Newman University
Strategic Plan
2014-2020

He has not created me for naught.
And to set forth the right standard, and to train according to it, and to help forward all students towards it according to their various capacities, this I conceive to be the business of a University.

Introduction

As a Catholic university, Newman University is committed to a Mission of Service. We are proud of our distinctiveness by name and by nature.

This new Strategic Plan sets out our plans and activities for the next six years. We acknowledge that these will be challenging times, but the timescale allows us to be visionary, aspirational and forward-looking. The Plan is seen as a ‘living’, developmental document and will be reviewed on an annual basis. Its brevity focuses the reader’s attention on the key messages.

The Strategic Plan derives from the unique framework of a bold preamble on formation as the key concept for all our activities, a clear vision, a reasserted Catholic ethos and the confirmed mission and values of Newman University; all in search for truth. We see ourselves as an academic community which is one of enquiry and research in all its different facets. Over time, this will prepare us for a submission for research degree awarding powers. We remain a student-centred institution, and in line with our motto ‘ex umbribis in veritatem’ (out of the shadows towards the truth) we approach this commitment in the spirit of a formative education for our students. We will continue to work on this and other aspects of our work in partnership with the Students’ Union.

Newman University fosters a community spirit among staff and students alike. Formation for our staff is naturally another focus of this plan. Although there will always be financial constraints, we are committed to help develop our staff for the benefit of the individual as well as the institution. The newly configured Academic Practice Unit will play an important role in this.

The development of this Strategic Plan has involved formal and informal consultation between our staff, students and members of Council. The successful delivery of our vision depends on their continued good will and commitment underpinned by a high level of understanding and ownership.

This is an exciting time to be part of the Newman community. The new Strategic Plan gives guidance, confidence and vision of the Newman University way to deliver Higher Education in a competitive and challenging global market place.

Sophia Pain
Chair of Council

Professor Peter Lutzeier
Vice-Chancellor & Principal
Formation in the University
Formation in the University

From information and knowledge creation, through formation to transformation

Blessed John Henry Newman’s chosen Memorial *Ex umbris et imaginibus in Veritatem* (out of the shadows and phantasies towards the truth), from which we derive our motto, expresses his understanding of the intellectual and spiritual formation which takes place in a University community. Newman University is a community of knowledge, but not merely knowledge as in the appropriation of information. Our University has a commitment to truly know what we know, which is the basis of true personal and professional flourishing. Such knowledge underpins our doing. In this our concern is not simply the totality and diversity of things known but also the moral integrity of the knower.

We believe, like Paulo Freire, that education is ‘the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world’. As many new types of jobs will be created over the next decade and others will disappear, to aim at immediate relevance is to aim for obsolescence. Learning is not reducible to the simple imparting of a body of knowledge. Education for a reflective mind, for well-being, for integral human flourishing involves a wider horizon of the good itself; my good, your good, the good of others, the good of our shared planet, the common good. Newman University recognises that each member of its community, in all their differences and potential, contribute to the construction of this common good.

All our teaching, learning and research, guided by wisdom and humility, is involved in the search for truth. Each discipline engages with a horizon greater than itself. The deeper we enter our own discipline the more it opens us to others, to what lies beyond the bounds of our own subject. In our shared and mutual formation as enquiring and knowing persons we engage what we know against the greater unknown. Our individual and collective knowing is finite but we are always stretching towards the infinite; ultimately, in the Catholic intellectual tradition, towards God.

The desire and love for truth - underpinned by a serious ethic based on evidence - courageously engages with what is assumed to be the case, questioning and ratifying but also rejecting and critiquing, constantly striving for ever more adequate viewpoints and hypotheses. This requires a certain intellectual humility between the extremes of arrogance, closed mindedness and personal certainty on the one hand and undue intellectual timidity and cowardice on the other. A community engaged in such questing knowing requires courage and generosity to engage the commonplace and to say what has not been said and, sometimes, what will not immediately be welcomed or heard. It also involves recalling what has already been achieved and so locates present engagement within the richness and beauty of our shared past and, in doing so, renews the hope of future insights and achievements.

Such disciplined practice directs us towards the whole of reality. It is a stimulus to see connections, continuities and new possibilities. This turning to the real requires a community that is connected, locally, nationally and internationally with other individuals and communities on the same quest to truly explore and understand the generous reality that connects us. In striving to follow Blessed John Henry Newman’s path from ‘out of the shadows towards the truth’ we become a community of transformation, transforming each other and inevitably the world we go out to engage and serve.

Formation at Newman University is:

- Education for a reflective mind, for well-being and for human flourishing;
- within a community of intellectual enquiry, which is
dedicated to the construction of the common good, the transformation of its members’ lives and of the world they serve and engage with.

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Objects, Vision, Catholic Ethos & Mission

I shall do good, I shall do his work,
Objects
The University’s objects are the conduct of a Roman Catholic university for the advancement of education, learning and research for the benefit of the public².

Vision
We are a values-driven university representing an academically excellent community of learning informed by the Catholic ethos³.

Catholic Ethos
The Catholic ethos means that as a university community, we:

- proudly stand in the tradition of Catholic education that values the process of respectful dialogue as a means of reaching new and defendable knowledge through teaching, scholarship, research and civic engagement;
- respect and encourage the individual integrity of everyone who is a part of the life of Newman University;
- are an inclusive community which emphasises the Christian practice of hospitality, cherishing the diverse traditions represented at Newman University;
- promote the values of Christian social justice in our neighbouring communities, nationally and internationally, and seek external partners who support this vision;
- place worship and reflection at the spiritual centre of our life and work;
- foster a sense of Mission of Service in students and staff, so that through our formation we are able to take responsibility for the flourishing of our world.

Mission
Following our motto ‘ex umbris in veritatem’ (out of the shadows towards the truth), we are driven by our understanding of a Mission of Service which directs our research towards a demonstrable impact on society and implies making higher education accessible to “the poor or members of minority groups who customarily have been deprived of it”⁴. We aim to make a strong contribution to the development of inter-faith understanding and dialogue, mindful of our location in the diverse community that is Birmingham. All our activities are underpinned by our Catholic ethos and guided by the values of respect for others, social justice and equity.

² Instrument & Articles of Newman University 2013
³ Within a reasonable time frame, Newman University will feature as a ‘100 under 50’ university in the THE.
⁴ Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities ‘Ex Corde Ecclesiae’ 1990, para 34.
Achievements and Reflections

1. With work placement modules built into all our degree programmes, it’s no surprise that Newman is in the top 20 in the UK for graduate employment*

2. Expect Development - we focus on developing the whole individual, fostering independence and building up critical thinking and analytical skills. This is why Newman is a top 10 university for personal development and academic support**

3. Newman uses an interactive teaching style not possible in large universities, and is ranked as the top university in England for teaching quality**

4. At Newman we give students the skills and inspiration to become independent learners, and we challenge students to think for themselves. Newman is the top university in the UK for satisfaction with academic feedback***

5. In the top 10 UK universities for student satisfaction, Newman provides a student-centred university experience* (Newman is also the top university in Birmingham for student satisfaction***)

*HESA DLHE Survey 2013  **National Student Survey 2013  ***The Sunday Times/The Times Good University Guide 2014
Following the approval of the 2010-2013 Strategic Plan, Newman University has made significant improvements despite the challenging and turbulent funding environment. The University has maintained excellent standards of teaching, as evidenced by exceptional National Student Survey (NSS) results, further improved its research base resulting in the largest Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission in the institution’s history, and continues to be financially strong.

Newman University was delighted to achieve full university status in February 2013 as this title now reflects the status of the institution as a provider of outstanding Higher Education (HE) in Birmingham. This was a major achievement in the history of our University.

In 2012 we completed the transformational redevelopment of our campus, the culmination of significant investment in the physical infrastructure. The estate development was an integral part of a major institutional project designed to re-focus and re-position our University. This has also encompassed a review of the undergraduate portfolio to ensure a suite of demand focused and academically coherent learning programmes are in place. An increased focus on improving academic leadership, and raising pre-entry attainment to further improve academic outcomes has also contributed to this project.

There have been significant external changes to the environment since the development of the last strategic plan. The partial implementation of the Browne Review resulted in funding moving from government Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) grant to fees paid by individual students. Although there was a sector-wide dip in applications and acceptances in 2012, followed by an increase in 2013, the predicted collapse in student numbers following the introduction of variable tuition fees as a result of the Browne Review failed to materialise. However some parts of the student population were affected more than others with, for example, mature student applications decreased by 14%. Raising tuition fees in 2012 has supported investment in the formative student experience. The further progression of competition within the HE sector, and student number controls, as well as uncapped recruitment of high performing students, has provided both risks and opportunities.

Newman University has strategically invested in academic leadership; with a number of professorial and reader appointments and investment in the research capacity of academic staff. This investment is reflected in the submission to the 2014 REF. The number of staff submitted for the assessment has doubled, and the volume of units of assessment has increased significantly.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has reconfirmed the robustness of standards and the quality of teaching and support provided to Newman University students with its confidence judgments. Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OFSTED) standing has been maintained, with all provision Grade 1, outstanding, and Grade 2, good in the last inspection in 2010. We continued to seek external accreditation for professional courses to demonstrate the value of the course and enhance employability prospects of our graduates. Newman University, proudly, has one of the highest graduate employment rates of all UK universities with consistently over 90% of students employed or in further study 6 months after graduation. A number of strategically important partnerships have been developed, which will benefit teaching, research, knowledge transfer and civic engagement in the long-term. Newman University is a crucial part of the local community being a large local employer, providing social and sports facilities to community groups as well as learning programmes based on local community needs.

The quality of our overall student experience has also been recognised by students and commentators. For ‘overall student satisfaction’ we are rated equal 10th and for ‘learning and teaching’ number 1 in England in the 2013 National Student Survey (NSS), and we are number 1 in Birmingham according to The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2014 for graduate employment. The latest Which? Magazine University Guide placed Newman University as one of the top two higher education institutions in the West Midlands.

Significant increases have occurred in reciprocal arrangements whereby both staff and students have taken up international visits, placements, exchanges and research opportunities. This has resulted in a more international community on the campus, and the widening of horizons for staff and students who have been overseas. The curriculum has and is being developed to enable students to operate effectively in a global society.

Newman University has achieved major successes during the period of the last strategic plan. We have a stronger platform upon which to build in terms of our research strengths, have completed major investments whilst maintaining a strong financial position and have weathered a turbulent external environment. We are in a strong position to continue to make a positive difference to our local community and wider society as a dynamic, high quality niche university.
Context for Planning
Newman University will focus upon its core mission to provide a values-based education through further enhancing the formative experience for all staff and students.

However a number of factors will significantly influence the planning process, including the HE market, demographic changes, Government policies and research funding decisions:

The market for HE remains turbulent and competitive. The Government is keen to promote competition within the sector and is encouraging more private providers to enter the market. Furthermore Further Education (FE) providers are also seeking to expand HE provision. In recent years we have revised upwards our entry requirements to attract a more comprehensive intake. This has resulted in an increase of average tariff points achieved, without reducing our proportion of students from Widening Participation (WP) backgrounds. In line with our Mission of Service Newman University remains one of the best universities in the country at recruiting students from WP backgrounds, significantly outperforming its benchmark.

Demographic changes in the UK during the period 2013-2020 show a significant reduction in the number of traditional-age students. Despite a spike in 2015 amongst female 18 year olds the overall trend between 2013-2020 is a decline of 11% in England, although Birmingham’s decline is smaller at 8%.

In addition to the declining demographic of traditional-age students the implementation of a control over the recruitment of new full time home/EU students has further constrained our ability to expand provision. This has encouraged a focus on part-time and overseas student recruitment and we will seek to expand in a controlled way our full-time undergraduate numbers following the Government’s announcement of the removal of the cap in 2015. However concerns relating to the long term viability of the new student loan system suggest a further revision of student finance terms and conditions cannot be ruled out.

Likely trends in Government policies to reduce public expenditure, increase diversity, and provide more influence to employers should impact the HE market significantly in coming years. Newman University must therefore remain alert to further policy changes and be prepared to anticipate and respond to changes within the environment to ensure the objectives of this plan remain achievable.

The implementation of one aspect of the 2011 HE White Paper Students at the Heart of the System reduced core numbers to develop a market for AAB+ (later changed to ABB+) and equivalent students. Whilst we have been successful in recruiting ABB+ and equivalent students to retain overall numbers, this policy adds further complexity to managing recruitment.

The Government’s desire to transfer Initial Teacher Education (ITE) from universities into schools has a significant implication for planning of ITE. Newman University has responded well to this challenge and working with school based partners, we are the largest provider of School Direct training in the West Midlands. We are determined to continue with an attractive ITE provision in the context of a multi-professional approach for education.

Research funding remains concentrated in research intensive institutions, and within Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. The probability of institutions similar to Newman University increasing their share of research funding is low. However research and scholarship are core to our mission, and investment in this activity will continue, including seeking externally funded research contracts.

Newman University will face continued competition and funding pressures and we will need to focus on providing a distinctive and student-centred experience to exceed the expectations of our students.
Formation for Students
Newman University’s focus is on formative education: the development of the whole person through transformative learning. Our students are members, alongside our staff, of a diverse and inclusive learning community in which we respect individuals and promote their growth into valuable members of society, able to make a positive contribution wherever they find themselves. We strongly encourage the full participation of our students in our community: working in partnership with academics and professional staff in a spirit of mutual trust and respect.

As a student-centred institution, we are proud of the quality of our teaching and we will maintain the high standards that we have set ourselves and that our students rightly expect. In order to maintain these standards, the scholarship of learning and teaching will be an important priority, guided by Blessed John Henry Newman’s wisdom that an educational system without “the personal influence of teachers on students will create an ice-bound, petrified, cast-iron university”\(^5\). We will promote educationally purposeful student engagement through collaboration between students and staff.

A key characteristic of our provision will be flexibility: in terms of the nature of our students, their modes of study, the pedagogies we use and the range of our curriculum. This flexibility will allow us to respond effectively to the increasing volatility in the HE landscape. We will build on our well-developed curriculum strengths in employability and work-based learning, allied to co-curricular activities such as volunteering, and our growing emphasis on internationalisation, which enable students to make meaningful contributions to society whilst simultaneously developing themselves.

Working with carefully selected, high quality, strategic partners will enhance our portfolio and enable us to fulfil our Mission of Service to provide successful access to higher education to learners from a wide variety of backgrounds and with diverse aspirations.

In order to achieve our strategic theme, we will concentrate on the following activities and developments:

- Further expand the opportunities for students, through Newman University Students’ Union and in other ways, to contribute proactively to the enhancement of their experience within our learning community.
- Develop and implement a Retention and Success Strategy to enable more students to fulfil their potential.
- Diversify our teacher education provision to include a strong and expanded Continuous Professional Development (CPD) portfolio, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities.
- Maintain an attractive and engaging range of undergraduate courses, taking strategic opportunities to increase recruitment of well-qualified students.
- Revitalise our taught post-graduate portfolio focusing on a small number of sustainable courses that can provide a source of research students.
- In order to continue to enhance the quality of teaching provided to our students, we will ensure that all our academic staff engage in appropriate CPD and address the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE\(^6\).

- Explore opportunities to broaden Newman University’s flexible provision, in particular making our portfolio more attractive to part-time learners.
- Further strengthen the emphasis on employability within the curriculum and, in particular, broaden the range of work-placements available to students, increasing the number of opportunities in social and private enterprises.
- Prudently develop initiatives with international partners including validation of overseas programmes and articulation agreements leading to international students studying at Newman University.


Formation for Staff
Newman University commits itself to being a learning organisation; a community of scholarly and professional practice which never settles but constantly grows and prospers. We want all our staff to develop and flourish in alignment with our strategic aims; to continually be and become the best they can be. To achieve this, we will promote a culture of collegiality and co-operation, open and honest dialogue, responsiveness and reflexivity, learning and continual professional development at all levels within the institution. We believe that being mindful of our values, thoughtful in our scholarship and reflexive in our practice is the best way to provide excellent, responsive service and outcomes to our students and partners.

At its heart our University consists of its staff and students; staff formation is therefore central to its mission, not least because staff formation serves to support the formation of students. It is the staff of our University that will deliver its strategic aims and objectives. Newman University is committed to providing transformative development opportunities for all its staff, to improve skills, enrich pedagogic practices, and improve the quality of provision for our students and partners. It will support scholarly activity which enhances teaching, research, knowledge transfer and educational leadership. Provision of professional and technical development for staff will promote innovation in service delivery. Promotion of respectful, interdisciplinary and collaborative working across the whole university community will highlight the important contributions all staff make in concert to our exceptional learning culture. This continual process of modernisation and renewal will ensure the sustainable development of University staff, maximising the contribution of individuals and teams by consolidating existing good practice and promoting innovation and excellence in scholarly teaching, research and knowledge transfer.

We will develop a progressive, coherent and integrated approach to the formation of our staff. Newman University will ensure there is an appropriate framework and infrastructure for staff work and development, at all levels within the organisation, which addresses and exceeds appropriate professional standards and seeks to inform and enhance good practice across all aspects of university life and provision. Staff formation rests on partnership between staff and institution which enables individuals and teams to realise their potential and participate fully in an effective learning culture.

We believe the working environment for staff has a direct impact on the quality of university provision. We therefore pledge to foster a culture where all those who work and study with us experience fair and equitable treatment and are respected and valued for their contribution. It is crucial to develop, attract and retain a high-quality and diverse staff base, organised effectively to maximise their potential and make the most of their aptitudes and skills. This will all be achieved by promoting organisational development and human resource practices which enable employee flexibility and encourage a sense of achievement and well-being while meeting institutional aims.

Change, development and growth are inevitable and necessary elements of a healthy, functioning learning organisation. Human Resources and Academic Practice will work in partnership with other services and providers within and beyond Newman University, to provide appropriate and effective opportunities for the development of all our staff. The language of staff transformation, self-actualisation, life-long, life-wide learning, collegiality and community creates a complementary holistic approach to that adopted by our University with respect to student formation.

In order to achieve our strategic theme, we will concentrate on the following activities and developments:

- Nurture a learning community, with shared values, goals and vision, that promotes a sense of mutual ownership, belonging and fulfillment.
- Foster a working environment which ensures the University is an employer of choice.
- Develop initial and continuing professional development frameworks which encourage reflective practice and both underpin and complement accredited professional and learning routes for all staff to address appropriate professional and working standards, such as the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).
- Provide management and leadership development programmes across all levels of the institution to foster a sense of broad corporate leadership and responsibility.
- Further develop an environment which creatively fosters the sharing and dissemination of effective practice across all our provision, including the effective use of new technologies.
- Encourage processes which support team learning through communication and dialogue within, across and beyond University disciplines, departments and stakeholders.
- Develop robust reward and recognition and promotion processes that encourage positive engagement with, and delivery on, Newman University’s mission and strategic plan.
- Implement programmes of mentoring, coaching and peer support for the enhancement of practice and succession planning at all levels within the University.
- Undertake institutional research to explore, reflect upon and enhance our institutional practices including the enhancement of iTrent management information provision.
Research, Enterprise and Scholarship
Our focus for the duration of the strategic plan is to be recognised nationally and internationally for the integrity and quality of our research and scholarship.

Key to this will be securing a platform for the achievement of Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) and an expanded submission to the next Research Excellence Framework (REF).

RDAP will be both a crucial staging-post in our development as an independent, fully-fledged HE provider and a badge of recognition that Newman University has achieved an excellent, mature research base on which to award our own doctoral and other research degrees.

Building upon the outcome of REF 2014, we will focus investment on securing a critical mass of academic staff who are engaged in research, practice, or other forms of advanced scholarship and can demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national or international standing.

We will ensure that the majority of full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies. We will also support staff to expand partnerships and external engagements in order that a good proportion of academics have experience of research activity in other university institutions, contributing to collaborative research projects, acting as external examiners for research degrees, or serving as external panel members.

We will expect all academic staff to engage in scholarship and to be scholarly in their practices. Scholarship is purposeful, well-founded and appropriately conducted; it produces meaningful results which are communicated effectively. It may involve knowledge creation, integration, sharing or application, as well as the development of ways of knowing in others. Such scholarship may issue in research publication but equally may find expression in other public outputs and forms of public engagement. The Graduate School and the Academic Practice Unit will work with staff and students to promote scholarship, researcher development and the exploration of academic identities. Engagement with emerging professional researcher frameworks will be promoted alongside support for the co-production of scholarship at all levels within our University. Students will be engaged as researchers and scholars, supported by staff who engage pro-actively in professional development to support their scholarly teaching, supervision and broader academic practice.

In light of the expected further concentration of research funding, it will be important to expand research income streams and demonstrate the impact of our research and practice on the wider community in keeping with Newman University’s social mission.

We will also seek to cultivate our third stream and enterprise activity through knowledge transfer, consultancy, and ethical employer engagement. These links can create opportunities and funding for research, as well as broadening the student experience, contributing to staff formation and generating income. An emphasis on social enterprise is seen as particularly important to enable staff and students to work collaboratively to tackle social problems and improve communities.

In order to achieve our strategic theme, we will concentrate on the following activities and developments:

- Building our capacity to apply for Research Degree Awarding Powers.
- Expanding academic leadership through the appointment of Professors and Readers.
- Sustaining an appropriate environment to attract high-quality researchers and postgraduate students.
- Increasing externally-funded research projects, independently and in collaboration with partners in the UK and overseas.
- Nourishing our research culture by protecting research time, mentoring early-career researchers and recognising research achievement.
- Growing research student numbers and timely completions.
- Enhancing advanced scholarship, pedagogy, and research-informed teaching and practice to the benefit of the student experience.
- Planning for an increased number of staff submitted to the next Research Excellence Framework.
- Supporting academic capacity to develop third stream work.
- Expanding research supervisory experience alongside a programme of training and development for supervisors and students.
- Nurturing student and staff community engagement.
- Engaging with and promoting students as researchers, co-producers and partners in scholarship at all levels of study.
- Fostering activity in social entrepreneurship and supporting staff and students to develop successful social ventures and enterprises in partnership with others.
- Attracting Visiting Academics who will help us to achieve our key strategic aims.
Collaborative Partnerships
In an increasingly competitive climate, Newman University will base its success in formative education, staff formation, and research on working effectively in selective, high-quality partnerships that add mutual benefit. Through collaboration, we will aim to achieve our aims to develop demand-focused and cost-effective high-quality student provision, to enhance teaching, research and advanced scholarship, and to raise our regional, national and international profile.

Our students and our alumni are at the core of our identity and vision as a collaborative values-driven Catholic university. We will also continue to work in co-operation and dialogue with Catholic and other partners to develop our mission and ethos. Internationally, we will undertake a limited number of targeted collaborations that add value and further our goals in formation and education with regard to teaching and research. We will also continue to focus our provision of shared programmes and distributed learning alongside strategic validation and development arrangements.

We will build on progress made to date with key partner schools and colleges, locally, regionally, and across Catholic education networks, to enhance entry into both our top-up programmes and undergraduate degrees. Our partnership work with schools will additionally be central to the development of our plans for teacher training and CPD provision.

External collaborative partnerships will support our key goals in the provision of a high quality student-centred learning experience as well as in research, advanced scholarship, civic engagement and enterprise. As income from public sources declines we will also seek further ways of expanding access to third stream and other external funding. We will thus aim to grow our income through collaborative working and to cultivate third stream activity through knowledge transfer, consultancy and ethical employer engagement.

We will implement our Mission of Service through engaging our staff and students in service-learning partnership activities which contribute to the local, regional, educational and faith communities to promote the benefits for all parties of working and learning together.

We will continue to engage with our growing alumni family to develop a global community of graduates who can offer support to our students and staff through their professional networks. We will promote institutional successes and CPD opportunities to our alumni to enhance our reputation and foster formation beyond graduation.

Newman University will focus on the following activities and developments with partners to achieve our strategic aims:

- Building sustainable collaborative agreements with high-quality organizations and institutions that share our values and Mission of Service.
- Enhancing our pedagogic and technological approaches to the appropriate and innovative delivery of flexible lifelong learning.
- Working with schools, colleges, and employers to ensure and enhance our reputation for high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate provision.
- Expanding our focussed work overseas, establishing selective progression agreements and potential to develop programmes.
- Growing our key partnership arrangements to optimize progression on to our courses, including selectively expanded recruitment to top-up degrees.
- Ensuring due diligence and quality assurance to secure high-quality collaborative programmes, delivering Newman University provision to students wherever they are.
- Increasing externally-funded research projects in the UK and overseas.
- Collaborating with external organizations and our alumni to develop our ability to offer excellent diverse opportunities for work placements, school experience and professional practice.
- Supporting academic capacity to work in collaboration with partners to develop research, social enterprise and our ability to attract external income.
- Building our work as active members of key external partnership organisations and networks to ensure our contribution in the local, regional, national and international communities are known, understood, and valued appropriately.
- Developing varied civic engagement activities to promote student learning from real-world challenges and to engage the community in the benefits of Higher Education.
- Engaging our alumni in the life of our University as valued supporters, ambassadors, donors and lifelong learners who contribute to and benefit from connections with us and each other.
- Aiming to play an active part in The Cathedrals Group.
Institutional Sustainable Development
All of the objectives within our Strategic Plan are designed to ensure the long term success of Newman University, while at the same time delivering on the expectations of the Brundtland report: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”7 We will continue to invest in the staff, facilities and resources required to offer high quality university education. We will proceed to generate research outputs of national and international significance whilst returning a surplus to ensure the long term viability of our institution. The financial health of our University remains strong, and the outcomes resulting from this Strategic Plan are designed to ensure this strength continues.

A review of the undergraduate portfolio in 2013 has resulted in a portfolio designed to create a range of more integrated joint honours courses, so that subject combinations are harmonious and provide students with a coherent formative education. It is likely that the portfolio will continue to be under review, with appropriate new markets, both in terms of geography and subject spread being considered. We will continue to explore the activities, partnerships and portfolio to meet the mission of our University, and ensure its long term viability. Financial planning to support growth and diversification will be undertaken in a controlled manner, recognising that to be an innovative and progressive university some risk is required. Such risks will be evaluated, understood and maintained at a reasonable and acceptable level.

Newman University is one of a small number of genuinely distinctive universities within the sector. Our clear strategic direction of delivering a values-driven university with a focus on formation of students will continue to be an attractive option to a significant sector of the market. This distinctiveness is underpinned by providing the facilities and supporting a culture in which staff can flourish, providing a firm foundation for organisational success, both academic and financial. As a community of scholars, open and constructive dialogue with all staff informs the decision-making within the University, and CPD for all staff is encouraged. One of the advantages of being a relatively small Higher Education Institution, is that Newman University utilises a management structure which allows for appropriate oversight whilst retaining the ability to respond quickly to changes in the environment.

This combined with high quality staff at all levels who believe in the values and mission of our University and a willingness to embrace change, and adapt to the challenges of the future, gives Newman University great confidence in what will undoubtedly remain a dynamic time in Higher Education.

This Strategic Plan is intended to function as a living document. It will be regularly monitored and evaluated through management structures and reports made to Senate and Council on an annual basis. The themes and aims of this Strategic Plan will be aligned with our risk register as part of this monitoring. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be achieved both directly and through a number of supporting strategies, in particular:

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Strategy
- Human Resources Strategy
- Estates Strategy
- Finance Strategy
- Collaborative Partnerships Strategy
If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society.

It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them.