

Institution: University of Gloucestershire**1. Context and mission**

The University of Gloucestershire's mission is founded on values, centred on students, and focused on learning. Our University Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 states four primary goals:

- To provide a breadth and richness of experience that enables all our students to reach their full potential
- To provide teaching and support for learning of the highest quality
- To undertake excellent research and innovative professional practice which enrich students' learning and create impact and benefit for others
- To build partnerships which create opportunity, innovation and mutual benefit for the communities we serve.

Within this strategic direction, our research programme is selective and prioritised on the areas where we can achieve excellence. We want our research to inform and enrich the learning of our students; to provide career development, reward and recognition for our academic staff; and create opportunities to work with partners where we can pursue knowledge creation and exchange for mutual benefit, with an emphasis on applying research for greatest impact.

The University had 8,487 enrolled students in 2019/20. 73% were studying at first degree level, 11% Masters, and 5% Doctoral level. 59% were aged 18-20, and 27% were aged 25+. We are committed to widening access and participation, with a large school and college outreach programme to tackle the low HE entry rates across the South West region. We have strategic partnerships with key FE Colleges in the area. We have a further 2,304 students enrolled with partners in the UK and overseas on programmes leading to UOG awards.

Our subject range covers business and management; computing, technology and engineering; arts and design; media; natural and social sciences, including our Countryside and Community Research Institute; education and humanities; nursing, allied health and social care; and sport and exercise. We are rated TEF Silver, and the majority of our NSS indicators are above the UK sector average. We are focused on providing the best possible experience for our students, with a strong emphasis on building employability.

Within our total budget for 2020/21 of ~£80 million, some £4.3 million is attributable to income from research and business development. A key part of our mission as an anchor institution for our community is to work with local businesses and employers to drive innovation, enterprise, higher level skills and economic development. This work is focused on our award-winning Growth Hub, which co-locates the University Business School with our business development services and the Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership. In line with our commitment to student employability and economic growth, we have invested strategically in growing our portfolio of higher and degree apprenticeships, with a latest forecast of some 850 apprentices on some 15 apprenticeship programmes during 2020/21.

2. Strategy

Following the 2014 REF, we completely redesigned our University research strategy, in order to achieve a more targeted approach to supporting our staff to undertake high quality research in selected areas of excellence, with a strong focus on impact.

That approach has proved very successful in developing both research quality and volume and its impact. We have achieved our corporate research targets for the period, with a REF 2021 submission that is almost triple the size of our REF 2014 submission, in terms of the number of staff and outputs submitted, and the number of UOAs we submit to, while sustaining our

estimated research quality (based on external peer review). For REF 2021, we are submitting to 13 UOAs, compared with just 6 in 2014. We consider this the best evidence of the real progress we have made in achieving both vitality and sustainability for our research, in line with the ambitions stated in our strategic plan.

The main components of the University's research and impact strategy are:

- We have positioned research as one of our top four strategic goals as noted above. This creates a clear line of sight for all our research activities through to our corporate purpose. The research goals are incorporated in our annual operating plan, with specified actions and targets and regular reporting to the University's Council and Academic Board
- The corporate research goal is also incorporated within our thematic Academic Strategy for 2017-2022, which sets out in more detail how we will develop and deliver our research programmes, and how those programmes will inform teaching, the student experience and our collaborative work with partners
- We created a new Research Committee in 2015, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and meeting 5 times a year, as our University level forum for developing research strategy and monitoring progress. The Committee has been significant in providing consistent, committed corporate leadership for our research strategy and programme
- We have identified six Research Priority Areas (RPAs) to give thematic coherence to our research activities. They are deliberately cross-cutting and inter-disciplinary, to encourage research developments across our School structures. The RPAs are:
 - Applied Business & Technology (maps to UoAs 12 and 17)
 - Being Human: Past, Present & Future (UoAs 27, 28, 31, 32 and 34)
 - Creative Practice as Research (UoAs 32 and 34)
 - Environmental Dynamics & Governance (UoAs 13, 14 and 21)
 - Learning & Professional Contexts (UoA 23)
 - Sport, Exercise, Health & Wellbeing (UoAs 4 and 24)
- Each RPA is led by a Convenor supported by an RPA steering group to manage, support and encourage the research programme for that RPA. Each is mapped to relevant Units of Assessment (see previous bullets), and we appointed a Co-ordinator for each of our 13 target UoAs.
- As detailed in our REF Code of Practice, we use our annual Staff Review and Development programme to set and review research objectives with each research active member of staff. RPA Convenors and UOA Coordinators work with research active colleagues to review their research plans and outputs within the peer-support group of researchers active in that RPA/UoA. Progress is reported to each Research Committee meeting
- As research outputs and impact case studies are completed, we have submitted all of them to external review, to get an independent assessment of quality and expert feedback on areas for improvement. That feedback is used by both individuals and research teams as a basis for continuous improvement in the quality of both outputs and impacts
- The University has a successful postgraduate research programme, with 538 enrolled PGR students in total in 2020/21, including a large DBA programme. We ranked 6th for overall student satisfaction in the 2019 PRES survey
- During 2020, we began developing our next quinquennial University strategic plan for research. Following extensive discussions in the University's Council, Research Committee, and Academic Leadership Group, we have now formulated our research strategy and action

plan for the period to 2027, which was approved by the University's Council in February 2021. The new strategy deliberately builds on and extends the progress we have made since 2014, re-scoping our 6 Research Priority Areas and laying plans to strengthen our research programmes across the board so that by 2027 we could submit to as many as 18 Units of Assessment.

The University's largest self-standing research unit is the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI). The CCRI was established in 2008, originally as a collaborative partnership between UOG, the University of the West of England and the Royal Agricultural University, developed from our Countryside and Community Research Unit founded over 30 years ago. CCRI has become a leading research institute specializing in the social sciences of planning, management, development, sustainability and change in the countryside, agri-food, and rural communities and economies. It currently deploys 26 research staff, with several project collaborators at the RAU, and will submit within UOA13.

As noted above, "impact" is a cross-cutting consideration for all our research, linking directly to the University's strategic goal "To undertake excellent research and innovative professional practice which enrich students' learning and create impact and benefit for others". Consequently, we have integrated attention to impact at every level. We see it as part of our mission as an anchor institution to consider how all of our activities, including research, can impact beneficially in the communities we serve, complementing our fourth strategic goal to work with partners for wider wellbeing. For example:

- We co-created Research4Gloucestershire as a forum for health-related research with our NHS partners in the county, so that we can support practice improvement through the application of research. The forum is chaired by the Chair of the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust. We are also partners in the NIHR-funded Academic Research Centre West, led by the University of Bristol
- As the leading UK University for Sustainability (top in the 2019 People and Planet League), many of our research programmes in CCRI and biosciences are focused on practical support for communities in managing climate change, winning the 2019 Green Gown award for impactful research, along with numerous other awards for Education for Sustainability
- In partnership with the Universities of Newcastle and Warwick, the CCRI has been successful in securing £3.7m of funding to establish a National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise, drawing on our long established social science expertise in applied rural development
- In partnership with the Universities of Bristol, Cardiff and Bath, we have developed a bid to the UKRI/RE Strength in Places programme for a major project to apply research excellence in cyber to promote economic development across our locality, and specifically to support the creation of a new Cyber Business Park adjacent to GCHQ in Cheltenham
- We have a large and successful knowledge exchange programme, co-ordinated through our Growth Hub and drawing on EU ESIF funding to support services for incubation, enterprise, SME growth, innovation and KTPs. Since 2014, we have been providing business support via the Growth Hub. We have worked with more than 6,000 businesses of all sizes, of which over 40% have been identified as high growth potential, with client satisfaction of 86%. Our work with Employers has led us to develop a large and growing portfolio of Degree Apprenticeships. We currently work with over 90 employers, offering high quality and relevant professional development. We won the Times Higher Award for Outstanding Employer Engagement in 2018 recognition of collaborative work between our Employability team and businesses coming through our Growth Hub.

To create an open research environment, we have created an open access University research repository at <https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/>, and we monitor compliance with open access

requirements at each meeting of the Research Committee. We receive approximately 8,000 unique downloads from our repository per month. All research active staff are encouraged to create an ORCID record. Our new University website gives greater prominence to publicising our research activities and our researchers via staff profiles, giving full transparency of outputs and people.

We regularly review how our research programmes link to national and regional priorities, in line with our commitment to impact and working in partnership. We have mapped where our subject communities and research programmes can link to priorities within the Industrial Strategy, which for example is the basis of our Strength in Places cyber project referenced above. We contributed to the South West Science and Innovation Audit. We work closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership, both on their previous Strategic Economic Plan for Gloucestershire, and in drafting their new Local Industrial Strategy. The two priorities identified in the LIS (cyber and agri-tech/green) both build directly on University areas of excellence in research and teaching.

We engage extensively with the wider community through research, for example:

- Through the work of our Professor of Science Communication, Adam Hart, who is a regular broadcaster and commentator on TV, radio and social media
- Through our public lecture series, which include public inaugural lectures on their research by all our new professors
- Through working with partners to use research to inform their professional practice, for example working with primary and secondary schools across the region through our School of Education and Humanities, and working with local NHS Trusts through the School of Health and Social Care
- Through the Erasmus+ projects that we have led with partner universities in Indonesia, one focused on developing enterprise and business support on a basis analogous to UOG's Growth Hub, and one focused on building crisis resilience. In both cases, we are drawing on expertise within the University to create networks of partner universities working together to achieve real world impact in areas identified by the Indonesian Government as priorities.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that all our research is conducted with integrity. To that end:

- We are signatory to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, and have recently reviewed compliance against all of its expectations to identify where we need to continue to improve. The University's Council and Research Committee have approved the resulting action plan
- We have an active Research Ethics Committee, which is our forum for consideration and approval of all University-wide issues of research ethics, covering both staff and student research. The Committee makes an annual report to the Research Committee, giving an overview of its work during the year
- We have an identified Research Ethics lead in each School, to give first tier consideration to all research ethics proposals, referring on to the Research Ethics Committee for decisions as necessary
- Research ethics is built into research methods training at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study. It is taught as a core component of the postgraduate research training in modules MR401 & 402. Additional research ethics training is provided to researchers and supervisors via School and University staff development opportunities such as school meetings, research seminars, and other events.

We are fully committed to the highest standards in terms of research integrity, including the reproducibility of research and the open research environment. Our subjects are diverse, with differing cultures and conventions, but through our university community we engender a culture of openness about our research practices, mutually supporting efforts to adopt best practice, and working to ensure our research is reproducible. We encourage recognition of contributions to research and the importance of transparency about that. Our research ethics committee leads a programme of researcher development encapsulating integrity in the widest sense.

3. People

The University's strategic framework for staffing has the following main components:

- Successful recruitment, retention, motivation and management of our people is identified as one of six key “enablers” of organisational performance within the University's strategic plan. From that starting point, we have developed a People and Culture strategy identifying objectives, targets and actions for achievement of that enabling goal
- 85% of the University's academic staff are on permanent employment contracts. We do not use zero hours contracts. We do use PTHP contracts to bring in particular areas of expertise needed for research and teaching, but in all cases those contracts specify the hours and the role. In order to avoid the risks of casualization, we do not rely on teaching of undergraduates by postgraduate students
- All staff are covered by the University Staff Review and Development (SRD) programme. This is an annual process to ensure that all staff agree annual objectives with their manager, review progress and performance, and can discuss career development and training goals. For relevant academic staff, the SRD process includes discussion with their manager of their research ambitions and career goals, annual objectives for research, and feedback on performance
- We have a well-established and comprehensive training and development programme, including induction for all new staff, support to achieve accreditation in the Advance HE Professional Standards Framework, a specific ‘Learning Leaders’ programme for Academic Subject Leaders, and use of the PGCert in Academic Practice for all staff new to teaching. For academic staff who do not have a higher degree, the University offers time allocations and fee waivers to support staff to work towards Masters and Doctoral qualifications
- The University is currently supporting 34 academic members of staff to undertake Doctoral studies (27 PhDs and 7 Professional Doctorates)
- We have developed a revised and updated set of academic career pathways, setting out the University's expectations for each level across three pathways of teaching and scholarship, teaching and research, and research only.

As a relatively small, student-centred new University, we select carefully which external accreditation schemes will add most value for us, taking account of their resource requirements and whether they are applicable. We believe this approach is consistent with the principles identified by the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics relating to burden and institutional differences.

On that basis, we have prioritised external accreditation against the Disability Confident and Workplace Wellbeing Schemes. Focussing our effort helped us achieve Level 3 of Disability Confident, recognising us as a ‘Disability Confident Leader’. We have also achieved re-approval under the Time for Change programme in recognition of our support for mental health, and were recently re-accredited as meeting the Workplace Wellbeing Charter. We are accredited by Advance HE to award fellowships within the UK Professional Standards Framework.

We have formally committed to the ten key principles that the Athena Swan Charter is based on. We are actively embedding the principles within our culture, policies, practices and action plans. Now that the Athena Swan review has been completed, and the new accreditation arrangements are being put in place, we expect to work towards institutional recognition.

We are committed to, and have formally endorsed, the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. We have recently reviewed our approach against all of the expectations in the Concordat to identify priorities for further improvement. Our action plan for continuing to make progress in implementing the principles of the Concordat was approved by the University’s Council and Research Committee.

We have established an Early Career Researchers Network which provides networking and development opportunities, including for PGR students. The ECR Network is represented on the University’s Research Committee.

Research Students

In 2020/21 the University enrolled 540 research students, of whom 146 were on the DBA programme, 32 on other Professional Doctorate Programmes, and 282 on PhD programmes. We also have enrolled 80 students on Masters by Research programmes. The largest concentrations of enrolled research students in 2020/21 are in the Schools of Business (253), Education and Humanities (91), and Natural and Social Sciences (62).

The total number of doctoral completions is shown in the table:

| | |
|------|----|
| 2014 | 18 |
| 2015 | 23 |
| 2016 | 24 |
| 2017 | 23 |
| 2018 | 19 |
| 2019 | 24 |

The majority of our PGR students are self-funded, part time and mature. Our DBA programme has been particularly successful overseas, especially in Germany. We have worked hard to ensure an approach to programme delivery that supports an effective and coherent experience for the students through a blended approach including block delivery in Gloucestershire.

We were pleased to be ranked 6th out of 103 for overall satisfaction in the 2019 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). We also ranked highly for research skills (17th out of 103). We recognise that research culture and resources are areas requiring further enhancement. Through the work of our PGR Leads, we are developing postgraduate research action plans to build on our areas of success and address areas for improvement.

Our framework for supporting PGR students has these main components:

- All PGR students have a “home” location within a School and subject community, so that they can be integrated within an active research community at a subject level, and can take part in research activities of that community (e.g., local seminar series and common research topic forums)
- We have deliberately not created a single, centralised postgraduate centre, believing that PG students will have a better experience if integrated with the relevant subject communities across our Schools. So we have created PG spaces distributed across our campuses and Schools

- Our supervision model assigns at least two supervisors to each PGR student. All PGR students will discuss and agree with their supervisors training needs, conference opportunities and signposting to careers advice; will review annual progression, including a log of meetings; and opportunities for teaching if relevant
- All PGR students are required to undertake two compulsory modules of research methods training, and can participate in relevant methodologic interest groups (e.g., practice as research)
- Each School has a member of staff identified as PGR Lead to co-ordinate the School's PGR programme. All PGRLs have developed an improvement action plan for their School, which links to a University level PGR action plan approved annually by the University's Research Degrees Committee
- A postgraduate research administration office supports PGR students from the point of enquiry through to completion, with all supervisor development and research student training provided through an Academic Development Unit
- The CCRI is part of the Wales ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP), as it is recognised as a 'pocket of excellence' by the Research Council. The CCRI has been successful in winning four fully funded ESRC studentships, with partner organisations providing funding and supervisory input.

Equality and Diversity

The University's commitment to equality and diversity, and its specific application to research staff and programmes, is detailed in our REF Code of Practice. In developing the Code, we prepared a comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment which has helped us to identify areas for future focus.

The main steps we have taken to ensure due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion issues in relation to research are:

- We operate our annual SRD programme in such a way that all academic staff have equal opportunity to identify their research ambitions and potential, and to agree research plans with their manager
- Those staff who are identified as research active have equal access to support from the relevant RPA and UOA; and to access financial support through the allocation of our research investment funding distributed through RPAs following approval by Research Committee
- We have publicised the Code of Practice widely, including its specific provisions for staff to raise concerns and complaints for independent consideration with appeal through to the Dean of Academic Development
- The University has supported the establishment of a Women Professors Group, as a forum and network to support progression of female academic staff. As noted above, we have formally committed to the Athena Swan principles. 36 staff have participated in the Advance HE Aurora programme since it was launched in 2013/14, and the University has supported the formation of a women's network
- Similarly, the University has supported the establishment of a BAME+ network for staff and students, to provide peer support and a forum for addressing issues affecting BAME staff and students.

Institutional level environment template (REF5a)

We submitted all eligible staff who are grade 7 or above in the teaching and research or research only academic career pathways (employment function) which is 35% of all academic staff. Our Equality Impact Assessment will provide full details. However, in terms of EDI indicators for those academic staff we are submitting to the REF (n = 152), the latest data show:

- Percentage of staff on fixed term contracts: 15%
- Percentage of staff with a declared disability: 5%
- Gender profile: Male 57%, Female 43%
- Ethnicity profile: White 90%, Black 0%, Chinese 3%, Asian 5%, Other/Mixed 1%, Unknown 2%

The staff Gender Pay gap for all our academic staff (not just those being submitted to the REF) is Mean 5.34%, Median 11.06%.

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

As a student-centred University, the great majority of our infrastructure and facilities are designed for dual use in teaching and research. We make a virtue of our facilities being available to students as well as research students and staff. Our capital programme is allocated to support priorities in the development of our academic portfolio. Recent investments have included a new Business School and new specialist facilities for nursing and allied health, computing, engineering, design, media, psychology, natural sciences, and sport and exercise. Building projects currently in train will create new facilities for biomedical sciences; allied health, including diagnostic radiography; and architecture, construction and the built environment.

Examples of our specialist research facilities include:

- Luminescence laboratory. Specialising in archaeological dating using geological markers, this internationally-reputed laboratory has secured contract research and evaluation income of £553,000 over the period 2014 – 2020
- Computing facilities. Specialising in cyber security, and based at Berkeley Science and Technology Park, these industry standard research and development facilities were created with a ~£3million grant under the local Growth Deal
- Sport and exercise facilities. Specialist laboratories and associated facilities for high performance sport and exercise for health are used for postgraduate programmes with a range of sports governing bodies. These facilities helped us gain status as one of only 7 FA High Performance Centres for Women's Football.

We allocate our REF grant funding to Research Priority Areas pro-rata to the size and quality of their research programme, and in response to proposals from each RPA identifying their priorities. Over the past REF cycle, £4.2 million REF funding has been invested in the RPAs, funding sabbaticals, research assistants, buy-out of teaching, attendance at events, and travel and subsistence. In addition, Schools use their budgets for staff development to support researcher development in accordance with the development needs as determined in the annual Staff Review and Development process.

Since the REF2014, we have secured £10.932M in research income. We have only been able to recognise £9.860M in REF 4b. The difference applies to:

- UoA31 - £580K of research endowment income
- UoA12 - £300K of research KTP income
- UoA23 - £190K of research income

Aside from the REF itself, we take the following approach to generating research income:

- As part of the annual budget setting round, each School is set a target for business development income, including research income. Progress towards that target is tracked

through the year, and discussed at School business planning meetings. Those targets are converted into income targets for each RPA and UOA and progress tracked through Research Committee

- Our University in Business (UiB) team (part of the Growth Hub) and the University Funding Office (UFO) support research teams in identifying potential bidding opportunities and preparing and submitting research bids. UIB/UFO are a University-wide resource supporting all research teams to develop bids
- As noted in Section 1, since the 2014 REF, we have achieved significant success in bidding to Horizon2020 and Erasmus+. Over the past seven years, we have secured £8,734,764 overall in funding for projects led by the University. We have won and led over 33 EU funded projects, and partnered on a further 23
- Since the EU Referendum on BREXIT, we have been working to diversify research funding away from EU sources. We have been successful in securing funds from UK Government and agencies (e.g., DEFRA, Innovate UK, Research England, Sport England); and from other national governments (e.g., Norway and Japan). We are preparing for new funding programmes being brought in by Government to replace EU funding programmes, such as the Shared Prosperity Fund, the Strength in Places programme, and the National and Local Industrial Strategies
- We work in partnership with other UK universities in submitting bids to UKRI, including the NICRE project with Newcastle and Warwick, the Cyber Wales and West project with Bristol, Cardiff and Bath, and the Wales Doctoral Training Partnership
- We have secured significant endowment funding, totalling some £2 million from a charitable foundation (the Kirby Laing Foundation) to support an endowed Chair who leads our research programme in theology.