

Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Strategy 2009-2015

Strategic Vision

1. The Research Assessment Exercise 2008 (RAE2008) placed Westminster among the top 'new' universities for the quality of its research, confirming almost 80% of the University's submitted research to be of at least international excellence with significant amounts of world-leading research, across a broadly based submission in 20 Units of Assessment. By achieving and sustaining international levels of excellence in most research areas, the University aims to consolidate and improve this position as a leading modern University with a reputation for research. Westminster will be known amongst peer and user communities and within the national, international and HE marketplace:
 - (a) For the strength, the breadth and the quality of its research with a profile characterized by success in both pure and practice-led research and enterprise underpinned by the achievement of excellence with impact.
 - (b) For sustaining a critical mass of research, enterprise and knowledge transfer activity of national recognition in all our major teaching areas and in addition for world-leading and internationally excellent research in a wide range of areas.
 - (c) For its profile and achievement in professional and practice-led work.
 - (d) As a source of research and innovation that benefits society, through contributions to a range of policy, services and products for community, government and business.
 - (e) For benefitting students and the curriculum through the inter-relationship of research, enterprise, knowledge transfer and teaching activity.
 - (f) For teaching that is informed by research
 - (g) For supporting interdisciplinarity, internal and external collaboration and internationalization in Westminster's research, enterprise and knowledge transfer activity.
 - (h) For achieving a ranking at least in the upper middle league of UK institutions for research.
2. To achieve this vision, the University will:
 - (a) Grow those subject areas where research, enterprise and knowledge transfer are strong or have the potential to be strong and are characterised by a high proportion of staff with international reputations, a critical mass of researchers and the capability to attract significant levels of funding.
 - (b) Build and sustain innovative, creative and practice-informed research output.
 - (c) Support some RAE2008 2* research and enterprise and sustain research or enterprise or knowledge transfer activity, or all of these, in the majority of departments.
 - (d) Develop the infrastructure, environment and culture to enable and support high quality research, increasing external funding levels and developing the next generation of researchers by increasing the quality and quantity of research students.
 - (e) Increase high-quality research activity by including research and/or enterprise experience as an required criterion in recruiting, retaining and promoting new academic staff.
 - (f) Encourage a higher proportion of academic staff to undertake research, enterprise and knowledge transfer or other professional or scholarly activity.

- (g) Work with local, regional, national and international communities to disseminate and embed the University's expertise and knowledge and support the effective and timely communication and dissemination of research to the benefit of wider society and the taught curriculum.
 - (h) Take into account the interests of research and research degree activity in decisions on policy, resource and space allocation and workload planning at all levels.
 - (i) Provide fit for purpose structures, space and resources to support strategic growth and development.
 - (j) Enhance the overall student experience and environment for postgraduate research students.
 - (k) Foster, enable and reward research leadership within the University in both the academic and the professional and support community
 - (l) Encourage the achievement of international and world-leading research and the highest professional standards of work, by means of selective support for internationally recognized research, strategic management in Schools, and planning and evaluation against strategically-determined targets.
 - (m) Support enterprise and knowledge transfer activity in the regional context to benefit curricula and student recruitment and retention through relevance to educating for professional life.
3. The University of Westminster defines research as that supported by an external sponsor and/or original work contributing to knowledge and understanding that leads to output accessible in a format for evaluation by peers.
 4. Enterprise is defined in the widest sense, including staff enterprise and corporate enterprise and encompasses both the usual definitions of spin-out companies, patents, licensing, consultancy as well as other activities where the University interacts with the local, regional and national community to use and transfer its expertise across the full range of the subject base. It does not include student enterprise which forms part of the learning and teaching activity and is supported through the curriculum and student services.
 5. Knowledge transfer covers the processes by which technology, knowledge, expertise and skills are turned into innovative products and services for community, government and business with social, cultural or commercial impact and value or a combination of these.

University Strategic Targets

6. By the end of the strategic planning period, we will have:
 - a) Increased the number of academic staff with an internationally recognized quality profile (2*) submitted to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2013/14 by 100 (staff headcount) above the number submitted to RAE2008;
 - b) Increased research income from external grants, contract and enterprise by annual increments of +1% of total income each year to reach the level of 14% of total University income from research and enterprise sources by 2015;
 - c) Established a University of Westminster Research Studentships Programme, providing full support for 60 students in steady state by 2011/12

- d) Increased levels of research activity to at least 60% of staff (FTE) performing at national excellence or above or involved in substantial knowledge transfer or enterprise activity;
- e) Increased the proportion of academic staff involved in substantial enterprise and knowledge transfer activity to 20%;
- f) Achieved a research degrees completion rate of at least 70% within four years¹;
- g) Ensured that all peer reviewed outputs and impacts are available in an expanded WestminsterResearch archive compliant with the RCUK (Research Councils UK) impacts database and, wherever possible, in open access format.

External income

- 7. To increase external funding levels to meet the University targets, Schools will set local targets for higher funding income levels and to diversify sources. Achievement of external funding targets will be supported by a programme of incentives, professional support and cultural change and managed through careful target setting, monitoring and review processes.
- 8. School plans should recognize the importance of establishing a 'virtuous funding circle', whereby higher income supports increased activity, improved quality, greater impact and visibility and therefore repeat reputational funding. They should ensure that the maximum benefit, in REF terms, is derived from externally-funded research, recognizing the inter-relationship between the various external quality evaluation processes, which include Research Council grants, enterprise funding, HEFCE REF, the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey and the RCUK impacts database).
- 9. The recovery of the Full Economic Cost should be a priority wherever the funding rules permit.
- 10. The key importance of good bidding practice should be recognized, and priority given to ensuring bid development is properly managed and carried out, ensuring that bids meet all internal and external requirements prior to submission. This must encompass compliance with internal and external regulations and guidelines, including legal, costings, eligibility, ethics, institutional consent as well as scrutiny for quality. This is a joint responsibility between School management, academic staff and Research and Enterprise Support (RES).
- 11. Professional support for external funding will be provided through Research and Enterprise Support and the Finance Department. The School Research Development Officers (RDOs) will be managed by RES in accordance with individual School research profiles. Professional support by RDOs will include horizon scanning, identification of funding opportunities, enhancing the content and structure of bids, compliance with formal requirements of bids and promoting the research and enterprise capability of the School externally to potential and actual sponsors to secure new business. The financial management of projects, knowledge transfer partnerships, commercialisation and compliance with University policies relevant to external funding will be provided by the central Grants and Contracts team within the Finance Department and RES.

¹ ¹(i.e. of any single cohort commencing at the beginning of the academic year, at least 70% should have successfully completed by the end of their 4th academic year)

12. Schools will develop systems to ensure the continuous enhancement of the quality of bids through increased sharing of examples of good practice and the development of training programmes.

Research students: the next generation of researchers

13. The University will establish the University of Westminster Research Studentships (60 in steady state by 2011/12) providing a major investment in the next generation of researchers. These will be fully funded studentships, with the maintenance element funded by the University and the tuition costs funded by the relevant School. Awardees will engage in teaching, academic support or enterprise and knowledge transfer activity not exceeding 6 hours per week and in accordance with University policy on teaching and other academic activity by research students.
14. School Research Plans should consider the overall role of research students which should be consistent with the strategic aims of the School and with the University's Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (CoP for RDPs), the fundamental reference point for the management of research degree provision. In planning and managing their research degree provision, Schools will need to take account the increasing importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (such as cohort completion rates) in external judgments of and funding for research degree programmes, recognizing the critical importance within this of effective supervision and of an appropriate research environment for research students. Questions of funding, costing, resourcing, marketing, training and development, role in teaching, supervision and student support should therefore be explicitly addressed in the case of all planned new studentships.
15. Schools will keep under review their arrangements for training and developing their students in research and generic skills in the context of the University's research training framework and external developments. School management processes should recognize that the supervision process is the primary means by which key elements of research training are delivered and monitored and should actively manage its capacity for research supervision through appropriate supported staff development and training. Schools also need to develop systems to ensure all students who teach or who support learning are given appropriate and timely support and preparation for this role.
16. Schools should seek to diversify the funding sources for research studentships, promoting the incorporation of research studentships (and research assistantships) in project funding bids where possible and considering their use of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
17. Quality assurance, academic standards systems and academic administration for research students are located centrally in the Research Office, Academic Services Department. The adequacy and consistency of local support for research student support functions not previously provided within the scope of Campus Administration is to be reviewed within the restructuring process.

Recruiting, Supporting and Developing Research Staff

18. The growth target of 100 additional staff submitted to the REF assessment in 2013/14 will be achieved mainly through new staff recruitment. Selection criteria should include an established research profile at or approaching international excellence or at the minimum a PhD and 4 peer-reviewed publications or other forms of output of similar esteem suitable for the practice based

subjects. Staff development is also of fundamental importance and Schools should encourage staff and staff should be willing to become research active. This may be achieved through the discussion of research and enterprise as part of workload allocation, the setting of measurable targets and personal development plans, noting the University's provision for the award of PhD by Published Work. All academic staff are expected to undertake research or other professional activity linked to enterprise and knowledge transfer or scholarly work.

19. Schools should develop systems and cultures to facilitate communication between experienced and developing researchers. Methods might include mentoring, support, review, critiquing, publication practice and professional practice in research. Such systems should give due prominence to the leadership contributions expected of Professors and Readers and School Research Directors (SRDs) and to the understanding of research as a joint activity rather than a solitary task.
20. The ownership and engagement of Heads of Departments with the School Research Plan is essential to the integration of the research interest within the University's wider mission and delivery. Schools should give priority to ensuring good communications between research managers and leaders, the School Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee (SREKTC) and other key managers and staff in the School.
21. Schools should actively consider policies to expand the roles and numbers of Research Assistants and Research Fellows, which are an important indicator of a vigorous research environment. The University will consider funding a limited number of University of Westminster Research Academic Fellows linked to specific upcoming retirements within the next five years.
22. Schools are encouraged to implement sabbatical schemes in the interests of providing contiguous time for research and to evaluate their effectiveness in producing research outputs and developing staff.
23. The Human Resources (HR) strategy will highlight the importance of developing effective and successful lifetime researchers from research student and early career stage onwards. The importance of continuing professional development will also be recognised through activities such as the establishment of a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework for research, enterprise and knowledge transfer activity, the development of a Researcher Network, and the review of institutional approaches to the recruitment, contracting and developing of staff.
24. Support services for research active staff are provided through the relevant corporate service offices.

Research and Teaching

25. The University is committed to strengthening the beneficial relationship between research and teaching, to ensure the curriculum is informed by current research and to inculcate research-mindedness in students at all levels. Staff with current expertise in research and knowledge transfer are expected to reflect this in their delivery of curricula particularly in relation to the development of research skills.
26. Research into, and scholarship of aspects of Higher Education pedagogy have an important part to play in the University's continuing development of a community committed to research-informed teaching. Pedagogic research and scholarship takes many forms and the University encourages the full spectrum of these activities, as they contribute to the enhancement of

teaching quality and learning, and as well as to research output and the development of a more scholarly academic workforce. The University will establish processes to build capacity and maximise impact of pedagogic research and Schools will be expected to demonstrate their practical support for pedagogic research and scholarship in their research and learning and teaching plans.

Structures, Management and Leadership

27. The continuing enhancement and the sustainability of research capability and capacity, including management capability, is of critical importance. The University's HR Strategy and enhanced relationships between the HR and the research governance and management functions will be key to delivering this. Institutional approaches to the recruitment, contracting and developing of staff will be reviewed taking into consideration the Research Concordat and the Roberts' Skills agendas.
28. Research leadership plays an important role in inculcating research mindedness, research culture and professional standards in research. University and School research management should seek to inculcate research leadership across the institution and to provide appropriate opportunities for research career progression.
29. The SRDs play a critical role in supporting the Dean of School in delivering School research strategies and should work closely with Heads of Department, Professors and Readers and other key staff in doing so.
30. Although Centres of Excellence have a role in building critical mass for cross-disciplinary work, these should be formed only where they clearly add value. Schools will need to consider any proposals for centres and institutes in the light of School and University plans and with regard to the University's criteria for excellence and selectivity including a positive trend in external income generation. To avoid the dissipation of energy and resource, Schools will maintain appropriate structures and procedures for the selective support management and governance of Centres and Institutes and ensure effective communication with the SREKTC. Alignment of existing centres with research and enterprise strategic aims will be re-evaluated through a review process during 2009/10.
31. Staff are encouraged to work in research clusters or groups both inside and across institutional boundaries, rather than as isolated researchers. This provides benefits to the research environment, the critical mass, expands peer review opportunities, supports the development of junior researchers and research students, provides coherent structures for submission for external quality assessment (REF) or funding and supports mutually beneficial links to knowledge transfer activity.
32. In keeping with the aim of increasing interdisciplinarity, the University will consider the establishment of 'Platforms' delivering research, knowledge transfer and enterprise activity as cross-School structures supported by 'pillars' of specific subject activity within Schools. Platforms will be established and managed in accordance with the procedure laid down by the University.

Impact and Visibility

33. The importance of metrics and reputations is recognized in the marketplace for students, staff and funding. The impact and visibility of research outputs should be optimized through use of

the most prestigious outlets and through publication policies and guidance amongst colleagues. High-profile enterprise and knowledge transfer activity similarly contributes to the University's profile of the University. Marketing should figure prominently in School and University plans and communications should increase impact and visibility, reflect strategic priorities and engage the interest of potential staff, students and research collaborators. Schools and Corporate Services Department will co-operate to ensure that research and enterprise activities at Westminster are put into the public domain quickly and efficiently and in ways that excite, enthuse and lead to further engagement.

Commercialisation

34. The University does not discriminate in favour of research that is more likely to have a commercial outcome, but will seek to commercialise University Intellectual Property (IP) where there is a clear route to market, recognising the opportunity to demonstrate the robustness of its' research against commercial criteria and acknowledging the potential for positive impact on the curriculum and research practice. The University is motivated primarily by making its knowledge broadly available for maximum impact, rather than profiting in narrow financial terms from invention. Commercialisation is carried out by a central professional service function within RES.

Supporting Research

35. The professional support contributions from Corporate Services underpin the delivery of the strategy. Good communication and alignment of objectives with the Schools, through the processes of planning, monitoring and review processes are of key importance. Services will be provided with a clear customer service ethos supported by clear expectations about service levels and School dedicated support where consistent with economic delivery and strategic objectives. The provision and development of relevant management information will be utilised to inform further strategic research, enterprise and knowledge transfer planning.

Information and library services

36. Information Systems and Library Services will ensure that the best support and facilities are available to foster high quality research, monitored against a list of deliverables and benefits. Services will keep pace with evolving needs and will be aligned with research strategies and priorities. They will support the production, storage, preservation and dissemination of high quality research, focusing on facilitating user access to information resources, developing information environments that encourage collaborative working and on optimising output visibility and impact, including through consideration of open access and other publication models. Communicating and sharing expertise will be a priority in the increasingly complex information environment and research support will form an explicit element in the role of Academic Liaison Librarians who will be focused on research groups and clusters.

Strategy implementation, monitoring and review

37. In the light of the University strategic targets set out in paragraph 4 above, Schools will develop Research Plans incorporating targets appropriate to the School's individual activity and performance profile, and the desired balance between stimulating activity on the one hand, and measuring achievement on the other. School plans will be presented to Research Committee annually in alignment with the University planning cycle and timescales and will be monitored through reports to the University Executive Board and the Research Committee with

performance reviewed annually, or more frequently if appropriate, against targets. Target-setting by Schools will be undertaken in liaison with the PVC Research as part of the annual planning process. The responsibilities for leadership, management and monitoring of the School plan should be clearly set out within it and targets should be realistic and appropriately resourced. Targets should be established against each of the KPIs listed below, with external income targets broken down for the full range of income streams (including RCUK, charities, industry, KTPs, EU, commercialization) as well as the overall income target. Progress against plans will be measured annually using the following Key Performance Indicators:

- a) Grant and contract income
- b) Grant and contract contribution,
- c) New research students (funded or unfunded)
- d) Total number of research students (ft, pt and ERDS)
- e) Research degrees awarded
- f) Cohort completion rates
- g) Publication, citation measures and other impact measures
- h) Research active staff recruited (relevant to total staff recruited) (headcount and FTE)
- i) Staff newly active
- j) Quality of output
- k) Knowledge Transfer:
 - a. Broad Knowledge Transfer activities
 - b. Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
 - c. CPD provision
 - d. Consultancy
 - e. Commercialisation (where appropriate)
- l) Impact and esteem factors
- m) Review of relative standing against agreed pacemakers (one to beat, one to keep ahead of and one to keep up with).

Incentives

38. Incentives to individual staff will also play an important role in generating improved research performance. Internal rewards for the generation of Full Economic Costs (FEC) Research awards will be realised by credits to Individual Research Reserves at the beginning of the funding, as an outcome of securing awards. The credit value will reflect the size of the award, the perceived quality of the funder in terms of REF metrics and the rate at which FEC is recovered. These credits may be carried forward from year to year.

39. The entire net contribution to Schools from all externally generated income from activities commencing on or after August 1st 2009 will be allocated to Schools, who have the option to 'top up' the individual credit set out at paragraph 33 above, by advance agreement between the Principal Investigator recorded in Appendix One.

Measuring success

40. The overall achievements and this strategy document will be subject to periodic review by the Research Committee.