



NCIUL



Strategic Plan 2017/2022

!

Welcome message from the Board of Directors

Welcome to Niccolò Cusano (Italian) University in London, an institution with an International style of education. The staff in our faculties have an almost limitless breadth of academic and business experience, offering our students a challenging, inspiring, and practical foundation for their future endeavours.

Our Partnership with The Open University, one of the biggest and most respected universities in the UK, reflects our vision of seeking to develop high value and accessible educational services. With the help of the latest technology, NCIUL can deliver

educational programmes through means other than the traditional classroom setting. NCIUL's curricula are comprehensive and at the same time adhere to exemplary international standards; they are based upon the principle of true international collaboration of knowledge building and sharing, using the latest research. Our ultimate goal is to produce self-directed and competent leaders.

In its drive to promote and accelerate leadership as well as professional development not only among its student body but also its faculty and other employees, NCIUL harnesses current research, relevant curricular offerings and responsive support services. By taking this stance, NCIUL is assured that it plays a significant role in the creation and delivery of relevant knowledge and skills, thereby contributing to society in general. In its aim to serve as a centre of knowledge and be part of the global education and science com-



munity, NCIUL also assumes responsibility for ongoing enhancement of a well-rounded, research-oriented academic programme. NCIUL takes pride in the opportunities and knowledge it offers to the international education landscape, and values each student as they contribute to this legacy.

We are proud of our achievements and we believe that every incoming student adds to our legacy. Our faculty members are encouraged to provide our students with fundamentals that they will use for the rest of their careers, as well as fostering learning experiences and lessons that will serve them personally and professionally.

I am confident that Niccolò Cusano (Italian) University in London can meet and exceed your expectations. We are proud of the opportunities and experiences that NCIUL can provide every day, and we hope you will become part of our community.

*Kind Regards,
Stefano Bandecchi*

Director

A photograph of four young women of diverse backgrounds looking at books together. One woman on the right is holding a book with a blue cover featuring a university crest. The background shows a modern building with large windows.

Our goals:
Academic Excellence
Global Perspective
Affordable Tuition
Valuable Employability Skills

Preamble

We have constructed our Strategic Plan as an extrapolation of our Vision and Mission statements rather than as a discursive commentary on the Business Plan, since we believe that the most meaningful strategy should lead to the realisation of the special ambitions of NCIUL and reflect the unique character of the Institution and its values.

By the end of the five-year period covered by this strategy NCIUL is expected to have a vibrant and diverse student community of 1000. The steps by which this will be achieved are set out in the Business Plan itself and its annexes which are appended to this document. It is there, for example, that the vital issue of resource planning is covered, notably taking account of three different scenarios in the proportion of ‘face 2 face’ students as compared with distance learning students.

Much of what is said in the Strategic Plan reflects the fact that NCIUL is a member of the growing ‘Cusano Family’ of universities. All the universities share the same ethos and objectives. Indeed, one of the unique selling points of NCIUL is the opportunity for students and staff to engage with other members of the family. To some extent this plan may be seen as the plan for the entire family, with the obvious exception that the timescales for realising certain objectives will vary. For example, the original Rome operation has, as one would expect, already made very considerable progress towards reaching many of the goals envisaged also for NCIUL.

The Strategic Plan covers three main areas: Objectives, Core Strategies, and Implementation.

The Objectives are:

- Knowledge Creation and Sharing (This objective embraces Pedagogy, Research, Professional Placements, Cultural Awareness, and Life Experiences)
- Creation of a Distinctive Blend of Learning Environments
- Development of Personalised Learning Experiences
- Empowerment of Students
- Open and Flexible Access
- Building a Community of Success

- Making NCIUL a Global Institution
- Inculcating Pragmatic Knowledge

The Core Strategies are:

- Rigorous monitoring of diversity, sustainability, and internationalisation
- Expansion of accredited campuses in three other European countries through which NCIUL will be able to offer enhanced opportunities to its students
- Participation of NCIUL in two intensive international research projects within the expanded campus network
- Investment in innovation

Lastly, plans for Implementation are set out in the section ‘How will we achieve it?’

The Strategic Plan rightly makes much reference to the global character of the Institution. However, NCIUL is also acutely aware of its place within the UK Higher Education landscape and the need to set the enactment of its mission within the context of the UK’s Quality Framework for Higher Education. Exposure to this quality culture is a special opportunity for NCIUL. It is hoped that NCIUL’s experience of working within this framework may bring benefits and insights exportable to other member institutions of the ‘Cusano Family’ outside the UK.

A leading feature of NCIUL’s engagement with the values of UK HE is its all-important relationship with The Open University. This is expected to be particularly fruitful given the many shared objectives between the two institutions, some of which do not figure so prominently in the agendas of ‘traditional’ British universities, including accessibility, flexibility, and affordability.

None of the objectives in our Strategic Plan will be fully met unless there is constant ongoing attention to the enhancement of quality. We particularly welcome the disciplined structure for institutional self-improvement provided by The Open University’s cycle of annual monitoring, programme reviews, and periodic/revalidation review.

Some of the intended milestones specific to NCIUL’s position within the UK higher education regulatory context are:

1. 2017: Validation Agreement with the OU becomes operational
2. 2017: Membership of International Higher Education
3. 2018: First annual review process with the OU (repeated annually there-

after)

4. 2018: Full participation in UCAS
5. 2018: First participation in Teaching Excellence Framework
6. 2018: First participation in National Student Survey
7. 2019: Completion of educational oversight review by QAA
8. 2019: Acquisition of 'ac.uk' website domain
- 9.2020: Approval by HEFCE for funding through SLC for home students loans or equivalent regime in force at that time, and also for any continuing arrangement for EU students
- 10.2020: In principle acceptance of NCIUL as a candidate for UK degree-awarding powers (also mid-point in the preparation sequence for this)
11. 2020: First annual review by QAA (annually thereafter)
- 12.2021: Portfolio review and approach to OU regarding possible additional programmes for validation
13. 2022: Periodic Review by the OU
- 14.2022: Degree-awarding powers acquired subject to probationary arrangements in force at that time
15. 2022: Concurrent continuation of validation partnership with the OU

Resources are in place to meet the costs of the processes relating to these quality assurance and reputational milestones.

In addition to fulfilling the educational objectives set out in the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan, NCIUL will be following a development plan relating to its infrastructure. In particular, it is probable that by 2022 it will have its own dedicated campus customised to its specific requirements. These new premises would then figure in the Periodic/Revalidation Review carried out by the OU.



The NCIUL Vision

Niccolò Cusano (Italian) University in London aims to be a centre of leading **academic excellence** that promotes individual self-awareness in a **global context**.

Based in London, one of the world's most multicultural cities, we will build strong links between different cultures, successful industries and business operators, to facilitate an **integration between academia and other professions**, in an innovative work-based, globally aware environment.

From our successful beginnings in Italy, we will expand to become one of the **best higher education institutions, internationally recognised with bases around the globe**.

Our aim is to become a world-wide community that believes in **knowledge building and sharing, respecting different cultures and the development of the self in a lifelong learning attitude**.

Through both innovative digital and traditional learning experiences, our curricula are designed to take into account real career opportunities. The international nature of our community and campuses means NCIUL will offer a **unique blend of teaching and learning opportunities for future global citizens and leaders**.

Therefore, NCIUL will expand in terms of size, student intakes and research impact to offer a **truly international experience** in our London campus. We already have campuses in Italy, France, Spain and Germany and we will expand to other countries in the future.

We are aiming to become an effective agent of change. Our research and graduates of the Institution will have a powerful impact on society, both in terms of promoting cultural change and improving lives.

NCIUL Mission

Niccolò Cusano (Italian) University in London aims to **foster knowledge creation and sharing**, in a globally aware environment that promotes **work-based lifelong learning experiences**.

We offer a **unique blend of teaching and learning methods** that combine personal development, strong community links, world-class academic knowledge, cutting-edge practice, global leadership and teamwork.

In terms of knowledge creation, we aim to contribute to the **latest research**; by considering traditional concepts too, we can foster critical analysis skills and evaluate and explore the best ways to adapt, create, share and disseminate new knowledge. We aspire to put to good use our intellectual resources, harnessing the talents of our academic staff in all Faculties while implementing cutting-edge departmental research.

We offer a wide range of digital and traditional teaching and learning opportunities, to offer **personalised learning experiences** that take into account individual learning styles and preferences and offer a truly engaging learning experience.

NCIUL is a community that builds **successful leaders and global citizens**, made up of students, staff, partners and stakeholders. We recognise that the success of one of us is the success of all of us. Therefore, we promote **individual excellence** as a foundation for NCIUL development.

We are a genuinely global institution, which means that we foster **global knowledge in a global environment for global citizens**. Our global focus is embedded in everything we do and offer, from the opportunity to study abroad, to the design of programmes and modules.

NCIUL recognises the vital importance of practical application, and fosters **close relationships between our world-class faculties, industries and other professions**. Whatever the level of study, we practise methods aimed at providing students with practical knowledge, employability and transferable skills that enable them to apply knowledge directly to a work environment.

NCIUL Strategic Plan

2017-2022

NCIUL Strategic Plan 2017-2022

NCIUL's Strategic Objectives:

1. Knowledge creation and sharing

Niccolò Cusano (Italian) University in London aims to foster knowledge creation and sharing, in a globally aware environment promoting open lifelong learning experiences. NCIUL is a partner within an international network of universities. Our founding base in Rome (also known as UNICUSANO) has now established other international universities, besides ours, in Paris and Madrid. Currently in development are also plans for NCU Berlin, Moscow and New York. This international network of universities represents a unique opportunity for fostering knowledge creation and sharing between faculties and students. All the members of the wider higher education community are invited to exploit all the opportunities offered by our international network in terms of pedagogy, re-search and experiencing different cultures and ways of living.

We plan to establish stronger international collaborations, starting from the Cusano Universities network:

- a. Pedagogy: in terms of pedagogy, we aim to offer a unique learning experience to our students, while supporting our staff in their planned professional development activities. Within this strategic plan, we encourage our academic staff to become active members of HEA and other accredited associations, to implement the variety of teaching and learning methods in use, with attention to the latest technology and its pedagogical purposes in HE.
- b. Research: being part of a vibrant international network can

provide unique opportunities for our students and staff. Within our strategic plan, we aim to build a stronger and personal relationship with our international partners, and plan research initiatives and opportunities for growth and global impact. Our students will benefit from this in terms of learning from visiting professors, as well as from opportunities for further their education.

c. Professional placements will be developed according to a wide spectrum of real world options: top private sector opportunities, public sector (City of London, NHS, Tavistock Institute etc.) and ONGs (MSF, Save the Children etc.). This will open our students to a wide range of opportunities, enrich their CVs and help them make decisions about future careers.

d. Cultural openness is a core component of our mission as we are proud to be an international higher education provider with a network of collaborations and synergies in Europe, the United States and the rest of the world. Though our origins are from a European country, we aim to di-versify our faculty and staff while being open to all cultural influences, diversities and spiritual traditions. We intend to form future global leaders and good citizens who can be effective agents of change wherever they go. An example of this attitude can be found in our Personal Development Planning (PDP) activities and coaching opportunities.

e. Life experiences are offered as an enriching exposure to different streams of life through our network of Cusano Universities. Experiencing different perspectives on life, from languages to food and traditions can open young minds to successful careers in our new globalised world. We plan to integrate this approach also within our teaching methods, while offering our students real-life business scenarios and case studies from all around the world.

Learning Environments

We offer a unique blend of learning environments combining personal development, community links, excellent advanced multimodal methodologies, global leadership and teamwork.

An enhanced online presence will form part of this strategy. Digital technology is revolutionising the manner in which knowledge is created, collected, and communicated across the globe. The Institution will position itself so that it can engage speedily and effectively with digital initiatives generated by our staff, students, alumni, and those outside the Institution.

We will create a strong and coherent online presence in order to direct those seeking knowledge about any area of academic study to relevant work carried out at

NCIUL. We will further develop our globally available teaching resources and collections for our own community, for our distance-taught students across the world, and for learners everywhere.

NCIUL promotes innovative teaching and learning styles based on digital and traditional methods. Combining innovative and traditional methods fosters a lifelong learning approach and a work-based attitude.

We will become a leading academic institution which utilises a real life problem-based approach in learning, in order to:

- better engage our students during their studies;
- enable them to make an informed choice about future career paths within a globally oriented perspective;
- link academic theory and the latest research to real life, so that our students can develop critical thinking, problem solving and other transferable skills;
- make strong links with the community, industries and other professions, with a particular emphasis on activities within the city of London;
- transform the lonely educational experience of distance learners into an interactive learning experience with their peers.

This particular approach better underpins our core values and learning outcomes, as well as being in line with one of our distinctive features, a placement programme that aims to reach a very high employability rate after the first 6 months from graduation (the target is 90%) and places our students in key places around the world.

In order to fulfil this statement, that is also our motto, we will:



Invest in People

NCIUL will consistently and sustainably invest in people, encouraging personal and professional long term plans.

We embrace innovation through collaboration, meaning that we always adopt a double process. Firstly, we place a call for suggestions, feedback and knowledge sharing, and once information has been collected, we expand our objectives, whether they relate to academic research and excellence, or to quality assurance, working in teams. One of our distinctive features is the ability to share knowledge, core capabilities and excellence among Faculties.

Furthermore, having the right people at all levels is one of the top priorities of NCIUL. We do firmly believe that we are our community, and in order to implement, improve and exploit our values and methods, we need to shape our identity.

Personalised learning experiences

We offer a wide range of digital and traditional teaching and learning opportunities, to offer personalised learning experiences in harmony with individual learning styles, abilities and preferences.

We provide our students, regardless of their status (face-2-face or distance learners, full time or part time, undergraduate or postgraduate) with a well-known innovative VLE that focuses on integration and collaboration. Through this system, our students have plenty of opportunities to interact with tutors, members of staff and their peers, through a chat room feature in their VLE Personal Page, and are able to build invaluable skills through collaborative assessment, such as team challenges and team projects.

Our attention to technology and its links to learning and teaching is considered a top priority in our strategic plan for growth and innovation. To better engage students and offer them an invaluable learning experience, we de-signed a VLE that could contain:

- recordings of lectures and seminars
- additional specialised lectures that complement the static lecture recordings. When appropriate, lecturers may audio/video record their lessons (in whole or part) and upload them as podcast, to support students with special needs and facilitate revision. This more intensive opportunity will provide them with a clearer understanding of the topics covered in a structured way, without the need to compromise on the interaction and discussion opportunities that may arise during traditional lessons.
- lecturers' notes given in booklet form, that will advise on material for further reading or study and other useful suggestions to enhance knowledge
- Personal Page with information about modules, scores, assessment, feedback (written and orally)
- other important guidelines/policies such as institutional policies and academic guidance
- a link to TurnItIn and/or Ithenticate for assignment submission (and our plagiarism check)
- a link to other online resource centres (for example Oxford University Press, Pearson and more)
- a link to databases and e-journal subscriptions
- a chat room/forum groups to interact with other peers, regardless of their status (distance learning students or face-2-face students). Distance students can use these groups to work in collaboration with other students.
- tutoring
- Help Desk support (in case students require help in finding information, uploading assignments and similar)

NCIUL is committed to supporting its students during their studies and plans to improve its technologies for everyone, and especially those with additional learning requirements. We understand the fundamental role that high tech has in everyday activities, and we aim to provide our students with a flexible learning that is designed to shape itself within their connected lives.

Empower our students

We want to empower our students in providing the best resources to find their self-organised access to education and involving them in managing their education environment. Therefore:

- students should feel empowered to ask questions—good questions. This is crucial for the whole learning process to work. The role of curiosity is vital to generate meaningful interaction with texts, media and specific tasks.
- questions are more important than answers: good questions should lead to good learning,
- creative ideas come from divergent sources. Ideas for lessons, reading, tests, and projects—the fibre of formal learning—should come from a variety of sources.
- we will value all knowledge sources including professional and cultural mentors, the community, content experts outside of education and, of course, the students themselves.
- a variety of learning models are used within our two main learning streams: VLE and classroom. Inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, direct instruction, peer-to-peer learning, school-to-school, eLearning, Mobile learning, the flipped classroom—the possibilities are endless.
- a characteristic of a highly-effective learning environment, then, is diversity of stimulation and curiosity triggers. We will keep exploring and developing new learning environments and opportunities.
- the Student Council will be actively involved in exploring new learning opportunities and in the assessment of the outcomes of development projects.

Having the right people at all levels is one of the top priorities of NCIUL. We do firmly believe that we are our community, and in order to implement, improve and exploit our values and methods, we need to shape our identity.

Open and flexible access

We promote open and flexible access without boundaries of age, finance and ability, working towards individual development as a foundation for individual excellence.

I. OPENNESS :

- we welcome everyone, and we aim to facilitate however we can people's choice in being an active member of NCIUL
- we encourage dialogue and promote innovation through consultation
- we promote equality of educational opportunities
- in support of our strong commitment to equality and diversity, we aim to value individual abilities, competencies and peculiarities, through a reflective and supportive approach that is embedded in

- every aspect of our academic life
- we are transparent and fair in our processes and procedures

In order to achieve this objective, we design our admission criteria and modes of deliveries in ways that can encompass the needs of more prospective students and staff. We plan to monitor and review collected data and, through target surveys and analysis of feedback, find new ways to open NCIUL to everyone.

Community of success

NCIUL is a community of success for leaders and global citizens, students, staff, partners and stakeholders.

II. INNOVATION for excellence:

- we aim to conduct innovative research that promotes and contributes to economic, cultural, and social aspects of our society
- we plan to strengthen our excellence in different research areas, evaluating academic resources within departments, using a systemic approach towards competitiveness
- NCIUL will build strong links with business, industry and other partners, through promoting a work and practice-based approach to teaching and learning, as well as collaborative research, consulting, licensing, spin-out companies, and commercial ventures with our other branches in Europe.
- research findings will be used to enrich the learning experience of our students, create opportunities for collaboration in an international and global environment, as well as to promote economic growth within our local and national community.

In order to achieve this objective, we plan to work together with external consultants and accredited bodies to implement our technologies to offer a flexible learning that can better fit into our modern hyper-connected life.

We will also work on designing an effective business plan for spin-off projects that can evaluate our excellence in academic and research matters.

We will encourage all our staff, students, partners and stakeholders to participate in such a phase, because we believe that innovation is part of everyday activities, in order to make the change possible. We will organise workshops, seminars and research cafés to creatively collect ideas from our participants, that will develop into more formal projects for our governing bodies to support in terms of funding and realisation.

A global institution

We are a global institution, integrating worldwide excellence in education towards a global environment for global citizens. Our global focus is embedded in everything we do and offer, from the opportunity for international studies in our international universities in Europe, to the design of programmes and modules.

We aim to present Study Abroad programmes for our students and academic staff to participate in, to facilitate mobilisation and an international approach. International students may also benefit from studying with us, in our London campus.

We are planning Summer schools in peaceful and interesting EU cities, as well as in our London Campus. Themes to be presented vary from research methods to complexity, learning a language and study a specific topic (i.e., arts and food in Italy).

Pragmatic knowledge

We recognise the vital importance of real world experience and close relationships between our faculties, business and professions. Whatever the level of study, we provide students with pragmatic knowledge and transferable skills, facilitating a direct access to professional environments and work placements.

Some practical objectives...

promote effective training, learning and development activities for staff and students;

prepare ourselves for becoming a Doctoral Training Centre, while maximising the social and economic impact that our research have on society;

work alongside industries, local communities and other professions in order to attract exclusive placements, internships and visiting staff members, to achieve an impressive employability rate and track our alumni success around the world.



Priorities and Core Strategies

Our successful beginnings in Italy have shaped our identity and made us unique. **We aspire to become one of the best higher education institutions internationally recognised with bases around the globe.** NCIUL believes in openness, diversity, globalisation, accessibility, multi-culturality and sustainable leadership.

Why?

Because we foster diversity as a precious resource for innovation, creativity, sustainable leadership and responsible global citizenship.

How?

By offering our students the opportunity to experience innovative teaching and learning methods, as well as cultures in different environments.

Our students can choose to study in our other campuses around EU, and could participate to unique placement opportunities both in London and overseas. This unique feature promotes mobility and globalisation of education and work, giving our students and members of staff the opportunity to travel, more easily find employment in a more widened and competitive labour market, and make ambitious personal and career development plans.

Research activities are designed and developed to support our innovative teaching and learning experience, and to contribute to social, economic and legal matters through global oriented high-impact projects, in partnership with business and industry.

When?

We have already an impressive ecologically sustainable campus in the heart of Rome, with more than 20,000 students. The campus in Rome offers a wide

range of services to students as well as leading industries. For example, it is currently leading advanced medical engineering research projects. We also have campuses in France, Spain and Germany, similar to our London Campus.

We aim to equip our London campus with enhanced premises for current and prospective students, and to become a Doctoral Training Centre in order to nurture our staff and students' professional development objectives.

Core strategies to make it happen:

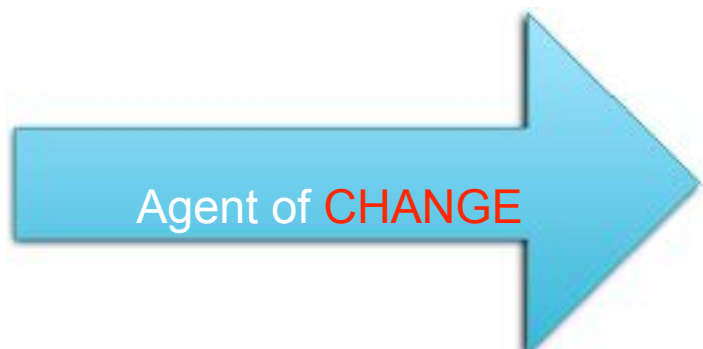


promote, implement and rigorously monitor diversity, sustainability and internationalisation in every aspect of our structure, welcoming people from around the world and providing international academic and work experiences. In order to achieve this objective, we will keep monitoring our recruitment processes and strengthen weak areas as shown through equality and diversity exercises

expand our campuses out of the EU, in leading academic and economic countries, while building on effective relationships and partnerships with other institutions worldwide. In accordance with our strategic plan, we aim to be fully accredited in three other countries and to create at least two intensive research project teams within our international network



consistently invest in innovation, sustainability, research and people, to foster a global approach to learning, career and life, as a passport to be equally used by everyone.



In order to achieve this objective, we will follow a double path.

We aim to provide our staff with competitive salaries, so encouraging international excellence. For our prospective and current students, alumni and partners, we will implement activities that build soft skills (coaching, negotiation, PDP), regardless of their study choice, and will offer placement and internship opportunities in a variety of work places. We will also aim to create an Office responsible for handling research projects.

Forming successful leaders and global citizens for a better world

NCIUL fosters and promotes excellent sustainable education in the global context.

We will form successful leaders and global citizens who recognise their role in our society, and will embrace change in order to promote social justice, equality and fairness.

In order to achieve this objective, we promote an agent of change attitude through intensive feedback and integration in our decision-making processes. We will work to design an innovative solution that can efficiently and effectively integrate students' view of what is needed and important in their learning experience, in how we grow.

Innovation and the ability to effectively shape resources in response to a changing environment, are key concepts for achieving personal and transferable skills. These skills are incredibly valuable in the contemporary labour market.

Our core principles are:



fairness, equality, respect, courtesy and the appreciation of different cultures

the development of personal, transferable and employability skills in order to provide lifelong learners with a better quality of life



making excellent education flexible and easily accessible

instilling a sense of community based on sharing, effective challenge, peer review and the equality of opportunity;





to form future leaders shaped by a mixture of tradition and innovation, who can make sustainable choices and who will promote social justice, equality and fairness everywhere they go.

How will we achieve it?

- Becoming one of the top 100 higher education institutions of choice for UK, EU and international students particularly for satisfaction, engaging learning experiences, access to the latest sustainable research and work related experiences
- Building a world-leading research community that will work without boundaries in the global academic arena, to have a real impact on our society and the way we belong everywhere
- Promoting and implementing through feedback and a reflective attitude at all levels, best practice, a lifelong learning approach and a real life scenario problem-based approach
- Making education accessible by lowering tuition fees. While the other higher education institutions implement a tuition fee rise for financial and economical purposes, we keep in mind principles of social justice and right to access education
- Promoting community events, where everyone at NCIUL is invited to share a story, a coffee or just a book. And we will extend our invitation to friends, staff and alumni wherever they are
- Flexible learning and freedom in accessing academic materials and lessons, at any point in time, all year long, from everywhere

- Being one of the leading higher education institutions in terms of employability of graduates, dedication to our communities of alumni, staff and students, and excellence in teaching and research.

NCIUL Strategic Plan 2017-2022 represents our principles and core values as underpinned in the Vision and Mission Statements.

We recognise how ambitious our plan is, and we are fully committed to achieving such important and prestigious objectives with creativity, tenacity and an open mind.

We continue to consult the whole of our community and maintain a democratic process of feedback, evaluation, development and inclusion. This document may be revised while we work hard to reach the top.

