

Internationalisation Strategy (2016-2021)

Final Version Approved by Council on 11th July 2016.

‘Newcastle University aspires to be one of the world’s leading civic universities. We strive to achieve academic excellence that is relevant to the global challenges society faces. Our Strategy needs to make practical sense to help all of us operate and achieve in the international environment we all work in. We need internationalisation¹ to be threaded throughout the University here and abroad, at all levels, from the activities of our students through to those of our staff. The Strategy presented here is the result of extensive consultation across the University between November 2015 and May 2016.’

**Professor Richard Davies
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July 2016



¹ We define internationalization as the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of our teaching, research and engagement.

1.0 Introduction

The University's aim, outlined in Vision 2021, is to be a world class civic university. Our research addresses some of the major challenges society faces regionally, nationally and internationally. We strive to achieve academic excellence that has a purpose and we are constantly operating on this international stage. This Strategy is aligned with these aims and will succeed if we can help members of our University community, individually and collectively, to achieve in the international environment we work in.

We start from a strong base and we have much to be proud of. We are already an international community. We have students from over 120 different countries, staff from over 80 countries and collaborative agreements with more than 200 overseas universities and institutions. We have three branch campuses, two of which are overseas. The annual International Student Barometer demonstrates that we continue to provide an excellent learning experience for our international students. Our research engagement is genuinely international. However, our academic excellence and impact has yet to receive the external recognition it merits, for example in THE and QS reputation surveys within world rankings.

To achieve an international presence and impact, we need to deploy strategies that make sense in a range of contexts. No one size will fit all. In many cases our international activities are very important, small in scale, academic to academic relationships. In other cases they will be multi-faceted, cross-faculty teaching or research partnerships working with the world's leading universities on the major challenges facing society today and in the future. This requires long term partnership building focused on key partners.

An in-country presence is one of the most significant activities we currently undertake. Some universities have made the decision that an in-country presence is a thing of the past. Others take the opposite view, but spread themselves thinly. We do not share either view. Instead we purposefully take a long-term approach to developing the value from teaching and research at a few key branch campuses. A physical presence in an important region of the world should, over time, yield key advantages because (a) we will develop a deeper understanding of the region, its culture and funding landscape which will open up additional funding opportunities (b) it will lead to greater awareness of our academic excellence and its societal impact outside the UK and (c) students who would not choose to come to the UK, can get a Newcastle University degree. Maintaining overseas operations is consistent with our aspirations to have a global reputation for academic excellence, but it is critical that we invest in making the most use of them for building high quality research collaborations as well as carrying out high quality teaching.

The most recent Internationalisation Strategy, approved by Council in 2012, is detailed and remains in line with the objectives of the University. Much of the intent remains unchanged here, but has been distilled down into a form that is practical so that it can be easily adopted by as many people as possible across the University community. The theme of 'take-up' by staff is an important pillar of this Strategy – we want it to be a call to action to all of our staff and our wider University community (e.g. partnerships and alumni). The 2016-2021 Strategy now includes just three strategic objectives to allow for the broadest possible uptake. For each strategic objective, we first deal with 'why', then outline 'how'. Appendix 1 includes the specific tasks and details that underpin the 'how' and this will be reviewed frequently.



SO1**International Presence and Impact**

Grow and sustain our international reputation, profile and impact through a small number of high-quality operations and mutually beneficial partnerships and networks of partners that deliver academic excellence.

This stems from the fundamental aspiration of our staff to carry out internationally leading research and teaching that has widespread relevance and impact. This feeds into the vision of the University to be a world class civic university having an impact on the global challenges society faces. The scale and complexity of these challenges mean that they need to be met through organisations coming together. We will therefore work through partnerships, with a range of organisations worldwide, for example: academic, governmental, NGOs and cultural bodies. There are additional benefits to having aspirations of world-leading research and teaching in terms of increasing the awareness of the University as a centre of excellence as this will help to improve our standing in world rankings.

We need to be organised in how we approach partnerships. It is essential that we continue to develop and invest in a small portfolio of long-term, broad and deep partnerships with like-minded, world-class institutions. We need to prioritise these partnerships and communicate better about them. This has to be balanced against maintaining a wide range of partnerships, sometimes academic-to-academic, which may develop into the strategic relationships of the future. In-country presence (e.g. international branch campuses) also plays a role in providing an international footprint and hubs from which we can develop impact through both teaching and research. We will continue to support and develop our branch campuses, particularly in their ambitions to develop research programmes, with the aim that they will be substantial regional hubs outside of the UK. As such, they are a channel for providing unique experience for both students and staff; for giving us valuable insights into strategically important areas of the world and for raising our international profile.



To achieve this Strategic Objective 1 we will:

1. Continue to build and strengthen Newcastle University Malaysia and Newcastle University Singapore into regional hubs with reputations for excellence in research as well as teaching.
2. Ensure a clear role and niche for Newcastle University London in building our international reputation.
3. Focus on fewer, but higher-quality, deep partnerships (including networks) that make sense to Schools, Institutes and Faculties. We will ensure these have an identified lead so that there is a clear line of communication and accountability. We will provide the support to help these high-quality partnerships develop, so that as many as possible flourish.
4. Support the three societal challenge themes to identify a small number of projects that partner with leading universities and organisations that could yield significant international impact.

5. Focus new institutional and organisational partnership development, in a small number of countries and regions, based on their potential and their strategic importance for the University².
6. Continue to align appropriate policies and procedures to enable the University to develop international activities efficiently and effectively.

SO2	<p>An International Experience</p> <p>Enable our students and staff to gain international experience.</p>
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We want to attract the world’s best academics and students to be part of Newcastle University and they in turn need to develop the skills to be effective and active global citizens. This Objective sets out a commitment to all of our staff and students, whether at home or abroad and in the broadest sense, to provide an environment which will encourage and support their development. This will result in a community equipped to achieve excellence and be world-leading in research, learning and teaching.

To achieve this Strategic Objective 2 we will:

1. Work harder to attract high-quality students from across the globe to study in our four campuses in Newcastle, London, Malaysia and Singapore, and actively seek to host study-abroad students from overseas universities. This will be achieved by ensuring our international student offer is clear and targeted; our processes are effective and that we are more aware of international student demand (i.e. which courses, which nationalities and in what format)³.
2. Aim to incorporate international experiences and perspectives into our teaching, research, engagement and professional support service activities, and welcome visiting staff and students from our partners as an essential part of our community.
3. Continue to value the benefits of our global community by offering our students a choice of opportunities to include an international dimension into their studies, fostering cross-cultural understanding and equipping our students with the knowledge, skills and aptitude to thrive in an international environment.
4. Support Schools to develop further our range of high-quality overseas destinations for student exchange and work experience and encourage our students to take advantage of the opportunities afforded to them.
5. Offer opportunities to all our staff to enhance their cross-cultural understanding and, where appropriate, international experience that feeds into their research, teaching and administrative best practice. For example we must continue to ensure there is foreign language provision for students and staff, through the continued development of language resources and programmes.

² For collaborative partnerships involving research we will focus primarily on the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australasia (see Appendix 1 of the Internationalisation Strategy Action Plan for more details).

³ See Appendix 2 of the Internationalisation Strategy Action Plan for an example analysis of key markets.

SO3**Consistent University Understanding and Approach**

Develop and embed a consistent understanding of and approach to internationalisation across the University

The University has almost 25,000 students and more than 5,500 staff, c. 2,500 of whom are academic. We have c. 180,000 alumni. The team is potentially vast. Strategic Objective 1 in itself is tremendously ambitious. Therefore, the call to action is not only to Newcastle University employees, but is much wider than this and includes students, advisors, internationally-based alumni and our partner organisations. Mobilising the team can only work by devoting time and effort into consulting and communicating a consistent approach that our community understands, buys into and to some degree can work towards.

This is a very important 'enabling objective' that we cannot take for granted. The first two strategic objectives are significant and to be able to achieve them we need to mobilise as many as possible from across our University. This objective is about our people. It captures how all members of the Newcastle community - our students, staff, alumni, advisors and partners - can work and contribute to the goals. This process has already started as it begins with engaging staff in the development of the Strategy, understanding and valuing their contributions and effectively communicating their successes. This will reinforce our key messages as we progress. Our success relies on the activities of individuals, units, schools, centres, institutes, faculties and services, creating a culture consistent with the building of an international University community. Achieving this objective requires us all to be committed to it. It will require good leadership and direction and, most importantly, the continued hard work, ideas and enthusiasm of all our staff.



To achieve this Strategic Objective 3 we will:

1. Embark on a continual process of consultation with the greater Newcastle University community in order to agree a set of clear messages on what internationalisation means to us as a university and what makes Newcastle University distinctive, with the ambition of embedding an international dimension into our practice, strategies, policies and procedures.

2. Convey our purpose, mission and values so that we all have a clear understanding of our internationalisation values and aspirations and how they can contribute to them as individuals, whatever their job role. This should help our engagement with existing partners and attract potential partners and new opportunities.
3. Ensure that Internationalisation (together with Engagement) is clearly understood throughout the University as one of the three core functions of our academic work, along with Research and Innovation' and 'Learning and Teaching', and that our policies and practices reflect this commitment.
4. Ensure that everyone within the University has access to key information that allows them to have a role⁴. For example, that information on the status of our present partnerships, who leads them and how to contribute is available to all.
5. Develop a clearer sense of the distinctiveness of our approach, which we need to communicate externally.

⁴ A one-stop-shop internal website has been set up here: <https://internal.ncl.ac.uk/international/> to allow easy access to Internationalisation information. The website is actively maintained to ensure it is up to date.