

School of Education & Social Work
Strategic framework for research with impact (2019-25)

Context:

We operate in an uncertain environment that includes Covid-19 and wider (e.g., Brexit and climate-related) precarities for HE and for research funding. We understand that there will also be new opportunities emerging from targeted investments in research by UKRI and other funders, and we are well placed to respond to greater support for interdisciplinary research and research with impact. Our strategy is designed to preserve and enrich a successful research culture and to facilitate agility in relation to changing external opportunities. Essential to this vision is a secure and well managed staff group whose development is nurtured at every career stage.

This strategic framework sets out our intent to sustain a distinctive research culture, enhancing our reputation for interdisciplinary excellence and challenging conventional thinking.

Our strategy commits us to a **vision** of research that:

- makes a difference to policy, practice and lived experience;
- is informed by a rigorous, critical and ethical perspective on knowledge production;
- actively engages with those who have a stake in our work;
- builds research-capacity, including via co-production.

Objectives are mapped to the pillars of the updated *Sussex 2025 Strategy*:

- **Capacity and profile:** Through visible leadership, to drive sector-wide improvements in research, policy and practice, strengthening partnerships with our stakeholders and shaping agendas through leadership and collaboration, locally, nationally and internationally.
- **Culture:** To further evolve our environment, with enhanced attention to equalities and diversity, research staff support, technological sophistication and climate change resilience.
- **Challenges:** To attract, nurture, and sustain research talent, strengthening our capacity for investigator-driven and policy/practice-driven and tendered research, through close alignment of research, teaching and staffing priorities in appointments and succession planning in research leadership.
- **Excellence:** To enable high quality research trajectories, underpinned by excellent research mentoring, internal peer review and transparent research management.
- **Diversification:** To further diversify our funding portfolio and align with funder priorities, valuing a mix of national and international research councils, government, third and private sector funders, and nurturing strategic relationships with non-HEI research collaborators.

Mechanisms: our approach to promoting these objectives and monitoring progress will take a range of forms including as an element of:

- individual research planning and research information systems;
- annual reporting formats for Research Centres;
- criteria evaluating applications for study leave and internal research funding;
- priorities for staff development and mentoring;
- focused and time limited projects, established by and reporting to ESW Research; Committee.

Indicators: our objectives will translate into hard outcomes as evaluated through the University KPIs for research in areas of research income and international authorship. We also intend that there will be softer outcomes visible at School level including evidence of:

- visible leadership within our fields (academic, professional and public);
- knowledge exchange that engages both scholarship and research;
- a privileging of quality over quantity in research outputs;
- a balanced portfolio of funded research in terms of funders, scale and type of project
- satisfaction among staff that they are able to undertake rewarding research and to progress in their research development over time;
- a shared understanding among Faculty of the collective research agenda and the need to balance the costs and rewards associated with research activity;
- appointments that contribute to synergies between research and teaching;
- collaboration between research centres.

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