



Our community,
our culture,
our future

At Cardiff University, our people are at the heart of who we are and everything we aspire to achieve. Every colleague, in every role, shapes the life of our institution and our impact on the world.

Our People and Culture Plan is our commitment to creating a place where people feel they belong, can thrive, and are empowered to do meaningful, ambitious work. It is how we bring 'Our Future, Together' to life, through the environment and community we create, how we connect and work together, and the values that guide us.

This plan is more than a narrative; it is a vision for the Cardiff University experience we strive to deliver. A culture where:

- colleagues feel safe, supported and trusted
- leadership is grounded in compassion and integrity
- our systems and services are connected and enable rather than hinder
- our shared values shape everyday actions

We will work together to protect the positive elements of our existing experiences. Through this united, values-led approach, we will strengthen our community, deepen our impact, and build a confident, modern, compassionate, future-ready Cardiff University.

Our approach to people and culture is grounded in the Nolan Principles, ensuring we lead with integrity, fairness, transparency, and accountability in everything we do and lived through our values:

- **Cynefin (Belonging):** a strong feeling of belonging to our place, people, and identity
- **Connected:** a commitment to meaningful sustained reciprocal relationships built on trust, compassion, and shared purpose
- **Courageous:** a bold future-facing vision with fearless integrity; embracing challenge, driving innovation, and striving for excellence in service of our mission and community
- **Cyfrannu (to Contribute):** that every member of the university - students, staff, and partners - actively adds value to our institution and society by sharing ideas, skills, and effort to achieve our common goals



Our ambition

Demonstrated through our actions

Our values – cynefin, connected, courageous, cyfrannu – are not just words on a page. They are behaviours lived by our leaders, our teams, and every person who contributes to the Cardiff community.

Together, these behaviours shape the culture we aspire to:

confident, compassionate, ambitious, and connected.

Our values	Behaviour expectations	
	We will all:	When we're a leader and we're managing people or resources or projects, we will:
Cynefin (Belonging): a strong feeling of belonging to our place, with our people, and to our identity.	- welcome everyone and help people feel they belong - treat people, ideas, and our workplace with respect - be fair and think about different needs and experiences - use and value the Welsh language, celebrating bilingualism and Welshness - listen carefully and respect different views	- create a safe and supportive workplace where people feel valued and can be themselves - show respect for people, ideas, and our workplace through your behaviour - make equality, diversity, and inclusion part of everyday decisions and actions - support and promote the Welsh language, accessibility, and culture in daily work - be open and respectful and listen to others
Connected: a commitment to meaningful sustained reciprocal relationships built on trust, compassion, and shared purpose.	- be kind, polite, and professional - work together by sharing information and helping others - do what we say we will do - treat everyone with dignity and respect their wellbeing - take responsibility for our actions and learn from experience to keep improving	- be kind, fair, and professional in how you treat others - build trust by working well with people across teams and roles - help teams understand shared goals and work towards them together - be consistent and reliable in what you say and do - take shared responsibility for results, and learn together when things do well and not go as planned
Courageous: a bold future-facing vision with fearless integrity; embracing challenge, driving innovation, and striving for excellence in service of our mission and community.	- understanding the purpose of my work and how it contributes to wider goals - raising questions or concerns constructively when improvement or fairness is needed - being open to new ideas and ways of working, trying things thoughtfully - speaking up respectfully about issues, rather than ignoring them	- set a clear purpose and direction - challenge ways of working when fairness, inclusion, or improvement is needed - encourage new ideas while caring for people - create safe spaces for honest and respectful conversations.
Cyfrannu (Contribute): that every member of the university - students, staff, and partners - actively adds value to our institution and society by sharing ideas, skills, and effort to achieve our common goals.	- do our job well and look for ways to improve - share our skills and knowledge to help others - ask for feedback and use it to support development - take responsibility for our part in team work - always consider how our work contributes to students, colleagues, and wider society.	- support your own performance and help teams do their best - share knowledge and skills to help others succeed - ask for feedback, listen to it, and act on it - set clear expectations and remove barriers so everyone can contribute - support learning and improvement in ourselves and others



Our deliverables;
the impact we
expect to see

Our People and Culture Plan is grounded in three core outcomes – the pillars through which we will measure progress and experience our success as a whole community.

1. A great place to work and study – where people thrive every day

Guided by Cynefin and Connected, we foster empathy, openness, and genuine community. Wellbeing, belonging, and a positive everyday experience are central to how we operate, supported by honest conversations, respectful relationships, inspiring spaces, and modern tools that help our people thrive.

A great place to work is one where colleagues feel welcomed, respected, and valued for who they are; where wellbeing and belonging are woven into daily life, not delivered as standalone initiatives.

Success means:

- **our community is shaped by openness, inclusion, and mutual respect**
Measured through staff survey results on inclusion and respect, EDI indicators, and feedback from staff networks
- **people feel supported, valued, and proud to be part of Cardiff University**
Measured through staff survey scores on support and pride, retention data, and feedback from engagement and recognition activity
- **A place where a range of voices are heard and staff feel listened to, valued, and involved**
Measured through staff survey questions on voice and involvement, participation in engagement sessions, and evidence of feedback shaping decisions
- **Balanced workloads are a core indicator of success**
Measured through staff survey workload and wellbeing data, sickness and absence trends, and Academic Planning information

Actions being taken:

1. We will recognise what matters to our people by embedding regular, meaningful appreciation that recognises everyday contributions and celebrates achievements across teams, Colleges, and the University. This will be supported through inclusive leadership behaviours, local recognition approaches, and University wide celebrations.
2. We will make wellbeing informed decisions by using staff and wellbeing survey insights to understand what matters to colleagues and assess the impact of change. This informs decision making, helps minimise negative impacts, and supports balanced, sustainable ways of working.
3. We will improve our ways of working by strengthening connected working, making better use of digital tools, and embedding wellbeing into how work is designed and delivered. This aligns to our connected working principles, digital enablement, and flexible approaches across the University.
4. Through our Campus Futures programme, we will take a long term, sustainable approach to how our campus is used, developed and maintained. This includes supporting modern ways of working, environmental sustainability, and a campus that meets future needs.
5. We will improve academic efficiency by streamlining teaching and assessment, reducing unnecessary work, and building capacity where it is needed most. This includes reviewing assessment practices, simplifying processes, and focusing effort where it has the greatest educational impact.

2. Moving forward together – for what's next

As an ambitious institution with a bold future, we must build our collective capability and readiness for what lies ahead. This means cultivating a people-centred culture where we draw on shared wisdom, collaboration and shared purpose to navigate change with confidence.

We want colleagues to feel equipped and encouraged to embrace change, experiment, innovate, and grow. Guided by Courageous and Cyfrannu, we challenge convention, learn from experience and view setbacks as natural steps in progress. Our strength lies in, learning, thinking and acting together as one community.

Success means:

- **We embrace change with confidence and shared purpose**
Measured through staff survey responses on confidence in change, clarity of purpose, and staff feedback during and after change activity
- **Colleagues feel trust and confidence in leadership**
Measured through staff survey questions on trust, visibility, and confidence in leadership, and feedback from engagement sessions
- **Teams collaborate across boundaries and innovate in their work**
Measured through staff survey collaboration scores, cross College/ Professional Service activity, and examples of joint working and innovation
- **We build a resilient, forward looking organisation ready for the future**
Measured through staff engagement trends, leadership capability indicators, delivery of strategic priorities, and our ability to adapt to change

Actions being taken:

1. We will support change by creating the right conditions for delivery, strengthening leadership capability, improving digital ways of working, and ensuring clear, coordinated change support across the University.
2. We will make change clearer by setting out why change is needed, how decisions will be made, and how staff can be involved before decisions are finalised. This will be supported through clearer change processes, leading to clearer communications, and earlier engagement with staff and trade unions.
3. We will support open and ongoing engagement through regular UEB led sessions held centrally and within Colleges, enabling clear communication and meaningful two way dialogue. This will include engagement events, open forums, College discussions, and opportunities for staff to ask questions and provide feedback.



3. An empowered University community, enabled to do its best work

Our ambition is to create an environment where colleagues can focus on what matters most: delivering outstanding teaching, undertaking impactful research, supporting student success, and contributing to the intellectual and civic life of our community. By ensuring our services are connected, efficient, and shaped around real academic and professional needs, we enable our whole community to do their best work.

Whether through improved digital tools, simplified processes, or co designed service experiences, our aim remains the same: to provide services that feel joined up, modern, and human — services that support smarter, faster, more meaningful work and that uplift our community so everyone can contribute with confidence and clarity.

Success means:

- **An empowered community enabled to do their best work**

Measured through staff survey feedback on empowerment and autonomy, engagement levels, and qualitative feedback from engagement sessions

- **Simplified services, processes, and provision**

Measured through reductions in process steps, improved service satisfaction, time saved, and progress through continuous improvement activity

- **Colleagues experience less friction and have more time for meaningful work**

Measured through staff survey results on frustration and time pressure, feedback on administrative burden, and workload and wellbeing indicators

- **Continuous improvement is driven by insight, feedback, and co design**

Measured through use of data and feedback, co design activity, number of improvement initiatives delivered, and evidence of “you said, we did” outcomes (Measured through staff engagement trends, leadership capability indicators, delivery of strategic priorities, and our ability to adapt to change

Actions being taken:

1. We will strengthen governance by delivering the outcomes of the University's Governance Review.
2. We will improve services by simplifying how we work, collaborating with colleagues to automate, streamline, or stop low value processes through the Continuous Improvement Hub, co design, and greater use of digital solutions.
3. We will clearly define and embed our Employee Value Proposition, setting out what matters to our people and ensuring it is consistently reflected across the staff experience, including values and behaviours, leadership expectations, and the Cardiff Academic and Cardiff Professional frameworks.
4. We will build a positive and open performance culture, encouraging honest conversations, learning, and shared responsibility through clearer expectations, strong performance and development conversations, and continuous feedback.
5. Leadership behaviours that reflect what the University says it values.



Our People and Culture Plan in action

Key themes	Our deliverable	What we will do	What staff will experience
A great place to work and study – where people thrive every day	A great place to work is one where colleagues feel welcomed, respected, and valued for who they are; where wellbeing and belonging are woven into daily life, not delivered as standalone initiatives.	Recognising what matters - Build regular and meaningful appreciation into how we lead and work - Celebrate everyday contributions and achievements at team, college, and university level Wellbeing informed decisions - Use staff and wellbeing survey insights to assess the impact of decisions - Consider wellbeing as part of business as usual and early on when designing and implementing change Improving ways of working - Strengthen connected working and flexible approaches - Make better use of digital tools and embed wellbeing into work design Campus futures - Take a long term, sustainable approach to how the campus is used and developed - Align the estate to modern ways of working and environmental sustainability	Recognising what matters - Feeling noticed and valued for their contribution - More consistent recognition, not just for large achievements Wellbeing informed decisions - Change that better reflects what matters to them - Fewer unintended negative impacts and more balanced ways of working Improving ways of working - More flexible, connected ways of working - Digital tools that support, rather than complicate, everyday tasks Campus futures - A campus that better supports how they work now and in the future - Spaces that support wellbeing, collaboration, and sustainability
Moving forward together—for what's next	A people centred culture grounded in shared wisdom, collaboration, and purpose, where we act as one community to navigate change with confidence—empowering colleagues to embrace change, experiment, innovate, and grow.	Making change clearer - Clearly explain why change is needed and what it is intended to achieve - Set out how decisions will be made and when - Engage staff and trade unions earlier, with clearer processes and communications Open and ongoing engagement - Hold regular UEB led engagement sessions centrally and within colleges - Provide multiple ways for staff to ask questions, share views, and give feedback	Making change clearer - Clearer information about what is happening and why - Earlier opportunities to understand, question, and influence change - Fewer surprises and greater transparency in decision making Open and ongoing engagement - Regular access to senior leaders and clearer communication from UEB - More opportunities to be heard and to contribute to discussion - Greater confidence that engagement is genuine and ongoing

Our People and Culture Plan in action

Key themes	Our deliverable	What we will do	What staff will experience
An empowered University community, enabled to do its best work	An environment where colleagues can focus on what matters most: delivering outstanding teaching, undertaking impactful research, supporting student success, and contributing to the intellectual and civic life of our community. By ensuring our services are connected, efficient, and shaped around real academic and professional needs, we enable our whole community to do their best work.	Strengthening governances - Clarify decision making routes, roles, and responsibilities - Simplify governance structures and approval processes Simplifying services and processes - Review processes with colleagues to automate, simplify, or stop low value activity - Deliver improvements through the Continuous Improvement Hub and digital solutions Embedding our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) - Clearly define what colleagues can expect from working at Cardiff - Embed the EVP into values, behaviours, leadership expectations, and role frameworks Building a positive performance culture - Set clear expectations and encourage regular, honest performance conversations - Support managers to focus on development, feedback, and improvement and environmental sustainability	Strengthening governances - Clearer understanding of who makes decisions and why - Faster, more transparent decisions with fewer approvals Simplifying services and processes - Less admin and duplication - Simpler processes and more time for meaningful work Embedding our Employee Value Proposition (EVP) - A more consistent and fair experience across recruitment, development, wellbeing, and ways of working - Leadership behaviours that reflect what the University says it values Building a positive performance culture - Fewer surprises and clearer expectations - Supportive, ongoing conversations focused on learning and improvement