

MANCHESTER  
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The University of Manchester

Our future

Knowledge | Wisdom | Humanity

# IT Services Strategic Plan 2024

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## Our purpose

**“Partnering across the University to enable the advancement of education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society, through IT strategy and services.”**



## Introduction

The University of Manchester's IT Services Strategic Plan sets out priorities for the next three years. It describes what IT Services aims to achieve by 2024, by which time we will have a new operating model, clearly defined services and an excellent experience for all who interact with us. The Strategic Plan is aligned to the University's 'Our future' strategy and addresses the needs of staff and students by focusing on a series of changes across people, processes and technology.

As one of the leading universities in the UK, we have a role to play in the development of excellence in digital technology and associated IT services, providing distinctive, specialised and inclusive platforms for education and research – something that is increasingly influencing the destination choices of students and academics alike.

We also need to underpin smooth operation of a range of professional services with consistent, reliable, cost-effective IT solutions and services. These services grow and evolve over time and IT Services must do the same. As well as excellence in service delivery, we need to support our University by collaborating in management of investment and change, providing total transparency about our cost, capacity and risk. The future is not always clear, so IT Services needs to be able to adapt quickly and responsively to the needs of those it serves.



# 2

## Our challenges

- Our history is complicated: IT Services is made up of former Faculty IT teams. These teams were centralised, bringing together the many services they managed, but little rationalisation of those services has taken place, and stakeholders still expect the same level of personal local support.
- We manage legacy complexity: We manage too many systems, for example, 1000+ teaching applications, 18 customer relationship management systems, 12 finance systems. We overuse specialist technology and solutions, so connecting and integrating specialist technology to enable secure but open data sharing has become a unique specialism itself, with the result that so much specialism requires unique skills and has many single points of failure.
- All of which impacts our performance: Managing such a big IT estate is expensive. Running so many services is bewildering for staff and students, and our options for how we organise IT Services are limited.
- We've made attempts to change: We have run a number of change projects in IT Services over the years that have not met expectations. As a result, projects have tended to focus on landing new technology and we've focused on reducing cost rather than getting the right IT services in place. This has impacted the staff and student experience.

### These challenges are compounded by emerging needs:

- Speed to market - we need to develop and evolve services that stakeholders require in a constantly changing world while shortening project delivery schedules.
- Increased customer expectations - the outside world has changed already and brings high employee, student, and staff expectations, requiring IT Services to be much more 'customer' focused. Organisations with 'customer-centric' operating constructs find it easier to meet demand than those relying on purely technology

operating models developed primarily to manage back-office technologies.

### We're aided by emerging opportunities:

- The platform economy - with our focus on Microsoft and Oracle as core platforms for the University going forward. These platforms rely on an IT Services operating model that's agile and enables collaboration.
- The COVID-19 pandemic triggered digital transformation – this demonstrated the need for good technology, particularly Enterprise IT, where only IT Services have the relevant skills.

# 3

## Our ambitions

We have set out our ambitions that clarify what we expect IT Services to look like by 2024.

- We are trusted for our excellence in delivery
- Our services are clearly defined, well understood and accessible
- Our people are empowered, encouraged to innovate and develop their skills
- We collaborate with each other and with our partners in and beyond the University
- We place staff and students at the heart of everything we do
- We strive to create a diverse environment where everyone is respected, supported and included.





# 4

## Our aims

We are reasserting our purpose and redefining how we work and what that means for our staff and students. Through a structured programme of change that addresses the historical and emerging challenges and opportunities, we will have:

- Improved experience and increased satisfaction of services – we will understand and meet the needs of staff and students
- Better availability and reliability – our services will be robust and accessible anywhere on any device
- Compliance and improved security – appropriate security, resulting in fewer security incidents, and adherence to standards will be built into our services and our processes
- Flexibility and resilience – we will be able to stand up, change and stand down services according to need
- High quality IT change delivery – we will hit time and quality targets for changes to our IT estate
- Demonstrated cost-effectiveness – we will provide clear value for

money and we'll be transparent about our costs

- Sustainability – we will provide and enable environmental sustainable services and solutions.

For IT colleagues this will enable improved job satisfaction and morale, driven through:

- Good leadership – we will be supported by an effective and accountable leadership team that is respected by IT Services colleagues
- A sense of purpose – we will understand the role IT Services holds within the University
- Clarity on how we contribute – we will understand the part we and our teams play in the success of IT Services
- An enjoyable work life – we will create and nurture an engaging and enjoyable working culture that protects our wellbeing.



# 5

## Our goals

### We have eight strategic goals that we will deliver in support of our ambitions and aims.

**GOAL 1**  
Supportive: We'll develop our staff

**GOAL 2**  
Collaborative: We'll work with partners, inside and outside The University of Manchester

**GOAL 3**  
Specialised: We'll grow our support of Specialist IT

**GOAL 4**  
Simple: We'll simplify our Enterprise IT

**GOAL 5**  
Engaging: We'll make it easier to get help

**GOAL 6**  
Consistent: We'll clarify how we manage our workload and cost

**GOAL 7**  
Open: We'll improve University data

**GOAL 8**  
Secure: We'll mature our approach to identity and security



## Goal 1

### Supportive: We'll develop our staff

- We'll make IT Services a fulfilling and enjoyable place to work, creating an inclusive, values-based culture, effective leadership and a positive engaged community
- We'll run a focused People and Culture plan to ensure we prioritise wellbeing
- We'll run a transparently costed Development and Operations (DevOps) resourcing model, removing silos across the different areas of technology, supported by the same flexible workforce
- We'll provide IT teams with better training in commodity IT (for example, email, collaboration tools, business systems, networks, desktop PCs and laptops) enabling greater flexibility for staff and students and job satisfaction and employability for our IT colleagues
- We'll create capability and processes that enable us to hire staff in junior positions and develop them along clear career paths, recognising performance and development.

### Outcome

Happier staff with the skills and flexibility to meet the University's changing needs.



## Goal 2

### Collaborative: We'll work with partners, inside and outside The University of Manchester

- We'll improve our ability to manage services that combine effort by a mix of internal teams, other parts of the University and strategic partnership support
- We'll implement the recommendations of the Uniac audit that was carried out in November 2020 and make ongoing improvements to our supplier relationships
- We'll clarify and expand the roles of Service Integration and Management (SIAM) to steer prioritisation of work within engineering teams, and make us more responsive and better able to collaborate with others
- We'll develop our ways of collaborating with other parts of the University
- We'll look to further our partnership and collaboration with other HE institutions and local businesses.

### Outcome

Our service quality, availability and cost will improve as we learn to play to our strengths and work with others effectively.



## Goal 3

### Specialised: We'll grow our support of Specialist IT

- We'll identify the areas of University activity where services genuinely rely on specialist technology and treat those services differently, collaborating with experts
- We'll develop Research IT, increasing services and ownership of specialist apps and technology to Research IT
- We'll build a Teaching and Learning IT team, supporting Start of Year and building a service catalogue of what the Teaching and Learning community needs most
- We'll work with the Research and Teaching and Learning communities to support development of their strategies.

### Outcome

Better experience for staff and students as we'll be able to offer them the specialist services they need most in a responsive and collaborative way.



## Goal 4

### Simple: We'll simplify our Enterprise IT

- We'll identify the areas of University activity best served by standard IT that meets the needs of staff and students and make those services easier to manage by shifting to a smaller number of solutions
- We'll shift to 'as-a-service' solutions: hosted in the cloud, reducing our need to manage infrastructure except where beneficial
- We'll complete delivery of Microsoft 365, exploiting the new capability for enterprise IT needs (for example, resource booking, document storage) and underpinning a 'citizen IT' offering – using applications and automation to improve local business outcomes
- We'll simplify integration, moving away from bespoke unique solutions to open standards.

### Outcome

Less specialism will mean fewer single points of failure, greater capacity and team performance, more flexibility and lower cost of IT overall.



## Goal 5

### Engaging: We'll make it easier to get help

- We'll make our services easier to access, understand and use, as well as making our performance more transparent
- We'll improve our basic services, with a service catalogue for all services and an improved portal, self-service and service desk
- We'll introduce more collaborative engagement for specialist IT, relying on experts in the field helping to guide our Teaching and Learning IT and Research IT teams
- We'll develop a citizen IT service, supporting people to use tools to build and run their own solutions for their problems.

### Outcome

Improved staff and student experience because they will easily find the help they need, whether that's through IT Services providing a service, collaborating on services, or solving their own problems.



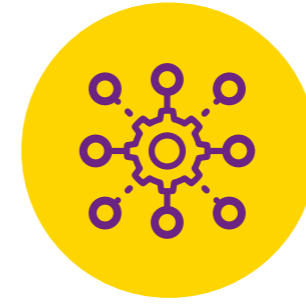
## Goal 6

### Consistent: We'll clarify how we manage our workload and cost

- We'll redefine how change projects and work in IT are started, supporting portfolio management in the University's Strategic Change Office (SCO) and using this as a way of clarifying our cost model and budget needs
- We'll transfer our IT Delivery Governance Team and Demand Management to SCO, improving how we manage demand and work, and simplifying governance and decision making in IT Services
- We'll move to a model where projects are fully costed and rechargeable with aligned Programme Management Office data and tools
- We'll provide a clear view of what capacity and capability is provided by our baseline IT budget
- We'll improve architectural oversight by using a view of capabilities to inform decisions on whether to build a new service or re-use and input this into the SCO design authority decision making.

### Outcome

Improved project delivery, clearer prioritisation of change portfolio and improved return on IT investment.



## Goal 7

### Open: We'll improve University data

- We'll improve availability and quality of data across The University of Manchester by understanding where data is held, move it to appropriate storage, improve its quality and apply good data governance policies
- We'll replace our data warehouse and use the opportunity to understand where master data are, agreeing single sources of truth
- We'll improve those master data using programme opportunities (for example, Finance Transformation) to run targeted improvements to data quality
- We'll collaborate with the Information Governance Office to further develop information governance policies and apply these to master data.

### Outcome

Better quality data, enabling us to use that data to improve other academic and supporting services in the University and make better decisions.



## Goal 8

### Secure: We'll mature our approach to identity and security

- We'll improve our approach to identity information security, recognising its importance, and use the opportunity this creates to improve satisfaction and efficiency
- We'll tactically augment our IT Identity and Access Management team to ensure the right level of resource for other projects and services to progress
- We'll run a strategic identity 'as-a-service' programme, developing a common identity framework - rationalising, simplifying and consolidating underpinning technologies where it is viable and appropriate
- We'll run a cyber security programme to further strengthen security and move to a Zero Trust model over time, running ongoing security hardening on our platforms and developing a security strategy.

### Outcome

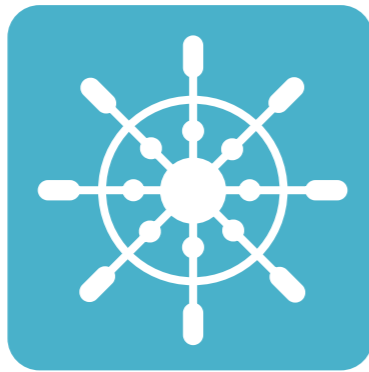
More secure data, supported by a better user experience. Improved profile, managability and sustainability of Identity and Security with reduced impacts on other projects.

# People and Culture

IT Services is developing a People and Culture Plan (linked to goal one) that demonstrates commitment to driving forward positive change. There are five areas of focus:



**Inclusive Values-based Culture:** To build and nurture a diverse and inclusive culture where staff at all levels live our values and feel safe to be themselves.



**Effective Leadership and Management:** To develop effective, trusted, supportive and accountable leadership at all levels of the organisation.



**Positive Engagement and Community:** To enable an engaged and motivated workforce that has a strong employee voice and works collaboratively across the wider IT community and beyond.

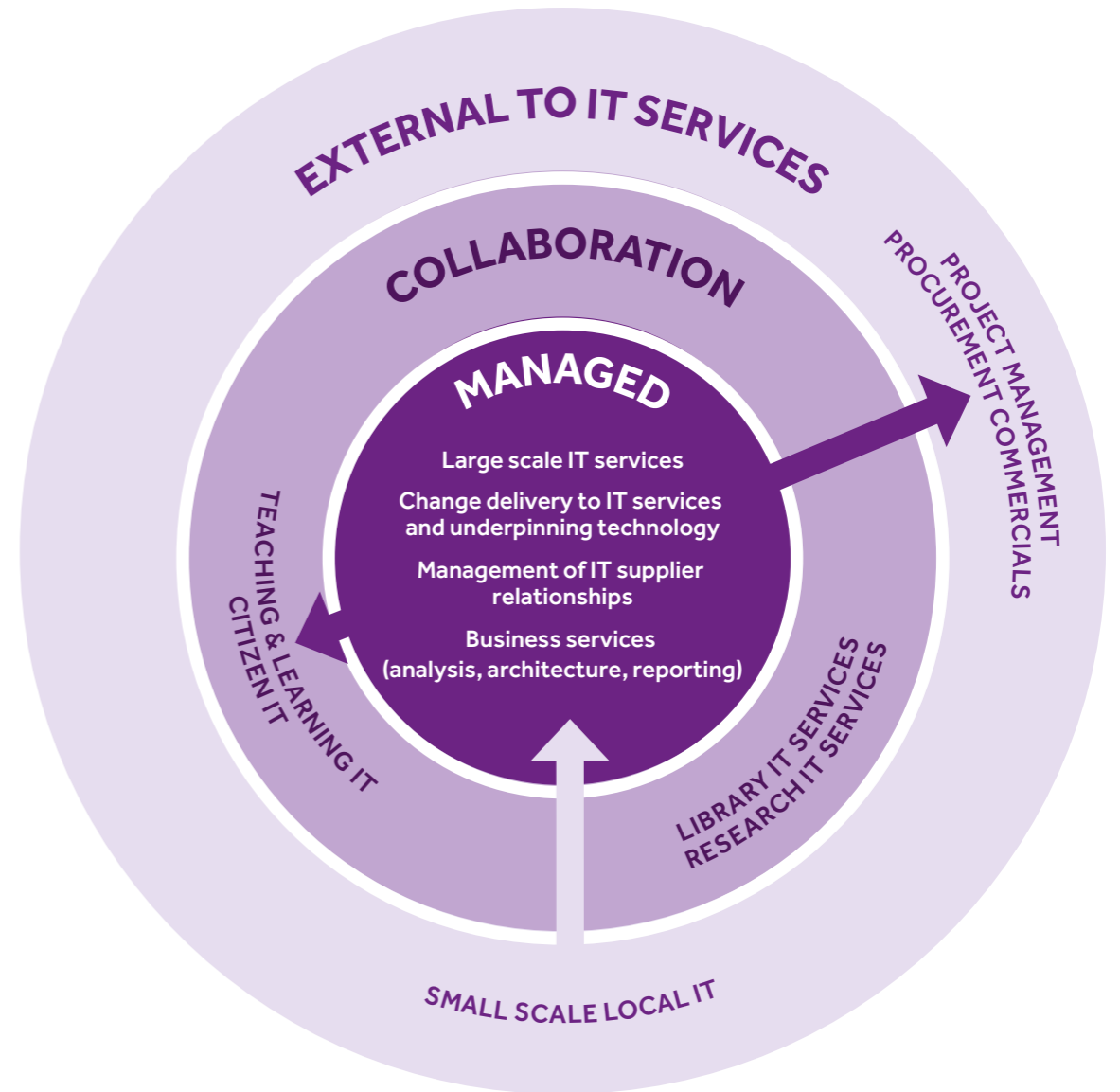


**Recognised Performance and Development:** To drive an accountable culture of high performance and continuous skills development where staff are recognised for their efforts.



**Prioritised Wellbeing:** To make time to prioritise physical and mental health of our staff at all levels and enable through focus on compassion and support.

# IT service delivery model



# Our approach to service delivery

We want to clarify what we're responsible for and what we're not.

For staff and students across our University this will mean:

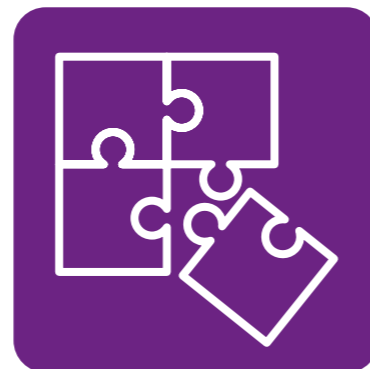
- **Clarity about our core service** – our service catalogue will make more sense, we'll be far clearer about what we do and don't offer, and we'll be consistent in delivery
- **Simplification of change delivery and portfolio** – we'll make changes to our services in response to University need, aligned to the SCO's portfolio of change
- **Services managed in partnership** – we'll develop and run specialist services in collaboration with other parts of the University giving experts the chance to shape the services they need.

For our people in IT Services this will mean:

- **Pride in successful delivery** – we'll be exceeding our stakeholders' expectations and will enjoy the satisfaction this brings
- **Clearer career paths** – our staff will benefit from a renewed focus on hiring at junior levels and progressing along pathways
- **Development and upskilling** – we'll develop our staff with core skills in commodity and standard IT, with the option of developing specialism in key areas.

## Measurement

We intend to monitor and measure progress against our goals through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, incorporating staff and student feedback as well as service delivery key performance indicators. These will be published on the IT Services website for transparency at regular intervals.



# Final word

**Angus Hearmon**  
Director of IT Services



"The IT Strategic Plan is aimed at improving IT so we can meet the expectations of staff and students and make the Directorate of IT Services one to be proud of. By making improvements, we will add value and benefit to all who use our services and ultimately provide the foundations for the development of a digital strategy – a strategy with a vision fit for The University of Manchester's digital future.

Commencing with a 'back to basics' approach, working collaboratively across IT and beyond, we will see a positive difference over the next three years as we progress our strategic goals."



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