Annual academic and skills report to Council 2024-25

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1. Purpose and introduction

Purpose of report

This report brings together material on Senate's oversight of academic quality and standards, the integrity of academic qualifications, and the management of specific academic risks, for example on academic partnerships. It supports the assurance process for Council, providing evidence of the robustness and effectiveness of the University's academic governance processes and procedures.

This report presents a view of: the current regulatory landscape; key themes and highlights from the University's academic provision; student demographics and achievement data; and, our students' experience for the academic year 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2025. The information presented reflects the University's organisational structure in place during that year.

In addition to providing assurance on its management of its delegated powers, Senate has identified major academic risks currently facing the University, prepared with reference to the University's Major Risk Register. These academic risks are presented as part of this report along with proposed risk mitigation measures.

This report also presents priorities showing the key focuses for the University in developing its academic provision over the next academic year, which has been developed with reference to the Corporate Plan and the strategies for Education and for Research and Innovation. The priorities have been developed with due consideration for the need to mitigate the academic risks identified.

2. Report on assurance of quality and standards

2.1 Regulatory overview

The Office for Students (OfS) is the Regulator for Higher Education in England, and the University is required to comply with its regulations and conditions of registration. In addition, the OfS currently has oversight of the External Quality Assurance (EQA) of Apprenticeship End Point Assessments.

As part of our apprenticeship provision, the University is required to meet the requirements of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), which are responsible for the inspection of all apprenticeship provision in England, and the Department for Education (DfE), which, through the Apprenticeship Levy, manages the funding of apprenticeship students.

The University also works with a range of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) to accredit our taught courses, who may have institution- or course-level recommendations to be considered prior to any accreditation being agreed.

The Office for Students (OfS)

Since 2018, the OfS has been the regulator for Higher Education in England, with the University a registered provider on the OfS Register. As part of the University's registration, it agrees to comply with the OfS's standard ongoing conditions of registration.

As part of their monitoring of higher education institutions, the OfS uses summary student outcomes indicators as part of a risk-based approach to the regulation of condition B3. These indicators include data on continuation, completion and progression. For 2024-25 the University exceeded the threshold standards by at least 5% for all of the 18 headline indicators which Cranfield were measured against, and by over 10% for 15 of the 18 indicators. The University exceeded the threshold by more than 15% for: progression of postgraduate apprentices and taught master's courses; completion of all postgraduate taught non-apprentices (full and part-time) and part-time research students; and for continuation of all apprentices and taught master's students (full- and part-time), all other postgraduate taught courses and part-time research students.

The University also exceeded the threshold in all but 6 of the 352 lower-level split indicators. These lower-level split indicators consider three reporting combinations (progression/continuation/completion; level of study; and a detailed indicator such as subject, disability status, age on entry etc.). The 6 lower-level split indicators in which Cranfield did not meet threshold standard were all either marginally below the threshold (within 3%) or based on low absolute numbers (and so more affected by individual cases). The University's performance against the 2024-25 summary indicators has been presented to Senate.

The University's continued compliance with the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration was self-assessed during 2024-25, which was presented to the University Executive. In addition the University's Internal Audit Office undertook a detailed audit of the University's compliance with consumer protection legislation, which is the subject of one of the ongoing conditions of registration, C4. The recommendations from this audit will be taken forward in 2025-26 to ensure the University maintains its compliance with this condition.

From 1 August 2025 the OfS introduced a new ongoing condition of registration, E6 concerning protecting students from harassment and sexual misconduct, and formalised expectations of providers regarding ensuring freedom of speech for staff and students, with work undertaken to ensure that the University was prepared for this. Further details of the work undertaken to ensure compliance with the new E6 condition are set out later in this report.

Ofsted and DfE

The University's apprenticeship provision is monitored (in full or in part) by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), the Department for Education (DfE) and the OfS (external quality assurance of End Point Assessments).

Ofsted is responsible for the inspection of standards for all apprenticeship provision in England. These inspections are undertaken according to the guidance set out in the Education Inspection Framework and the Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook. Following a successful Ofsted inspection in 2024-25 the Post-Ofsted Task & Finish Groups worked through the inspection outcome, with recommendations shared with the Apprenticeship Steering Committee, which will inform the next iteration of the University's Self-Assessment Report.

The DfE is accountable for funding for the education and training sector, and monitors and administers payments that the University receives for apprentice students through the UK Government's Apprenticeship Levy. The University is required to adhere to DfE rules and regulations for the management of apprentices. The UK Government announced in May 2025 that funding for Level 7 apprenticeships would cease from January 2026. These changes will not affect students who commenced an apprenticeship programme prior to January 2026, and funding for Level 6 apprenticeships will remain unaffected.

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs)

The University remains committed to accreditation of taught courses by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, which provides external scrutiny of our courses and enhances courses' reputations and desirability to applicants. Although not all courses are eligible for accreditation for a number of reasons, including no suitable accrediting body due to the specialist nature of a course, the University currently engages with 26 different PSRBs who accredit one or more of Cranfield's courses.

Accreditation highlights from 2024-25 are presented below.

Faculty of Business and Management
Cranfield School of Management continues to hold the prestigious triple accreditation of AACSB International (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), AMBA (the Association of MBAs), and EQUIS (the European Quality Improvement System of the European Foundation for Management Development) following a successful reaccreditation visit with EQUIS in May.

EQUIS accreditation lasts for five years and is the most comprehensive institutional accreditation system for business and management schools.

The provisional report from the Accreditation Board indicates that they were impressed with the remarkable resilience, agility, and strategic foresight of the School over recent years, noting the significant advances in global rankings, research performance and student employability.

Suggested areas for further development include strengthening executive education, expanding interdisciplinary programs in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences and further enhancement of digital infrastructures to meet the demands of online delivery.

Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences
The Engineering Council, which is the UK regulatory body for the engineering profession, acts as an umbrella organisation for all engineering based PSRBs, with individual PSRB accreditation requirements based on Engineering Council regulations. 2025 saw a successful large-scale visit held in June at the Cranfield Campus with the Engineering Accreditation Board involving 34 courses and 6 Professional Engineering Institutions:
• Energy Institute (EI)
• Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
• Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)
• Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)
• Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS)
• The Welding Institute (TWI)

The Accreditation Board provided 13 commendations that include the very supportive leadership both at Faculty and University level; the knowledgeable, articulate and highly motived students; supportive and approachable staff; laboratory and facilities support; extensive and effective industrial input being instrumental in developing programmes; student visits to industry, placements and internships and the substantial recruitment into industry of programme graduates.

A number of conditions and recommendations were made by the Professional Engineering Institutions which the Faculty are reviewing and addressing. The accreditations will be formally approved upon completion of the conditions. Conditions included requiring the Faculty to review all course and module learning outcomes to ensure they are in line with AHEP4 (Engineering Council's Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes standard, 4th edition). Recommendations included to review the University external examiner system to ensure that it fully meets Professional Engineering Institutes' expectations of constructive support and critique of all aspects of examining standards.

Academic Practice
The Academic Practice & Educational Excellence team (APEX) led a major reaccreditation in 2024 of our award-bearing and professional development programmes in academic practice. This included programme redesign and alignment to the new AdvanceHE Professional Standards Framework. Accreditation was awarded from 1 February 2025 until 31 January 2030. The development of academic practice and award of professional recognition is an expectation of academics at Cranfield and is embedded in our Senior Academic Promotion process. The redesigned programmes also create a route to

recognition and academic award for professional colleagues involved in the design, delivery and support of our academic programmes.

2.2 Reports from committees responsible for academic quality and standards

Senate

Following the 2023 Senate Effectiveness Review, during 2024-25 Senate met three times during the academic year. Prior to each meeting two of Senate's panels (Quality and Standards and Visiting Professor Appointments) met to undertake detailed review and discussions and provide opinion and advice to Senate. The third panel (Nominations and General Purposes) has not met as frequently as there has not been a need. As a result Senate are reviewing whether the Nominations and General Purposes panel is required as a standalone panel or whether the business of this panel can be merged with one of the others. The changes made to Senate as a result of recommendations from the Senate Effectiveness Review have resulted in improved engagement from Senate members, leading to good discussions and greater understanding of the role of Senate.

Also as a result of an action from the Senate Effectiveness Review, the Student Experience Committee (SEC) has become a committee that reports to the Professional Services Executive (PSE). The terms of reference have been updated to reflect that SEC is now primarily responsible for discussing operational student matters which is more suitably aligned with the remit of PSE. The staff Chair of SEC will continue to review this change to ensure it is aligning with the core objectives set out.

Senate is currently undertaking a review of the Visiting Professors appointment policy to ensure the process is more robust, transparent and clear and to also ensure any appointments have a clear role and impact for the University. Any recommendations and changes from this review will take effect during 2025-26.

Education Committee

Education Committee oversees the quality and standards of Cranfield's regulated education and skills provision (taught degrees and apprenticeships) with authority to do so delegated by Senate. It meets monthly and is supported by several working groups.

Education matters of particular note in the 2024-25 academic year included:
- Preparations for the introduction of postgraduate degree classification on 1 August 2025.
- The re-calibration of the credit tariff for the master of science (MSc) award to align with the national norm of 180 credits effective from 1 August 2025.
- The introduction to the postgraduate assessment rules of a consistent approach to compensation on all taught courses from 1 August 2025.
- Oversight of a significant number of course withdrawals and other course changes as a result of ongoing portfolio review.
- The evolution of changes to the mechanisms that ensure student representation on and engagement with the Committee.
- Changes to Committee working groups, including the disbandment of the undergraduate standing group, with further changes to ensure better representation and greater effectiveness to come in 2025-26.
- Introduction of new initiatives resulting from the work of the exceptional circumstances working group including approval of a self-certification policy and removal of the "fit to sit" approach in line with sector best practice.

Research Committee

The work of Research Committee has focused this year on driving forward the Research and Innovation Strategy as well as compliance, assurance and continuing improvements. Key areas of progress are:

R&I Strategic Priority – Scholarship with Purpose

Research Culture and Quality
Excellence in Scholarship (EiS): Mock REF
This has been a major focus of work for 2024–25. Mock-REF output reviews combined with EiS review data have enabled a revised estimate of the research super KPI for 4* outputs eligible for submission to REF2029 of 19.8%. This represents an increase in research output quality of 5.3% compared to the revised baseline of 14.5% from REF2021 submission, applying current submission rules. This contributes positively to the university's research excellence KPI of a

5% annual increase in 4* papers.

The University Executive has agreed recommendations arising from the Mock REF including Unit of Assessment (UoA) selection for REF2029. Indicative output quality profiles and potential impact cases were analysed, along with considerations of submission size, effects on income and submission preparation resource. These are the same UoAs as submitted for REF2021 and will provide sufficient scope for mapping the majority of staff and research. For all potential impact case studies identified, the underpinning research would map to one of these UoAs and with the removal of the requirement to submit a minimum of one output per person, we would no longer have to submit outputs that relate tangentially to a UoA.

Reflecting on our activities and current priorities regarding financial sustainability, it has been agreed that the University will submit to the following three UoAs (only):
   A: 6 Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences
   B: 12 Engineering
   C: 17 Business and Management Studies

A detailed review of REF readiness will be undertaken by Internal Audit this year.

Security, compliance and ethics
A Trusted Research and Collaboration (TRaCA) review tool went live mid-2024. The first Trusted Research Annual Report was produced March 2025. 380 reviews were undertaken (June 2025 – March 2025), with 83 reviewed at enhanced levels, 31 referrals to the Government's Research Collaboration Advice Team and 12 Export control licence applications

Project Saturn – Research and Innovation Strategy Projects
Project Saturn is the umbrella term for the collection of research and innovation strategic implementation delivery projects. These were launched in 2022, and have addressed laboratory utilization (Project Titan), improving research and data integrity (Project Hyperion), professionalizing research management (Project Nimrod), developing new international research collaborations (Project Hermes), developing support for research students (Project Janus) and developing a new Quality Research (QR) allocation model (Project Pandora). Progress is monitored by Senate.

Most recently Project Pandora has been completed. Total QR funding to Cranfield is worth ~£14M annually, of which ~£7M is directly a function of REF performance (mainstream QR) and a further ~£3.7M utilizes REF performance as part of the funding allocation formula. As REF is only conducted every 7-8 years, our REF performance has a long-lasting influence on annual QR funding allocations. QR funding is intended to support institutional strategic research aims, complementing the project-based funding allocations provided by UKRI and other Government funding bodies. The University Executive approved a new model for allocating mainstream QR to Themes, which is based on the relative contributions from their staff to the REF2021 submission. This model takes some account of the variability in quality of submissions between Themes, as the best impact cases and outputs available were selected for the submission (within the criteria of a minimum of one and maximum of five outputs per person).

It was agreed that the mainstream QR allocations to Themes must have a clear focus on increasing research quality and will be bounded specified criteria, including linkage to Thematic research strategies, supporting activities (including training and mentoring) such as output assessment and impact case study development, building research capacity, support strategically important grant applications (e.g. ECR research fellowships), ensuring good research practice and compliance, enhancing research student experience, driving research translation. A 5% central fund, managed by the PVC Research and Innovation will support REF leadership roles across the university and cross-Thematic research activities.

Annual reporting on mainstream QR allocations will be required from Directors of Theme to outline how spend has increased research quality and met the above criteria, detailing the outcomes and impacts of the funding, including via short case studies and (wherever possible) quantitative evidence of positive change.

R&I Strategic Priority - Championing the Research Student

Doctoral College
Research Committee reviewed feedback from the Best Practice in PGR Support report (2022) and PRES surveys 2022, 2023, 2024 to identify the persistent feedback themes. It was identified that whilst we have a unique position within the sector, as a primarily post-graduate institution, we do not offer sector-leading support or provision for our research students and continue to receive feedback of inadequate or poor student experience, often stemming from variable practice across the institution. Work has been done to consider how a Doctoral College might deliver key benefits for Cranfield University and its research students. A University wide consultation has been completed, and now a business plan will be produced for the Executive's consideration. A business plan will be submitted to the University Executive for consideration in early 2026.

Empowering the research student
- A Mutual Expectations Framework supporting the student/supervisor relationship was developed and added to the Senate Handbooks for Managing Research Students and the Research Students' Handbook.
- A review of the PGR Review Process was completed in early 2025 with a set of recommendations for changes agreed by Research Committee for the new academic year.
- Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey (PRES). The Cranfield overall response rate was 43.2% (compared to a median sector return rate of 38.8%) with 302 responses. Supervision and Research Skills continues to be reported as the most highly rated categories. The score for Research Culture noted a positive increase, although it remains below four. Identified areas of concern include a lack of consistency across the University, the need to improve our research culture for students, and student concerns around laboratory and equipment access and usage. An action plan to address matters raised has been agreed by the Executive.

Enhancing research student support, training and development opportunities
- The Core Doctoral Training Programme content and delivery was restructured and launched in September 2024. The training aligns with QAA and UKRI recommendations of as well as being underpinned by the VITAE Research Development Framework.
- Prizes for the 2024 Doctoral Publishing Awards were awarded at the CDN Annual Conference in September 2024 and an inaugural Cranfield University Research Conference was successfully held in May 2025.

Apprenticeship Steering Committee

The Apprenticeships Steering Committee (ASC) is the focal point for the management of apprenticeships. The aim of the committee is to embed apprenticeships within the organisation structure, systems and processes of the University in order to deliver high quality training provision. ASC has one sub-committee, the Apprenticeship Quality Group (AQG), which focuses on the quality of apprenticeship provision.

Matters of particular note considered by ASC and its sub-committee in the 2024-25 academic year included:
- The government announced in May 2025 its long awaited decision to change its funding for level 7 apprenticeships. With a few exceptions level 7 funding is not available beyond 2025. Any apprentice who starts a level 7 apprenticeship before 1 January 2026 will continue to be funded through to completion. Planning for teach-out of existing level 7 cohorts is at an advanced stage. Funding for apprenticeships at levels 4 to 6 including those delivered by MK:U is not affected.
- Recommendations were made by the Post Ofsted Task & Finish Groups which will inform the next iteration of our Self-Assessment Report.
  - AQG closed off the current version of its Quality Improvement Plan. A new version will be created in the 2025-26 academic year following the completion of the next Self-Assessment Report.
- Cranfield was subject to its first external quality assurance (EQA) readiness check by the Office for Students (OfS) for the Digital & Technology Solutions Professional (L6) apprenticeship standard. The outcome was positive with the OfS confirming that Cranfield is on track to deliver the EPA.
- The End Point Assessment Organisation Working Group recommendations on integrated degree classifications were endorsed by AQG and approved by Education Committee.
- Cranfield's performance against the DfE Apprenticeship Accountability Framework continues to improve and exceeds the national average in all key measures.
- The terms of reference of ASC and AQG were reviewed. ASC Committee meeting frequency has been reduced as a result of the review.

2.3 Other University Initiatives

During the last academic year the University has commenced a number of projects to further enhance its educational offering. Some of these are set out below.

Attendance monitoring

This year has seen the launch of a pilot of a new attendance monitoring system The pilot took place at MK:U and was successful. It allowed for attendance to be captured in a more consistent, timely and structured way which enabled better and more accurate reporting. 'Welfare' emails have been developed as part of this pilot to automatically trigger when a student does not log their attendance. MK:U have since rolled out the system to all cohorts and courses. A plan to rollout on the Cranfield campus is in place ready for a 2025-26 launch.

Akari

Last year's report noted that Akari, a new curriculum management system had been deployed for the 2024-25 curriculum data. It was noted as the deployment developed that there were some immediate modifications required to improve how

we could use the system better. The changes were put into place in March 2025 and the system was relaunched with those modifications in place to prepare the 2025-26 curriculum data. Priorities have already been set ready for modifications for 2026-27.

AI in education and research

Artificial intelligence is impacting on academic matters and the pace, scope and scale of AI-driven change continues to accelerate. Cranfield has embraced AI, and has not sought to regulate or "AI-proof" its education and research, preferring to encourage engagement and manage risks as they emerge. A brief outline of initiatives to date include:

- A cross-Senate committee coordination group on generative AI was established in 2023 to develop guidance for staff and students.
- Sector developments are monitored and engaged with.
- Library advice on acknowledging the use of AI in submitted work is available to students and staff.
- A guide to protecting intellectual property and data when using generative AI tools has been published.
- A digital skills hub is available to help staff and students develop their AI literacy.
- A number of communities of AI practice have established across the university.
- A series of seminars and workshops in summer 2025 explored the role of AI in education and how it can contribute to the learning journey and our professional roles. The series focussed on:
  - o AI and world of work
  - o AI, course design and assessment
  - o Developing staff digital capabilities
  - o Empowering learners
  - o AI and skills development.

Looking ahead, there is no doubt that AI must drive curriculum and assessment transformation and be fully embraced in course and learning design.

3. Report on student experience

3.1   Student Experience

Overall student experience

Understanding of the Cranfield Student Experience is underpinned by various feedback mechanisms across the institution. The collective understanding of our students' experience at a University level are gained through institutional-level surveys (e.g. postgraduate experience surveys run in collaboration with AdvanceHE and the National Student Survey for undergraduates), governance and operational committees. The importance of localised conversations remains and is reflected in the role Directors of Education play in their feedback sessions and associated activities.

The Student Experience Committee is pivotal in bringing together various strands of feedback and ensuring alignment between the student voice and institutional priorities. The Cranfield Student Association (CSA) is represented through this Committee, with the CSA President as Co-Chair and the CSA Executive representing the student voice. This complements the activities of the CSA Executive, who also meet regularly to consider student experience matters and concerns.

Senate undertook an effectiveness review and recommended that Student Experience Committee reviewed how it works as part of wider mechanisms that facilitate the student voice. As a result there was a consultation period which included a review of previous committee meeting discussions and agenda items. The outcome of this was that past meetings have predominantly focused on operational and 'student life' concerns and less frequently on academic matters. Academic matters tended to be brought forward by staff only, with students raising operational concerns. The Committee will therefore change its function to focus on 'student life' and operational matters only and now report into Professional Services Executive rather than Education Committee and Research Committee. All students will be able to feed into meeting agendas via their CSA Executive Officers and Course Representatives, allowing for relevant issues to be discussed with the right people and taken forward to the right forums. Academic matters will continue to be discussed at course level with Directors of Education and via the enhanced channels into Education Committee.

During October-January, a four month project was conducted that focused on the part-time student experience. The findings from the project were presented to University Executive and some recommendations have since been implemented, with others in the pipeline. Overall the project confirmed the importance of identifying the needs of students based on their mode of study and differentiating service provisions accordingly. The guidance provided to part-time students is being enhanced. There is a focus on consistent student representation on all part-time courses, given evidence of how effective cohort representation is. Recognising the different requirements of students will underpin enhancements further for new initiatives given the findings of this project.

Following a successful co-creation project in 2023-24 to develop the course representative role and other student voice engagement, a number of enhancements have been implemented. Course representatives now get a formal induction into their role and direct, consistent support. The engagement of course representatives is critical in ensuring we can understand the Cranfield Student Voice. In addition, more focused sessions were held for the representatives to enable them to feel informed for supporting their cohort. One example of this is a session on Assessment and Feedback, in which course representatives were able to provide thoughts on the related processes. Assessment & Feedback is an area that scores consistently low on the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, and this was a new and positive way to engage with students on the matter.

The university change programme was an important contextual factor during the 2024-25 academic year and in preceding years to an extent. The university's financial challenge and the management responses to it have consequences in terms of resourcing and in staff morale that pose risks for the quality, standards and the student experience that had to be mitigated. Multiple indicators of student satisfaction and of student attainment suggest that the risks were largely mitigated. Looking forwards to 2025-26 and beyond these risks will be amplified due to the scale of change that is underway and the chronic stress on the people and systems that are responsible for mitigating actions. The student experience needs to be of the highest priority and subject to great vigilance.

Postgraduate research student experience

The feedback from the PRES survey helps us target areas for improvement to the student experience. The more students that take part, the more representative the data and feedback will be. Over the last year, the following improvements have been made.

In line with the R&I strategic priority area of Championing the Research Student the following improvement have been implemented in 2024-25:

- Launched the Mutual Expectations Framework underpinning the Research Student Charter creating a bilateral agreement between the University and the student to support an effective supervisory relationship from day one. www.cranfield.ac.uk/research/rio/research-student-charter.
- Restructured the content and delivery of the Doctoral Researchers Core Development Programme. The programme now comprises of four week-long units; one week for each key stage of the research journey spread over the research degree period.
- The Cranfield Doctoral Network Annual Conference focused on resilience in research with an external Health Coach delivering a session around using failure to build research resilience as well as academic staff sharing their own examples of overcoming challenges in research. Sessions on AI in Research to support research degrees were also on the programme.
- We have continued with the popular Three Minute thesis (3MT) competitions, challenging our students to present their thesis in under three minutes, using only one static slide. In autumn 2024, the 3MT was held as part of the CDN Annual Conference. Due to popular demand from our students, a 3MT was also held in March 2025. For the first time, the general public were invited to join the audience as well as providing potential students the opportunity to join the event.
- At the end of July 2024, the first global TEDx event to be held at Cranfield took place exploring the theme "Where great ideas take flights". This is a great example of a student led initiative. A second TEDx event was held in March 2025. Talks are available on Youtube TEDx Cranfield University.
- Launched a University wide consultation for establishing a Doctoral College, a central hub through which training, support, resources and activities would be offered, supporting a consistent experience for all research students and complementing the academic experience.
- Delivered the inaugural University Research Conference. We had 12 speakers across four sessions over two days, as well as 44 posters. 249 participants registered. An online survey gathered 51 responses which gave the event an average rating of 4.46/5, with particular appreciation for the value and quality of speakers and panel sessions.
- The Doctoral Publishing Awards are open to current and past participants of any doctoral programme at Cranfield University for a single best publication, judged on academic merit. The winners of the Doctoral Publishing Award for 2024 were announced at the CDN conference.
- We have continued to facilitate regular drop-in sessions in the Research students' corner, a space allocated specifically to our research student community. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation and staff from the Research and Innovation Office run regular drop-ins, alongside the SAS Research team, Library etc.

Undergraduate student experience

Programme Development
MK:U delivers apprenticeships across five courses in digital and management subjects. January 2025 saw the launch of the Robotics Engineering apprenticeship, the first of its kind in the UK, with work underway to recruit students for its second cohort. MK:U is also launching a new apprenticeship in October 2025 in Logistics and Supply Chain Management. Project Management and Data Analyst (Level 4 only) apprenticeships are both expected to recruit their first apprentices during 2025-26.

Communications and Processes
In 2024 MK:U hired a Student Experience Manager to allow it to effectively engage with undergraduate students and to manage the gathering, interpretation of and actioning of feedback from students. The Student Experience Manager also oversees the selection, training, and management of course representatives, as well as serving as the primary communication source for students.

Feedback Gathering
Previously, feedback was gathered on an ad-hoc basis and formally at the end of a module via Evasys. MK:U launched a new feedback method in 2024 via a Microsoft Form that allows all stakeholders to give live feedback in three categories: Praise and Thanks, Idea/Solution and Critique. Crucially, this form is not anonymous and allows MK:U to contact the sender if they select this option. Significant work has been undertaken with the apprentices to ensure constructive and solutions-focussed feedback. Of the 82 completed feedback forms received between March-July 2025 45% were critiques, 28% ideas or solutions, 18% praise or thanks and 9% categorised as other.

Evasys still provides a space for anonymous feedback. Since inception, MK:U has collected Evasys feedback after the assignment grades have been returned to the apprentices; whilst significant effort has been undertaken to ensure usable response rates, they have remained low. In 2025-26 MK:U will be piloting different approaches including the reduction of questions and the separation into end of taught phase and end of module surveys.

MK:U App
As mentioned above, last year, MK:U piloted a new attendance monitoring system with CI Connect, via the MyMKU app. This

system was rolled out to all apprentices at MK:U and has been successful. The MK:U app is also a hub for students to access all education systems, as well as receive notifications and connect with their fellow apprentices.

Student Voice – provided by the CSA President 2024-25

"I would like to sincerely thank the University for the significant efforts being made to improve the overall student experience. I am particularly pleased to see that the challenges related to student experience have been formally recognised and raised as a key agenda item at Senate. This reflects a strong commitment to listening to the student voice. As CSA President, I am hopeful that this marks the beginning of a closer and more collaborative relationship between the CSA and Cranfield, ensuring that student concerns are addressed proactively and that the student experience continues to improve in a meaningful and sustainable way."

3.2   Student Experience Surveys

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) are UK higher education sector-wide surveys designed to gain insight from postgraduate students about their experience. Organised annually by AdvanceHE, the surveys provide robust, benchmarked data from a large number of higher education providers across the UK, against which individual institutions can assess their own performance and drive enhancement of the student experience. Cranfield runs and responds to the research and taught surveys in a coordinated way, recognising the common factors affecting the student experience across the whole student body, whilst acknowledging the specific needs of different groups of learners.

In addition to the two postgraduate surveys in which Cranfield has participated for a number of years, for the first time in 2025 Cranfield took part in the National Student Survey (NSS), an independent survey run by Ipsos on behalf of UK funding and regulatory bodies that asks final-year undergraduate students' opinions on the quality of their course and broader university provisions. It is compulsory for most publicly funded Higher Education Providers in the UK, with the growth of Level 6 apprenticeship student numbers at MK:U triggering Cranfield's involvement.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2025 (PRES)

PRES ran from 17th March to 17th April 2025. The survey was open for a shorter period of time in 2025 as a result of direct feedback from research students. All universities had to close their PRES surveys by 16 May 2025.

In 2025, the Cranfield overall response rate was 43.2% with 302 students completing the survey (46% for full-time and 32% for part-time students). This is in line with previous years. In 2024, the response rate was 43.2% compared to 41.8% in 2023 and a 2024 sector return rate of 38.8% (median).

Figure 1   Cranfield student satisfaction by PRES category/question – percent of students rating as good or very good

PRES Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change (2024 to 2025)
Supervision	85%	88%	88%	86%	91%	+5%
Resources	78%	85%	86%	85%	85%	No change
Research Culture	49%	57%	62%	58%	60%	+2%
Progress and Assessment	84%	84%	85%	85%	85%	No change
Responsibilities	79%	80%	83%	82%	82%	No change
Research Skills	85%	88%	91%	87%	89%	+2%
Professional Development	72%	79%	81%	80%	80%	No change
Opportunities	63%	73%	73%	74%	-	-
Overall Experience	74%	77%	80%	79%	78%	-1%
Motivations	81%	825	84%	81%	-	-
Support	73%	76%	76%	78%	77%	-1%
Community	New category		65%	64%	65%	+1%
Total	**76%**	**80%**	**81%**	**79%**	**80%**	**+1%**

Overall, out of 10 categories, 9 improved and 1 did not change. *Supervision* and *Research Skills* continued to remain the most highly rated categories compared to 2024. The score for Research Culture noted a positive increase compared to 2024, although overall it still remains below 4. Issues raised by students in the verbatim comments section of the survey will

be used to inform 'next steps' and actions. Key areas of concern remain:

- a lack of consistency across the University - results will be filtered by theme and discussed with Directors of Research and Directors of Theme to identify areas of best practice that can be developed and shared more widely.
- we are not on track to achieve our institutional KPI (Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027) for research students. This set out the target to achieve a 5% year on year increase in the research culture PRES measure, reaching 75% by 2027. Whilst the score has bounced back from 2024, it continues to be only 2% higher than 2022. A matter of particular concern is the lack of academics engagement in research culture related initiatives, such as student events (CDN, 3MT) and the institutional research conference.
- widely reported student concerns relating to lab and equipment access and usage.

Figure 2 PRES benchmarking data

PRES Category	Cranfield	National average	Russell Group	Pre-92	Cranfield Quartile Position
Progression	87%	81%	79%	81%	1st
Community	67%	63%	64%	64%	1st
Responsibilities	84%	80%	79%	80%	1st
Support	77%	75%	76%	75%	1st
Supervision	91%	89%	89%	89%	2nd
On-Campus Resources	84%	83%	84%	84%	2nd
Research Culture	63%	62%	65%	64%	2nd
Online Learning Resources	86%	86%	85%	86%	2nd
Research Skills	88%	88%	87%	88%	2nd
Professional Development	80%	80%	80%	80%	2nd
Overall Satisfaction	75%	82%	83%	82%	4th

Figure 2 shows benchmarking data for Cranfield provided by Advance HE. Cranfield's performance in the individual categories compared favourably with all benchmarks, and was in the 1st or 2nd quartile for each individual category. For overall satisfaction however Cranfield scored lower than all benchmark scores and was in the 4th quartile of surveyed institutions.

Research Committee launched a University-wide consultation during May 2025 regarding the development of a Doctoral College or similar vehicle to help address some of the recurring issues highlighted through past PRES surveys and the feedback from the Best Practice in PGR Support reports 2022.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2025 (PTES)

PTES ran from 28th April to 6th June 2025. 743 taught students completed the survey. The overall response rate was 32% (52% for full time and 11% for part-time students), which compares favourably to the national response rate of 26%. A summary of the student satisfaction in the 2024-25 academic year (designated at 2025) with comparison to previous years by PTES category / question is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Cranfield student satisfaction by PTES category/question – percent of students rating as good or very good

PTES Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Change (2024 to 2025)
Teaching and Learning	82%	84%	83%	85%	87%	+2%
Engagement	78%	82%	83%	84%	84%	No change
Assessment and Feedback	71%	71%	72%	74%	72%	-2%
Dissertation or Major Project	86%	82%	83%	85%	86%	+1%
Organisation & Management	72%	73%	73%	79%	75%	-4%
Resources and Services	75%	88%	91%	92%	93%	+1%
Skills Development	81%	84%	85%	86%	86%	No change
Support	74%	81%	82%	83%	82%	-1%
Community	New category		69%	70%	68%	-2%
Overall Experience of Course	81%	83%	81%	87%	87%	No change
Would recommend Cranfield		90%	No data	91%	92%	+1%

Nb. For consistency with previous years' figures these data exclude AP contract students and include apprentices.

By comparison with 2024, satisfaction in 2025 against 4 out of 11 PTES categories/overarching questions improved, 3 did not change and 4 deteriorated. Long term trends are either up or are static depending upon the PTES category or overarching question. 87% of respondents rated their overall experience as good or very good (no change on 2024) and 92% would recommend Cranfield to other students (an improvement on 2024). A new semi-automated (supported by ChatGPT) analysis of free text responses was applied to the PTES survey qualitative comments yielding fresh insights into the students' free text comments.

Commentary on the 2025 PTES scores

- In an academic year affected by uncertainty around the university change programme, the improvement in some PTES categories, the maintenance of the overall quality score and the improvement in the advocacy score is welcome news.
- The response rate was the lowest in more than 10 years. Notwithstanding the fact that our response surpassed the national average (as has been the case since we joined the survey), it is disappointing and will affect the representativeness of data for some courses. PTES launched during a highly sensitive time in the change programme and it is plausible that this had a distracting effect – we know that Course Director advocacy is crucial to participation rates.
- Of the 4 PTES categories with a lower score than last year, 3 have longstanding weak satisfaction i.e. Assessment & Feedback, Organisation & Management, and Community. This is especially disappointing as the first 2 of these categories had been on an improving trend, albeit slow.
- The part-time response rate is significantly lower than that for full-timers and this is mirrored in terms of satisfaction.
- University level satisfaction statistics mask significant differences at faculty, theme and course level.

Figure 4   PTES benchmarking data

PTES Category	Cranfield	Russell Group	University Alliance	GuildHE	National	Cranfield quartile position
Teaching and Learning	87%	87%	89%	88%	87%	2nd
Engagement	84%	83%	87%	86%	84%	2nd
Assessment and Feedback	72%	78%	85%	85%	82%	4th
Dissertation or Major Project	86%	83%	89%	88%	86%	2nd
Organisation & Management	75%	80%	84%	83%	81%	4th
On-campus resources	93%	90%	92%	81%	89%	1st
On-line learning resources	93%	92%	93%	90%	91%	1st
Support	82%	82%	86%	84%	83%	2nd
Community	68%	67%	76%	74%	69%	2nd
Skills Development	86%	89%	87%	83%	85%	2nd
Overall satisfaction	87%	85%	89%	87%	86%	2nd

Whilst Cranfield's satisfaction scores have broadly followed an improving trend since the inception of the PTES survey, our position relative to the rest of the sector is patchy. In 2025, Cranfield ranked above the sector median for all categories apart from Assessment & Feedback and Organisation & Management and was top quartile in the two Resources categories the JISC data splits out for benchmarking purposes. Our benchmarked performance in Assessment and Feedback (ranked 95 out of 102 in 2025) was unsatisfactory. As a postgraduate specialist the target should be top quartile in all categories and this has never been so. Shifting the dial will need a whole university response both in terms of the priority placed on student experience and to address the multiple factors that underly weak satisfaction in categories such as Organisation and Management and for particular student groups notably part-timers.

The Office for Students' proposed changes to the regulation of quality should provide both a focal point and a realistic timescale for change. Amongst the OfS proposals is the expectation that all providers will be required to take part in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and that TEF performance will become a new threshold measure of satisfactory/unsatisfactory provision. The proposals are subject to consultation and timescales are not fixed but it is reasonable to expect that Cranfield's postgraduate provision will be assessed in 2030 or soon afterwards. Whilst this is some way off, it is important that the University sets targets and plan for TEF success as soon as possible. Having not previously taken part in the TEF the University will need to make use of the sector information and guidance that is available. We do however have experience of several rounds of the REF and should transfer that knowledge as part of TEF action planning. The change programme provides a basis for a coherent a TEF action plan. The Portfolio Pillar of the change programme proposes a Curriculum Transformation Project that would form the foundation of the TEF action plan. The Process Pillar includes a review of academic excellence with a view to a consolidation of skills in research and academic excellence.

Beyond the change programme there is an internal audit proposal for a review of assessment & feedback set within the context of our obligations under OfS condition of registration B4 on Assessment and Awards which will provide valuable recommendations on priorities for action. The Part-Time Project, led by the Director of Student Experience has surveyed part-time students, identified priorities for action, implemented changes (for example in part-time student representation) and will provide a focus for further action for this important segment of the student community. Taken together and if managed coherently these projects will form the basis of a TEF action plan that addresses our biggest risks. The key to success however is to identify success in the TEF as one of the University's top strategic priorities.

National Student Survey 2025 (NSS)

The NSS was open to all final year (Level 6) undergraduate students at MK:U. Out of 45 eligible students, 26 responded to the survey, giving a response rate of 58%, just above the 50% threshold required for reporting. The survey consists of 27 questions across 7 themes, with each respondent's feedback representing approximately 3.8% of the score. It should be noted that these themes are typically equipped to measure the student experience of full-time undergraduate students, with all of MK:U's students being part-time apprentices. Apprentices were included in the NSS survey for the first time in 2023 and analysis of the national data shows that they are generally more negative about the course and organisation but more positive about assessments. The overall theme scores, alongside the national average, are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5 NSS scores

Theme	MK:U Positivity measure	National Benchmark	Difference	Quartile
Theme 1: Teaching on my course	71.2%	79.7%	-8.6%	Q3
Theme 2: Learning opportunities	63.1%	78.4%	-15.3%	Q3
Theme 3: Assessment and feedback	71.5%	77.5%	-6.0%	Q3
Theme 4: Academic support	84.6%	85.1%	-0.4%	Q3
Theme 5: Organisation and management	51.9%	66.8%	-14.8%	Q3
Theme 6: Learning resources	71.2%	82.1%	-10.9%	Q3
Theme 7: Student voice	60.3%	68.6%	-8.3%	Q3

Positivity measure presents the percentage of "Very good" and "good" responses.

Given the low number of respondents, a review of the written comments provides a more valuable insight. In summary, they show a mixed experience among students. Positively, students appreciated passionate and knowledgeable lecturers, flexible learning options, and opportunities for real-world application through hybrid models and employer engagement. However, many expressed a need for improved course organisation, more consistent communication and more understanding of the work/study balance, particularly in relation to the immediacy of the topics taught. While improvements were noted over time, the overall sentiment suggests that structural and administrative challenges significantly impacted student satisfaction.

Whilst MK:U's NSS results are below the national benchmarks, this should be considered in the context of the timing of the survey and small size of the cohort. This was MK:U's first cohort of students, and the University has already acted on much of the feedback gathered from these students as they have progress through their studies, with these insights improving the experience of following cohorts. The size of following cohorts should also provide a more valuable insight in future NSS surveys.

3.3   Student support

National Review of Higher Education Student Suicide Deaths

The University contributed to the confidential national review of student cases in the 2023-24 academic year, coordinated by the University of Manchester, by providing relevant case materials. The review produced a report, infographic, and summarising video, highlighting the main findings. The University received an institutional report, which was reviewed by the University's Safeguarding Lead, with the findings presented to the University Executive. Specific comments around terminology used in reports, timeliness and the involvement of families have been considered and incorporated into updated guidance to teams responding to the death of a student. The institutional report commended Cranfield's structured approach in the questions used in the independent internal review of cases by the University; these questions were cited anonymously as good practice in the national report.

The national report noted that effective suicide prevention in universities is built on comprehensive mental health training for all staff who interact with students. The report recommended that: training should cover recognising risk factors, understanding neurodiversity, and responding supportively to students in distress; that University housing should be safe with regular checks and support available at all times; and that after a suicide prevention efforts should increase and the

safety of locations should be reassessed. It also recommended that information sharing and serious incident investigations should involve families and have strong leadership support, that universities should be open with families after suspected suicides, and proposed a national forum which should monitor progress and related incidents like self-harm.

Student Wellbeing and Disability Support (SWaDS)

In 2024-25, 18% of students nationally reported a mental health condition. At Cranfield 16.4% of students accessing SWaDS disclosed a mental health condition, and a further 5.7% were considered at significant risk. This is separate to students who shared a diagnosed mental health condition when accessing learning support. Although fewer students presented with mental health conditions in 2024-25 compared to 2023-24, the proportion of students "at risk" remained consistent and overall engagement with wellbeing services increased despite a decrease in registered student numbers. Notably, 288 students were aged 19 or under in 2023-24, an age group of focus for Ofsted, evidencing the younger demographic of MKU learners. Overall, apprenticeship learners accounted for 25% of SWaDS engagement in 2024-25.

SWaDS services were enhanced in 2024-25 with an expanded central team increasing our learning support provision, enhanced counselling services providing better value for money, and a stronger emphasis on early reporting of concerns to SWaDS to enable timely pro-active support. The service continually adapts to the evolving needs of the student body, taking into account external pressures including NHS service capacity, waiting times for accessing mental health resources and those seeking a formal disability diagnosis.

Figure 6 below presents safety and wellbeing concerns raised to SWaDS during 2024-25 compared to previous years. The figures represent the number of student cases where these concerns were reported; individual students may have presented with multiple concerns over the year. In total, 1451 individual students engaged with SWaDS during 2024-25, compared to 933 in 2020-21, with year-on-year growth reflecting a steady rise in the number of students engaging with SWaDS despite a fall in overall student numbers.

Figure 6 Safety and wellbeing concerns reported to SWaDS

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Bullying / harassment	16	37	36	47*	44*
Mental health	155	296	288	299	238
Student of concern / suicidal ideation / safeguarding concern	39	89	76	77	84

* in 2023-24 23 students reported concerns via Report and Support, of which 10 were anonymous.

  in 2024-25 18 students reported concerns via Report and Support, of which 9 were anonymous.

OfS Condition E6: Harassment and Sexual Misconduct

The University is committed to educating students about harassment and sexual misconduct, the available support, and reporting procedures. A new OfS ongoing condition of registration concerning harassment and sexual misconduct was introduced from August 2025.

In preparation for the introduction of the new condition a Task and Finish group worked on ensuring compliance, with new initiatives introduced from 2025-26:

- A new online module for students on sexual consent (opt-out option available), explaining its definition, contexts, and reporting pathways.
- A short video guiding students on how to use the 'Report + Support' tool, complementing existing resources on safeguarding responsibilities and support.
- Summary guidance provided to students on harassment, support access, reporting routes, and student conduct expectations.
- A new 'Student Support Induction' session for all new students, outlining support services, principles of consent, and promoting a safe and respectful environment.

In addition a comprehensive single source of information on all related policies, procedures, training, and support was published on 1 August 2025, meeting a key requirement of the new OfS E6 Condition.

These training and guidance initiatives build on the mandatory 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' online module, which explains the legal definition of harassment and support options, and the optional 'Bystander Intervention' module, which focuses on recognising boundaries, safe intervention, and reporting. All areas will be observed to assess engagement, gather feedback and enhance how we communicate with students on this theme.

Counselling Service Engagement

Professional counselling remains an essential part of the University's student support. Demand for counselling is rising as

NHS capacity decreases and local charitable services have variable funding streams. Students are eligible for up to six counselling sessions per academic year, with extra sessions provided where appropriate. In December 2024, the University changed its external provider for 24/7 support to Spectrum Life. The re-branded 'Cranfield Student Support 24/7' offers online counselling in multiple languages via referral from SWaDS, single-session support, digital resources, and 24/7 phone line providing professional mental health support and triage out of hours. In-person counselling remains available on the Cranfield campus.

Despite declining student numbers, demand for counselling services remains high. Late cancellations and DNAs (did not attend) are closely tracked, with a rate of 17% in 2024-25 with a frequent reason cited 'change in time/overran academic meeting/lecture'. Of the 133 students who accessed the service, 39 (compared to 32 in 2023-24) required more than six sessions, totalling 89 additional sessions (144 in 2023-24). Referral procedures and guidance documentation are being adapted further, to address late cancellations and emphasise the role of counselling services, and the availability of single-session support through the 24/7 service which is included in the annual licence cost.

Figure 7   Student use of counselling services

Student use of Counselling services	Number of students	Number of sessions	Number of sessions (Late cancellations / DNA)
2020-21	161	904	-
2021-22	153	826	-
2022-23	121	467	-
2023-24	145	810	112
2024-25	133	714	122

University Mental Health Charter Programme

In 2024, the University joined the University Mental Health Charter Programme (UMHC) to inform best practice and steer cultural change. Due to ongoing institutional changes and the Change Programme, work on the UMHC is currently paused, including the 2025-26 subscription. The University's position will be reviewed in summer 2026 to decide on commencement.

Learning Support

SWaDS centrally coordinates reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, physical and mobility impairments, learning differences, and health conditions. In November 2024 a new online tool was introduced to screen for neurodiverse traits and provide recommendations for adjustments prior to official diagnosis. Students also gained access to a digital platform with personalised guidance and resources tailored to their needs.

To further enhance support the service has focused on:
- Increased awareness and visibility of available resources through targeted communications, staff training, and dedicated events, encouraging early engagement with support services.
- In line with sector best practice, introduction of internal guidance and procedures to support students without a formal disability diagnosis to access support.
- Expanding student feedback mechanisms to identify emerging needs and inform the development of proactive interventions.
- Monitoring and reviewing the University's progress toward sector benchmarks on disability disclosure and support, with the aim to meet or exceed national figures and thereby foster a culture of openness and belonging.

3.4   Apprenticeship student provision

Level 7 Apprenticeships

On 24 September 2024 the Labour government indicated their intent to defund level 7 apprenticeships. Along with many other institutes and professional bodies, Cranfield lobbied to overturn this intent without success, and this became policy in May 2025.

Following this change in government policy several steps were taken to optimise any remaining opportunity, consider liabilities and plan. This included:
- Reviewing existing apprenticeships, developing a teachout plan and implementation.
- Re-organising the apprenticeship provision across Cranfield into a central team enabling a managed exit, with the last L7 completion by July 2029.

- Planning additional cohorts within the 25-26 academic year before the 31 Dec 2025 cut-off date.
- Suspending development of any additional apprentice standards at L7.

L6 Apprenticeships
In February 2025, Professor Lynette Ryals, stepped down from the CEO role in MK:U, with Neil Withey recruited as MK:U Director.

Additional L6 apprenticeships have been developed and apprentices recruited including Robotics Engineer, Supply Chain Leadership, with Project Manager set for recruitment in 2026.

As a result of the level 7 defunding MK:U are exploring with both FBAM and FEAS opportunities to deliver level 6 apprenticeships, utilising faculty expertise and providing pathways into post graduate programmes. Solutions are anticipated for delivery in the 2nd quarter of 2026.

As MK:U approaches its 5th anniversary it has successfully completed its first cohorts from 2021 with all 42 apprentices passing with either merit or distinctions.

The post-16 education white paper (October 2025) is currently being reviewed to consider opportunity and impact.

Apprentice Recruitment
Additional cohorts have been planned and recruited to in the reduced recruitment window 01/08/25 – 31/12/25, at L7 to maximise revenue.

As at 21 October 2025 recruitment has resulted in 564 L7 and 222 L6 starts detailed below.

Figure 8   New apprenticeship registrations

School	2024-25 (final)	2025-26 (at 21/10)
FBAM	566	370
FEAS	215	194
MK:U*	141	222*
Total	**922**	**786**

MK:U has additional cohorts planned in 2026

Apprentice Compliance
Following successful Ofsted, ESFA and OfS inspections and audits of Cranfield's apprenticeship provision various projects were initiated to look at recommendations made during these processes and covered the following broad areas:

- Ensuring effective feedback across all types of provision enabling apprentices to reflect and improve.
- Review of careers advice and guidance provided to apprentices as per the inspection framework requirements.
- Review of data management and KPIs for apprentices to provide clear information to senior management, thus enabling effective decisions.

These projects are concluded, with recommendations implemented or further developed aligned to changes in apprenticeship provision and rules.

All 7 key apprenticeship KPIs monitored by the DfE (previously by ESFA) through the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework (AAF) are showing as on track as at September 2025, with the overall Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) being 77.2% against a sector QAR of 60.2%.

3.5   Complaints, appeals and academic misconduct

The University has in place formal processes which govern the management of student complaints, academic appeals and allegations of academic misconduct. These processes are set out in Senate Handbooks, which are regularly reviewed to take account of casework experience and external regulatory changes.

Details of the student complaints, academic appeals and academic misconduct cases investigated during the year are set out below. The investigation procedures for student complaints, academic appeals and academic misconduct cases all follow a three-stage process, an informal, local investigation (Stage 1), a formal investigation undertaken by an independent member of staff (Stage 2) and a formal review of the Stage 2 investigation (Stage 3). Following the internal process students have the right to request that an independent body, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA),

considers the University's response to their case, who will not reinvestigate the matter but determine if the University acted fairly and in line with its own documented regulations and procedures.

Where the OIA have provided feedback on their reviews of complaints made by Cranfield students, they have consistently made comments such as "the University adhered to its policies and procedures and it acted fairly and reasonably" and "we are satisfied that the University's decision was both reasonable and in line with its regulations and procedures."

They noted in two separate complaints regarding actions taken in relation to students who have disclosed a disability the acknowledgment that universities must develop and apply policies consistently across the entire student body, and that Cranfield's actions were reasonable in applying its regulations fairly and consistently to members of the student body with different characteristics.

Student Complaints

Figure 9   Student Complaints

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total Stage 2 cases	21	18	26	28	43
Stage 2 cases upheld or partially upheld	11	<5	14	10	26
Total Stage 3 cases	7	<5	8	8	16
Stage 3 cases upheld or partially upheld	<5	0	<5	0	<5
Cases referred to the OIA by student	8	<5	<5	<5	7
Found to be justified/partially justified by the OIA	<5	0	0	<5	<5

Figure 9 above shows a significant increase in the number of Stage 2 complaints received in 2024-25 compared to the previous year and in the number and percentage of complaints which were upheld or partially upheld. The table above covers Stage 2 (formal investigation) and Stage 3 (Review of Stage 2 decision) of the complaints process, with Stage 1 (informal investigation) being undertaken at a local level by relevant staff in the area of that student's concern. Stage 1 complaints are not centrally recorded, but address concerns directly and swiftly for students. Where students are dissatisfied with a formal outcome of a Stage 2 investigation they may request a review of the Stage 2 investigation (Stage 3). The above figures show that in 2024-25 <5 Stage 3 reviews were upheld, which provides assurance over the fairness and robustness of the Stage 2 process. At the time of writing this report <5 students who had made a complaint to the OIA are awaiting the outcome of their complaint, with five Stage 2 and <5 Stage 3 complaints pending an internal outcome.

Academic Appeals

Figure 10 Academic Appeals

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total Stage 1 cases	32	36	62	68	39
Stage 1 cases upheld or partially upheld	10	15	23	12	19
Total Stage 2 cases	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Stage 2 cases upheld or partially upheld	<5	<5	0	0	0
Total Stage 3 cases	<5	<5	<5	0	0
Stage 3 cases upheld or partially upheld	<5	<5	0	0	0
Cases referred to the OIA by student	<5	0	<5	0	5
Found to be justified/partially justified by the OIA	0	0	0	0	0

As shown in Figure 10, 2024-25 saw a significant decrease in the number of academic appeals received at Stage 1, where an informal investigation is carried out to determine if an error in the assessment or marking process or recording has occurred. The 2024-25 figure is in line with the years prior to 2022-23, although proportionately more academic appeals were upheld or partially upheld in 2024-25 than in previous years. The academic appeals received as a Stage 2 formal

appeals was dismissed as without appropriate grounds for appeal. Of the five cases referred to the OIA, <5 were found to be not justified, with <5 pending an outcome.

The fall in the number of appeals received is greater proportionately to the fall in the number of registered students, and may be due to work undertaken to address the higher number of appeals in previous years. The introduction of degree classification from 2025-26 is expected to lead to an increase in the number of academic appeals received, with the possibility that students who have achieved their award may appeal against a mark or outcome in order to be considered for a higher classification.

Academic Misconduct

Figure 11 Academic Misconduct cases

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total Stage 1 cases	90	305	177	102	62
Stage 1 cases upheld	85	290	153	83	48
Total Stage 2 cases	85	290	153	86	47
Stage 2 cases upheld or partially upheld	70	212	113	67	19
Total Stage 3 cases	0	9	11	10	0
Stage 3 cases upheld or partially upheld	0	0	0	<5	0
Cases referred to the OIA by student	0	<5	<5	<5	0
Found to be justified/partially justified by the OIA	0	0	0	0	0

There was a continued significant drop in the number of academic misconduct cases investigated and upheld at all internal stages of the academic misconduct process. This follows work undertaken to address the rise in cases experienced in 2021-22 (attributed to issues with time-compressed assessments during Covid) and the introduction of mandatory online referencing and plagiarism (eRAP) training for most students.

There was a drop in the proportion of cases that were upheld at Stage 2 (meaning that the student was found to have committed academic misconduct after a formal investigation). It should however be noted that eight of the 47 cases considered at Stage 2 are pending an outcome. No students made an external complaint regarding an academic misconduct investigation to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator during 2024-25.

4. Student demographics and outcomes

4.1 Student demographic data

The tables below present demographic data on students registered with the University during 2024-25, and cover postgraduate and undergraduate provision. The data presented as part of this report was taken from the dataset used to inform the University's HESA data return, taken in July 2025. This data includes all students who were involved in an academic activity in 2024-25 (including completion of theses), and as such includes students on full-time one-year courses who commenced their studies in 2023-24.

Figure 12 Overall student demographic data 2024-25

	Research		Taught		
	FT	PT	FT	PT	PT Apprentice
FBAM					
Female	33	30	332	186	263
Male	22	58	439	341	314
Other			14	<10	<10
FEAS					
Female	197	47	474	226	87
Male	481	169	1434	1137	227
Other	12	<10	43	52	<20
MK:U					
Female					136
Male					369
Other					<20

Figure 12 shows a continued increase in the number of part-time apprentice and non-apprentice students (including students enrolled at MK:U), however there was a significant drop in the number of full-time taught students which contributed to the continuing overall fall in student numbers. As shown in Figure 13, the University's percentage of apprenticeship students as a proportion of the total taught population has increased to a high of 23%.

Figure 13 below provides details of the numbers of registered students who were included in HESA returns for the last five years, and shows a continued year-on-year drop in taught (and thus overall) student numbers since 2021-22. Figure 14 provides year-on-year data of new student registrations, which follow the declining trend of the overall data.

Figure 13 Overall student demographic data 2020-25

	Research			Taught					% Apprentices of Taught total
Year	FT	PT	Research Total	FT	PT	PT Apprentice	Taught Total	Grand Total	
2020-21	768	297	1065	3359	2136	1490	6985	8050	21%
2021-22	765	302	1067	3694	2127	1439	7260	8327	20%
2022-23	799	306	1105	4015	1610	1223	6848	7953	18%
2023-24	779	305	1084	3560	1766	1154	6480	7564	15%
2024-25	745	310	1056	2736	1947	1436	6119	7175	23%

Year	Research			Taught			Taught Total	Grand Total	% Apprentices of Taught total
	FT	PT	Research Total	FT	PT	PT Apprentice			
2020-21	218	44	262	1560	451	550	2561	2823	21.5%
2021-22	162	38	200	1972	361	308	2641	2841	11.7%
2022-23	143	40	183	2060	321	317	2698	2881	11.7%
2023-24	130	36	166	1561	383	327	2271	2437	14.4%
2024-25	144	51	195	1239	445	549	2233	2428	24.6%

Figure 14 New student registration data 2020-25

Figures 15-18 below set out data on some of the protected characteristics of the student population as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The data is presented alongside historical comparisons. Consideration of this data allows the University to ensure that it has due regard to the demographics of the student population and that appropriate support is in place for these students.

Figure 15 Student disability status

Disabilities	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Multiple Disabilities	17	20	29	28	23
Learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	251	277	276	318	337
Social/communication conditions such as a speech and language impairment or an autistic spectrum condition	12	11	18	30	37
Physical impairment (a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting or carrying)	19*	16	19	18	17
Mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety	63	81	95	110	90
Temporary disability (e.g. accident, post viral)	-	-	-	<5	<5
Long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy	57	64	69	78	85
Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	-	6	8	<5	5
Deaf/deaf or have a hearing impairment	20	17	14	11	9
An impairment, health condition or learning difference not listed above	32	33	44	41	31

The number of students disclosing a disability has continued to increase in percentage terms. The proportion of students disclosing a disability has risen from 5.85% in 2020-21 to 8.9% in 2024-25, although this is below the 12% national average for postgraduate students who report a disability. Learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D remain the primary category of disclosed disability (53% of all disclosed disabilities), with students reporting a mental health condition remaining the second-most disclosed disability.

Figures 16-18 below present data on student ethnicity, religious belief or non-belief and age on entry and show that the University continues to have a diverse student population. Figure 16 presents amalgamations of the ethnicity data categories reported to HESA.

Figure 16 Student ethnicity

Ethnicity	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Arab	6	6	11	118	137
Asian or Asian British	2231	2746	3266	2860	2324
Black or Black British	518	526	589	539	481
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	141	257	253	215	223
White	4696	4441	3955	3574	3712
Other ethnic background	334	242	216	147	131
Information refused/not available	124	109	82	111	167

Figure 17 Student religious belief or non-belief

Religion	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Buddhist	73	61	95	74	78
Christian	2056	2201	2145	1537	1674
Hindu	492	930	1428	1031	657
Jewish	12	23	25	22	24
Muslim	439	591	680	499	557
Sikh	42	47	54	36	39
Other	161	132	161	119	149
No Religion	2866	2949	2759	2049	2530
Not available	1909	1393	606	2197	1467

Figure 18 Student age on entry

Age	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
24 and under	2685	2895	3119	2970	2603
25 – 29	1674	1765	1837	1624	1462
30 – 34	1324	1311	1194	1022	1004
35 – 39	1009	1002	933	822	814
40 – 44	637	637	602	521	588
45 – 49	428	413	380	327	388
50 – 54	193	205	194	173	199
55 – 59	84	76	89	80	86
60 – 64	13	13	17	19	23
65 and over	<5	<5	7	6	8

Figure 19 below shows fairly steady numbers of total registered postgraduate research students over the last five years. Overall research student numbers show greater stability than the number of taught students, which have seen significant drops over the last five years.

Figure 19 Intended postgraduate research students' awards 2020-25

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
DBA	49	50	51	45	52
EngD	28	20	0	0	11
MPhil	6	8	5	<5	<5
MSc by Research	61	57	53	56	81
PhD	921	932	996	963	909

As in Figure 20 below, the number of apprenticeship students increased, with significant growth in FEAS and continued growth in the number of undergraduate apprentices in MK:U. The incoming cessation of Level 7 funding means that the numbers of apprentices in FBAM and FEAS will decrease after 1 January 2026. MK:U apprentices are completing part-time undergraduate awards, so therefore have longer registration periods than those studying for a postgraduate award.

Figure 20 Apprenticeship students by Faculty

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
FBAM	1241	1160	865	546	584
FEAS	249	199	172	210	330
MK:U	-	80	186	398	523

4.2   Student achievement data

Taught Postgraduate students (non-apprentices)

The tables below present achievement data of non-apprentice postgraduate students whose awards were completed and confirmed during the 2024-25 academic year. Classification of postgraduate taught awards has been introduced from the 2025-26 academic year, however achievement below is presented as students achieving a final overall mark of High Pass (≥70%), Good Pass (60%-69%), Pass (50%-59%) or Fail (<50%) (n.b. these are quasi-classes created for the purposes of this report – further qualification criteria have been introduced for the classification of taught awards which will begin to be reported in next year's report).

Figure 21 below shows an increase in 2024-25 of the percentage of students who achieved a High Pass (≥70%) compared to 2023-24, however this figure was still lower than the previous three years and than the 5-year average. There was also an increase in the percentage of students failing their award, although this still remains a very small percentage of the student body. The historical comparison data shows variations year-on-year in the percentage of students who receive a High Pass compared to Good Pass, but the percentage of students who achieve either a High Pass or Good Pass has remained consistent, with only around 10% of students failing to achieve at least a Good Pass (60%) for their course over each of the last five years. As noted above, the criteria for classification of postgraduate taught awards will be based on more than one factor, and as such the percentage of students who achieve a Distinction or Merit is unlikely to mirror the categories of High Pass and Good Pass set out in this report. During 2025-26 Education Committee's Assessment and Feedback Working Group will consider the University's Qualitative Assessment Criteria against which assessed work is graded, marking practices and the use of rubrics for assessments to support marking consistency across all taught programmes.

Figure 21 Overall taught achievement 2020-25

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-year Average
High Pass	47.5%	43.9%	41.9%	36.8%	39.8%	41.7%
Good Pass	43.4%	45.2%	47.5%	52.9%	50.3%	48.1%
Pass	7.4%	8.8%	9.1%	9.3%	8.1%	8.7%
Fail	1.7%	2.1%	1.5%	0.9%	1.8%	1.5%

Figure 22 Taught achievement 2020-25 by mode of study

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-year Average
FT						
High Pass	49.9%	47.1%	42.9%	36.9%	39.0%	42.8%
Good Pass	41.5%	42.5%	45.8%	52.4%	51.0%	46.9%
Pass	7.0%	9.0%	9.9%	9.7%	8.2%	8.8%
Fail	1.7%	1.4%	1.5%	1.0%	1.8%	1.5%
PT						
High Pass	38.4%	33.5%	38.3%	37.6%	42.5%	38.0%
Good Pass	50.8%	54.1%	54.0%	53.1%	48.0%	52.1%
Pass	8.9%	7.9%	6.1%	9.1%	7.8%	8.0%
Fail	1.9%	4.5%	1.6%	0.2%	1.7%	1.9%

As shown in Figure 22 the achievement rates of full-time students who achieve either a High Pass or Good Pass (≥60%) has remained fairly static across the last five years, with the equivalent achievement for part-time students showing slight year-on-year fluctuations.

Figure 23 below sets out achievement by gender, which remains fairly even between male and female students, with the percentage of female students receiving a high pass consistently slightly lower than male students. Female students have, however, seen a higher proportion of either High Pass or Good Pass outcomes compared to male students, both in 2024-25 and across the last five years.

Figure 23 Taught achievement 2020-25 by gender

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-year Average
Female						
High Pass	46.9%	44.2%	38.7%	35.6%	38.3%	40.5%
Good Pass	45.8%	45.4%	51.3%	53.6%	53.8%	50.2%
Pass	6.3%	9.0%	9.0%	10.3%	5.7%	8.2%
Fail	1.0%	1.4%	1.0%	0.5%	2.2%	1.1%
Male						
High Pass	47.7%	43.7%	43.1%	37.4%	40.5%	42.2%
Good Pass	42.4%	45.2%	46.2%	52.3%	49.1%	47.3%
Pass	7.9%	8.7%	9.2%	9.3%	8.8%	8.8%
Fail	2.0%	2.4%	1.6%	1.0%	1.6%	1.7%
Other						
High Pass	100.0%	100.0%	66.7%	58.8%	38.1%	47.8%
Good Pass	-	-	16.7%	35.3%	47.6%	40.3%
Pass	-	-	-	5.9%	14.3%	10.4%
Fail	-	-	16.7%	-	-	1.5%

Figure 24 below sets out achievement by disability status. In 2024-25 a smaller percentage of students who disclosed a disability failed their award compared to those who had not disclosed a disability for the first time in the last five years. Conversely, the percentage of students who have disclosed a disability who achieved a High Pass was the lowest achieved over the last five years (although the fall in High Pass outcomes was matched by an increase in the percentage of Good Pass outcomes). The percentage of students who disclosed a disability and achieved either a High Pass or Good Pass in 2024-25 was higher than both 2023-24 and the 5-year average. The University continues to make efforts to support and make available resources to students who have declared a disability, which has had a positive impact on their ability to achieve.

Figure 24 Taught Student achievement by disability status

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-year Average
Disclosed disability						
High Pass	36.9%	40.5%	40.6%	40.0%	35.5%	38.8%
Good Pass	48.5%	41.4%	45.5%	49.0%	54.8%	47.9%
Pass	12.6%	11.7%	10.5%	9.6%	8.1%	10.4%
Fail	1.9%	6.3%	3.5%	1.4%	1.6%	2.9%
No disclosed disability						
High Pass	48.0%	44.1%	42.0%	36.9%	40.1%	41.9%
Good Pass	43.1%	45.4%	47.6%	52.8%	50.0%	48.2%
Pass	7.1%	8.6%	9.0%	9.5%	8.1%	8.5%
Fail	1.7%	1.9%	1.4%	0.8%	1.8%	1.4%

Research Students

Research students do not receive a numerical mark for their final award outcome, with achievement measured as pass or fail. The University reports student completion within four years for full-time students and six years for part-time students, as set out in Figures 25 and 26 below. It should be noted that the figures for 2024-25 are skewed by the large number of students who have submitted their theses but not yet received a confirmed outcome. Where the data below shows withdrawals, this may be where a student has withdrawn from their original intended award, be as a result of the outcome of a Review meeting or be where the student is recommended to work towards a lower award.

Figure 25 Research student completion data – Full-time students

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Completed - over 4 years	45.24%	49.12%	45.52%	50.00%	34.62%
Completed - under 4 years	26.98%	29.82%	28.28%	36.84%	26.50%
Submissions - no outcome yet confirmed	7.14%	0.58%	1.38%	1.97%	33.76%
Withdrawals	17.46%	18.13%	22.76%	6.58%	3.42%
Failures	3.17%	2.34%	2.07%	4.61%	1.71%

Figure 26 Research student completion data – Part-time students

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Completed - over 6 years	42.22%	36.54%	38.89%	39.13%	30.65%
Completed - under 6 years	17.78%	28.85%	25.93%	15.22%	27.42%
Submissions - no outcome yet confirmed	11.11%	0.00%	1.85%	13.04%	17.74%
Withdrawals	24.44%	34.62%	31.48%	26.09%	17.74%
Failures	4.44%	0.00%	1.85%	6.52%	6.45%

Postgraduate degree apprenticeship students

Apprentice achievement is presented with the same achievement groupings as other taught students. Figure 27 below provides the achievement of apprentices compared to non-apprentice students. Overall and in 2024-25 apprentices have a higher proportion of both High Pass (≥70%) outcomes and either High or Good Pass outcomes (≥60%) compared to non-apprentices, with over 97% of apprentices achieving either a High Pass or Good Pass in 2024-25. The percentage of apprentices who fail to achieve their award is very low (and has been consistently so across the last five years).

Figure 27 Overall postgraduate degree apprentice achievement

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	5-year Average
Apprentice						
High Pass	50.6%	51.1%	39.1%	39.2%	44.5%	45.4%
Good Pass	48.6%	48.0%	58.4%	55.9%	52.6%	52.5%
Pass	0.8%	0.7%	2.2%	4.9%	2.3%	1.9%
Fail	-	0.2%	0.3%	-	0.6%	0.2%
Non-apprentice						
High Pass	47.5%	43.9%	41.9%	36.8%	39.8%	41.7%
Good Pass	43.4%	45.2%	47.5%	52.9%	50.3%	48.1%
Pass	7.4%	8.8%	9.1%	9.3%	8.1%	8.7%
Fail	1.7%	2.1%	1.5%	0.9%	1.8%	1.5%

Undergraduate students

During 2024-25 the first MK:U students completed their awards, on the BSc in Business and Management. Over three-quarters of students received a first class award, which is far higher than the national average of less than one-third, however it should be noted that there were only 21 students in this first cohort, and that apprentice achievement is generally higher than the achievement of non-apprentices nationally.

Figure 28 Overall undergraduate degree apprentice achievement

	2024-25
BSc Business and Management	
First	76.2%
2:1	23.8%

End Point Assessments

As part of their apprenticeship, both postgraduate and undergraduate apprentices complete their academic award (if it is a degree apprenticeship) and an End Point Assessment (EPA), which may or may not be linked to the academic award as part of their apprenticeship.

Figure 29 Apprentice EPA outcomes

Faculty	Standard	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Fail
FBAM	Senior Investment and Commercial Banking Professional	8	<5	11	-
	Senior Leader	242	-	8	<5
	Sustainability Business Specialist*	10	21	14	-
FEAS	Bioinformatics Scientist	-	-	<5	<5
	Digital and Technology Solutions Specialist*	<5	<5	<5	-
	Materials Process Engineer	<5	-	<5	-
	Postgraduate Engineer	-	-	7	-
	Risk and Safety Management Professional	<5	-	-	-
	Systems Engineer	-	-	<5	-
	Systems Thinking Practitioner	7	6	5	<5
	Through Life Engineering Service Specialist*	<5	-	5	<5

* denotes where Cranfield acted as the End-point Assessment Organisation for the EPA.

Of the 373 students undertaking EPAs during 2024-25 96% passed first time, with almost 99% of students achieving at least a pass after one or more attempts.

5. Academic risks

The following table presents major academic risks i.e. those related to quality, standards and the student experience (including student wellbeing) and associated regulatory and reputational risk. In creating this table (in which the risks are not ranked in any order), consideration has been given to academic-related risks in the university's major risk register such that there is alignment between the two. Whilst the risks presented below represent major risks from the perspective of Senate's remit (as opposed to those for which the University Executive holds the principal responsibility), the links and interactions between the two have been taken into consideration and joint responsibilities recognised.

No	Risk descriptor	Consequence	Mitigation	Monitoring	Owner
1	Lack of PGT portfolio innovation, modernisation, and rationalisation.	An old-fashioned, indistinct and complex PGT portfolio harms reputation, recruitment, and financial viability.	University-level portfolio planning, review and management.	Senate and University Executive	PVC Education & Research
2	Lack of prioritisation of teaching excellence and the student experience.	Falling behind rather than leading the sector harms reputation, recruitment and financial viability.	Monitoring of teaching and student experience data. Adoption of sector best practice. Teaching excellence is a university strategic priority.	Education Committee and University Executive	PVC Education & Research
3	Deficiencies in delivery of teach-out (PGT & PGR).	Breach of OfS ongoing condition of registration C3.	Implementation of the University's Student Protection Plan.	Education Committee and Research Committee	PVC Education & Research
4	Apprenticeship provision does not meet regulators' (Ofsted, OfS, DfE) expectations.	Funding clawback and cost of additional regulatory scrutiny.	Monitoring and assessment of compliance risks, engagement with regulators, delivery of action plans arising from regulatory checks.	Apprenticeships Steering Committee and the Apprenticeships Quality Group	PVC Education & Research
5	Major student incident (including student suicide)/student mental health and wellbeing.	Threat to life, health and wellbeing. Impacts on staff wellbeing. Consequences for reputation.	Continuous improvement of our student support services, safeguarding and wellbeing policies, and staff training. Vigilance and responsiveness regarding students of concern.	University Executive	Chief Executive & Vice-Chancellor
6	Non-compliance with research security legislation.	Risk of breach of national security legislation and consequent penalties and reputational damage.	Development of enhanced due diligence for international research partnerships and internal 'secure collaboration' process for collaborative research aligned to research integrity practices.	Research Committee	PVC Education & Research
7	Lack of compliance with sponsor terms and conditions for higher risk and major awards, including, increasingly demanding terms and conditions from industrial sponsors.	Risk of financial penalties arising from non-compliance and reputational damage.	Development of new post-award professional project management service to be charged to projects.	Research Committee	PVC Education & Research
8	Insufficient volume of high quality research and lack of preparedness for REF 2029 leading to reduced/poor REF performance.	Risk of significant reduction in annual QR funding from 2029 onwards following REF 2029 and associated reputational damage	Excellence in Scholarship Programme, Mock REF, Research Committee oversight and engagement, Theme Research Plans. Limited window to impact outcome for next REF and need for targeted QR investment.	Research Committee	PVC Education & Research

6. Priorities

6.1 2024-25 Priorities update

Action No.	Theme	Action	Progress
1	Education Strategy - Experience theme	Phase 3 of Academic Charter - Undertake consultation and agree underpinning initiatives required to deliver ambitions.	Paused due to university change programme.
2	Education Strategy - Experience theme	Phase 3 of "Cranfield Enhance" to include implementation of the sustainability offer and the development of the outreach offer.	Underpinning work for sustainability badge completed. Further progress paused due to university change programme.
3	Education Strategy - Experience theme	Phase 3 of Student Engagement Framework - part-time student experience project delivery, next phase of course reps development project, apprentice representation.	Completed.
4	Education Strategy - Enhancement theme	Implementation of classification and credit framework changes.	Completed.
5	Education Strategy - Enhancement theme	Taught course portfolio review – to encompass both significant further course rationalisation for 25-26 recruitment year and review of the new course development and approval process to encourage new product modernisation and innovation.	Completed.
6	Education Strategy – Enhancement theme	Specify and start to deliver action plan arising from Ofsted inspection review.	Specification completed. Delivery paused due to change programme and apprenticeship strategy uncertainty.
7	Education Strategy – Experience theme	Education Committee to agree new Assessment & Feedback Action Plan.	Action plan draft completed. More work needed to agree priorities and delivery schedule.
8	Education Strategy – Experience theme	Education Committee to define priorities for a new teaching excellence project.	Analysis of CU performance vs. sector completed and priorities for improvement identified.
9	Education Strategy - Environment theme	Review of the Education Technology Standing Group.	Completed.
10	Research and Innovation Strategy - Scholarship with Purpose	Mock REF.	Mock Ref completed and reported to Executive July 2025.
11	Research and Innovation Strategy - Scholarship with Purpose	Research Committee Terms of Reference aligned with new University structures.	University consultation completed and business plan to be considered by the University Executive during Autumn 2025.
12	Research Strategy - Championing the Research Student	Delivery of PRES response action plan, including proposal for a Doctoral College.	Completed.
13	Research Strategy - Championing the Research Student	Cranfield Doctoral Landscape Award submission.	Round 1 completed.
14	Research Strategy - Diversity of Thought and People	Inaugural University Conference..	Completed.
15	Research Strategy - Diversity of Thought and People	Inaugural lecture in University Seminar Series.	Delayed.

6.2 2025-26 Priorities

This plan sets out headline activities to be completed during 2025-26 to support the academic aims of the University, and which are linked to the University's academic strategies.

Action No.	Theme	Action	To be taken forward by
1	Education Strategy – Enhancement theme	Education Committee to prepare for introduction of TEF to postgraduate courses	PVC Education & Research
2	Education Strategy - Enhancement theme	Implementation of revamped new course approvals and the new portfolio planning and management processes	PVC Education & Research
3	Education Strategy – Enhancement theme	Education Committee to agree new Assessment & Feedback Action Plan	PVC Education & Research
4	Education Strategy - Experience theme	Next phase of Student Engagement Framework with focus on revamped Student Experience Committee, CSA and student rep representation and engagement, and the customer-centric project	Director of Student Experience & PVC Education & Research
5	Education Strategy – Experience theme	Education Committee to monitor teach-out plans and delivery of Student Protection Plan	PVC Education & Research
6	Research and Innovation Strategy – Championing the Research Student	Research Committee to monitor research-out plans, supervisory provision and delivery of Student Protection Plan	PVC Education & Research
7	Research and Innovation Strategy – Championing the Research Student	Production of Doctoral College business plan	PVC Education & Research
8	Research and Innovation Strategy – Scholarship with Purpose	Review research governance in the context of new university structures and academic priorities	PVC Education & Research
9	Research and Innovation Strategy – Scholarship with Purpose	Delivery of Excellence in Scholarship: REF action plan and related QR funding and reporting model	PVC Education & Research
10	Research and Innovation Strategy – Diversity of thought and people	Refresh of research culture and strategy aligned with restructured university and strategic priorities	PVC Education & Research

The current Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research & Innovation will be taking on the role of PVC Education & Research from 1 January 2026.