



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

College Business Plan

2025-26



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Introduction

The Stranmillis University College Corporate Plan for the period 2025-28 sets out our Mission, Vision and Values along with our aims, objectives, KPIs and outcomes covering from Sept 2025 to August 2028.

Stranmillis University College's 3-year Corporate Plan has been authored taking cognisance of a number of key strategic documents including: the new Programme for Government, the Economy Minister's priorities, the Department for the Economy's Strategic Plan as well as the more recently published Department of Education's SEN Reform Agenda and Delivery Plan and the Transform ED Strategy and Delivery Plan. All of these, and others, will have considerable significance to the University College in the months and years ahead.

By ensuring that our corporate strategic aims are appropriately interpreted and aligned with these priorities and strategies, Stranmillis University College is reaffirming its dedication to fostering educational excellence and contributing positively to societal and economic advancement.

This Annual Business Plan for 2025-26 has been authored using the 2025-28 Corporate Plan and sets out the aims, objectives, KPIs and outcomes for the academic year.

Planning Context

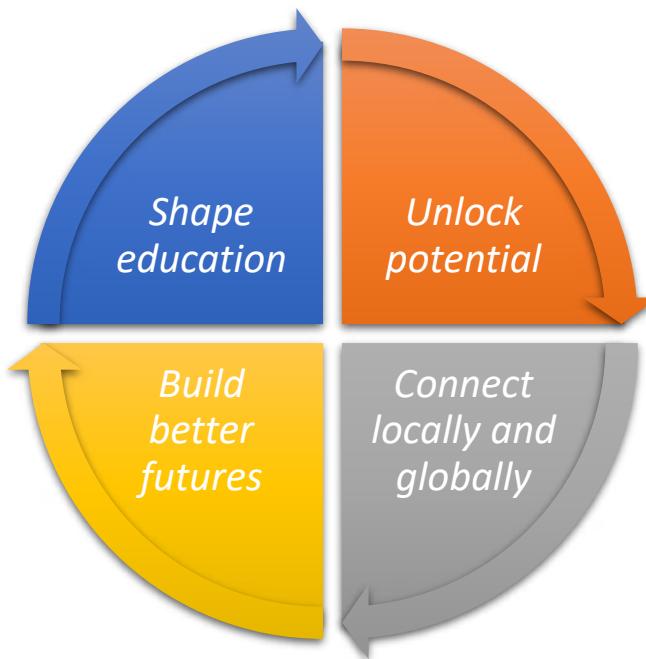
The Mission, Vision, Values and Governance of Stranmillis University College

Our Mission

To transform the lives of children, young people and communities, through excellence in teaching, research and scholarship.

Our Vision

To be a leading institution with a reputation for excellence in the field of teacher education and related professions; driving innovative professional practice that will:



Our Values

Governing Body Approved Date TBC

The first letter of each of our core values spell the word STRAN. Our values are described below and underpin the culture and our behaviours within the University College and will support us in meeting our aims and objectives. They provide the foundation for achieving our mission which is *“To transform the lives of children, young people and communities, through excellence in teaching, research and scholarship.”*



STUDENTS at the centre

We place our students at the centre of our planning and our future.



TEAMWORKING

We value working with others and the benefits that collaboration brings.



RESPECT for everyone

We promote respect by listening to and valuing all within and without our College community.



AMBITION for our students, our staff, our partners and our community

We are ambitious for our students, our staff, our University College, our partners and the wider community.



NURTURING our students, our staff and our environment

We seek to nurture our students, staff as well as our own physical environment.

The Policy Context

The University College's Corporate Plan, and the related Business Plans, are shaped by the external government policy context in which we operate. In 2025, significant strategic plans for the school sector have been announced and these will have implications and opportunities for the University College. The following programmes, priorities and strategies have been considered, amongst others, in the University College's strategic planning for the next three years.

a) Programme for Government 2024-2027 (PfG)

On 27th February 2025 the Northern Ireland Executive agreed the Programme for Government 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'. It outlines nine priorities for making a difference to the lives of people in Northern Ireland.

These priorities are:

1. Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy
2. **Deliver More Affordable, Accessible, High-Quality Early Learning and Childcare**
3. Cut Health Waiting Times
4. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
5. **Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs**
6. Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing
7. Safer Communities
8. Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment
9. Reform and Transformation of Public Services

Although the University College will contribute more widely to a number of these priorities, our mission and day to day activity directly aligns with the priorities related to early learning and

childcare as well as with children and young people with SEN. We do so through a number of our undergraduate and post graduate programmes¹ as well as through our research.

¹ E.g. Our B.Ed degrees, our B.A. in Early Childhood Studies and our PGCE in Early Years.
Governing Body Approved Date TBC

b) Department for the Economy (DfE) Strategies and Priorities

The Economy Minister has identified four key economic priorities as follows:

Good Jobs: Enhancing the quality of employment, including by investing in affordable childcare and strengthening trade unions, particularly in low-paid industries.

Regional Balance: Ensuring equitable economic opportunities across all regions by funding local economic strategies and prioritizing projects that promote regional development, such as the expansion of the Magee campus.

Productivity: Improving productivity through leveraging dual market access to grow domestic exports and attract high-value investments, alongside investments in skills, research and development, and innovation.

Decarbonisation: Reducing carbon emissions to meet Net Zero targets by 2050, viewing the transition as both a legal obligation and an opportunity for economic prosperity.

The University College will contribute to these priorities in a number of ways including the following:

Good Jobs

- Enhancing education with high performing graduates who go on to secure well-paid, professionally recognised roles.
- Expanding workforce development through postgraduate and continuous professional development (CPD) courses.
- Supporting the early years sector through qualifications, research, and sector engagement.

Regional Balance

- Running outreach, talks and access initiatives that encourage applicants from across Northern Ireland—not just Belfast.
- Partnerships with schools, FE colleges and other stakeholders, including those in rural areas, strengthening education pathways outside urban centres.
- Embedding equity and partnership across placements, increasing opportunities in all schools.

Productivity

- **Supporting** the improvement of educational outcomes.
- **Skilling educators in digital and STEM methodologies**, fostering innovation in schools.
- Undertaking research in relation to educational outcomes, disadvantage etc.

Net Zero

- **Embedding sustainability into education programmes**, equipping future educators to teach eco-awareness and climate responsibility.
- **Institutional green initiatives**, such as emissions reduction and sustainability governance, aligning with net-zero professional standards and targets.
- **CPD** in environmental education, supporting societal transition to Net Zero.

c) Department for Education (DE) Strategies and Reviews

The University College's mission is also closely aligned with key DE policy initiatives and developments, including:

i. **Transform ED**

The Minister for Education announced the Transform ED strategy for Northern Ireland's primary and secondary education schools on the 11th March 2025. The strategy is structured around a 10-point plan aimed at achieving educational excellence. The key components of this plan are:

1. Curriculum: Redesign of the Northern Ireland curriculum to ensure every child benefits from an ambitious, knowledge-rich education that develops their learning in a well-sequenced and explicit manner.
2. Advice and Resources: Provide classroom teachers with greater investment in high-quality curriculum advice and resources to support effective teaching.
3. Professional Learning: Implement sustained investment to offer a coherent approach to professional learning, supporting teachers throughout their careers.
4. Literacy and Numeracy: Introduce new literacy and numeracy strategies informed by evidence and based on international best practices.
5. Data: Establish a new system of attainment measures for end-of-key-stage assessments to set high standards for all children and provide reliable system-level performance metrics.
6. Qualifications: Review the qualifications landscape to ensure the availability of high-quality, up-to-date, portable, and fit-for-purpose qualifications that support progression to higher learning, training, or employment.
7. Improvement: Develop a new school improvement policy to create a framework supporting excellence and an improved model of external support for schools.

8. Tackling Disadvantage: Deliver a more integrated approach to tackling educational disadvantage through evidence-based interventions within schools, families, and communities.
9. Extending Education: Introduce legislation to ensure all learners remain in education, apprenticeship, or training until age 18.
10. Accountability: Establish a new coherent accountability framework to demonstrate value for money and drive improvement through responsibility and answerability.

This 10-point plan outlines the strategic priorities aimed at transforming Northern Ireland's education system with the aim to be more effective, equitable, and better aligned with high performing international comparators.

The College has been engaging and will continue to engage with the Department of Education in relation to the new strategy. Alongside any directly associated changes to ITE and related programmes due to the strategy, there are a number of key areas which align closely with University College activity. These include: curriculum, Teacher Professional Learning, addressing underachievement, research and scholarship and tackling disadvantage.

ii. The SEN Reform Agenda and Delivery Plan

In February 2025, the Department of Education Northern Ireland launched the SEN Reform Agenda to improve support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The reform aims to create a more inclusive, efficient, and transparent system that better meets the needs of students, parents, and schools.

Key Objectives:

1. Early Identification & Intervention:

- Focus on identifying needs as early as possible.
- Implement timely interventions to prevent escalation of needs.

2. Improved Support in Mainstream Schools:

- Strengthen the capacity of mainstream schools to support pupils with SEN.
- Enhanced training for teachers and school staff.

3. Clearer Processes & Accountability:

- Simplify and clarify SEN assessment and support processes.
- Ensure that responsibilities are clearly defined and transparent.

4. Partnership with Parents:

- Foster stronger collaboration with parents/carers in decision-making.
- Ensure parents have access to clear information and guidance.

5. Integrated Services:

- Encourage better collaboration between education, health, and social care services.
- Develop a more holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people.

Delivery Plan:

The Delivery Plan outlines specific actions, timelines, and stakeholders responsible for implementing the reforms. It focuses on:

- **Legislative Changes:** Updates to SEN legislation to support the new framework.
- **Capacity Building:** Training programs and resources for educators and support staff.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Regular assessments to measure progress and effectiveness.
- **Communication & Engagement:** Ongoing communication with schools, parents, and stakeholders to ensure transparency and gather feedback.

Corporate Plan Aims and Objectives

We will deliver the following aims and objectives over the lifetime of our Corporate Plan.

1. Aim: To deliver outstanding student experiences

We strive to deliver outstanding student experiences through a holistic and student centred approach. We will deliver this through the following objectives over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan:

- 1.1. Ensure that all undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), continuing professional development (CPD) programmes are characterised by high quality teaching and learning and that the programmes are informed by Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities as appropriate.
- 1.2. Provide high-quality, timely services which support the recruitment of high calibre students as well as student welfare and wellbeing that enables all students to achieve their full potential on their programmes.
- 1.3. Achieve high undergraduate and postgraduate retention and success rates and high post-graduation progression rates into employment or further study.

2. Aim: To be an employer of choice

We recognise that our people are vital to the success of our students and our organisation and we want to ensure and support an inclusive culture where all staff feel engaged, supported and empowered. We will deliver this through the following objectives over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan:

- 2.1. Recruit and retain high calibre staff.
- 2.2. Invest in the development of staff across the college.

2.3. Maintain a safe and attractive environment for the College community which promotes wellbeing.

3. Aim: To be financially and environmentally sustainable

In order to continue to meet our corporate mission we must be financially sustainable. In addition, we must also be environmentally sustainable, not least because of the stewardship of our beautiful surroundings. We will deliver this through the following objectives over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan:

3.1 Ensure financial sustainability by increasing income from a diverse range of sources including:

- a) full-time undergraduate programmes (in line with student number allocations)
- b) part-time programmes
- c) Hospitality, Accommodation and Conferencing Services (HACS) and use of the campus physical resources
- d) research income
- e) additional projects and partnerships.

3.2 Develop and maintain an environmentally sustainable high-quality learning and working environment which aligns with relevant Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities.

3.3 Continue to operate an effective system of corporate governance and risk management, while ensuring effective management of the College.

4 Aim: To impact wider society

Our Mission drives us to have ongoing and significant impact on wider society which aligns with relevant Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities. We will deliver this through the following objectives over the lifetime of the Corporate Plan:

- 4.1 Foster effective local and international partnerships.
- 4.2 Promote research and scholarship to shape education, inform policy and change practice in line with Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities.
- 4.3 Promote and deliver Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Lifelong Learning/Community Engagement Programmes and Activities in line with Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities.

College Strategic Priorities for 2025-26

- Pursuing our Mission and Corporate Aims.
- Ensuring Financial Sustainability.
- Supporting developments associated with Transform ED and associated strategies and plans.
- Developing our Full Cost Recovery Income.
- Expanding our International Partnerships and Income.
- Exploring additional undergraduate and/or postgraduate programmes.
- Continuing to widen our research activity and its impact in informing debate, providing evidence for decision makers and assisting to shape policy.

Annual Business Plan Key Performance Indicators and Outcomes for 2025-26

The tables below provide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each Objective associated with the College's Aims. Objectives and KPIs will be tracked and/or measured over the duration of the Business Plan, as appropriate, against the annual College Business Plans.

Aim	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
1. To deliver outstanding student experiences	1.1 Ensure that all undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), continuing professional development (CPD) programmes are characterised by high quality teaching and learning and that the programmes are informed by Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All substantive programmes evaluated as high quality through having positive internal and external Quality Assurance outcomes e.g. validation processes/inspection reports etc. High Student Satisfaction rates (above the UK average) as evidenced by National Student Survey (NSS).
	1.2 Provide high-quality, timely services which support the recruitment of high calibre students as well as student welfare and wellbeing support that enables all students to achieve their full potential on their programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average UCAS Entry Tariff maintained at 130 (BEd Primary - 144, BEd Post Primary – 126, BA ECS 132, BSc PES – 116). Annual Widening Participation targets to recruit under-represented groups met in line with agreed annual targets with DfE in relation to the following target groups: NI MDM Quintile 1 - 88; Disabilities (DSA) - 36; Adult Students - 100; Care Experienced - 1.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Student Support Satisfaction rates as evidenced by annual internal and external student surveys (annual surveys, NSS).
	1.3 Achieve high undergraduate and postgraduate retention and success rates and high post-graduation progression rates into employment or further study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% retention, 94% success & 94% progression rates on substantive undergraduate programmes achieved.
2. To be an employer of choice	2.1 Recruit and retain high calibre staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve an annual voluntary turn-over rate of 6% or less.
	2.2 Invest in the development of staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of lecturing staff with/undertaking doctorates maintained at 65% or above. • Deliver an annual programme of staff development and CPD programmes for all permanent staff.
	2.3 Maintain a safe and attractive work (and study) environment for the College community which promotes wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All compliance targets for Health & Safety achieved annually. • Implement the Estates Strategy to maintain and enhance the physical environment.

<p>3 To be financially and environmentally sustainable</p>	<p>3.1 Ensure financial sustainability e.g. by maintaining or increasing income from a diverse range of sources:</p> <p>a) full-time undergraduate students in line with DfE allocations</p> <p>b) part-time students</p> <p>c) Hospitality, Accommodation and Conferencing Services (HACS) and use of the campus physical resources;</p> <p>d) Research and scholarship income</p> <p>e) additional projects and partnerships.</p>	<p>Annual targets met as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time students – income of £4,040k • Part-time students – income of £1,204k • Hospitality, Accommodation and Conferencing Services (HACS) and use of the campus physical resources to generate income of £2,950k • Research and Scholarship to generate income of £205K; • additional public and private sector projects and / or partnerships – £279K <p>3.2 Develop and sustain a high-quality learning and working environment which aligns with relevant Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical environment/infrastructure maintained and improved in line with the Estates and Digital Strategies. • Achieve annual percentage of IT system uptime of at least 95%. • Annual sustainability targets met including energy usage, recycling.
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	<p>3.3 Continue to operate an effective system of corporate governance and risk management and ensuring effective College management.</p>	<p>Evidenced through positive reports with respect to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal/External Audits • DfE Mid-Year and Annual Assurance Processes; • BCP testing completed to agreed schedule; <p>Regular review and updating and reporting of Risk Registers maintained</p>
<p>4. To impact wider society</p>	<p>4.1 Foster effective local and international partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of local, national and international partnerships against 24/25 baseline.
	<p>4.2 Promote research and scholarship to shape education, inform policy and change practice in line with Government and Departmental strategies, plans and priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with policy makers in DfE, DE and other relevant government departments evidenced through collaborative activities and sponsored research and scholarship.
	<p>4.3 Promote and deliver Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Lifelong Learning (LLL) in line with Government and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD provision expanded in line with sector needs and departmental strategies and annual recruitment and/or income targets met (£66k).

	Departmental strategies, plans and priorities.	
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Monitoring and Reporting Progress

Tracking of progress against the annual Key Performance Indicators will take place as follows:

