



Newman  
University  
BIRMINGHAM

# Strategic Framework

## 2020-2025

### The Idea of a University



# Welcome to our Strategic Framework

We spent most of 2019 in conversation with students, staff and our wider communities. What you are about to read arises from dozens of discussions and from wide-ranging consultation. We believe that it represents a widely shared view of the future of Newman University, Birmingham, and provides a strong vision for our next five years.

The key ambition that stands out clearly is to work together in partnership to transform students' lives.

This strategic framework presents the objects, vision, mission and values that then frame our six strategic objectives.

We will implement the Framework through our sub-strategies and associated action plans.

In doing so, we will remain true to our Patron's precepts and navigate our future challenges with success.

***"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." Saint John Henry Newman***

## The Idea of a University

Our ambition is based firmly on Catholic values and a proud commitment to the principles of social justice. Our educational aspiration is founded on the traditions of Catholic social teaching; emphasising human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity, stewardship, social justice and a commitment to the common good. Oscar Romero set out this purpose when he said:

***"Let us not develop an education that creates in the mind of the student a hope of becoming rich and having the power to dominate. Let us form in the heart... the idea of loving, of preparing oneself to serve and giving oneself to others."***

Recognising that a university also had a valuable, pragmatic dimension, our Patron, Saint John Henry Newman, was convinced that the pursuit of knowledge was desirable for its own sake. In his inspirational work, *The Idea of a University*, he wrote:

***"If then a practical end must be assigned to a university course, I say it is that of training good members of society. It is the education***

***which gives a person a clear conscious view of their own opinions and judgements, a truth in developing them, and eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them."***

At Newman University we continue to hold fast to these ideas, striving to realise them in our practice. As a small, friendly, single campus institution, we also seek to embrace that sense of community which is manifested in the Catholic ethos of welcoming all; regardless of religious belief, race, ethnic origin or background.

As a University we plan to grow in scope, distinction, and all those positive attributes that make us unique in an increasingly homogenised higher education landscape.

We are inspired by our patron, Saint John Henry Newman, who taught that effective higher education in a close-knit community relies primarily on good relationships between tutor and student. We are, as Paulo Freire said, members of a learning community in constant dialogue, "jointly responsible for a process in which all grow."

### OBJECTS

The University's objects are established by our Instrument of Government and Articles. These frame all that we do and are stated as follows:

**The University's objects are the conduct of a Roman Catholic university for the advancement of education, learning and research for the benefit of the public.**

He has not created me for naught.

## VISION

Our vision articulates what kind of institution we aim to be.

To be a University based on Catholic values that continues to grow in academic distinction and strives always to enhance its sense of community.



## MISSION

Our Mission sets out how we aim to achieve our vision and the way in which we work.

To serve our diverse communities by making high quality, globally-connected education accessible to all who are able to benefit from it. As well as engaging in research, scholarship and professional practice that informs our learning and teaching and has a positive impact on society.



## VALUES

Our values set out the principles of how we work and how we behave. Every member of the University community, whether a member of staff or student, seeks to embrace, support and actively live out our values.



We champion and give voice to the Catholic traditions of education, equality, and social justice.



We respect and value all contributions, recognising that we are a single community, inspired and united by our shared vision and mission.



We place student learning and welfare at the centre of all we do and we offer a nurturing environment for all students.



We are ethical, honest and humane. In difficult situations we seek to work with understanding, kindness and compassion.



We recognise and embrace the power of community and build respectful relationships that help us excel.



A mission of service motivates us, seeking the common good with care and love.

## Transform students' lives

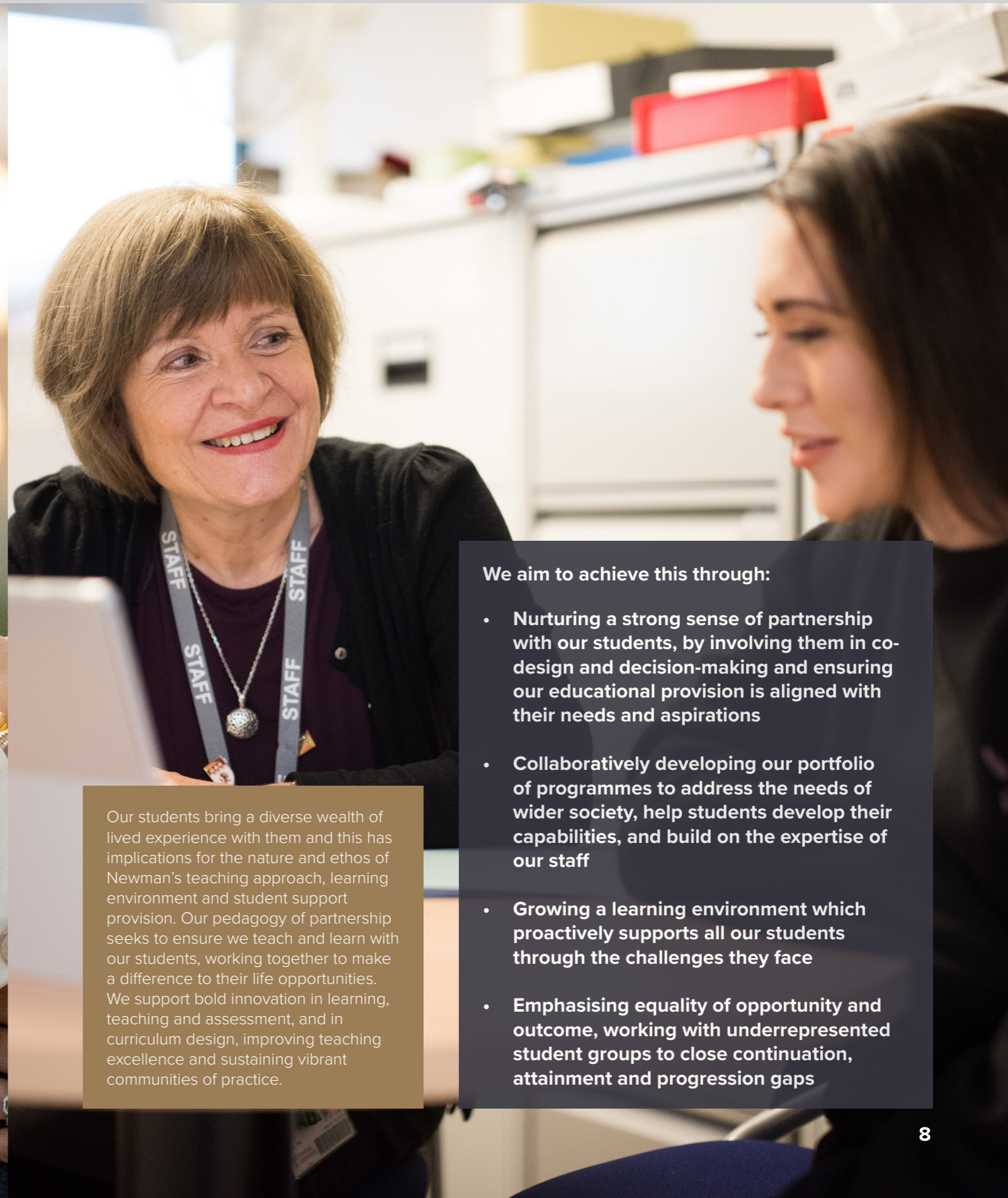


We want our students to flourish as valuable members of society, able to make positive contributions wherever they find themselves. It is through their self-awareness, sound judgement, care, consideration and eloquence that we make our most important contribution to society. We recognise the achievements and advocacy of our students - as active citizens, employers and employees - are fundamental to Newman University's flourishing reputation. Our undergraduate and postgraduate students are predominantly drawn from the local area, with a high proportion of commuter students. Our learning community embraces mature students, disabled students, students from low-participation neighbourhoods, first-generation higher education students, and those with family and caring responsibilities. We seek to transform their lives so that they can transform society.

### We aim to achieve this through:

- Working in partnership with our students to ensure learning experiences which raise their consciousness of themselves, broaden their understanding, increase their knowledge and sharpen their skills
- Nurturing student citizenship, leadership and advocacy
- Improving student enterprise and employability through partnerships with local, national and international employers and organisations
- Enhancing student outcomes across access, participation, retention, progression and success

## Work in partnership with students



### We aim to achieve this through:

- Nurturing a strong sense of partnership with our students, by involving them in co-design and decision-making and ensuring our educational provision is aligned with their needs and aspirations
- Collaboratively developing our portfolio of programmes to address the needs of wider society, help students develop their capabilities, and build on the expertise of our staff
- Growing a learning environment which proactively supports all our students through the challenges they face
- Emphasising equality of opportunity and outcome, working with underrepresented student groups to close continuation, attainment and progression gaps

Our students bring a diverse wealth of lived experience with them and this has implications for the nature and ethos of Newman's teaching approach, learning environment and student support provision. Our pedagogy of partnership seeks to ensure we teach and learn with our students, working together to make a difference to their life opportunities. We support bold innovation in learning, teaching and assessment, and in curriculum design, improving teaching excellence and sustaining vibrant communities of practice.

## Grow our institution

We are stewards of our University and its environment for this and future generations. Sustainable development means growing our University and its contribution to the common good without denuding the resources available to those who come after us. Our institutional sustainability depends not merely on successful financial performance, but on establishing awareness of our contribution to society, through our work and our students.

### We aim to achieve this through:

- **Increasing external awareness of our distinct ethos and unique contributions to society and the common good**
- **Developing and deploying sustainable environmental and ethical practices**
- **Growing and diversifying our income through increasing student recruitment, improving retention and developing services to the wider community**
- **Ensuring value for money in all we do, through careful deployment of our resources, enhancement of our estate, and investing in our IT infrastructure and digital systems**

## Nurture our staff

We strive to be an employer of choice for existing and future colleagues; known for the quality of our working environment and for fairness of opportunity in enabling our staff to reach their potentials. Collegiate and collectively proactive, Newman University is a learning organisation.

This depends on the cultivation of an invigorating working culture and climate, in which colleagues and students support and challenge one another to flourish as fully engaged citizens of our academic and professional community. We provide transformative opportunities to our staff; promoting their growth and flourishing, so they can best serve our students and community partners.

Acknowledging our humanity, we advocate for a relationship-based, authentic approach that focuses on people.

### We aim to achieve this through:

- **Providing opportunities for continuing professional development and supporting leadership development across all levels of the University**
- **Enhancing our systems, including equitable and transparent resource allocation, to enable a vibrant working culture that drives achievement of our collective potentials**
- **Encouraging, promoting and embodying professional behaviours that reinforce our distinctive ethos**
- **Cherishing and cultivating our unique learning community to encourage growth, creativity, and innovation**

## Add to knowledge and cultivate wisdom



We strive to increase the quantity and quality of our research, scholarship and professional practice. Our curriculum, learning approaches and relationships with external partners will be informed and enriched by the knowledge we create and interpret. Our research, scholarship and professional practice will be integral to all our academic activity. We seek to promote wise and thoughtful action informed by secure and reasoned knowledge.

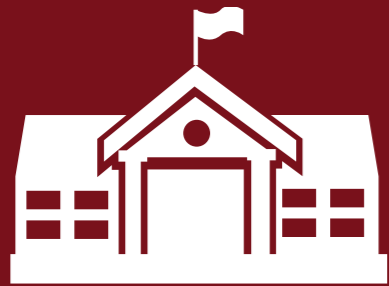
- We aim to achieve this through:**
- Ensuring that all academic staff are engaged in some measure of research, scholarship or professional practice and increasing the number of staff returned in research assessment exercises
  - Cultivating our research students and staff as we pursue Research Degree Awarding Powers
  - Promoting staff and student engagement as public intellectuals and stimulating knowledge exchange
  - Investing selectively in the development of taught postgraduate provision

## Serve our diverse community and the wider world



We seek to serve our community, modelling social responsibility and working for change. We embrace and commit to strengthening our social responsibility to our local and regional communities. We are also part of much wider global communities of scholarship, research, education and social justice, through which we seek to contribute to the common good. We will champion social justice, helping the marginalised, excluded and dispossessed find their voice and speak their truth.

- We aim to achieve this through:**
- Strengthening partnerships with schools, colleges, community groups and other education providers
  - Developing opportunities for lifelong, life wide learning, globally connected and locally rooted
  - Deepening our community engagement and reach, providing and supporting community leadership and empowering individuals and groups to bring about social change
  - Engaging with our alumni to connect us with local, national and international organisations and groups



**99.4% of students are from state schools<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020

**87% student satisfaction with teaching quality.<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> National Student Survey NSS (2018/19)

We are proud of our

**Interactive teaching style**



We provide

**Work placements on all undergraduate 3 year courses**



**34.6% of students are mature learners<sup>1</sup>**

**90% of our academic staff are qualified against the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in HE**



We offer

**An education based on the values of social justice, personal development and the common good**



<sup>2</sup> National Student Survey (NSS) 2018/19

**1st for student experience in Birmingham.<sup>2</sup>**



**Sustainable campus**

We have a

**Modern single site campus**

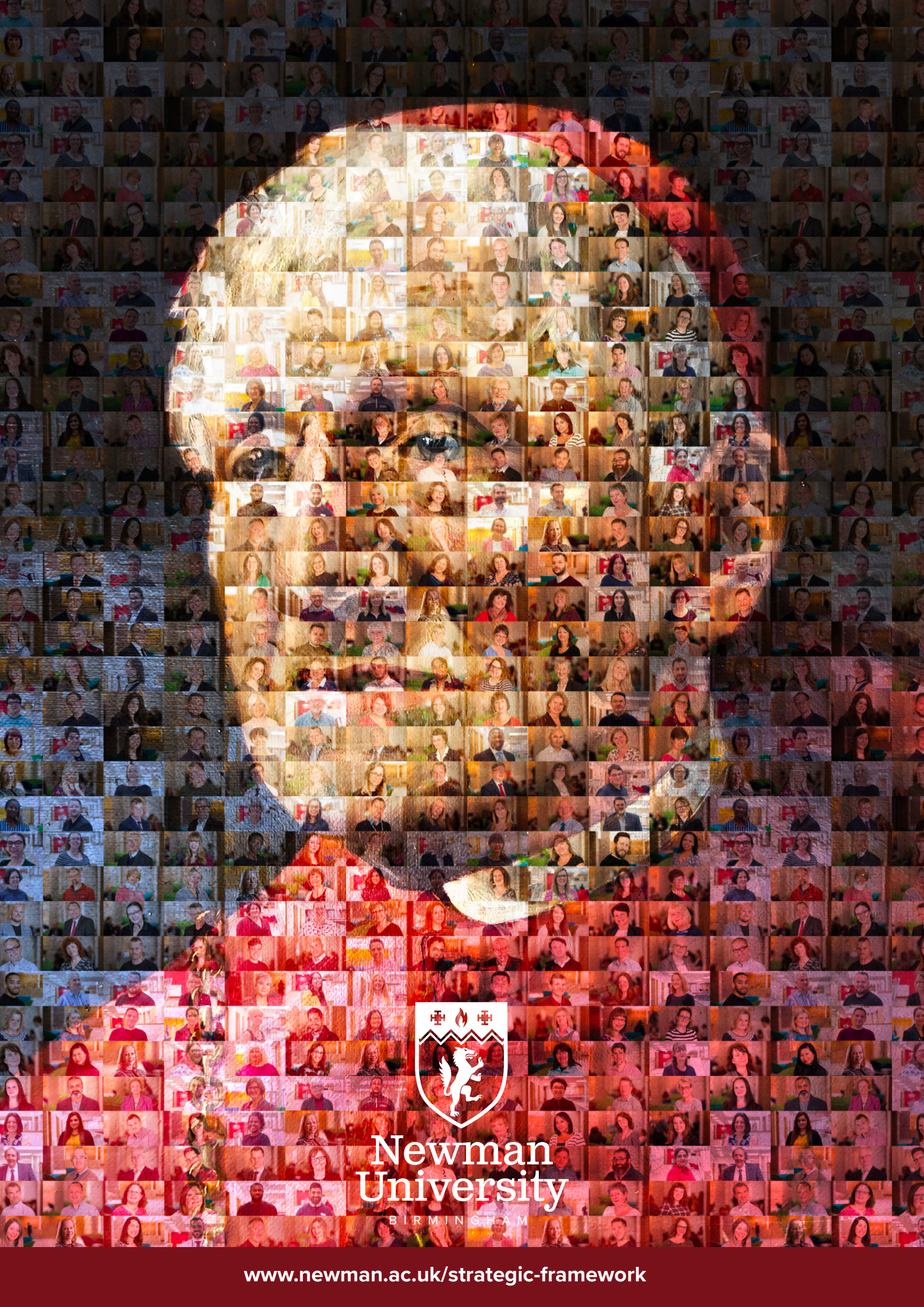


**Students and staff have a strong sense of belonging**



**Your opportunity  
Your community  
Your university**





Newman  
University  
BIRMINGHAM