Catalysing Change
Strategy 2015-2020

cata·lyst
ˈkad(ə)lʌst/
noun: catalyst
plural noun: catalysts
A substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any permanent chemical change.
A person or thing that precipitates an event.
This document sets out the Leadership Foundation’s strategy for 2015-2020. It seeks to encapsulate why we exist, what we want to achieve – with and for the higher education community we serve – and how we plan to achieve it and measure our success.

Our strategy recognises that higher education is in the midst of challenging times both financially and in policy terms, the consequences of which will test not only the sector itself but also agencies such as ourselves and how we need to work in the future. A core element of our new strategy is to work in partnership and collaboration to meet the needs of the higher education sector in the most effective and efficient manner, to enrich our services and provide a broader range of opportunities and experiences for our members and those who use us.

Woven through our strategy is a contextual assessment of the current state of higher education in the UK. We seek to set out the Leadership Foundation’s planned activities and a vision for the Leadership Foundation in 2020.

The board approved this plan in November 2014 and they have the responsibility for monitoring its progress throughout the next 5 years as the executive carries it out. This strategy is underpinned by a series of more detailed service/business plans.
The UK higher education landscape

The world in which the Leadership Foundation now exists is very different to the world in which it was set up. In the last four years alone, higher education in the UK has undergone some of the most radical policy changes in a generation.

Each of the UK’s four nations has experienced far reaching higher education policy reforms and face considerable uncertainty, including the global financial crisis, austerity measures, and shifting regulatory contexts. Particularly pressing strategic issues include the changing funding environment, technological change, new providers coming into the sector and international competition. These are supplemented by enhanced student choice, demands for greater transparency and scrutiny, greater expectations of the teaching and learning experience, government-driven restructures, differing organisational forms and governance arrangements, the omnipresent and numerous league tables and the need to balance being globally competitive while being locally relevant. All create unprecedented challenges to higher education leadership, governance and management.

At the same time, leaders must face the changing needs of postgraduate education, the role of universities as ‘place-makers’ alongside the latest immigration policy, pressure to lead sustainable development in support of the government’s CO2 reduction policy, and the need to be role models for greater equality and diversity.

All these factors serve to challenge the leadership of HEIs, which are simultaneously expected to be the engines of economic growth and recovery, the creators of new knowledge and innovation, and the providers of solutions to society’s problems.

HEIs must also seek to achieve greater efficiencies in all that they do and invest in their infrastructure and staff while maintaining the UK’s reputation as a world class higher education system – safe for students, safe for investors and safe for the public purse.

Further dynamics include the fallout from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the development of the next REF, the 2015 general election, the consequences of the Scottish referendum and elections to the Scottish Parliament in 2016, the challenge from international competitors (especially the rise of the East Asian economies in science research), and the consequences of new providers entering the higher education marketplace. Evidence to date shows that the leadership, governance and management of UK higher education has been a success story on any indicator from research success, National Student Survey results, higher education’s contribution to the economy at circa £73bn, international students’ destination of choice, teaching quality assessments and the financial health of the sector.

The unpredictability of the future for higher education has never been so great which makes the need for high quality leadership, governance and management development even more relevant and needed.

It is within this context that we present our response in the shape of our strategic plan and ambitions for our higher education leadership, governance and management over the next five years.

Informed by our members and stakeholders voices, it is a living document which we will review regularly to reflect the changing nature of the higher education landscape. Our core ambition for quality, relevance and value for money in leadership, governance and management development remains steadfast.

Sir Andrew Cubie CBE
Chair of the board

Alison Johns
Chief executive
Our response & distinctiveness

Our response

The Leadership Foundation’s new strategy recognises the success of higher education and the pressures it now faces. We also acknowledge and welcome the substantial development in the sector’s leadership, governance and management capacity and capability over the last 10 years – achieved in part through the Leadership Foundation’s work. We are now working with a sophisticated market of service users who have a wide choice in where they seek their development.

Most HEIs have well-established internal provision with networks of trusted local providers who “know and understand the university well” and who provide value for money. We know from our market research that most respondents are not planning to change their patterns of delivery over the coming years.

Where the Leadership Foundation can add even more value is in developing institutional leadership and management capacity, such as developing understanding and experience in working at the organisational and strategic level and by learning from others both within and without the sector; but the message from stakeholders is clear – the price has to be right.

The Leadership Foundation therefore needs to compete and continually demonstrate its worth and the quality and value for money of its programmes, consultancy and research. This strategy needs to deliver a step change in the way we support and enable HEIs to address current and future challenges and in our relationship with the higher education community.

Our distinctiveness

The Leadership Foundation makes a distinctive contribution to leadership, governance and management development in higher education. What distinguishes us from other providers lies in the following:

1. We are specialists in the field of leadership, governance and management development and have a deep understanding of the business and culture of the institutions we serve.

2. Our programmes and interventions are underpinned by high quality research – and hence an evidence base.

3. We are the only body of and for the higher education sector for leadership, governance and management development in the UK.

4. We are a membership organisation in a sector which contains the brightest minds in the UK and they contribute to and lead our programmes and research.

We are an educational charity, owned by the higher education sector we serve. We have a customer-focused business model funded by fees, membership, and funders’ investment; and we invest all our funds in development through programmes, research, networks, targeted grants and consultancy.
Mission, vision & values

**Mission**

Our mission derives from our origins as the sector body set up by and for the sector for the development and enhancement of leadership, governance and management in higher education. We are a membership organisation and we also work with other stakeholders to develop an internationally recognised cadre of leaders and managers equipped to deliver the aspirations of their own institutions and the best possible higher education system for the UK. Quality, relevance and excellence are at the heart of everything that we do.

To serve, drive and catalyse the best possible leadership governance and management in higher education.

**Vision**

Our ambition is to become the premier provider of higher education leadership, governance and management development that is recognised nationally and internationally by our members and the wider higher education community as the preferred partner to enable them to meet their aspirations and needs. Our vision is expressed in terms of what we aspire to achieve with and for our members and those who use our services.

That higher education is recognised for excellence in leadership which transforms lives, enriches society and develops the economy for the better.

**Values**

Ensuring those who come to us have a high quality experience and leave equipped to make a difference in their work and institutions is what drives us and we will continually seek to improve what we do, critically evaluate our own practice and respond and adapt. We try to follow our values in everything we do.

Ambition for those we serve, passion in all we do, path finding new ways of leading, governing and managing, commitment to quality, expertise, relevance and impact.
In setting out our strategic aims it is important to be explicit that we shall:

1. Retain our focus on higher education, being uniquely ‘of and for the sector’.

2. Widen our reach and increase the impact of our research with new areas of the higher education market.

3. Ensure that institutions understand the benefits of Leadership Foundation membership, and recognise its intrinsic and financial value.

4. Grow our business.

Our strategic aims for 2015-2020 derive from listening to our stakeholders – members, customers and alumni and understanding the challenges they face alongside our analysis of the environment in which higher education has to exist and thrive. We attempt to couch our new aims in practical and pragmatic terms of what we are trying to achieve with and for the sector rather than the inputs or processes we will adopt.

Work with the UK higher education sector to secure its high reputation in terms of quality of leadership, governance and management with students, business, government, investors and other stakeholders.

- Enable governors and senior management teams to respond more effectively to unpredictable and disruptive change.
- Provide flexible access for learners to our services in the modes they prefer, including digitally.
- Achieve greater active engagement by Leadership Foundation members and users across all of our activities.

Enhance our international reputation, simultaneously bringing greater international intelligence and experience to the development of our UK activity.

Enshance our networks and communities of practice to enable greater peer support and challenge which also create development opportunities that are bespoke for specific communities of learners.

Promote Leadership Foundation research and innovation outputs to inform strategic and operational practices in HEIs and increase their impact nationally and internationally.

Be recognised for our contribution to achieving greater diversity of governing bodies, senior leadership teams, and more broadly within institutions.
Our new strategic framework

In order to deliver these strategic aims alongside our mission and vision we have translated our ambitions into the following strategic framework and activities.

Our activities, across leadership, governance and management tiers, are enabled within a strategic framework. The subsequent six sections – three strands of activity and three cross-cutting themes provide more detail of the objectives and activities within this over-arching framework.
Ambition.

Programmes Open & Bespoke

Objective: to enable leaders, managers and governors in higher education to manage organisational and personal change more effectively.

We will:
1. Maintain and grow our offer with more bespoke and specialist programmes.
2. Ensure programmes reflect the real world challenges that HEIs face.
3. Embed digital learning experiences in our programme portfolio.
4. Build on the career development pathway offered by our programmes.
5. Offer opportunities for accreditation for programme participants.
6. Organise conferences to share good practice, to disseminate the results of our research and innovation projects and to respond to higher education policy developments.

Membership
7. Build on the use of secondees as part of programme teams.
8. Introduce “programme champions” from senior levels of institutional management.
9. Engage with our alumni in support of our programmes and other activities.

Partnerships
10. Partner/collaborate with other sector agencies and sectors to ensure relevance and richness of content.

International
11. Take our highest-profile programmes onto the world stage and build new international markets.
12. Increase international participant numbers on UK programmes.
13. Develop a capacity-building “train the trainer” approach to support worldwide expansion.

Key Performance Indicators (by 2020)
- Participant numbers on Leadership Foundation programmes (open and in house) – planned growth of 20%.
- Income from Leadership Foundation programmes – planned growth of around 35%.
- Responses to our stakeholder survey – we intend to double the proportion of respondents who rate the value of Leadership Foundation programmes at 4 or 5 (on a 5 point scale).
Path finding.

Research & Innovation

Objective: to commission, develop and disseminate path finding research and resources which have originality, utility and impact.

We will:
1. Commission targeted quality research, thought leadership and innovation projects through our research road map to promote learning and organisational change.
2. Achieve a step-change in the influence and impact of commissioned research, thought leadership and innovation projects, nationally and internationally.
3. Provide original, innovative and robust evidence, resources and content to our leadership, governance and management programmes.
4. Share knowledge, promote learning and inspire leaders, managers and governors through round table events, debates, accessible briefings and networks.

Membership
5. Involve our members in research and projects through co-creation and commissioning case studies, pilot projects, good practice resources and as research champions and sponsors.
6. Develop an impact evaluation strategy for our activities which demonstrates the value of what we do to our members.

Partnerships
7. Develop strong partnerships and collaborations, nationally and internationally, to secure new research and innovation income streams; build on our expertise and provide dissemination opportunities.

International
8. Capture and share relevant learning from other sectors, from international sources and from the diverse range of higher education providers across the UK.

Key Performance Indicators (by 2020)
- Commissioned research is verifiably of the highest quality.
- Increase in stakeholder satisfaction by 20%.
- Dissemination/usage of the Leadership Foundation’s research is increased by at least 20%.
- Five significant research partnerships and collaborations by 2020 including at least one international.
Consultancy

Objective: to build capacity in HEIs to enhance institutional and team performance, strategic delivery and culture change through targeted and specialist consultancy interventions.

We will:
1. Establish our consultancy brand and grow this part of our business.
2. Extend our services to provide a fuller range of consultancy services to include:
   - Organisational reviews.
   - Needs analyses and evaluations.
   - Structural change.
   - Strategy development.
   - Change and culture change programmes.
   - Top team development.
   - Coaching.
3. Extend our reach to support the new higher education environment, including: alternative and new providers; higher education in further education; and further education consultancy.
4. Continuously refresh our associate pool, to ensure up to date knowledge quality and relevance.

Membership and International
5. Provide strategic HE advice to governments, agencies and institutions, thus also providing opportunities for our members to engage in consultancy for development and exposure internationally.

Partnerships
6. Partner with other agencies in order to enter new consultancy activities/markets, develop our capacity, generate income and share risk.

Key Performance Indicators (by 2020)
• We plan to increase the turnover of our consultancy business by 150%.
• We shall expect at least 85% of our clients to be able to confirm that the consultancy project has achieved the objectives identified at the outset.
Value.

Membership

Objective: to provide value-added services for our members.

We will:

1. Work closely with member institutions to understand their development needs and contexts, in order to strengthen the value of membership.
2. Draw on the expertise and experience of staff in member HEIs in co-creation of our programmes, networks, research and innovation projects.
3. Promote Leadership Foundation membership as a clear signal of HEIs’ commitment to professional leadership, governance and management in support of their institutional and sectoral aims.
4. Provide and promote take-up of relevant membership benefits and services to support leadership, governance and management in higher education, wherever it is located.
5. Facilitate a community where members learn from and challenge each other in neutral spaces.
6. Develop a facilitative network of national and regional coordinators for local engagement.
7. Identify and work with partner organisations where these can deliver innovative or enhanced benefits and services to members.
8. Manage sustainable growth of our membership base among alternative higher education providers to reflect the diversity of the sector and enrich members’ leadership, governance and management experience.

Key Performance Indicators (by 2020)

- Growth of at least 10% in the number of institutions in membership of the Leadership Foundation — sustaining the existing high level of membership amongst “traditional” HEIs, and welcoming “alternative providers” as new members.
- Perception of value of Leadership Foundation membership increases by at least 25%.
- To double the number of LF Fellows.
Partnership & Collaboration

**Objective:** to secure added value by working with partners from within the higher education sector.

We will:
1. Develop more collaborations and partnerships which leverage creativity, value and richer programme content.
2. Deliver on strategic policy agendas for higher education policy and context eg efficiency, sustainability, diversity and others as determined by the sector.
3. Work with others to ensure that we do not duplicate effort but deliver synergies to the benefit of members and differing sector specialisms.
4. Partner/collaborate with a wide range of sector agencies and professional bodies including our funders and sponsors.

**Key Performance Indicators (by 2020)**
- We will work regularly with at least eight sector agencies/bodies.
- We shall be engaged with a number of commercial brand-name partners.

Good Practice.

International

**Objective:** to build capacity in HEIs, informed by the best of international practice and experience.

We will:
1. Incorporate an international dimension to all the Leadership Foundation’s work, by building international best practice into our UK programmes, research and consultancy.
2. Create opportunities for international delegates to participate in UK programmes.
3. Develop a new and financially self-sufficient strategy for overseas work.

**Key Performance Indicators (by 2020)**
- We plan to have at least 400 programme participants from outside the UK.
- We shall have MOUs/partnership agreements or similar with agencies/institutions in at least five non-UK countries.
- We will have a financially sustainable international business which contributes to the future development of the LF’s services.
Services, development & delivery

Our strategic framework takes a systems approach to developing capability and capacity. That is, it seeks to work at the individual, team and whole organisation levels. It consists of three strands of activity and three cross-cutting themes.

1. Programmes Open & Bespoke – Individual development
2. Research & Innovation – Creating new knowledge and understanding to underpin all three across the system
3. Consultancy – Team and whole organisation development

Throughout our services, we aim to:

Apply a “members first” approach to ensure value for our members.

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<tr>
<th>BE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE TO CURRENT CHALLENGES AND RAPIDLY CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS.</th>
<th>DISSEMINATE AND USE THE RESULTS OF OUR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECTS.</th>
<th>Address issues of ethics, authenticity and diversity in leadership.</th>
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<tr>
<td>ENSURE UNDERPINNING QUALITY, RELEVANCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY.</td>
<td>DEMONSTRATE OUR BELIEF IN WHAT WE DO.</td>
<td>Capture and promote impact at individual, team and organisational levels.</td>
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Provide testing intellectual challenges in safe environments.

Use innovative learning approaches and contemporary content, grounded in the real world.
By delivering the strategy set out in this document, we shall establish a new strategic position and character for the Leadership Foundation.

In 2020, the Leadership Foundation will continue to be an intelligent and flexible provider and guide, offering a wide range of contemporary programmes, developmental advice, and thought leadership. We shall engage with all parts of the UK higher education sector – recognising that the sector may be significantly more diverse than it is now. We will have embedded a greater international dimension into our activities.

Our activities will comprise programmes (open and in house), consultancy (expert advice and support), and intelligence (generating and promulgating knowledge). We shall target a 18% improvement in the overall satisfaction ratings shown by respondents to our stakeholder survey.

In addition to assessing our own impact (not least through longitudinal studies), we shall be committed to helping individuals and institutions to understand the impact of the development work they undertake with us.

Consultancy
The Leadership Foundation will offer a niche consultancy service, competitively priced and uniquely expert in helping to solve the challenges faced by its market. Through an integrated consultancy team, we shall undertake projects for both UK and international clients, capturing and utilising intelligence and learning to address clients’ diverse problems. We will work with governments, HEIs and individuals.

Many of our activities will be initiated through a suite of sector-specific diagnostic tools and approaches developed by the Leadership Foundation. Where appropriate, we shall seek to work in partnership with other consultancies, universities, and sector agencies.

Research and Innovation
In 2020, the Leadership Foundation’s research and innovation activity will be focused on the core challenges affecting leadership, governance and management of higher education. It will synthesise, analyse and evaluate leading edge thinking to assist and support our members and HE face the challenges of unpredictable futures. We shall be responsive to new agendas and changes in the higher education environment.

Our output will be robustly evidenced, yet accessible. We will co-create research and innovation with our members and partners – and use our results as a key contribution to our programmes and consultancy services. The Leadership Foundation will be recognised both in the UK and internationally as the most distinctive source of innovative and challenging thinking about leadership in higher education.

Programmes
In 2020 we aim to be providing a stable base of development programmes, open and in house, for governors, leaders, and managers – in a range of configurations. Our participants will be mainly from the UK, but we shall also attract international delegates.

We will be acknowledged nationally and internationally as the most innovative leadership, governance and management development provider for higher education. We will run our Top Management Programme from a regional centre outside Europe for mixed nationality cohorts. Leadership Foundation-licensed programmes will be operating in at least three continents, supported by an established training hub. Our programmes will incorporate regular stimuli from other continents.
Membership
We will be more of a mixed-membership body reflecting the diversity of the higher education sector in the UK. Our membership will include a long-standing core of publicly funded higher education institutions from the UK and Ireland, with perhaps 15-20% of our members representing alternative/private providers, institutions providing higher education in further education, and sector agencies. Members will continue to find active membership of the Leadership Foundation attractive and we will offer an even more attractive value proposition.

Members continue to participate actively in our networks, research and innovation projects and willingly give time and expertise to contribute to our publications, programmes and events and to the co-creation of development resources and activities.

International
Our programmes will attract a significant proportion of international participants and some programmes – both open and bespoke – will be offered outside the UK. Programme content and pedagogy will be informed by an international perspective. The Leadership Foundation will be the provider of choice for countries seeking major strategic development of their higher education systems. Our research will reference the best of international practice and inform a worldwide community.

The Leadership Foundation will be seen as the premier leadership development organisation of its type globally, with strong relationships with kindred bodies in at least two other continents. Our international work will be self-sustaining and recognised for contributing to higher education development globally.

Partnership
Many of our activities will be carried out in partnership with HEIs (whether with individuals or with institutions), sector agencies, other brand leaders and international bodies. The accountability inherent in a “partnership” will be brought to bear on all our activities.

The Leadership Foundation Business
The Leadership Foundation will work on a networked and distributed basis, as the optimal model for delivering our public benefit mission. We will be a blended service deliverer, combining the best face-to-face experiences with online opportunities and resources, compatible with a range of technologies.

We shall communicate to members and stakeholders information about our services and offers in a timely fashion – and celebrate the successes and achievements of the work of the Leadership Foundation. It will be important for us to ensure that the higher education media is informed of our ambitions and work for higher education.

The Leadership Foundation will grow towards financial self-sufficiency based on mixed income sources including membership, programme/consultancy fees, and funders’ investment/partnerships for specific developments which are of sector benefit but not otherwise financially viable. We shall maintain appropriate levels of reserves and cash balances to provide resilience and enable growth.