



UK | DUBAI | MALAYSIA

LEADERS IN  
IDEAS AND  
SOLUTIONS

# SHAPING TOMORROW TOGETHER

Strategy  
2025



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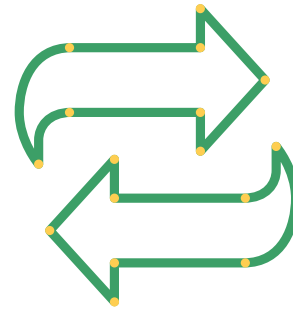
# Our Values

*Our values underpin who we are, how we behave and the ways we work together across every aspect of the University. Our Strategy will embed a values-led approach at every level of the organisation. This will define our community and contribute to our distinctiveness.*



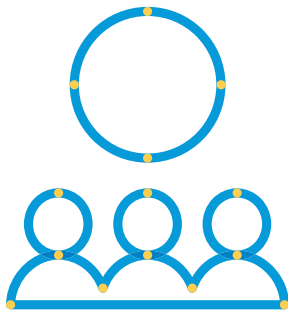
## Inspire

Inspire curiosity to learn and find solutions that transform lives.



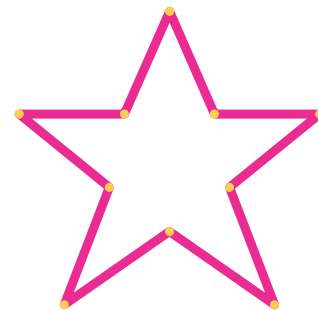
## Collaborate

Collaborate by working in partnership to shape the future whilst taking responsibility for our own actions.



## Belong

Belong to a diverse, inclusive and international community working together across boundaries and cultures.



## Celebrate

Celebrate excellence and take pride in the achievements of our students, staff and alumni.

# Our Strategy

*Heriot-Watt is a distinctive University with global reach and a proud history of providing access to education, ideas and solutions that make a real contribution to the world.*

Our strategy is based on our heritage, our expertise, our relevance, and our global presence. We know what we are good at, and we know that our global configuration creates exciting opportunities. This strategy shows how we will realise those opportunities, imaginatively and energetically.

Our highly distinctive personality make us strong and our capabilities and expertise enable us to serve the future needs of society. Our goal is to educate our students to flourish in their learning and life skills, and for our University to deliver research and enterprise with profound impact on the communities that we serve.

Our strategy is all about shaping tomorrow together. It comprises four high-level themes that connect to our activities, and which will guide how we will continue to pioneer in education, excel in research, build flourishing communities and develop our globally connected status.



Our core purpose is to create and exchange knowledge that benefits society. Our approach is to develop leaders in ideas and solutions. Recognising the challenges of our rapidly changing world requires us to be even more determined to fulfil our purpose and advance our approach. Our strategy presents our ambitions in this regard. Through it we will further our reputation as a ground-breaking, high performing university that

makes an outstanding impact across the globe. You can read about our strategic performance indicators on page 24, including our intention to pioneer new measures for global access to education and sustainability befitting a multi-campus international University.

**Professor Richard A. Williams**  
**OBE FREng FRSE FTSE**  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

# Our Purpose

*From a pioneering institute born out of the Scottish Enlightenment in 1821, to a leader in transnational education, Heriot-Watt has become a global university through a commitment to its vision, mission and ethos.*

## Our Vision

Our vision is to be world-leading within all our areas of specialism.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to create and exchange knowledge that benefits society.

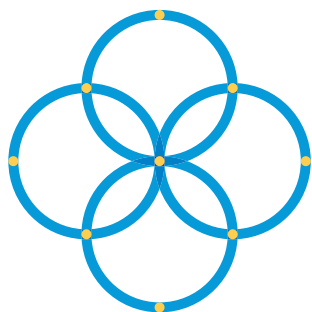
## Our Ethos

We put our community of students, staff and alumni at the heart of everything we do. Our distinctive strengths will continue to build a global University that pioneers innovation in education, research and enterprise.

# Strategic Themes

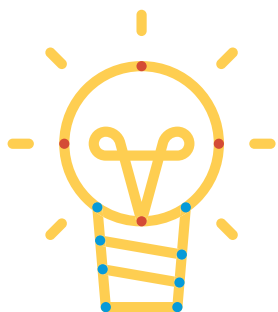
*Shaping Tomorrow Together is a values-led strategy, articulating and supporting the behaviours that will allow our values to be lived across the University community until 2025 and beyond. It explains how we will work to transfer our values from concepts to tangible activity, ensuring that they underpin everything we do.*

Our strategy expresses what we intend to achieve over its lifetime. It builds on our strengths and is organised around four related themes.



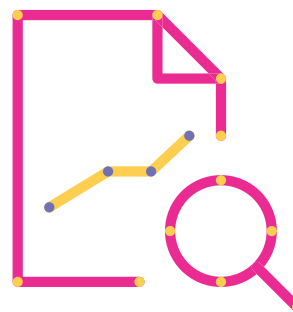
## We will build flourishing communities

Communities flourish when they are inspired, connected, collaborative and valued. Through our strategy we will continue to generate these attributes across students, staff and alumni, and strive to be a positive influence on the communities where we are based. We will shape tomorrow together to deliver benefits for all of society.



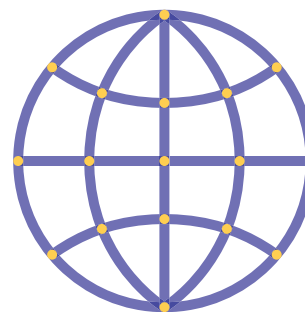
## We will pioneer in education

Since our foundation in 1821, we have been outward looking pioneers of education, in pursuit of knowledge to the benefit of society and the world. We will continue to offer a distinctive learning experience, enhanced by our global connectivity, and grounded in the needs of a rapidly changing world.



## We will excel in research and enterprise

Our research and entrepreneurial approach will place us at the forefront of academic endeavour that aims to make an outstanding impact on society. We will continue to address crucial world issues through our interdisciplinary approach and close collaboration with industry and business.



## We will be a globally connected University

Across our five campuses and growing international communities we will work to break down any institutional barriers and further encourage outward engagement, collaboration and partnership.

## STRATEGIC THEMES

# Building Flourishing Communities

*Heriot-Watt is a vibrant, international, intercultural and interdisciplinary community of staff, students and alumni.*

Our strategy will support all our communities in the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia, creating opportunities to engage staff and students with our vision, mission and values.

We will build flourishing communities by developing the wellbeing of our students and staff, promoting equality and diversity in all its forms across our locations, and embedding a culture of listening and engagement. Encouraging life-long learning and personal development will support our communities to achieve their ambitions and experience greater fulfilment.

Our alumni form an extensive, global community with whom we will build stronger relationships by encouraging new ways to grow their engagement with the University and to support their career development.

We will continue to work on the effectiveness, operation and structure of the University, to help our academics excel in their teaching, research and enterprise, creating opportunities for collaboration to flourish and encouraging partnerships between academia, business and industry.

Across all of our locations we will seek to develop social and business partnerships which drive economic prosperity, deliver growth and increase our social impact. Encouraging mutually-beneficial connections to flourish between our staff, students and wider society will underpin activities to share and exchange ideas, skills and learning.

Enabling our communities to be at the heart of the data revolution will also be a priority. We will grow our expertise in data-driven innovation and seek further opportunities to share that expertise, building on partnerships we have already formed such as that with the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal to become the 'data capital of Europe'.



## Outcomes:

- Happy, resilient, emotionally intelligent and future ready graduates
- A supportive environment for staff and students to achieve their full potential and shape the future
- A distinctive community that is values-led and purpose-driven
- Synergistic relationships between research, education and business
- An inspiring and dynamic environment to work and study



Sector Upper  
Quartile



Staff  
Satisfaction



Double by  
2025



Economic  
Impact  
(Global)

## STRATEGIC THEMES

# Pioneering in Education

*Heriot-Watt is highly regarded for its degree programmes based on professional and real practical relevance.*

Through inspirational approaches to learning our students already acquire the key attributes which are valued by employers, including specialist expertise, creativity, global thinking and professionalism.

Our strategy will support all our students to acquire not only knowledge and skills but also intercultural intelligence, increased personal resilience and the confidence to cope with a rapidly changing world. We will develop a learning to learn approach which will help our students and graduates to flourish, equipping them to succeed and able to meet the emerging challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

We are committed to enhancing the learning experience of all our students, regardless of their location, level, mode or duration of study. The range of ways in which a student can

gain their education with us is part of how we enhance their experience and we will continue to develop new pathways; be that on campus; through transfer between campuses; learning remotely and primarily through digital media; in partnership between the University and their employer; or by combining modes to best suit their individual circumstances.

Our degree programmes are highly regarded for their professional relevance and the resultant employability of our graduates. Through our strategy we will continue to innovate in the area of global curriculum design. We will further develop our distinctive approach through the latest research into learning, increasing digitalisation, and combining individual and collaborative modes of study.

Offering transformative educational opportunities, locally and globally, will ensure that the learning experience of our students will be inspiring, challenging and fulfilling.

## Outcomes:

- Empowered graduates holistically developed through innovative learning and engagement methods
- Highly sought-after graduates
- Flexible, personalised and highly relevant programmes of studies to engage and upskill learners
- Providing new pathways and globally accessible education



## STRATEGIC THEMES

# Excelling in Research and Enterprise

*Our strategy will capitalise on opportunities to grow research and enterprise across the University.*

We will implement a major expansion in our capacity and reputation through the creation of up to six research institutes. These will build on areas of existing excellence and strive to become internationally leading. They will exemplify our success in research of real value to society and will help to develop our enterprise activities worldwide.

The new institutes will work with funders, businesses and other leading research organisations to co-create research propositions that place us at the forefront of intellectual discovery.

To grow our research portfolio we will create a vigorous and supportive environment that develops opportunities to achieve excellence and which connects our international research communities across our locations and with our network of leading research partners.

We will continue to recruit, retain and develop high calibre research leaders and support them through our values-led approach and our state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities, enabling them to achieve world-class success in their areas of specialism.

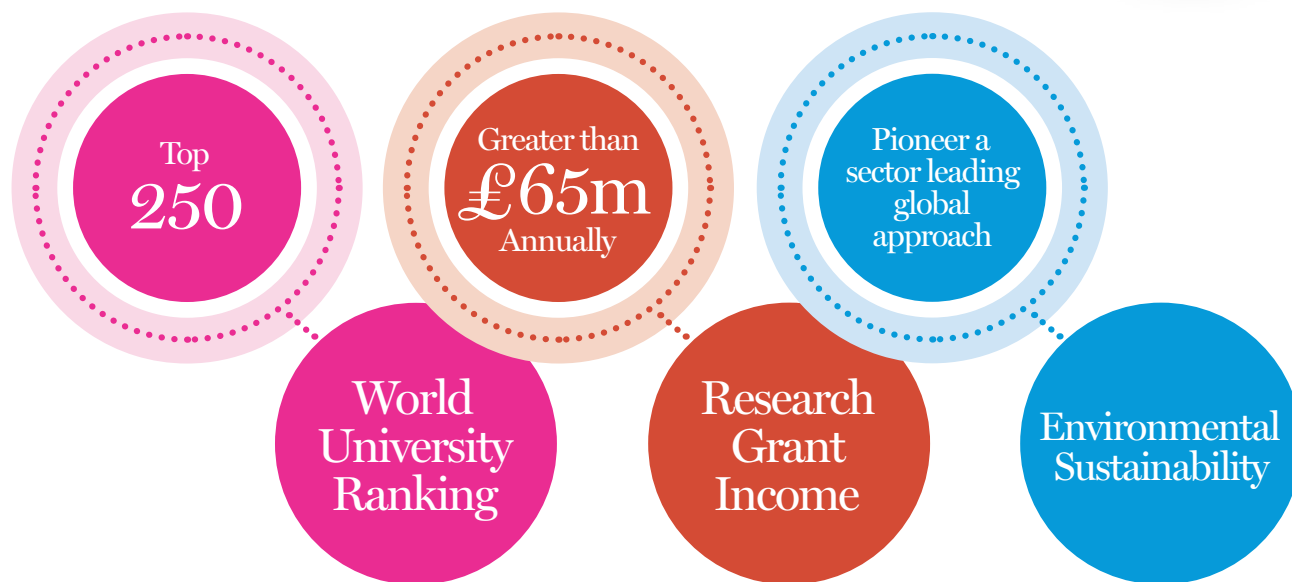
Our strategy will substantially increase our research income and the contributions that our research will make to the economy and the environment. Through our interdisciplinary approach and close collaboration with industry and business we will build on our reputation to seamlessly evolve our fundamental research to innovation and enterprise.

Developing the people and ideas that spark new businesses and transform organisations will help us to shape tomorrow through our approach to enterprise. We will integrate enterprise activities with our research and teaching, developing new partnerships and strengthening our interactions with business.

Our aim will be to stimulate radical innovation, utilising state-of-the-art interactive spaces to develop creative relationships between our students, staff and business partners, leading to new funding streams and further accelerating the impact of our work.

## Outcomes:

- Excellence and financial growth in research income supported by up to six new interdisciplinary research institutes
- Thought leadership that shapes the global research agenda
- A new local and globally connected enterprise eco-system connecting students, staff and society
- Global reputation for transformative economic and societal impact that addresses Grand Challenges and contributes towards Sustainable Development Goals



## STRATEGIC THEMES

# A Global, Connected University

*Heriot-Watt is a globally connected, multi-campus University, where our students and staff form an integrated international community.*

Our strategy will see us consolidate our move towards a single organisation where geographical location does not limit staff or student opportunities. Interacting across time zones and locations will be further enhanced through infrastructure which supports and enables exchange, collaboration and partnership.

Building an organisational culture which reinforces our global, connected identity will be a priority and we will establish wider shared working, and take early actions to evolve our structures to deliver effectively across all our locations.

We will optimise our balance of resources to deliver our core business smoothly and efficiently across our multi-campus structure and develop agility to respond to opportunities wherever they arise.

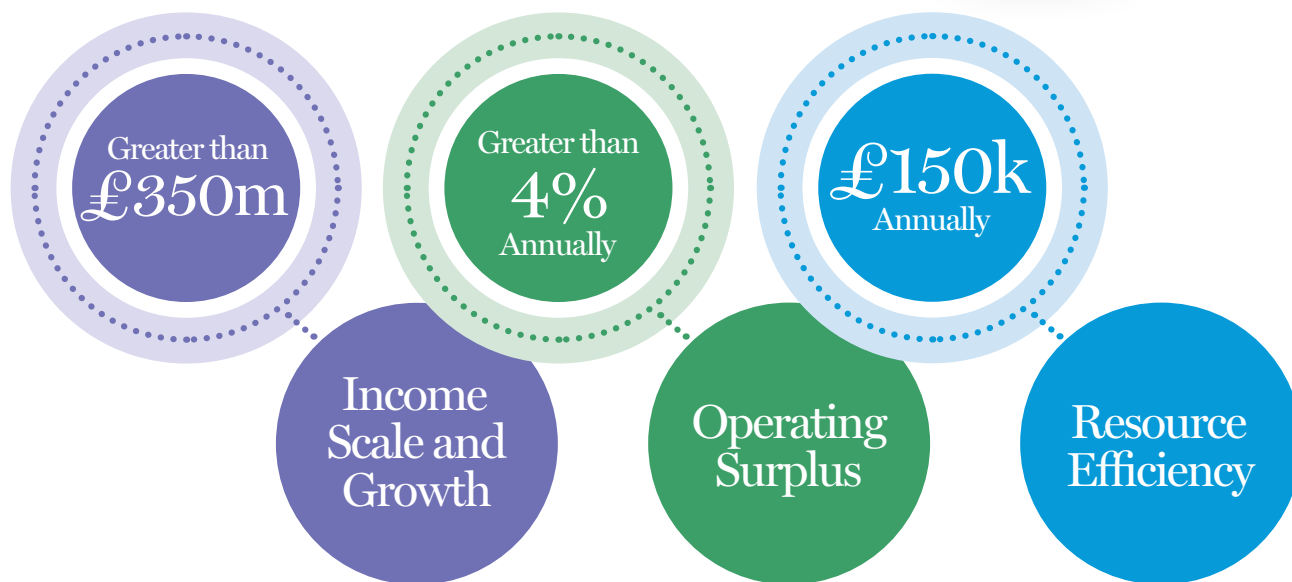
We will also strengthen our capabilities in leadership throughout the University, so that our values-led approach is embraced by staff and students across our global community.

The University makes a significant contribution in each of its locations and we will work to further our impact and influence. We will increase our income and strengthen our financial sustainability by developing a more diverse portfolio of income in each of our locations, for example by expanding multi-modal teaching, through research funding, and from fundraising.

Heriot-Watt's reputation is based on a distinctive education and a pioneering approach: the extent to which we are taking forward our concept of a global university is part of that approach, and through it we will provide stimulating, inspiring and exceptional opportunities for all students and staff.

## Goals:

- Globally connected students, staff and alumni community
- Robust, effective and efficient systems and methods
- Financially sustainable and diversified operations
- Digital transformation of the organisation



# Our Bicentennial: celebrating a pioneering heritage

*Heriot-Watt is the eighth oldest higher education institution in the UK and in 2021 we celebrate our 200th anniversary.*



1821

Edinburgh School of Arts, the world's first Mechanics Institute, founded by Leonard Horner and Robert Bryson in Niddry Street.



1854

Formation of the Watt Club – The UK's oldest higher education institution alumni association.



1989

The International Centre for Island Technology at the Orkney Campus opens in Stromness.



1998

Merger with the Scottish College of Textiles to create the Scottish Borders Campus.



From a pioneering institute, born out of the Scottish Enlightenment, to a leading global university, our reputation for adapting and evolving teaching, learning and research to meet the changing needs of industry and society has been established throughout our history.

Beginning as the world's first Mechanics Institute which opened up education for working people in 1821, we have continued to be focused on access to learning. Twenty years before legislation forced Scottish universities to open their doors to women in 1889, the Watt Institution had begun admitting women students – a truly radical step.

Our heritage includes a range of notable achievements in educational leadership and innovation, including: the world's first global MBA through distance learning; the UK's first Actuarial Science Honours degree; the world's first Interpreting and Language degree; and Scotland's first

university to introduce degrees in Computer Science, Building, and British Sign Language.

We have continued this pioneering ethos to opening up educational opportunities and responding to areas of need through a growing internationalism: in 2005 we established the first overseas university in Dubai Academic City – to provide top quality British education to students and executives in the Gulf and further afield; and in 2011 we were chosen by the Malaysian Government to create a new university in Putrajaya – our state-of-the-art flagship campus opened in 2014.

Today, our heritage as providers of practical education and solutions for business and industry sees us leading the way across globally significant disciplines including: robotics and AI, sustainable energy, optics and quantum technologies, carbon capture and storage, logistics, engineering, business and design.



# 2005

The Dubai Campus was founded. The University was the first to set up in the new Dubai International Academic City.



# 2014

Heriot-Watt University opens its fifth Campus in Putrajaya, Malaysia, only 25 km from Kuala Lumpur.



# 2018

Edinburgh Business School opens Panmure House, the former home of father of economics, Adam Smith.



# 2021

The University celebrates its 200th anniversary.

# Transformative education on a global scale

*Demographics are changing adversely; the world economy remain uncertain; there are tensions in world politics.*

The nature of learning changes too with pervasive digital technologies intrinsic to modern life. Recognising the challenges of the changing world must make us even more determined to achieve future goals that we have set for ourselves: we are an international university like no other.

We have already a portfolio of exciting new strategic learning initiatives.

The GRID is our new focal point for Global Research, Innovation and Discovery. It provides an innovative teaching and learning environment designed to remove boundaries between academic disciplines, and deliver new ways to link with industry partners and our global community. The GRID methodology is being embedded in the infrastructure and operations in UAE and in Malaysia.

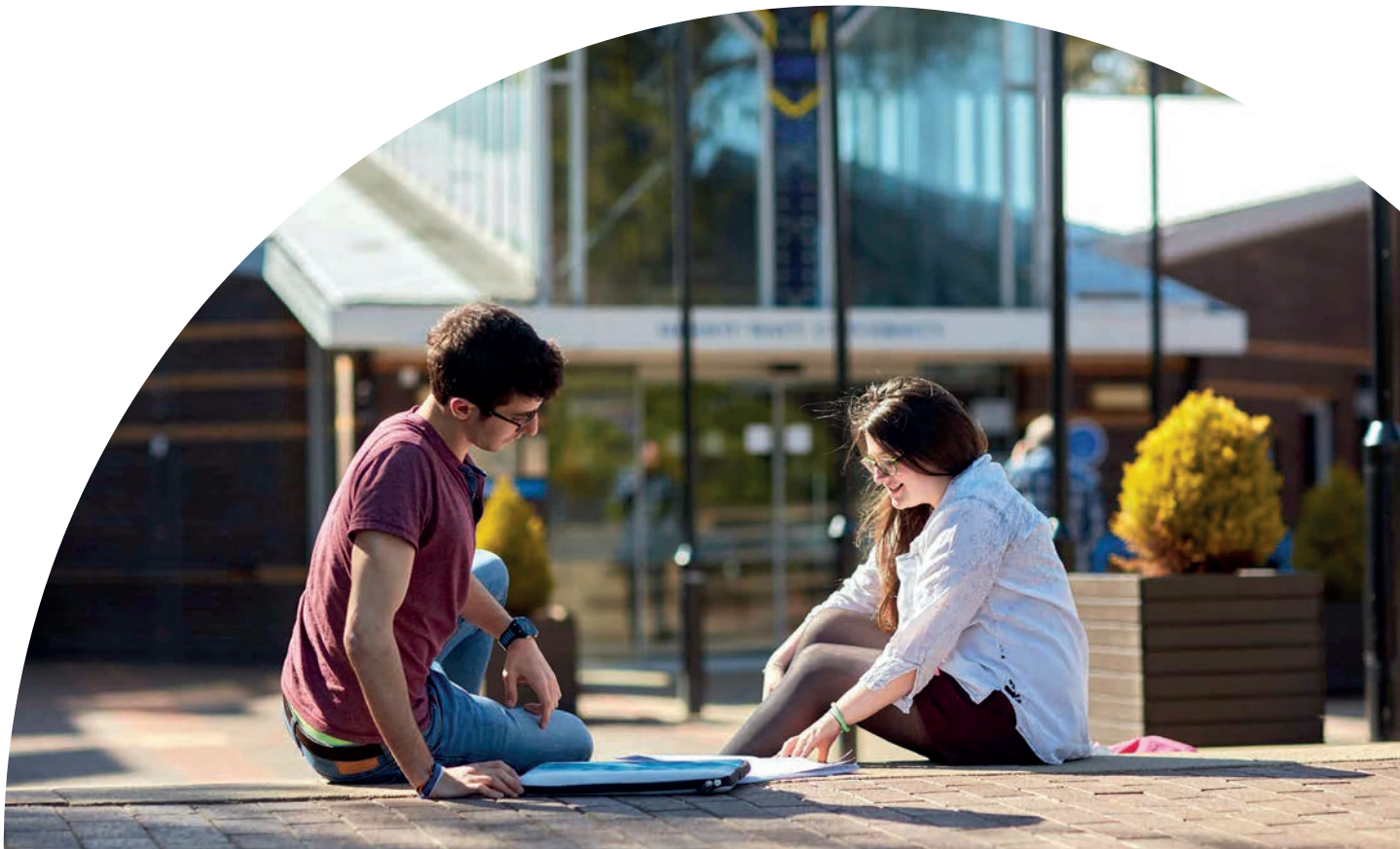
It will also be a focus for enterprise, nurturing a strong entrepreneurial culture where staff, students and industry partners are encouraged to develop ground-breaking

technologies and solutions, creating entirely new industries and supply chains.

Oriam, Scotland's National Performance Centre for Sport, is a truly leading facility for student sport, engaging all our Edinburgh communities and in the future enabling new research and teaching in performance, sports digital analytics and medical technologies across all campuses.

Our Learning and Teaching Academy enables fresh approaches to student learning and to the support of our staff. Linking with investments and building on initiatives developed at the Malaysia Campus that highlight the positive impact our students and staff have on society.

The coming years will mark a new era for an invigorated Edinburgh Business School, providing business courses at all levels from foundation through to executive education and postdoctoral research. Online teaching and assessment offers us an unrivalled opportunity to build flexible support for our students on campus and for those far away.



# Powering up innovation and enterprise

*Increasingly we expect our research to have radical impact on the issues that challenge society, especially in the communities where we are based.*

We are developing multidisciplinary research centres strongly connected to our partners and community.

The Lyell Centre, a collaborative venture with the British Geological Survey, is leading the development of a portfolio of frontier geoscience research relevant to climate change issues in all of our locations.

Heriot-Watt is a world leader in robotics and artificial intelligence addressing key scientific challenges around managing robotic interactions within a diversity of environments. Combining our scientific leadership with extensive industrial engagement, we are designing some of the world's most advanced robotics and autonomous systems with specialism in artificial intelligence and human robotic interaction. Our National Robotarium enables our engineers, physical and social scientists to deploy artificial intelligence to serve society.

The hub will offer an integrated capability unique in the world, spearheading developments to revolutionise manufacturing, healthcare, offshore energy, construction, and marine science.

Building on the GRID concept, we are harnessing both digital design and artificial intelligence in developing a smart construction centre in Dubai. In Orkney, we are building new community based research projects and energy systems integrating sensors and data science.

Across all of our campuses, we aim to address major societal challenges through radical innovations from our research and community engagement.





# Our People – Shaping Tomorrow Together

*Heriot-Watt is a truly global university: we have campuses across Scotland, in South East Asia and in the Middle East, and collaborative alliances with 85 academic partners in 35 countries around the world.*

Our community is international, inter-cultural and interdisciplinary. Our students are problem-solvers, entrepreneurs-in-the-making who are globally-minded, public-spirited and inspired to shape our future world. Our research, knowledge exchange, teaching and learning are all globally focused and this ethos led to the accolade of International University of the Year from The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide in 2018: we were the first institution to receive this award.

Our people are inventive, entrepreneurial and expert, with a shared ambition to be at the forefront of innovation which meets global challenges. They excel in research – over 80% of academic staff are currently engaged in research at

internationally recognised levels. They pioneer education and contribute to flourishing communities by driving economic impact and contributing to growth in every location where we are based.

We are expanding our global footprint, developing our international diversity and growing our multi-campus community; together with our 132,000 alumni, located in over 190 countries, we are a powerful engine of change, transforming business, industry and society across the world. Shaping tomorrow together, we are a global community of leaders in ideas and solutions.



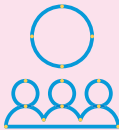
VALUES



INSPIRE



COLLABORATE



BELONG



CELEBRATE

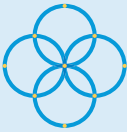
STRATEGIC THEMES



PIONEERING  
IN EDUCATION



EXCELLENCE  
IN RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE



FLOURISHING  
COMMUNITIES



A GLOBALLY CONNECTED UNIVERSITY

# Measuring our Performance

*We monitor what we do to ensure we operate in ways which live up to our purpose.*

Our operational plans are monitored to assess performance of both normal business activities and special initiatives, with our annual planning process driving refinement of plans as we adapt to a changing environment.

Our achievements are represented by a basket of strategic performance indicators (SPIs). The table illustrates how our strategy themes principally align with the strategic performance indicators. Our Strategy 2025 website ([strategy2025.hw.ac.uk](http://strategy2025.hw.ac.uk)) details our SPIs and progress made to achieve them.

Deliberately two SPIs require further definition by our University community to pioneer a bold, new global approach.

**Environmental Sustainability** – in addition to ensuring delivery of any statutory environmental requirements across campus locations, we will develop: globally relevant targets for our emissions; our organisation practises and behaviours; and, importantly, to quantify the net societal and global impact of flagship ground breaking research projects and policies.

**Inclusion and Wider Access** – we will grow accessibility of students to our graduate residential and on-line programmes. Although well defined in the UK, we will lead out in defining and progressing this in all our principal campus locations and other selected territories.



# 2025 Strategic Performance Indicators

Theme	Performance Indicator	2025 Target
Building Flourishing Communities	Staff Satisfaction	Sector Upper Quartile
	Economic Impact (Global)	Double impact by 2025
Pioneering in Education	Student Satisfaction	Upper Quartile
	Graduate Outcomes	Top Decile
	Inclusion and Wider Access	Pioneer a sector leading global approach
Excelling in Research and Enterprise	World University Ranking	Top 250
	Research Grant Income	Greater than £65m*
	Environmental Sustainability	Pioneer a sector leading global approach
Globally Connected University	Income Scale and Growth	Greater than £350m*
	Operating Surplus	Greater than 4%*
	Resource Efficiency	Greater than £150k*

\*annually

Detailed definitions of these SPIs can be found on the Strategy 2025 website.

[Strategy2025.hw.ac.uk](http://Strategy2025.hw.ac.uk)

# Shaping Tomorrow Together Membina Masa Esok Bersama معا نصنع المستقبل

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## Orkney Campus

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## Dubai Campus

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## Malaysia Campus

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