

Imperial College  
London

# Imperial People

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**STRATEGY 2022+**

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# INTRODUCTION

The HR Group's overall objective is to support the College in delivering its academic mission by finding and developing diverse talent, creating an inclusive culture, and building a resilient workplace.

We are extremely proud of the current range of services and support we provide to our community. However, we know that in order to support the College's aspirational vision for the future, we need to continually develop and build upon what we do.

Our People Strategy sets out three core aims and explains how we will achieve them.

The first aim is to find, develop and retain diverse talent. We will work to find new and exciting talent and to reach the best candidates with a range of backgrounds and skills. We will ensure that we remain an attractive employer and that our employees' achievements and contributions are fairly recognised and rewarded. We will provide high-quality workforce data and insights to enhance workforce planning and career progression, as well as address pay inequality.

Our second aim is to build an inclusive culture and support leadership to engage with staff. All staff should be supported so they can perform at their very best. We will provide support at all career stages. We strongly believe that an engaged, valued, and well-motivated staff community is fundamental to enabling the College to achieve its academic mission. Our College Values and Behaviours will be embedded within our College community, and we will continue to strive to eliminate bullying and harassment.

Finally, our third aim is to build a resilient workplace. This will involve supporting the move to more flexible ways of working, as we navigate working both in-person and online, while maintaining a sense of community cohesion. We will continue to place great importance on the health and wellbeing of our staff, to help them manage the pressures of life and work. We will continue to actively listen and respond to staff and implement practical approaches for measuring and improving engagement.

Our People Strategy is underpinned by getting the foundations of Human Resources right by ensuring that we have clear policies in place, that we have efficient systems with a high degree of operational optimisation, as well as access to high-quality data. We know that time is precious, and that by reducing the amount of time and effort required to navigate essential Human Resources processes and systems, we can help our people to deliver at their very best.

Our People Strategy is rightly ambitious – and we believe that it is achievable with the support of colleagues across the College.

I look forward to working with you all in the delivery of this strategy and in our journey to be an exemplar of best practice and a great place to work.

**Harbhajan Brar**  
**Director of Human Resources**



# OUR STRATEGY

At Imperial, our ambition is to find and develop diverse talent, to create an inclusive culture and build a resilient workplace. The Imperial People Strategy 2022+ sets out our aims and how we will achieve them.

Our strategy has three core aims:

## Finding and developing diverse talent

- We will find new talent and reach the best candidates with a diverse range of backgrounds and skills to fill a wide range of roles.
- We will ensure that we remain an attractive employer and that achievement and contribution are recognised and rewarded.
- We will provide high-quality data and insights to support planning at department, faculty and College level, enhancing career progression and increasing equality in pay.

## Supporting an inclusive culture and leadership

- We will ensure all staff are supported so they can perform at their best.
- We will provide support for individual, group, and organisational learning at all stages of Imperial careers.
- We will embed common values and positive behaviours across the organisation. We will strive to eliminate bullying and harassment.

## Building a resilient workplace

- We will create policies to ensure that Imperial is prepared to be more flexible as we work both in-person and online, while maintaining our culture and a sense of community cohesion.
- We will work to support the health and wellbeing of our staff to help them manage the pressures of life and work.
- We will listen and respond to staff and support all areas within the College to do the same. We will implement practical approaches for measuring and improving staff engagement.

# FOUNDATIONS

Our ambitions for the Imperial People Strategy 2022+ depend on strong foundations to succeed.

## To deliver our strategy, we will continue to focus on the following areas:

- Create clearer, more concise policies and maintain clear governance arrangements that underpin all that we do.
- Deliver Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Service and Case Management solutions to support the performance of Human Resources' services.
- Continue to review Service Levels, seeking feedback and sharing outcomes with our stakeholders to show how we continue to listen and improve.
- Ensure that our systems and processes generate high quality, accessible data and insights that can drive effective decision making.

# Finding and developing diverse talent

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**We will ensure that we remain an attractive employer and that achievement and contribution are recognised and rewarded.**

**We will provide high-quality data and insights to support planning at department, faculty, and College level, enhancing career progression and increasing equality in pay.**

## **The picture today**

Today, our Recruitment Hub provides a direct service to most areas of the College. The Temporary Worker team has been established and system implementation is underway. In our recruitment practices, we promote diversity and inclusivity. However, issues with integration to ICIS and the approval process contribute to challenges with our recruitment processes, while the availability of resources and the complexity of generating contracts affect their turnaround time.

## **Our ambition**

- Develop our in-house temporary worker team and systems. This will enable us to take a 'full service' approach to temporary worker recruitment and avoid using costly agencies.
- Cut recruitment time by building a pipeline of talented candidates.
- Implement a new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) (with full integration to ERP).
- Achieve high levels of satisfaction from managers and candidates.

## **Our plans for the future**

To address these challenges and improve our recruitment service, we will:

- Implement College Values across our recruitment processes.
- Reduce the use of external agencies to increase the capacity for in-house search and create a talent pool.
- Establish an employer brand, which promotes Imperial as an employer, and also develop and implement a programmatic approach for recruitment.
- Increase the use of automation in our recruitment processes.

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## The picture today

The Total Remuneration Package outlines our ambition and promotes dialogue on the College's remuneration provision. The annual review of pay is based on national comparators and pay gaps are reviewed against the College comparison group. Voluntary turnover is analysed annually by grade, growth by job family and inflation.

## Our ambition

- Continue to develop our Total Remuneration Package statement to provide clear information about all benefits for staff in ERP.
- Pay reviews and budgeting to be driven by the manager compensation and benefits dashboard.
- Employees able to manage their own benefits through ERP.

## Our plans for the future

To address these challenges and deliver a transparent, competitive reward framework, we will:

- Conduct a review of Professional, Technical and Operations, and Learning job families' salary structures.
- Introduce targeted pay gap interventions.
- Enhance benefit packages.
- Influence improvements to pension provisions.
- Review recognition mechanisms and assess impacts.
- Review and implement a Retention and Market Strategy.

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## The picture today

The provision of Management Information (MI) for recruitment is limited, resource intensive and affected by data quality issues. Progression processes need to be conducted manually so are also resource intensive, while data is not available for analysis. Where data is available, dashboards are in place but do not offer reporting on candidates' skills, qualifications, and capabilities, limiting their effectiveness.

## Our ambition

- To proactively provide advice to managers on approaches to resourcing based on good quality MI.
- To make data available directly to managers to inform local decision-making.
- To have the ability to carry out modelling based on data and MI.

## Our plans for the future

To address these challenges and achieve our ambitions, we will:

- Engage with our internal customers and stakeholders to understand our current and future needs.
- Launch a set of diagnostic dashboards with the capacity to produce action plans, with support and interpretation provided by the HR Strategic Support team.

# Supporting an inclusive culture and leadership

**We will ensure all staff are supported so they can perform at their best.**

**We will provide support for individual, group, and organisational learning at all stages of Imperial careers.**

**We will embed common values and positive behaviours across the organisation. We will strive to eliminate bullying and harassment.**

## **The picture today**

There are pockets of positive and impactful leadership across College; our challenge is to support our leadership population to role model values based leadership across all teams. There are opportunities to improve Performance Review and Development Planning (PRDP) and to address the factors that inspire motivated individuals and teams, including wellbeing, workload and career development.

## **Our ambition**

- Deliver a PRDP process that enables an improved experience for all.
- PRDPs help staff feel clear, supported, and motivated about their development, performance, and objectives.
- The process supports and improves individual performance and contributes to organisational success.
- A streamlined and improved recording process captures useful information and makes reviews easier to manage.
- Values are embedded into PRDPs enabling on-going behavioural feedback and development.

## **Our plans for the future**

To address these challenges and improve the PRDP process, we will:

- Complete the consultation and changes from the PRDP review to make the process more effective and valuable to staff, managers, and the organisation.
- Incorporate the College's Values and Behaviours
- Support managers and staff to develop skills that will allow them to maximise the benefits of the PRDP.
- Engage with HR systems colleagues to develop a 'module' for the PRDP when there is a new HR system.



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## The picture today

There is a strong development offer across the College, although this may not be accessed by all. There are many opportunities to continue to improve how we work and learn at an individual and organisational level, more closely supporting the strategic direction of the College and equipping people with the support, skills and knowledge to help Imperial thrive now and in the future.

## Our ambition

- Continue to support the development of our culture and leadership to enable the College to adapt, collaborate and respond beyond its traditional structures and hierarchies.
- Inspire and equip the community to create open, safe and inclusive Values-led environments in which staff feel empowered and confident to work together in respectful and collaborative ways.
- Support individuals and the organisation to learn and develop in order to thrive and achieve continued success.

## Our plans for the future

To address these challenges and improve individual and organisational learning, we will:

- Continue to refine the offer to adapt to the changing needs of the community, providing engaging, relevant, and accessible development support.
- Build our organisational development consultancy across the Directorates and Faculties to ensure culture development, organisational design and change management support is embedded and accessed where it is most needed.
- Create direct links between departmental and individual goals, objectives and development plans ensuring relevant world-class development provision is available and accessible to all.
- Build the capacity of our Leaders and Managers to effectively manage and develop talent across their teams drawing on strengths and celebrating the diversity of skills, backgrounds and experiences

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## The picture today

The Staff Survey shows a strong positive experience of working at the College, although there are variations across teams. There are opportunities to improve confidence in addressing poor behaviour and encouraging staff to raise concerns, as there are in supporting managers to confront challenging situations.

There is a perception that all managers do not feel able to discuss poor behaviour and or that action will be taken if concerns are raised. There is a belief that the new Values and Behaviours framework can further improve the culture and working environment.

## Our ambition

- Consistently positive values and behaviours are experienced by staff, wherever they work at the College.
- Individuals feel supported and more confident to raise issues early with their manager or colleagues to prevent escalation.
- Where individuals require further support, it is easier for them disclose bullying and harassment, to feel supported and for this to be addressed.
- People work within an environment of collaboration, constructive challenge, and healthy dialogue.

- Staff feel confident to use the Imperial Values to give and receive feedback and praise in day-to-day conversations.

## Our plans for the future

To address these challenges and improve our workplace, we will:

- Embed Imperial Values and Behaviours in Human Resources processes including recruitment, reward, development and promotions.
- Support Leaders and teams to embed the values across their relationships and working processes to build positive working environments.
- Incorporate Imperial Values and Behaviours in the Leadership and Management development offer.
- Our values will underpin our approach to our work and how we relate to our colleagues and each other

# Building a resilient workplace

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**We will create policies to ensure that Imperial is prepared to be more flexible as we work both in-person and online, while maintaining our culture and a sense of community cohesion.**

**We will work to support the health and wellbeing of our staff to help them manage the pressures of life and work.**

**We will listen to and respond to staff and support all areas within the College to do the same. We will implement practical approaches for measuring and improving staff engagement.**

## **The picture today**

The Operations Committee continues its work on considering the return to campus approach for many who had been working remotely, while interim policies to support flexible and hybrid working as part of the 'Transition and learn' phase are developed.

## **Our ambition**

- Put in place policies and contractual arrangements that support flexible, hybrid and remote working in accordance with the College's vision.
- Develop and maintain a positive collective College culture in future working environments.

## **Our plans for the future**

To achieve our ambitions in this area, we will:

- Develop objectives in collaboration with the Operations Committee, as well as our staff community.
- Consult with staff on the cultural implications of more dispersed working arrangements.

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## The picture today

Wellbeing at work has been supported in HR by Occupational Health, the Confidential Care helplines and EDIC. It is built into campaigns including Mental Health Awareness Week, Black History Month and Women at Imperial Week. Wellbeing pulse surveys have guided us to priorities for action. The Mental Health First Aid scheme aspires to one Mental Health First Aider for every 50 employees. We have recruited dedicated organisational development staff who are co-designing a Wellbeing strategy and implementation plan supported by a new Wellbeing at Work development offer.

## Our ambition

- We want to work in a healthy environment that promotes wellbeing, helps people flourish and supports staff and the organisation to achieve potential.
- We want our staff to remain mentally and physically healthy while dealing with the pressures of life and work.
- We want staff to feel supported and able to talk to their managers about mental or physical health issues and for managers to be confident and equipped to facilitate these conversations.

## Our plans for the future

To address these challenges and support the health and wellbeing of our staff, we will:

- Implement the new holistic Wellbeing Strategy – and identify and address the influencers of wellbeing.
- Address the underlying causes of workplace stressors, including increasing the use of the Workplace Stress Assessment Tool and Staying Well Plans.
- Embed understanding of wellbeing at work and what this means to the multiple populations who work and study at the College.
- Clarify expectations around everyone's role in maintaining Wellbeing and provide resources to help staff look after themselves.
- Improve managers' skills in creating the right environment which promotes the wellbeing of their teams.

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## The picture today

The Staff Survey measures employee engagement, by looking at responses on the following items: commitment to helping the College achieve its aims, pride to work for the College, a strong sense of belonging to the College, recommending Imperial as a good place to work and study and, finally, that working here makes individuals want to do the best work they can. Employee engagement levels at the College were at 74% in the 2022 Staff Survey, which is stable since 2019 despite external and internal challenges. The Staff Forum was introduced during the pandemic and became a popular event for hearing from senior leaders. These engagement events will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the College. A new 'pulse' survey tool offers the possibility of more focused and frequent measurement.

## Our ambition

- Foster a culture of high staff engagement where all staff groups are proud to work at Imperial and feel part of the College community.
- Managers who are skilled in engaging and retaining staff, so they speak positively about the College, feel a sense of belonging and are highly motivated to do their best work.

## Our plans for the future

To maintain and further improve staff engagement, we will:

- Support managers to understand more about the benefits of employee engagement and their role in engaging staff.
- Clarify the skills, knowledge and behaviours involved in engaging individuals and augment the Values and Leadership behaviours framework.
- Develop managers' skills to lead individuals and teams in a way that inspires high levels of engagement.
- Address the drivers of engagement including support for wellbeing, feeling valued by others, effective leadership, opportunities to work together to achieve goals, effective management of change and communication.

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