**Towards an International Strategy**

**for the University of Cambridge**

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# Introduction

The University of Cambridge is a global institution. Currently 42% of our student population (62% at postgraduate level), 35% of our academic staff and 57% of our research staff are from overseas. A significant proportion of our publications are co-authored with academics from overseas institutions (57%), and we are actively engaged in research projects and collaborations throughout the world.

Furthermore, our international presence is strengthened by the reach and impact of two significant activities that are part of the wider University. Cambridge University Press is the second-largest university press in the world, with a global sales presence and offices in more than 40 countries. Cambridge Assessment is one of the largest international assessment agencies working with schools and governments around the world.

The University has a unique set of strengths that allow it to thrive internationally, and upon which our international engagement should build. Our collegiate system has developed over 800 years, and has created an environment that combines a close-knit scholarly community and strong pastoral care with an educational experience informed by world leading research and academic discovery. Research excellence (and particularly curiosity driven research) is at the heart of everything we do, but the quality of our academic contribution is made even more notable by its breadth – our six academic Schools, over 100 faculties and departments, eight University museums and numerous institutes, span the full range of academic pursuits. Furthermore, our world-leading research underpins a huge range of innovations, and we enjoy mutually-beneficial relationships across business, government and the third sector.

Our approach to international engagement to date has developed organically. Many of the incentives and goals for engagement are inferred rather than explicitly stated. Although there have been attempts in the recent past to identify priorities in this area, such undertakings have tended to focus on individual aspects of international engagement and the approach overall has remained largely reactive.

In 2019 the University Council requested that an international strategy be developed and this document is a response to this request. Given the changing global setting for universities it was felt imperative for the University to articulate clearly the goals, priorities and direction for its international engagement.

This document is intended to create guidance and direction that will aid decision-making, makes clear what the priorities are and where to focus central resources, and provides the fundamental principles for engagement. International engagement takes place across the University based on the individual academic interests of University members. We therefore need to make sure that there is an appropriate balance between enabling this bottom-up activity to continue to flourish while allowing strategic choices and a more directive approach to be taken where there are opportunities for greater coordination or where a more pro-active approach would bring greater value.

The document sets out a number of goals, opportunities and activities that together form the first stage of the strategy process. It does not identify where, how, or with whom we should be working, but it does identify the tools needed to allow us collectively to prioritize activity and ensure that resources are being used effectively to support the academic mission of the University. This first stage will therefore be followed by a prioritisation and strategic decision making phase, and an implementation phase which will be taken forward and ‘owned’ by those with responsibility for the various areas/activities. It is envisaged that this will include the development of regionally specific strategies to reflect that different regions will have a different balance of priorities.

Over 2019 the Vice-Chancellor has also been developing and consulting on a Priorities Framework and programme of action to ensure that the Collegiate University thrives into the future. This document builds on the themes and priorities identified in that work.

# The strategic context: challenges and opportunities

Cambridge’s strategic choices are informed by the challenges and opportunities that we face in a global context that is complex and fast-changing. Cambridge, as a respected leader in global research and education, has a special responsibility to lead by example and to help generate innovative, long-term solutions by mobilising expertise across all disciplines. In this, the University is well-placed to respond to the escalating alignment of the funding landscape around challenge-focused research, without neglecting the curiosity-driven, long-term research that has always been at the heart of what we do.

Though international cooperation on the challenges we face is urgently needed, we are increasingly having to operate within a multipolar international environment. Tensions arising from shifting power dynamics, as well as growing inequality, have led to the election of more populist governments in many countries and the erosion of support for a globalised paradigm in favour of more national perspectives. The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 has, however, provided a particularly dramatic and destructive demonstration that global problems require a coordinated worldwide response from the research community. Now more than ever, Cambridge must advocate for openness and trust. In our research, we must continue to offer outstanding examples of what can be gained by working together, and through our teaching we must continue to produce graduates who are globally engaged and irrepressibly curious. This requires us to understand not only the regional dimension of global issues, but the region-specific challenges and opportunities in areas where Cambridge has the greatest presence:

**Africa**

Africa continues to undergo sweeping change at a time when it is also highly exposed to the impacts of current global challenges. In particular, its rapidly expanding and increasingly young populations create societal pressures distinct from those faced by aging populations in other parts of the world. By growing our partnerships with African colleagues, Cambridge can increase its contribution to global challenge research and to positive, transformative change in the region, while we in turn learn from those at the front-line of these issues.

**Asia**

Asia is already home to major centres of research and education excellence, and growing investment in higher education, research and innovation, especially in China and India, will continue to change the relative global standing of universities. In the face of intensifying competition, collaboration with partners across Asia is critical if Cambridge is to continue to thrive and lead.

**Europe**

Cambridge, and UK universities more broadly, have long enjoyed a close relationship with universities and research bodies across mainland Europe. Brexit will, however, fundamentally reshape our relationship with the European Union. The impact of the changes brought about by Brexit have created new incentives for us to build and capitalise on the opportunities offered by our existing bilateral relationships in Europe.

**North America**

For many years the United States has been the most prolific source of research co-publications for the University; there is a significant number of US students studying at Cambridge and there are several exchange programmes for students and early-career researchers travelling in both directions. Historic affiliations with Canadian institutions continue to develop into flourishing partnerships that promise to deliver global impact. Maintaining these strong links in coming years will depend on well-supported relationships in curiosity-driven research, as well as identification of key areas for challenge-led collaboration.

# Scope

The approach outlined in this document is focused on the Academic University. It does not directly cover the activities of Cambridge University Press (CUP), Cambridge Assessment (CA) or the Colleges, but recognises that working in partnership with these and other parts of the Cambridge University ecosystem is important if we are to maximise opportunities and meet our high level goals. It therefore aims for **close alignment where possible.**

The Cambridge collegiate system is a unique strength, providing high quality education and research, and supporting interdisciplinary connections through the nurturing of close-knit scholarly communities. As well as attracting international staff and students, the Colleges are themselves a source of valuable international links and relationships. It is very important that University international strategy does not develop independently from the Colleges. This is particularly the case regarding student recruitment and education, where the University and Colleges already work closely together but where there are opportunities for even closer alignment.

Similarly, CA and CUP are important elements of the University’s identity and contribute significantly to its reach and impact. Closer working of the Academic University with CA and CUP on aspects of international engagement could significantly increase in-country knowledge and opportunities on all sides. Such alignment recognises that both organisations share a common brand with the Academic University, and so are subject to some of the same risks.

In terms of the type of activity, this document is primarily focused on engagement with stakeholders from outside the UK by our staff, students, departments, institutions, schools or the institution more broadly. It is not in itself intended to cover the experience of international staff and students within Cambridge or engagement with national stakeholders on international issues, but recognises that these aspects are important and related. As such, this document will feed into discussions taking place elsewhere in the University on international staff and student experience, the international recruitment strategy, and government relations. These discussions will, in turn, influence strategic decision-making and implementation.

# Principles for engagement

The principles that govern how we engage internationally are as important as the direction of travel. We need to ensure that we work with sufficient respect for and understanding of the needs of our partners, while also upholding the broader values of the University.

**Freedom of thought and expression**

Our international engagement activities should be consistent with the University’s core values of freedom of thought and expression, and freedom from discrimination.

**Equality and diversity**

The University of Cambridge’s international engagement should be in line with our commitment to equality of opportunity and to a proactive and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity.

**Commitment to excellence**

Our reputation is built on the quality and excellence of our research and education. It is important that our international engagement maintains these high academic standards.

**Clarity and transparency**

Partnerships require trust and honesty. We must demonstrate a commitment to clarity and transparency of purpose and ways of working in all collaborations.

**Respectful and equitable engagement**

Our international engagement – whether student recruitment, research collaboration or academic diplomacy – needs to be supportive and respectful of the needs of all interested partners and the regions within which we are working. International partnership work must also be an equitable arrangement and we should strive for a co-creation approach where possible.

**Ethical working**

Our international engagement must recognise local expectations and practices and comply with local regulations and laws while ensuring that we abide by the University’s high ethical standards at all times.

**Environmental awareness**

The University of Cambridge is the first university in the world to adopt a science based target for carbon reduction, committing us to absolute zero by 2048. It is therefore important that as we pursue our international goals we are consistent with this environmental commitment in our activities. This means taking steps to better understand and reduce our indirect emissions through flights, and to use and improve electronic communication as an alternative to travel.

While it is important to ensure these principles are upheld across our international engagement activity, at times there may be potential for conflict of these with individual work streams. We plan to develop further guidance on resolving such conflicts as part of the implementation plan referenced later in this document.

# Our mission

The starting point for international strategy development should be the Mission of the University of Cambridge:

*“To contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest levels of international excellence.”*

It is in pursuit of this mission that we engage internationally.

# Our Goals

Our international engagement – whether building research collaborations with partner institutions, recruiting international students or engaging internationally through academic diplomacy – helps us to fulfil our mission by supporting four high level goals.

**Working internationally we will:**

1. **Extend our impact and contribute to global public good**

… by tackling global challenges that cross borders and can only be addressed through international collaboration, and engaging with regional issues that can only be addressed by working with partners in that region.

1. **Generate and contribute to globally leading research**

… by working with and learning from others internationally, creating and enhancing opportunities for excellent research, and attracting outstanding researchers.

1. **Compete globally to recruit the best students and create an educational experience that provides the skills and knowledge to thrive in an interconnected world**

…by ensuring we reach and attract the best students internationally, enriching the quality of our education through learning from international partners, and creating opportunities for diverse learning experiences.

1. **Ensure that we have a global voice and influence**

…by contributing to global debates and providing a gateway for UK society to engage with international issues.

# 1. Extend our impact and contribute to global public good

By working together within the University and with academia, industry, government, cultural institutions and third sector partners across the world, we will:

* Help address the central problems of our era, including, but not limited to, climate change, sustainable design, global health and wellbeing, social inequality, forced migration, cultural heritage and the changing nature of democracy.
* Deliver real impact, whether academic, economic, societal, technological or policy-led.
* Respond flexibly, responsibly and with integrity to changing social, political and technical landscapes by providing academic expertise to the international community.

**Opportunities and challenges we face in delivering this goal:**

* With global challenges of a magnitude and complexity rarely seen in human history, we need global solutions, drawing on global intellectual resources. It is essential that we identify how we can best use the full breadth of Cambridge’s intellectual resources to help understand and address these challenges – from the natural sciences to the social sciences to the arts and humanities
* We can only succeed if we work with others. Global universities must seek connection, communication and collaboration if we wish to see changes that will make the world a better place for everyone. These challenges are too big to tackle alone. We must develop relationships that enhance our shared impact, whether by bringing together unique perspectives on global challenges, or by combining different but complimentary research expertise.
* Education and research are key, but to make a real difference we need to identify clear routes to impact through our international collaboration and engagement.
* An important route to impact is through industry engagement and partnership. Cambridge academics work with organisations of all shapes and sizes, turning new ideas into ground-breaking commercial realities that make a difference to our lives. The University sits at the centre of the most successful technology cluster in Europe, bringing together extraordinary research with a huge range of entrepreneurial skills and know-how. We need to capitalise and build on these skills and connections in our international engagement activity to leverage greater impact.
* Routes to achieving international impact must be managed carefully, reviewed frequently and should involve a high level of connectivity between individual academics and the senior leadership team, in order to ensure that Cambridge’s strengths are appropriately championed to contribute best to global public good. The work in this area should also be closely aligned with the developing University Impact Strategy.

**Proposed next steps to address these opportunities and challenges:**

***Working through interdisciplinary initiatives…***

*Any attempt to map areas of potential collaboration on global challenges will build on the work of our Interdisciplinary Research Centres (IRCs), Strategic Research Initiatives (SRIs), Strategic Research Networks (SRNs) and other cross-departmental and cross-School bodies. Many of these have a strong impact agenda and are engaged in existing international networks. In particular, the Cambridge Global Challenges SRI is already supporting interdisciplinary work across the University focussed on the SDGs and we will look to build on this work.*

1. **Carry out a mapping exercise…** to identify areas of strength that can form the basis of collaboration on global challenges. Start by focusing on a select number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, analysing the University’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to these goals, and potential opportunities and threats.
2. **Undertake sector analysis…** to explore how other universities are using their resources to engage with a select number of core global challenges in which Cambridge has existing strength. Identify where the best research is happening in these selected areas, and where there is compatibility with our values and expertise or existing academic collaboration.
3. **Implement a more robust and consistent reporting mechanism…** for international partnerships and projects identified as ‘strategically significant’ to allow for easier assessment and accountability against project goals. The joint General Board and Council International Strategy Committee will act as the principal governance body within the University for this purpose.

***Partnerships in the Global South…***

*To contribute effectively towards the UN SDGs and to address global challenges we need to have strong relationships with universities in Africa, Asia and elsewhere in the Global South. As a starting point we will focus our attention on a small number of key university partners in sub-Saharan Africa, where there is already a critical mass of academic relationships. In doing so, we can help support further academic links both within those institutions and across the region. This will sit alongside continued engagement in India and South East Asia.*

# 2. Generate and contribute to globally leading research

By working together within the University and with academia, industry, government, cultural institutions and third sector partners across the world, we will:

* Undertake international collaborative research to understand and address key intellectual challenges and generate new knowledge and insights.
* Convene the world’s experts and stimulate collaboration.
* Attract the best staff from across the world to undertake globally leading research.
* Work with those institutions producing research at the highest levels of excellence.

**Opportunities and challenges we face in delivering this goal:**

* Cambridge is in a position of strength. We are one of the very top international research institutions with links across the world. However, we cannot work with every partner at the same level of commitment. We need to ensure that our greatest efforts are given to those international links where the academic case is strongest and the value that collaboration/partnership will bring is clear. At the same time we must recognise that this should be a relationship of mutual benefit, and take into account the long term value to the global research community.
* The international research and higher education landscape is changing. Across the globe multiple universities are poised to challenge Cambridge’s status as an international leader. To stay competitive we need to continue to support our relationships with top universities and research institutions while having one eye to the future by developing links with rising stars in the university sector globally, and attracting the best global talent to Cambridge.
* Our ability to recruit talented academic, professional and technical staff is directly related to the experience and opportunities we offer in Cambridge. We must ensure that our aim to attract the best staff is balanced with proper attention to the staff experience, and that Cambridge remains a desirable place to work.
* Cambridge has a world-wide reputation for research excellence. This reputation gives us access to opportunities and partners with the potential to bring considerable benefit to the University.
* The University of Cambridge museums represent the UK’s highest concentration of internationally important collections outside London. In addition, the Cambridge University Library’s Special Collections house a rich source of manuscripts, printed and artefact material. These collections offer a formidable intellectual resource for researchers across the world, developing international reach and academic relationships through loans, research visits and digital content.

**Proposed next steps to address these opportunities and challenges:**

1. **Undertake a review of existing high-profile partnerships…** including CARES, Cambridge Africa and the Cambridge University-Nanjing Centre. Evaluate how these partnerships came about, how successful they have been to all partners involved, the operational challenges faced, and the extent to which they are relevant to broader questions around global challenges and societal impact.
2. **Develop an international partnership prioritisation framework…** to guide engagement and identify collaboration opportunities that match our strengths and ability to add value through the full range of our intellectual activity. This should be primarily based on academic factors but could also take into account which countries and regions are investing in research, and which institutions have growing and emerging strength in fields that complement Cambridge’s work. The framework should also be informed by other broader aspects, including geopolitical context, reputational risk, the communications landscape and potential operational challenges. This will help identify those places (whether regions, countries or cities) where there are viable opportunities but greater focus and coordination is needed.

***The global realignment of research and higher education …***

*The extraordinary economic growth of China and India in the 21st century has been accompanied by similar rises in universities’ standing, as countries across Asia increase investment in research and higher education. The partnership prioritisation framework will recognise the importance of research links in these regions, building on already established relationships where they exist.*

1. **Develop institutional level relationships to help facilitate PI to PI links…** with international universities, businesses and other bodies, based on the internal mapping and international prioritisation framework identified above. Where appropriate, work towards larger added value projects or those which provide opportunities for educational exchange or collaboration. Such projects should not be focused solely on addressing global challenges, but also include fundamental academic linkages, the application of which might not yet be foreseeable, and forms of scholarship with less direct emphasis on the challenges of the present.

***The influence of Brexit…***

*The UK’s decision in June 2016 to exit the European Union has had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on our international relationships. Our strong ties to the European Research Community, through a shared funding framework, have been weakened. We therefore need to continue to invest in bilateral relationships with important European partner institutions such as LMU Munich, the University of Copenhagen and Sciences Po in Paris.*

1. **Undertake a programme to identify and explore key international membership networks…** with universities, businesses and other bodies at the cutting edge of research and educational provision. We will use these networks as an opportunity to co-create events that bring the best researchers and talent to Cambridge. We will also undertake cost-benefit analysis of international networks and organisations of which Cambridge is already a member.

***IARU and LERU…***

*Cambridge is an active member of a number of international networks and membership organisations. Of particular note are the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU) and the League of European Research Universities (LERU). Both bodies help promote connectivity with peer institutions at an administrative and academic level. They facilitate information sharing and provide opportunities to developed shared platforms on issues of strategic importance. These existing ties will be key components of our broader international network*

1. **Explore and evaluate models to help build connectivity…** between Cambridge and other institutions during the early stages of a relationship. This work should be carried out in close liaison with the Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) and Research Offices. One model the University has had some success with is ‘pump priming’– i.e. developing funding schemes to support simple and direct engagement such as exchanges, workshops and visiting lectures. However, we need to evaluate the mid- to long-term impact of this model.

# 3. Compete globally to recruit the best students and create an educational experience that provides the skills and knowledge to thrive in an interconnected world

By working together within the University and with academia, industry, government, cultural institutions and third sector partners across the world, we will:

* Attract the best students from across the world at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
* Learn from and work with others to support continuing innovation in our own educational delivery.
* Ensure that we continue to provide an outstanding education that meets the needs of graduates working and leading in a global society.

**Opportunities and challenges we face in delivering this goal:**

* We want to ensure that any student from any background, talented enough to study at Collegiate Cambridge, has the support they need to get here, to get the most out of our unique educational experience, and to go on to make a difference in the world. It is important, therefore, that efforts to recruit are properly balanced with efforts to bring in funding to support these students.
* World leading education requires world leading educators. Attracting academics with excellent pedagogical skills is crucial if we are to continue to deliver a world-class education that meets the needs of graduates working in a global society.
* Cambridge provides the highest quality education for the most talented students, but this should not prevent us from learning from others in terms of how best to recruit and support international students. In order to continue to provide the best possible education for our international student community, we need to continue to innovate.
* The University of Cambridge delivers a broad range of educational programmes and experiences for international students. In addition to undergraduate and graduate degree programmes, the University also delivers executive and professional education and, through its Institute for Continuing Education, life-long learning, summer school and online courses. It is important that we take into account the full breadth of our international education when considering our approach to international student engagement.
* In an increasingly interconnected and global working environment, Cambridge graduates need to have the cultural sensitivity, communication and other international engagement skills that will enable them to flourish.
* We should ensure that in recruiting the best students from across the world, we give proper attention to the international student experience and how this enrichens the academic and educational experience at Cambridge. It is also important to recognise that the experiences and expectations of different student bodies – e.g. whether undergraduate or graduate – may be different.
* In the face of rapidly improving competition from other world-leading universities, it is essential that we communicate effectively the quality and rigour we provide in the education of our undergraduate and postgraduate students.

**Proposed next steps to address these opportunities and challenges:**

1. **Develop and implement an international student recruitment strategy…** building on the review of admissions and outreach, and work already undertaken by the Cambridge Admissions Office.

***Widening participation for international students…***

*Cambridge is committed to attracting the most talented undergraduate and postgraduate students from the UK and around the world, an ambition supported by a £100 million gift from the David and Claudia Harding Foundation. No country has a monopoly on talent and our approach to international student recruitment needs to expand our reach and diversify our student intake.*

1. **Undertake a programme of activity to increase the international experience and opportunities for our student body…** to best prepare them with the skills and experience they need for an interconnected and global working environment and support academic excellence. With resourcing we will explore opportunities to help expand undergraduate and postgraduate student mobility, building on existing summer placement opportunities, and ensure student mobility and international engagement is adequately supported through foreign language skills provision and other relevant international skills and knowledge.

***International collaboration and postgraduate studies…***

*Owing to Cambridge’s unique structure (including the short but intense term times, the role of the Colleges, and the importance of the ‘Cambridge experience’ in our education delivery) the University has relatively little overseas educational activity or student exchange. Although education- based institutional partnerships are likely to remain difficult at undergraduate level, there is more flexibility in postgraduate learning, an area that is being actively explored.*

1. **Clarify the viability of joint educational provision within the Cambridge system…** in order to identify models of working with international partners in this area. This will start with a review of joint supervision arrangements for PhD students in order to develop a more systematic approach.

# 4. Ensure that we have a global voice and influence

By working together within the University and with academia, industry, government, cultural institutions and third sector partners across the world, we will:

* Ensure that Cambridge continues to be seen across the world as an institution that leads in research and education, an influential voice on global challenges, and a source of authoritative insight, in order to underpin and propagate our impact.
* Convene expertise and debate, and be the ‘go-to’ institution for advice, guidance and collaboration.
* Serve the international community by helping create academic and other non-governmental channels for international engagement.

**Opportunities and challenges we face in delivering this goal:**

* To deliver and develop our international engagement we need to communicate our ambitions and the activities that support them.
* Our reputation gives us a strong voice internationally – enabling our academic expertise to feed into important debates and contribute towards global public good. However, we need to make sure that, when we engage internationally, the institutional voice of the University is consistent with its strategic priorities and values. This is distinct from the independent voices of our academics.
* As a world-leading institution that is over 800 years old, Cambridge is embedded in the fabric not only of the UK, but of international society. We therefore have a responsibility to ensure that our voice is used to best serve the global community, while maintaining the principle of respectful and equitable engagement as outlined previously in this document.
* Our ability to fundraise, and so support our world leading research and education, benefits hugely from our global voice and profile. We therefore need to ensure that there is strong alignment between our international communication and fundraising activities.
* As a generator of world changing ideas, knowledge and scholarship, and as a nexus of high value, overlapping networks, Cambridge has considerable convening power. A high degree of global influence can be exerted as an ‘honest broker’, a role that Cambridge plays successfully and which fits well with the University’s mission and values.

**Proposed next steps to address these opportunities and challenges:**

1. **Develop an international communications strategy…** that starts with an understanding of how Cambridge is currently perceived amongst key audiences across the world. This will help us frame our messaging and identify communication channels that resonate with our international audiences. Some of this work has already started through the Office of External Affairs and Communications Brand Review. The communications strategy will need to be tailored according to the various international work streams – research collaborations, strategic partnerships, student recruitment, staff recruitment and global engagement – and the audiences associated with them. The strategy should also recognise that communication is about dialogue and needs to be sensitive to other cultures and communities.
2. **Carry out an internal communication programme…** to communicate the principles of international engagement and international priorities to internal audiences. Anecdotal evidence suggests that our academic and non-academic staff would welcome greater clarity and signposting, to help with day-to-day decision making.
3. **Undertake a more proactive approach to international leadership and institutional engagement with global challenges…** while ensuring that this is framed within the role of a global research university and the mission of the University. One of the strengths of Cambridge is its considerable convening power. We should make the most of this strength by bringing together expertise on global challenges that relate directly or indirectly to the work taking place in Cambridge.

***Engagement with existing cross-university platforms…***

*The University’s membership of the recently formed Global Alliance of Universities on Climate, through the new Cambridge Zero Initiative, is an example of an international platform that could strengthen our voice in an area of significant global impact. We will use this as a test case while exploring other opportunities to work on challenge-focused academic platforms coordinated by international organisations and NGOs.*

1. **Explore how we engage with international platforms in order to strengthen our global voice…** looking for opportunities to feed into policy making as appropriate. We should make the most of Cambridge led networks, including the Cambridge Institute for Sustainable Leadership, the Centre for Science and Policy, and the extensive networks operated through the Cambridge Colleges. Promotion of our leadership activity in Cambridge and abroad should also be incorporated within our international communications strategy.

# Key enablers

Our ability to meet our goals depends on a number of key factors that underpin all activity. Successful international activity has the capacity to further support and develop these enablers, creating a virtuous circle. We have identified seven key enablers that are needed to support the objectives set out in this document, and suggest possible actions to address those areas where further work is needed.

**People**

Cambridge’s greatest resource is its people: whether staff or student, academic or professional services. We are only able to provide research and education at the highest levels of international excellencet because of the talent and commitment of these people. This allows us to maintain our international reputation and presence, which in turn helps us attract talent.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Promote the University as an employer of choice.** We need to ensure that we attract and retain the best talent from across the world through a modern, open approach to recruitment in line with the objectives set out in the University’s People Strategy Action Plan.

**Academic buy-in**

Nothing is possible without the interest, support and commitment of our academics. We are a bottom-up institution that values academic freedom above all else. Our academics have considerable autonomy and so it is important that our international interests are led by academic interests and have buy-in from the academic community. We need individual academics to be interested enough to champion international relationships within the institution, and take on the time and resource commitments that this type of activity can involve.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Undertake ongoing internal engagement.** We need to ensure institutional level international engagement works with and not against the interests and priorities of our diverse academic community. We therefore need to be clear what these interests are. This requires ongoing engagement by the Strategic Partnerships Office (SPO), and at School, departmental and, where possible, PI level. Such engagement should form part of the international communications programme mentioned above (see **4B**)**.**

**Network capital**

The vast majority of international opportunities are only made possible by the significant network capital of the University community – i.e. our ability to access an extensive network of professional and personal relationships that span the world. These relationships are also an important source of knowledge and information, helping support the decisions and choices we make around international engagement. In particular, one of the most valuable networks we have is the University’s global alumni community. The Colleges and the University Development and Alumni Relations Office are important gateways into this network, through the extensive programme of events and engagement they deliver across the world.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Promote opportunities for PIs to build international connections** through a dedicated webpage on the international section of the University’s website. This could show opportunities for funding for staff exchange, academic events or other forms of interaction with institutional strategic partners. The Research Office, the SRIs, SRNs and IRCs will need to be closely involved in this process to ensure it adds value and does not duplicate activity taking place elsewhere.
* **Ensure our global alumni community has greater awareness of our international goals and activities** through closer work between Cambridge alumni relations professionals and the SPO on international events and engagement.

**Efficient and effective internal systems and processes**

Clear, efficient and transparent systems are needed to maximise opportunities and minimise risk, and to support academic engagement and collaboration across the world. We need to make sure that our systems are fit for purpose and helping us to achieve rather than detract from our high levels goals. Good systems are also needed to track and map our international activity – an important component in supporting strategic decision-making. A lack of clarity around our international processes can not only result in increased inefficiency and confusion but can also enable high risk activity to proceed without sufficient oversight.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Map and rationalise international processes and systems** - building on the work of the International Structures Working Group and SPO - with the aim of ensuring we have the right processes for supporting international activity across the University.
* **Establish an International Support Services function** – to provide operational advice and support for University staff and students who are working, or considering working, overseas or with international partners. This function will also ensure that there is appropriate review and oversight of activities and improved assurance around the risks associated with international activities.
* **Develop a Customer Relationship Management System** to help track partnership activity – linking up ongoing contact data with academic collaborations, co-publications and other relevant data.

**A strong brand and reputation**

Built on 800 years of world-changing research and education, and the consistently world-leading talents of our academics, our name and reputation are two of our greatest assets. The Cambridge brand is known across the world. It helps open up opportunities that would not otherwise be available. It gives us greater access to government, businesses and important global fora, and helps us recruit the best staff and students to enable us to continue to have a positive global impact. Protecting and managing our brand and reputation is therefore key to our international engagement.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Develop a coherent strategy and guidelines for use of the University brand**, and look at how we can do more to address serious brand violations in regions of strategic importance. The Office of External Affairs and Communications is already taking forward this work based on the findings of the University’s Brand Review.

**Knowledge and understanding of our partners**

To work with a partner, we need to understand their needs, interests and the context within which they are working. Nowhere is this more important than in the international space where there can be cultural sensitivities and notable differences in approach. Operating without this understanding could damage important relationships and lead us into situations of substantial reputational, financial and legal risk for the University. It is therefore important that we make use of the considerable knowledge and experience of our academic body: those with scholarly expertise relating to particularly geographies as well as those with direct experience of international engagement.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Promote principles of co-creation and a partner-focused approach** within our internal communications programme (see **4A**). This is already a core part of our engagement in Africa.
* **Pool international knowledge through region-focused working groups** to ensure appropriate portfolio holders within the SPO are as informed as possible and able to provide advice and guidance to help support international collaborations.
* **Identify and leverage the knowledge and contacts of Cambridge academics** who have strong connections and cultural expertise in relation to regions, countries and cities**.**

**A culture of engagement**

To generate and make the most of international engagement opportunities, we need the right institutional culture. A culture that supports international engagement has various aspects to it. It needs to encourage ambition and calculated experimentation while also ensuring we engage with humility and self-awareness, and assessment of risk. Pragmatism, continuous learning and building carefully upon previous experience are also important.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Increase the visibility of our international engagement** and celebrate it within our communication. This should form part of our international communication strategy and internal communication programme (see **4A** and **4B**).

**Funding**

Our international engagement is not driven by income generation, but some activities might well offer opportunities for resource growth. However, as with all activities, international engagement also has a resource cost. Funding is therefore a key enabler for this activity. As well as supporting existing relationships, funding enables us to explore and develop new academic opportunities, create large high-value collaborations, and ensure that we can attract and support the best staff and students. The University itself has limited existing internal funds to support this type of activity, so our international engagement relies on our ability to bring in new dedicated funding from government, philanthropy, business and other sources. Fundraising, in all its forms, is therefore an important activity if we are to further our mission through international engagement. The work of the University Development and Alumni Relations Office, the Research Office and the College development community is crucial in making this happen and ensuring our academics get the financial resource they need to do their work.

**Bridging the gap: proposed activities**

* **Ensure appropriate match-up between international priorities and funding opportunities** whilst ensuring that these are consistent with existing School, campaign and student support priorities. This means the SPO, DAR, Research Office and Cambridge Admissions Office should meet regularly, engage with each other early in the partnership development process, and operate as cross-departmental teams on specific projects.
* **Focus international fundraising activities in areas of most opportunity, leverage and strategic value** such as where there are large or active alumni communities, where there are important strategic partnerships or where there is a strong hi-tech ecosystem.

# Strategy process and implementation

This document sets out high-level goals for international engagement and identifies the tools that will allow us to prioritise our activity.

As stated in the introduction, the Towards an International Strategy document is not intended to provide the detail on where, how, or with whom we should be working. However, greater clarity on this will be needed to take forward implementation.

It should therefore be seen as the first stage in a three part strategy process:

01/01/2021+

01/06/2020 – 01/01/2021

01/01/2019 – 01/06/2020

This document will lead to a second stage, comprised of a package of work, including some of the activities proposed in this document, to make strategic decisions that will inform implementation and delivery. Stage 2 will start after the publication of this document, and will run until the beginning of 2021. We will then publish an implementation plan which will begin the third and final stage of the strategy process. There will be an ongoing review and feedback process taking place throughout the implementation phase and beyond.