



Glasgow Caledonian University

Living Values Project

July 2018

Our institutional Values

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) is a modern university in the heart of one of the UK's liveliest and most popular cities. Despite being one of the newest Higher Education institutes it has big ambitions for its research, teaching excellence, outreach and internationalization activities. A big drop in employee engagement in 2011 following a large-scale organisational restructuring process was therefore a serious cause for concern. While the aim of realigning departments and subject disciplines was to enhance productivity and effectiveness in pursuit of our goals it was seen, in some areas, to have had the opposite effect. In hindsight it appears that the scale and scope of the changes coupled with a lack of staff connection to the rationale for those changes, had a serious negative impact on employee engagement: this was clearly reflected in responses to engagement focused questions in the 2011 GCU staff survey.

Glasgow Caledonian University prides itself on its social, community and widening participation activities which have a long history dating back to our 1875 Queens College roots. This drive to improve life for others locally, nationally and internationally is reflected in our motto 'For the Common Weal' or 'for the common good' in modern English. It became very clear following the 2011 survey that despite other areas of discontent, over 90% of staff believed strongly in our Common Good mission and were committed to it.

This strong personal connection with our University Mission provided a solid starting point for re- building engagement. The mission clearly spoke to GCU employees and made a connection between them and the university as an organization. We recognized that while our Mission and our Strategic Vision described the **Why** and the **What** of our organizational narrative we were missing the **How**. Our university values at the time had limited connection to the University mission and very few people knew what they were. It was clear that we had to go back to our staff and students and identify our organisational values from the ground up.

Focusing on the positive characteristics of our university, staff and students were asked what characterized GCU on its best day and the types of values they would expect to see reflected in the University for the Common Good. A large quantity of very rich data resulted and after an iterative process of grouping and consolidating four headings for our values emerged: Integrity, Creativity, Responsibility and Confidence. These are now our GCU Values. It should be stressed however that Integrity, Creativity, Responsibility and Confidence are only headings for a much richer sense of what it means to be part of GCU. To make this more

apparent and useful the meaning underlying each one of our values has since been expressed. After an iterative design process we agreed a set of behavior statements that staff and students felt captured the essence of our Values in action. The organisational form of these can be seen at the end of this document. There is also a set of statements to explain our aspirational behaviours at 'all staff and student', 'people manager' and 'executive board' levels. Both of these documents can also be found on the GCU website.

Our approach to the Living Values project

Continued activity on Institutional values

While we have already undertaken an extensive and grass roots review and refresh of our institutional values we are still on the journey of embedding them firmly into everyday practice. This is not a short-term task. It will take a number of years to review all processes and practices using the lens of our institutional values and monitoring and reflection is a continuous process.

Before the start of the Living Values project we had begun the task of embedding and at the point of its beginning we had already aligned a number of key processes. For example:

- Recruitment (e.g. included our Values and Behaviours in recruitment packs and developed a bank of values linked questions for our managers to use in interviews)
- Induction (Values and Behaviours feature in our induction process and paperwork)
- Staff performance and development (staff and managers are encouraged to use the behaviour statements in reflecting on the year's performance and to identify areas of strength and weakness)
- Promotion (staff are encouraged to describe not only what they have achieved but the behaviours they have demonstrated to get there)
- Student curriculum (the GCU behaviours have been linked to graduate attributes and the opportunities to develop these attributes are now highlighted in GCU modules and programmes)
- An exhibition and celebration of exemplars of staff living the GCU Values was piloted in 2016, repeated with improvements in December 2017 and is now an annual event.

This year we are continuing the process of embedding our institutional values, using a Values Forum comprising senior representatives from key functions across the university as a sounding board and think tank. Three meetings have taken place to date and have been extremely stimulating and positive.

Our other key activity this year has been to explore the deeper links between staff engagement and our mission and values and to identify key metrics for measuring the impact of our activities. In a series of workshops running over the summer and autumn we are supporting staff to identify what makes them happy in their work, how those activities are connected to our values and how we might increase their frequency. Using the same positive approach adopted for the values identification exercise we are seeking to embed, build on and measure success rather than focus on areas for improvement.

Future focus on fundamental values

Once our work on institutional values is more deeply embedded and we have an instrument for measuring impact we feel it will be useful to reflect, on the Fundamental Values using the Living Values project approach. We recognise that while we, like most other HE institutions, firmly endorse and believe in the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and

integrity (in its MCO sense) we don't have a clear sense of the extent to which we are currently living them. While it may be another year or two before we can undertake this work, we do have some clear ideas about the things we would like to learn.

Academic freedom

Within the project we would like to explore the following areas:

- How academic freedom is defined and perceived at a local level;
- What we as an institution aspire to in the name of academic freedom?
- What will it look like and feel like when we've achieved it?

We understand that there is a balance between freedom and responsibility but perhaps are less clear on where we, as an organization stand on this in relation to academic freedom? It is likely that we will identify that we place restrictions on academic freedom in the name of ethics or strategic focus for local funding but there may be other restrictions we haven't recognised. We would also like to review how transparent our decisions are in relation to this issue and a range of other questions. For example: Do all academics in our organisation have access to the same degree of freedom? What policies have we in place that impact (directly or indirectly) on academic freedom? Was the impact intentional? What external factors have an impact? How do we compare against other universities? Does our current state map on to our aspirations & if not what can we do to address this?

Institutional autonomy

If asked most academics would probably agree that a university should be independent of external or political influence and yet those same individuals would probably also see their institution as a responsive unit of society. The question we would like to reflect on here is how viable is it to be both and how do we, at GCU, balance those potentially competing values? As the University for the Common Good are we an integrated part of a greater whole, rightfully responsive to the requirements of the nation or as only truly useful as generators and disseminators of knowledge if we remain apart? There are clearly no right answers but understanding where we believe we should be is important to ensuring we are operating in a way to achieve it.

Equity & Integrity

This value is already part of our institutional values and we have made a lot of progress in embedding equality over the past 10 years. We've attained Athena Swan Bronze status and on our way to Silver, we have a strong Equality and Diversity policy and processes which ensure it is followed. We go beyond legal requirements in all areas of equality practice and our operational integrity has been commended in financial and academic audits. We haven't however necessarily captured all of our achievements in this areas in a form which we can reflect on, celebrate and review.

Challenges

While our core Values project continues apace, the resourcing of the Fundamental Values element has been a challenge. GCU is undertaking a number of ambitious internal realignment exercises this year linked to our strategic growth agenda. This has inevitably, and understandably, meant that during the timescales of the Living Values pilot our internal energy and resource has been directed towards ensuring the successful completion of the alignment process rather than to undertake new projects.



University for the Common Good

GCU Values and Behaviours

Integrity Integrity Integrity Integrity Integrity Integrity Integrity
Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity
Responsibility Responsibility Responsibility Responsibility Responsibility
Confidence Confidence Confidence Confidence Confidence Confidence
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Values and Behaviours

Our Mission

Our specific purpose

Glasgow Caledonian University is a University for the Common Good.

Our Vision

What we want to be recognised for

By 2020, Glasgow Caledonian University will have a global reputation for delivering social benefit and impact through education, research and social innovation. We will be recognised as a University for the Common Good that transforms lives, enriches cities and communities, innovates for social and economic impact, and engages globally.

Our Values

How we will conduct ourselves at work and study

Our core values of **Integrity**, **Creativity**, **Responsibility** and **Confidence** are shared by staff and students and they underpin what we do and how we do it. Our values are the foundations upon which we build collaborative relationships with like-minded partners to deliver our social mission for the common good.

Integrity *We will:*

- Strive to make a positive difference in the world
- Be open and honest in all our dealings
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Be accountable for our actions

Creativity *We will:*

- Challenge ourselves with new problems
- Create space for curiosity, imagination and entrepreneurialism to flourish
- Draw inspiration from working with others and across discipline boundaries
- Continually seek improvement

Responsibility *We will:*

- Take responsibility for our work and study and our environment
- Empower others to be independent contributors
- Own, learn from and grow through, our mistakes
- Comply with all laws and regulations relating to our activities

Confidence *We will:*

- Be proud of our university and its contributions
- Be bold and reach beyond that which is known
- Believe that positive change is within our power to realise
- Nurture self-belief, independence and ambition in others
- Value and share our knowledge and expertise

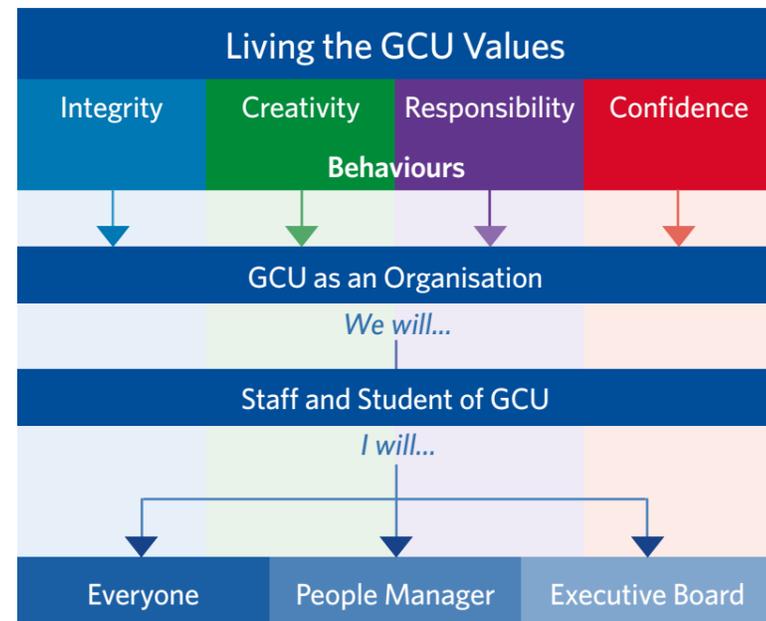
Integrity
Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity Creativity
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Understanding our values and behaviours

The behaviour statements in this leaflet are a way of explaining how we, as individuals, embed the GCU values of **integrity**, **creativity**, **responsibility** and **confidence** into our work and study. They were generated in partnership with staff and students and based around the core values we associate with the **Common Good** mission. These are the benchmark behaviours we'd like to be recognised for, and the ones we will use to evaluate and improve our current practices.

The statements are both realistic and aspirational, describing how we live our values on our best days: some we achieve easily, others may need effort, training, or support before we can regularly attain them.

There are four strands to the statements. The first describes how we, as an organisation live our values and can be found in the separate leaflet **GCU Values and Behaviours**. The other three, presented here, describe how we as individual members of GCU will live our values depending on our role within the university.



Everyone: describes the behaviours that we all aspire to, whatever our role.

People Manager: describes the behaviours aspired to by those with people management responsibilities within the university.

Executive Board: describes the behaviours aspired to by those with strategic and executive responsibilities.

Living our values

You can use the GCU values and behaviours to help you, your colleagues and your team to provide a consistently excellent educational experience, deliver quality research and consultancy and realise our vision of achieving a global reputation for delivering social benefit and impact.

You can use the GCU Values and Behaviours for:

Recruitment: to select people with the attitude and behaviours needed, as well as the technical competence

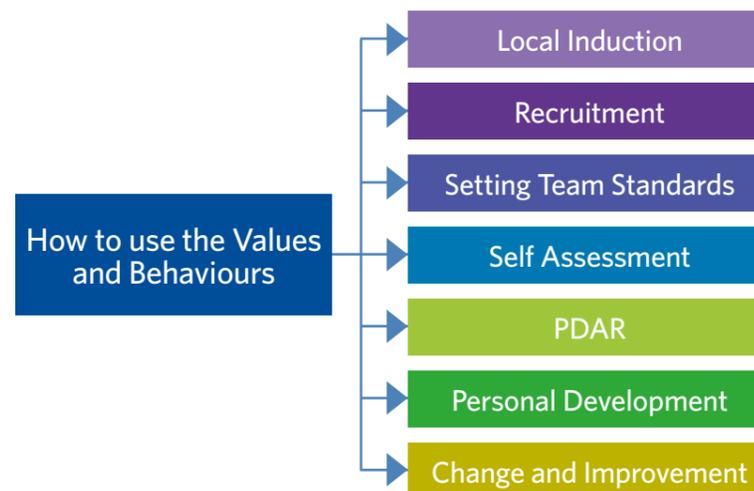
Local induction: so that people know what behaviours are expected in the daily business of the University right from the start

Self-assessment and personal development: to help you monitor your own performance and identify areas in which you need additional training or support

PDAR: to make sure there is a balanced focus between objectives and behaviours in the discussions around Performance & Development Annual Review

Setting team standards: to focus on specific behaviours within your team as part of on-going service improvement

Change and improvement: Use the values and behaviour statements to help identify current good practice, what best practice would look like and to develop your plan for change.



GCU would like to thank Carolyn Norgate and Guys & St Thomas Health Trust for sharing their successful approach to identifying level based behaviour statements and for the useful format of this document



University for the Common Good

Our Values and Behaviours



Everyone

Lives the values using the behaviours below

Integrity	Creativity
I am open, honest and reliable	I look for ways to be innovative
I treat others with the dignity and respect that I would like applied to me	I am flexible and open to change
I look for ways to make a positive difference through my work	I look for opportunities to work with, learn from and share with others
I am discrete when dealing with confidential or sensitive information	I am prepared to look outside my own environment to find solutions to problems
I reflect honestly on my work practices and behaviours	I am open to positive feedback on the way I do things
I take personal responsibility for my actions and behaviours	I regularly look to improve the way we do things

Responsibility	Confidence
I take personal responsibility for my work and its completion	I am generous with my knowledge and expertise
I admit to mistakes and learn from my experience	I am proud of my work and my contribution to the University
I help others to develop their skills and confidence	I treat mistakes as an opportunity to learn and develop
I raise awareness of poor practice or behaviour when I see it	I believe that I can make a difference by what I do
I strive to keep up to date with those laws and regulations that directly influence my work	I am willing to step outside of my comfort zone to learn, or achieve, something new
I use equipment, resource and time in an efficient and sustainable way	I speak positively about GCU and of its mission for the Common Good

People Manager

Leads at a Departmental/Unit level

Integrity	Creativity
I strive to be a role model for the behaviours expected by staff	I endeavour to develop a working environment that allows creativity, imagination and entrepreneurialism to flourish
I am fair and consistent in my dealings with staff and colleagues	I foster a flexible working environment that is open to change
I encourage and support staff in their efforts to make a difference	I encourage activities which cross discipline and organisational boundaries
I spend time gathering information and evaluating alternatives before arriving at decisions	I promote a culture of innovation, encouraging staff to experiment
I provide opportunities for staff to discuss issues and listen and respond actively to their concerns	I reward and disseminate good practice and good ideas
I share the rationale behind my decisions	

Responsibility	Confidence
I make the decisions that have to be made	I support and encourage the dissemination of my department's achievements
I do not allocate blame but seek to improve future performance	I cultivate self-belief, independence and ambition in my staff
I stand up and support my staff and colleagues in difficult situations	I welcome challenge and debate
I delegate appropriately using the expertise in my department and trust staff to do their job	I ensure that mechanisms for self-reflection and changes in practice exist and are working well
I actively manage performance by recognising success and supporting areas for improvement; challenging and encouraging staff to exceed their own expectations	I take responsible risks in seeking to meet the department's and University's goals
I plan and review budgets and resources to balance day-to-day service delivery and longer term service improvements	I believe that my department can achieve its goals

Executive Board

Leads and directs at University level

Integrity	Creativity
I uphold the highest standards of professional and personal practice	I seek to shape operational practices and direct resources in ways that will facilitate curiosity driven and divergent thinking
I am committed to and support a collegial working style	I review and distil knowledge from the national and international policies and activities of other educational bodies useful to the University's mission and goals
I ensure that the University's mission informs every strategic decision we take as a Board	I encourage the sharing of ideas and adoption of good practice between different teams in the University
I build and develop relationships and partnerships with other organisations to further our mission and the future success of our University	I sponsor and support the development of key innovations within my area
I am approachable. I invite conversation, discussion and the sharing of ideas	I engage with public, private and other relevant organisations in the development and improvement of our education and research
I listen to the University's stakeholders in order to understand how our decisions may affect them	I recognise innovative approaches to the improvement of university services and operations
I take full responsibility for my area and for the decisions and actions of my staff	

Responsibility	Confidence
I regularly review the activities of my area to ensure that they are in line with the University's goals	I encourage and support the dissemination of the University's knowledge and expertise
I make sure that the University commitment to the Common Good is promoted and fulfilled in the areas I lead	I listen to and support my staff and colleagues and encourage them to talk about their ideas, thoughts and aspirations for the future
I lead and sponsor university wide developments in my area	I welcome and encourage debate and challenge
I work with colleagues to ensure that student experience and quality standards are being met	I celebrate the achievement and the success of individuals, teams and the whole organisation
I ensure that the University and the area I am responsible for operates within its available resources	I take calculated risks and am willing to try different approaches and strategies even if the outcomes are not clear
	I speak externally with pride about the University's mission and its activities in support of it