

AECC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026



**FIT FOR THE
FUTURE**

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

Our Strategic Plan was developed in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic and published while the pandemic was still going on. All of our lives have been touched by the pandemic and the dedication, resilience and determination shown by our staff and students has been and is exceptional. Further on in this Strategy you will see our values set out to guide not just what we do but also 'how' we do things. We have lived and breathed these values through the pandemic and are proud to stand by them.

AECC University College was founded in 1965 as a pioneer of chiropractic education and training and since this time has maintained its strong focus on evidence-based healthcare education, training and delivery. Our students thrive in our small and supportive community, and achieve excellent graduate outcomes which form the basis for fulfilling future careers and lives.

Our mission to create 'a healthier society through education, research and clinical care' is as relevant today as it was 57 years ago and is especially pertinent as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic to face significant challenges and uncertainties.

Our strategic review involved a large number of our staff, students, governors and external stakeholders in an iterative process over several months. On behalf of the Board of Governors, I extend our sincere thanks to all those who took the time to help shape and refine this work. The process allowed us to re-examine our founding commitments, to reflect on and restate our shared values, and to renew and expand our purpose.

The University College is a unique institution based in a relatively deprived area encased within a relatively wealthy conurbation. Our sense of 'Place' was a key part of our strategy; in particular we will seek to understand our role as a civic university and will maximise the possibilities to support and strengthen the communities we live and work in. Our strategy has a strong focus on looking outwards, building partnerships with our local community, our NHS colleagues, other education providers and local employers. Our small size gives us a tangible advantage, in the speed of our decision making and our ability to respond flexibly and creatively to our partners requirements. This strategy also underlines our ongoing commitment to Sustainability

and Diversity and Inclusion, highlighting key principles that will underpin all we do in the next 5 years.

I hope that you enjoy and are inspired by our strategic plan, 'Fit for the Future'. We are confident that this provides a clear direction of travel that will ensure our future success as a health sciences university which is proud to support its people, partners and local communities. This will require a responsive and flexible approach so that we continually evolve in response to the needs of our stakeholders in an uncertain HE environment.



INTRODUCTION FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

The latest AECC University College Strategic Plan 2021-2026 builds upon key institutional milestones achieved over the past five years, including the gaining of Taught Degree Awarding Powers and Office for Students registration. Despite the global challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, AECC University College has continued to thrive. We acquired an additional site and were awarded £2.7m by the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership in 2020, and this year made a submission to the national research exercise (REF 2021) for the first time in our history. All of these successes have been developed, driven and supported by our talented and close-knit community of staff and students. Their unwavering commitment and collective efforts have ensured the continued progress of the University College in a highly changeable external environment. During the process of strategic review, we have reached out to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, refreshed and reset our institutional values, and clarified the behaviours all community members can expect of each other.

The University College is a small and specialist higher education provider, operating across health, rehabilitation and sport sciences disciplines. Our historic foundation in chiropractic remains a strong part of our heritage and identity, with a positive national and global reputation, and is the primary base for chiropractic research in the UK. We have well-established clinical imaging courses and services, with a centre of excellence in medical ultrasound. New courses have been developed in allied health, rehabilitation and sports and exercise sciences with further expansion already planned into new disciplines based on workforce demand and with the support of key sector partners.

The Dorset LEP funding will support the development of a new state-of-the-art community integrated rehabilitation facility. Additional patient services will also be developed to expand our multi-disciplinary care model, delivering positive patient outcomes and experiences and providing opportunities for service improvement projects and applied research.

Our new strategic plan is defined by our ambitions for continued excellence, growth and partnership. We have exceptional graduate outcomes and will protect these; however, we will build on our successes to date to ensure our relevance as a specialist University supporting local, regional workforce expansion and development as the

NHS delivers its Long-Term Plan. We will work closely with our community groups, and support the delivery of the regeneration of Boscombe as its local university and anchor institution.

The higher education sector is set for further challenge and change as the UK and world emerge from the pandemic and the resultant economic, social and cultural conditions take effect. With an increasing political focus on the development and delivery of technical skills and qualifications in further education, universities will need to demonstrate they continue to provide value for money, excellent learning experiences, equitable student opportunities and successful outcomes. The HE environment is complex and with pension costs rising against a backdrop of static or reduced tuition fee and grant income, universities must work hard to ensure their financial stability.

Having gained its new status 3 years ago, AECC University College is well placed to realise its future ambitions and establish itself as a highly valued health sciences university, health and care sector partner and anchor institution which makes a difference to its people and the communities it serves.

OUR MISSION

“Creating a healthier society through education, research and clinical care”

OUR VISION

“To be a leading specialist health sciences university providing excellent education, clinical care and applied research. We will become an important anchor institution serving Dorset and our local communities, recognised nationally and internationally as a centre of excellence.”

Our Vision will drive the next phase of our institutional journey as we continue to develop and diversify our academic portfolio and patient services. This will take place alongside ongoing developments in our established fields of expertise in chiropractic, radiology, rehabilitation, sport science and psychology.

We will increase our student numbers across all study modes and levels, including postgraduate research, providing opportunities for lifelong learning and continuing professional development.

We will provide a greater breadth of health services to an increasing number of patients and service users, including a contemporary new integrated rehabilitation centre, supporting our local population with long-term conditions, injuries or illness to live well for longer.

We will embrace our full University title which is fully representative of our broad offer, while maintaining visibility of our Anglo-European chiropractic heritage within our School structure.

We will enhance our relationships and collaborations with stakeholders locally, regionally, nationally and internationally in health workforce development, research and innovation, and commercial enterprise.

OUR VALUES

Caring – Caring is demonstrated every day by expressing and accepting caring, compassion and respect in our personal and professional relationships. As a health sciences university, we treat people with respect and compassion on a daily basis.

Professional – We take pride in the quality and standards of the work that we do and the relationships we form. We are competent and reliable, working in an ethical way and seek to be excellent in all that we do.

Passionate – We passionately believe in the power of education to inspire and transform lives, and in healthcare to enable and support people to reach their full potential, to be happy, live well and thrive.

Inclusive – We welcome diversity as an essential component of a healthy society and an enriched educational environment. We strive to create a safe and accessible space where all students and staff feel they belong and can flourish as part of our supportive community. Our patient services are centred on the needs of each individual, delivered in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

Collaborative – To play our part in solving complex world problems we believe in the power of working together. Our multi-professional environment provides opportunities for collaborative working, interprofessional education and multidisciplinary patient care to benefit our students, staff and patients. We are small and specialist but together with our partners we can make a big difference.

Our Strategic Aims 2021/22 to 2026/27

STRATEGIC AIMS	WE WILL ACHIEVE BY
1. Provide an outstanding student experience and deliver excellent graduate outcomes for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a new student experience strategy with our students as partners ▪ Maintaining our outstanding graduate outcomes ▪ Addressing gaps in success between different groups of students ▪ Providing a unique opportunity for students to study and practice together in a multi-professional health science environment ▪ Providing more support for student enterprise/entrepreneurialism ▪ Investing in learning spaces and facilities ▪ Creating lifelong learning opportunities
2. Support the expansion and development of the health workforce by providing demand-led high quality education and training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanding our portfolio of Health programmes and grow student numbers to c.2000 at foundation through to postgraduate levels; ▪ Increasing the breadth and number of CPD programmes and short courses ▪ Developing and strengthening relationships to ensure we are aware of workforce development requirements ▪ Being agile and responsive to the needs of our stakeholders
3. Provide affordable patient-centred care through multidisciplinary clinical, rehabilitation and diagnostic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating a hub of learning, teaching and applied research in clinic settings ▪ Developing new patient services ▪ Developing a new Integrated Rehabilitation Centre with a community rehabilitation facility, providing a new provision as a Centre of Excellence ▪ Expanding placements and practice learning opportunities for students across all clinical education and training courses ▪ Working with partners across the Dorset ICS to support transformation of services
4. Position ourselves as a first choice partner within specialisms for research and innovation in the health science community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aligning our research and innovation activities to local and regional priorities ▪ Increasing research income and enhancing quality ▪ Increasing the number of research partnerships we have with the health and care sector
5. Establish ourselves as an anchor University for knowledge exchange and economic development within our local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing local community partnerships ▪ Developing an engagement strategy which encompasses outreach, civic and business engagement ▪ Aligning our activities with local and regional priorities
6. Create a diverse, inclusive and sustainable environment in which we support our people and develop our activities, spaces and facilities to be fit for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating a flexible, high quality physical and digital environment ▪ Creating a transformational and inclusive culture that is person-centred, values led and ambitious ▪ Being financially independent, environmentally aware and sustainable ▪ Implementing effective processes and digital tools to support the activities of our staff, students and patients / services users ▪ Ensuring our organisational processes and structures promote and facilitate efficiency, agility and innovation ▪ Developing estates, digital, people, financial and marketing strategies that will ensure we have the infrastructure, culture and capability required to support the delivery of our strategic aims

Strategic Aims

1. Provide an outstanding student experience and deliver excellent graduate outcomes for all

We will achieve this by:

- Developing a new student experience strategy with our students as partners
- Maintaining our outstanding graduate outcomes
- Addressing gaps in success between different groups of students
- Providing a unique opportunity for students to study and practice together in a multi-professional health science environment
- Providing more support for student enterprise/entrepreneurialism
- Investing in learning spaces and facilities
- Developing lifelong learning skills

Our new student experience strategy will be developed in partnership with our students so that their voice remains at the centre of all that we do. We perform well in the National Student Survey and are regularly placed above our benchmark compared to other universities. Our students rate highly the learning community that we create; whilst our student numbers will grow, we will retain the strong sense of community we create on our campus. We will continue to focus our attention on improving the organisation and management of our courses as well as assessment and feedback to deal with those issues where students have expressed their dissatisfaction.

Our Access and Participation plan commits us to challenging targets to ensure that we continue to widen access to our courses in health and related professions. Almost 45% of our students come from Dorset and the neighbouring counties and working with local schools and colleges is a priority for us. We will maintain our outstanding graduate outcomes, and will ensure that all of our

students have the opportunity and support to achieve the best graduate outcomes to enable them to move seamlessly into their chosen professions. Through active engagement and targeted support, including a focus on physical and mental health needs, we will provide a culture of belonging to enable students from underrepresented groups achieve their educational and professional goals.

We will provide unique opportunities for our students to collaborate with other professionals and enhance their academic and clinical experience as we expand our academic provision and develop the new Integrated Rehabilitation Centre.

As the future graduate employment environment changes we recognise that many of our future graduates will spend periods of time managing a portfolio of contracts of employment, and that many will choose to be self-employed, so we will provide more support for students to develop enterprise and entrepreneurial skills.

We will continue to offer a high-quality student experience that supports all our students to achieve their academic, personal and professional potential. For high quality learning we know that our students need excellent teachers and professional services staff, but they also need high quality learning spaces and facilities. In response to student feedback, we will continue to develop our digital offer with increased asynchronous learning opportunities alongside high levels of face to face contact. We have invested in state-of-the-art treatment benches and simulators which will be used to support the development of clinical skills. We are investing in additional staff to support the expanding number of our students who seek support for their health and well-being from our highly valued suite of student services.

We will ensure that all students are equipped with skills to reflect upon and develop their own personal and professional development as lifelong learners.



Strategic Aims

2. *Support the expansion and development of the health workforce by providing demand-led high-quality education and training programmes*

We will achieve this by:

- Expanding our portfolio of Health programmes and grow student numbers to c.2000 at foundation through to postgraduate levels;
- Increasing the breadth and number of CPD programmes and short courses to support flexible, inclusive learning
- Developing and strengthening relationships to ensure we are aware of workforce development requirements
- Being agile and responsive to the needs of our stakeholders

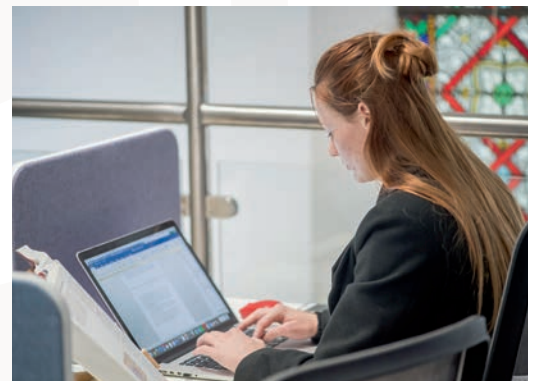
We are committed to growing student numbers for two reasons: i) the health workforce needs more high quality graduates who are taught within a multi-disciplinary environment; ii) to secure an independent future as a university college we need to reach a critical mass of teaching activity. Our growth will be carefully planned to ensure that we do not overload our staff or our facilities and that we encourage a strong sense of identity amongst our student communities. Our growth in student numbers

will be driven by new programmes developed in all three of our academic Schools. New courses will include pre-registration and post-registration education and training in clinical imaging, therapies and rehabilitation sciences.

We will continue to develop our education and training courses and CPD in response to local, regional and national needs, informed by our local ICS and regional HEE partners and working closely with professional bodies, NHS, primary care, local authority and Private,

Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector partners. This will require us to work in a more agile and responsive manner so that we are able to meet the needs of our external partners and stakeholders.

We will provide flexible opportunities for students to take credit bearing units and short courses to support professional roadmaps, specialist training needs and individual pathways of lifelong learning and education.



Strategic Aims

3. Provide affordable patient-centred care through multidisciplinary clinical, rehabilitation and diagnostic services

We will achieve this by:

- Creating a hub of learning, teaching and applied research in a care setting
- Developing new patient services
- Developing a new Integrated Rehabilitation Centre with a community rehabilitation facility, providing a new model of care recognised as a Centre of Excellence
- Expanding placements and practice learning opportunities for students across all clinical education and training courses
- Working with partners across the Dorset ICS to support the transformation of health and care services

We seek to create a multi-disciplinary, patient-focused model of care. Our new Integrated Rehabilitation Centre will be an exemplar model for place-based care in a community setting. Our new patient services will be developed alongside the expansion of our academic portfolio, and will provide unique opportunities for clinical education, including student placements, and applied research and development projects.

We want more patients to be able to access our clinic services and we will work with our local community, colleagues across the Dorset Integrated Care System and PVI partners to provide a range of demand-led, accessible

services for those seeking care as a primary point of contact as well as secondary referrals.

The quality of our patient services is of the highest importance to us. We will ensure that 'safety first' is a priority and we will regularly monitor patient outcome and ensure satisfaction is above 90% in all categories of patient experience.

As we develop new services and develop our clinical teaching and research we will establish patient and carer expert panels as an expansion of our Friends of the Clinic Group.

We will develop further our positive relationship with the Dorset Integrated Care System and

work with all local partners to help Dorset residents to start, live and age well and to reduce health inequalities. By aligning and harmonising our efforts we will ensure that we can develop sustainable provision which has high relevance and adds value to local and regional systems.

Many of our courses are specialist and vocational. This means they require work placements for students to achieve learning outcomes and professional qualifications. We will work closely with health provider partners and employers to develop relationships so that we can expand the number of placements offered to our students.



Strategic Aims

4. *Position ourselves as a first-choice partner within specialisms for research and innovation in the health science community*

We will achieve this by:

- Aligning our research and innovation activities to local and regional priorities
- Increasing research income and enhancing quality
- Increasing the number of research partnerships we have with the health and care sector

We already have a global reputation as a leading provider of chiropractic education and a growing international reputation in imaging education and research. In 2021, for the first time in our history, we were able to make a submission to the national Research Exercise Framework (REF2021). Our academic portfolio is focused on allied health and social sciences disciplines, including chiropractic, radiography, physiotherapy, psychology, clinical exercise rehabilitation and sport and exercise sciences. The nature and breadth of these disciplines represent the value and focus we place on person-centred health and care as a complex interaction between physical, psychological / neuro-psychological and social components.

We have a range of far-reaching overseas links and partnerships in chiropractic, allied health sciences and rehabilitation medicine.

Our ambition is to develop our research base and validate postgraduate research degree programmes. We will invest in our research support infrastructure to enable us to do this and recruit more academic and clinical staff who are research active.

We have research links nationally and internationally, and locally work in partnership with the Universities of Southampton and Bournemouth, the Wessex AHSN, the Dorset Innovation Hub, HEE and NIHR in the South

West. We will focus on applied research that aligns with the priorities of our partners to ensure that our activity is relevant and grounded in practical application. There are considerable opportunities to undertake more practice-based research in our new integrated rehabilitation centre (IRC) alongside our existing clinical facilities and in collaboration with other health and educational partners

We will seek to engage more of our academic staff in contract research and consultancy projects. This will increase the knowledge exchange activity we are engaged with as well as support the diversification of our income base.



Strategic Aims

5. Establish ourselves as an anchor institution for knowledge exchange and economic development within our local community

We will achieve this by:

- Developing local community partnerships
- Developing an engagement strategy which encompasses outreach, civic and business engagement
- Aligning our activities with local and regional priorities

We are committed to creating civic benefit in all that we do and will pledge to develop a Civic University Agreement working with local partners to bring focus to our engagement and outreach activity across community, health, education and business.

We are proud to be situated in Boscombe and support the Boscombe Regeneration Partnership and Towns Fund vision to make Boscombe a better place to live, work and visit. We are one of the largest local employers and recognise the social and economic impact we have locally.

We will have more porous boundaries and our beautiful campus, patient services, educational opportunities and high-quality public talks will be more accessible to our local community.

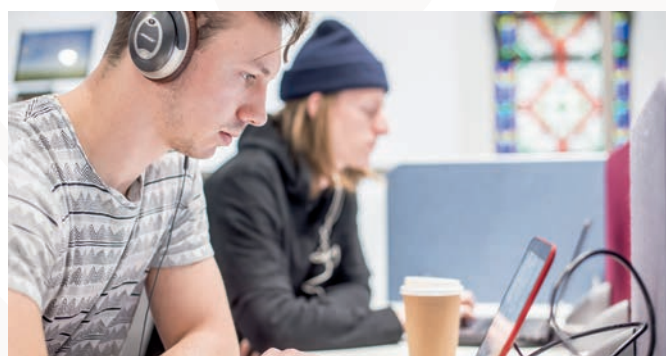
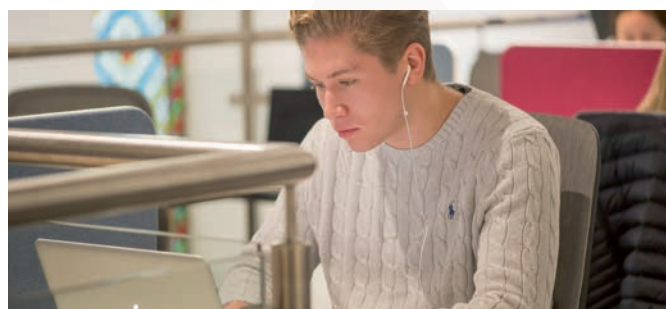
As we are developing our Access and Participation practice, we have worked to develop relationships with schools locally to widen the groups of students we offer opportunities to, and will be extending this to some inner-city areas to reach a wider group of students and to enable more local young people to consider a career in health.

Reducing health inequalities and improving educational outcomes for local children are regeneration priorities and we are confident we can make a big contribution. We are already working with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to offer opportunities to looked after children across the region. We will dedicate time to developing relationships with our local communities, as well as health and local authority partners. We will also expand our work with sporting bodies, sports clubs

and organisations to raise brand awareness and identify mutually beneficial opportunities.

We will support the work of the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership's Local Industrial Strategy to build conditions for sustainable growth in health and social care as part of the One Health approach. We will support the Dorset LEP priorities of job creation, attracting new business and growing existing business. We will contribute to workforce planning and development through the Skills Advisory Panel and Board.

We will develop a business engagement strategy to guide our work with local and regional partners in the south of England to support economic development and business growth, and to identify opportunities for our own business and enterprise development.



Strategic Aims

6. Create an inclusive and sustainable environment in which we support our people and develop our activity, spaces and facilities to be fit for the future

We will achieve this by:

- Creating flexible, high quality physical spaces in an environmentally sustainable way
- Developing our digital environment to support the activities of our staff and students
- Creating a transformational and inclusive culture that is person-centred, values led and ambitious
- Being financially independent, environmentally aware and sustainable
- Implementing effective organisational structures and processes to promote and facilitate efficiency, agility and innovation
- Developing operational strategies and plans that will support our growth and the delivery of our strategic priorities

We will develop our estate to create additional spaces to support our growth in student numbers, optimising our spaces through innovative design, and providing high quality accessible and flexible facilities for our staff and students. As we improve our estate we will strive to reduce our carbon footprint and enhance opportunities for environmental sustainability and biodiversity across our campus.

We will develop our digital environment and ensure everyone in our community is equipped to effectively use digital services, tools, data and technology safely and with confidence, resilience and creativity in their learning, teaching, research, clinical services and professional support.

Our staff are our greatest asset and we will promote a values-led, person-centred culture which is visible in all that we do. We will ensure our staff feel valued and that we have the

infrastructure in place to support their mental health and well-being. We will create a new staff learning and development programme to ensure that our staff have the skills and knowledge to enable us to deliver our ambitious strategic aims and to support their professional and personal growth.

We know that we need to have a strong financial base to assure ourselves of an independent and viable future. We will ensure that we are able to invest in our growth by generating cash to reinvest and increasing external funding support for new projects. We will reduce the impact of financial challenges which arise by careful stewardship of our resources and containing our cost base as we grow.

To support our student recruitment and business development, we will develop a new marketing strategy that raises our brand

awareness and profile and helps us extend our reach. We will put a process in place to review our name in response to external stakeholder feedback, whilst protecting the heritage of our AECC roots. We have a strong network of alumni and we recognise their contribution to championing our work to a future generation of students and practitioners. We will strengthen our international reach through targeted international student recruitment and overseas partnerships.

We will update our operational strategies and plans in estates, digital, people, financial and marketing strategies, and regularly review our organisational structures and processes to ensure they are effective, efficient and fit for purpose in supporting us to achieve our strategic aims. We will optimise our agility and coherence as a small and specialist organisation with a unique offer.



AECC University College

Parkwood Campus
Parkwood Road
Bournemouth
BH5 2DF
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1202 436200

Email: hello@aecc.ac.uk

aecc.ac.uk



AECC
University College