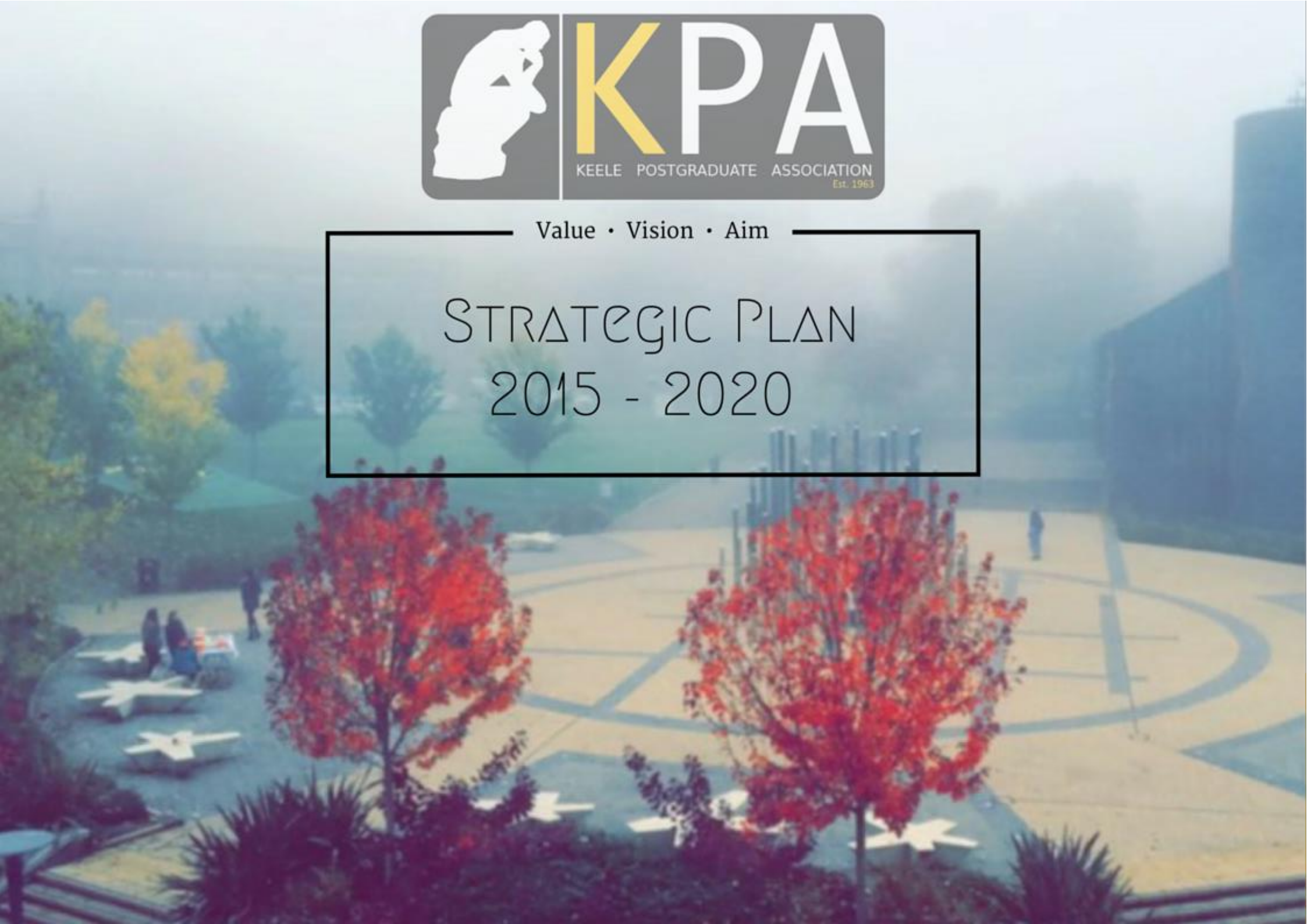




Value • Vision • Aim

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 - 2020





KEELE POSTGRADUATE ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 – 2020

As of academic year 2014/15, the Keele Postgraduate Association represents a diverse body of over 3400¹ postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) students.

Representing this body of students is a complex and demanding task. It is therefore essential that our aims for the next five years are clear and well communicated to; the student body; Keele University; current and future committees.

Keele is a respected provider of higher education and sits among the top 200 universities for international outlook².

With its distinctive campus, and world leading research led

In line with Keele's 2020 Vision; the KPA has developed a strategic plan to ensure that postgraduate's students are properly represented in the coming years.

KPA Vision

The Association and its committee will uphold the needs of the current and future postgraduate student body, endeavouring to remain on the pulse of their evolving needs. Doing so will enable Keele University to continue to produce graduates of the highest standard who can make a positive impact on local communities, and furthering Keele's international reach. Together, with Keele, the Postgraduate Association will work to bolster postgraduate student satisfaction, producing distinctive graduates, happy with their choice of university.

¹ Approximate number based on number of student accounts as of December 2015

² <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/200-most-international-universities-world-2016>



KPA Values

In line with the wider values of Keele University, the postgraduate association and its committee members are dedicated to upholding the following values

- Education is a significant element in achieving social change for individuals and wider society;
- Education should be offered to all on the principal of equality of opportunity;
- Independent research and academic enquiry is the best route for the advancement of knowledge;
- Nurturing a sustainable environment now, is imperative to securing a positive and sustainable future for forthcoming generations;
- Keele is a unique organisation and community of students, staff, residents, and other actors. This should be reflected in the excellence of delivery of services and the experience offered;
- Ensuring all individuals rights and responsibilities are upheld to the highest of standards, ensuring an equal and diverse community;
- Inclusivity, tolerance and pluralism are important to the cohesion of our communities. Keele, championed by its Staff, Students, and Residents, must lead in the protection of these communities;
- Transparency and clarity of all activities and undertakings of Keele University is important for the ethical conduct of its departments, faculties, and schools;
- Keele University, as with other organisations must be held accountable for its commitments and promises made to its students, staff, and the wider community;
- The student skill base should be utilised effectively, and opportunities for students communicated and apportioned appropriately.

Strategic Aims

Aim 1

Support and enrich the social and academic experience for students to undertake their postgraduate studies and research in a supportive and 'holding' environment.

To be achieved by:

- Encouraging the growth of internal dissemination activities for research students at all levels: - PGR; PGT; Undergraduate; Teaching Staff; Research Staff.
- Supporting opportunities and events that bring students together in social spaces. Particularly those that are student-led, and foster the postgraduate community on and off campus (for example postgraduate coffee mornings).
- Ensuring that the postgraduate student body is aware of, and at the appropriate time, seek the financial, academic, and social support available to them. This includes support available to them by virtue of membership to the association, or other bodies.
- Holding Keele University responsible for its commitments to postgraduate students with respect to; provision of study material; provision of study space; departmental academic support.
- Remaining consistent as an organisation, whilst remaining innovative; evolving with the changing needs of postgraduates.
- Communicating effectively the upcoming changes to postgraduate education, both at Keele and at a national level³
- Engaging with Keele university and the wider community (on and off campus), to ensure that faith provision is appropriate and suitable for all major religious groups represented on campus now, and in the future.

³ See the KPA Communication Strategy document.

Aim 2

Provide bespoke, personalised support. Safeguarding the individual and collective welfare of students in times of need

To be achieved by:

- Strengthening the KPA brand, ensuring that the Association is visible on and off campus, and all students are aware of what it has to offer them in way of support.
- Tailoring the support and welfare advice to the diverse population of postgraduate students; targeting hard to reach groups and providing them with the same access to support, regardless of their age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, or any of the other protected characteristics as defined by section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 ⁴
- Reinforcing and supporting the strengths of students, and providing packages to allow students to support themselves through their studies.
- Taking a joined-up, multi-agency approach with other organisations (including Keele University and Keele Students Union) to form packages of support for students that are founded in the principle of interdisciplinarity.
- Remaining flexible in the delivery and execution of the support offered. Operating in a way which suits the student or cause, rather than the status quo.

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4>

Aim 3

Provide opportunities for students to engage in an academic environment which enables them to flourish as researchers and as internationally leading professionals in their disciplines

To be achieved by:

- The administration of bursaries, affording students the opportunity to attend national and international training and dissemination activities (such as conferences) to showcase their own and to see the work of others in their fields.
- Encouraging the awareness of, and engagement with, wider structures that influence professional excellence. Including, but not limited to, professional standards of practice, academic quality, and robust research practices.
- Ensuring that students are supported effectively as individuals in the context of their studies and personal circumstances, to achieve high standards of academic and professional excellence.
- Continuing to support student activities extraneous to core academic course activities which develop students into well rounded career-ready individuals.



Aim 4

To continue to raise awareness of, and funds for, local, national, and international charities, causes, and other third sector organisations, by way of contributing positively to these arenas

To be achieved by

- Providing students and other social actors in the local area with the resources to develop plans and activities which achieve social change and the raising of charitable donations.
- Taking lead on charitable activities and events to raise funds directly for charitable organisations
- Building partnerships and collaborative relationships with organisations, bolstering the reach and effectiveness for both. Including connecting students (with relevant skill bases) with organisations with compatible or matching needs. Doing so provides opportunities to students which enhance their experiential learning portfolios, whilst providing support to these organisations.
- Helping to build positive and functioning links between the Keele community and wider society, promoting volunteering opportunities

Aim 5

To aim for, and achieve, sustainability in all aspects of the Association's conduct including, but not limited to; environmental sustainability; financial sustainability; human and social sustainability

To be achieved by

- Demonstrating practices which are environmentally ethical and sustainable, in a way which is exemplary of the Association and Keele University's wider ambitions.
- Committing to the three R's of the environment: Reduce; Reuse; Recycle. For example, the KPA Clubhouse operates as a drop off point for Foodbank donations and RSPCA animal food and bedding, encouraging patrons to make donations.
- Continuing to operate the Association as a paperless organisation, encouraging partner organisations to do the same.
- Producing a financial memorandum of understanding between the Association and some of its funding partners or bodies.
- Committing to the principals of equality of opportunity and encouraging social responsibility, community development, and cultural competence among the University's students, staff, and residents.
- Encouraging community engagement across multiple platforms. Including, but not limited to: public dissemination activities; community consultation; locally hosted community outreach social events.
- Reaffirming our commitment to reducing our environmental impact. In 2015 the KPA Clubhouse was awarded the NUS Green Impact Bronze award. In 2016, we aspire to attain the Gold award, requiring a concerted effort in reviewing Clubhouse operations.
- Maintaining a socially responsible policy toward alcohol in all aspects of the association's activities. This includes committing to a "zero alcohol policy" in relation to the associations charitable funds. In addition, this means ensuring that the commercial arm, the Clubhouse abides by all alcohol licensing laws, as well as being actively involved in university wide initiatives promoting responsible drinking and alcohol retailing.

Aim 6

To ensure that Keele University is held accountable, at all levels, for its conduct with regard to its postgraduate students in both its short and long term commitments

To be achieved by

- Holding Keele to its commitments and values, especially that of “valuing probity and integrity in all its activities”⁵.
- Ensuring that recruitment (both national and international) is fairly targeted, in line with Keele University’s commitment to widening participation (See Keele Outreach⁶).
- Communicating with the Learning Professional Development Centre (LPDC) effectively, providing feedback following consultation with the student body. This will allow us to ensure that the right kind and amount of training opportunities are available to taught and research students.
- Encouraging flexibility with research training hours and credits for students, ensuring they are aware of the opportunity to log them.
- Providing students with information and links to the appropriate resources available to them (including funding, training, and welfare procedures offered by Keele University).
- Safeguarding students’ rights in times where they are called into question, especially with regard to academic, accommodation, and finance procedures.
- Informing students about the funding available within their departments and ensuring it is fairly and appropriately allocated.

⁵ See Keele Values - <http://www.keele.ac.uk/aboutus/strategicplan/>

⁶ <http://www.keele.ac.uk/outreach/>