UNIVERSITY *of* STIRLING

PEOPLE STRATEGY 2024 - 2030

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ATTRACT. ENGAGE. GROW.

OUR STRATEGIC PURPOSE

We prioritise people in everything we do. We act with integrity, mutual respect, and we champion the ambitions of our region and global community.

Wherever they work, our dedicated teams enhance the student experience. They shape our environment, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students and people. They create and maintain our facilities, promoting collaboration and community engagement. They drive cutting-edge research, tackling local, regional, and global challenges. They educate and empower our students, leaving a lasting impact on their lives.

Our People Strategy is the compass guiding our University's success through its people. Its purpose is to elevate employee engagement and productivity, while also attracting, recruiting, and retaining top talent.

We're committed to fostering a culture where everybody can realise their aspirations, feel connected to our priorities and know they make a meaningful impact. This strategy recognises that how we do things matters as much as what we do. It values the pivotal role of leaders and teams across the University and acknowledges our collective responsibility to create an environment that aligns with our strategic goals.

BUILT BY OUR PEOPLE, FOR OUR PEOPLE

We have developed our People Strategy to meet the needs of our University and its people. We want them to be prepared for the future. Whether it's innovative teaching methods, a new approach to research or maximising the opportunities of a digital world, we want our people to feel able to do things differently.

We have collective experience of responding to uncertainty. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted workplaces, it also caused us all to rethink what is most important to us collectively and individually.

We each have stories and experiences from that time that have shaped our approach to life. The pandemic provided a catalyst for change, an opportunity we, at Stirling, identified and grasped.

We achieved a remarkable amount during that turbulent, disruptive period – our collective efforts allowed us to act and respond quickly. We refocussed and transformed the mode of delivery across our core activities which underpinned a positive step change in our overall institution growth and performance.

We have taken the best of what we have learned and applied it to our everyday work. This has included proactively adapting our approach to working practices. Our new agile approach is helping to foster a culture that is enabling significant transformation in how we work and deliver our strategic priorities.

We remain committed to being a progressive and inclusive employer, responsive to the impact our changing world has on our people, and we will continue to build on that.

Karen Lawson
Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development

We have experience of responding to uncertainty. The Covid-19 pandemic caused us all to rethink what's most important. It was a catalyst for change and an opportunity we grasped. We transformed the way we deliver across our core activities, which marked a positive step change in our overall growth and performance.

We've harnessed this experience and developed a new agile approach that's transformed the way we work. Our commitment to inclusivity allows us to respond to the needs of our diverse people and the evolving world's impact on our team. Our community thrives on collaboration and mutual support.

We value work-life balance and individual priorities. We actively seek feedback to enhance our people's experience, empowering them to contribute, grow, share their voices, and maintain their wellbeing. By supporting innovative work methods, we foster inclusivity and resilience in an ever-changing world.

Feedback has highlighted the need to improve the overall people experience. We've modernised engagement through Be Heard and pulse surveys, promoting open dialogue and a culture of continuous improvement. We're committed to collaboratively enhancing our people's experience at the University of Stirling.

Our People Strategy is shaped by extensive feedback. We heard from our staff that their priorities include:

- Improving the welcome and induction process

- Enhancing the experience of our people, focusing on development, growth and wellbeing

- Streamlining, simplifying and automating systems and processes

- Offering skills development and career growth opportunities

- Creating more opportunity for interaction, engagement, and communication

Our People Strategy:

ATTRACT, ENGAGE, GROW

The University of Stirling's success hinges on our dedicated people, who together, make this a great place to work. Our size and structure allows each individual to make a visible impact.

Our People Strategy belongs to everyone. It inspires us to build upon our achievements, it brings out the best in our people and students and it equips us to excel and deliver our strategic ambitions.

Valuing ambition is one thing; delivering it is another. That's why, to develop our People Strategy, we asked three crucial questions:

1. How do we **attract**, recruit and retain the right talent to achieve our goals?

2. What's our vision for the experience of our people, and how can we **engage** others in shaping it?

3. How do we empower our team to excel; do we have the right skills mix, can we provide opportunities for our people to develop and **grow**, and can we create room for future talent?
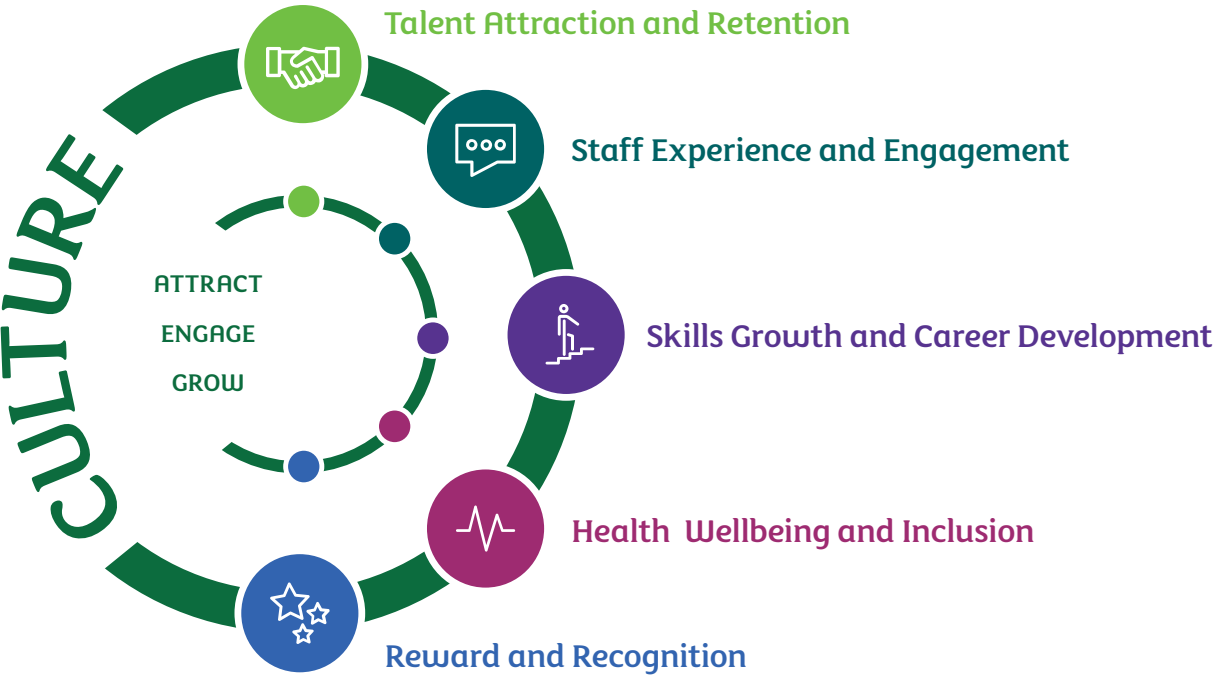
The answers to these questions have shaped our People Strategy: **Attract. Engage. Grow.**

STRATEGIC THEMES

**Our People Strategy will bring "Attract. Engage. Grow."
to life through five themes.**

We know it will take time to transform our University's culture and behaviours – our five themes are designed to take us on the journey and create the experience we aspire to.

We can all make a meaningful contribution; how we approach our work will be as important as what we do. To build on the culture we're collectively creating, we'll continue to be guided by our values of ambition, integrity and respect.

Talent Attraction and Retention

Staff Experience and Engagement

Skills Growth and Career Development

Health Wellbeing and Inclusion

Reward and Recognition

CULTURE

ATTRACT

ENGAGE

GROW

TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

The talent, ideas and collaboration of our people have been critical to our success. In an increasingly competitive global market, we'll build on this success, continuing to find ways to attract and retain the best talent to deliver on our strategic priorities.

Together, we will

- Define a recruitment strategy that signals our ambition and enables us to respond to competitive markets whilst modernising our approach to attracting and retaining the best talent

- Develop and embed an employer brand that reflects our values and sets out what distinguishes us as an employer of choice

- Implement methods to assess our retention rates among both new and existing staff

- Develop mechanisms that enable us to sustainably manage our workforce and promote employment practices aligned with our values

- Deliver dynamic and ongoing induction programmes for our people at every career stage to unlock their full potential while retaining our best people

- Create strategic people plans that will drive institutional performance and prepare our people for the future of work

- Identify opportunities for our people to contribute to and benefit from our international partnerships, including cross-institutional collaboration

- Explore strategies to 'grow our own' talent, offering opportunities to harness the early career potential within our University community and the local region

Together we have already

- Implemented our Agile Working Framework, enabling dynamic, progressive working practices that support agility, inclusion, growth, and high performance

- Grown our staff population to >1,800, with 92% of staff reporting that they felt welcomed to our University community

- Undertaken a strategic review of our welcome and induction processes

"Agile Working allows me to manage my work, home and life commitments without impacting my outputs. I am trusted to get on with work and can contact my team at any time. Equally I find working in the office as important for physical meetings and collaboration."

Agile Working Pulse Survey 2022

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT

The engagement of our people is vital to understanding, shaping and enhancing our staff experience and institutional performance. We know that how our people experience work matters and we will facilitate ongoing opportunities to learn more about what is important to our people and respond proactively.

Together, we will

- Modernise our systems to simplify and automate key aspects of our employee journey, giving our people autonomy and our leaders the insights they need

- Develop an engagement strategy that builds on the success of 'Be Heard', creating further opportunities for feedback and utilising it to make a meaningful impact

- Facilitate inclusive peer support networks and employee groups, providing our people with opportunities to build relationships across teams, facilitating collaboration and sharing diverse perspectives

- Continue to proactively provide opportunities to understand our diverse staff population and their evolving needs and expectations

Together we have already

- Engaged our people in the development of our new Strategic Plan through World Café and other consultation events

- Identified 'staff experience' as a priority within our Strategic Plan, demonstrating our commitment to collaborating with our colleagues to build an excellent staff experience

- Launched 'Be Heard' – a modernised approach to staff voice enabling our staff to provide feedback and supporting our leaders to prioritise actions that enhance staff experience with confidence

- Simplified key processes, enhancing transparency, increasing engagement and improving leadership oversight

- Introduced initiatives to engage staff in sustainability, active travel, biodiversity and waste reduction

"As a deaf person who has worked and studied at the University, I can say with confidence that it is a supportive environment for people with disabilities. I have been able to bring my best self to work, enabling me to succeed."

Lauren Wilson, Head of People Systems and Data Insights

Strategic Theme

SKILLS GROWTH AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Our commitment is to create a culture where every staff member can achieve their ambitions. This means creating opportunities and investing in our people to build future- proof skills, expertise and innovation, equipping our people to grow their careers and make an impact with work that really matters.

Together, we will

- Create and implement an innovative leadership development programme, blending various delivery methods to ensure a strong leadership pipeline that supports our strategic goals

- Develop an institutional approach to identifying and defining skills gaps and development needs, ensuring impactful learning opportunities are available for all staff

- Build our capacity to track and understand skills growth within the institution to inform approaches to staff development opportunities

- Revitalise our mentoring programme, to provide opportunities for staff to access a mentor to support their skills growth and career development

- Continue to invest in targeted leadership development programmes for under-represented groups, supporting a diverse range of staff to develop leadership skills and increase their confidence in pursuing leadership opportunities

- Implement a Digital Skills Framework and associated learning, enabling staff to evaluate their digital capability, reflect on their development needs, plan their development path and find the resources to develop their digital skills

- Invest in the development and delivery of an internal graduate programme, harnessing the knowledge, skills and abilities of Stirling graduates

Together we have already

- Implemented targeted support for female employees which helped improve gender balance in our Professoriate to 47% females against a sector benchmark of 28% (UCEA, 2021)*

- Invested over £150,000 over the last five years to develop a total of 77 female employees* through dedicated, female-only leadership programmes

- Put measures in place to support a pipeline of female academic talent, increasing the number of females who were successful in the Academic Promotion process from 55% in 2019/20 to 63% in 2021/22

- Committed to supporting the career development of our research staff via the Research Concordat

- Increased access to on-demand learning and development opportunities through LinkedIn Learning, with over 9,000 videos viewed by employees in 2022/23

- Launched the Jisc Digital Experience Insights Survey to understand how our people use technology and how this can inform our Digital Skills Framework

*The term "female employee" represents all employees who identify as a woman through our records.

"The University has supported my personal and career development by funding me to undertake an MSc in Big Data. Almost a year on I have successfully completed my first year of my MSc, I'm undertaking new challenges in my role, and have managed to find a balance between work and family life, aided greatly by the University's Agile Working Framework."

Lynn Caldwell, Data Analyst

HEALTH, WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

Being future-ready means investing in our people's health and wellbeing, continuing to evolve our innovative approach to progressive working practices, and further building an inclusive environment that responds to each individual's diverse range of needs and expectations.

Together, we will

- Continue to build on our progressive approach to working practices to support and enhance work/life balance

- Modernise our approach to collecting equality, diversity and inclusion data from staff to better understand how to build a truly inclusive culture

- Implement meaningful processes to measure the impact of our equalities work, enabling us to improve and broaden the scope of our equality reporting capabilities and further our contribution to achievement in areas of related priority

- Expand our healthcare provision and wellbeing support to ensure our people have access to the support they need, when they need it

- Broaden our network of mental health champions, enabling them to raise awareness about mental health and provide signposting to our community

- Continue to understand what contributes to our gender pay gap and how that might be further narrowed

- Equip our leaders with the skills to respond to the impact our changing world has on our people, empowering them to make decisions that prioritise health, wellbeing and equality

Together we have already

- Developed a joint University of Stirling and Stirling Students' Union Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-24, which we continue to deliver against

- Maintained an institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award, recognising our commitment to supporting and advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine

- Launched and enhanced a range of resources to support our people's wellbeing, including an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and digital health apps that provide free healthcare support and advice

- Worked with our people to embed progressive and inclusive working practices that have positively impacted work/life balance – 93% of women in senior roles reported that their work/life balance has improved as a direct result of our approach to working arrangements and 87% of

staff with a declared disability reported that this approach enhances their ability to successfully deliver their priorities

- Committed to host fellows through the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA), helping and supporting academics at risk find a safe space to continue their work

- Continued to narrow our gender pay gap from 18.72% (2020) to 14.12% (2022)

- Invested in the wellbeing of our community by supporting over 180 staff to become Mental Health First Aiders

- Enhanced provision of and access to health and fitness facilities by investing £20m in redeveloping our Sports Centre

- Launched 'Be Connected', a programme of social, health and wellbeing, learning and cultural activities and resources

"A combination of business need and individual need helps us to be inclusive and person centric. This helps me to enable my staff to do their best work without compromising on their wellbeing at Stirling."

Jacqui Lenaghen, Head of Student Support and Operations

REWARD AND RECOGNITION

We want our people to feel proud to work for the University and to feel valued, supported, and recognised. We will continue to build fair, transparent and sustainable reward and recognition processes that will position us as an employer of choice, enabling us to attract, recruit and retain talented people.

Together, we will

- Review our approach to reward recognition, ensuring it is dynamic and responsive to our changing environment

- Define, develop and deliver further opportunities for meaningful reward and recognition

- Develop a Total Reward Package that reflects our values, making clear to all staff the total value of rewards and benefits they can access

- Develop and embed an agile and consistent approach to discussing contribution, focusing on delivery of objectives and skills development

- Equip our leaders with the skills and tools to support our people in setting meaningful goals and identifying impact

Together we have already

- Committed to pay the Real Living Wage for all our staff

- Launched our Research Culture Awards, an opportunity to recognise those who contribute to a vibrant and collaborative research culture

- Introduced a programme of support to help our people demonstrate their achievements and contribution to prepare for promotion

- Launched and modernised a number of approaches to recognising exceptional staff contribution, with over 420 awards for outstanding performance (since 2017)

- Committed to improving how research is evaluated to promote best practice (through DORA)

- Continued to celebrate staff commitment through our Long Service Awards scheme

"Being successful in my application for academic promotion not only acknowledges my past achievements, but also encourages me and inspires me to reach for even greater ambitions and goals. This promotion means recognition but also motivation to continue developing innovative work."

Dr Diana Miranda, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

How will we know we're on track? We recognise the difficulties of quantifying people impact. At the highest level, we will know our People Strategy is effective if we are delivering our strategic priorities and our people feel they are making a difference.

Throughout the lifecycle of this strategy, we will regularly engage with our people to monitor, iterate and evolve the People Strategy. This will ensure we remain on track to achieve our ambition of being an employer of choice, giving everyone the opportunity to achieve their professional ambitions and make a difference at work while enjoying a high quality of life.

Attract, Engage, Grow covers the employee lifecycle, from attracting talent to fostering engagement and supporting growth and development. In developing our measures of success, it's important to reflect on the three questions that formed the foundations for this People Strategy:

1. **Have we attracted and retained the right talent to achieve our goals?**

2. **Are our people engaged in shaping our staff experience?**

3. **Are our people enabled to excel, with clear and meaningful opportunities to develop and grow at Stirling?**

Success indicators are set out below, categorised against Attract, Engage and Grow. These metrics will enable us to report progress against key elements of the People Strategy whilst remaining responsive to internal and external environment changes.

Attract

- **Talent metrics** – time to fill positions, quality of hire (assess performance and fit of new hires)
- **Employer branding** – brand perception (how the University is perceived by potential candidates)
- **Diversity metrics** – track diversity of candidates in hiring process

Engage

- **Satisfaction rates** – regularly assess levels of satisfaction
- **Employer brand** – measure likelihood of staff recommending the University of Stirling as an employer
- **Engagement** – assess levels of engagement with 'Be Heard' instances and staff engagement rates against our issued content
- **Retention metrics** – overall turnover and voluntary turnover
- **Wellbeing** – measure employee engagement in wellness initiatives and assess balance between work and personal life
- **Reward and recognition** – track and measure employee participation in recognition activities
- **Inclusion** – increased disclosure rates for employee equality characteristics

Grow

- **Leadership** – track development and growth of leadership pipeline
- **Career growth** – evidence rate of succession linked to career growth and progression by monitoring the percentage of permanent roles filled by internal candidates
- **Performance and delivery** – assess the effectiveness of individual development plans created through Achieving Success process
- **Skills development** – consistent measurement of the impact of skills development activity and initiatives

SCOTLAND'S
UNIVERSITY FOR
SPORTING
EXCELLENCE

UNIVERSITY *of*
STIRLING

GENDER CHARTER

Athena
Swan
Silver Award

BE THE
DIFFERENCE