

**Birmingham 2030**

Strategic Framework

# **Our enduring purpose**

The University of Birmingham was founded on the vision of Joseph Chamberlain in 1900 to provide a university for the people of Birmingham, ‘a great school of universal instruction…taking all knowledge in its province’. This philosophy has defined and shaped us as an institution ever since, founded on social responsibility and equality of opportunity for all.

We believe that universities such as Birmingham are central to a functioning democracy, vital to creating a prosperous and just society, and essential for a thriving city, region and nation. Our society depends on universities because they are powerful and independent engines of research, development and innovation, places where cultures are enriched, ideas generated, and social capital created. They are where the minds, capacities, and capabilities of current and future generations develop and are sharpened. Universities open up learning to all, help to shape a more inclusive society, and make prosperity possible.

The University of Birmingham is an academic community of staff and students, alumni and partners, a place for open, critical thinking, and the creation, sharing, and dissemination of knowledge. For those who study here, the experience of exploring that knowledge with fellow students and academics is transformative. We are a university that has always sought to teach, test, extend, and apply knowledge in the broadest range of subjects, and to the highest standards of excellence. This breadth allows us to bring together diverse academic disciplines to stimulate fresh perspectives and ideas, and to translate those into solutions and interventions that make a lasting difference to the world.

In this environment, freedom of speech is fundamental - the ability of all our members freely to challenge prevailing orthodoxies, query the positions and views of others and to put forward ideas that may sometimes be radical or dissenting in their formulation, all within an atmosphere of mutual respect.

This enduring purpose will continue to shape the University as we move ahead into our next chapter. We will celebrate what we know, remain curious about what we do not yet know, and will share our knowledge generously and rigorously with our students, collaborators, and wider society. As we continue to find new expressions of our civic purpose, we are proud that the University is a great global institution, working with a diverse and vibrant city. Our doors are firmly open, welcoming the best to Birmingham, and taking the best of Birmingham to the world.

# **Birmingham 2030: Our ambition**

During the last decade, the University of Birmingham has been transformed. Our strong emphasis on intellectually rigorous education and pioneering research across the full breadth of disciplines has led our students to attain increasingly impressive outcomes, and our research has enjoyed growing global significance and societal impact. We have a remarkable platform on which to build, yet there is more we can achieve.

**Over the next decade, our aspiration is to establish Birmingham in the top 50 of the world’s leading universities.**

This Strategic Framework sets out how we will pursue this highly-challenging ambition. With world-class research and outstanding global education as our core mission, we will strive to increase the volume and quality of our research to make an even greater difference to the world around us. We will be the UK’s exemplary civic university, remaining firmly committed to our foundations in the highly diverse communities, people, and economy of the city of Birmingham and the West Midlands. We will maintain our financial strength to enable investment in our academic mission, allowing us to make the most of the extensive breadth and quality of the University’s academic disciplines. We will take full advantage of our signature projects, innovation sites, and capital developments to make a lasting impact in all the regions in which we operate, and globally.

This is a demanding task and we must recognise the scale of the challenges we must set ourselves if we are to succeed.

The global environment for research-intensive universities is increasingly complex and competitive. Universities likes ours now operate from multiple international locations, teach and recruit highly-mobile students and academics from around the world, collaborate extensively, receive income from multiple sources, and operate complex research infrastructure. Leading international universities have a number of large-scale, globally-recognised academic strengths. Importantly, the academic quality of top universities underpins a wider reputation that secures their international stature.

The Covid pandemic has presented exceptional challenges. We are proud that our response to the pandemic has demonstrated the impressive resilience of the University and its people. At the same time, we know that it will leave a legacy for society and the economy from which it may take several years to recover. The breadth we enjoy at Birmingham will allow us to respond by shaping policy, supporting economic recovery, understanding cultural change, and creating innovative solutions to the challenges we will face.

The UK’s long-established position in global higher education is increasingly challenged internationally, with significant competition for the best academics, students, and research funding. For UK universities, Brexit has also required renegotiation of our relationships with Europe and the wider world. In the coming years, UK higher education policy is likely to experience more constrained financial settlements, accompanied by greater government intervention in research priorities and education programmes: this will require us to prioritise carefully.

The prominence of universities globally places them under greater scrutiny, frequently at the centre of ‘culture wars’ and in the context of a political populism that underappreciates the value of higher education. Students increasingly perceive their relationship with their university as a consumer. Together, these factors lead to increased regulatory burden, public accountability, and political pressure.

These are the long-term trends within which this framework is situated. We face these challenges with confidence, knowing that we have strong foundations, exceptional capability amongst our people, and longstanding financial strength. Great universities draw on their strengths to chart their own course: we will remain confident in the course set out in this framework.

# **Our six pillars**

## **Research that matters**

In the last decade, we have made substantial progress in the quality, ambition, and impact of our research. We will build on this platform as we continue to increase the delivery of *Research that Matters*: research with outcomes that are important to other people, organisations, and academic fields, and are widely disseminated to achieve lasting, transformative impact in the world.

Our value to society is grounded in the authority and breadth of our core disciplines. By generating new knowledge and understanding of the world that we live in, our research outcomes will lead to positive change. Our distinctive and broad research portfolio will span from ground-breaking discoveries, interpretation and critique, in areas such as Particle and Astro- Physics, Genomic Biology, and Textual Editing, to research that translates our expertise and capabilities for more immediate economic, societal, and cultural benefit, for example Green Transport, Maternal Health, Regional Economic Development, and Shakespeare Studies.

We will use our extensive disciplinary breadth and research expertise to establish Birmingham as a leading university internationally for collaborative and interdisciplinary research that addresses contemporary challenges, including post-Covid recovery and pandemic resilience, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals - such as Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Sustainable Cities and Quality Education. We will exemplify our roots as a civic university, addressing cultural, societal, and economic issues in our city, region, and nationally in areas such as Youth Mental Health, the Circular Economy, and effective utilisation of Health and Genomics Data.

We will enable our talented researchers to be even more productive in their research endeavours, creating an inclusive, supportive, and ‘fizzing’ environment where researchers at all career stages can flourish. They will be supported by [Professional Services](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/leadership/professional-services.aspx) and technical teams who are integrated into our research culture and goals, sharing the recognition and celebration of our successes. Through our distinctive PhD training, and development of early-career academic staff, we will attract and train the next generation of talented researchers.

We will ensure that the symbiotic relationship between research and education is meaningful to our students and staff and that our university is recognised as a place where world-class research and education, and the delivery of impact, are mutually inspiring and reinforcing.

## **Our Birmingham 2030 goals are to:**

* **Grow our research excellence by increasing the number and scale of our globally-recognised research themes.**
* **Deliver research that matters *more*, with far-reaching impact.**
* **Influence and respond to regional, national and international research priorities.**
* **Increase and diversify research funding to enable more ambitious and impactful research.**

## **Underpinning these goals our key priorities will be:**

### **Focusing investment in our key research themes**

We will invest to build and sustain these strengths, utilising our extensive disciplinary breadth and interdisciplinary capabilities to build critical mass, and to become world leaders in a select number. We will respond quickly and effectively to funder calls, government needs, business, the NHS, and third sector, allowing us to build world-class research infrastructure, attract global talent, and nurture high quality, diverse research teams with outstanding academic leadership. The [Birmingham in Action](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/birmingham-in-action/index.aspx) campaign will prioritise these themes, ensuring they benefit from exceptional alumni and philanthropic support.

### **Building impact through our interdisciplinary capabilities**

Utilising the strength of our [Institute for Global Innovation](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/global-goals/igi/index.aspx) and establishing new interdisciplinary institutes, we will reduce barriers to internal and external collaboration, sharing and extending research methodologies such as data science and open research across disciplines. We will convene research teams that combine approaches from across the University to tackle contemporary challenges in areas such as Urban Renewal, Inclusive Education, and the Societal and Legal Implications of New Technologies. We will introduce more interdisciplinarity into our PhD programmes.

### **Creating an environment for individuals and teams to flourish and be productive in their research**

We will support our researchers to deliver more, higher quality research outcomes, with an increased emphasis on knowledge sharing, mentoring, wellbeing and research integrity. Our systems and infrastructure will be tailored to support the breadth of our research, and our [Professional Services](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/leadership/professional-services.aspx) (including technicians) will be valued in playing their full role.

### **Working more closely with research funders, government, and other stakeholders**

We will shape evolving priorities in key research domains such as Sustainable Energy, Advanced Clinical Trials Methods and Translational Medicine, Superdiverse Populations and Regional Leadership. We will enhance the number and quality of our strategic relationships, utilising our extensive alumni base to support these partnerships.

### **Enhancing the benefits that our broad education portfolio brings to our research**

We will develop greater mutual benefit between our research themes and educational programmes, increasing the availability of student research projects with clear links to the University’s research themes, engaging students in research impact and public engagement activities, and aligning degree and Continuing Professional Development programmes with our research expertise.

# **Education for sustainable futures**

Birmingham has a long history of welcoming students from all backgrounds and nationalities to study in a comprehensive range of disciplines.

Our students are intellectually curious, academically and personally ambitious, and keen to be challenged as well as supported. In recent years, through a combination of the quality of our academic teaching, our investments in learning spaces, support and wellbeing, and student facilities, our students have achieved increasingly impressive degree and employment outcomes. We build on these foundations as we build a distinctive, exciting, and innovative approach to our education that reflects our global ambitions.

Learning in a research-intensive, global university is transformative. Underpinned by cutting-edge knowledge, our education will be intellectually challenging, inclusive, and developmental. Our programmes will be taught by leading researchers, allowing the next generation of leaders, innovators, problem-solvers and citizens to interact with, understand, and influence, the latest discoveries and ideas. These are defining features of education in a research-intensive environment at a global top 50 university.

Wider changes in society will have an impact on future employment, and this will inform our education over the next ten years. Major challenges and opportunities will arise from the Covid pandemic and other societal changes, along with a growing international focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the so-called fourth industrial revolution. We will equip students to join talented peers and alumni globally to lead and shape these agendas, reflecting the future needs of employers.

Our students come from all backgrounds. We will deliver education in-person across our world-class campuses, in transnational partnerships, and through our digital platforms. This blended approach will enable us to provide a sustainable model of education to meet the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students from the UK and around the world. We aim for our education to be increasingly flexible and accessible, supported by an enhanced digital approach. Our overriding ambition is to provide an outstanding education experience for all our students.

We will use the exceptional breadth of the University to offer a wide range of academic disciplines, whilst also providing interdisciplinary opportunities which prepare students to prosper as citizens and become highly employable graduates, equipped to succeed in their chosen careers and life choices.

## **Our Birmingham 2030 goals are to:**

* **Develop a distinctive research-intensive approach to education.**
* **Provide students with a transformative education.**
* **Support a thriving, inclusive, and global student community.**
* **Nurture an environment which values outstanding and innovative teaching.**

## **Underpinning these goals our key priorities will be:**

### **Incorporating active engagement with research across our curriculum**

We will prioritise the development of research skills at all levels of study to enhance students’ learning and employability, and ensure all students are taught by leading researchers. We will provide interdisciplinary learning opportunities linked to our research objectives, and will engage students, alumni, and employers in our institutional research ambitions. We will introduce new models for teaching and assessment setting out our approach to research-intensive teaching and learning, informed by alumni, employers and global peers.

### **Enhancing the quality and attractiveness of our education**

Grounded in research at all levels of study, we will offer a challenging and inclusive education, centred on the needs, interests, and aspirations of our students. We will blend the experience of in-person learning at our world-class campuses with high quality, digital learning, supported by our Digital Strategy.The depth of our individual academic disciplines will provide students with greater opportunities to study across disciplines, more flexible and personalised study opportunities, and meaningful engagement with global challenges. We will support this by updating our programme architecture to support innovative curriculum design, as well as upgrading our student administration systems and enhancing our approach to timetabling.

### **Delivering a new approach to employability**

Our Employability Strategy will develop a range of new personal and career development opportunities within the curriculum, aligning teaching and assessment with the attributes that employers are looking for in our graduates. Drawing on the expertise of employers and alumni, we will support students to make connections to the world around them, and will deliver University employability modules in areas such as sustainability, inclusivity, data science, leadership, and digital skills.

**Improving the experience and outcomes for our diverse student community**

We will continue to attract students from all backgrounds and numerous countries to access our education. We will work with our students and staff to address gaps in access to the University, and will develop new approaches to support our whole community of home and international students, from a wide range of backgrounds, to explore and reach their potential. Working in partnership with the Guild of Students, we will prioritise academic, mental health and wellbeing support, as well as wider personal development opportunities.

### **Prioritising and rewarding outstanding teaching**

We will seek to attract leading academics who enjoy the intellectual challenge of sharing their research expertise through teaching our students. We aim to create a stimulating environment in which exceptional teaching is valued and rewarded, supported by innovative career-long professional development through our [Higher Education Futures Institute](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/hefi/index.aspx). We will engage with global peers to ensure we are both informed and visible, developing new skills in digital education, programme leadership, personal academic tutoring, and inclusive pedagogies.

# **Engagement and Impact**

The next decade will see dramatic changes in the way people work, learn, and live.

As a civic university, grounded in the communities around us, we will be central both to shaping and responding to these changes. We will provide a model of how a global university can create meaningful change in the world, demonstrably improving the economy, society, and the environment, and contribute to human health and wellbeing. We already have unique innovation assets, cultural venues, international reach, and creative capacity. We will draw on these to maximise the difference we make to individual lives and society.

We aim to build partnerships that connect our research and education activities and translate our expertise into real-world outcomes. Our partners will know us as an engaged and relevant university, which is easy to work with and understands their needs. Through collaboration, we will tackle the key challenges of the next ten years, including inequality and exclusion, global health threats, climate change, the management and regulation of emerging technologies, and the fourth industrial revolution. We will shape regional, national, and international agendas, and anticipate and respond to the challenges of the future.

All members of our community, from students to professors and members of the [Professional Services](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/leadership/professional-services.aspx), will be proud of and actively contribute to the many ways in which the University makes a difference to the world around us. Our [Birmingham in Action](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/birmingham-in-action/index.aspx) campaign will allow us to draw on our extensive and influential alumni community to enhance our impact.

## **Our Birmingham 2030 goals are to:**

* **Become the best university in the UK for innovation**, **capitalising on our distinctive breadth of disciplines and innovation sites.**
* **Actively engage our local communities to enhance our education and research.**
* **Equip our students to make a difference in the world throughout their lives.**

## **Underpinning these goals our key priorities will be:**

### **Maximising the benefits we draw from our major sites and assets**

Using our wide disciplinary breadth, we will take full advantage of these assets to attract talented academics, work with strategic partners, translate excellent research into innovations and practical solutions, and grow our global reputation. Major assets include: [Birmingham Health Innovation Campus](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/birmingham-health-innovation-campus/index.aspx); [The Exchange](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/the-exchange/index.aspx); [Birmingham Institute of Forest Research](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/bifor/index.aspx); [Manufacturing Technology Centre](https://www.the-mtc.org/); [High Temperature Research Centre](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/htrc/index.aspx); the [Shakespeare Institute](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx); [Barber Institute](https://barber.org.uk/); [Tyseley Energy Innovation Park](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/energy/research/collaborations/tyseley-energy-park.aspx); and the [University of Birmingham Dubai](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/dubai/index.aspx).

### **Incorporating impact from the outset of all our major initiatives and research programmes**

From research grants to new buildings and venues, investment in academic capacity, and curriculum design, we will embed engagement in research, draw connections between research and education, and grow our research commercialisation. We aim for every researcher to have the tools and a vision for how their research will matter to others, both now and in the future. We will support strong pathways from ideation and discovery to translation and delivery in areas such as Quantum Technologies and Bio-medical Engineering.

### **Creating a wide range of opportunities for our students to make a difference locally, nationally, and internationally**

We will support development of the skills required for fulfilling careers, and to lead, shape and solve the world’s pressing challenges. We will draw on our size and academic breadth to provide opportunities across all disciplines for internships and placements, and our student incubator hub at The Exchange will enhance opportunities for student enterprise and entrepreneurship.

### **Seizing major engagement opportunities for Birmingham, Dubai and our other locations**

We will use events such as the [2022 Commonwealth Games](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/commonwealth-games/index.aspx), the [Global Challenges Forum](https://community.forumforglobalchallenges.com/home), and the Dubai Expo to maximise visibility and benefit for the University, our students, research, and the city more generally. We will work with the city to attract and shape future major events that have a global impact.

### **Engaging and working with our highly diverse local communities**

Our campuses, assets and venues will be open, places for collaboration with our partners, with a focus on active engagement of communities and the public. Through our [Birmingham in Action](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/birmingham-in-action/index.aspx) campaign, we will support staff and students to volunteer one million hours. We will provide our academics with resources, opportunities and inspiration to help them develop new and exciting ways to engage the public with their work.

### **Working across disciplinary boundaries to make it easy to engage with the broad expertise of the University**

Our academic expertise and voice will be recognised by potential partners and policy-makers as providing an essential ‘one stop shop’ for work across disciplines and sectors. We will be a University that contributes to the evidence-base in a broad range of policy areas, develops solutions to challenges, and creates and commercialises new intellectual property. We will shape public debate and policy to address regional, national, and global challenges.

# **Civic and global**

Having been founded as the first civic university in the UK, a university “for Birmingham and the district”, we are now also a global university, leading locally, nationally, and internationally.

These twin roles as an exemplary civic and a leading global university are mutually reinforcing: together, they strengthen our research excellence, student opportunities, and reputation. Our civic credibility in Birmingham, Dubai, Guangzhou, and other locations provides the foundation for our global reach. This global influence in turn brings significant benefits to the regions in which we operate, and allows us to bring new insights, solutions, and opportunities for our students, our academic community, our city and region, and the world.

With our ambition to be a leading global university, we will tackle global challenges, so that our research extends beyond regional and national boundaries to have international impact. Our students form an international community, and we will provide them with an outstanding international experience, both at their home campuses and through high levels of mobility. Importantly, we will build the confidence across the University to project our areas of truly world-leading strength.

As an anchor institution in the city of Birmingham, our Civic University Agreement captures how we will work with our local partners to continue to bring deep cultural, social, and economic benefits to our city and region. Elsewhere, we will play a leading role in delivering Dubai’s vision, and will continue to bring demonstrable economic benefit to through our partnerships in our sister city of Guangzhou, China. In India, we will collaborate across education, healthcare, environmental sciences, global surgery, sports science, and more, to improve lives in India and across the world.

The challenges faced by the locations in which are operate are those of the world, allowing us to speak with authority into the world’s challenges. We aim to build further the strong bridges between our civic and global engagement, making advances in shared challenges of regional, national and global importance in areas such as Interfaith Studies, Maternal Health, Social Inequality, and Air Pollution. We will provide our students with global citizenship skills, while enabling them to engage actively with their local communities.

## **Our Birmingham 2030 goals are to:**

* **Welcome the best international students, staff, and partners to Birmingham and our global locations.**
* **Take the best of Birmingham to the world, expanding our local, national, and global partnerships.**
* **Make a major contribution to our city and each of the regions in which we operate.**

## **Underpinning these goals our key priorities will be:**

**Reinforcing our position as an exemplar of a civically-engaged university**

We will bring cultural, social and economic benefits in each of our contexts. This includes working closely with major partners such as Birmingham City Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority and Birmingham Health Partners to deliver the commitments of our Civic University Agreement; playing a central role in the ambitions of Dubai and the UAE; and extending our impact in China, Europe, North America, and India.

**Nurturing current and new local, national, and global partnerships and networks**

We will expand the University’s global reach, drawing on our major research strengths to work closely with industry, academic, public and third sectors partners, in order to grow our research and education opportunities. We will work with our city and region to provide solutions to local, national and global challenges in areas such as rail, advanced manufacturing, energy, and sustainable business.

**Projecting our world-class strengths, locally and internationally**

We will raise our national and international reputation by equipping our staff with the knowledge and confidence to promote the University; by enabling our students to be our best advocates; and by engaging our alumni as ambassadors. All of our campuses and locations will benefit from our international reach and our convening power will bring together people and organisations to host debates of global importance, leading conferences and events, such as the Global Challenges Forum.

**Equipping our students to engage locally and think globally**

We will attract growing numbers of the very best students from around the world and will provide all our students with the option of studying or working abroad, to deepen their intercultural understanding and skills. They will be models of how to be both local and global citizens.Our students will contribute to their communities through volunteering, internships, entrepreneurship, and other regional initiatives.

**Building on our significant contributions to the wider education system**

We will continue to support the distinctive mission of the [University of Birmingham School](https://uobschool.org.uk/), develop the [National College for Advanced Transportation and Infrastructure](https://www.nchsr.ac.uk/), and train a wide range of health professionals to lead and innovate within the NHS. We will explore further opportunities to grow high-quality educational opportunities at all levels for excellent students in the regions that we operate.

# **People and culture**

Achieving the global ambitions of our Strategic Framework depends on our people: leading edge researchers, inspiring teachers, and high-quality [Professional Services](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/leadership/professional-services.aspx) and technical staff support.

We are fortunate to build on strong foundations of highly talented and engaged colleagues, who are committed to the core purposes of research and education, and who share the institution’s ambitions. Our staff have high levels of engagement and pride in the University.

We will capitalise on this platform by seeking to build a culture which is still more ambitious and high-performing, but also supportive and inclusive. We will seek to attract exceptional groups in our major research and education themes, whilst creating a culture in which all speak with the confidence and knowledge about the institution, reflecting the pride and reputation of being part of a major global university. With a focus on the development of people and teams, this culture will be enabled by effective leaders across the University who encourage career progression, staff who take responsibility for their own professional development and wellbeing, and flexibility and trust in how work is undertaken.

Being part of an academic campus-based community is central to the attraction of working for the University of Birmingham, enabling shared learning, formal and informal interaction, social opportunities, creativity, and collaboration within and across disciplines and roles. These qualities contribute to a vibrant culture for research and education, stimulating interdisciplinary thinking, and supporting collaboration within the University and beyond.

**Our culture is based on our shared values**, which we seek to embody throughout the organisation:

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| **Ambitious**  | We are confident in the University of Birmingham and project this globally. We are focused on our goals, are clear about our strengths, and pursue our own direction. We are bold and take intelligent risks. |
| **Innovative** | We enjoy being the first to do things. Inspired by our Birmingham [heritage](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/history-and-heritage/index.aspx), we are resourceful, creative, grounded, and practical, and seek to make a real and positive difference to the world around us.  |
| **Open**  | We welcome colleagues, collaborators, and students from across the world to work and study with us. We are committed to academic freedom, freedom of speech, and equality of opportunity for all. We expect everyone to act with sensitivity, respect, and fairness. |
| **Collaborative** | The major challenges facing our city, nation, and the world cannot be solved if we act alone. We enhance our research and education by pursuing creative partnerships within and beyond the University.  |
| **Responsible** | We operate with transparency, trust, and respect. We value our role as an anchor institution for Birmingham. We strive to be an excellent employer, to reduce inequalities in access to education, and to place sustainability at the heart of our work.  |

## **Our Birmingham 2030 goals are:**

* **Attract, develop and retain great people.**
* **Promote an intellectually stimulating and collaborative environment for research and education.**
* **Nurture a culture that provides opportunities for all to flourish and succeed**.

## **Underpinning these goals our key priorities will be:**

**Providing clear, flexible career routes for academic staff**

As a leading global university, we will seek to attract the best academics from around the world. Through the refreshed Birmingham Academic Career Framework, we will provide clear and attractive career paths for research, education, engagement and impact. We will provide comprehensive support and career development for our early career academics.

**Building further on the successful ethos and capabilities of Professional Services**

We will run effective and efficient services to support our research and education priorities, holding the contributions of all groups of staff in high esteem. Our [Birmingham Professional](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/excellence/professional/index.aspx) programme will support the ambitions in this framework, including for our support staff and the technical community.

**Delivering the objectives of the University’s recently renewed Equality Scheme** We will promote diversity in all its forms. We will significantly improve the representation of women and ethnic minorities, particularly at senior levels, and will reduce gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

**Investing in leadership development**

We will ensure all our leaders are equipped to motivate and sustain high performance in research and education, build effective and collaborative teams, support wellbeing, and create a stimulating intellectual environment. We will invest in training and mentoring for those taking on influential roles, and expect our senior leaders to influence nationally and internationally.

**Placing wellbeing at the heart of our decision making**

We will emphasise, support, and enhance wellbeing for the greater good of the institution and our colleagues. We will create a culture where staff are actively encouraged to take ownership of their wellbeing and support those around them. We will facilitate flexibility in how people work and support colleagues to achieve a balance of work and personal commitments. This will be underpinned by creative use of space and digital developments as part of the capital programme.

# **Sustainability**

As a research-intensive University founded on social responsibility, we have the expertise and partnerships to play a significant role in tackling global sustainability challenges.

In line with our aspiration to be a leading global University, we will embed sustainability in all of our activities, seeking to change society and the environment positively through our research and education. Our ambition is to deliver sustainability through pioneering research and innovative education, the behaviour and actions of our students and staff, and engagement with our local communities.

Our national and international collaborations will draw on our broad disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths to address the major global challenges of our time, expressed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will utilise our expertise and our extensive network of partners to take a scientific approach to building and adapting our campuses at Edgbaston and Dubai to be innovative and smart, efficient, and flexible.

## **Our Birmingham 2030 goals are to:**

* **Use our research and education to make a major global contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals**.
* **Collaborate with the Birmingham, Dubai, and their wider regions to tackle sustainability.**
* **Achieve net zero carbon for scope 1 and 2 by 2035, and overall by 2045.**

## **Underpinning these goals our key priorities will be:**

**Using major University initiatives to develop and share our research and impact on sustainability**

Birmingham’s contribution to research in sustainability will impact globally, including through [The Exchange](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/the-exchange/index.aspx), [COP26](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/cop26/our-research/our-research-homepage.aspx), the [Forum for Global Challenges](https://www.forumforglobalchallenges.com/), and the [Commonwealth Games](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/commonwealth-games/index.aspx). Through initiatives such as the [Institute for Global Innovation](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/global-goals/igi/index.aspx), the [Birmingham Institute for Forest Research](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/bifor/index.aspx), and our new sustainability research institute, we will address the UN Sustainable Development Goals, from discovery research through to changing the world, in areas such as mitigating climate change, creating and marketing technological solutions, and developing more sustainable cities.

**Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals to develop educational material for each discipline**

We will equip our students to be knowledgeable practitioners of sustainability, ensuring our courses address sustainability in the context of each subject. We will enable our graduates to be global citizens, insightful leaders, and contributors to a more sustainable future in their chosen career and their lives. We will draw on our academic breadth to develop programmes on climate change and sustainable solutions, from natural to social capital.

**Contributing to sustainability locally through collaboration with our city and region**

We will expand our activities on the [Tyseley Energy Innovation Park](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/energy/research/collaborations/tyseley-energy-park.aspx) to create and test new technologies that will move energy in Birmingham and elsewhere to net zero carbon, including energy storage, the cold economy, the decarbonisation of heat, and recycling. Through [The Exchange](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/the-exchange/index.aspx) we will engage our local communities in key issues around sustainability.

**Developing sustainable, smart campuses and ways of working**

We will work with our industrial partners to use technology to support our net zero carbon goal, running our campuses more sustainably, reducing emissions and optimising our campus for our community and the planet. Our Dubai campus will embrace sustainable practices, providing an exemplar building that can adapt to changes in technology, learning and climate. Utilising technology and mobile applications, students and staff will be able to maximise their efficiency, working smarter. We will continue our commitment to maintaining high environmental, social and governance standards across our investment portfolios.

**Supporting staff and students to be knowledgeable about issues of sustainability**

We will support our community to consider the personal actions they can take to reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to socially responsible activities. We will support reduced car use through the redevelopment of the University Station, development of new pedestrian and cycle routes, and more flexible working. We will use campus Living Labs for staff and students to research into sustainability and evidence reductions in emissions, and develop plans to achieve net zero carbon.

# **Measures of success**

Our 2030 Measure of Success quantify our long-term ambition. These are the principal means by which [Council](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/leadership/governance/council/index.aspx) will assess progress with the delivery of the Strategic Framework.

More detailed quantitative and qualitative performance measures that support these principal measures will be integrated into our annual planning process and used by [University Executive Board](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/leadership/ueb.aspx). This will provide accountability for all areas of the University in contributing to the delivery of our ambitions, and will support prioritisation of investment decisions.

* **Global reputation:** We will be recognised amongst the leading universities globally, ranking within the top 50 global institutions in the leading international tables.
* **Research quality:** The quality of our research will be amongst the best in the UK; our volume of citations per FTE will place us in the top 10 in the UK.
* **Teaching and Learning:** Our student experience will be exemplary, ranking within the top 20 in the sector for institutional student satisfaction.
* **Graduate success:** Our graduates will be amongst the most employable in the UK, ranking within the top 5 institutions in the UK for Graduate Outcomes.
* **Engagement and Impact:** We will develop measures to monitor progress against our priorities relating to social responsibility, community engagement, and economic and social impact.
* **Pride in our University:** Our staff will be proud to work at the University; our staff engagement, measured via staff surveys, will compare favourably with top national and international employers.
* **Environment:** We will make annual gains in reducing our carbon footprint, to achieve net zero carbon for scope 1 and 2 by 2035 and overall by 2045.
* **Finance and Growth:** We will continue to ensure our capacity to invest in our core activities, by maintaining a 10% annual surplus, and our overall income per FTE will be amongst the top 10 in the UK.

# **Supporting infrastructure and financial plans**

Our ambitions will be enabled by the delivery of several supporting plans.

Central to our strategy is the **financial sustainability** of the University. The University has a long history of sound financial management: as well as enabling significant investment over a long period in the people and buildings that are crucial for the University’s academic mission, this strength also provides us with resilience to manage during unexpected circumstances. We will continue to steward the University’s finances and resources carefully during the period of the Strategic Framework, recognising that this provides us with the ability to invest in our academic research and education priorities, including people and the physical and digital infrastructure. We will seek to increase and diversify our income streams whilst controlling costs, targeting annual cash generation of 10% of income to enable this investment.

We will continue to refresh and develop our campus facilities and IT infrastructure through our **capital and digital strategies**, recognising that high-quality facilities, space, and equipment are crucial to the teaching, research and innovation ambitions of this strategic framework. Approximately 60% of our non-residential estate is over 60 years old, so a significant programme of upgrade and refurbishment will be required. We will invest in new forms of space, to support more flexible and collaborative working. In light of changes to how we teach, research, and work, our investment in technology, through our Digital Strategy [link when published], will form a greater proportion of our infrastructure investment.

Our strategy will be underpinned by a clear ambition for the future **size and shape of the University and our student population**. We will continue to grow the number of overseas students that we welcome, while sustaining our strong and valued UK student population. Globally, we will continue to grow our new Dubai campus, whilst also expanding our programmes in China, Singapore, and other countries. Drawing on the lessons of bimodal teaching and the increasing need for flexible postgraduate education, we will expand our distance learning portfolio with full degrees, micro-credentials and CPD delivered on a variety of platforms.

Many of the key themes of this framework are supported by [**Birmingham In Action**](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/birmingham-in-action/index.aspx), the University’s fundraising and volunteering campaign, which aims to transform lives for our generation and the next by tackling the world’s biggest challenges, today. The campaign supports some of the most important areas of work in the University, including access to education, youth mental health, cancer, and the environment. As well as ambitious financial targets, the campaign also seeks to harness one million volunteering hours from staff, students, alumni, and friends.



[University of Birmingham](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk) | Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom.