

## Value for Money - the ARU Approach

Our University Strategy underpins the activities that add and deliver value for our students, the region and the wider community.

Our investment in each of the areas of focus outlined in our Strategy seeks to balance the needs of individual students, student cohorts and the whole university student community, while also considering the wider impact the University and our students have on the communities in which we live and work.

Whilst much public focus is placed on the full-time undergraduate student population it is vital to recognize that our investments support the educational experience of our increasingly diverse student body (part time, mature, degree apprentices etc.)

### Theme 1: Creating a leading learning and innovation ecosystem

In combining the best of face-to-face and digital learning in all our courses, increasing work-based opportunities and offering activities that enhance academic success and employability we focus on adding value to and for our students. We take great pride in developing and supporting a highly innovative education across the university. We invest significantly in areas such as academic and professional staff development; the classroom environment and physical campus; digital tools and the learning management system.

Our research expertise and the underpinning investments in staff and facilities adds value by

- enriching our curriculum and ensuring our students' education is enhanced by first-hand contact with original research and the cutting-edge knowledge and insight this generates
- ensuring our academics are supported to remain up to date with their disciplines and pursue their professional development
- serving our communities, by maximizing our contribution to the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the communities we serve through the generation and application of new knowledge and understanding
- promoting the good reputation and standing of our University and thereby the value of the qualifications we award

By building strong regional linkages we create opportunities for our students during their time at ARU and enhance opportunities to build employment and careers across the region.

We are responding to the needs of employers in the development of our curriculum and are educating over 10% of the degree apprentices offered by UK Higher Education providers as well as establishing Essex's first undergraduate Medical School which is designed to meet local needs. Growing knowledge of our university and awareness of the capabilities of our graduates helps to ensure the long-term value of and ARU qualifications.

### Theme 2: Building and nurturing vibrant university communities

ARU is very proud of its diverse student body. For us it is really important that our university community allows students to meet, study and socialize with others from differing backgrounds and nationalities. We have invested heavily in recruiting and supporting a student body that draws students from a wide range of backgrounds. As a result, we have one of the most equitable mixes of undergraduate students of all UK universities.

We are committed to invest in measures that best meet the varied needs of all our students, with support available at the appropriate time and when and where needed. Our current students benefit from the investment that has been made in them and their skills over many years, supported by previous generations of students. Committed to intergenerational fairness, it is appropriate that we continue to invest now for the benefit of students that follow later.

There is a close and effective partnership between the University and the Students' Union co-designing and delivering change to meet the needs of our diverse student body.

Building on our reputation as a good employer, we focus on attracting and keeping the very best people we can. We have made very significant investments in our staff.

- Over the past three years we have improved our academic staff : student ratio from 23.8:1 to 18.3:1, a 23% improvement.
- Our academic staff have among the highest levels of educational qualifications in the country - we have a greater number and proportion of Principal Fellows of the Higher Education Academy than any other English university and are in the top 20 for overall numbers of staff with HEA fellowships
- Growth in PhD qualifications – since 2010-11 the proportion of our academic staff with a PhD has increased by 32% to sit at just under 60%. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest rise in the country over this time and represents a very real investment in our university's academic capital.
- Staff development - we spend appreciably more than our benchmark peers on staff development, much of which is focused directly on our students' educational experience.

We nurture the wider ARU community, including schools and colleges, alumni, and friends and supporters.

- We are committed to deploy our insight, knowledge and skills for the public good of the communities in which we and our students live and work
- We do extensive work with business. We have won awards for this work, which build the standing of the university and the value of an ARU qualification
- 85% of our graduates are from our region and contributes extensively to the regional economy and in particular the health workforce

### Theme 3: Strengthening the underpinning operations of the University

Building on our reputation for enterprise, we use innovative, user-focused approaches to problem-solving. We put the needs of those who study and work with us at the forefront of the way we design our activities.

- Our investments are student-focused. Over the past 2 years, and into the next 3–5 years our major investments have been, and will continue to be, focused on student-facing areas, including teaching and social space, and sporting infrastructure.
- We are committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of our students including those with mental health needs. The University has tripled its investment in counselling and wellbeing services provided to ARU students during the last six years and has delivered a 60% increase in individual interventions since 2012/13 [https://web.anglia.ac.uk/anet/student\\_services/public/mental-health-at-arU.pdf](https://web.anglia.ac.uk/anet/student_services/public/mental-health-at-arU.pdf)
- We have invested heavily in our digital infrastructure, including Canvas, to support excellence in education and in research, and will continue to do so to fulfil our ambition of being a digital leader.
- We balance this emerging 'digital campus' with the needs of our three physical campuses, ensuring that we make appropriate and balanced investments in both our physical and digital infrastructure.
- We are very conscious of the need to balance current operational expenditure against ensuring we invest sufficiently in the future. At all times investments in infrastructure that directly benefit our students and the academic environment are prioritized whilst recognizing that we cannot neglect the underpinning operational capabilities of the university.

We make the most of our current resources, and work consistently to grow them. We will use data and evidence to identify areas for improvement and investment, focusing resources on priority areas that will deliver the greatest impact. We regularly benchmark our spending against a group of peer institutions to look at patterns of spend and use this to inform our budget and planning process