ESW RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE STRATEGY (2014-18)

1. OUR VISION

The School of Education and Social Work enjoys a national and international reputation as a leading and outward looking centre of research excellence. Building on existing achievements, our vision for 2013-18 is to grow and diversify our distinctive strengths, maximise our sustainability, vitality and outstanding contributions to our disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields. Distinctive to our research profile and ambition are:

A shared value base: Underpinning all our research is the commitment to inclusion and equity, to promoting social justice, social and civic participation, and improving life chances across the lifecourse and contexts.

Making a difference to knowledge: We generate knowledge through criticality and innovation in education, social work and related interdisciplinary fields. Our research combines conceptual and theoretical sophistication with empirical rigour, through situated enquiry with international significance and reach. We promote all forms of research inquiry, including original and participative research methodologies that combine theory, research, policy and practice. We will continue to sustain excellent research quality as we grow these activities, maximising our use of intra- and inter-university research networks and partnerships within and beyond the academy.

Making a difference in the world: We know that research can make a social impact and facilitate change in practice and policy, address professional concerns and make a difference to lived experience across the lifecourse and in different contexts. We have an excellent track record of outward looking engagement with international policy organisations, and with practice and policy research users in the UK, Europe, Asia, Australasia, the Americas and the Global South, contributing to debate and influencing social and pedagogic development and change. We will continue to develop our strategies for achieving research impact through active dialogue, partnerships and knowledge exchange with stakeholders and our diverse user communities.

Commitment to sustainability and vitality: We are dedicated to continuing and growing ESW as a centre of excellence in research and teaching, making significant and wide-reaching contributions to the sustainability and vitality of our disciplines and fields. Our research concentration is complemented by our commitment to creating and sustaining a supportive, stimulating research environment, enabling all faculty with research elements in their contracts[1] to be confident and competent in their research and knowledge exchange role, and nurturing early career and doctoral researchers in particular. Our collaborative environment will foster both collective research identity and diversity.

2. OUR STRATEGIC RESEARCH GOAL FOR 2013-18:

- To maintain and extend our standing, vitality and sustainability as international centres of research excellence and scholarship in Education and Social Work.

3. OUR STRATEGIC TARGETS FOR RESEARCH:

- Growth and sustainment of profile and reputation to achieve ranking among the top 20 UK HEIs for Education and Social Work research post-REF 2020;
- Meeting research and knowledge exchange income generation targets 2014-18;
- Achievement of reputation as destination of choice for doctoral and post-doctoral research among the top 20 UK HEIs for Education and Social Work post-REF 2014.

---

[1] Hereafter referred to as 'relevant' faculty.

4. OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: supporting our goal and targets for research and knowledge exchange, will be:

   A. To produce internationally excellent and innovative research and publications that make leading contributions to disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields;
   B. To extend and maximise national and international research and knowledge exchange partnerships, collaborations and networks;
   C. To enhance and diversify bidding activity and funders, including increased large interdisciplinary bids within a diverse portfolio, for successful, sustainable research and consultancy income generation;
   D. To extend and maximise research synergies and collaboration within and between departments, research centres and schools
   E. To extend the local, national and global significance and reach of our research impacting on policy, practice and real lives;
   F. To grow and mobilise research confidence, competence and capacity among all relevant faculty and research staff , in particular nurturing early career faculty, doctoral and post-doctoral researchers;
   G. To encourage and promote high standards of research conduct, integrity and data management;
   H. To optimise synergies between research and teaching;
   I. To ensure staffing levels, recruitment strategies and workload balance to support and sustain high quality research activity;
   J. To strengthen the ESW research community, combining common purpose and inclusivity with distinctiveness and diversity.
   K. To ensure continuation and growth of thriving doctoral community;
   L. To ensure workload balance in doctoral supervision to support and sustain high quality doctoral research activity and outcomes;
   M. To enhance doctoral research supervision capacity and quality to achieve and sustain high submission and completion rates;
   N. To enhance the quality of space and facilities to support excellent doctoral research activity making ESW a destination of choice for doctoral and post-doctoral research in Education and Social Work;
   O. To review doctoral research provision to achieve a high ratio of PGR international students;
   P. To utilise the international profile of research centres to attract high quality doctoral and post-doctoral research students.

5. MECHANISMS: to support this approach will include:

Research leadership, strategic and operational planning

   i. **Department/UoA research leads (DRLs)**: appointed respectively for Education and Social Work, to oversee implementation of ESW Research Strategy in line with departmental strategies (including staffing, workload). Department research leads will act as UoA leads in planning for REF 2020, a process which begins from early 2014 and incorporates learning from REF 2014. This includes developing UoA level publication portfolio, income generation, impact and environment strategies, and regular review of progress. Department research leads will take lead responsibility for ongoing (real-time) recording, monitoring and update of REF data, and annual update of REF 'living documents'. This will need to be supported by planned improvements at University level in research and impact management information systems and resource.

ii. **Research Leadership Team and Department Research Strategy Groups:** DRKE, HoDs and Department Research Leads will constitute the School Research Leadership Team, working together to plan and oversee effective implementation of the mechanisms outlined below, to achieve intended objectives. Research Leadership Team will work with Department Research Strategy Groups (HoD, DRL and Research Centre Leads), including in support of REF planning, and with the full membership of ESW Research Committee and Director of Doctoral Studies as required.

iii. **DRKE and REC:** in liaison with research leadership team and Research Ethics Officers will ensure compliance between School and University policies on Research Conduct and Integrity, Data Management, Open Access and use of Sussex Research On -line, with regular updates and monitoring of implementation as necessary;

iv. **The ESW Professoriate**: will take individual and collective responsibility to contribute academic leadership to support research and knowledge exchange activity and development, and to play a strong role in the achievement of objectives.

Research Centres:

v. **Strengthening ESW research centres and developing synergies**: our research centres will be supported, strengthened and developed, as critical intellectual communities, engaging with contested social, political and educational arenas that influence wellbeing, citizenship, equity, material contexts and resources. In particular, our centres will be supported and enhanced as core hubs of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research activity and collaborative engagement, through maximising synergies within and across centres and fostering outward facing collaborations with national and international partners within and beyond the academy.

vi. **Ensuring research centre continuity and productivity:** through transparent provision and audit of core resource, moving towards rewarding activity levels and success with resource on equitable principles. There will be regular and transparent review of research centre activities, success and plans, including publication portfolio, bidding profile, income generation and impact achievement, and contribution to a vibrant research environment.

vii. **New research centre for adult wellbeing**: establishing a new interdisciplinary university research centre, provisional title Centre for Innovation and Research in Adult Wellbeing (CIRA). The centre will focus upon mental health, ageing, disability, risk, cultural diversity and migration, linking with key groupings across campus (such as BSMS, Psychology, Migration Studies and Anthropology) and externally to bring growth in research income through bids in these key national and international policy areas.

viii. **New centre for social work research:** establishing a new school Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research with distinctive focus on critical disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to social work problems, practice, policy, knowledge development and exchange.

ix. **Cross- school and cross-research centre activities and events:** continuing and developing our programme of research seminars, symposia, workshops etc. to promote cross-fertilisation, common purpose and research collaboration, and synergies between research and teaching and across disciplines.

Partnerships:

x. **International partnerships and collaborations:** proactive development and consolidation of our links, networks and knowledge hubs with international research partners and stakeholders; includes: invited visitors and exchanges, and building on existing relationships (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO, Commonwealth Ministers, INGOs, EU, and our multiple links in Europe, USA, Australia, Asia and Global South) to generate increased grant capture to produce high quality, high impact research.

xi. **Partnerships with education and social work practitioners and local authorities:** building on and extending existing relationships, including further development of collaborative and practitioner-inquiry research between the university, partner agencies/schools and user groups, to generate research impact for local community and service users, as exemplified in the new Sussex Research Network with local schools, and the local Service Users and Carers Network.

xii. **Cross-university partnerships and collaboration:** continuing actively to promote cross-university partnerships to develop broader interdisciplinary bidding platforms (particularly but not exclusively for large competitive bids), improve research capacity, quality and innovation and ensure ongoing competitiveness. To include: consolidating research links with the Rudd Centre for Research and Practice in Adoption Studies and other (national and international) centres for adoption studies; pursuing stronger collaborative links with health, including BSMS, Global, Psychology and Sociology for adult health and social care research; to grow links with BMEc on leadership and diversity research; to consolidate and grow links with Migration Studies, Gender Studies, IDS, the Sussex Centre for Conflict and Security Research, Sociology and the Africa Centre, for international education.

Research Income Generation

xiii. **Growth and diversification of bids**: research leadership team and research centres will deploy partnership and development mechanisms outlined above, and bidding mechanisms below, to promote in particular large, interdisciplinary bids to high prestige funders (including EU, ESF, Research Councils). This will be complemented by support for a diverse portfolio of bids and awards, with increasing diversification of local, national and international funders, across government/public, non-government/charity and where possible philanthropic and industry sectors.

xiv. **Building research relationships with funders**: based on high quality research outputs and knowledge exchange, we will consolidate and further grow existing funder relationships (e.g. with UNESCO, UNICEF, ESRC, DfID, DH, DfE, Geneva Global, Oxfam, Office of the Children's Commissioner) and extend newer ones (e.g. EU, AHRC, Nuffield).

xv. **Alerts to bidding opportunities**: tailored 'Research Professional' searches and alerts are set up and will be refined for all research centres; centre leads will alert appropriate members to research and consultancy opportunities and encourage and support their bids.

xvi. **Collaborative bidding:** will be encouraged and supported, inter- and intra-school, and with other HEIs and stakeholders, to build interdisciplinary national and international bidding platforms, extend capacity and competitiveness, maximise success and sustainability. Early career researchers will be encouraged to collaborate as co-investigators on larger bids, moving to principal investigator on small then larger bids.

xvii. **Bidding for open calls:** dedicated activities (e.g. 'think tanks', brainstorming sessions) will be hosted to stimulate bidding for 'open' calls, promoting originality, creativity, innovation and risk taking, with follow through support via research centres/themes/mentoring.

xviii. **Pricing of bids**: maintaining FEC where possible but flexible pricing for bids of key strategic importance to the school, and to ensure competitiveness.

xix. **Post decision review of bids**: process for post-decision review of a proportion of applications, both successful and unsuccessful, to be established, to identify and advise faculty of lessons learned. .

Impact

xx. **Planning, monitoring and reviewing impact strategy**: Research Leadership Team will collaborate (and work with University Impact Officer) to plan, support, implement and review regularly research impact plans at school, UoA, centre and individual levels, including use of specific mechanisms below. Includes HEIF funded appointment of p/t School Impact Officer, for one year in the first instance.

xxi. **Engagement in consultancy activities at national and international levels:** will be encouraged and supported through centres to extend reach and impact of research.

xxii. **Impact generation activities integrated and costed into research bids:** as far as possible, grant applications will include activities to extend the reach of findings to appropriate research users and beneficiaries; peer review of bids will include scrutiny of pathways to impact.

xxiii. **Maximising impact generation opportunities:** especially in key strategic and academic areas of expertise. Includes: creating opportunities through networks, collaborations and research designs to maximize policy/practice utilisation; improving research communication and dissemination in forms accessible to research user and social science communities; hosting conferences and seminars, enhanced use of web based and social media; judicious use of HEIF funds.

xxiv. **Monitoring, recording and reporting impact**: monitoring and recording in live time to be supported by planned improvements at University level in research and impact management information systems and resource; research impact will also be reported, for example, in research centre annual reports, with examples of good practice made available to all relevant faculty and research staff.

xxv. **Impact case studies**: will be developed on an ongoing basis in preparation for next REF; steered by Department Research Leads and supported by Research Centre Leads.

Research Capacity, Development, Performance and Conduct

xxvi. **Workload planning and research time:** transparent workload planning includes protected allocation for research bidding, writing and impact generation.

xxvii. **Sustainable staff base**: as an essential prerequisite for all the above: continuing to build a sustainable staff base through recruitment, recognition and promotion.

xxviii. **Individual publication and income generation norms:** guideline norms for all relevant faculty will be introduced, with indicative averages of at least one 3* /4* peer review publication and circa £10K research contribution income per year. Norms will be treated as guideline averages, with flexibilities in recognition of individual circumstances, and for example, high quality but unsuccessful bids made. Achievement to be supported, monitored and reviewed through the full range of mechanisms outlined below.

xxix. **Individual research plans**: all relevant faculty will develop mandatory individual research plans, to facilitate clear direction, support and appropriate levels of achievement. Early and mid-career researcher plans to be drawn up in dialogue with mentors; and senior researcher plans normally drawn up in dialogue with peer consultant. Research staff will normally also be encouraged to draw up individual research plans in dialogue with mentors/supervisors. Plans to identify clear goals and supports needed, including for high quality publication, income generation and impact. Plans to be made with reference to guideline norms (including flexibilities as appropriate), along with career development ambitions, individual and collective REF ambitions and Research Strategy objectives. Individuals encouraged to identify protected research time within IRPs and diaries. Plans to be lodged with DRLs, to be shared with HoDs, DRKE and HoS. Progress of plans and achievement of goals will be supported, monitored and reviewed through the range of mechanisms outlined below.

xxx. **Induction:** as part of induction, all relevant new faculty and research staff will be fully appraised of research and knowledge exchange opportunities, expectations, guideline norms and standards of research conduct, support and resources, policies and processes. Includes introduction to key research personnel, research centre(s) as appropriate, web based resources and programme of activities, as well as early establishment of mentor/peer consultant arrangement for individual research planning. Where probationary period applies, individual research planning, goals, development needs and supports formally to be integrated within probation plan.

xxxi. **Research mentoring:** research mentoring to be provided departmentally, as mandatory, for all early and mid-career researchers and all research staff, and for other relevant faculty as required. Mentoring to include drawing up of individual research plans, guidance on research conduct, support for development to achieve planned goals, monitoring of progress and achievements. Early and mid-career researchers to be facilitated increasingly to take responsibility for their own research bids and projects, and individual research plans to reflect this.

xxxii. **Peer consultation for senior faculty**: will be recommended and provided for senior career colleagues (without mentors), as the preferred mechanism for developing and supporting individual research plans, and monitoring progress and achievement.

xxxiii. **Planned progression through co-work/team bidding :** experienced PIs encouraged to include earlier career researchers as Co-Is in bids and as co-authors, and actively to support progression from Co-I to PI, co-author to lead author.

xxxiv. **Peer review and quality assurance:** provision of peer review for research grant applications (including pathways to impact), research reports and publications, routinely for all relevant faculty and research staff. Clear mechanisms for arranging peer review to be established, including through research centres, and notified to faculty. Normal internal deadlines to be established for pre-submission bid review, with flexibilities by arrangement with reviewer.

xxxv. **Informal peer support:** provision on a task focused basis, through research centres, or otherwise as agreed, to support all relevant faculty and research staff in developing bids, conducting research, writing, and generating research impact.

xxxvi. **Dedicated research/writing development initiatives:** provision of dedicated task focused workshops to be provided, to support bid writing, writing for publication and generating research impact – for ECRs and others as needed. Timetabling dedicated research writing weeks where possible.

xxxvii. **Researcher development and research training for relevant faculty and research staff:** provided and/or sponsored as appropriate, including School-based workshops/masterclasses, and training through the Doctoral School or external providers where necessary and within resource. Includes research impact training and development opportunities, hosted by School and/or University through ESRC Impact Acceleration Account managed programme. Also includes training and development on research ethics, integrity and data management.

xxxviii. **Scholarship development for teaching fellows:** oversight and support of scholarship development for teaching fellows, to include mentoring, doctoral registration /supervision if appropriate and within resources, mentoring, and review/appraisal**.**

xxxix. **Study leave**: applications for standard study leave (for staff on teaching + research contracts, supported by clear research plans and target output/outcomes, are considered on an annual basis for allocation within resources. Applications for exceptional study leave (also for staff on research only contracts) are considered at any time. Priorities include flexible use of short, task focused periods for completion of research bids/outputs, and compensating senior management team members for research time lost to service. Individual study leave outcomes/outputs to be monitored and reviewed, including through appraisal.

xl. **Appraisal and performance review**: individual research plans will be fed, as a discrete element, into annual appraisal of staff research, teaching and service contributions. Appraisal will identify and plan for research development needs, and formally review progress and achievement of individual research plans/goals, with reference to School research guideline norms and benchmark descriptors for promotion as appropriate. Individual research plans and review of achievement will be lodged with Head of Department, with delegated authority from Head of School for monitoring performance, in context of full individual workload, circumstances and support provided. Where necessary, further research performance management measures will be taken in accordance with the University Capability Procedures. Review of individual research plans also lodged with DRLs, for collective review with DRKE, HoDs and HoS.

xli. **Probationary review:** individual research plan and goals, with associated identification of development needs and supports, will formally be built into probation plans, with progress monitored informally through mentoring and formally through annual progress review with HoD. Achievement of individual research goals, along with fulfilment of the spectrum of probationary criteria in context of individual circumstances and supports, will be fed into Probation Committee's formal decision-making concerning confirmation of appointment.

xlii. **Review of common research development needs**: common themes among staff research development needs identified through mentoring and appraisal processes will be reviewed by DRKE, Departmental Research Leads and Heads of Department annually, for further planning, to support and mobilise research capacity, confidence and competence.

Doctoral and post-doctoral research: (awaiting amendment)

xliii. **Enhanced doctoral student experience:** ensuring continuation and growth of thriving doctoral research community through research skills training, student-led research conferences and provision of adequate space and facilities for doctoral students

xliv. **Doctoral supervision and workload**: providing high quality doctoral supervision through regular training of supervisors; monitoring doctoral student progress to completion through annual review of student progress, identifying challenges for appropriate action by DDS; ensuring that faculty supervision workloads do not exceed the max of 6FTE to enhance the quality of doctoral supervision

xlv. **Increased external funded doctoral students**: attracting externally funded doctoral studentships and post-doctoral fellowships by identifying and supporting students applying for such awards through the application process; encouraging faculty to include funding for doctoral and post-doctoral in research bids

xlvi. **Increased number of International and fulltime PGR students:** using academic partnerships with higher education institutions to attract fully funded doctoral students, streamlining and enhancing professional doctorate programmes to improve demand and increase number of registered students; enhancing attractiveness of doctoral programmes through publicity showcasing thriving doctoral research community, student satisfaction, and high quality research centres and faculty engaged in cutting-edge research in education and social work.