

Executive Summary of Business for Senate

Title	Updated Research with Impact Priorities
Status	Unrestricted
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Type	Briefing note
Date	19 February 2021
Summary of paper	This paper will update the existing Sussex 2025 Research with Impact strategic priorities
Strategic context	Supports Research with Impact ambitions.
Value for Money	Value for Money is at the heart of strategy development for research priorities
Equalities Analysis	No, an equalities analysis hasn't been undertaken. This is not a policy change.
Environmental Impacts	None
Consultation	ULT 'away days' November 2020, DRKES December 2020 RaKE Strategy Meeting
Effective date of introduction	1 January 2021
Recommendation	Senate is asked to RECEIVE this briefing on the revised activities under the Research with Impact Aims.

Updated Research with Impact Priorities

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the approved Sussex 2025 Strategy, the Research with Impact pillar held 3 high level programme areas of activity: REF 2021, Costing and Pricing, and Knowledge Exchange, with each programme area have 7 activities.
- 1.2 In addition to the programme areas, there were 5 main aims:
 - 1.2.1 Build the capacity and profile of Sussex as a distinctive world-leading research-intensive institution with impact;
 - 1.2.2 Build a vibrant, exciting, collaborative research culture across the University and through all stages of the research career
 - 1.2.3 Build Sussex's capability and reputation for path-breaking interdisciplinary research, tackling global challenges as well as local issues
 - 1.2.4 Pursue and build research excellence in all that we do, prioritising quality and impact over quantity
 - 1.2.5 Increase research income and contribution across the institution, through diversification of sources, influencing activities, and targeting of funding programmes
- 1.3 Each of the 5 aims, had a multitude of activities to support these aims, some of which, but not all, mapped to the 3 programme areas.

2. Background

- 2.1 A significant amount of work has been undertaken across the 3 programme areas. A summary report detailing Costing and Pricing activities is enclosed at appendix 1.
- 2.2 REF preparations are well known and documented, with good structures in place to deliver the objectives. REF submission is delayed until 31 March 2021 due to the impact of the pandemic.
- 2.3 The Knowledge Exchange Framework programme, was repurposed to Business Engagement under the previous dPVC R&E, but has been revisited following the PVCR&E's appointment in post.
- 2.4 Research with Impact was a key topic area at the ULT Strategy 'away day' sessions held in November. The PVCR&E led his senior team to engage ULT with discussion on the existing aims, and what our priorities should be in the current environment.
- 2.5 The revision to the aims has been developed as a direct outcome from ULT engagement with the development of priorities for Research with Impact, and discussion with DRKES at the December RaKE Strategy Meeting.

3. Revised activities under the 5 Aims

- 3.1 The revised RWI activities have been endorsed by UEG. This will now provide a framework upon which The Research & Enterprise Roadmap can be developed.
- 3.2 The table shown in appendix 2, details the revised activities that have been agreed. None of the high level aims have been changed. Following RaKE Committee in February, further small revisions to the activities have been recommended and approved, but those revisions haven't yet been reflected in the table.
- 3.3 The activities will support the Research with Impact vision held by the PVCR&E and his supporting research leadership team, and provides a key framework to take those activities forward.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 Senate is asked to **RECEIVE** this briefing on the revised activities under the Research with Impact Aims.

Appendix 1

Summary of the key achievements of the Maximising Research Income and Pricing Project

1. Introduction

The Maximising Research Income and Pricing activity was a key project of the Research with Impact pillar of the Sussex 2025 programme. The MRIP Steering Board is Chaired by Professor Stephen Shute and membership comprises of Allan Spencer and Sue Angulatta, with secretariat provided by Gill Watson. Other key members of the RES team attended by invitation. The Executive met 7 times during the 15 month period July 2019 to October 2020 to oversee the work of the programme.

2. Programme of work

The principal theme of this stream of work, was to find ways to improve the recovery of income on research grants and contracts. Improvement works are part of business as usual in RES, but this stream of work focussed on some key strategic areas requiring rapid response intervention. A number of key activities were identified and included in the work stream, a mixture of policy, process, and strategic.

3. Outputs

3.1. Strategic: One key activity during 2019-20, was the **Integrated Planning and Budgetary Process.**

As part of this Finance-led activity, research income, for the first time, played a key role in the planning process. Council KPI for income is based upon the £ per academic FTE for the discipline area, with a target of 50% of our discipline areas being in the top 20% of UK disciplines. With this target in mind, research income and stretch targets were developed for the 5-year IPBP period, as part of an iterative process with Heads of School and Finance Business Partners.

3.2. Policy:

3.2.1. The new policy for **Contract Research Pricing** was developed and presented to RKEC for approval. Feedback from the meeting in February, resulted in further nuancing of the charging rates. The final pricing policy has now been agreed and is operational as part of pricing contract research.

3.2.2. New approach on NHS/NIHR grant application drivers/overhead pricing was approved by the Board in January. This will be reviewed in the current financial year for effectiveness in recovering funds for Sussex. (Led by the JCRO)

3.3. Process improvements:

3.3.1. Inclusion of 'service packs' for equipment when included in a bid as standard.

3.3.2. Revised Professorial banding rates to ensure sufficient recovery of salaries on grants and contracts.

3.3.3. Reviewed researcher grades 7 and 8 and ensuring grade 'run on' from one to the other as 'standard' as part of pricing up research applications.

3.3.4. Summary bid sheets now include the RAM charge as part of the sign off for Heads of School. The bid sheet also includes a recovery rate based on FEC and funder income.

3.3.5. Revised processes for School sign off on bids by the Finance Business Partner will be trialled in MPS this autumn prior to roll-out to other Schools.

3.3.6. Improved process for approval and sign off of Institutional Letters of Support are in place.

4. Outstanding work to be taken forward as ongoing improvements:

4.1. **Peer review processes** to improve grant capture. dPVCr Prof Seb Oliver is revisiting some early work undertaken by the team with a view to gaining some traction and agreement on improvements that can be made across Schools, to help with improving quality.

5. **Conclusion**

There have been a number of key improvements in the pricing and recovery of research income on grant and contract applications. Further improvement works will continue as part of Business as Usual, and the Steering Board will be disbanded in September.

Appendix 2: Sussex 2025 – Aims & Activities – November 2020

Aim 1: Capacity & Profile	Aim 2: Culture	Aim 3: Challenges	Aim 4: Excellence	Aim 5: Diversification
Build the capacity and profile of Sussex as a distinctive, world-leading research institution with impact.	Build a vibrant, exciting, collaborative research culture.	Build capability and reputation for path breaking interdisciplinary research, tackling global and local challenges.	Pursue and build research excellence prioritising quality and impact over quantity.	Increase research income through diversifying sources.
A1.1: Review and support our research priorities aligning with strengths and future aspirations	A2.1: Celebrate and take Pride in our research	A3.1: Take a leading role in addressing Global Challenges	A4.1: Develop a strong future REF strategy	A5.1: Build capability & agility to respond to and influence changing funding sources
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an effective governance process for the creation and maintenance of research programmes, research centres and groups. 2. Provide procedures to evaluate and develop research that allow clarity over need for institutional based financial support. 3. Ensure our research strategy aligns well with major funders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage good citizenship in research where collaboration, mutual support and mentoring are valued highly and recognised publicly. 2. Enhance the recognition and reward for staff who excel in creating impact. 3. Regularly celebrate research achievements at all career stages and encourage and support researchers to secure external prizes. 4. Articulate the value of research to the business 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify existing international collaborative strengths and identify/target future collaborations/networks; consider forming university networks. 2. Identify future funding opportunities to build e relationships and collaborative opportunities. 3. Set expectations and encourage joint research outputs with international partners. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For REF2021, focus effort where investment will yield maximum benefit. 2. Post REF submission, identify those ‘impacts’ where we can exploit publicly. 3. Develop strategies for the next REF and build capacity to achieve this e.g., impact generation and capture, open access compliance, and open data. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map the funding landscape for research and review regularly. 2. Develop infrastructure and systems across to capture the full knowledge exchange benefits from our research. 3. Build central capacity to extend our R&E reach and demonstrate its economic and social value to external stakeholders. 4. Develop clear research-related 'propositions' which inspire

	of the university and communicate and celebrate this widely	4. Build upon and publicise joint activities with IDS.		stakeholders to invest in our R&E capability.
A1.2: Identify and develop strong partnerships with leading universities and external partners	A2.2: Develop our researchers	A3.2: Engage and respond to UK National Challenges	A4.2: Embrace a 'quality vs quantity' approach to research	A5.2: Nurture strategic relationships with non HEI research collaborators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define ways of supporting academic staff to engage with key external partners. 2. Establish where possible external advisory boards for Schools and University supported Programmes and Centres. 3. Promote opportunities for staff to build research partnerships with academics at other universities, especially those overseas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State and support clear expectations for all research-active staff. 2. Establish a career development framework for researchers at all career stages. 3. Ensure taught students have the opportunity to engage in research linked to the Learn to Transform Strategy. 4. Develop and support researchers to be ambitious, take risks and tackle big challenges. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be aware of and connected into national networks with the aim of building research collaborations. 2. Encourage academic engagement in funder strategic networks and advisory councils to input to and shape future funding opportunities. 3. Develop initiatives that invite / connect us systemically to external challenges to build our research portfolio. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify research strengths and align overarching themes to promote research at Sussex to the outside world. 2. Develop new bid processes to actively support our strategic priorities. 3. Maximise researcher effectiveness by mentoring, coaching and effective peer review processes in School. 4. Develop Work Load Management that allows sufficient time to develop research ideas and partnerships. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify key public and private corporations with which to build strong relationships with a significant research component. 2. Nominate senior relationship managers (at UEG/HoS level, supported by Business Partnership Managers) to ensure that key relationships are managed and maximised. Join strategic research-related networks that promote the University's R&E strengths and ambitions. De-prioritise those which do not.
	A2.3: Embed a culture of collaboration, openness & inclusion	A3.3: Develop a 'place' based strategy to respond to Regional Challenges	A4.3: Develop a strong KEF strategy	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a strategy for sector-leading Equality, Diversity and Inclusion throughout our research activities. 2. Embed a culture of collaboration, external engagement, partnership and co-production. 3. Develop a sector leading approach to Open Research. 4. Embed DORA principles into recruitment and the criteria used for evaluation of performance and promotion processes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop further Sussex's connectivity to Brighton & Hove, establishing a strong 'place' agenda. 2. Identify and develop critical local partner relationships; establish local 'needs' to evidence funding investment requirements. 3. Build strong regional partnerships with other universities to promote regional expertise. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Knowledge Exchange programme, setting out clear aspirations, plans and actions to achieve greater impact and increase income. 2. Appoint a dedicated member of staff to manage the KEF, KEF Concordat and HEIF reporting requirements. 3. Ensure School-based KE activities maximise their contribution to our KEF results and increase our HEIF allocation. 	
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