

Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2020-2030

Re-imagining the world: creating the future

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<p>Summary:</p> <p>This document outlines the institution’s Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy aligned to the University’s Strategic Vision 2030, <i>A Beacon for Educational Excellence, Sustainability & Social Justice</i>.</p> <p>The Strategy is accompanied by a separate, flexible operational plan which will be updated throughout its life-span and reflects sector changes including the impacts of Covid-19 and policy changes. The plan will be monitored by Senate RKE Committee.</p>	

Re-imagining the world: creating the future

Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE) Strategy 2020-2030

The University's Strategic Vision 2030, *A Beacon for Educational Excellence, Sustainability & Social Justice*, sets out our commitment to delivering transformative research and innovation. In this ten-year RKE Strategy we build further on our established strengths and venture into new areas and new ways of thinking to deliver the University's ambitious vision. In so doing, we aim to increase the amount and quality of the research and knowledge exchange that empowers and transforms our staff, students and communities close to home and around the world. We seek to re-imagine the world to address the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in ways which align with our values of Compassion, Individuals Matter and Spirituality.

We will do this by seeing the world through different lenses, developing creative and courageous researchers and innovators who will respectfully push boundaries and challenge convention; we will do this by developing a values-driven research culture where staff and student researchers are inclusive, mutually supportive and interdisciplinary.

To achieve this bold vision requires an holistic approach to all aspects of RKE, working closely with our internal and external stakeholders for the common good. Through collaboration and aspiration, we will create the future.

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This document details the five key Principles which underpin the Strategy and identifies the headline aims for each Principle, showing the roadmap for achieving them through respective strands. A separate flexible operational plan provides the next level of detail, including integrated targets. This itemises the first phase of the strategic journey and recognises the immediate challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Each Faculty has their own ten-year RKE Strategy and operational plan, aligned to the Principles herein, demonstrating our collaborative approach to achieving the RKE goals of the University's Strategic Vision 2030.

Principle 1

Deliver world-leading and internationally excellent research, driven by our mission to achieve sustainability, social justice, and make a difference to all life and the planet, increasing our league table positioning in each successive Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise

(University Strategic Vision 2030, p. 25)

We aim to:

- **Increase the amount and quality of research relevant to our values and the University's Strategic Vision 2030**
1. We will achieve this by:
 - a. Strengthening, through regular reviewing and monitoring, the quality of all aspects of our research infrastructure, including research integrity and ethics, to support staff and student researchers at all levels of their careers
 - b. Supporting, through training and funding, the continued development of internationally excellent and world-leading work in all areas of our portfolio, further encouraging that which aligns with the values and aims of the University's Strategic Vision 2030
 - c. Enabling researchers from undergraduate levels onwards to be bold, creative, courageous and confident and push boundaries and challenge convention, and act with the highest levels of research integrity, observing best ethical practice
 - d. Enabling researchers to think and work globally, by supporting high-quality work, including that which aligns with UKRI's Global Research Challenges Fund (GCRF), benefitting communities in countries in receipt of Official Development Assistance (ODA)
 - e. Creating the next generation of researchers by providing Early Career Researchers and staff on research-only contracts with increased opportunities for mentoring and career development (See also Principle 5)
 - f. Developing Research Centres' profiles as beacons of national and international expertise
 - g. Encouraging sustainable approaches to research and climate-conscious researchers

Principle 2

Create demonstrative impact of our research on a global scale, evidenced through increasing amounts of world-leading and internationally excellent impact in each successive REF exercise

(University Strategic Vision 2030, p. 25)

We aim to:

- **Increase the amount and quality of our research impact**

2. We will achieve this by:
 - a. Embedding understandings of impact into different types of engaged research through enhanced training
 - b. Analysing the quality of our research impact statements for REF 2021 and developing long-term plans at institutional and UoA level to increase the quality for future REF exercises
 - c. Targeting funding towards impact to build a sustainable infrastructure for planning, developing and creating impact of all types
 - d. Enabling staff and student researchers to develop social innovations that influence public policy, corporate practice and thinking
 - e. Promoting and facilitating affordable modes of 'Open Access for Social Justice', increasing the accessibility of our outputs and data sets globally to facilitate greater reach as a potential pathway to impact

Principle 3

Deliver outstanding knowledge exchange, driven by our mission to achieve sustainability, social justice and make a difference to all life and the planet, securing a position in the top quartile of our Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) benchmarked group

(University Strategic Vision 2030, p. 25)

We aim to:

- **Increase the quality and quantity of our KE impact, leading to the attraction of sustainable income through Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) and additional diverse sources**

3. We will achieve this by:
 - a. Targeting resources to develop skill sets in areas of KE which will make a difference to people and planet, impacting on our KEF placing
 - b. Embedding our high-quality public engagement and knowledge exchange activities into all aspects of our activities, working collaboratively with other internal teams to ensure extended reach
 - c. Developing Knowledge Exchange Centres' profiles as beacons of national and international expertise
 - d. Contributing to the Civic Universities Strategy and Community Impact Strategy, helping to enrich communities and transform lives
 - e. Supporting, capturing and evaluating the work of colleagues and students in Faculties and relevant Professional Services departments in developing links with businesses, particularly SMEs, with shared values
 - f. Supporting, capturing and evaluating the work of colleagues and students in Faculties and relevant Professional Services departments in developing student entrepreneurship

Principle 4

Increase our external research and knowledge exchange income

(University Strategic Vision 2030, p. 25)

We aim to:

- **Increase our external research and knowledge exchange income by 50% by 2030 through diversification of income streams and enhanced performance in national assessment frameworks**

4. We will achieve this by:

- a. Facilitating the increase of external income from a range of sources, with Research Centres and higher numbers of colleagues attracting recognition for their expertise through grants and other income streams
- b. Facilitating the increase of external income from a range of sources, with KE Centres and higher numbers of colleagues attracting recognition for their expertise through consultancy, contract research and other income streams
- c. Extending our consultancy offer, drawing on existing areas of expertise and developing new ones, increasing the number of quality Consultancy Units
- d. Working in partnership with the Estates Team and Faculties to maximise opportunities for our communities to make use of our facilities
- e. Working in partnership with the University's Development Manager, to explore new and diverse income streams for research and knowledge exchange
- f. Increasing the number of externally funded PhD Studentships

Principle 5

Have a growing and thriving community of research students

(University Strategic Vision 2030, p. 25)

We aim to:

- **Increase PGR student numbers by 50% to 450 by 2030 ¹**

5. We will achieve this by:

- a. Undertaking a thorough, consultative review of our PGR offer and revising accordingly to ensure the highest quality student experience throughout the doctoral journey and in preparation for careers in academia and beyond
- b. Diversifying our community by developing a high-quality international PGR offer

¹ Subject to the capacity and capability of an appropriate number of doctoral supervisors

- c. Increasing the completion rate by providing the highest quality student experience through a proactive approach and being highly responsive to students' needs
- d. Enhancing the PGR student training programme to prepare them to be bold, creative, courageous and confident researchers who act with the highest levels of research integrity
- e. Ensuring a high-quality training programme for supervisors to maximise the student experience
- f. Adopting an holistic approach to staff recruitment and retention across the institution, to ensure sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified doctoral supervisors
- g. Providing interdisciplinary PhD Studentships in areas related to sustainability, social justice, the University values and the SDGs, and/or those which support small and new Units of Assessment