FOREWORD

For some years now Robert Gordon has been recognised as one of the very best universities of those that gained university status in 1992. We are, and rightly, hugely proud of what we have achieved, and of the impact we have had. Generations of students have acquired knowledge and skills in RGU that have made our graduates amongst the most sought after in the labour market. Our research has increasingly come to be recognised as addressing key issues society needs to have resolved. We can justifiably say that this university is making a difference.

We also know that nothing stands still, and that what is expected of us changes, and what we demand of ourselves becomes more ambitious. We know that we can provide not just an excellent education for our students, and new insights through our research, we also know we can provide leadership in our city and region, and we know we can join with strategic partners across the world to create a real university of the future.

This newly refreshed RGU strategy recognises all that is good that has been achieved in RGU, and it also points us to new opportunities and new projects that will make the university known nationally and internationally. It can only be achieved if we all work together, as one team and as a community of learning and scholarship.

I look forward to continuing this journey with you, and to achieving the exciting aims we have set ourselves.

Ferdinand von Prondzynski
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

RGU’S CONTINUING JOURNEY

The journey of Robert Gordon University has been an impressive one. We have become known as an educational innovator, a strong partner for the city and shire and local education institutions, a university that understands the needs and priorities of business, industry and the public services, and a place of learning that provides students with real advantages as they embark upon their professional careers. We have invested to create a state-of-the-art campus at Garthdee, complemented by our virtual learning environment. These are the achievements of the staff and students of the RGU community, who will continue to be central to what the university can achieve in the future.

While these developments have been crucial to the university’s success and will still support us in the future, they will not however be enough, because everything around us continues to change. The environment in which we work is changing; as more students take their courses from within a working career and at different stages of life, as technology threatens to make obsolete some traditional teaching methods, as employers expect to find new transferable skills in all their employees, as governments expect to see universities underpinning economic development; and as the desire for fewer socio-economic divisions puts pressure on universities to provide solutions.

Most universities recognise these changes and pressures, but few are able to adapt to them with the speed and agility that society now requires while still maintaining academic integrity and intellectual excellence and freedom. This strategy is our response to an assessment of where we are and where we want to go. It is the university’s engagement with the future, and it is our plan to provide an excellent education for students in a changing world. It is our contribution to society to help us achieve opportunities and find solutions to problems and needs.

This strategy is also our statement of intent to be a leader in the developing knowledge society. It does not just represent our desire to make a positive contribution to higher education and society, it demonstrates our ambition to be innovative and entrepreneurial, and to set new trends that will allow a new generation of students to change the world for the better. It shows our intention to find and use new discoveries to provide solutions to some of the world’s problems and needs.

RGU’S VISION

RGU aims to be recognised, in Scotland and beyond, as a distinctive university leading and shaping the debate on the future of higher education and placing students at the centre of the education it offers. It will be known for the impact of its teaching, scholarship and translational research, the employability of its graduates, its influence in the region and nation, its growing global profile, and its strong interdisciplinary focus on a small number of key questions and issues of concern to the local and global community. It will achieve its goals in partnership with academic, voluntary, public and business organisations that share its ideals and aspirations.

The university will enter the global university rankings, diversify and secure its income and resources, and enter into collaborative agreements with key strategic partners. RGU will be a model university of the future and will shape its own culture, practice and organisation accordingly.

RGU’S KEY STRATEGIC AIMS

In order to achieve our vision, we will commit ourselves to a set of key strategic aims:

- Teaching and learning: inspire all individuals to achieve their maximum potential and excel in the world of tomorrow.
- Extending access to learning: enable individuals to achieve their ambitions throughout life whatever their circumstances.
- Student experience: support students and graduates to enjoy and prosper within a vibrant learning community.
- Research: recognised for its contribution to the growth of innovation through advancing internationally excellent translational research in our areas of strategic focus
- Commercialisation: harness our intellectual and physical assets so they generate value to the economy and are profitable to the university.
- The regional community: contribute to and be an active leader in the development of the regional community.
- Partnerships: secure strategic partnerships with a small number of globally recognised universities and companies that will support the university’s key ambitions.
- Our university: empower staff and students to develop a strong and engaged community.

The foresight exercises that the university engaged in have assisted us to identify our areas of immediate focus. These will relate to oil and gas, health and wellbeing, big data, and the creative industries. Along with the work in these sectors, we will build on our record of strong employability and support for the city and region. These priorities will be amplified in a series of supplementary strategic policy documents.

We recognise that implementing aspects of this strategy will be challenging, requiring a significant change in our current mindset and approaches. For example in order to achieve our ambitions in commercialisation we will need to identify and realise greater commercial potential in what we do; in order to achieve our ambitions for research we will need to focus on areas which will have a significant impact on economic growth. To support these changes we also intend to secure significant philanthropic funds. In effecting this transformation we will deliver a sustainable future for the university, in which we are less reliant on public funding.

In doing this we will value our intellectual leadership, aspirations for excellence and inclusive approach, our responsiveness and ability to work with others, all in a spirit of partnership and collegiality. This will be achieved within a clear ethical framework and by building on the commitment of staff, and by committing ourselves to the values of flexibility, enterprise and innovation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

RGU will publish six strategic statements setting out our priorities in these areas:

- Oil and Gas
- Health and Wellbeing
- Big Data
- Employability of Graduates
- Creative Industries
- RGU and the Region

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The implementation of this strategy will be achieved with the help of an annual strategic implementation plan. It will be monitored through a range of key performance indicators (KPIs).

© Robert Gordon University 2013
RGU’S STRATEGIC AIMS IN DETAIL

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Inspire all individuals to achieve their maximum potential and excel in the world of tomorrow.

We aspire to:
- Develop student capabilities to thrive in an increasingly multi-disciplinary and fast-changing world of work with confidence.
- Motivate students to see themselves as contributors to changing global societies both while students and as alumni.
- Empower students to shape their learning experience and that of their peers.
- Help students to become well-rounded individuals capable of contributing to society.
- Challenge the design of our teaching, learning and assessment to enable best use of learners’ abilities and time.
- Lead thinking in the development of professional practice and emerging professions and roles.
- Recognise teaching excellence.

EXTENDING ACCESS TO LEARNING

Enable individuals to achieve their ambitions throughout life whatever their circumstances.

We aspire to:
- Motivate and facilitate individuals from under-represented groups in North East Scotland to access the university’s provision.
- Facilitate a wider take-up of courses for UK and international students by developing the reach of the university’s provision.
- Engage with employers and professions to develop workforce skills and capabilities to meet the needs of the economy and society.
- Ensure all our students, whether on or off the campus, feel part of a supportive learning community.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Support students and graduates to enjoy, and prosper within, a vibrant learning community.

We aspire to:
- Enable students to enrich their personal and professional development through the provision of extensive extra- and co-curricular opportunities.
- Stimulate students to participate actively in the continuing development of the university community.
- Create and resource a campus environment that supports and enriches a vibrant and diverse student life.
- Ensure all our students, whether on or off the campus, feel part of a supportive learning community.

RESEARCH

Be recognised for our contribution to the growth of innovation through advancing internationally excellent translational research in our areas of strategic focus.

We aspire to:
- Focus and develop ambitious translational research around energy and health that addresses key challenges within these sectors.
- Develop partnerships in order to access and collaborate in world-class innovation relevant to Scotland.
- Engage with companies and start-ups to grow the investment in Scottish national and regional research and development.
- Create a research environment that nurtures career development and progression, across every level, from a vibrant research student community to a successful professoriate.

COMMERCIALISATION

Harness our intellectual and physical assets so they generate value to the economy and are profitable to the university.

We aspire to:
- Stimulate and recognise an entrepreneurial attitude throughout the university to identify and respond to commercialisation prospects.
- Swiftly and objectively assess and where relevant nurture profitable commercialisation opportunities.
- Ensure resources and skills are harnessed to translate opportunities into products and services that others invest in.
- Deliver our commercial products and services to the highest professional standards.
- Return value to the university and its investors (individuals, employers or organisations).

THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY

Contribute to, and be an active leader in, the development of the regional community, alongside its increasing international profile and role.

We aspire to:
- Promote competitive research and development in the region.
- Support and encourage the growth of innovation and commercialisation around energy and health.
- Engage with employers and organisations to access and collaborate relevant to Scotland.
- Engage with companies and start-ups to grow the investment in regional research and development.
- Create a research environment that nurtures career development and progression, across every level, from a vibrant research student community to a successful professoriate.
- Deliver our commercial products and services to the highest professional standards.
- Return value to the university and its investors (individuals, employers or organisations).

PARTNERSHIPS

Secure strategic partnerships with a small number of globally recognised universities, public and voluntary organisations and companies that will support the university’s key ambitions.

We aspire to:
- Identify and engage with high value partners that share our ambitions and values.
- Build relationships and embark upon joint projects with these partners that support the implementation of our priority objectives.
- Identify a small number of high value partners that share our ambitions and values.
- Make a significant contribution to stimulating contribution to stimulating growth of innovation and commercialisation.
- Promote a learning and research environment that nurtures career development and progression, across every level, from a vibrant research student community to a successful professoriate.

OUR UNIVERSITY

Empower staff, students and alumni to develop a strong and engaged university community.

We aspire to:
- Promote a learning and research environment that nurtures career development and progression, across every level, from a vibrant research student community to a successful professoriate.
- Engage with employers and organisations to access and collaborate relevant to Scotland.
- Engage with companies and start-ups to grow the investment in regional research and development.
- Create a research environment that nurtures career development and progression, across every level, from a vibrant research student community to a successful professoriate.
- Deliver our commercial products and services to the highest professional standards.
- Return value to the university and its investors (individuals, employers or organisations).

- Recognise teaching excellence.
- Lead thinking in the development of professional practice and emerging professions and roles.
- Develop student capabilities to thrive in an increasingly multi-disciplinary and fast-changing world of work with confidence.
- Motivate students to see themselves as contributors to changing global societies both while students and as alumni.
- Empower students to shape their learning experience and that of their peers.
- Help students to become well-rounded individuals capable of contributing to society.
- Challenge the design of our teaching, learning and assessment to enable best use of learners’ abilities and time.
- Make staff and student involvement in our decision-making central to our ethos.
- Recognise staff and students for their contribution to our success.
- Secure resources that will allow us to achieve our ambitions in a sustainable way.
- Renew our commitment to an environmentally sustainable campus.