



# Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

## Research and Knowledge Exchange (KE) Strategy -2015-2020

### **Mission**

**QMU is dedicated to improving quality of life and building the evidence-base for policy and practice through world leading multidisciplinary, translational research and international collaboration. We initiate and share research ideas that are demand led and focused on a broader perspective. The value of our work is measured by its impact and the social usefulness, practicality and applicability of its outcomes.**

**We are committed to working at the intersection of conventional disciplinary groupings to create innovative approaches to contemporary societal challenges and public discourse; and to making a significant contribution to the creation and sharing of knowledge that reaches and influences a broad range of regional and international stakeholders.**

**The vitality of our research environment and our commitment to researcher development promotes synergy between teaching, research and knowledge exchange to achieve maximum impact.**

### ***Vision***

***To achieve an international research profile that ranks QMU as one of the leading post-92 universities for research and KE, we will maintain and enhance research excellence while promoting the highest standards of integrity and maximising impact in a research environment that is vibrant, inclusive and sustainable.***

### ***Aims***

We will continue to embrace specialisation and focus, while encouraging collaboration to maximise complementary strength, so that we develop a critical mass of staff and activity with a clear goal of delivering international research excellence, creating critical volume and ensuring sustainability while nurturing nascent capability and opportunities.

We are committed to the application of translational research to influence public discourse beyond academia, including policy makers, industry, public sector, voluntary and community sectors, and the wider public. We will continue to support innovation externally, working with organisations and business to achieve economic and societal transformation, regionally, nationally and internationally.

By strengthening our global strategic linkages and synergies with external partners and policy makers we will seek to achieve greater impact through greater demand-led complementary alignments with Government and international policy agendas. We shall develop a coherent strategy which continues to support short term horizons but with a new priority focus of long term and more sustainable funding frameworks.

There will be greater emphasis on commercialisation as part of the spectrum of research and knowledge exchange. The establishment of Research Centres will provide a sound basis for developing a more strategic approach to the commercial exploitation of our research and knowledge exchange portfolio.

Future policy development will ensure parity of esteem for impact generating translation and attach greater importance to the promotion of knowledge exchange through the initiation and sharing of research ideas that are focused on a broader perspective through the provision of a more holistic evidence base and added value for economic growth.

An increasing proportion of our future success in research rankings, league tables and funding will depend on our ability to capture and evidence the causal flow from research to its impact. Embedding permanent processes to do this will be key to our REF 2020 strategy, allowing us to catch impact in 'real time'. We will launch a new strategy for impact that will support staff in building impact into the initiation of their research and knowledge exchange activity, to ensure that it is leveraged for the widest possible benefit and return.

By identifying and communicating the outcomes of research that address societal challenges, we will seek to respond to the increasing alignment of funder agendas to grand challenges that demonstrate change and relevance in a global context.

We will continue to support the development of researchers to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly complex external policy context while establishing sustainable, international relationships with strategically aligned organisations by developing suitable engagement activities and communication channels.

Recognising that a world class student experience and excellence in research and knowledge exchange are mutually illuminating, the new Graduate School will ensure the highest standards of supervision and training; promoting an inclusive and interdisciplinary research environment for PhD and Professional Doctorate students. The strategy aims to ensure that, through the creation of a new Graduate School, the specific needs of our postgraduate students are given the prominence required for the achievement of our strategic objectives

We will enhance our vibrant research environment, seeking to increase, celebrate and reward research activity. We will ensure that the processes of academic staff development and review, and promotion, place due emphasis on research activity and performance. Central to this will be a new university-wide peer review and mentoring procedure to drive up the quality of research and KE. Further we will seek to establish appropriately benchmarked metrics and other quality indicators for the spectrum of research and KE activity.

We will continue to develop incubation services for the creation of graduate start-ups and support for innovation in local companies, recognising the increasing role of the University as a catalyst for regional innovation led economic growth.

We will support our researchers in providing Open Access to published research outputs so that they are online and freely available and will seek to provide sustainable policies in support of data management.

### Strategic Objectives, Actions and Performance Indicators

Action	Timescale	KPIs
<b>Strategic Objective 1: PEOPLE - Attract, develop, retain and reward researchers at all career stages</b>		
Appoint new Directors of Research Centres to provide leadership for Research, KE and Commercialisation.	December 2015 - 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of 2*,3*,4* outputs per academic FTE.</li> <li>2. Number of open access outputs deposited in eResearch.</li> <li>3. External commercial income per Research Centre/KE Centre.</li> <li>4. External research grant income per Research Centre/KE Centre.</li> </ol>
Develop our research environment through the launch of a new Graduate School to enhance postgraduate student numbers and experience.	June 2016	
Continue to promote equality and diversity in Research Careers through initiatives such as the curation and promotion of the QMU Inspiring Woman Researcher Exhibition.	November 2019	
Implement the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers Action Plan.	May 2018	
<b>Strategic Objective 2: EXCELLENCE - Through selective strategic investment prioritise the attainment of excellence and international reputation while ensuring that increased focus is balanced by openness to diversification and exploiting the advantage offered by new opportunities.</b>		
Create new strategic Research Centres as the drivers for excellence.	October 2015 - 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Increased levels of research activity in female staff FTE.</li> <li>6. Submission to 6 UoA in REF 2020.</li> <li>7. Identification of Research Impact Case Studies for REF 2020.</li> </ol>
Manage an improved trajectory of performance in REF 2020 through the appointment of a new REF 2020 Strategy Group.	October 2015 - November 2019	
<b>Strategic Objective 3: IMPACT - Maximise the reach and significance of our work through external engagement, public discourse, enterprise and innovation, stimulating the exchange of ideas and knowledge through collaboration.</b>		
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Diversity in our PhD student funding mix.</li> <li>9. Number of PhD students per academic FTE.</li> </ol>

Action	Timescale	KPIs
Launch and deliver a new strategy for research derived impact.	October 2015 – November 2019.	<p><b>10. A continually enhanced postdoctoral student experience as reflected in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).</b></p> <p><b>11. Increase the uptake of incubation space by Graduate Start Ups.</b></p> <p><b>12. Increase the number of SME engagements.</b></p> <p><b>13. Increase participation in sector commercialisation initiatives i.e. Converge Challenge and University Technology.com.</b></p> <p><b>14. Improve the capture and promotion of public engagement activity.</b></p>
Maximise research derived impact, through impact plans for Research Centres, promoting user led and policy informing translational research.	November 2019.	
Extend our knowledge exchange activities, commercialising our research and academic portfolio wherever appropriate, and continuing to promote entrepreneurship and graduate start up.	September 2017	
Continue to focus our research on societal challenges and, drawing on alliances with stakeholder groups in national and international contexts.	November 2019	
Develop and embed new university-wide peer review and mentoring procedures.	June 2016	
<p><b>Strategic Objective 4: ENVIRONMENT – <i>Create a sustainable, responsive and inclusive research environment that is connected internationally and rooted locally.</i></b></p>		
Embed a new culture of Open Access Publishing and Data Management in response to UK policy directives.	April 2016	
Increase income from Research, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation.	November 2019	
Implement new structures to promote good conduct and integrity in Research.	July 2016	
Continue to nurture and maximise international dimensions of our research.	November 2019	

## Objectives

### **1. PEOPLE - *Attract, develop, retain and reward researchers at all career stages***

- 1.1. Develop our skills capacity and attract and develop the next generation of researchers, focusing on ensuring our core academic team remain competitive and entrepreneurial while up-skilling and promoting the enhanced employability of our doctoral and contract research staff, including doctoral students.
- 1.2. Recruit and retain staff with internationally excellent research profiles, remaining alert to opportunities to attract world leading researchers who complement our identified strengths.
- 1.3. Embed more holistic processes to link recruitment, workload allocation models and reward and recognition.
- 1.4. Champion equality and diversity in research careers both within and beyond the traditional domains of STEM and Athena Swan.
- 1.5. Implement sector best practice in researcher career development and mobility through the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, Human Resources Excellence in Research Award and engagement in international networks.
- 1.6. Launch a new pan-University Graduate School to develop the teaching and research nexus through an enhanced postgraduate student experience.
- 1.7. Attract high quality postgraduate research students from across the globe.
- 1.8. Offer a competitive, high quality doctoral and research experience which prepares students and early career researchers for careers within or beyond academia.
- 1.9. Develop curricula underpinned by our critical and applied research and practitioner expertise.

### **2. EXCELLENCE - *Through selective strategic investment prioritise the attainment of excellence and international reputation while ensuring that increased focus is balanced by openness to diversification and exploiting the advantage offered by new opportunities.***

- 2.1. Drive excellence through the creation of strategic Research Centres, containing cognate groupings of researchers in order to build coherence, credibility and capacity in research excellence, while maximising outputs from internal and external strategic investments.
- 2.2. Ensure QMU achieves excellence in and recognition for the quality of its postgraduate education and research through the creation of a new Graduate School.

- 2.3. Support Research Centres in developing international profiles for research excellence measured in research outputs, external funding and impact.
  - 2.4. Improve the quality of outputs and the number of citations through; a more proactive approach to peer review and mentoring; improved management information on citation performance; and ensuring all outputs are deposited in eResearch, in line with our commitment to Open Access publishing.
  - 2.5. Embrace sector developments relating to research metrics including altmetrics and alternative measurement tools.
  - 2.6. Raise the level and ambition of our activities to world leading standards by increasing the quality profile and volume of our submission to REF 2020.
- 3. IMPACT - *Maximise the reach and significance of our work through external engagement, public discourse, enterprise and innovation, stimulating the exchange of ideas and knowledge through collaboration.***
- 3.1. Develop and implement a new strategy for the growth, capture and curation of impact.
  - 3.2. Promote parity in esteem for impact generating translation and knowledge exchange activities with more explicit reference to commercialisation.
  - 3.3. Develop strategic research collaborations with national and international HEIs and other stakeholders.
  - 3.4. Champion entrepreneurship and enterprise by implementing a programme of activity resulting in a step-change in the entrepreneurial culture within QMU.
  - 3.5. Continue to respond to national economic agendas for innovation led economic growth through SME engagement.
  - 3.6. Maximise the impact of research excellence by focusing critical mass in a number of focused strategic research centres, maximising the opportunities afforded by multidisciplinary and cross school working.
  - 3.7. Foster a culture that is responsive to external opportunities and challenges.
- 4. ENVIRONMENT – *Create a sustainable, responsive and inclusive research environment that is connected internationally and rooted locally.***
- 4.1. Ensure an achievable and targeted investment plan for staffing and infrastructure while creating an operating framework that is transparent in managing activity and lines of responsibility and accountability.

- 4.2.** Ensure compliance with sector Concordats and contemporary standards of good practice to ensure and enhance quality and integrity in research and KE.
- 4.3.** Enhance and develop the environment for doctoral research, building on feedback from doctoral students as a means of developing and continuously monitoring excellence in our research culture.
- 4.4.** Ensure research is sustained through external research grants, knowledge exchange and commercialisation.
- 4.5.** Embed efficient post-award research support services with adequate systems and resources to facilitate improved project monitoring and reporting.
- 4.6.** Ensure the robustness and compliance of Data Management, including a sustainable solution for data storage.
- 4.7.** Support the principles and objectives of Open Access Publishing and seek routes that make all forms of output accessible for the benefit of wider society.
- 4.8.** Develop regional, national and international collaborations, using appropriate funding models and multidisciplinary proposals.
- 4.9.** Ensure that support services are clear of their contribution to research and encourage pro-active dialogue to improve process and system.
- 4.10.** Review processes to support commercialisation in order that we grasp opportunities while ensuring that activities are both commercially and ethically robust; protecting our public liability and ensuring our brand values are upheld.