

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

2022-2027

OUR MISSION

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

The KOL mission is to continue to transform students' lives and careers by delivering and expanding our suite of innovative, industry led and career enhancing and relevant higher education programmes to a global market.

This Strategic Plan supports the mission and goals of Kaplan Open Learning (KOL) over the next five years.

We have accomplished a great deal over the last five years. We have consistently achieved outstanding National Student Survey (NSS) results for overall student satisfaction scoring 95% in the 2021 survey for University of Essex Online and placing us top in the UK compared to other mainstream universities.

We were voted the Best Online Classroom Experience award at the highly prestigious Global Student Satisfaction Awards 2021. The Global Student Satisfaction Awards are the only student-powered global university overview that captures students' feedback on their study experience. The Awards are delivered by Studyportals in collaboration with the British Council, IELTS and Unibuddy.

We also successfully registered for Approved (fee cap) status with the OfS in 2021.

In 2018, we achieved the highly prestigious gold rating in the Government's Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), placing us alongside other highly-ranked UK universities. The TEF Panel judged that the University of Essex Online 'delivers consistently outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students. It is of the highest quality found in the UK.

In 2017 our partnership with the University of Essex was recognised within the wider education sector globally when we were awarded the Public/Private Partnership of the Year award at the inaugural PIONEER Awards, created to honour achievement and recognise both individuals and organisations who are pushing professional standards, evolving their engagement or redefining the international student experience.

Since we established in 2007, the external part-time learning environment has changed considerably, with the substantial increase in student fees and the introduction of part-time student loans in 2012. Domestic part-time student numbers have been in decline across the sector since the 2012 student funding reforms, however, University of Essex Online numbers have grown significantly due to the introduction of a portfolio of postgraduate programmes and an increase in international student recruitment. In 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic changed attitudes towards online learning opening up international markets such as India and China who previously hadn't recognised degrees which had been studied online. It also resulted in more competitors entering the market as University's were forced to deliver online.

In 2019, we partnered with the University of Liverpool to deliver a portfolio of career-focused postgraduate online programmes. We launched the first suite of programmes in 2021 with further programmes due to be rolled out over the next 5 years.

Our ambition, is to increase the online student population of both of our University partners and be recognised globally as a leading online learning provider. By doing this we will be transforming the lives and delivering positive change for individuals. To achieve this, we plan to develop our programme portfolio and expand our international recruitment through inclusivity, fairness and sensitivity across our diverse community. The growth in student numbers will ensure that we continue to develop as a sustainable higher education institution that seeks to deliver the highest standards of service and education. Through working collaboratively with our students and university partners we will seek to be recognised as one of the UK market leaders in online delivery.

In the longer-term we want to further explore the possibility of attaining Taught Degree Awarding Powers for KOL so that we can develop our own portfolio of online programmes.

OUR VISION

KOL's vision is to become a world leader in online learning, making higher education accessible to anyone with the potential and drive to succeed.

In pursuit of the KOL 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 KOL 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

The approach of how we will achieve each aim is outlined in this document. This is based on our current thinking and view of the online marketplace and will be updated over the lifetime of the strategy as the online market evolves.

STUDENT NUMBER GROWTH

Our aim

Our aim is to expand our marketing operations and raise our international reputation and global profile to enable us to enhance our recruitment capabilities and grow our student enrolments.

Our approach

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Expand the global reach of our marketing activities and improve effectiveness in the international education market.
- Establish a network of in-country regional agents to enhance recruitment capabilities and draw upon local knowledge.
- 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.
- 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.
- Expand marketing and recruitment activities in collaboration with our University partners.

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Our aim

Our aim is to continue to 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 support team 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.

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

In order to achieve this aim we will:

- Develop and embed innovative assessment activities which exploit the latest technological developments in online learning.
- Implement collaborative activities to create an online global community of scholarship and professional practice.
- Encourage the better understanding and utilisation of learning analytic data to
 - Enhance the learning platform to challenge and empower students to take ownership of their learning and academic progress.
 - Introduce AI based systems to enhance individualised support for our students.
 - Assess the pedagogical effectiveness of our innovative approach to online teaching and learning.
- Expand our sector-leading Learning Technology Department to enhance our global delivery.
- Broaden accessibility to our learning platform in the global learning environment.
- Enhance outward facing activities to increase the visibility and impact of our innovative pedagogical and technological excellence.
- Participate in technology-focussed research-led activities to achieve external recognition for our digital innovation.

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 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.
- Engage with academic staff and students to build a community of online learners in a way which recognises both the challenges posed by online delivery and our student demographic but also the unique qualities our students possess in meeting these challenges.
- Further integrate associate tutors into the academic community.
- Create an environment that fosters research and innovation into effective online pedagogy and teaching excellence.
- Drive forward initiatives which focus on student retention and completion and apply developments in learning science, learner analytics and learning technology to:
 - better engage students
 - provide tailored support interventions for students throughout their learning journey
 - measure the effectiveness of developments in teaching, learning and assessment
- Deepen our University partnerships, incorporating their academic scholarship to enhance curricula and develop professionally focused programmes which provide career enhancement opportunities for students.
- Where appropriate and working in collaboration with our University partners, expand the professional recognition of curriculum through professional accreditations.
- Create a reporting dashboard enabling staff to access performance data to enhance teaching, learning and curriculum development.

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.
- Achieve continuous improvements through the use of benchmarking data.
- Support the professional accreditation of our programmes to provide a learning experience which is career focused and support career enhancement.
- Develop seamless quality assurance processes to support and inform decision making, monitor impact, effectiveness and efficiency and listen and respond to feedback from stakeholders.
- Ensure that our systems and processes support continuous enhancement in line with our plans for growth.

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:

- Introduce a new Induction process in partnership with the HR team.
- 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 training and development opportunities.
- Support staff to participate in external engagement activities which raise the profile of KOL.
- Promote the organisation's 'Gift of Knowledge' and the development opportunities offered to all staff.
- Continue to support the Staff Wellbeing committee to share best practice and ensure support is given where required.
- Hold regular town hall meetings to update staff on the performance of the organisation and celebrate achievements.
- Undertake annual appraisals and salary reviews to ensure that staff feel valued and received feedback to improve their performance and that salaries are competitive in the market.
- Ensure a work life balance and offer remote working opportunities where possible.
- Improve overall staff satisfaction measured by the annual employee engagement survey.

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 a that we remain a sector leader in online learning.
- Continue to generate sufficient resource to meet our financial obligations and investment requirements.

