Vision:

‘To continue to be recognised for delivering a global gold standard of defence education’

Mission:

‘To develop the intellectual edge for success on operations, and leadership in government, with our allies and coalitions in an era of persistent engagement’

1 In this context the meaning of gold standard is ‘authoritative or recognised exemplar of quality’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem – The Future Environment and Internal Challenges</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis of the Situation and Guiding Principles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach and Coherent Actions across the Defence Academy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Actions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We live in turbulent times. The strategic backdrop is shifting in almost all its dimensions: geopolitical, economic, technological and environmental. Defence must adapt if we are to deliver our national strategic objectives. Defence Education has a key role in ensuring our people have the skills to deal with the complexities they will face in their profession, as they progress in their careers. It is essential that the Defence Academy organises itself to deliver the education required by our people, including cross government and Public Sector colleagues, as well as our international partners. The education must be relevant, focussed, timely, and efficient and must be delivered in a way that also meets our people’s aspirations.

The Defence Academy Strategy 2018-2021 is a pragmatic response to the challenge and builds around 12 Strategy Actions. It is a clear statement of the priorities and work required to deliver proactively targeted Defence Education; increase access to the many not the few; and to do so in a commercially and fiscally responsible manner.

The strategy is unashamedly ambitious and demanding and needs to be. It delivers guidance for our people to test the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ against the vision, mission and priorities. It is also a clear statement to our core customers, both organisational and individuals that we intend to deliver on our promise to them and maintain our international brand and reputation for excellence.
Introduction

“The Nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools.”

Charles George Gordon

1. The rapidly changing grand strategic environment, its impact on the United Kingdom’s security, national fiscal realities and the evolving needs of our core customers and individuals’ expectations are all driving change in current Defence Academy (DefAc) structures, processes and outputs. The World has moved on and we need to reflect this through continuous assessment and improvement. The scale of the challenge we face means that our Strategy is a near-term strategy, covering the period of most significant transformation as we pursue our Defence Academy Vision 2025.

2. As with the Modernising Defence Programme, this Strategy focuses on delivering the capability needed to meet the changing security environment that is sustainable and affordable. This strategy will:

   - Describe the strategic environment in which the DefAc must operate and the challenges that we face.
   - Provide a diagnosis of the situation, including guiding principles to be applied.
   - Give the strategy actions required to deliver our mission.

3. The DefAc delivers three high-level objectives: UK Defence education; Defence Engagement (DE) through education; and Defence education research. This Strategy aims to set out the associated DefAc strategic actions against which resources will be prioritised and allocated to enable delivery of exemplar Joint education that meets the needs of Defence and our Partners Across Government (PAG). The DefAc will focus on educational excellence to deliver success in an era of persistent engagement and on operations, remain a world-leading Professional Military Education (PME) institution, and maximise value for money in its operations and delivery. In all areas, the DefAc will operate as part of the larger Joint Forces Command (JFC) - Joint Force Development (JFD) enterprise.

The Problem – The Future Environment and Internal Challenges

4. The character of the strategic context and operating environment:

   - Volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, rapidly changing, with information pervasive and instantaneous.

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2 ‘The Defence Academy Vision 2025’ (DefAc document: 1705-3289 / SERCO M&G).
3 The strategy will support the delivery of the DefAc’s contribution to the JFD Business Plan and JFC Strategy.
4 PME is taken to encompass the traditional command and staff education but also business and technology.
• The distinction between war and peace has blurred; adversaries, both state and non-state, threaten the stability of the rules-based international order.

• Persistent, multi-faceted and hybrid state-on-state and non-state competition, contested access to, and control of, all domains.

• Securing Information Advantage and influencing adversaries, actors and audiences will be more complex and competitive in the instant digital news era yet essential to delivering future strategic, operational and tactical success.

• The risk of failure in traditional force-on-force military conflict will increase.

• The risk of technological surprise, either by state or non-state actors or even individual extremists, is increasing.

Therefore we must:

• Adopt the National Security Advisor-led Fusion approach to deliver defence and security for the UK.

• Seek creative solutions, building on our hard-earned strengths, to provide credible military options and maintain our freedom of action and political utility.

• Be pragmatic, recognising the constraints of our Defence budget.

• Be more agile in our thinking so that we can adapt quickly and respond to the unexpected.

• Leverage and support the UK’s ability to act in the world through multinational and bilateral frameworks and partnerships, and with NATO in particular.

5. The ‘Future Force Concept’ is the authoritative high-level analytical concept that seeks to shape the design and development of the Future Force out to 2035. This document drives the development and adaptation of the DefAc curricula to produce professionals with the intellectual edge required for success.

6. In addition to the evolving realities we prepare students to face, we have our own challenges within the DefAc and must:

• Deliver high-quality education that is sharply focused on the strategic context and Defence need.

• Deliver education using the technologies and techniques that deliver the best outcomes.

• Deliver course content that is up-to-date and, where possible, anticipates change in threats to our security and the character of conflict.

• Streamline our education structures and supporting functions to achieve synergy while ensuring the student learning experience is optimised.

• Develop an educational research capability to enhance DefAc’s offer and support the JFD enterprise, including networking and collaborating with relevant external institutions.

• Shape our structure, supporting contracts and estate to our needs and resource base.

• Retain and develop the DefAc reputation as the PME provider of choice for UK Defence, wider government, UK industry and international partners.

• Build a workforce that is diverse, inclusive in nature and thought, and empowered.

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Joint Concept Note 1/17 ‘Future Force concept’ published by the JFD Development, Concepts Doctrine Centre.
• Operate in an effective, efficient and economic manner, including seeking revenue generation, to deliver our business outputs at minimum net cost.

Diagnosis of the Situation and Guiding Principles

7. The DefAc mission is: ‘Develop the intellectual edge\(^6\) for success on operations, and leadership in government, with our allies and coalitions in an era of persistent engagement’. This is the benchmark that all our efforts, decisions and actions must be constantly tested against. It requires focused commitment, understanding, innovation and investment across the DefAc.

8. The DefAc must ensure that curricula are focused, agile enough to rapidly account for changes in the strategic environment, and meet today’s needs of our customers and people. To achieve this, our underlying principles are to:

• Have a constantly enquiring and self-critiquing, learning-based, adaptive approach.

• Work as an inclusive, integrated, effective Whole Force, recognising people as our most important asset, promoting appropriate challenge across all activity.

• Optimise the student experience and outcomes through embracing those modern educational practices which add value.

• Be outcome focused, responsive and proactive to emerging demands, and able to adjust education through rapid assessment, testing and application.

• Be recognised for innovation and adaptation where the best want to work.

• Be efficient, effective and economic in delivering value for money.

• Underpin our educational offers by internal and external cutting-edge research.

• Consistently strive to develop and deliver best-practice joint education.

• Support national DE objectives to contribute to Global Britain by being international by design.

Approach and Coherent Actions across the DefAc

9. ‘One Academy’. We will transform to a One Academy operating model that harnesses the synergies inherent in the breadth and depth of its faculties: this sits at the heart of delivering success. Realising this will require change in both physical structures and culture. Every member of the DefAc has an important part to play in supporting and delivering our training and education outputs. This will be achieved through collaboration and partnering across DefAc, while valuing all contributions. A shared mission with a common sense of purpose overrides previous federated approaches. Our previous structures and processes should not be a straightjacket to novel thinking. Therefore we will:

• Think and operate as a team of teams, within a ‘One Academy’ model.

• Go out of our way to help those requesting assistance and advice: our ‘can do’ attitude will be all-pervading.

• Conduct all activity with accuracy, diligence, efficiency and humility.

• Have a service-orientated culture.

\(^6\) Simply put: the ability to think better and faster than our future adversaries. Our graduates must be capable of simplifying complexity, grasping subtlety and be comfortable with ambiguity. The must be ‘match fit’ on leaving the DefAc.
• Build and develop the knowledge and skills of the workforce and recognise and reward excellence.

• Build an ethos of empowerment, accountability and appropriate risk appetite.

10. **DefAc Core Values.** All personnel should embody and actively promote the core values of their parent Service and in addition the DefAc values:

- **Bold** – without risk there is no innovation. We must be bold enough to question ideas and perceived wisdom, provoke new ways of thinking, strip away the superfluous, challenge the inefficient, empower our individuals and focus on the things that really count.

- **Collaborative** – change requires effective and persistent communication and involvement of those affected, including a willingness to listen to and act on feedback. We will be connected across faculties, schools and teams, communicating consistently, frequently and via multiple channels.

- **Innovative** – at all levels from day to day business to major proposals for improvement. We will foster a culture of mission command that empowers our personnel.

- **Inclusive** – respect and celebrate diversity. With a generosity of spirit, we will value emotional intelligence as well as knowledge.

- **Strive for Excellence** – not perfect, but understanding the importance of critical thinking, discipline and responsibility, expecting the very highest standards of ourselves and our students. We will adhere to the Chilcot principle of ‘Reasonable Challenge’ in all that we do.

11. **Intellectual Leadership.** Core to delivery will be intellectual leadership, which demands that we grow our own understanding of the environment for which we are preparing our students. This requires us to be masters of our craft and to embrace intellectual curiosity and professional debate so it permeates throughout the DefAc and we are seen to be ‘thought leaders’ for Defence. We must maximise the possibilities of the DefAc as an arena for debate not simply as an extended classroom.

12. **Cost Reduction.** Maximum efficiency and effectiveness must underpin all DefAc activity. Cost reduction will continue through ongoing scrutiny of our business to drive out unnecessary portfolio, structural, process, and legacy costs. Our principal mechanism for achieving our savings target will be revision of the supporting contracts to get the best value for money. We will review and revise our estate and infrastructure utilisation to drive out inefficiency and identify where we must invest for the best education outcomes.

13. **Development Faculty.** The creation of this new faculty will reach horizontally across all other faculties to allow us to horizon scan for business and education development opportunities, exploit the benefits of scale, focus course analysis and design and development capacity where needed and coordinate strategic options. Additionally, it will allow us to ensure and assure our training and education products, giving us, our students and their employers the confidence in our products. It will also continue to maximise the generation of additional income through the use of irreducible spare capacity, development of business opportunities through our portfolio of estate and intellectual property plus maximum utilisation of our considerable consultancy capacity.

14. **Defence Engagement.** We will continue to play a significant role in DE activity by educating students from allied and partner countries in the UK and by delivering training offsite and overseas. We will support wider DE goals through inward visits and
by providing advice to other countries. We will inform Defence’s DE strategy to ensure this activity is directed to gain the best effect for the UK.

Strategy Actions

15. **Actions and Responsibilities.** Combining the above analysis, approach and direction, the following strategy actions describes how the DefAc will meet its mission and vision:

   a. **Strategy Action 1 – Delivering Defence Academy Training and Education Outputs.** We will deliver our outputs to the standard, volume, time and quality agreed with Training Requirements Authorities (TRAs)\(^7\) and within the limits of our operating budget. This will require us to act as an intelligent training and education provider\(^8\) through the Customer Executive Board process\(^9\). We will actively seek improvement, including more efficient delivery mechanisms, through evolution or new products. We will ruthlessly trim and or delete products that do not meet today’s need, offer value for money, or are not affordable. *(Lead: Academic Delivery Faculty Heads and Comdt RCDS)*

   b. **Strategy Action 2 – Restructuring the Defence Academy.** We will realign our DefAc structure, and supporting processes to a model comprising a single command element and seven faculties, with RCDS as an associated college, by 10 Sep 18. Each faculty will be responsible for refining its structures to best deliver collective and individual outputs. *(Lead: Dep Comdt DefAc)*

   c. **Strategy Action 3 – Improving Contracted Support.** The contracts line of activity will seek to maximise value for money in our hard and soft Facilities Management contracts, balancing economy, efficiency and effectiveness. *(Lead: Head Support Faculty)*

   d. **Strategy Action 4 – Improve Estates Utilisation.** We will examine our use of estate and infrastructure to ensure we are optimising utilisation, with the balance being freed-up for alternative users or be disposed. *(Lead: Head Support Faculty)*

   e. **Strategy Action 5a – Enhancing Intellectual Leadership.** We will invest in our staff training, education and qualifications to stimulate their professional intellectual curiosity. This will include establishing an Education Research capacity that will allow us to: improve our own research; make better use of our academic partners’ research; and share research with allied and partner academies and colleges. *(Lead: Head Development Faculty)*

   f. **Strategy Action 5b – Staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD).** We will invest in our DefAc staff to encourage and enhance their mastery of their roles and to develop their own individual skills and strengths. *(Lead: Head Development Faculty)*

   g. **Strategy Action 6 – Defence Education Pathway Implementation (DEPI).** DEPI will deliver options for the Advanced Career Development Pathway, with early opportunities being exploited by the Advanced Faculty. The selected option will be refined and then implemented from Initial Operating Capability in 2020 to Full Operating Capability in 2022. Lessons and findings will be shared widely to enable incorporation into training and education delivery across DefAc and beyond. *(Lead: Head Development Faculty, supported by Head Advanced Faculty)*

   h. **Strategy Action 7 – Project JASON.** Project JASON will determine the sustainable future location and support arrangements for the Nuclear Faculty. *(Lead: Head Technology & Business Skills Faculty, supported by Head Nuclear Faculty)*

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\(^7\) This encompasses any demand agency requesting T&E support from DefAc.

\(^8\) Training Delivery Authority (TDA).

\(^9\) This includes any activity to refine the customer’s requirement and confirm outputs meet the agreed quantity and quality.
i. **Strategy Action 8 – Defence Technical Officer Engineering Entry Scheme (DTOEES).** The DTOEES review will examine the performance and value for money of the scheme and propose alternative provision as required to meet Defence’s need. *(Lead: Head Technology & Business Skills Faculty)*

j. **Strategy Action 9 – Improving Course Analysis Design and Development.** A course analysis, design and development function will be created by using and building on existing course design capability within the DefAc. *(Lead: Head Development Faculty)*

k. **Strategy Action 10 – Revise Support Arrangements for Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness.** Support activity will be improved through centralised control (under the Support Faculty) to ensure standardisation of output and allow resources to be effectively targeted at the point and time of need. It will be a subordinate line of activity to Contracts (see Action 3 and seek to reduce the administrative load on the Academic Delivery Faculties. *(Lead: Head Support Faculty)*

l. **Strategy Action 11 – Improve DE Effect.** We will maximise the DefAc’s contribution to DE effect through an international-by-design approach. This will be done collaboratively with Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (DE)’s staff to support MOD and National objectives. *(Lead: Dep Comdt, Head Development, in collaboration with HQ JFD)*

m. **Strategy Action 12 – Pursue Opportunities to Generate Income.** We will seek to maximise the income we generate through the sale of spare capacity within the DefAc. Additionally, we will identify opportunities to invest in Business Development activity for both Government and commercial customers in order to create additional income and to reinforce the DefAc’s intellectual leadership. *(Lead: Head Development Faculty)*

**Summary**

16. Developing the intellectual edge for success on operations, and leadership in government, with our allies and coalitions in an era of persistent engagement is the primary purpose of the DefAc and this Strategy outlines the key actions to deliver it. This Strategy describes the ways and means through which the DefAc will support Defence and PAGs to help build and gain advantage through the conceptual component. The focus on developing an intellectual edge is our highest priority and we must be committed to providing the best possible education to our people. In summary, I want DefAc graduates to be leaders:

- **With …** a practical understanding of history, contemporary issues, theory and doctrine.

- **Who can …** think, understand, analyse, decide and communicate.

- **Who are …** knowledgeable and keen to learn; agents of change; not unhinged by complexity or the unexpected; and dedicated to improving their organisation.

- **Who can …** think all the way through a problem or issue.

- **Who remain …** students of their profession for the remainder of their Service.

17. This Strategy is effective on receipt and supersedes all previous DefAc strategy documents. It will be underpinned by supporting implementation plans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
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<td><strong>Improving Contracted Support.</strong> The contracts line of activity will seek to maximise value for money in our hard and soft Facilities Management contracts, balancing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.</td>
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<td><strong>Improve Estates Utilisation.</strong> We will examine our use of estate and infrastructure to ensure we are optimising utilisation, with the balance being freed-up for alternative users or be disposed.</td>
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