

# **INCLUSIVE SUSSEX**



**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY**

**2018-2025**

# Contents

Equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone’s business	3
Context and drivers	4
What is equality, diversity and inclusion?	4
Our approach	5
Our vision for Inclusive Sussex	5
Our five goals	6
Our measures of success	7
Goal 1:     Equal Sussex	8
Goal 2:     Diverse Sussex	12
Goal 3:     Connected Sussex	15
Goal 4:     Accessible Sussex	18
Goal 5:     Flexible Sussex	21

# Equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's business

In July 2018, the University of Sussex published Inclusive Sussex, our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. It was published at the same time as [A Better University For a Better World – Sussex 2025](#), the University's Strategic Framework 2018-2025. Inclusive Sussex was the first enabling strategy to emerge from the Sussex 2025 Strategy and as such its high level ambitions did not have the benefit of consideration alongside other enabling strategies.

Subsequently, our [Access and Participation Plan for 2020/21 to 2024/25](#) was published in 2019, our Estates and Digital Strategies were published in November 2019 and our Sustainability Strategy was published in June 2021. Our People Strategy was approved by Council earlier this year. Alongside this, in October 2021, we appointed our first permanent Pro-Vice Chancellor for Culture, Equality and Inclusion.

Midway through the 7 year strategy and in light of these developments we have taken the opportunity to refresh Inclusive Sussex to provide that additional context and link to the other enabling strategies and delivery programmes across the University. These strategies and programmes are designed to help us meet our goals and ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's business. The refreshed Inclusive Sussex also includes a few other changes and initiatives to reflect the changing environment.

The world has changed a lot since we launched in July 2018. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that some work on Sussex 2025 had to be put on hold, some continued as planned and some was fast-tracked, as the University responded to student and staff needs. In addition, the effects of Brexit as well as an uncertain climate for higher education mean that the university reviewed its priorities against its overall strategy to ensure that we achieve our ambitions of being a thriving and vibrant place to study and work.

However, our desire and commitment to do that inclusively, embracing the five core values the University seeks to (promote: kindness, integrity, inclusion, collaboration and courage), has not changed. The creation of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Culture, Equality and Inclusion) ensures strategic oversight at executive level. With the development and publication of all of our enabling strategies to deliver Sussex 2025 we can now articulate how these strategies play a role in delivering Inclusive Sussex. This means that every member of our University Executive Group is committed to ensuring that they deliver their part of our vision for Sussex 2025 inclusively and that equality, diversity and inclusion is a responsibility for everyone within our community.

Professor David Maguire  
Interim Vice-Chancellor

Professor David Ruebain  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Culture, Equality and Inclusion)

## Context and Drivers for Inclusive Sussex

All public institutions including universities, have equality, diversity and inclusion strategies; invariably driven by three distinct areas of need and purpose.

**Ethical** - Sussex has a proud history of progressive endeavour, reflected in Sussex 2025 and in its broader “place”; geographically, intellectually and in the wider higher education sector. This itself is a driver for strong EDI work but even if that was not the case, it has become increasingly clear that, particularly for public facing institutions, it is not possible to ignore wider political, cultural and social developments; as recently evidenced by the impact of the Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements.

**Legal and regulatory** - In addition to its statutory obligations as set out in the Equality Act 2010, including anti-discrimination and public sector equality duties, and in related legislation (concerning human rights, freedom of speech & academic freedom, employment, criminal and other areas of law), universities are subject to a higher education regulatory framework that specifies requirements to address and progress EDI. These include widening participation, an Access and Participation Plan (APP) and other conditions of registration with the Office for Students (OfS).

**The “business case” for EDI** - This reflects the now well established and evidenced principle that EDI supports and enhances the core activities of an organisation; which for a university are sometimes defined as: teaching, learning, research and knowledge exchange. In summary fair, diverse and inclusive organisations are better and more successful.

## What is equality, diversity and inclusion?

**Equality** is a quasi-legal concept which requires fairness. Much law focuses on equality of opportunity but increasingly (including in the higher education sector) there has been a shift to equality of outcomes. Meanwhile, related human rights law and jurisprudence sometimes looks beyond mere equality of opportunity and even outcome to concepts of human dignity.

**Diversity** recognises the benefit that difference brings to the “business” of an organisation.

**Inclusion** is the process of ensuring that diversity – people with different identities and beliefs and from different backgrounds - can thrive, and not merely seek to “fit in” to an otherwise homogenous culture or environment.

## Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

Inclusive Sussex is built on the premise that to advance equality, diversity and inclusion, we must recognise and tackle both visible and invisible structural barriers.

Structural inequality is where exclusion and disadvantage are embedded in the policies, practices and decision making of the institution, and therefore also in our curriculum, culture and environment. It is historically fashioned and has given rise to current unequal status, power and benefits between different groups of people and has led to differential experiences and outcomes, resulting in underrepresentation and disadvantage.

Our approach is to tackle structural inequality in Sussex and its manifestation in our behaviours and actions. Through working with our community, we use an evidence-led approach to understand the particular challenges and barriers faced by members of under-represented, disadvantaged and minoritised groups.

Activities that form part of Inclusive Sussex are designed to remove those barriers through change in structural processes, culture and other change, and we will learn from each activity to allow for continuous improvement on this journey. Our activities aim to engage the Sussex community so that together, we deepen our understanding and knowledge and collectively become responsible for EDI.

## Our vision for Inclusive Sussex

Our vision is to become Inclusive Sussex, where all members of our community have equal access to opportunities, experience the University as one that enables them to fully meet their potential, and supports them to make a full contribution to the University. Reducing inequalities, addressing under-representation and disadvantage, celebrating diversity and becoming ever more inclusive allows us all to thrive. We can achieve more together than we can apart.

This equality, diversity and inclusion strategy sets out the steps we will take to become an Inclusive Sussex. This is a collective endeavour involving management, staff and students to create a fully inclusive campus by and for our whole community.

We have identified five key goals to make Sussex truly inclusive: equality, diversity, connection, accessibility and flexibility.

Achieving equality, diversity and inclusion is fundamental to the success of the University of Sussex. We aspire not just to reduce inequalities in outcomes for individuals, but to use our expertise, commitment and courage to challenge the status quo in order to change the University, and the wider world, for the better. We will take bold action to transform the campus into one that is experienced as inclusive by all our communities. This includes

understanding and addressing unequal power relations and the intersecting inequalities that many members of our community experience. Our plans to deliver Inclusive Sussex include actions to transform our campus and the experiences of all our staff and students. With it we hope to create a culture where everyone thrives, making Sussex an exemplar of good practice and a beacon in the sector, nationally and internationally.

We have much to be proud of in building an equal, diverse and inclusive community at Sussex. In terms of gender equality our percentage of women professors is higher than much of the sector and our Widening Participation programme of engagement and support has resulted in significantly reducing the awarding gap for our 'first generation scholars'. But we know from our data, research and consultations that we have much more to do, for example, by closing the gender pay gap, improving the representation and experience of black and minority ethnic staff, closing the awarding and employment gaps across different groups of students, and making our campus fully accessible.

## Our five goals

To deliver an Inclusive Sussex we will:

### **1. EQUAL SUSSEX**

Reduce the gaps in representation, experience, progression and reward between those with protected characteristics that are under-represented or disadvantaged, and others.

### **2. DIVERSE SUSSEX**

Be a place that celebrates and proactively supports and encourages diversity.

### **3. CONNECTED SUSSEX**

Build a thriving community that fosters good relations and supports a rich, diverse, rigorous, collegiate and inquisitive teaching, learning and research environment.

### **4. ACCESSIBLE SUSSEX**

Provide equal access to excellent learning, research and employment opportunities for all with particular regard to disability and also recognising the accessibility needs of those with other protected characteristics.

### **5. FLEXIBLE SUSSEX**

Become an organisation that is flexible by default to ensure we are inclusive in everything we do.

These 5 goals are our long-term outcomes that underpin Inclusive Sussex and for each of these, we have identified medium and short-term outcomes that our activities aim to achieve.

We believe that what is necessary for some is generally good for all. In delivering change to address inequalities for particular parts of our communities, we will strive to deliver solutions that deliver benefits to all of us.

# Our measures of success

We will measure our progress towards becoming Inclusive Sussex in a number of ways including:

## University KPIs

- To halve the gender pay gap by 2024.
- Year-on-year improvement in staff who believe that the University is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

## Other university measures

- Higher representation of staff with protected characteristics that are currently underrepresented, including in senior leadership positions.
- Continued reduction in student awarding gaps between those with different identities to be significantly better than national averages.

## External recognition of our work through:

- Race Equality Charter Bronze award.
- Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Top 100 Employer.
- Disability Confident Leader.
- All Schools to hold Athena SWAN awards.

## Goal 1: Equal Sussex

*Reduce the gaps in representation, experience, progression and reward between those with protected characteristics that are under-represented or disadvantaged, and others.*

Equal Sussex means that we will work to remove barriers to inclusion, tackle abuse of institutional power relations and reduce the gaps in representation, performance, reward and experience between those with protected characteristics that are under-represented or disadvantaged, and others. We will work to improve attainment and employment outcomes of students where data suggest that there are barriers which prevent them from reaching their full potential. We will build on our work to date to identify and where demonstrated reduce student awarding gaps for BAME students, international students, mature students, those who are carers and those declaring a disability.

For staff, our reviews of recruitment and promotion will help identify the changes needed to our policies and processes to ensure greater diversity and more equal representation. We will promote our mentoring programme and coaching for all members of staff and particularly for those from underrepresented groups. We are committed to tackling the gender pay gap identified in 2018. Closing this gap requires us to remove the obstacles faced by women, in particular, at major points of career development and progression. The actions we are taking – including the drive towards Flexible Sussex – will be designed to ensure we remove barriers to recruitment, progression and reward and proactively work to reduce inequalities for other minority groups as well.

We will seek to work closely with the University of Sussex Students' Union as well as with new and existing staff networks to hear the voices of a wide range of people and to fully understand and address the barriers they face to equal representation, attainment, progression and reward.

We are seeking independent recognition of our work on race, disability, sexual orientation and gender reassignment as we have achieved for gender equality through the Athena SWAN Charter. In addition to our ambition to become a Disability Confident Leader we will also aim to hold a Race Equality Charter Bronze award and be ranked in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index Top 100 Employers. These schemes are for us not tick-box exercises but important tools which give leverage to address issues substantively and with support from all parts of the institution. It is within these programmes of work that we will collaborate with our community, using an evidence-led approach to understand the particular challenges and barriers we need to address and identifying actions to address them.



# How we will deliver Equal Sussex





## For Students

We are proud of our commitment to fair access and widening participation. Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2020/21 to 2024/25 sets out an ambitious programme to achieve equality of access, opportunity and outcome for all of our applicants and students. Embracing our value of collaboration, student representatives were involved in every aspect of the Plan, both formally and informally, from evaluation of past activities through to shaping and creating the new vision.

Our overarching aim is to ensure equality for under-represented groups. We will promote and facilitate fair, inclusive, transparent practice through all the stages of the student experience. The APP sets out the analyses of areas of under-representation and gaps in experience and outcome. It also presents a theory of change to underpin our actions to address identified inequality. It sets targets to reduce the greatest gaps in representation and experience/outcome. We will reduce awarding gaps for students. In November 2021 we published our Antiracist Sussex Pledge which included a commitment to eliminate the BAME degree awarding gap.

We have made good progress towards our vision and goals. Data on awarding gaps and representation show we are on track to meet the targets we set for 2024/25. However we continue to monitor all gaps in outcome and experience and will continue to ensure that actions are taken to eliminate these.

Our outcomes in delivering Equal Sussex for students will be:

-  Reduce the awarding gap between white and black students
-  Reduce the awarding gap between white and Asian students
-  Reduce the awarding gap between students with and without a disability
-  Inclusive practice in all stages of student experience

## Activities

- ✓ Degree Outcomes project to analyse quantitative and qualitative information to understand causes behind BAME awarding gaps at Sussex, evaluate potential actions to address these and create an action plan to coordinate and/or initiate work in this area.
- ✓ Roll-out BAME awarding gap toolkit to all Schools and publish School action plans to eradicate awarding gaps.
- ✓ Review assessment and feedback mechanisms to ensure inclusive practice.
- ✓ Create a student engagement, employability and enhancement programme.

- ✓ Review modes of teaching delivery in order to enhance our pedagogic practices.

## **For Staff**




We have committed in our People Strategy to improving inclusivity by driving forward the actions that will result in reduced pay gaps and a pay framework, benefits and promotional criteria that are open, transparent and foster equality. We will ensure that our remuneration, reward and recognition offer is fair, transparent and effectively delivered with clear review processes and clear criteria for promotion, job evaluation and pay increases.

We will promote and facilitate fair, inclusive, transparent people practice through all the stages of the employee experience. The revision of our HR policies will proactively address inclusivity and allow a diverse workforce to be the best version of themselves, feeling valued for their input and equal in their ability to succeed and be recognised for their successes. We want to be renowned in the sector for our inclusive policies and being a champion of best practice around inclusivity and diversity, leading to improved engagement with our people.

We have made good progress towards our vision and goals. We analyse our staff data as part of our self-assessment process within our programmes of work related to charter applications. This process identifies the barriers we need to address at different points in the employee lifecycle and experience to eliminate identified areas of inequality in outcome or experience. The analysis and actions to address any barriers identified form part of the applications and action plans.

We were successful in our renewal of our Institutional Athena SWAN Charter award. The actions from the institutional action plan are reflected in our plans throughout this strategy. We have joined the Race Equality Charter and analysis of our staff and pay data continues as part of our self-assessment. We plan to submit our first application for award in 2023. In November 2021 we published our Antiracist Sussex Pledge as an interim step in this self-assessment process. We joined Disability Confident at level 1 in May 2019 and moved to level 2 in December 2021 following our first stage of self-assessment. We made our first application to the 2020 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) and ranked 407<sup>th</sup> and are now ranked 264<sup>th</sup> following our application to the 2022 WEI.

Our outcomes in delivering an Equal Sussex for staff will be:

-  reduced gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps
-  increased senior level representation for minoritised groups
-  inclusive practice in all stages of employee experience

## **Activities**

- ✓ Develop a total reward strategy
- ✓ Develop transparent pay frameworks at grade 10

- ✓ Clear criteria for promotion, evaluation and pay increases
- ✓ Introduce enhanced shared-parental pay provisions
- ✓ Revised guidance on starting salaries to reduce unconscious bias in these decisions
- ✓ Analysis of ethnicity/disability pay gap data to identify drivers and recommend actions
- ✓ Publish intersectional ethnicity and gender pay gap data
- ✓ Conduct a full equal pay audit
- ✓ Introduction of an e-recruitment system that supports fair and inclusive recruitment policies and processes.
- ✓ Revise appraisal framework for academic staff
- ✓ Produce a toolkit of measures for managers to support academic staff who take carers' leave
- ✓ Expand our mentoring scheme to offer identity-based mentoring
- ✓ Review of academic promotions process and how this links to career pathways, professoriate banding and academic appraisal to support the career development of all academic staff

## Goal 2: Diverse Sussex

*Be a place that celebrates and proactively supports and encourages diversity.*

Diverse Sussex means that the University is firmly committed to creating and sustaining a positive environment promoting diversity and inclusion. We will continue to encourage and celebrate diversity throughout the University.

We are proud of our diverse Sussex community, but we realise that we are not as diverse as we could be and we need to ensure that the working and learning experience we offer is inclusive and supports all members of our community. We will work towards this, mindful of the findings of the Changing University Cultures (CHUCL) project, to promote an institutional culture and individual behaviours characterised by inclusion, kindness, integrity, courage and collaboration.

The University has clear expectations of how all members of its community treat – and are treated by – others. We will not tolerate bullying, harassment and violence, including sexual violence, racial harassment and hate crime. Reported incidents will be dealt with swiftly and decisively and we will provide support for those affected. We reviewed our policies on bullying and harassment and published a new Dignity and Respect Policy which will link to our policy on addressing violence and our new processes and procedures for supporting those who experience sexual violence. We have a team of trained Dignity and Respect Champions who provide support to staff who have concerns about dignity and respect at Sussex. We have introduced an online Report and Support tool where students and staff can report unacceptable behaviour either anonymously or by giving their contact details.



## How we will deliver Diverse Sussex

Our institutional culture and the behaviours of those in our community are characterised by our core values of inclusion, kindness, integrity, courage and collaboration. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for every member of our community. We published our Dignity and Respect Policy in 2019. All members of our University community – staff, students and visitors – can expect to: be valued for their skills, abilities and contributions and be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy; study, work and live on a campus free from bullying, harassment or victimisation or violence and experience no form of unlawful discrimination. The University takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and violence. In 2021 we launched the Report and Support tool for staff and students to report unacceptable behaviours either anonymously or by giving their contact details. The tool will better help us to understand and remove the barriers to people reporting incidents of bullying and harassment. This tool will give us better insight and understanding of what the issues are – and what we can do to address them and prevent future incidents.

In our People Strategy we have committed to develop a programme of coordinated work across staff experience to address the concern of staff in relation to witnessed and received bullying, micro-aggressions and harassment/disrespectful behaviour. We will use staff survey data to identify underlying causes and set targets for improvement. We will enhance our leadership capability and capacity and promote greater diversity at all levels of institutional leadership by adopting proactive strategies to identify and nurture talent early, to support effective succession planning in building the next generation of academic and professional leaders.

As part of our Learn to Transform Strategy we are developing ways to ensure what and how we teach is as inclusive as possible. Decolonising the Curriculum at Sussex is a collaborative university-wide project informed by insights drawn from research, educational policy and lived experience. We will look to build on this approach to explore the curriculum through further perspectives to make it as inclusive as possible.

Our outcomes in delivering Diverse Sussex will be:

-  Staff/students who respect each other, and who are equipped with the tools to address poor behaviour when they see it
-  A curriculum which is inclusive and promotes diversity of thought

### Activities

- ✓ Develop a Wellbeing Strategy
- ✓ Revised Stress Management Policy
- ✓ Provide clarity on use of the term BAME and how and when we use it and where possible provide better alternative language

- ✓ Review the process for collection and analysis of feedback from staff in exit interviews/in exit questionnaires to see whether issues relating to protected characteristics are a causal or contributory factor
- ✓ Improve University external pages and pages for those considering joining the university to showcase our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- ✓ Black Alumni Project
- ✓ Publish staff-facing resources to support decolonising the curriculum
- ✓ Initiatives to increase the diversity of Council and key governance committees to better reflect our diverse community

## Goal 3: Connected Sussex

*Build a thriving community that fosters good relations and supports a rich, diverse, rigorous, collegiate and inquisitive teaching, learning and research environment.*

Connected Sussex means that the University will actively foster a culture of good relations between all members of our campus – including but not restricted to identity, nationality, faith and political groups.

We will actively promote awareness and understanding of a wide range of groups, giving a voice to them to share their perspectives. We are committed to the principle of collaboration and consultation to make Sussex truly inclusive. We value the crucial contribution of our staff networks and the Students' Union in sharing the staff and student voice of their membership to help shape policy and procedures which support all of our staff and students.

We will continue to promote the benefits of diversity across our local, national and global communities. We will seek to foster good relations across communities, both within the University and outside it - including with our local community through improving understanding and empathy.

## How we will deliver Connected Sussex

Connected Sussex means that we will actively promote awareness and understanding of minority and under-represented staff and students to help foster good relations. We have already made good progress in supporting our staff networks with a clear commitment to our networks and time allocation for those who run them. In our People Strategy we have committed to enhance our existing community engagement structure to build stronger and more staff networks that give voice to marginalised groups, that collaborate with each other and inform/shape our work to facilitate a fair, open and inclusive environment.

Our Connector Programme involves students and staff working as equal partners, collaborating to improve the student experience at Sussex. Through co-creation, Connector teams develop careers support, embed technology in learning, design new course modules and more. Connector projects make a real difference to Student Connectors, Staff Connectors and the University community. Inclusivity is a hugely important part of this scheme helping to amplify the voices of under-represented student groups.

As part of our Engage for Change Strategy we have developed an International Strategy that aims to ensure that our students will be globally competent, confident, knowledgeable and skilled, prepared to thrive in a more diverse and interconnected world. Through our Internationalisation at Home strategy by 2025, 40% of our undergraduate students will undertake an international experience during their studies at home or abroad.

We will also commit to educating our staff and students to increase knowledge and awareness of minority and under-represented groups to deliver the inclusive culture we aspire to. We will ensure that all staff and students have accessed anti-racism learning. We will foster a culture of constructive dialogue about difference and a willingness to reduce “othering” through an allyship and listening programme and a series of speaker events. We will set up a religion and belief forum.

Our outcomes in delivering Connected Sussex will be:



Actively promoting awareness/understanding of minority and under-represented staff/students



Actively listening to the voices/perspectives of all staff and students and collaborate on shaping our organisation



Staff/students who understand how to work together and collaborate, acting with integrity, kindness, courage

### Activities

- ✓ Anti-racism training and development opportunities for staff and students.
- ✓ Review of and seek to enhance EDI training for staff, students and Council members and



uptake of existing provision

- ✓ Ensure that our procurement strategies are inclusive and uphold our values.
- ✓ Work with students through the Connector Programme to understand issues of student diversity in order to enhance inclusive practice
- ✓ Work with Staff Networks to analyse and act on feedback from staff surveys
- ✓ Develop a programme of allyship work
- ✓ Launch a new lecture series, with speakers addressing the University community to increase understanding on a range of inclusion issues.
- ✓ Establish a religion and belief forum to consider and address a range of matters including islamophobia and anti-Semitism

## Goal 4: Accessible Sussex

*Provide equal access to excellent learning, research and employment opportunities for all with particular regard to disability and also recognising the accessibility needs of those with other protected characteristics.*

Accessible<sup>1</sup> Sussex means that everybody in our community can do what they need to do in a similar amount of time and with the same amount of effort. It means that people are empowered, can be independent, and will not be frustrated by something that is poorly designed or implemented.

Notwithstanding the challenges raised by the topography of our campus, we aim to be fully accessible, transforming the University so that all members of our campus community have a fully inclusive experience, providing the kind of environment where people can achieve their ambitions and potential. We will provide equal access to excellent learning, research and employment opportunities regardless of physical or unseen impairments and other identities. Our belief that what is necessary for some is generally good for all will be at the heart of how we design our services and facilities.

We are proud of our campus which offers a stunning location and unique architectural heritage. But we acknowledge the constraints and barriers to accessibility that our campus presents. We will address some difficult issues by actively embracing the challenge of delivering innovative approaches to improve accessibility. Our new estate strategy articulates our plans to develop our estate. In implementing that we will collaborate with experts in this field to identify affordable solutions that provide accessibility without compromising the beauty and heritage of our estate. The accessibility challenges we face on campus are not simple to overcome and will take time and financial investment. In the short term we will continue to make practical improvements in line with the needs and requests of staff and students.

Our digital strategy sets out how we can support all our students and staff and increase accessibility. A robust and innovative digital architecture opens new and exciting opportunities to deliver greater accessibility. Technology will enable us to introduce new ways to deliver our services and for students and staff to engage with us.

We will use the Disability Confident scheme as a framework to shape our approaches to accessibility for our employees. Our aim is to provide seamless, joined-up solutions to applicants, staff and students accessing support for physical or unseen impairments and other requirements. Our aim is to improve understanding of how these issues impact our staff and students, what we are doing to address them and how everybody can become part of the solutions through kindness, collaboration and courage.

---

<sup>1</sup> Accessible Sussex does not include access issues covered by the AAP. It relates to physical and virtual accessibility of our services and teaching for staff, students, applicants and visitors

## How we will deliver Accessible Sussex

In Building for the Next Generation, the Sussex 2025 estates strategy, we have committed to ensure that the estate is fully accessible for all our staff, students and local communities. An inclusive campus will be placed at the heart of design with opportunities to address inequality of access across the piece. Our goal will be to ensure we are inclusive by dismantling borders and creating opportunities. We will prioritise and promote accessibility for all, and ensure all new projects are accessible by design. All non-project type work will adhere to these same core principles.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that some strategic work on estates had to be put on hold while we prioritised essential adaptations to the estate to make the campus safe. However new spaces on campus have been created improving accessibility. In 2022 we opened the new Student Centre as part of a range of initiatives to enhance the student experience. It is designed to be the go-to place for students to get face-to-face information, advice and guidance. It is accessible to all, including a changing place. This reflects the model for inclusive design for all new development on the campus.

We will transform, manage and maintain our campus to ensure it is accessible for all and that the facilities and services on campus meet the needs of all our staff, students and visitors.

We will transform how we work to improve the experience for disabled students from the support we provide. In our Digital and IT Strategy we have committed to set the standard for innovation in teaching, learning and student experiences. In doing this we will ensure technology, infrastructure and systems are accessible and personalised so that every student gets an opportunity to learn and/or research without barriers.

We launched a new workplace adjustment toolkit in 2021 to support disabled staff. In our People Strategy we have committed to a comprehensive review of all HR policies, processes and support to ensure that we enable our people to do their best work. This will include the next stages of the workplace adjustment toolkit.

Our outcomes will be:



A campus that is accessible for all and that the facilities and services on campus meet the needs of all our staff, students and visitors



Ways of working that improve experience for disabled staff and students

### Activities

- ✓ Ensure our technology, infrastructure and systems are accessible
- ✓ Ensure technology, infrastructure and systems are accessible and personalised so that every student gets an opportunity to learn and/or research without barriers.

- ✓ Publish inclusive estates policy core principles
- ✓ Provide clear University guidance on workplace adjustment for staff
- ✓ Implement a new workplace adjustment policy
- ✓ Develop disability absence policy
- ✓ Review support services for disabled students and applicants to ensure that they are accessible and provide the reasonable adjustment required
- ✓ Establish a religion & belief forum, in part to assist in advocating for the needs of these communities.

## Goal 5: Flexible Sussex

*Become an organisation that is flexible by default to ensure we are inclusive in everything we do.*

Flexible Sussex means that we will take a proactive approach to flexible working, encouraging and supporting individuals who want greater flexibility, making things easy to arrange and change. We will promote a culture where, unless there is a good reason, we say 'yes' to flexible working and all new positions are advertised as suitable for flexible working unless there is a clear business reason for not doing so. Sussex is powered by its people and they are our strength in delivering Sussex 2025. Embracing an agile and flexible approach to work will enable us to attract, retain, support and develop an excellent and diverse workforce.

Flexible Sussex will be central to our plans to reduce inequality and improve accessibility. We seek to improve the representation of women and support carers working at Sussex by improving retention and progression for staff working flexibly. Feedback from staff in 2017 highlighted the need to improve our current approaches to flexible working. We believe that enabling better flexible working within the University is key to reducing our gender pay gap. Flexible working is also one of the most effective forms of reasonable adjustment available to support staff with a disability. This will enable us to increase accessibility to opportunity and progression throughout the University.

Flexible Sussex is also about enabling flexible and agile ways of working to improve our services and sustainability. Flexibility in how services are delivered will enable us to reflect a diverse range of needs. We will transform how we work to improve the experience for students and staff.

We have undertaken a range of reviews of how we deliver our services (1PS), how the University is structured to meet the evolving challenges within the world and HE (Size and Shape) and the culture within our University (CHUCL). We will continue to ensure that flexible, equal, accessible and inclusive policies and procedures shape the implementation of how we work and deliver our services.

# How we will deliver Flexible Sussex

## For Staff

We have committed in our People Strategy to recognise and enable flexible working as an important element of our reward package. We want Sussex to be a great place to work. We want to be known as an employer that values and invests in the wellbeing of staff and actively promotes a better work-life balance.

We have made good progress towards our vision and goals. We relaunched our flexible working policy in July 2018 and since October 2018 all new positions have been advertised as suitable for flexible working, unless there is a clear business reason for not doing so. In 2021 we introduced a remote working framework which promotes and encourages the practice of remote working as allowed by an individual's role, team/departmental requirements, personal circumstances and preferences, while also ensuring the efficient and effective running of the University and the research and education we provide. The framework builds on some of the positive experiences that came from working differently during the Covid 19 pandemic.

We remain committed to enabling better flexible working within the University to support the needs of a diverse workforce.

Our outcomes in delivering Flexible Sussex for staff will be:



A range of flexible working options within the University that can be tailored to support the needs of all employees



Ways of working which improve the experience for staff

## Activities

- ✓ Monitor the impact of our flexible working policy and remote working framework on increasing representation of carers and disabled staff across our staff demographics.
- ✓ Use staff surveys and other continuous improvement feedback loops to review the effectiveness of our flexible and remote working practices (with particular regard to disabled staff and staff with caring responsibilities)
- ✓ Ensure that in introducing new ways of working and delivery of university services, diverse working patterns are considered and included in the design and consultation.
- ✓ Use IT to enable new ways to deliver our services to staff

## For Students

We have committed in our Learn to Transform Strategy that students will receive a transformative, high quality education and learning experience that will allow them to realise the futures they want. Flexibility in how the education and learning experiences are delivered

ensures that a diverse range of student needs can be met. We launched our pedagogic revolution in 2019 to encourage dialogue for innovative practice to underpin that flexibility.

We have made good progress towards our vision and goals. Smart Sussex (one of the enabling strategies of Sussex 2025) emphasises the University's ambition to pioneer the use of virtual and augmented reality technologies to deliver a distinctive learning experience for our students. While some progress had already begun on providing a digitally enhanced learning experience, the Covid-19 pandemic escalated the adoption of significant changes to its teaching and learning approaches. Students now have the flexibility to log into Sussex systems remotely and complete their work or studies away from the campus. We have embraced a range of technologies to enable remote study and collaboration for students: Canvas learning-management platform; Panopto lecture-capture software; Zoom video conferencing technology; and LinkedIn Learning.

Our outcomes in delivering Flexible Sussex for students will be:



Ways of working which improve the experience for students



Flexible learning pathways (within a range of choices)

### **Activities**

- ✓ Pedagogic Revolution
- ✓ Review modes of teaching delivery
- ✓ Grow alternative and flexible delivery methods
- ✓ Use IT to enable new ways to deliver our services for students
- ✓ New ways to access university services

Through the transformative power of education, research and engagement,  
and Inclusive Sussex, we work for a better university for a better world

Signed off by Council, July 2022

