

Newman University

People Strategy 2023-2026

The People Strategy underpins [the two sub-strategies of the Strategic Framework](#) and is vital in enabling the University realise its strategic aims to Grow our Institution and Nurture Our Staff in the context of our Strategic Framework 2020-25.

Newman University strives to be a learning organisation where ***Working together-Growing together*** is a lived experience for everyone. The pursuance of excellence for our students lies at the heart of everything we do. Grounded in the University's mission and values, the strategy highlights our commitment to providing a positive and transformative educational experience for our students. Our success in achieving this objective depends on the expertise, dedication, and professionalism of our people. We recognise that how we value and treat our people is critical to fostering excellence in all areas of teaching, research, and professional services. By strengthening our position as an 'employer of choice', we demonstrate our commitment to our people through our efforts to provide a positive employment lifecycle at Newman, attracting talented individuals who want to work and grow in a stimulating and inclusive environment.

Purpose and Principles

The key purpose of the People Strategy is to support the growth in student recruitment while ensuring ethical development and sustainability of the institution. Our values of social justice and sense of mission are demonstrated through our commitment to achieving student success and build a positive contribution to our community and wider society.

We recognise that our staff are instrumental in achieving a positive educational and transformative experience for our students. We are committed to supporting their development and well-being in alignment with our strategic aims, providing a stimulating working environment which addresses professional standards and promotes good practice across all aspects of university life.

We expect all staff to be involved in ***Working together – Growing together***, with a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities aligned with the strategic objectives of the University. This transformational endeavour sits alongside a range of activities, practices, and opportunities available to staff. By consolidating existing good practices and promoting innovative ways of working, professional practice, scholarship, and research, we aim to enhance performance and efficiency through the effective management of the University's people, their health, well-being, and development. We will continue to focus on creating the conditions and culture that support staff growth and success. We will do this by strategically allocating resources to modernise and achieve the University's strategic framework and sub-strategies, while promoting professional behaviours and respectful, interdisciplinary, and collaborative working across the University community.

Working together- Growing together

The strategic direction of *Working together-Growing together* is outlined in six themes: employer of choice; organisational development, design and sustainability; leadership and management; developing our people; equality, diversity and inclusion; health, wellbeing and engagement.

Working together-Growing together provides a framework within which the Newman community can work together effectively toward the achievement of excellence. The University will foster professional behaviours that promote the types of activity the University believes will promote excellence. They are intended to be applicable to all staff at the University and can be adapted to reflect the particular needs and circumstances of different roles within a constantly changing environment; externally (markets change, new competitors emerge, and technology evolves) and internally (people come and go, cultures evolve, and leadership agendas change).

1. Employer of Choice

Objective: Strengthening the University's position as an 'employer of choice' by providing a positive employment lifecycle experience that attracts and retains talented individuals to work and grow in a stimulating and inclusive environment, where the pursuit of excellence for our students is at the heart of everything we do

To achieve this, we will:

- Establish a shared understanding of institutional priorities that balances our commitment to our people while maintaining the sustainability of the institution. We will promote a positive staff and student experience by setting clear expectations and creating a supportive and inclusive environment in which they can succeed
- Develop a shared understanding of professional behaviours and staff attributes (Newman Academic and Newman Professional) that promote respectful dialogue, dignity at work; in which we expect all colleagues to conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with our shared values
- Modernise role descriptors, appraisal processes, and promote new and innovative ways of working aligned to digital and other enabling technologies to promote excellence in what we do and a common purpose of supporting the success of our students
- Continue to review our career offer and reward package that recognises excellence, staff contribution, innovation and success, ensuring it remains attractive and competitive in the face of evolving challenges and change
- Promote a learning environment within which the University community can work together effectively toward the achievement of excellence by prioritising and organising work/workloads fairly and equitably to meet objectives and manage performance, to an agreed specification, timeline and within budget
- Create an inclusive people-centred culture where everyone feels welcomed and engaged at work and where every 'voice' is heard in a spirit of openness and mutual respect about how the University can improve its operations and the working environment to better support both the staff and student experience.

2. Organisational development, design and sustainability

Objective: Explore innovative approaches to organisation development and design (OD&D) to improve performance and effectiveness through modernising our operating models, structures, frameworks, systems and metrics to deliver positive sustainable change and build an adaptable workforce and create great employee and student experiences

To achieve this, we will:

- Develop a workforce planning process that adopts best practice and explores new approaches to ensure our people practices and models of employment are developed to support the University's long-term sustainability (Sustainability Plan)
- Establish a clear and transparent staff costing model and understanding of how our staff costs are constructed ensuring resources are considered in a transparent and consistent manner in furtherance of our strategic objectives
- Continuously review and adapt organisational structures to ensure operational agility, value for money and improved service delivery practices to enable the university to respond to both external and internal workforce planning challenges, providing upskilling opportunities as necessary

- Review our change management practices and establish shared principles in which to govern the way we manage, communicate and implement transformational change programmes and processes fairly and equitably to modernise the University in accordance with best practices
- Promote change agent advocates within Faculties and Directorates to champion innovative practices and OD&D
- Promote and support special interest networks, managed by staff for staff, to act as centres of informed practice and knowledge exchange.

3. Leadership and management

Objective: Support and foster confidence and capability amongst our leaders and managers to deliver innovative and creative solutions that enable the University to thrive

To achieve this, we will:

- Develop a management and leadership competencies matrix, building on professional standards/programmes in the sector, to create a clear and shared understanding of priorities, role descriptors and expectations at all line management levels
- Broaden management and leadership provision to enable managers at all levels to support the delivery of university priorities through formal learning, professional networks, building communities of practice, and a culture of sharing good practice, peer observation and effective appraisal
- Encourage colleagues to engage in the expansion of partnerships, engagement in external professional networks and promote engagement in sector bodies to enhance knowledge and practice exchange in order to build corporate knowledge base and experience in the pursuance of our strategic aims and long-term sustainability
- Promote multi-disciplinary working and breaking down barriers between functions and job roles and encouraging collaborative working across the institution to engender widespread and shared ownership of our corporate objectives and their delivery.

4. Developing our people

Objective: Develop high quality, flexible and sustainable learning and development interventions for all our people and provide them with the opportunity to engage in continuous professional development with the necessary support to respond to a changing landscape in which we operate

To achieve this, we will:

- Deliver a comprehensive professional development programme which encourages our people to strive for continuous improvement and excellent performance, communication and engagement; ensuring all staff have a clear understanding of their role, expectations and alignment of their personal objectives with the strategic objectives of the University
- Refresh the matrix of skills, knowledge and attributes for staff development (individuals and teams) to ensure staff receive relevant and timely development opportunities to support them in their present and future roles whilst promoting and raising staff profiles
- Explore the provision for mentoring and coaching, that complements academic mentorship, promoting a model of continuous feedback through guidance, support and promoting career pathways for academic and professional services staff

- Deliver digital skills to enable staff to grow in confidence and improve utilisation of new technologies and innovative teaching practices
- Identify, nurture and retain our talent through engagement and proactive succession planning to ensure staff are ready for emerging opportunities and/or to fill 'business-critical' positions.
- Maximise research and advanced scholarship activity towards securing a research culture that can support an application for RDAP.

5. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Objective

Promote and nurture an inclusive University community committed to advancing equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, where all people feel valued regardless of heritage, lifestyle, socio-economic background or protected characteristics

To achieve this, we will:

- Foster a sense of belonging which embraces difference and engenders a culture where people feel at ease discussing, sharing and celebrating diversity within our community through our formal committee structures, staff communications, staff networks and appraisal processes.
- Increase the proportion of employees from under-represented groups and improve our staffing profile and, promoting positive action initiatives where required, in relation to the recruitment, retention, development and inclusion of all under-represented groups
- Provide confidential support and guidance for staff who present with issues in respect of harassment and discrimination through the enhancement of our Dignity at Work contacts
- Review, extend and embed best practice with respect to equality impact assessments across all aspects of the employment lifecycle and
- Enhance the EDI training provision and EDI initiatives to promote understanding in relation to fairness of opportunity, equality, discrimination and harassment¹
- Continue to support the Aurora and AUA Programme and a women's networking group to enhance opportunities for female progression.

6. Health, wellbeing and engagement

Objective

Foster an organisational culture of engagement which promotes positive health and wellbeing which is embedded and reflects our approach to health and safety across the University

To achieve this, we will:

- Recognise the link between the health and wellbeing of our people and the success of the University as an employer of choice and a place where employees want to work
- Promote a culture where staff feel empowered to manage their own health and wellbeing and supported in their work-life balance

- Encourage healthy behaviours through wellbeing workshops, therapeutic group sessions, mindfulness programmes, B Active, and Healthy Minds etc and to breakdown myths and stigmas associated with mental health
- Seek collaboration with internal partners to develop specialist training and wellbeing resources, guidance, manager and staff toolkits, and events for staff (including suicide awareness, anti-racism, cultural awareness, neurodiversity)
- Establish partnership working links with sector interest groups and key providers: Practitioners Forum, Thrive, Public Health, Charlie Waller Trust, Birmingham City Council and Mind
- Promote UUK Step Change and University Mental Health Charter for sector best practice in preparation for registering for charter status, this will include the development of a Mental Health Plan (aligned to the principles of the Stevenson and Farmer report)
- Continue to build the wellbeing offer and EAP provision to enhance mental health and wellbeing interventions
- Consult, design and communicate role descriptors and training for the creation of Wellbeing Champions at Faculty/Directorate level and across the university. Champions will be advocates for staff in promoting wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion.

People Plan

The Human Resources directorate will provide an **annual plan of agreed University priorities in relation to the implementation of the People Strategy**. The plan will set out the specific projects to be undertaken to focus human resource management activity on achieving each using specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound objectives. Alongside this work the directorate will continue to offer timely advice, guidance and support to leaders, managers, and staff across the University.

We will achieve our objectives by maximising resources and focusing on capabilities and performance that aligns to University's strategy, goals and core purpose. This will be a shared responsibility with corporate leadership and functional line management in conjunction with the University's Human Resources directorate.

Governance Process

The University Leadership Team (ULT) is responsible for all matters relating to the approval, management, resourcing and implementation of the University's People Strategy.

Measures of Success

The People Strategy is underpinned by the objectives of the 2020-2025 Strategic Framework, approved institutional KPIs and additional operational KPIs. These include KPIs to increase student headcount by 30%, decrease the non-continuation rate to achieve benchmark levels, and maintain progression as an 'employer of choice'. The measures of success against the KPI's will be assigned in the annual People Plan each academic year for the duration of the strategy. These will be monitored by ULT with oversight from the University Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee. Operational KPIs will be developed by Human Resources and approved by ULT.

Sources:

CIPD Good Work Index 2022, Dan Wheatley, 2022

Transformational Culture: Develop a People-Centred Organisation for Improved Performance, David Liddle, Kogan Page, 2021

AdvanceHE Race Equality Programme, AdvanceHE, 2022

Step Change: Mentally Healthy Universities, UUK, 2022

Thriving at Work: The Independent Review of Mental Health and Employers, Stevenson and Framer. 2018

UCEA Health and Wellbeing Strategy, UCEA, 2020