Faculty of Education Research Strategy 2021 - 2025

# **Vision**

Rooted in a commitment to social justice, the Faculty’s research aims to shape, inform and change educational policy and practice for those who have been excluded or marginalised by institutional and structural barriers of discrimination or exclusion. The vision is to undertake and prioritise research that impacts positively on the lives of children, young people, schools, educational institutions, families and communities. This vision drives a vibrant research culture and environment, where social inclusiveness, democratic understanding, and collaborative activity, are all fundamental to the ways in which the Faculty undertakes its research.

This strategy builds on the achievements made during the period of the previous Faculty Research Strategy and since REF 2014. It also lays out plans to drive forward research and to build capacity for, and confidence in, conducting high quality research. It also seeks to identify and prioritise areas for development. The strategy recognises the relationship between research and knowledge exchange, and that research can both lead *to* knowledge exchange activity, as well as arise *from* such activity.

Over the period covered by the last Faculty Research Strategy, and since REF 2014, we have actively supported the development of researchers and research capacity; enhanced the research infrastructure and environment to maximise the number of internationally excellent and world leading outputs, and strengthened the impact of our research.

Building on these successes, we now seek to:

* Enhance the Faculty’s capacity for research and the number of staff eligible to be submitted to the REF;
* Increase the number of bids submitted for external grant funding and the amount of income received;
* Produce an increased number of world leading and internationally excellent research outputs;
* Undertake research that informs the Faculty’s teaching, student learning, and partnership work, and has impact beyond the Faculty and University;
* Form strategic partnerships and research collaborations to enhance the research environment;
* Recruit and develop excellent postgraduate research students;
* Support and nurture academic staff through providing high quality opportunities for learning and development.

Central to achieving the Faculty’s strategic goals for research will be:

**Consolidation**

We will build on our existing strengths and expertise to enhance our reputation for research that aligns with our priority themes that are linked with a commitment to social justice as a theme of, and an operating principle for, our research:

* higher education policy and practice;
* teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum;
* inclusion, diversity, and identity;
* children’s rights and well-being.

**Communication**

We will communicate effectively internally so that resources are used efficiently and in order to maintain a vibrant research culture. Through our external communications we will engage with our research users, build networks and partnerships, and disseminate our research effectively.

**Confidence**

We will support staff to realise their research potential and their transition from excellent practitioners to engaged researchers who are secure in delivering research informed teaching.

# **Research and impact strategy**

Following from this vision are a number of strategic research priorities and goals with key performance indicators:

**STRATEGIC GOAL 1:**

**We will enhance the Faculty’s capacity for research and the number of staff eligible to be**

**submitted to the REF.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* increasing the number of staff with significant responsibility for research by recruiting staff to roles where there is a greater emphasis on research capacity as an essential criterion;
* identifying and supporting emerging researchers through the Faculty’s 3-tiered mentoring scheme;
* providing specialist resources and mentoring to academic staff to develop research independence;
* setting and monitoring, appropriate targets for research as part of every academic performance review;
* supporting staff to realise their research potential by engaging novice researchers with Faculty-commissioned research projects.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 2:**

**We will increase both the number of bids submitted for external grant funding, and the amount of income received.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* developing and communicating a timetable for key funding calls;
* providing briefing and support sessions around funding calls;
* using performance review and monitoring processes to identify and target funding opportunities;
* developing collaborations with highly experienced colleagues at other institutions to bid for research funding to support larger projects;
* identifying and deploying mentors with specific expertise on bid writing.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 3:**

**We will produce an increased number of world leading and internationally excellent research outputs.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* increasing the number of outputs co-authored with expert scholars;
* providing mentoring and feedback to enable authors to recognise and produce work of internationally excellent and world leading quality.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 4:**

**We will** **undertake research that informs the Faculty’s teaching, student learning, and partnership work, and has impact beyond the Faculty and University.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* forming a social justice group to work towards establishing a Centre for Social Justice and Education;
* identifying an Impact Lead for post-REF 2021;
* aligning the Professoriate with departments to further integrate the connections between teaching and research, and to provide research mentorship and enhanced growth in departmental research communities;
* developing a professional doctorate programme to enhance the Faculty’s academic portfolio.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 5:**

**We will form strategic partnerships and research collaborations to enhance the research environment.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* building on existing knowledge exchange partnerships in order to develop research collaborations;
* appointing further Visiting Professors within the Faculty;
* recruiting Visiting Scholars to the Faculty;
* forging research collaborations between the Faculty’s research groups and networks and other external organisations.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 6:**

**We will attract, recruit and develop excellent postgraduate research students.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* enhancing the Faculty’s digital profile around research;
* recruiting postgraduate research students whose projects align with the Faculty’s priority research themes (social justice and education; higher education policy and practice; teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum; inclusion difference and diversity; children’s rights and well-being);
* providing a programme of pre-application support;
* increasing the number of self-funded postgraduate researchers;
* supporting postgraduate researchers’ training and development through the Faculty’s Research Development Programme;
* supporting postgraduate researchers’ well-being by establishing informal social support mechanisms both in person, and online;
* Increase doctoral supervisory capacity.

**STRATEGIC GOAL 7:**

**We will support and nurture academic staff through providing high quality opportunities for learning and development.**

**To meet this goal we will prioritise:**

* providing all new staff with a clear Faculty induction around research;
* supporting academic staff to become and remain research-active through performance review processes;
* implementing a Faculty Research Development Programme to serve the needs of novice researchers, early career researchers, and mid and late career researchers;
* implementing a three-tiered Faculty research mentoring scheme;
* providing targeted support for applications to Reader and Chair positions.

# **3 People**

The Faculty is committed to investing in its staff in order to support excellence in research that has demonstrable impact in different educational contexts, in families and communities, and which supports the understanding and development of research-informed teaching and learning. To do this, we will support staff at all levels and throughout their career, from nurturing our postgraduate researchers; developing our ECRs, and providing tailored support for mid and late-career researchers. Through this we will engage in succession planning to ensure that we are providing clear paths to research leadership within and beyond the Faculty.

3.1 As part of our commitment to recruiting and nurturing our postgraduate research community (strategic goal 6), we will:

* Recruit, develop and support excellent postgraduate researchers (including all GTA PhD

and MRes students) in line with our research themes and priorities;

* Integrate our postgraduate research students effectively into a vibrant teaching, learning and research community;
* Have 30 successful postgraduate research completions during the next REF cycle.

3.2 To demonstrate our investment in our academic staff (strategic goals 1 and 7), we will:

* Provide, in line with our commitment to social justice, an inclusive research environment in which celebrates diversity;
* Ensure, through workload planning processes, that all staff with significant responsibility for research are provided with appropriate time and resources to produce excellent, impactful research;
* Support staff who are transitioning to independent researchers with enhanced staff development time and resources through the Research Development Programme;
* Support staff to apply successfully for promotion to research leadership positions (Readers and Personal Chairs) through the Faculty Mentoring Scheme;
* Support staff to develop national and international research profiles and to make strong contributions to their disciplinary fields;
* Provide opportunities for those first time and novice researchers to work in teams on collaborative research projects with more experienced researchers;
* Develop staff expertise with the use of Pure to facilitate internal and external communication.

3.3 To form strategic partnerships and research collaborations that enhance the research environment (strategic goal 5), we will:

* Forge national and international partnerships aligned with the Faculty’s main research themes and priorities;
* Increase the number of collaborative funding bids with external partners;
* Appoint Visiting Professors to enrich the Faculty’s research;
* Work with the International office to provide opportunities for international visiting research scholars to work with the Faculty;
* Build on our knowledge exchange partnerships to help initiate research projects;
* Work collaboratively with other and the University’s Research Centres to increase engagement with interdisciplinary research and writing projects.

# **4 Income, infrastructure and facilities**

The Faculty is committed to developing its research infrastructure and facilities, and to increasing its grant funded income, in order to provide a vibrant and sustainable research culture. Achieving this will support the development of impactful research and the publication of internationally excellent and world leading outputs.

4.1 To increase the number of bids submitted for external grant funding and the amount of income received (strategic goal 2), we will:

* Provide targeted support for bid writing through the Faculty Mentoring Scheme;
* Work with research groups and networks to set targets for bids to support their work and raise their profiles nationally and internationally;
* Work with University Research Centres to help broaden Faculty expertise in bid writing;
* Work with the Unit for Evaluation and Policy Analysis (EPA) to develop expertise in securing tender income.

4.2 To produce research that informs the Faculty’s teaching, student learning, and partnership work, and that has impact beyond the Faculty and University (strategic goal 4), we will:

* Establish a Centre for Social Justice in Education by the end of the next REF cycle.

4.3 To continue to develop the Faculty’s research infrastructure, we will:

* Undertake an evaluation of administrative and research assistant support for research, and make a business case for enhanced resource where required.

# 5 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & ACTION PLAN

**Strategic Goals: Key Performance Indicators**

| **Priority** | **KPI** |
| --- | --- |
| **RESEARCH & IMPACT** | |
| **Capacity for research and increased number of staff eligible to a submitted to the REF** | All staff transitioning to research independence to be part of Faculty Mentoring Programme  Novice researchers from all departments to be represented on Faculty commissioned research projects |
| **Funding bids and income generation** | Increased number of bids submitted from research networks and groups, and from individuals  Improvement on the number of collaborative bids submitted with external partners  Achieved £650K in external grant funding  Increased overhead recovery rate from grant funding |
| **Produce excellent research outputs** | Achieved at least 50% of outputs that are internationally excellent |
| **Undertaking impactful research** | Appointed an Impact Lead for post-REF 2021 |
| **PEOPLE** | |
| **Partnerships and collaborations** | Established 3 new national/international research partnerships  Appointed 4 new Visiting Professors  Increased the number of collaborative research funding bids with partners |
| **Postgraduate research students** | Increased by 50% the number of successful PGR students  Recruit increased numbers of externally funded PGR students  Have 30 successful PGR completions in the next REF cycle  Recruited improved numbers of self-funded PGR students to the Faculty’s priority research strands |
| **Support academic staff** | Established and evaluated achievement rates against targets from the Faculty Mentoring Scheme  Achieved high levels of satisfaction from the Research Development Programme  Successful promotion to Reader (4 posts) and Personal Chairs (2 posts)  All academic staff have an updated profile in Pure |
| **INFRASTRUCTURE** | |
|  | Established a Centre for Social Justice in Education  Established a professional doctorate for the Faculty |

**Action plan (2020 – 2021)**

| **Action** | **Milestones** | **Responsibility** | **Timeframe** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Implement the Faculty Research Mentoring Scheme and evaluate progress at the end of year 1 | Recruit mentors and mentees for strands 1 and 2  Conduct evaluation | Carol Robinson; Amanda Fulford | Recruitment by **February 2021**  Evaluation of 2020 – 2021 by **September 2021** |
| Pilot 2 commissioned research projects | Pilots commissioned  Pilots reporting | Carol Robinson; Amanda Fulford | **April 2021**  **August 2022** |
| Consult on, and recruit to, commissioned research projects for 2021-2022 | Consultation completed  Recruitment to projects | Carol Robinson; Amanda Fulford; FoE Heads of Department | **September 2021**  **October 2021** |
| Set up a grant income development group for pre-and post-application support | Group agreed and terms of reference determined | FoE Research Strategy Group | **May 2021** |
| Set up tender response group | Group agreed and terms of reference determined | FoE Research Strategy Group | **October 2021** |
| Run regular monthly applicant support sessions for potential PGRs | Dates agreed for meetings | Amanda Fulford; FoE Professoriate | **March 2021** |
| Develop a formal partnership with Strathmore University, Kenya | MoU signed | Amanda Fulford; Jane Moore; Directorate | **May 2021** |
| Strengthen links with the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid | Collaborative bid and writing projects agreed | Amanda Fulford; Bianca Thoilliez (FoE Visiting Professor) | **September 2021** |
| Implement the Faculty Research development programme and evaluate progress at the end of year 1 | Create a presence on the wiki  Conduct year 1 evaluation | Francis Farrell; Amanda Fulford  Francis Farrell; Julie Kirby; Charlotte Hastings | **January 2021**  **September 2021** |