

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY: RESEARCH STRATEGY

1. Vision

Research at Sheffield Hallam University is underpinned by excellence and characterised by a focus on impact addressing the cultural, economic and social challenges facing society in the twenty-first century. It is achieved through the successful application and translation of fundamental research at local, national and international levels. Our distinctive commitment to collaboration and engagement with end user partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors ensures that a mix of curiosity and market-driven research results in a demonstrable and significant impact on society at large.

2. Introduction

The University has long been an outward looking institution recognising how knowledge may be applied to inspire and transform the lives of individuals, organisations, and communities. Our ambition is to continue to be known for our internationally excellent and world-leading research, and the valuable contribution that it makes to the benefit of businesses, the professions, government, governmental agencies, communities, and other partners.

In increasingly competitive and uncertain times this means developing and maintaining collaborative engagement and strategic relationships with funders, sponsors, policy makers and stakeholders. We are a pro-active and responsive university, highly aware of our partners' and funders' priorities and strategic objectives, while simultaneously retaining the developments in knowledge and capacity that permit us to contribute to their agendas.

We have established, intend to maintain and further develop a wide range of relationships including those with mainstream funders such as the Research Councils, the European Commission, the UK Government, the National Health Service, charities, local government; and business led innovation and market driven bodies, including the Technology Strategy Board and individual firms.

Within the University we believe it is essential that frameworks and programmes exist to support the development of researchers and their careers. We will continue to nurture strong links and synergies between research and teaching, thus contributing to a high quality teaching environment and student experience.

3. Objectives and supporting actions:

We will aim to deliver our strategy and vision through the following objectives:

3. 1 Support areas of existing and potential world leading and internationally excellent research.

Actions:

- Continue to build and sustain critical capacity and capability in these areas and ensure alignment of priorities to address grand and societal challenges identified by the Research Councils, European, government, the NHS, national and regional government and business and industry.

- The University has developed a number of strong areas of research excellence that are truly world leading, and we have a good track record of working with organisations to apply the outputs of that research, To support this activity the University is submitting into eleven strategic priority Units of Assessment for the REF 2014:

3	Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
5	Biological Sciences
13	Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Metallurgy and Materials
16	Architecture, Built Environment and Town Planning
19	Business and Management Studies
25	Education
26	Sports and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
29	English Language and Literature
30	History
34	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
36	Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

- Use this base to develop and plan for our submission into the REF 2020
- Ring-fence QR funding from the REF2014 to invest in Unit of Assessment strategic plans alongside 5-year rolling plans for the development of each UoA whilst recognising any new areas of emerging capability.
- Monitor and evaluate the use of QR to ensure it is used effectively to support the University's vision for research.
- Establish a strategic research investment fund to support further investments in research priority areas whether capital or revenue, to enable the University to respond to and meet changing needs in the external environment.
- Building on existing partnerships, further develop and create a broad set of research strategic collaborations with other institutions, government and related agencies, and private companies, in the UK and internationally, to maintain and enhance our research excellence and reputation.
- Ensure actions and activities address issues of 'vitality and sustainability' within the University as well as the contribution to the wider discipline and research base.

3.2 Developing and supporting the translation of our research outputs into 'real world' impact.

Actions:

- Whilst our research is underpinned by excellence and originality, we must ensure it continues to be predominantly applied in that it is focused on the needs of society and the development of knowledge to improve peoples' lives.
- Continue to develop our impact and public engagement frameworks to enable a fuller and shared understanding of the use of our research for our partners, stakeholders, individual funders and audiences.

- Develop and support the translation of our research outputs into 'real world' impact enabling us to continue to be thoroughly engaged with business, industry, government, charities and communities to maximise the value of our research.
- Promote symbiosis between research, innovation and knowledge exchange, with a mix of fundamental and market driven research leading to customer specified research and innovation impact.
- Where appropriate use funds from sources such as the European Structural and Investment Funds and Local Growth Funds to support collaboration with economic development partners and businesses in research and development and optimise opportunities for impact on the UK economy.
- Continue to support small, medium and larger companies through research led technology transfer and knowledge exchange. Creating novel, high value solutions, developing new IP and giving rise to patented products and processes.
- Develop and evolve the University's 'Impact Strategy for Research and Knowledge Exchange' to ensure the benefit and outcomes of the University's research impact is communicated and disseminated widely to enhance the credibility and reputation of the University. This will include an assessment and further development of the role that public engagement and understanding of research can play in the appreciation of wider societal benefits.

3.3 Nurturing our research base.

Actions

- Establish and set up a new Postgraduate Research Office within the University's Research and Innovation Office to improve the strategic overview of PGR activity, development and management across the University and create a thriving postgraduate research student community.
- Support staff development for research from early career researchers to established academic staff including, support for staff undertaking doctoral qualifications, attending conferences and scholarly work with professional and similarly prestigious bodies.
- Continue to develop and embed the principles and practice of the 'Concordat to support the career development of researchers' and build on the positive outcomes of the 'Careers in research on-line survey' to date.
- Continue to implement and embed the 'Vitae Researcher Development Framework' to help develop and grow world class researchers and make the University an attractive place to advance a research career.

- By judicious use of the strategic research investment and QR funds invest in university wide programme to assist the development of early career researchers.
- Recognising that the complexity of societal challenges often spans disciplines and research interests, the University will continue to seek to develop and design mechanisms to support a multi-disciplinary approach to the opportunities presented by these challenges.
- Further explore new and emerging research areas and support staff to collaborate across Faculty and discipline boundaries. .

3.4 Increasing the permeability between research and teaching.

Actions:

- Develop Faculty specific plans for greater permeability between teaching and research, building on best practice in those research centres already engaged in a substantial portfolio mix of research and teaching, and where research excellence informs high quality teaching.
- Ensure our models of working and the management of research activities enable increased research staff engagement in teaching and related activities. Whilst there are different models pertaining to different disciplines the value to the student experience and their employability is a core component in the relationship between research and teaching.
- Ensure the University is developing and appointing academics with PhDs who both research and teach, and that recruitment policies reflect this policy approach of a 'well rounded' individual academic approach to research and teaching.

3.5 Providing a high quality and responsive research support environment.

- Ensure that the central directorates – the Finance Directorate, Human Resources, Learning and Information Services, Information Services and Technology, the Directorate of Corporate Affairs and the Research and Innovation Office have their services aligned to support the delivery of the research strategy.
- Addressing issues and opportunities created by the moves towards Open Access and the need for a comprehensive research data management strategy and policy are two examples of where central directorates take the lead in providing a high quality research support environment.
- Review and where identifiable carry out improvements to processes and systems that support the research strategy.