



University of
St Andrews

Careers Centre Strategic Plan 2021-2024

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Purpose	The Careers Centre's purpose, aspirations, values, and approach. This document also supports five distinct themes in the overall University Strategy: world- leading, diverse, entrepreneurial, global and social responsibility.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.1	Updated	Published	Tracey Dall, Information Officer, Careers Centre	19/12/2023
1.0	New strategy document	Published	Tracey Dall, Information Officer, Careers Centre	02/12/2021

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Context

The world of work is becoming an increasingly complex environment to navigate. Students and graduates are faced with an unprecedented array of rapidly evolving career choices at a time when there is a high level of uncertainty in the global geopolitical and economic climate. In this context, equipping our students and graduates with the lifelong skills to thrive in their careers has never been more challenging or important.

The AGCAS response to these challenges has been to focus on futureproofing and professionalising our work, developing an ambitious new quality standard that reflects the need for us to be collaborative, agile, and expert, providing cutting edge services to our stakeholders and leadership for our institutions.

Our university's response has been to recognise the important role that employability and enterprise plays within the curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular experience at St Andrews. This challenges us as a service to become more visible, mobilising the full resources of our university community to embed meaningful employability experiences into every facet of university life.

Purpose

We educate, inspire and empower our students to equip them with the lifelong career management and enterprise skills they need to create meaningful and fulfilling careers, whatever their ambitions.

We offer horizon-broadening opportunities and challenging experiences alongside professional information, advice and guidance to allow all our students to:

- explore who they are and what makes them curious
- focus their plans and ambitions
- feel empowered to act to successfully realise their career ambitions

Strategic aspirations

Our ambition is to become an essential part of the life of the university and student experience, and a leading careers service in the higher education sector.

We will do this by:

- developing ourselves as institutional experts and leaders in careers, employability and enterprise
- strengthening our local, national and international partnerships and connections
- mobilising our wider St Andrews alumni community to support our students and graduates in becoming thriving members of our global family

Values and approach

Partnership working with our local and global stakeholders is at the heart of what we do, and we work collaboratively in the design, development and delivery of our services. We are also a committed member of the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) and live our collective values of equity, honesty, integrity, impartiality, reliability, and professionalism, in order to support achievement for all.

Strategic Priority 1: Enhancing Engagement

We recognise that, whilst we offer a range of services, our students, graduates and colleagues are not always aware of them and are not clear about the value of engaging with us. Working in partnership with our stakeholders, we aim to raise the profile and value of our offer and make it easier for students, prospective students, graduates, and colleagues to engage with us.

We will do this by:

- a) Providing visible institutional leadership on careers, employability and enterprise, demonstrating that our expertise adds value to the university, and promoting the effectiveness of our work
- b) Re-branding the Careers Centre and developing a communications strategy to raise awareness of the Careers Centre, and how we can support student success
- c) Raising the profile of our expertise in student/graduate careers, employability and enterprise by dissemination of our work through committees, conferences, publications, and awards
- d) Creating and promoting a coherent student career journey so that students know how to engage with us and ensuring that all our services align with that journey
- e) Designing innovative solutions to increase engagement, including creating and hosting exciting, highprofile events to build our brand and draw students in
- f) Developing well-designed, accessible and informative web resources, recognising that this is the first, and sometimes only, way that students might engage with us

➤ **University of St Andrews strategy:** [World-Leading](#); [Diverse](#); [Entrepreneurial](#)

Strategic Priority 2: Embedding data-driven practice

We want to ensure the continued value of our services by working towards a data-informed approach to service delivery. We will analyse and interpret data to review and develop our services, focusing our work where it is most wanted, needed or has the greatest engagement and impact. This allows us to be agile and responsive, ensuring that we make the best use of the resources we have available.

We will do this by:

- a) Proactively seeking and employing data to evaluate, develop and improve our services for the benefit of our stakeholders, and to make the most effective use of our resources
- b) Researching and making use of data and information that allows us to anticipate and adapt to trends and predictions in the world of work, ensuring our services are relevant to current and future needs

- c) Regularly gathering, analysing, and presenting data to support reporting and accountability to our stakeholders, evidencing the professionalism, impact and efficacy of our services
- d) Using data to identify at-risk students and take appropriate actions to support them
- e) Using data as a mechanism to support and engage our academic and PS colleagues; applying our expertise to interpret data for the benefit of our stakeholders

➤ **University of St Andrews strategy:** [World-Leading](#); [Diverse](#); [Global](#)

Strategic Priority 3: Engaging our Students and Graduates

Students are at the heart of our work, and we aim to deliver a high-quality service for all our students, including those who do not currently engage with us. We recognise that not all students will connect with us at the Careers Centre and aim to reach them where they engage best. We aim to integrate their needs more fully into our service planning and delivery, working to better understand who they are, what they need, and how they engage with our services.

We will do this by:

- a) Creatively engaging students where they are, irrespective of background, discipline or interests
- b) Building careers, employability and enterprise into every facet of the student experience
- c) Identifying and engaging our students who are most at-risk, and who need us most
- d) Designing services that support student career development, as well as their transition skills
- e) Working in partnership with students to shape and deliver quality services and opportunities
- f) Supporting the global ambitions of our students

➤ **University of St Andrews strategy:** [Social Responsibility](#); [World-Leading](#); [Diverse](#); [Global](#); [Entrepreneurial](#)

Strategic Priority 4: Strengthening Partnerships with Schools and Units

The university's success with graduate employability depends on the ongoing contribution of our professional service (PS), academic and school-based staff. We aim to build on the university's achievements in this area by building strong partnerships with our academic and PS colleagues, sharing best practice, and developing opportunities for enhanced engagement with careers, employability and enterprise.

We will do this by:

- a) Enhancing relationship management by transitioning to a consultancy model of working, sharing our specialist expertise with colleagues to support engagement with careers, employability and enterprise (e.g. through provision of advice, training, data analysis, creative problem-solving)
- b) Developing data-rich, co-owned career plans and partnership agreements for each School and relevant Unit
- c) Regularly training and sharing best practice with Career Links, Academic Advisors and PS staff to develop an embedded culture of careers, employability and enterprise in the curricular, cocurricular and extra-curricular student experience

- d) Engaging with all School and PS staff to raise awareness of their students' and graduates' employability, working in partnership to identify successes and areas for improvement
- e) Working with the Principal's Office to support recognition of the contribution that our academic staff make to the university's success with graduate employability

➤ **University of St Andrews strategy:** [World-Leading](#); [Diverse](#); [Entrepreneurial](#)

Strategic Priority 5: Cultivating connections with Employers, Alumni and Parents

The success of our students and graduates depends on cultivating good relationships with employers, alumni, and parents in order to inspire our students as to what is possible for them, and to give them highquality experiences and graduate-level jobs. We intend to improve the quality and quantity of connections that we make, and to maximise the benefits of those relationships for our students and graduates.

We will do this by:

- a) Increasing the number of connections that we have with global employers, alumni, and parents, and helping students/graduates to engage with them
- b) Working with Schools, Units and students to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships with employers, alumni and parents
- c) Building on one of our greatest assets by finding innovative ways to engage with our global alumni community
- d) Improving our systems for relationship and account management
- e) Developing a data-informed approach to target the sectors of greatest interest to our students
- f) Increasing the visibility and availability of graduate jobs, work experience and internships

➤ **University of St Andrews strategy:** [Social Responsibility](#); [World-Leading](#); [Diverse](#); [Global](#); [Entrepreneurial](#)

Strategic Priority 6: One Team

We know that delivering quality services for our stakeholders depends on the Careers Centre staff team. We achieve more as one team than as separate individuals and are at our most effective when we use our strengths to work together towards common goals and a shared purpose.

We will do this by:

- a) Agreeing and committing to our shared values and behaviours to create a healthy workplace
- b) Developing and equipping staff to work to a high professional standard
- c) Giving staff ownership and accountability over their tasks, self-development and training
- d) Building a culture of cross-unit working
- e) Developing robust processes, policies and procedures to support our 'one team' ethos
- f) Regularly reviewing our performance and workplace culture in a spirit of continuous improvement

➤ **University of St Andrews strategy:** [Social Responsibility](#); [World-Leading](#); [Diverse](#)

Strategic enablers

Our ambitious strategy is underpinned by three strategic enablers, and we will work with colleagues and the Principal's Office to ensure that we have robust support in place.

1. We cannot achieve our aims without a robust branding and communications strategy. This will raise the profile both of employability and our unit, helping our stakeholders understand us and the value that we bring in delivering quality-assured professional careers, employability and enterprise support for the university.
2. The engagement of our academic schools and staff is vital. Employability is co-production, relying on the efforts of all our colleagues, and the engagement of students. We recognise that our Schools are where our students engage best, and School-based staff will be critical to the success of our strategy.
3. Our global alumni community is one of our greatest and most unique assets. Fostering strong relationships with Development and our alumni underpin our success.

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