



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Mission, Vision and Identity

The University's Identity

The University of Sheffield has roots going back to 1828 and was founded formally in 1905 via penny donations from the local citizens to bring higher education within the reach of the children of the people working in the great industries of Sheffield, to give support to those industries and to serve as a centre for the study of diseases. The University is proud of its origins and continues to value the role it has come to play in its city and region.

From its earliest days the city of Sheffield has been renowned for its steel. Its hallmark - for technical innovation and guaranteed quality - is the 'Made in Sheffield' stamp. Its many innovations in steel were rooted in practice, prompted by observation and made possible by understanding. They frequently changed the world.

The University's culture was endowed from the start with the best qualities of the city – excellence and innovation, curiosity, friendliness, independence of thought, and a preference for action over rhetoric. Combined over time with a determination to make a significant impact on global as well as local and regional challenges, these longstanding characteristics have created a distinctive identity for the University.

The University has expanded from its original intake of 114 students to nearly 25,000, who now study across a broad range of areas spanning arts and humanities, social sciences, medicine, science and engineering. We promote the potential for higher education to transform people's lives and welcome a hugely diverse range of staff and students from around the world to our city. We recognise too that some issues of international importance in the 21st century are entirely different from those of the past. We seek to play a leading role in the research and teaching needed to address the biggest issues facing our world today.

Over the years the growing extent of our ambition and the increasing number of exchanges of people and ideas has developed the University's reach. We are now a truly international university with a world-wide reputation.

The University's Mission

Our purpose has long been to improve the world by seeking to understand it better. The University's motto, "Rerum Cognoscere Causas", comes from Virgil's *Georgics* and means 'to know the causes of things'. We now define the University's mission in more contemporary language as 'to discover and understand'. We remain committed today to the goal of changing the world for the better through the power and application of ideas and knowledge.

The University's Vision

The University of Sheffield will be one of the best universities in the world, renowned for the excellence, impact and distinctiveness both of its research and its research-led learning and teaching. This vision is grounded in a strong belief in a culture of higher education built on a positive interaction between learning, teaching and research.

The University's Guiding Principles

There are six guiding principles that underpin the University's mission and inform all our strategic decisions. They combine to constitute a shared framework for our activities.

Achieving Excellence

Excellence indicates the very highest quality, significantly exceeding the norm, as reflected by the 'Made in Sheffield' stamp. It reflects a refusal to accept the ordinary. We aim to create an environment that supports and promotes success, encouraging staff and students to achieve and excel.

Cultivating Ambition

We set challenging and important goals. We are willing to grapple with the most difficult intellectual and practical problems of our time and are not easily daunted. We want to attract and retain people with ambition and to provide them with the opportunities to realise their dreams and develop their talents.

Making a Difference

Universities are one of society's engines of change. We seek to create, discover, share and apply knowledge through teaching and research in ways that make a difference and ensure that our work has a genuine cutting edge. We also want to make the experience of being part of the University something that shapes the life and prospects of everyone who comes here.

Working Together

Solutions to important problems depend increasingly upon collaboration: between staff and students, across disciplines and in partnership with others locally, nationally and internationally. We aim to build inclusive teams, maximising the benefits of difference and drawing on the skills and potential of the widest possible range of colleagues.

Protecting the Future

We have to think beyond the short term. In order to safeguard our core academic activities and the student experience for the future, we must ensure that our research and teaching are financially sustainable. We need to use resources effectively, transparently and responsibly and to be resilient and adaptable in the face of change.

Leading the Way

We believe that universities have a responsibility to look ahead to important new problems and to offer intellectual leadership to society in response to them. We expect our staff to be leaders both in their fields and in the governance of the University and we encourage our students to think how they too can shape the world both now and into the future.

The University's Strategic Planning

This document describing the University of Sheffield's mission, vision and identity frames our approach to strategic planning. Although our guiding principles need to be applied to changing situations and conditions, and to chart new ways of working, we see them as enduring over time. They stand as the touchstone of the kind of university we aspire to be, guiding the choices we all make in our daily work.

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