

## Digital strategy E2 - UNIVERSITY

# Analysis Report: Digital Strategy for a University

*(Based on document study, interviews, and operational research)*

## Organisational Ambition

The university aims to position itself as an open, inclusive academic community at the heart of society, where students, staff, and researchers feel connected, valued, and motivated to engage. The focus is on enhancing visibility, fostering pride, and improving retention through digital innovation, personalised experiences, and seamless communication.

## Core Problems

For Potential Students:

- The university struggles to stand out in a crowded market, with many prospective students unaware of its unique strengths and opportunities.
- Traditional recruitment methods, such as open days, fail to convert interest into enrolments effectively.
- Students often feel overwhelmed by generic information and lack personalised guidance to make informed decisions about their academic future.

For Current Students:

- Low engagement and pride: Many students do not actively advocate for the university or feel a strong sense of belonging.
- Limited progression support: BA students receive little tailored advice about MA or PhD opportunities, resulting in low progression rates.
- Impersonal communication: Students want relevant, timely information but often receive one-size-fits-all messaging that doesn't meet their needs.

For Staff and Researchers:

- Lack of visibility: The university's groundbreaking research and achievements are not effectively communicated to external audiences, limiting its reputation and appeal.
- Poor onboarding experiences: New staff often face confusing processes and insufficient support, leading to early frustration.
- Low ambassadorship: Staff and researchers are not empowered or encouraged to share the university's successes, missing opportunities to enhance its profile.

For New Staff:

- Information gaps: New hires struggle to access the right resources at the right time, delaying their integration and productivity.

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## Target Audience and Motivations

Prospective Students (Ages 16–18):

- Seek authentic, relatable insights to help them choose the right university.
- Prefer interactive, digital-first experiences (e.g., virtual tours, student-led social media content) over traditional brochures or presentations.
- Want personalised communication that addresses their specific interests and concerns.

Current Students:

- Desire a sense of pride and connection to the university, with opportunities to share their experiences and engage with peers.
- Need clear, proactive guidance on academic progression, career opportunities, and further study options.
- Value mentorship and peer support to navigate their academic journey confidently.

Staff and Researchers:

- Want to showcase their work and contribute to the university's reputation but lack easy-to-use platforms and tools to do so.
- Seek streamlined processes that save time and reduce administrative burdens.

New Staff:

- Require a smooth onboarding process with clear instructions, accessible resources, and personalised support to help them settle in quickly.

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## Key Findings for Digital Strategy

To address these challenges, the digital strategy should focus on:

Enhancing Visibility and Distinctiveness

- Use digital storytelling (e.g., podcasts, webinars, and social media campaigns) to highlight the university's unique research, student success stories, and academic strengths.
- Create targeted content for prospective students, emphasising what sets the university apart from competitors.

Personalising the Student Experience

- Develop interactive tools (e.g., a mobile app for open days) to provide tailored information based on students' interests and stage in the decision-making process.

- Implement data-driven communication (e.g., CRM systems) to deliver relevant, timely updates about courses, events, and opportunities.

#### Empowering Ambassadors

- Provide training and platforms (e.g., a "Uni Story" portal) for students and staff to share their experiences and advocate for the university.
- Encourage peer-to-peer engagement through student-led content (e.g., live social media videos, blogs, and testimonials).

#### Improving Onboarding and Support

- Design a digital onboarding hub for new staff, offering step-by-step guidance, checklists, and virtual meet-and-greets with colleagues.
- Introduce automated, personalised workflows to ensure staff receive the right information at the right time.

#### Supporting Academic Progression

- Use AI-driven tools to match students with suitable MA/PhD programmes and provide personalised study plans.
- Create online communities for PhD candidates and researchers to collaborate, share resources, and receive mentorship.

#### Measuring Success

- Track engagement metrics (e.g., website visits, social media interactions, and open day conversions) to assess the effectiveness of digital initiatives.
- Monitor student and staff satisfaction through surveys and feedback tools to continuously refine the digital experience.

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## Next Steps for Workshop Attendees

Using this analysis, your task is to develop a digital strategy that addresses the needs of one key audience (e.g., prospective students, current students, or new staff). Focus on:

- One core problem (e.g., low conversion rates at open days, poor staff onboarding).
- One digital solution (e.g., an interactive app, a CRM system, or a storytelling platform).
- How you will measure success (e.g., increased enrolments, higher satisfaction scores, or improved retention rates).

Discussion Question: *Which digital tool or platform would have the greatest impact on your chosen audience, and how would you implement it?*