Thank you for the opportunity to give you an initial view of how I see the Global Engagement Strategy developing at the University of Reading and for me to hear your feedback.

For those of you that don’t know, I’ve been at the University since August. Since then, alongside a range of other things, I’ve been trying to get a better understanding of the University’s current international strategy and I’ve been consulting colleagues about how we might broaden and develop it. My plan is to have the key elements of a new Global Engagement Strategy approved this academic year and to develop the initial implementation plans and start working on them over the summer.

I should make clear that this period of consultation and reflection on our strategy isn’t an hiatus in developments. Significant work in re-invigorating internationalisation at Reading has been undertaken over the past few years and that work continues. I’m not starting from scratch but rather building on past work and successes.

Having said this, I think we have a lot to do to catch-up and overtake competitors who have been active internationally while Reading corporate, if we’re honest, was sleeping through much of the 1990s and at the least half of the 2000s.
We have a great deal to do if, as I hope, we agree to work towards making **Global Engagement the University’s defining feature**.

So with this as an introduction, let me set out what I plan to cover in this slot:

I’ll start with a brief assessment of where the University currently sits on various measures of Global Engagement, describing what I believe the key features of a Globally Engaged University.

I’ll then move onto key elements of that I would hope to see in the next phase of our strategy as it evolves from an international to a Global Engagement Strategy. There’s a very important distinction here. Most British universities have developed internationalisation strategies over the past 15-20 years, which have essentially been about international student recruitment and focussed very much on fee income.

And I finally plan to outline my Vision for Global Engagement at Reading and some immediate priorities and areas for action.
Until now, I've talked about the GE Strategy, as described in Vision 2026, as a supporting one, and while this is still the case, I also think we have the opportunity to make it our defining strategy potentially distinguishing Reading from competitors in terms of global reach but also its attractiveness in both the domestic and international markets.

The strategy is a broad one supporting and aligned with Research and T&L objectives but it's also about the community on our campuses, about opportunity for our domestic students and employability, our global reach through physical presences overseas but also through our network of alumni and partners, supporting capacity development overseas and is, I hope to show you, about so much more than the one dimensional inward student mobility strategies adopted by much of the rest of the sector.
But we also need to recognise that we shouldn’t want to and couldn’t if we did, do everything everywhere. I therefore plan to develop an operational matrix in which we prioritise and tier parts of the world for different kinds of activities and allocate our resources to support those developments accordingly. This will mean reduced resource for some activities in some parts of the world so that we can focus and give enough attention to our top priorities.
So let me start with an assessment of our current position.

The first thing to say is that I really do believe, from what I’ve read and from discussions with colleagues here, that Global Engagement is within this University’s DNA. Reading has a long history global engagement, of internationally focussed research, staff mobility and international students coming here.

• It has a particular history of relationships with, and as a result alumni in Africa and in Commonwealth countries more generally. If we exclude Mauritius, which attracts a large number of academic visitors from the UK, we’re the only UK university with a significant physical presence on mainland Africa.

• We undertake research of international standing and on issues of global significance. 98% of research at the University was judged to be of international standing in the recent REF exercise and according to the QS World Rankings by subject area, our work in English language and literature, geography and environmental sciences, were judged to be within the World’s top-100 and Agriculture at Reading was ranked 11th in the World.

• ISLI and its predecessor the Centre for Applied Language Studies, a unit in which I worked while a student at Reading and which inspired me to work in international relations and cultural diplomacy, is world renowned, especially for its work in English language teaching and in particular testing, and the
foundation programme it runs has been described to me by external private providers of foundation programmes as sector leading.

• We now also have a physical presence in Malaysia where we’re about to open a new campus with a planned student population growing to more than 2000 over the next 5-years. This will add to the almost 3000 Transnational Education or off-shore students we already have. By the end of this decade almost ¼ of the University’s student body may never physically come to Reading.

• Unlike many others in the sector, we haven’t seen reductions in annual intake of international students over the past couple of years. In fact of our immediate competitors, we’re the only ones to have experienced continuous growth.

• And, last time I was at Reading, we were the first University to be granted a Queen’s Award for Export achievement – recognising, at the time, our sector leading and pioneering international activities
We also already have a global presence matched by no other traditional UK university. We have our campuses in the UK and now Malaysia, Reading University Offices in Beijing and Lagos, Henley’s South Africa Campus and a network of offices, teaching bases and partners across Europe, Asia and elsewhere, and off-shore delivery of taught programmes, in among other places, Accra, Athens, Beijing, Moscow and Toronto.

Only the University of London’s external programme and the Open University could claim a more diverse global presence than Reading.
And during a period of flat lining or reducing annual intakes of international students to UK universities
Reading has managed to keep growing while much of the rest of the sector and some of our nearest competitors have felt more turbulence in international student recruitment.

This really isn’t a bad story and I could stop here leaving you wondering why we need to develop a new Global Engagement Strategy.

Well the less positive side of the story is that despite the successes I have described, we have some significant gaps, or being more positive, opportunities for development.
On international student recruitment: we’re dominated by Henley, and other than in Law and Business Studies, our performance might best be described as patchy.
We are massively over exposed on China. 1 in 4 of our international students comes from China
and at PGT level it’s closer to 1 in 3.
Our funding from outside the UK sources could be better. We are ranked 34th for income from EU sources.

Notes:

**The following WP2016-17 draft sections:**

Under the Societal Challenges Pillar:
- Societal Challenge 1 - Health, demographic change and well-being
- Societal Challenge 2 - Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research, and the bioeconomy
- Societal Challenge 3 - Secure, clean and efficient energy
- Societal Challenge 4 - Smart, green and integrated transport
- Societal Challenge 6 - Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies
- Societal Challenge 7 - Secure Societies - protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens

The draft for Societal Challenge 5 - Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials - is still outstanding and will be circulated as soon as
it becomes available.
and 39th for funding from outside of Europe.

Steve has this in hand as part of the Research 2020 Strategy seeing significantly greater targeted effort and support for H2020 and other international funding opportunities.
Our performance overall in non-UK research income sources is perhaps also reflected in our slide relative to others, in international research collaborations and joint publications.
And in turn international rankings where we have dropped out of the top-200 in the major Global university rankings, and where our research performance, measured by citations, have stood still or fallen against competitors in a majority of subject areas.
And hardly any of our domestic students study abroad despite the clear signals from employers that they are failing to fill vacancies because of skill gaps among British university graduates, in particular in so-called global skills.

And in terms of our international students feeling at home in Reading, making friends with UK students and engaging with the host community, we consistently come in the bottom half of UK universities according to the i-graduate International Student Barometer.

So I think you’d agree, there’s probably a job to be done.
So where do we go from here? What might a University of Reading Global Engagement Strategy look like? What will be its key features? What should our ambitions be? And what should our immediate priorities be?
Our starting point is clearly the University’s Vision 2020 which talks about the University being global, stimulated by and informing changes in the world around us, and where we will be larger in terms of students, global reach and presence – and in turn, going back to my matrix, impact, reputation and income.
I’ve translated the Vision 2026 as meaning, things international will become a more normal, routine part of our activities where staff, students, research and degree programmes are all internationally mobile.

Where we will have established but still growing physical presence on three continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. Physical presences overseas will not be vanity projects and ends in themselves as we have seen elsewhere in the sector.

And where we will have a network of strategic partnerships around the world providing Reading people with global degrees and opportunities for teaching and research which we’d be unable to undertake on our own.
Least this all sound too much like motherhood and apple pie let me elaborate on some immediate priorities which you might see as helping to move us in the direction I’ve described in the GE Vision

After a period of significant growth both in domestic and international students we are starting to experience some space constraints in the UK. While we want to keep growing, perhaps at a slower rate than recent years, our priorities should be focussed on diversity: diversity by subject area, level and nationality. This not about disinvestment from China but rather more focussed effort to grow student populations from elsewhere including Europe, South and South East Asia & Africa. We will need a more nuanced approach to international student recruitment and better targeting of resources to achieve our objectives.

But in growing our international students we need to also be aware of cost of acquisition. Looking at RIO alone, our acquisition cost per student has increased by 79% over the past 5-years (or from 6.5 to 9.5% of income). We’re ranked 48th in the UK for new international starters but 18th for spend on agents. We know in reality the cost is greater as HBS and ISLI in particular, but also other Schools, have dedicated international student recruitment activity. UK universities have been obsessed by the income they gain from international student recruitment and generally haven’t given enough attention to margin on that activity.
In order to improve our efficiency in international student recruitment and reduce our acquisition cost per student and to achieve the growth we want and the diversity we desperately need, we will have to secure recruitment pipelines both internationally and from within the UK through partnerships. According to the recent report from hefce, Directions of travel: Transnational pathways into English higher education (November 2014) 1/3rd of all international undergraduate entrants in England’s universities come through TNE pathways. We’re behind on international partnership development and we need dedicated support to find, develop and secure international partnerships to feed the UK campuses but also in order to grow our student body beyond the physical limitations of our UK campuses. But I think we should also look to opportunities closer to home. While we have a sector leading international foundation programme of our own through ISLI, we just don’t have the marketing reach of the private providers to feed through ISLI the diversity of students, in particular by subject area, that we need. (I have discussed this with both the Heads of ISLI and ACD) that I am proposing serious consideration of options to work with a private foundation provider who might complement rather than compete with what we do already targeted specifically at some shortage areas (in terms of international students) such as, initially, in Art, Film, TV and Drama.

In terms of pathways the UoRM needs special mention because it is an integral part of the University of the Reading. We are already seeing the impact of that campus and increased presence in the region on intake to UoRUK. The majority of students I met during a recent visit to Malaysia said that they had chosen the UoRM because it provided a pathway to the UK. Now in some respects this is good news, at least for the UK, but will also mean that the UoRM will have to work twice as hard student recruitment just to stand still.

As I said earlier, ¼ of our students by the end of this decade will never come to Reading UK. We have expanded our off-shore delivery significantly in recent years. In doing so, we’ve rightly focussed on the quality assurance aspects of that activity but perhaps ignored the wider impact of these programmes on our learning support services and on the business case development. It’s priority for me that we bring a greater business focus to our off-shore delivery expansion – this doesn’t mean it should all be about money – our strategy is wider than that – but we need to properly understand the financial and non financial benefits and costs of these different kinds of activities and how they deliver against our strategic priorities.
At the moment less than 4% of UG student cohort undertakes a formal study or work experience abroad as part of their studies. We know there is demand for mobility before students join us and we know from the Council for Industry & Higher Education that employers are failing to fill vacancies, despite the growth in graduates, because of lack of individuals with “global skills” – so we’re failing at both ends.

We should set an ambitious growth target for outward mobility – at least 1/3rd of UG cohort by 2026 will study or work abroad as a normal part of their degree programme. Every school should have at least one degree programme with integrated mobility.

And, we have to work out how to gain maximum benefit from this great resource we have through the HBS Global Network for wider university benefit.

### WHAT DOES THE VISION MEAN?

**Internationalisation of the Curriculum & Student mobility #URGlobal**
- Significant push on development of opportunities – **target of 1/3 of UGs**
- The Malaysia Campus & Strategic Partners will be key
- Curricula flexibility and partnership development key to success
- But also removal of bureaucratic hurdles - more integrated degrees

**Student Experience**
- We need to better understand the issues – could be about diversity?

**HBS Global Network**
- Need to capitalise on this resource for wider University benefit

LIMITLESS POTENTIAL | LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES | LIMITLESS IMPACT
Reports to Senate – about bringing GE higher up our agenda and ensuring that colleagues don’t just think of it as an international student recruitment activity
SOME IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

- Options for external provider of bridging programmes
- International visitor ‘welcome’
- get our scholarships’ provision in better order
- Africa TNE options appraisal
- Mobility strategy: role of UoRM
- & North America ‘strategic’ partner(s) search
- NUIST and China

Scholarships and fee waivers at least c£6m
Is there anything special here that might be distinctive and give us a competitive advantage? I think there is including the proposals:

- Global degrees and such high volumes of mobility
- The development of a Reading Global Network
- The volume and spread of off-shore delivery that really belongs to us – is Reading rather than through franchiser or validation exercises

And of course our position in Africa.

The rest, I think, is just makes academic and business sense.
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT
The University’s defining strategy?

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