

People Strategy

Progress so far

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Introduction

Since its launch in October 2024, we have made good progress in delivering our [People Strategy](#), and this document highlights the actions taken to date to implement it. It demonstrates how our commitment to creating a great place to work is being translated into tangible improvements to our culture, policies and practices. This commitment has also been reflected externally, with the [University of Cambridge being ranked the UK's top employer in the Financial Times' Best Employers 2026 survey](#), a recognition based on independent and anonymous feedback.

Our progress has been shaped by engagement with colleagues and informed by people-related data, changing workforce needs and evolving expectations. In working to deliver our People Strategy, we remain focused on enabling our people to maximise their potential in support of the University's mission to contribute to society through education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

As we reflect on what has been delivered so far, this progress provides a strong foundation for the ongoing delivery of our People Strategy. We remain committed to listening, learning and taking action to ensure the University of Cambridge continues to be an exceptional place to work.

Talent Attraction

We will attract and recruit a diverse range of great talent

- **Payment of visa and NHS surcharge fees** has been introduced for all new starters employed on a Skilled Worker or Global Talent visa, strengthening international recruitment and reducing financial barriers for new employees.
- The **minimum starting salary for Research Assistants** has been raised to point 36, improving competitiveness when recruiting researchers.
- A new [jobs website](#) has been launched, offering a more modern and intuitive platform that enhances the candidate experience and supports more effective talent attraction.
- The first **University of Cambridge jobs fairs** were delivered, creating new opportunities for candidates to explore careers across the University and for departments to promote their roles.
- The collection of **employment references for all new academic staff** has been introduced, with a view to extending this further, strengthening recruitment assurance and enhancing research culture.
- The [Inclusive Recruitment Framework](#) has been refreshed and relaunched to help embed inclusive recruitment principles throughout every stage of the hiring process.
- A series of new [recruitment short guides](#) has been launched, providing institutions with practical tools to improve recruitment outcomes.
- A ['Focus on Technicians' spotlight series](#) was launched to highlight the importance of Technician roles and broaden applicant pools.



Reward and Recognition

We will reward and recognise our people for the contribution they make to the University.

- Paid family leave ([maternity](#), [adoption](#) and [shared parental](#)) has been increased from 18 to 26 weeks at full pay, enhancing support for those with childcare responsibilities.
- [Paid paternity/co-parent leave](#) has been increased from 2 to 12 weeks at full pay, reinforcing the University's commitment to family-friendly working practices.
- A new enhanced entitlement to [neonatal care leave](#) on full pay has been introduced, enabling time away from work during this critical period.
- An **Academic Career Pathway for Research staff** has been introduced, together with **new titles for researchers**, to ensure these roles remain attractive in an increasingly competitive environment, as well as improving recognition of their contributions.
- **Restrictions on contribution points for academic staff in grades 9, 10 and 11 have been removed**, enabling more consistent and equitable application of contribution-based progression.
- A new **non-consolidated pensionable payment equivalent to 2.5% of basic pay** has been implemented for University employees paid at or below point 48, providing targeted financial support to around 8,000 employees at a time of ongoing cost of living pressures.
- A **review of Childcare Services** has been conducted to enable targeted service improvements, such as [a new Multi-Sports Holiday Camp for children](#), expanding childcare options and offering a wider range of activities during school holiday periods.
- The Long Services Award ceremony for staff reaching 25 years at the University has been refreshed, creating a more engaging and meaningful celebration of long term commitment
- A new '[Fair Attribution and Publishing for Technicians' workshop](#) has been launched, supporting improved recognition for technicians' contributions.



Talent Management

We will enable our people to achieve their potential and develop their skills inline with the changing needs of the organisation.

- New generic Departmental Administrator role profiles have been introduced to promote consistency and expedite recruitment activity.
- A new [pilot mentoring scheme](#) for early-mid career academic staff in grades 9 and 10 has been launched, offering structured developmental support to academic colleagues at a critical career stage.
- A [Professional Services Development Programme](#) for staff in grades 3 to 6 has been piloted, supporting skills development, confidence building, and progression pathways.
- Information and guidance on [mentoring](#) schemes, training and resources have been consolidated, improving accessibility and ensuring staff can more easily navigate and access the support available to them.
- **Staff Review and Development** guidance has been streamlined, offering clearer, more user-friendly resources that support both staff and managers in holding meaningful and effective performance discussions.
- The first two cohorts of [Data Apprenticeships](#) have been launched in partnership with the Data Office, strengthening internal data capability and offering structured learning pathways for staff building careers in data analysis and management.
- Three new **development programmes for technical staff** - Technical Leadership Essentials, Aspiring Technical Manager and Technical Career Development - have been introduced, supporting progression and strengthening professional capability within the Technician community, and the first Technicians Conference has been delivered, further enhancing community cohesion and showcasing the essential contributions of technicians across the University.
- A series of diverse [career case studies](#) has been published, showcasing a wide range of career paths within Professional Services and highlighting the varied opportunities available across the University.
- A new part-time **fellowship secondment programme** sponsored by the Vice-Chancellor has been created to provide emerging academic leaders with experience of working at a senior level within the University and having responsibility for delivering University- or School-wide initiatives. These opportunities are intended to create an internal pipeline of future academic leaders at the University.



Culture and Community

We will develop a culture that enables our community to work together and thrive.



- The University has successfully renewed its [Athena Swan Silver award](#), reaffirming continued commitment to advancing gender equality.
- The University has also successfully renewed its [Race Equality Charter Bronze award](#), highlighting progress in becoming more welcoming and inclusive, including improvements in attracting and retaining Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E) staff and students.
- The [Enhancing Research Culture](#) Fund has been launched, alongside delivery of the University's first Research Culture celebration event, recognising and promoting positive research practices.
- New [Communities of Practice](#) have been launched, enabling knowledge sharing and collaboration across professional communities.
- Twice-termly **meetings for Heads of Institution** have been delivered, supporting leadership effectiveness, information sharing, and peer connection.
- A new [Technician Development Fund](#) has been launched, providing financial support for technical staff to pursue training and development opportunities.
- The first two [University Repair Cafés](#) have taken place, promoting sustainability, community engagement, and opportunities for practical skills sharing.
- A new University [Single Comprehensive Source of Information on harassment and sexual misconduct](#) has been launched for the University in collaboration with Education Services, to ensure compliance with the OfS Condition of Registration E6.
- A programme of mandatory **staff training** on freedom of speech, sexual harassment and the Equality Act 2010 has been formally approved by the University in support of its duties under the Worker Protection Act 2024, Office for Students (OfS) Condition of registration E6 and the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- [Wellbeing support](#) has been strengthened, including through the delivery of two new cohorts of 'Mental Health First Aid' training and refresher sessions, delivery of the 'Your Voice, Your Wellbeing' event, the introduction of a new series on 'Mental Health Awareness, and a dedicated Staff Wellbeing SharePoint site providing a central hub for information on training, events, initiatives and support resources. In addition, existing Wellbeing Advocates have been re-engaged and a bespoke training programme has been delivered for both new and current advocates, further strengthening the effectiveness of the University's wellbeing advocacy network.



Organisational Effectiveness

We will improve our systems, processes, and practices to enable us to work more efficiently and effectively.

- New [Staff and Students Relationship Policy and guidance](#) have been launched, prohibiting intimate relationships where there is academic, pastoral or other professional responsibility, and setting expectations for disclosure and safeguards.
- The [Retirement Policy](#) has been revised, including the implementation of changes to the Employer Justified Retirement Age.
- The first phase of a **programme of work to prevent and tackle sexual harassment** has been rolled out, including new information on preventative steps for staff who are lone-working or working in environments where alcohol is served, and an updated [Breaking the Silence website](#) with additional information and resources for staff and institutions
- An [International Working Policy](#) and guidance have been introduced, providing clarity and support to institutions, managers, and employees engaged in international working arrangements.
- The central fund for international working has been extended, enabling continued facilitation of international working arrangements.
- [Guidance on alcohol and substance misuse](#) has been introduced, providing clear expectations and support mechanisms to promote health, safety, and wellbeing at work.
- [Menopause guidance](#) has been introduced, supporting greater awareness, consistency, and practical support for affected staff and their managers.
- **One-page summaries** have been introduced for key HR policies to help staff and managers quickly find key information online without navigating detailed policies.
- A new specialist **HR Organisational Change** team has been introduced, providing support for institutions undertaking organisational change.
- A new specialist **HR Case Management** team has been introduced, strengthening support in the management of employee relations cases.
- Annual leave accrual during sickness absence has been amended to accrue at the normal contractual rate, representing an enhancement beyond the statutory minimum.
- Two of the four phases of [implementing annual leave on CHRIS](#) have been delivered for institutions under **myHR Readiness** portfolio of work, to improve annual leave administration efficiency.

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