community **[Global and Cultural Intelligence]**

▶ gain the excellent critical, analytic, creative, digital, and practical capabilities which are valued by employers and are the basis for professional achievements which will shape future society **[Knowledge and Skills]**

▶ develop the personal attributes – including knowledge, opinions, independence, networks, and self-confidence - which will in combination equip them for personally fulfilling lives and sustainable careers. **[Resourcefulness and Resilience]**
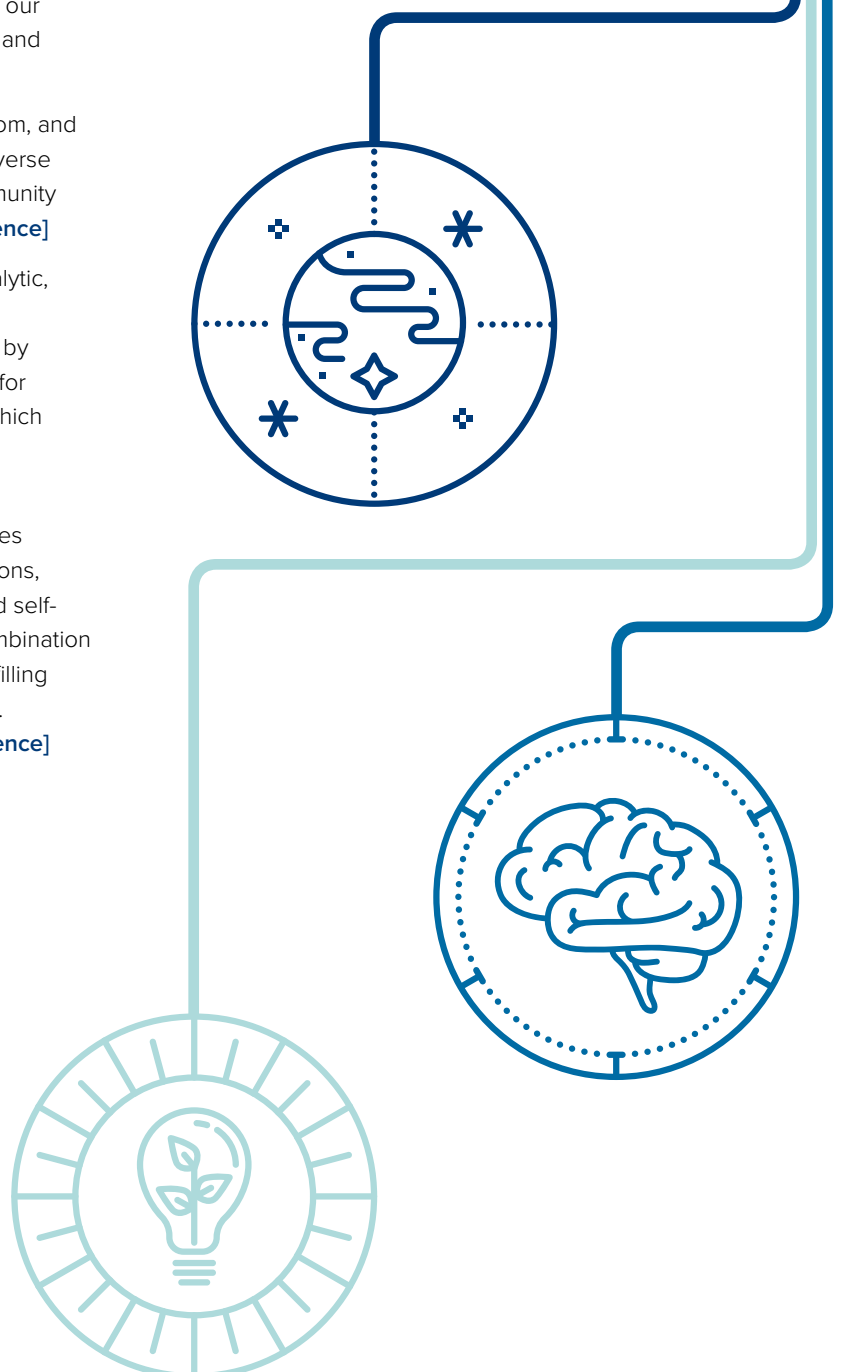
mean in practice?

THE THREE STRANDS ARE AMPLIFIED BELOW, TO INDICATE PARTICULAR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, EXPERIENCES, AND SUPPORT WE WILL DELIVER IN ORDER TO PROVIDE OUR STUDENTS WITH AN OUTSTANDING EDUCATION:

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Our students will be engaged as ambitious, active and collaborative learners across – and beyond – their programmes, developing:

▶ a strong and confident grasp of facts, concepts, and methods in their field

▶ an evidence and research-based approach to acquiring, questioning, and generating new information

▶ exposure to/experience of, collaborative working, within and across disciplines

▶ experience of applying their academic knowledge in professional contexts, including research positions.

RESILIENCE AND RESOURCEFULNESS

Our students will gain experience and confidence in responding effectively to opportunities, challenges, difficulties, and setbacks.

They will be supported to develop self-reliance, resourcefulness, and leadership skills through:

▶ experiences of being academically stretched, and learning from both success and failure

▶ a problem-solving orientation in the context of their studies and co-curricular activities

▶ opportunities to forge collaborative and mutually supportive peer and professional networks

▶ access to advice and resources enabling them to proactively manage their wellbeing and maintain a balanced lifestyle.

GLOBAL AND CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

Living and studying in our diverse community, our students will develop intercultural awareness and informed views on global social and ethical issues.

They will learn to engage perceptively and confidently with people from varied backgrounds through:

▶ programme content, and curricular and co-curricular activities which engage them with diverse perspectives and develop intercultural skills

▶ opportunities and support to spend time working or studying overseas, and to develop connections with peers in other countries.

Objectives

THE OBJECTIVES SET OUT WITHIN THE THREE STRANDS WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH A SUITE OF CONCRETE ACTIONS.

These will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, and are categorised in relation to five 'strategic aims' we have for all of our programmes. That is:

▶ they will all be ambitious in their scope and in the outcomes they enable students to achieve;

▶ they will be inclusive and accessible for all students;

▶ we will ensure teaching excellence through staff pedagogical expertise, and through high calibre learning resources and support;

▶ the importance of supporting student wellbeing, which is key to successful learning and development, will be embedded;

▶ through programme curricula and co-curricular activities, we will enable students to develop a world view, gaining an understanding of diverse perspectives.

STRATEGIC AIMS RELATE TO:

AMBITIOUS PROGRAMMES

INCLUSIVE CURRICULA

TEACHING EXCELLENCE
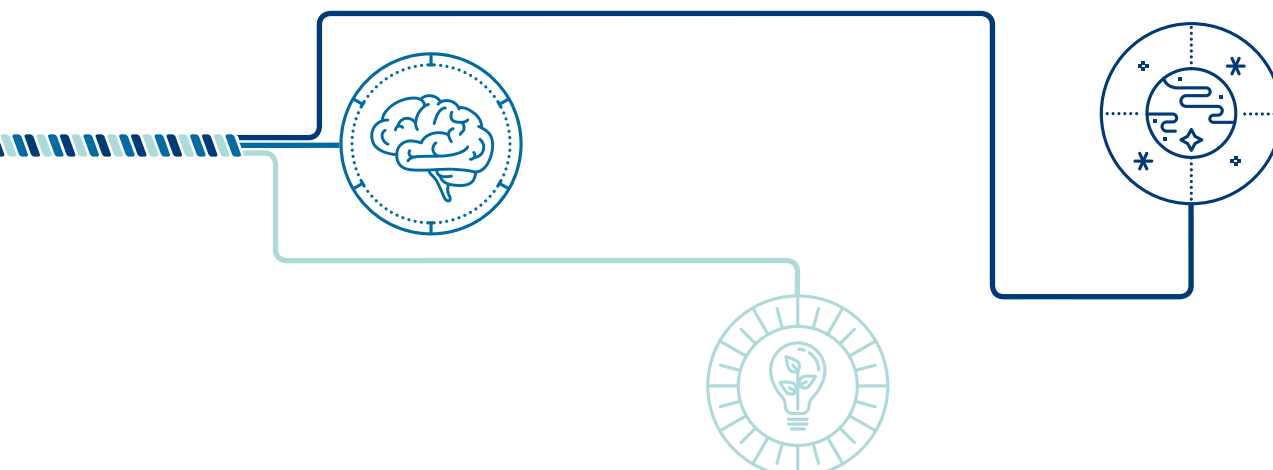
SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING

A WORLD VIEW

▼

ACTIONS

▼

OUTCOMES / INDICATORS

Strategic aims

AMBITIOUS PROGRAMMES

Our programmes, designed to engage students as active learners, will:

▶ be contemporary and stretching, infused by critical analysis of evidence and the development of research skills

▶ be professionally oriented and industry-informed in order to equip students with the knowledge and skills valued by employers

▶ utilise physical and digital resources designed to facilitate and enrich learning, and to develop digital literacy

▶ be assessed in ways which support learning and are clearly and proportionately focused on well-defined outcomes.

AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

We will:

▶ support students from all backgrounds with high academic potential to join our programmes, sustaining the diversity which enriches our education.

▶ create the conditions for all our students to realise their academic potential.

Our curricula will:

▶ be student-centred, co-developed with students, and inclusive

▶ be responsive to diverse learning preferences and approaches.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

We will:

▶ be leaders in developing, embedding, and disseminating effective and innovative practices in relation to all aspects of pedagogy (teaching, assessment, use of digital and other technological resources) across our programmes.

SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING

We will provide and encourage students to engage with a wide range of experiences and support, equipping them to:

▶ develop the attitudes, skills, resources, and self-reliance to absorb or manage stress

▶ rise to academic and personal challenges, enabling them to remain or get back on track

▶ approach their futures with confidence.

A WORLD VIEW

We will provide our students with opportunities and support, on-campus and through travel, to enhance their future personal and professional lives by:

▶ gaining experience of interacting with people from other cultures and social backgrounds, and understanding diverse perspectives

▶ developing the cultural sensitivity, communication skills, and confidence to establish relationships in situations characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity

▶ developing knowledge, understanding, and opinions on issues of global relevance and concern

▶ developing enduring international social networks and relationships.

endeavour

Although education is often seen as 'what happens in the classroom', involving the staff based in academic departments, the vision we have for education here relies on collaboration between many different academic and professional staff, working closely with students and their representatives.

As evident from the planned actions listed in the following slides, the teams and services involved include all of those shown here, and others.

The next five pages set out the actions which will be undertaken over the next year or two in relation to each of the strategic aims.

Each planned or ongoing action has associated milestones, and progress will be monitored by the University Learning and Teaching Committee. New actions will be added as others are completed or move into subsequent phases.

FACULTIES AND ACADEMIC SCHOOLS / DEPARTMENTS

LIBRARY AND LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

STUDENTS' UNION

DEPARTMENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

WIDENING PARTICIPATION & OUTREACH

CENTRE FOR WELLBEING

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM

ESTATES & FACILITIES

Aim one
AMBITIOUS PROGRAMMES

Our programmes, designed to engage students as active learners, will...

- ▶ **be contemporary and stretching, infused by critical analysis of evidence and the development of research skills;**

- ▶ **be professionally oriented and industry-informed in order to equip students with the knowledge and skills valued by employers;**

- ▶ **utilise physical and digital resources designed to facilitate and enrich learning, and to develop digital literacy;**

- ▶ **be assessed in ways which support learning and are clearly and proportionately focused on well-defined outcomes.**

ACTIONS

- ▶ A major review of curriculum design will embed key principles and practices relating to the content, pedagogy, and assessment of our programmes, ensuring that they are sustainable, stretch students academically, give prominence to professional preparation, develop students' curiosity and problem-orientation, and are inclusive.

- ▶ We will design and adopt more varied approaches to formative and summative assessment, to support learning and to index learning outcomes effectively and proportionately; digital systems will be used to optimise the forms, accessibility, and inclusiveness of assessments.

- ▶ We will develop and implement institution-wide systems to enhance provision of feedback on assessed work, and to support students' engagement with and effective utilisation of feedback.

- ▶ We will expand and modernise teaching, learning and study spaces (physical and virtual), improving their accessibility and enablement of new pedagogies and technologies.

- ▶ We will enable flexible modes of programme delivery and learning by widening digital access to information and captured teaching content.

- ▶ We will develop distance and blended learning, including through MOOCs, to enhance the content, reach, and accessibility of our educational provision.

- ▶ A new Surrey Employability Award will recognise how the learning gained across students' whole university experience relates to skills valued by employers.

- ▶ We will collaborate with employers to develop and deliver professionally-oriented degree apprenticeships.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Students will graduate with high levels of knowledge and professional skills/capabilities.

- ▶ Students will experience and evaluate their programmes, modules, and overall educational experience as excellent.

- ▶ Summative assessments will be less numerous overall, and more varied in format /administration mode.

- ▶ Online mechanisms enabling active engagement with feedback will be embedded and used by students.

- ▶ More teaching rooms will meet new physical and digital specifications to support active learning.

- ▶ Increasing numbers of learners will access the university's online learning resources.

- ▶ There will be an increase in active employer partnerships offering high quality work placements/experience, apprenticeships, and professionally oriented teaching.

- ▶ Graduates will be successful in progressing to/within rewarding careers or further study.

Aim two

We will:

▶ support students from all backgrounds with high academic potential to join our programmes, sustaining the diversity which enriches our education;

▶ create the conditions for all our students to realise their academic potential.

Our curricula will:

▶ be student-centred, co-developed with students, and inclusive;

▶ be responsive to diverse learning preferences and approaches.

ACTIONS

▶ Our curriculum review will drive the adoption of inclusive and student-centred learning and teaching principles across the university, reflected in a diversity of learning opportunities and approaches which build on students' prior knowledge and which have been shaped by projects undertaken in partnership with students.

▶ We will develop our engagement with schools and colleges to encourage and support talented students to overcome social, practical, and psychological barriers to progression to university.

▶ We will introduce a new Foundation Year, enabling students to gain the confidence, knowledge, and skills required for progression to a range of our degree programmes.

▶ We will, in liaison with students, develop our use of learning analytics to support the engagement and attainment of all students; and to enable staff to provide tailored and timely support when students encounter problems.

▶ The Student Progression and Learning Gain group, comprising staff and students, will continuously review predictors of differential progression and attainment; these data will inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions by staff across the university.

▶ We will extend and integrate a range of learning support services, resources and activities to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of our curricula, so that all students are enabled to develop their personal and professional capabilities.

This will include:

▶ increasing the accessibility of learning spaces and learning materials, including through appropriate forms of captured teaching content and other digital provision.

▶ developing language support that equips students to meet the speaking, listening, and written English demands of their curricula and future careers

▶ developing the central provision of mathematical support for students whose programmes or professional training requires them to enhance their level of numeracy.

OUTCOMES

▶ Pedagogical/curriculum developments will increasingly engage students as partners.

▶ Students will report high satisfaction with learning support.

▶ There will be growth in the number of students from under-represented groups.

▶ Progression rates will improve, overall and particularly within groups who are currently at elevated risk of withdrawal.

▶ Attainment gaps currently evident for specified groups will diminish.

▶ The overall number of resits and module failures will decrease.

▶ Students will increasingly access digital learning materials.

Aim three

We will be leaders in developing, embedding, and disseminating effective and innovative practices in relation to all aspects of pedagogy (teaching, assessment, use of digital and other technological resources) across our programmes.

ACTIONS

▶ We will maintain and enhance our evidence-based culture of learning and teaching practice, demonstrating highly visible leadership in relation to the shaping and dissemination of pedagogical best practices, through internally and externally collaborative research which is rigorous, of international calibre, effectively disseminated, and impactful.

▶ We will continue to invest in information and resources (digital and print) that maximise student access to 'content' and strongly support our commitment to research-informed teaching.

▶ The curriculum review will be strongly informed by the pedagogical expertise of the Depts of Higher Education and Technology Enhanced Learning, which will contribute to its effective implementation via their training and support to staff across the university.

▶ We will develop effective ways of engaging students in contributing to the development of programme content and pedagogical approaches which respond to shifting societal priorities, challenges, and opportunities.

▶ We will extend the training, development, and support provided to staff involved in delivering or supporting learning and teaching, in particular through expansion of the Surrey Excellence in Teaching framework and by ensuring that staff are allocated time to participate in pedagogical CPD activities.

▶ The Teaching Quality & Valuing Teaching and Digital Enablement groups, comprising staff and student membership, will develop approaches for motivating, recognising, and rewarding effective pedagogy (including use of technology), and identifying where and how teaching practices on programmes and modules could be improved.

OUTCOMES

▶ TEF and other national evaluations of teaching excellence will place us within the top 10% (or highest category).

▶ Student feedback will indicate high satisfaction with teaching at module and programme level.

▶ Our pedagogical research will be published in influential and highly regarded books and journals, and will contribute to REF and TEF submissions.

▶ Our programmes and modules will increasingly introduce and evaluate appropriate non-traditional / innovative pedagogies.

▶ More modules will systematically embed and utilise digital resources appropriately and effectively.

▶ Students will normally be involved in contributing to the design of, or providing critical inputs to, new pedagogical initiatives.

▶ Increasing numbers of staff will participate in the Surrey Excellence in Teaching framework or other forms of pedagogical CPD.

▶ Teaching excellence will be recognised and valued more systematically in staff appraisal and promotions.

Aim four

SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING

We will provide and encourage students to engage with a wide range of experiences and support, equipping them to:

▶ develop the attitudes, skills, resources, and self-reliance to absorb or manage stress;

▶ rise to academic and personal challenges, enabling them to remain or get back on track;

▶ approach their futures with confidence.

ACTIONS

▶ The curriculum review will ensure that module content exposes students to intentionally challenging concepts or problems, where the experience of difficulty is viewed as a spur to problem-solving and learning.

▶ We will develop a collaborative learning culture in which sources of academic, practical, and psychological support are systematically 'joined-up' and effectively communicated to students, enabling them to take personal control of any difficulties / challenges by actively choosing and using appropriate resources.

▶ Students will be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities (e.g. sports, social, clubs, societies, volunteering) which enhance wellbeing and hence resilience; and which contribute to the development of personal attributes such as teamwork, leadership, intercultural understanding and confidence. We will work on structuring academic timetables in ways that enable participation in such activities, and on development of formal award schemes recognising and documenting students' participation.

▶ We will expand and diversify our provision of wellbeing services, to ensure that they include elements which proactively encourage well-balanced lifestyles and others which provide responsive and professional support when needed; which draw on a range of agencies (including professional, pastoral, and peer support); which are accessible and provided in different modes (face to face, group, on-line); and which remove or reduce any sense of stigma.

▶ We will review the role and responsibilities of Personal Tutors to ensure that students have access to (and experience) appropriate, timely and compassionate support throughout their time at the university.

▶ We will expand and increase the reach of peer-mentoring and other student-organised support schemes, with appropriate training and facilitation from the Centre for Wellbeing and Student Services; and will encourage students to participate in these schemes as both givers and recipients of support.

OUTCOMES

▶ Students will report increased confidence in their professional capabilities / employability.

▶ The rate of withdrawals from programmes or PTY placements will reduce.

▶ Students will show increased satisfaction with support services provided by the university.

▶ Access to timely counselling provision will increase.

▶ There will be an overall improvement in students' wellbeing and confidence.

▶ Student participation in peer mentoring and other support schemes will increase.

Aim five

A WORLD VIEW

We will provide our students with opportunities and support, on-campus and through travel, to enhance their future personal and professional lives by:

- gaining experience of interacting with people from other cultures and social backgrounds, and understanding diverse perspectives;

- developing the cultural sensitivity, communication skills, and confidence to establish relationships in situations characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity;

- developing knowledge, understanding, and opinions on issues of global relevance and concern;

- developing enduring international social networks and relationships.

ACTIONS

- The curriculum review will consider how to embed within programmes consideration of global and cross-cultural issues, varied socio-demographic perspectives, and intercultural skills, as relevant to the particular discipline.

- We will participate in UUKi's "Go International" campaign, developing institutional processes and support mechanisms to increase students' awareness of the benefits of, and participation in, opportunities to study or work overseas during their programmes (e.g. via Study Abroad, student exchanges, PTY placements with international partners).

- We will develop, expand, and increase the accessibility of financial and practical support to enable students, particularly those from disadvantaged and under-represented groups, to participate in Study Abroad or international professional training years.

- We will develop a system of 'buddies' and peer advisers for those going on Study Abroad.

- We will extend the range (duration and format) of opportunities for students less able to participate in extended overseas mobilities – for example, via virtual exchange trips.

- We will expand and enrich opportunities for home and international students to interact and engage with one another, providing the basis for the development of social and professional international networks which will enhance cultural understanding and employability skills.

- We will further expand and develop the Global Graduate Award scheme, for example through the addition of a new 'Global Citizenship' module.

OUTCOMES

- More prominence will be given to global / cultural themes and the development of intercultural skills in curricula, in ways appropriate to the discipline.

- The number and proportion of students undertaking a period of study or work in another country will increase.

- More students from groups which are currently under-represented in international mobilities will undertake a period of study or work in another country during their programme.

- There will be an increase in the range of cross-cultural and intercultural activities offered on campus and/or virtually, and in participation in them by different student communities.

- A higher number and proportion of students will participate in, and complete, the Global Graduate Award scheme.

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