THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
informatics

STRENGTHS

- Strong reputation and rankings (research and teaching)
- High calibre student applications allow us to be selective
- Strong, collegiate and diverse community
- Inter-disciplinary work across the University and with industry
- Flexible and nimble to grasp opportunities
- Collegiate leadership team and devolved responsibility to DoIs provides larger group to provide advice/support
- Central location and modern building
- Research-based and breadth of curriculum
- Largest translation and industrial awards in CSE
- New labs and associated funding – Quantum, CISCO, GAIL
- CDTs – award of new CDTs and x3 from AI call

WEAKNESSES

- Student experience (NSS scores)
- Teaching work perceived as less important and desirable than research
- Staff morale and wellbeing – lack of respect for University leadership given poorly managed university change projects; overload/burnout; pay and rewards
- Workload – at the heart of staff experience; impacting staff morale and in turn the student experience. Workload associated with project supervision; Course Organiser of large courses
- Bureaucracy - University and School levels
- While we have strengths in grasping new opportunities - we don't have or take sufficient time to implement them effectively and struggle to get people to step up to lead new initiatives
- Our size and pace at which we work results in layers of (ineffective) communication
- Space (shortage of)
- Breadth of curriculum – complexity, resources, quality assurance
- Recruitment against North American cycle (staff and students)
- Failure to influence at highest levels (eg. Treasury, UKRI) to shape funding calls and policy
- Not enough people with capacity (or willingness?) to investigate and solve the big problems

OPPORTUNITIES

- Knowledge exchange opportunities and promoting the impact of what we do on industry and society
- Inter-disciplinarity opportunities to solve big problems with other disciplines/Schools and global challenges (eg. health and medicine).
- Future is digital and AI very fashionable - student demand and breadth of funding
- Incorporating AI ethics in our curriculum
- Data education – opportunities for education beyond core computer science (eg. social sciences, etc)
- Good value for North American students
- EFI and Dugald Stuart buildings to enable growth
- Shifting landscapes (eg. ChatGPT)
- Technomoral Futures, Ethical AI - GAIL
- CPD – training for industry
- Distancing learning
- Data Science Unit – promotion & expansion
- Research strengths present the opportunity for staff to try new things (potential for pump priming)
- Engagement with alumni
- Increased outreach activity to Schools
- More presence in London – space to host meetings/events – to compete with golden triangle
- New lab opportunities including DDI 2.0 seed funding

THREATS

- University's expenditure model limits flexibility to respond quickly
- Over-reliance on Chinese students and research funding
- Chinese university improvement in rankings
- GeoPolitics –political uncertainty; China; War(s) – funding uncertainty
- University's centralisation agenda and systems that are not fit-for-purpose – add bureaucracy, workload and reduces job satisfaction
- Export Control / National Security & Investment Act (NSIA) breach
- Recruitment and retention of academic and research staff; competitors (particularly US and golden triangle); working abroad instructions
- Industrial action (eg. marking boycott) – workload impacts, staff morale/experience impacts, reputational impacts
- School's popularity pulls us in too many different directions
- Misconception we specialise in data analysis
- Contribution expectations from College/University impacts local investments
- Shifting landscapes (eg. ChatGPT)