IT Services
Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016
Foreword

This document sets out the strategic direction for IT Services for the next five years. The IT strategy has been put together in consultation with colleagues from across the University to ensure our focus is on priorities that will help the research-led University of Aberdeen achieve its Global Ambitions, as detailed in the University’s Strategic Plan.

There are exciting times ahead with lots of challenges and this plan has been produced to help ensure that we remain focused on delivering professional IT services that are strategically aligned and prioritised and actively support our customers to get the most value from them. As part of our strategic analysis and review, we recognise the following influences and drivers that have helped shape our strategic direction:-

**External**
The University has to operate in a political environment over which it has little or no control. Political issues such as immigration, the research funding environment, government policies on higher education and the drive within the public sector to commit to sharing IT infrastructure and resources across organisations, amongst others, can have a large impact. For example, the introduction of student fees in the UK to those not domiciled in Scotland may significantly increase the expectations of future students, leading to a more competitive environment in UK higher education.

In an increasingly competitive market, we have to work very hard to attract and retain high calibre students and academics, and we must continue to benchmark our services and facilities to ensure we are providing those expected of a University ranked amongst the best in the world. To maintain this status, IT needs to effectively support business processes and services, and IT Services is very aware of the role IT plays in ensuring the overall success of the University.

**Internal**
The University aims to attract its full complement of UK and EU students, and as many overseas students as can be accommodated. IT Services has a critical role in ensuring the quality and functionality of our information systems and course delivery mechanisms, helping to attract and retain students by enriching the student IT experience. We also recognise our responsibility to support diversity within our staff and student populations.

IT Services is also aware of the pressure on University budgets and the need to get best value from suppliers of all services. There is also increasing pressure on the University, both internally and externally, to do more with less, and IT solutions can often facilitate cost-efficiency as well as quality.

Recent changes in carbon emissions legislation and penalties for slow progress have placed growing importance on carbon reduction and waste management. IT Services has already made a significant and on-going impact on carbon reduction through power management but recognises the need to continually look for ways to make further contributions to University targets.

**Technological**
For the University to maintain its competitive edge, we need to meet the expectation of any device, anytime, anywhere. Student and staff expectations are ever increasing in terms of availability of systems, course materials, delivery models, delivery mechanisms, and support. Technologies need to be up-to-date and support innovation, and we always need to be looking to and planning for the future.

Compliance is a major feature of University management and effective and efficient information systems are needed to ensure that the University maintains data integrity and is positioned to meet its legal and contractual obligations.

Our strategy demonstrates our direction of travel and shows how we will tackle the issues we face. We will remain focussed on supporting the University reaching its Global Ambitions and will regularly review our progress towards achieving this. We will proactively review our operational plans/actions to ensure we adapt to changing requirements, manage risk and remain on target.

Irene Bews,
Director of Finance & IT | August 2012
Mission, Values, Aims and Goals

Our mission is to deliver world class customer driven IT services to enable the University of Aberdeen to generate highly valued research, teach effectively, and share ideas.

Values
We will continue to support and promote the University of Aberdeen’s seven values:

- Pursuit of excellence
- Internationally facing and at the heart of the community
- Equality and diversity
- Sustainability and social responsibility
- Openness, transparency and honesty
- Ambition and innovation
- Adding value

These enhance and complement our existing IT Services values of:-

- **Openness and Consideration**
  We treat everyone with courtesy and respect, and endeavour to make our processes ever more transparent.

- **Professionalism**
  We will be professional at all times, we will take the opportunity to learn from previous experiences and follow agreed good practices.

- **Responsibility**
  We will keep customers apprised at all times and take ownership of our actions.

Aims and Goals
The following are our six strategic aims and supporting goals which will be pivotal in delivering IT services for the future:-

### Aim 1: Enhance Customer Experience

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Facilitate <em>any device, anytime, anywhere</em></td>
<td>To ensure that, as far as is possible, University information and resources can be accessed from a range of personal and corporate devices, at any location at any time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Improve our response to customer enquiries</td>
<td>We will continue to improve both the speed and quality of our response to customer enquiries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Clarify our services and make them easier to access</td>
<td>We will work to ensure that all customers have a clear understanding of and easy access to our services, ensuring all communication with our customers is effective, meaningful, timely, and targeted, and supports an inclusive experience for all.</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>Develop and rationalise services in line with demand</td>
<td>We will develop and rationalise our customer facing services in line with demand whilst ensuring best strategic value for money.</td>
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1 Source: University of Aberdeen’s Strategic Plan 2011-2015 available at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/strategic-plan.php
## Aim 2: Enhance Teaching & Learning Experience

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<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Enhance teaching &amp; learning spaces</td>
<td>We will work with colleagues to improve our physical estate to create more productive teaching and learning spaces. We will continue to enhance our facilities through our process of technology replacement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Create opportunity for innovation</td>
<td>Through development and promotion of innovative IT facilities and services, we will create opportunity for innovation in teaching and learning.</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>Support the enhancement of student facing systems</td>
<td>We will support the development and rationalisation of student facing systems, particularly MyAberdeen virtual learning environment, with the aim of improving access to information and the study experience.</td>
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## Aim 3: Support the University’s Research Ambitions

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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Develop and deliver a research environment.</td>
<td>To support our competitiveness as an international research driven university, we will develop a research specific environment and enhance our research related service offerings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Develop the research related skills &amp; knowledge of our staff</td>
<td>To improve our advisory and support capability, we will actively develop IT Services staff skills in supporting research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Support legislative requirements for research data management</td>
<td>We will work with staff and stakeholders to meet funding body and legislative requirements for research data management.</td>
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## Aim 4: Support Business Improvement

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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Ensure applications are procured and developed in-line with University strategic demand and priority</td>
<td>We will ensure our resource prioritisation, procurement, and development activities are overseen by the governance of the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Support the improvement in business processes with the implementation, replacement, development, and integration of key University systems.</td>
<td>We will support the rationalisation and consolidation of key University systems, primarily via the OneSource project; reducing costs, improving business processes, contributing to key University objectives, and improving environmental impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Enhance our business information capabilities</td>
<td>We will develop capabilities to be able to provide timely and relevant information to the University decision makers.</td>
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### Aim 4: Support Business Improvement

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<td>4.4</td>
<td>Develop and share knowledge of good practice in IT</td>
<td>To improve efficiency we will raise awareness of good practice in IT, applications, and technologies that may offer benefit to the wider community. We will also support the development of IT skills and good practice within the University community.</td>
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### Aim 5: Enhance the IT Environment

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<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Actively pursue the best strategic solutions, including shared services and/or collaboration with other partners</td>
<td>In respect of products and services, we will actively pursue the best strategic fit, whether this is an external product or in-house solution, cloud or locally-hosted, or a shared service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Enhance performance of our infrastructure</td>
<td>We will enhance the performance, capacity management, resilience and monitoring capability of our infrastructure, and our ability to recover where business continuity is interrupted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Enhance our data security and integrity</td>
<td>We will enhance access to our data and services, ensuring security is robustly designed and a transparent part of the service.</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>Harness emerging technologies to enhance service offerings</td>
<td>We will harness emerging technologies to enhance existing services and create innovative new service offerings that will be of strategic benefit to the University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Collaborate regionally and nationally</td>
<td>Actively engage with initiatives and collaborations within the HE sector and beyond to assist in the development of new products and services both in Higher Education and in other spheres of activity.</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
<td>Develop the skills and knowledge of our staff</td>
<td>We will further develop IT Services staff skills and knowledge, ensuring we embed industry standards and adopt good practice in IT.</td>
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### Aim 6: Deliver Greener IT

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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Develop and implement sustainable ICT policy</td>
<td>We will develop and implement a sustainable ICT policy which will drive greener IT initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Share services</td>
<td>We will look for opportunities with others, including partner institutions, to reduce overall environmental impact and costs such as redesign of our data centre and sharing of facilities with HE and FE partners.</td>
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## Aim 6: Deliver Greener IT

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<td>6.3</td>
<td>Minimise our carbon footprint</td>
<td>We will continue to maximise the virtualisation of our IT estate, reducing the quantity of physical hardware and minimising our energy consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Develop green procurement processes.</td>
<td>We will ensure that our procurement processes include energy, efficiency and green credentials as part of our selection criteria.</td>
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Our mission is to deliver world class customer driven IT services to enable the University of Aberdeen to generate highly valued research, teach effectively, and share ideas.

### External Drivers
- Government Policy in HE; Research Environment; Immigration Controls

### Internal Drivers
- Staff and Student Expectations; Recruitment and Retention; Value for Money; Power/Waste Reduction

### Technological Drivers
- Any device, anytime, anywhere; Competitiveness; Forward Planning and Innovation; Meeting Regulatory Requirements

### Aims

#### 1. Enhance Customer Experience
- **1.1** Facilitate any device, anytime, anywhere
- **1.2** Improve our response to customer enquiries
- **1.3** Clarify our services and make them easier to access
- **1.4** Develop and rationalise services in line with demand

#### 2. Enhance Teaching & Learning Experience
- **2.1** Enhance teaching & learning spaces
- **2.2** Create opportunity for innovation
- **2.3** Support the enhancement of student facing systems

#### 3. Support the University’s Research Ambitions
- **3.1** Develop and deliver a research environment
- **3.2** Develop the research related skills & knowledge of our staff
- **3.3** Support legislative requirements for research data management

#### 4. Support Business Improvement
- **4.1** Ensure applications are procured and developed in-line with University strategic demand and priority
- **4.2** Support the improvement in business processes with the implementation, replacement, development and integration of key University systems
- **4.3** Enhance our business information capabilities
- **4.4** Develop and share knowledge of good practice in IT

#### 5. Enhance the IT Environment
- **5.1** Actively pursue the best strategic solutions including shared services and/or collaboration with other partners
- **5.2** Enhance performance of our infrastructure
- **5.3** Enhance our data security and integrity
- **5.4** Harness emerging technologies to enhance service offerings
- **5.5** Collaborate regionally and nationally
- **5.6** Develop the skills and knowledge of our staff

#### 6. Develop Greener IT
- **6.1** Develop and implement a sustainable ICT policy.
- **6.2** Share services
- **6.3** Minimise our carbon footprint
- **6.4** Develop green procurement processes
Strategic Targets 2012 - 2016

**TARGET 1**
We will enhance customer experience and we will:-

1.1 Replace 25% of staff and PGR desktop equipment annually. Implement and sustain PGR technology initiative.

1.2 Make 100% of customer facing application’s available on all major consumer mobile devices.

1.3 50% increase in the number of telephone calls being answered in person and 50% reduction for incident fix time.

**TARGET 2**
We will enhance the teaching and learning experience and we will:-

2.1 Replace 25% of classroom resources and redesign two spaces each year.

2.2 Review and consolidation of virtual learning environments and student facing portals.

2.3 Provide mobile access to the virtual learning environments by implementing Blackboard Learn and other institutional services with Blackboard Central.

**TARGET 3**
We will support the University’s research ambitions and we will:-

3.1 Establish a sustainable High Performance Computing service by summer 2013.

3.2 Establishment of research support group by summer 2013.

3.3 Contribute to ten successful research grant proposals per annum.

**TARGET 4**
We will support business improvement and we will:-

4.1 Deliver business improvement capability providing improved services to students and researchers by delivering approximately five projects as part of the OneSource Programme.

4.2 Replace all legacy web sites with new web design by the end of 2014.

4.3 Revise training options and schedules for staff and students, targeting course bookings to reach at least 80% of capacity.

**TARGET 5**
We will enhance the IT environment and we will:-

5.1 Maintain data storage available capacity at a minimum of 10% above actual utilisation and enhance the speed and capacity of our data networks, internal, external wired and wireless by a minimum of 400%.

5.2 Deliver 99.5% service availability on all core customer facing applications and services.

5.3 Reduce the number of IT security incidents by 50%.

**TARGET 6**
We will develop greener IT and we will:-

6.1 Deliver shared primary and secondary data centre services.

6.2 Virtualise 80% of our server estate.

6.3 Reduce server and PC carbon footprint by 20% per annum.