



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Internationalisation Strategy

Edinburgh Global

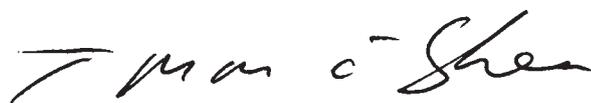
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The University is grateful to former Associate Vice Principal Sarah Smith for her contribution to the work that underpins this strategy.

Principal's introduction

“ The overarching priority is to further enhance our global presence. We are a distinctly Scottish university based in Scotland's capital, but our reach and aspirations are international and it is in that context we must be measured. We operate on an international stage and this must be reflected in all areas of University life; from our students and staff, to our collaborations that tackle problems transcending national boundaries, and in the important intellectual and societal contributions we make.



Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea,
Principal and Vice-Chancellor
from The University of Edinburgh Strategic Plan 2008-2012

Introduction

The University of Edinburgh has a long and proud history as an internationally focused university. This strategy sets out how we propose to build on that strong international tradition and reputation to ensure that we are best positioned to contribute and thrive in the years ahead. Given the ever-increasing pace of change globally, we need to be able to act quickly and flexibly. We need to give a sharp international focus to our considerable and broad-ranging strengths in research, learning and knowledge exchange – identifying and making the most of emerging international opportunities; communicating effectively internally and externally about the range of our international activity; and continuously improving the way in which we go about the range of our international work.

Globalisation is set to continue. It will bring new opportunities and new challenges for the next generations of graduates and academics seeking to prosper in and contribute to an increasingly interdependent world. It will also bring big new markets for providers of higher education, yet significantly greater competition and greater potential volatility. The implications of the increasing pace of technological innovation are likely to be profound. They include a huge shift in demand for ‘borderless’ education. The expectations of all students as more sophisticated, informed consumers of learning experiences can be expected to rise and the ability to recognise and meet such expectations is likely to be a key source of differentiation. We can expect increasing pressure on resources – human, energy and financial – adding to the impetus to be attractive to international staff, and offering new international research challenges and opportunities.

We are likely to be carrying out our future range of international academic activity in a global political environment that continues to be very uncertain. This will mean that we must be able to respond quickly and flexibly to perceived or actual barriers to internationalisation.

This strategy sets out how we intend to deliver on our aspiration of becoming a place of first choice in the minds of the world. The risks of not embracing this agenda are severe: in this dynamic, exciting and challenging world, to stand still or even to make incremental progress will be to fall behind. But if we are successful, we will see clear benefits in terms of having vibrant, internationally focused staff and students who are open to, and working with, the best minds worldwide. We will have recruited students today who will be the international leaders of tomorrow. We will see enhanced resources so that we can offer our students continually improved learning and living experiences and can make the investments that we need to make to develop our broad ranging and cutting-edge research agenda over the coming years.

We are already a strong, internationally engaged and respected University. We have set ourselves a broad-ranging and ambitious goal that will build on these strengths but require strong commitment, engagement and ingenuity from all of us to get there.



Globalisation will bring new opportunities and new challenges for the next generations of graduates and academics seeking to prosper in and contribute to an increasingly interdependent world.



Our international history

“Many of our students come from across the border, they come from every civilised land; and it is our proudest compliment, for it means that they think they get something here which is not to be got elsewhere.”

J M Barrie, *The Entrancing Life*

Inaugural address as Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, 25 October 1930

The University of Edinburgh has been attracting international students and scholars and contributing to international debate for more than four centuries. We have a long history of international expertise. For example, we have been teaching Arabic for more than 250 years and have had a strong history of engagement in Africa.

Some of the world's great achievers and most distinguished scholars, academics and scientists have studied with us over the centuries. These include such world-renowned figures as Charles Darwin, the naturalist and geologist; David Hume, the philosopher; Joseph Black, the founder of thermochemistry; John Witherspoon and Benjamin Rush, signatories to the American Declaration of Independence; writers including Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Walter Scott, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and J M Barrie; Peter Mark Roget of Thesaurus fame; Joseph Lister, who introduced antiseptics into surgery; James Simpson, who pioneered the use of chloroform in midwifery and surgery; James Hutton, the father of modern geology; and Sophia Jex-Blake, who opened the medical profession to women in Great Britain.

This strong tradition of academic excellence has continued with leading international scholars including Professor Sir Ian Wilmut, who led the team that created Dolly the Sheep; Professor Peter Higgs, theoretical physicist of Higgs-Boson acclaim; Professor Tom Devine, international authority on the history of modern Scotland; Professor Fraser J Stoddart, nanotechnology and chemistry; Piers Sellers, NASA astronaut; and Professor Annelia Sargeant (Caltech), former Chair of NASA's Space Science Advisory Committee and

Director of Caltech's Owens Valley Radio Observatory. The University is also associated with nine Nobel Prize winners including Peter Doherty (Medicine), James Mirrlees (Economics) and Honorary Professor Sir Michael Atiyah, who won the Abel Prize (Mathematics).

From our foundation in 1583, the University has developed a reputation for being one of Europe's principal universities. By the early 18th century, the University was one of the continent's principal universities and a major centre in the European and Scottish Enlightenment, a period characterised by an outpouring of intellectual and scientific accomplishments. As the French philosopher Voltaire famously said of intellectual thought emanating from Scotland at that time: “We look to Scotland for all our ideas of civilization.”

But it was not just within Europe that the University developed a strong reputation. We were the first university in Europe to admit a Chinese student, Huang Kuan, who graduated as a Doctor of Medicine in 1855. And such was our reputation internationally in the 19th century that a number of fledgling universities overseas – notably in Canada and the US – used Edinburgh as a model for their own institutions.

In recent years, our international standing is well demonstrated by those who have accepted honorary degrees with the University. Recent honorary graduates include Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission; President Mary McAleese of Ireland; Bill Gates, the Chair of Microsoft; Professor Zhong Nanshan, President of the Chinese Medical Association, who led the scientific team that identified the SARS virus; and Neil Armstrong, the US astronaut.



Our current international strengths

We are currently performing well internationally across a wide range of areas, as evidenced by global university rankings. The Principal and a number of colleagues within the University have played a pivotal role in acting as ambassadors for the University and in developing and fostering international awareness of what we do.

We engage in a range of international groupings of Universities, such as Universitas 21, League of European Research Universities and the Coimbra Group in order to promote internationalisation, academic collaboration, excellence in learning and research, and service to society. We shall continue to play a major part in the European University system, through cooperation and involvement with the Bologna agreement and its implications.

Edinburgh is a very special place, offering many attractions for international students and academics, including its wide range of national museums and galleries, stunning architecture, music and theatre, and easy access to beautiful and varied countryside. It is also seen as a safe place to live, compared to many other cities worldwide. So it is not surprising that it has been ranked the best place to be by international students. We provide good support for international students and many opportunities for engagement through our international office, clubs and societies, and our faith provision and worship facilities. The Edinburgh University Students Union is rated highly by our international students for the wide variety of services that it offers.

We have succeeded in attracting increased numbers of international students from more than 130 countries on the back of our reputation, teaching quality and location. Having a good proportion of international students offers all of our

students the opportunity to learn more about the world. In partnership with approximately 200 institutions worldwide, we also participate in exchange and mobility schemes that offer students and teachers a challenging and exciting international experience, providing them with new perspectives and an understanding of different cultures.

We have built up an increasing number of non-traditional ways of offering teaching and learning to international students, such as through distance learning and joint PhDs. We have considerable international expertise within the University and have developed a number of strong centres of international excellence, for example, the Confucius Institute, the Centre for the Study of the Arab World, the Europa Institute and the Centre of African Studies. We have recently launched a new Centre for International Development to promote University-wide support and engagement for enhanced interdisciplinary and cross-college activity relating to international development. Our international expertise and reputation enables us to provide an environment for challenging and important international debates.

We employ more than 640 international academic colleagues from more than 80 countries around the world and participate in numerous international research collaborations, attracting a significant amount



Having a good proportion of international students offers all of our students the opportunity to learn more about the world.



of international research funding. Through innovative initiatives to pool research in certain areas, we have been able to play a leading role in shaping and tapping into research expertise more broadly. A recent survey in the Scientist magazine ranked Edinburgh as the fourth best place in the world for post-doctorate researchers to work.

We have developed a range of strategic partnerships at senior levels with overseas governments, institutions and organisations, in particular with China where we have extended our links with academic institutions such as Peking University and the Beijing Film Academy in fields as diverse as e-Science, engineering, life and medical sciences, and arts and culture. We work in partnership with approximately 40 European institutions to facilitate teaching visits for our academic staff and we offer numerous collaborative programmes with institutions such as the University of Sydney, University of Trento, Universitat Aachen and l'Universite de la Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III.

We have a strong and vibrant network of alumni across the world. Recent alumni include Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister; Douglas Alexander, the UK Secretary of State for International Development; Piers Sellers, the NASA astronaut; Dr Michael Cullen, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of New Zealand; Sir Chris Hoy, the Olympian and world-beating cyclist; and Anneila Sargent, Professor of Astronomy at the California Institute of Technology, USA.

The University's strong and broad international performance provides an excellent foundation for us to meet the undoubtedly increasing and ever more complex international challenges in the years ahead.

“ We have been able to play a leading role in shaping and tapping into research expertise more broadly.



The Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea with Professor Min Weifang, Party Secretary of Peking University, at a ceremony in Beijing to celebrate collaboration between the University and China, 152 years after Huang Kuan graduated in medicine from Edinburgh, the first Chinese graduate of any European university



Joel Edmonson, postgraduate music student and Scotland's International Student of the Year, with Jimmy Choo at the International Student of the Year Awards 2007



The UK Prime Minister and University of Edinburgh alumnus, Gordon Brown, with his wife Sarah Brown, fellow alumnus Sir Chris Hoy and University Principal, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea, at the University's Olympic reception in Beijing, 2008



NASA astronaut and University of Edinburgh alumnus, Piers Sellers



Anneila Sargent, Professor of Astronomy at California Institute of Technology, USA and University of Edinburgh alumna

Our aspiration

Our aspiration is to become a place of first choice in the minds of the world.

This aspiration puts increasing our international reputation for quality – in learning, research and knowledge transfer – at the heart of our future activity. We want to develop further our relationships with the best international universities across this spectrum of activity.

Enhancing our international reputation should create a virtuous circle, building further and bigger opportunities for international research partnerships with other world-class universities and institutions worldwide; enhancing our ability to shape and secure increased levels of international research funding; attracting the best minds to work with us (whether to learn, research or develop commercial opportunities); increasing our ability to secure

sustainable income flows through offering increased opportunities to international students to study here; and offering all of our students increased international experience and understanding that will support them in building a future in an increasingly interdependent world.

Becoming a place of first choice is a process, not an end-state, and will require continuous improvement in what we do across a range of areas. Measuring success through the perceptions of others internationally means that we will focus on how we are seen by all the key people we engage with internationally – whether leading international academics, alumni, governments, institutions, students, schools or parents – and will ask ourselves how we can best demonstrate and deliver continued and improved quality in what we do to meet actual and future expectations.

“Our aspiration is to become a place of first choice in the minds of the world.”



Key outcomes

To reach our overarching objective of becoming a place of first choice in the minds of the world, we will seek to achieve the following key outcomes:

- A broad international understanding of what we stand for and what we offer
- Attracting the best students worldwide to study with us
- World-renowned research that attracts the best academics worldwide to work with us
- Knowledge that is valued and applied by business and government worldwide.



Key actions

To achieve the breadth of our ambition will require activity and thought touching on a wide range of our business. We have appointed a Vice-Principal (International) to lead this work, supported by senior figures within each of the Colleges and new Deans (International) for each of our priority countries or regions, and we will develop a sustainable model to fund investment in our internationalisation efforts.

We will tackle six broad strands of activity.

1 We will provide easily accessible information about the range of our international activity and what we offer.

As priorities, we will:

- develop web-based materials to act as a gateway to the international aspects of the University of Edinburgh, covering areas such as research databases; graduates and affiliates; academic engagement and expertise; and student resources; and
- develop our alumni network further so that they can help form networks and contacts and build reputation in key countries and regions.

2 We will offer a learning and living experience that explicitly meets the needs and expectations of international as well as domestic students.

As priorities, we will:

- streamline and further professionalise recruitment and admissions processes for all undergraduate and postgraduate students;
- put greater investment into (and respond quickly and flexibly to) market research in priority countries;
- offer significantly more postgraduate taught places – the Vice Principal (International) will work with each of the Colleges and Schools to identify ways of meeting the targets set out in the University's Strategic Plan, including identifying and agreeing appropriate incentives and removing barriers that may stand in the way of increasing our offer of good quality postgraduate programmes and places;

- respond swiftly and effectively to international student feedback to build on strengths and address priority areas of concern – starting with improving the accommodation service we offer; and
- offer a range of international scholarships to try to ensure that we attract the best and the brightest international students who may be prevented from studying abroad due to resource constraints.

3 We will best prepare our students to thrive in and contribute to an increasingly interdependent world.

As priorities, we will:

- establish an Institute of International Expertise which will draw together and better highlight the wide range of international expertise that we have within the University;
- support domestic students in gaining greater international experience through a range of measures such as targeted scholarships; new links with international partners; and increased promotion of short-term programmes overseas; and
- offer more support on careers, including attracting internationally recruiting employers and identifying more international work placements.

4 We will focus on building strategic partnerships in a focused number of countries or regions.

As a priority, we will:

- focus our efforts where we think we can offer strong added value to our partners and/or where our engagement will contribute significantly to our overall aspiration of becoming a place of first choice in the minds of the world.

5 We will secure a greater volume of resources from international research partnerships and increase the use of our intellectual property worldwide.

As priorities, we will:

- provide pump-priming money for potential partnerships for large international research grants; and
- ensure strong links are maintained and enhanced with key external stakeholders that promote and fund international knowledge transfer.

6 We will continue to develop a strong international focus and awareness in all our staff and in all that we do.

As priorities, we will:

- embed the value attached to an internationally aware and focused approach in key measures, such as performance appraisal, promotion boards, pay reviews and leadership training; and
- seek to attract more international academic staff – reviewing and monitoring proportions at school level; assessing talent pipeline; suggesting ways of enhancing attractiveness to potential applicants; and providing good support in post.

Measures of success

We will report annually on our progress, drawing from measures including:

- League tables
- Student surveys – National Student Survey and International Student Barometer
- Share of international research grants
- Brand awareness in countries and regions of strategic focus
- Numbers and quality of international students – we have a target of recruiting a further 1000 non-EU international students within three years
- Existing benchmarking studies on commercialisation
- Assessment of growth in gross value added from our international student activity.



Conclusion

The aspiration and reach of this internationalisation strategy is necessarily broad, as internationalisation touches on a wide range of activity within the University. It is not something that can or should be set in stone – it will need to be refined in the light of what we learn as we take this agenda forward and take account of the inevitably fast-changing external context. Both of these factors mean that success will be dependent on the energy, goodwill and outward-looking attitude of colleagues throughout the University. Given that support and engagement, building on our existing international strengths and connections, we will be well on our way to deliver on our aspiration to become a place of first choice in the minds of the world.

“ Success will be dependent on the energy, goodwill and outward-looking attitude of colleagues throughout the University.



Vice Principal's conclusion

“ The University of Edinburgh has always been a powerful academic magnet for students and staff from the four corners of the globe. We value the contributions they make to University life and beyond. Edinburgh alumni past and present have gone on to make genuine differences to the world. The University's responsibility must be to ensure that future alumni remain fully equipped for modern global service. All associated with the University – students and staff, past and present, home and abroad – have a role in Edinburgh Global. This is the roadmap we will follow.



Professor Stephen Hillier,
Vice Principal (International)

Useful contacts

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