

Glasgow Caledonian University

Research Strategy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Research lies at the heart of a university's life and its contribution to society. It informs and underpins our teaching thereby helping to produce skilled, intellectually adept and employable graduates. The transfer of the knowledge we produce through research, aids economic growth and wealth creation, helps develop innovative technologies and practice based interventions, contributes to better public policy, social and cultural understanding and the advancement of social justice. The pursuit and dissemination of research connects us internationally and enables the University to be a conduit of global knowledge into Scotland as well as a contributor to the international community.
- 1.2 For these reasons a research strategy is vital in providing the University with a clear direction for the range of its research activities and the development of its academic staff. It allows us: to focus on our strengths, to develop intellectual capacity and innovative approaches, to allocate resources strategically and, by informing the planning process, to help ensure the staffing, infrastructural support and achievement of targets required for a self-sustaining research base.

2 Research Vision and Goals

- 2.1 The Research Vision is underpinned by the University's core values as set out in its *Vision, Mission, Values and Goals*:

GCU is committed to produce and disseminate research which contributes to the common good through its practical applications to public policy, service delivery and economic regeneration so as to have a real and beneficial impact on lives and well-being in Scotland and more widely.

- 2.2 If we are to achieve and sustain this vision there will need to be a step change in our profile so that research and knowledge transfer are central to our activities as much within the University as in our engagement with, and responsibility to, external communities. The first requirement of our research strategy is to enable and put in place the conditions through which such a step change can be made. The University has, therefore, identified the following clear goals, consistent with our mission, which it believes will support and lead to the achievement of our Research Vision:

- to identify and prioritise for investment externally-credible research strengths and potential;

- to increase the number and quality of staff engaged in research and knowledge transfer;
- to increase the revenue earned from research as the basis for sustainability;
- to promote a confident research culture which stimulates collaboration within the University and partnerships externally;
- to provide mechanisms of support for individuals and research groups that will facilitate a productive, creative and innovative research environment.

2.3 The policies and mechanisms to implement these goals throughout the University are set out in Section 4 below.

3 *Research Strategy and Key Objectives*

In order to realise these goals the University research strategy has the following key objectives:

- 3.1.1 to retain and reward high quality researchers and attract internationally respected research leaders;
- 3.1.2 to support existing and promote new and emergent areas of research that cross traditional subject or disciplinary boundaries and to facilitate cross-School working through Institutes or similar mechanisms;
- 3.1.3 to facilitate the agile and strategic allocation of resources in order to take advantage of research strengths, opportunities and the emergent priorities of a variety of funding bodies or commercial opportunities;
- 3.1.4 to develop strategic collaborations and partnerships nationally and internationally including leading and participating in networks of excellence;
- 3.1.5 to ensure external funding from diverse sources sufficient to achieve a sustainable research and knowledge transfer base;
- 3.1.6 to ensure that research, while it encompasses fundamental enquiry, aligns with the strategic priorities of end-users;
- 3.1.7 to deliver the University's mission to make its research and knowledge transfer expertise available to diverse communities and to this end pursue close working with regional and national agencies, especially but not solely, in Scotland so as to align with their strategic priorities;

- 3.1.8 to increase the cohort and success rate of postgraduate research students as a measure of research culture and as contributors to future knowledge production within and outwith the University;
- 3.1.9 to establish policies and support mechanisms for research activity that help enable successful grant applications, sound project and financial management and effective dissemination to end-users;
- 3.1.10 to systematise and simplify the monitoring and audit of research performance to inform strategic development.

4 Implementation

4.1 Central to the implementation of the research objectives will be a University Research Committee that has the authority to take a strategic role in all aspects of developing and sustaining a successful research culture and research performance. The Committee will have as a major function to ensure that the University's areas of research strength and comparative advantage are protected and enhanced, that research potential is recognised and nurtured and that resource is strategically targeted to build an externally-recognised and critically-sized research presence. In particular the Committee will have the following functions:

- to advise the Senate on research and knowledge transfer development and strategy;
- to determine the criteria on which research performance and investment will be measured;
- to assess new research initiatives in the University and recommend to the University Executive the strategic and agile allocation of resource;
- to identify through foresighting and environmental scanning regional, national and international research needs and opportunities, and to advise on prioritisation of research areas;
- to develop policies and lead initiatives in the University that will support an inclusive, collaborative and outward-looking research culture;
- to advise on and support partnerships with business and other agencies or institutions to exploit commercially viable research;
- to oversee and advise on the University's IPR and the exploitation of innovation from research activities;

- to monitor and audit the research and knowledge transfer performance of Schools, Institutes and the University as a whole, including preparation and management of external assessments of research quality.
- 4.2 The composition of the new Research Committee is set out in Appendix 1. The membership is designed to harness the expertise, whether through their strategic function or research background, of those senior staff who have an active knowledge of research and knowledge transfer nationally and internationally.
- 4.3 Clear systems to manage and monitor research performance are essential if the University is to have the sound evidence on which to take strategic decisions that will support research priorities and facilitate the emergence and sustainability of areas of research excellence. In particular, investment in new academic posts that will provide critical mass and leadership in selected research areas will need to be targeted to where impact and national prominence are most likely to result. To this end the Research Committee will have a central role in commissioning and assessing a broad range of evidence.
- 4.4 More generally, the Committee will submit to Senate an annually updated research and knowledge transfer report and strategic plan for research. The plan will reflect and utilise the reporting required by each School and Institute to the Committee as follows:
- Annually on a development plan for the next three years, including new initiatives, staffing and resource requirements, income and output targets and the strategies to achieve these
 - Quarterly on research grant income against agreed targets
 - Quarterly on knowledge transfer income and surplus against agreed targets
 - Annually on individual staff or research group performance, including outputs, income, applications and other relevant research metrics
 - Annually on numbers of postgraduate research students and doctoral completions
 - Bi-annually on achievements, new initiatives and opportunities against the strategic plan.
- 4.5 Although the reports to the Committee will play a large role in informing the overall direction of the University's research strategy and will aid in the prioritisation of research areas and the allocation of strategic resource, they cannot substitute for the active management of a vibrant

research culture among all academic staff by Schools and Divisions. If the University is to achieve its research goals there must be a partnership between the Schools and the Committee in its role of encouraging and enabling more staff to undertake better and more successful research.

4.6 For its part the Research Committee will lead and help resource initiatives which promote both a broader research culture and the research development of individual academic staff. These will include:

- the allocation and funding, on a competitive basis, of new University Research Fellowships targeted to promising researchers to allow them to initiate or complete strategically significant research projects;
- co-funding of sabbatical leave for academic staff to undertake agreed projects and to help develop new research capacity;
- the selective allocation of funded PhD scholarships and a new scheme of post-doctoral studentships with a view to achieve the renewability of research areas;
- distribution of pump-priming grants to explore and develop strategic collaborative initiatives with external partners nationally and internationally;
- support for significant conferences hosted in the University and for external conference attendance and presentations by academic staff.

4.7 In their turn Schools will be expected to implement policies that will enhance the activities of existing researchers and develop those of new or inexperienced academic staff. These support mechanisms will include:

- the encouragement of all academic staff (where appropriate) to develop their research potential through an agreed annual research activity plan and review;
- the development of clear research groups both within and outwith the School bringing together experienced and new staff, postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students;
- mentoring, especially for newly appointed and inexperienced academic staff, by experienced colleagues within the School and more widely in the University in areas such as research planning, grant applications, project management and dissemination of outputs;

- a practice of double peer-review of all applications for external research funding before their submission for formal University approval;
 - regular research seminars and inaugural and professorial lectures that will provide staff with the opportunity to share research knowledge and to expand their own research horizons.
- 4.8 The University's research culture will be enhanced by the further development of the Graduate School which has the primary responsibility for postgraduate research student training and social and intellectual integration. The Graduate School will play a key role, alongside Schools, in developing career pathways for successful research students.
- 4.9 The implementation of the University's research strategy will be underpinned by the support provided by the Research and Innovation Service. Support will cover both advice to the research community and information to the Research Committee including:
- maintaining a University-wide comprehensive research data base;
 - the preparation and provision for the Research Committee of up-to-date metrics of research performance in the University;
 - provision to academic staff of regular information on grants and external funding opportunities;
 - assistance to academic staff in preparing research applications, including advice on costing and pricing, meeting funding eligibility criteria, negotiating agreements and identifying related innovations arising from research activity;
 - a seminar programme bringing together researchers and external speakers to advise on opportunities for funding and collaborative ventures with business, public sector and European partners; and to provide practical advice on related academic issues;
 - the preparation and dissemination of regular research bulletins about the University's research to be distributed internally and externally;
 - support for the co-ordination of the University submission to the periodic Research Assessment Exercise and any future successor mechanisms;
 - support in addressing external policy initiatives relating to research and innovation agendas.

APPENDIX 1

University Research Committee

The membership of the University Research Committee is:

The Principal (ex officio)

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research (Chair)

Executive Director of Business Development & Commercialisation

2 Deans of School (to serve on a rotational basis for a period of two years) nominated by the Principal

The leaders of the University Institutes

Four members of Academic Staff (excluding Deans and members of the Executive) to be nominated by the Committee

Director of the Graduate School

Director of Research and Innovation Services

In attendance:

The Director of Policy and Planning

Chair of Higher Degrees Committee

Chair of University Ethics Committee