



KAPLAN HIGHER EDUCATION UK

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

2022-2027 | Updated 2026



INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan supports the mission and goals of Kaplan Higher Education UK (KHE UK) over the five years from 2022 to 2027.

Working in long standing partnerships with the University of Essex and the University of Liverpool, KHE UK (formally Kaplan Open Learning) has delivered high quality online education since 2007 that expands access, drives innovation and supports institutional growth in an increasingly competitive global market.

Strategic Context

The global market for online higher education continues to expand, driven by increasing demand for flexible, career-focused learning and intensified by growing international competition. Student expectations have evolved significantly, with greater emphasis on quality, employability, and a high-quality digital learning experience.

Within this environment, KHE UK has demonstrated sustained growth, particularly through the expansion of its postgraduate portfolio and the successful recruitment of international students. Our partnerships with the University of Essex and the University of Liverpool have enabled us to build a strong and differentiated online offering that meets the needs of a diverse, global student population.

KHE UK's commitment to high-quality online education is reflected in consistently strong student satisfaction, including high levels of positive feedback across end-of-module surveys, alongside strong academic outcomes. This performance has been reinforced through sector recognition and external validation, including the Public/Private Partnership of the Year award at the PIEoneer Awards (2017), Approved (fee cap) status with the Office for Students (2021), and the Best Online Classroom Experience award at the Global Student Satisfaction Awards (2021).

Since the launch of this strategic plan in 2022, KHE UK has continued to strengthen its academic standing and sector reputation, including achieving a Silver rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework (2023) and Gold in the Times Higher Education Online Learning Rankings (2024) for both University of Essex Online and University of Liverpool Online.



These achievements position KHE UK strongly for future growth, providing a robust foundation to scale our partnerships, expand our portfolio, and compete effectively in an increasingly global and competitive online higher education market.

Our ambition

KHE UK's ambition is to increase the online student population of our university partners and be recognised domestically and globally as a leading online learning provider. By doing so, we will transform lives and deliver positive change for individuals through high-quality, accessible education.

To achieve this, we will continue to develop our programme portfolio, ensuring it meets the evolving needs of students and employers. We will also expand our international recruitment efforts, fostering an inclusive and diverse learning community that upholds the principles of fairness and sensitivity. Growth in student numbers will be essential in maintaining our sustainability as a higher education provider, enabling us to uphold the highest standards of service and education. By working collaboratively with our students and university partners, we aim to establish ourselves as a leading provider of online higher education in the UK.

In the longer term, we aspire to attain Degree Awarding Powers and University Title, enabling us to develop and deliver our own portfolio of online programmes. This strategic goal will enhance our ability to shape the future of online education and strengthen our position within the global higher education sector.



OUR MISSION

Kaplan helps individuals achieve their educational and career goals. We build futures one success story at a time.

Kaplan Higher Education UK's mission is to place students at the heart of everything we do, helping them grow in confidence and capability through accessible, supportive, and career-focused higher education that opens doors to new opportunities worldwide.

OUR VISION

Kaplan Higher Education UK's vision is to lead the way in online and flexible learning, opening access to higher education for all who have the ambition and determination.

In pursuit of the KHE UK vision, our approach has always been to provide educational opportunities for those who may not have been able to access higher education (HE) at a traditional time or in a traditional way by widening access to high-quality university education that expands across the globe.

The KHE UK vision is underpinned by the Kaplan core values. Our core values define our company culture and provide the framework for what we deliver to our students and employees each day.

- **Integrity** - we hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in everything we do.
- **Knowledge** - we offer expert resources to help you achieve your academic and career best.
- **Support** - we give you the tools you need to succeed.
- **Opportunity** - we open doors and broaden access to education.
- **Results** - we're dedicated to helping you achieve your goals – we succeed when you succeed.

OUR STRATEGY

We have established clear aims and KPIs for each of the following strategic objectives:

- **Student Number Growth**
- **Student Satisfaction**
- **Digital Innovation**
- **Good Student Outcomes**
- **Staff Development & Enhancement**
- **Quality Assurance**
- **Organisational Sustainability**

This document outlines our approach to achieving each objective. It reflects our current understanding and perspective of the online marketplace and will be updated throughout the strategy's implementation as the online market continues to evolve.

STUDENT NUMBER GROWTH

Our aim

Our aim is to continuously review and expand our marketing operations to raise both our domestic and international reputation that enables us to enhance our recruitment capabilities and grow our student enrolments.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Strengthen brand recognition in the domestic market through targeted marketing investments, with the aim of increasing domestic enrolments.
- Expand the global reach of our marketing activities and improve effectiveness in the international education market.
- Identify and prioritise emerging markets through the use of market intelligence and insight drawn from across the Kaplan Group, enabling informed and timely investment decisions.
- Broaden our network of in-country regional agents to enhance recruitment capabilities and leverage local expertise.
- Develop a better understanding of our global target market by developing customer personas and satisfying their educational requirements effectively.
- Utilise marketing intelligence to develop a curriculum that better meets the needs of targeted emerging markets than competitors.
- Utilise data, automation, and artificial intelligence to enhance marketing effectiveness, improve conversion rates and support more personalised engagement across the recruitment funnel.
- Focus on ensuring meaningful, valuable and positive brand experiences across the student journey by delivering broad-reach brand awareness and activation marketing campaigns.
- Encourage more students and alumni to act as advocates to recruit new students and help to build networks to support existing students.

Measures of success

Success in delivering student number growth will be measured not only by increased enrolments, but by the quality, diversity and sustainability of our student population, alongside strong continuation, satisfaction and outcomes.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Our aim

Our aim is to always provide an exceptional level of support for students to empower them to achieve their full academic and career potential.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Maintain high student satisfaction ratings in internal surveys and continue to achieve good outcomes in the National Student Survey (NSS).
- Invest in the development of the learner analytics reporting system to enable the Student Services Teams to provide enhanced individualised student support to improve retention rates and good award outcomes.
- Provide development opportunities to staff to offer a broader scope of pastoral support and advice to help students stay healthy physically, mentally and emotionally during their online studies.
- Work with students to expand the range of study skills and disability support we provide to improve accessibility and remove barriers to study.
- Develop a sector leading employability and careers support service for online students to facilitate positive outcomes in career planning and improve Graduate Outcomes results.
- Empower staff and students to develop initiatives to establish a global online learning community and professional network.

Measures of success

Success will be demonstrated through consistently high levels of student satisfaction, strong continuation and completion rates, and positive academic, wellbeing and graduate outcomes for our students.

DIGITAL INNOVATION

Our aim

Our aim is to invest in digital innovation to ensure that we continue to be at the forefront of the online education sector in the UK and a leading online learning provider in the global market.

Our approach

To achieve this we will:

- Develop and embed innovative assessment activities that harness the latest technological advancements, including AI-driven tools, to enhance online learning.
- Create innovative, technology-enhanced collaborative programmes of study that connect a global community of students in engaging online learning experiences.
- Leverage data-driven insights and AI-powered analytics to enhance student engagement, personalise learning experiences, and drive academic success.
- Continuously develop our learning platform and enhance its content to empower students, encouraging deeper engagement in their academic progress.
- Transform student support services by integrating intelligent and adaptive technologies, including AI-driven solutions, to provide tailored, real-time assistance.
- Assess the pedagogical effectiveness of our innovative approach to online teaching and learning.
- Broaden accessibility to our learning platform, ensuring an inclusive and adaptable learning environment for a diverse global audience.
- Expand our outward-facing efforts and participate in technology-focused, research-led initiatives to increase visibility, enhance impact, and achieve external recognition for our pioneering work in pedagogy and digital innovation.

Measures of success

Success will be reflected in the demonstrable impact of digital innovation on teaching quality, learning experience and student outcomes, supported by strong platform performance and sector recognition.

GOOD STUDENT OUTCOMES

Our aim

Our aim is to achieve outcomes for students which represent outstanding performance in relation to student satisfaction, progression and retention.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Enhance our curricula to develop and deliver professionally focused programmes which provide career enhancement opportunities for our students.
- Collaboratively engage with our students to enable them to contribute to the development of curricula that meets their needs and professional aspirations.
- Foster a supportive and engaged online learning community that recognises the needs, strengths and circumstances of our diverse student population.
- Implement initiatives that drive strong continuation, completion and progression outcomes in line with regulatory expectations and sector benchmarks.
- Apply developments in learning science, learner analytics and digital capability to improve student engagement, retention and academic success.
- Utilise artificial intelligence responsibly and ethically to support personalised learning, early identification of risk and timely student interventions, while maintaining academic integrity and transparency.
- Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment approaches to ensure high quality outcomes for students.
- Where appropriate, seek to enhance the professional recognition of programmes through external accreditation and alignment with employer and sector expectations.

Measures of success

Success will be demonstrated through strong performance in student continuation, completion and progression, sustained high levels of student satisfaction, and positive graduate outcomes, meeting and where possible exceeding regulatory expectations and sector benchmarks.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Our aim

Our aim is to ensure that our provision meets the highest standards for UK Higher Education and that we are internationally recognised for the quality of our teaching, learning resources and educational experience for online students.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Maintain robust programme validation and annual monitoring and review processes to ensure our programmes meet the requirements of the UK Higher Education Qualifications Framework and UK Quality Code.
- Use benchmarking, performance data and external insight to drive continuous improvement and inform quality enhancement activity.
- Support the professional accreditation and external recognition of our programmes to provide a learning experience which is career focused and support career enhancement.
- Embed coherent and efficient quality assurance processes that support effective decision making, enable impact evaluation, and ensure we listen to and respond to feedback from students and other stakeholders.
- Ensure that quality systems, governance and processes are scalable and resilient, supporting sustainable growth while maintaining high academic standards.
- Conduct regular internal audits to promote accountability, transparency and consistency across the organisation.
- Monitor student performance data on an ongoing basis to ensure continued compliance with the Office for Students B3 conditions of registration, with a focus on continuation, completion and progression.

Measures of success

Success will be demonstrated through sustained compliance with regulatory requirements, strong performance against quality and outcomes benchmarks, positive student and stakeholder feedback, and continued external recognition of the quality of our online provision.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT & ENHANCEMENT

Our aim

Our staff are critical to our future success. Our aim is to establish a great place to work by fostering an environment where all staff feel valued and empowered to be innovative and contribute to enhancing the student experience.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Ensure a thorough induction and new starter training programme in collaboration with HR.
- Recognise achievement and contributions made by staff.
- Mentor and support staff to reach their potential and achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Establish a cycle of ongoing training and development opportunities.
- Support staff to participate in external engagement activities which raise the profile of KHE UK.
- Promote the organisation's 'Gift of Knowledge' scheme and explore further development opportunities on offer to staff through our Learning and Development Policy.
- Provide staff with access to counselling services and dedicated Mental Health First Aiders to ensure support is available to everyone.
- Regularly review people metrics ensuring we continue to attract, engage and retain the people we need while fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can contribute and reach their full potential.
- Undertake annual appraisals and salary reviews to ensure that staff feel valued and receive feedback to improve their performance and that salaries are competitive in the market.
- Use the annual employee engagement survey and other feedback mechanisms to track and improve overall staff satisfaction.

Measures of success

Success will be reflected in positive staff feedback, strong engagement and wellbeing, sustained retention of talent, and a motivated workforce equipped to deliver an excellent student experience.

ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Our aim

Our aim is to maintain a sustainable financial position which enables continued investment in technological innovation, resources and academic excellence to drive successful student outcomes.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Manage and control costs to generate sufficient financial resource to facilitate future investment in the agreed strategic objectives.
- Monitor and evaluate our curriculum and online delivery model to ensure:
 - Value for money for students
 - Cost effective delivery
 - Continued investment and innovation
- Further invest in systems and processes to enable us to better evaluate the effectiveness and scalability of our pedagogic and digital innovations.
- Continue to invest and develop our Virtual Learning Environment to ensure that we remain a sector leader in online learning.
- Continue to generate sufficient resource to meet our financial obligations and investment requirements.

Measures of success

Success will be reflected in the organisation's ability to maintain financial resilience while continuing to invest in technology, resources and academic excellence that underpin high quality student experience and outcomes.

