

SOLENT'S  
CIVIC  
CHARTER

**SOLENT**  
UNIVERSITY  

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SOUTHAMPTON





**SOLENT**  
UNIVERSITY

#WithSolent

# INTRODUCING OUR CIVIC AGREEMENT

With over 160 years' experience of working with our communities, and our commitment to developing future-ready, work-ready learners, we are here to make a difference.

Now is the start of a new era, offering growth and opportunity as our communities emerge and begin to flourish once again. From the impacts of Covid-19 to our new relationship with the EU, recent events have provided us with the opportunity to stop and re-think our approach to working with our communities.

That is why we are making a strategic commitment to our local community here in Southampton and across the wider region. In 2019 Solent pledged to develop a Civic Agreement, and since then we've been on a journey, evolving our approach to how we work with our communities.

Our 2025 strategy outlines our vision and priorities for the years ahead, with our formalised Civic Charter providing the foundations for how we will work in partnership with our communities.

While we are in charge of our own destiny, working together will be critical for the success of our students, staff and wider community. Business, government, the voluntary sector and local residents will all play a role in unlocking Southampton and the Central South region's full potential.

Across the UK, universities such as Solent are anchor institutions within their communities, driving innovation, tackling social justice and enabling knowledge exchange between their communities. We are proud to represent Southampton and the wider region through the Civic University Network and are working locally with neighbouring institutions to form the Universities Together movement.

Working with our colleagues at the University of Portsmouth, the University of Southampton and the University of Winchester, we are bringing together our shared knowledge, experience and understanding of some of the biggest issues facing society. No issue can be tackled alone, and we share the principle of making the region a great place to study, work, live and visit through our shared presence here.

The commitments set out within our Civic Charter align with those of our regional peers. We are delighted to have their backing in enabling these ambitions and our wider strategic vision to develop a work-ready, world-ready, future-ready university.

Sarah Stannard



# OUR CIVIC CHARTER

We are proud of our heritage, having grown and evolved in line with our home city. As Southampton has developed, so has Solent University, opening the door for people to go on and build successful working lives. Our courses, staff, learners and alumni reflect the changing dynamic and face of Southampton and the Central South region.

Located in the heart of Southampton, we actively contribute to the city's growing cultural scene. From performing live gigs and supporting business start-ups to showcasing contemporary art and inspiring people to live healthy, active lives, we share our skills and resources to drive the city's renaissance.

We champion the city's strengths, recognise its challenges and seize the opportunity to work collaboratively to build a fairer and sustainable future for all. Our commitment to real-world learning provides opportunities for the community and industry to shape the curriculum, with our approach to partnership-working reflective of our values.

Our connections, resources and knowledge allow us to act on the issues where we feel we can make a difference:

- Creating a city of lifelong learning
- Building a culturally enriched and cohesive city
- Championing a healthy and active community
- Driving sustainable economic growth

Join us and be part of it.

We are Solent.

We are future-ready.





# WE COMMIT TO

## CREATING A CITY OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Since 1856 we have been transforming lives, providing education and training for people, regardless of their background. Our commitment to supporting residents in accessing lifelong learning is reflective of our ethos of enabling people to achieve their full potential. Through providing an inclusive environment that shares skills and drives knowledge exchange, we will play our part in building successful working lives.

For our communities, this means we will:

- enable residents to access education and training opportunities that allow individuals to achieve their full potential, regardless of background or circumstance
- provide opportunities for residents to access our academic and student communities through a series of public engagement events and activities
- make our campus and facilities accessible to all, providing opportunities for residents to visit our campus and make use of our facilities
- encourage our student and staff communities to volunteer and make a positive difference to local neighbourhoods.



## BUILDING A CULTURALLY ENRICHED AND COHESIVE CITY

Being based in the heart of Southampton's thriving cultural scene, our pool of creative talent is helping to enrich the resident and visitor experience. From supporting business start-ups and celebrating diversity through Pride to hosting award-winning exhibits and supporting the safe city initiative, we are working with partners to grow Southampton's reputation as a global visitor destination.

For our communities, this means we will:

- back Southampton's bid to become the UK City of Culture 2025, offering residents the opportunity to participate in cultural events and activities
- provide a welcoming and inclusive environment that respects and reflects Southampton's multicultural communities
- work closely with partners and residents to enhance neighbourhood safety and cohesion
- celebrate the diversity and success of our local and global communities here on campus and out in the local community.



## CHAMPIONING A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Surrounded by waterways that propel global trade and parkland that houses wildlife, we will experience first-hand the impact of climate change. We will address the challenges of the climate and ecological crisis through our teaching, research and public engagement. We will utilise renewable energy and inspire our communities to live healthier, active lifestyles. Through working together with partners and suppliers, we will unlock social value and help people create healthy, active communities.

For our communities, this means we will:

- partner with NHS trusts to support the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce that supports residents in accessing healthcare services
- be a good neighbour, minimising the negative impacts of our operations on residents and the environment
- provide opportunities for residents to participate in sport, health and fitness, with a focus on groups currently under-represented
- recognise the importance of – and take action to enhance – physical and mental wellbeing within our communities.

## DRIVING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

From global brands to local freelancers, Southampton and the Central South region is a major economic powerhouse of the UK. As Global Britain embarks on the post-Brexit era, we will be working closely with business to drive green, economic growth within our communities. From co-creating new product innovations to supporting small business growth, we will develop strategic working relations with employers and professional bodies to drive sustainable economic growth.

For our communities, this means we will:

- work in partnership with business, education, government and other partners to enable regional growth and development
- develop work-ready, world-ready, future-ready graduates who make Southampton and the Central South region their home
- provide employment opportunities for local people that enable individuals to grow and develop, reaching their full potential
- support small businesses and local suppliers, ensuring equal opportunity for engagement and participation.

# HOLDING US TO ACCOUNT

Our Civic Agreement is more than just a document – it sets out our responsibility and our commitment to working with you, our local community. As our communities develop, new technologies emerge and political policy evolves, we recognise that we may need to adapt our approach and priorities.

While things may change around us, our 2025 strategy sets out a series of key strategic priorities and further measures of success. The work that we undertake as a university will help us to fulfil these ambitions, as well as those of our civic partners and local communities.

You can find our strategic priorities and key measures of success below:

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	MEASURE	2025 TARGET
Student success	Percentage of graduates in highly skilled employment or further study	70%
Positive impact on the community	Recognition for Solent's community impact work through external award programmes	Silver watermark NCCPE and university of sanctuary status
Research and knowledge exchange	Research and knowledge exchange income (grants and contracts) received as a percentage of total income	0.8% of total income

FURTHER MEASURES OF SUCCESS	MEASURE	2025 TARGET
Financial sustainability	Adjusted net operating cashflow as a percentage of income	Rolling three-year average of c. 10–12%
Environmental sustainability	The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings	Top third of rankings
Student success (recruitment)	Undergraduate market share	0.7%
Student success (recognition of teaching excellence)	The Teaching Excellence Framework	>50% of subjects achieving a gold award
Student success (University reputation)	Guardian League Table ranking	Top 50% by 2023, then review
People experience (beacon for student and staff health and wellbeing)	Student Minds Mental Health Charter Award / UUK Step Change Framework on Mentally Healthy Universities	Highest award possible (student charter award). Full alignment with the framework (staff)
People experience (students)	National Student Survey average score across all questions (excluding SU)	85% or greater
People experience (staff)	Staff satisfaction survey: 'Overall I am happy working at Solent'	Agreement score of greater than 70%
People experience (equality of opportunity)	BAME attainment gap	8.2%
People experience (equality of opportunity)	Gender pay gap	8%



# OUR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOU

Our Civic Agreement provides the foundations for our relationship with you, our local community. We'll be working with you to build engagement and participation in our collaboratively developed community events and initiatives.

Our local community network will be at the centre of this, bringing together our internal and external communities to both report upon our progress and explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership-working.

As we emerge from Covid-19, like many local organisations, we plan to grow our physical event presence once again. We will combine our learnings from delivering virtual and in-person activities to offer a diverse and inclusive engagement programme that will take place both on campus and out in the local community.

You can view our full programme of community masterclasses and open-house sessions, along with other community activities, by:


- visiting [www.solent.ac.uk/community](http://www.solent.ac.uk/community)
- emailing us at [engagement@solent.ac.uk](mailto:engagement@solent.ac.uk)
- writing to us at **Solent University (Communities Development team), East Park Terrace, Southampton, SO14 0YN**
- visiting us at **Solent University, East Park Terrace, Southampton, SO14 0YN**
- phoning us on **023 8201 3000**
- following us on Twitter **@SolentCivic**


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