

Institutional level environment template (REF5a)**Institution:**

St George's, University of London

1. Context and mission

1.1. SGUL is the UK's specialist health university. Our mission is to pursue excellence in academic medicine, healthcare and science, informed by a global outlook. We shape modern health with transformative research, expert teaching and hands-on learning. SGUL's research strategy in our 2017-2022 five-year plan is to: 1) Increase societal impact by improving diagnosis and treatment and preventing disease; 2) Respond to new and emerging healthcare challenges through targeted intervention; and 3) Develop our understanding of health through effective collaboration.

1.2. We share our site with St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (SGUHT). The integration of patients, healthcare workers, students and scientists creates a vibrant and dynamic environment, and ensures a strong translational component to our research achievements.

1.3. Located in Tooting, London, we are part of a global city and proud to be embedded in a thriving local community. We bring employment opportunities to the area, engage with local schools and are supported by the diverse patient population in our research.

1.4. Our research and teaching staff currently number 839 including casual, honorary and joint staff. We teach undergraduate medicine, allied health and bioscience, and post-graduate PhD, MD(Res), MRes and taught MSc degrees.

1.5. The Principal is Professor Jenny Higham, supported by Deputy Principals in Research & Enterprise (Prof Jon Friedland), Education (Prof Jane Saffell) and (until Oct 2020) Institutional Affairs (Prof Deborah Bowman).

1.6. Academic staff at SGUL are members of one or more of four Institutes dependent on their workload distribution and expectations regarding research and teaching. Three of these Institutes are focused on research: Infection & Immunity (I&I), Molecular and Clinical Sciences (MCS) and Population Health (PHRI). The fourth is the Institute for Medical and Biomedical Education (IMBE). Academic staff may have joint membership of more than one Institute, outlined in our REF2021 Code of Practice. Staff who are members or joint members of a Research Institute have a significant responsibility for research, and if they are independent – defined by job title – are returned in SGUL's REF2021 submission. Research Institutes provide critical-mass in core areas, co-ordinate staff and student development, finances, local safety, seminar programmes, and administrative support.

1.7. SGUL is submitting to REF2021 in two subject areas, UoA1 (Clinical Medicine) with 100 staff (93.39 FTE) belonging to I&I and MCS, and UoA2 (Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care) with 19 staff (14.67 FTE) belonging to PHRI.

1.8. SGUL jointly manage with Kingston University the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education (FHSCE), including the Centre for Applied Health and Social Care Research. In agreement between both universities, Joint Faculty research will be returned to REF2021 in UoA3 within Kingston University's submission. Cross-disciplinary research between SGUL and FHSCE is strongly supported with co-location of staff on the St George's campus, joint collaborative grants such as NIHR CLAHRC/ARC, joint events and prizes, teaching and PhD student supervision.

1.9. SGUHT, one of the country's principal teaching hospitals, employs over 9000 staff and shares its main site with SGUL. It serves a population of 1.3 million, providing acute care, a wide range of specialist care and community services. Specialty complex care is provided to patients from a larger catchment area as the designated centre for networks on heart attack, stroke and major trauma. SGUHT's Strategy commits to research and supporting the SGUL partnership with investment and recruitment.

2. Strategy

2.1. We focus on the impact our research could have for patients. From fundamental to translational research, our aim is to improve individual patient outcomes and broader population health. St George's five-year research strategy is to focus our research in areas where we have proven or emerging potential for excellence and global impact by

- i. Pursuing fundamental and translational health sciences research of the highest quality;
- ii. Investing in our existing and emerging areas of research strength and rapidly adapting our research to new societal needs;
- iii. Extending strategic collaboration with SGUHT and other local healthcare providers and with research institutions nationally and internationally;
- iv. Providing a research environment that inspires innovation and enables people at all career stages to reach their full potential;
- v. Recognising, inspiring and retaining early-career researchers to nurture scientific leaders of the future;
- vi. Maximising the impact of our research and its contribution to scientific knowledge and clinical practice;
- vii. Engaging the public in our science and communicating widely the significance of our research;
- viii. Providing expert opinion at local, national and international levels to inform healthcare policy.

2.2. In 2015-2017 SGUL was ranked 1st in the world for Citations (research influence) in the Times Higher World University Rankings, and in REF2014 we ranked 4th in the UK for Research Impact.

2.3. Research Strategy is overseen by the Deputy Principal (Research & Enterprise), who chairs the Research Committee and the Research Steering Group. These report to Senate, Council and Finance committee. Monthly Research Committee meetings are attended by the Principal and Deputy Principals, Institute Directors, Directors of our Clinical Academic Groups (CAGs), Professional Services leads, and the Trust Associate Medical Director. Representatives from the PhD group, Post-doc group, Lecturer group and Senior Lecturer groups attend and report to their respective groups monthly, ensuring active involvement in strategy. Research Committee receive reports on REF2021, Research Operations, Estates and Facilities, Information Services/Library, Human Resources, Finance, Health and Safety, and SGUL's Research Ethics and Integrity committee (SGREC), as well as from working groups on Research Data Management (RDM), Scholarly Communications Group (SCG), and Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) group. Working groups and committees have representatives from all Institutes and career stages.

2.4. SGUL invests in cross-disciplinary research via four Clinical Academic Groups (CAGs): Cardiovascular, Genomics, Neuroscience and Infection. CAGs are joint units where both the university and hospital excel to deliver high quality translational research and educational programmes. They are important for fostering research collaboration, and developing academic research Fellows, potential Fellowship holders and Clinical Lecturers. CAGs focus on research with translational potential and nurture and network a range of staff to develop impact.

2.5. St George's Joint Strategic Board, chaired by SGUL's Principal and Trust Chief Executive, ensures a co-ordinated research partnership. The new Translational and Clinical Research Institute (TACRI) was launched in late 2020 (delayed by Covid), led by the Associate Medical Director for Research at SGUHT and SGUL's Deputy Principal (Research & Enterprise). It will provide a structure for clinical researchers (including nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health professionals) to collaborate across Trust specialties and is strongly supported by the university (e.g. with dedicated statisticians). A full-time administrator has been appointed.

2.6. Cross-cutting research expertise is shared across the university including Statistics, Genetics and Bioinformatics skills supported by workshops and training. Facilities such as our Biological

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Research Facility (BRF), Imaging Resourcing Facility (IRF) and a range of specialist laboratories bring expertise in basic and applied research together.

2.7. The Joint Research Enterprise Service (JRES) supports and facilitates research across the university and Trust, including grant applications, clinical trials, intellectual property, consultancy and research finance. The service is funded approximately 60% by the university and 40% by the Trust. By removing barriers to joint working, it facilitates interdisciplinary and impactful grants and innovation. JRES has 30 staff in three teams: Research Funding, Research Governance and Delivery and Enterprise and Innovation.

2.8. Translational impact is supported by the joint SGUL-Trust Clinical Research Facility (CRF), operationally managed by the Trust and employing 21 staff, funded by research income and located in SGUL's Jenner wing. It provides the infrastructure and environment to conduct clinical trials safely and efficiently, embedding research into clinical care across the Trust. Trials are led by university staff and/or honorary/category C staff. The research delivery team of about 90 FTE comprises research nurses, practitioners and coordinators, while Trust services such as pharmacy and radiology also support research.

2.9. SGUL's Vaccine Institute co-ordinates vaccine studies in paediatric, adult and maternal populations in collaboration with NHS and industrial partners, most recently leading in the UK on the Novovax Covid-19 clinical trial and being a south London hub for many other phase 1,2 & 3 Covid-19 vaccine trials including for Oxford/AstraZeneca and Imperial.

2.10. SGUHT has increased its share of patients recruited to clinical trials in recent years, recently ranking in the top 10 in the UK, and 2nd or 3rd in London. Recruitment has more than doubled from 5108 patients and 221 trials in 2016/17 to 13102 patients and 284 studies in 2018/19. This covers the full range of clinical specialties serving our community, with the highest recruitment in SGUL-driven cardiology, paediatrics, reproductive health and accident and emergency.

2.11. SGUL Enterprise strategy is focused on translational research to deliver clinical impact, commercial value, industry and partnerships. A new St George's Translational Research Advisory Board has been established to cement and develop our translational networking reach. SGUL set up spin-out companies, and run a yearly Innovation Awards scheme, and one encouraging Student Enterprise. Our 2021 KEF results demonstrate our strong partnership and entrepreneurial approach; we are in the top 10% of our KEF cluster for research partnerships and the top 20% for working with business.

2.12. SGUL's Research Ethics and Integrity committee (SGREC), chaired by a senior academic clinician, reviews organizational research projects not subject to national clinical ethics, including staff and student projects and those undertaken overseas. Our Research Ethics and Integrity officer co-ordinates our annual integrity statement on the web, policy, governance, a range of training for different career stages and specialties and drop-in sessions. We meet the UKRI Concordat to Support Research Integrity, RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct and UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research. Our Research Misconduct policy links to our disciplinary process.

2.13. SGUL's Research Publications policy (including Open Access) is developed by the Scholarly Communications Group and supported by St George's Library including two dedicated staff. We invested in Symplectic's Current Research Information System (CRIS) to notify and record publications and in St George's Online Research Archive (SORA) for open access deposition of our research. Training and support, including for ORCID, is led by the Library, and extended to honorary Trust colleagues. Block grants to fund Article Processing Charges (APCs), including SGUL's annual £21K contribution, are discussed monthly at Research Steering Group according to our APC guidance. We have recently invested in a broad range of Read and Publish subscriptions to encourage OA publishing.

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2.14. SGUL leads on Research Data Management and was one of 13 universities that took part in JISC's Research Data Shared Service pilot, including being awarded funding (£30K) contributing to the development of a national research data storage/management and preservation infrastructure. We are working towards compliance with the Concordat on Open Research Data. A dedicated staff member supports RDM and we have subscriptions to Figshare and Preservica. Strategy is led by the RDM working group which develops policy, guidance and advocacy.

2.15. SGUL signed DORA in 2018. Our DORA working group provides policy, guidance, advocacy, external website and training support to researchers preparing CVs and interpreting metrics, as well as specific guidance for those recruiting, promoting and reviewing.

2.16. SGUL has achieved NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit status and Cyber Security Essentials Plus Certification, led by our Information Governance officer who chairs our IG working group. We have invested in a Data Safe Haven for storing personal identifiable and sensitive information as required for projects using NHS Digital data, enabling secure processing of data on site. Our High-Performance Computing cluster enables computationally intense research, e.g. genomics and bioinformatics.

2.17. SGUL holds an annual Research Day to share research presentations, award prizes to undergraduate, masters and postgraduate students, and for outstanding paper, public engagement, Post-doctoral researcher, Lecturer and Senior Lecturer of the year. The main event is the prestigious Thomas Young prize lecture (e.g. David Nabarro, Sir Munir Pirmohamed, Thomas von Zglinicki, Nancy Rothwell, Hagan Bayley, Peter Piot). Inaugural lectures from newly promoted or appointed Professors are held throughout the year.

2.18. Public Engagement is led by an Associate Dean for Public and Civic Engagement, supported by a Public Engagement Officer and four public engagement Champions in the last four years. We have developed a Public and Civic Engagement Strategy 2020-2024 and implementation plan. The Spotlight on Science regular events showcase St George's Research during evening sessions open to the public and now online. They draw a diverse audience. Inside Science is a programme engaging prisoners with our research. We work with schools and community groups to support learning and share perspectives, including hosting at our Pathology Museum. We build capacity amongst our own community by encouraging and training our staff and students to participate in public engagement in their own work. Bursaries for attending engagement events are available to staff and students.

2.19. Our 2022-2027 strategic plan will build on many of the newer initiatives above, including supporting CAGs, TACRI, and extending partnerships to other healthcare providers locally via ARC and South London HIN and in London, such as mental health and primary care, besides strategic research partnerships beyond. We plan to apply for NIHR Clinical Research Facility for Experimental Medicine status.

3. People

3.1. The development of SGUL's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 followed wide consultation and as a community we defined institutional values that guide our behaviours and shape our culture. Our core values are Commitment, Openness, Respect, Engagement, and integrity in all interactions.

3.2 As a compact and focused university, St. George's invests in areas of research excellence and research impact, particularly translational impact. When recruiting academics and researchers, we aim to build critical mass in pre-identified areas that integrate with our research networks. Our CAGs exemplify this, promoting research careers and development and building critical mass of research staff and collaborative networks.

3.3. Many academic staff are clinically qualified and undertake clinical duties recharged to the Trust or other partners. In our REF2021 return this includes 19 Professors, five Readers, four Senior Lecturers and seven clinical Lecturers, while 34 of our research Fellows and Post-docs

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were clinically qualified. Similarly, Honorary Trust staff who are research active onsite and contribute to our research grants, training and teaching (Category C staff), include four Professors, two Readers and three Senior Lecturers. Another 80 Trust staff hold honorary contracts with us and contribute to teaching and/or research, including allied health professionals and nurses leading clinical research.

3.4. SGUL has made a commitment to recruit early-career researchers to Lectureships, resulting in eight new posts in the last two years with at least three per annum going forward. This includes Chadburn lectureships for those working part-time due to caring responsibilities. Each is provided with a start-up package which may include funding for a PhD student and consumables. In addition to the George's Academic Training (GAT) programme, 25% of our REF returned staff are classified as early-career researchers by REF2021 criteria.

3.5. The GAT programme provides specialised advice and training to attract and support clinical academic trainees, including those in medical-school intercalating year, academic foundation years, Academic Clinical Fellows (ACF) and Clinical Lecturers (CL). Newsletters, events, training, networking, one-to-one advice and mentoring are provided. The NIHR programme income of £539 204 per year has created eight matched Clinical Lecturer posts with NIHR badging, SGUL has hosted 56 ACFs and CLs during 2015-2020 and 90% of trainees have progressed to competitively funded PhDs/MDs, with 25% in tenured senior academic positions in the UK.

3.6. We have worked hard to improve inclusivity in recent years. As described by Jenny Higham, Principal, "The diversity of the people within our community at St George's is one of our strengths. The university benefits hugely from the range of perspectives that come from the different backgrounds, opinions and beliefs of our staff and students and, in recognizing that, we want to put our approach to diversity and inclusion firmly at our core. It is not an optional extra."

3.7. SGUL was awarded an Institution-wide Athena Swan bronze award in 2015, upgraded to Silver award in 2018, one of only 18 universities to hold this. The Self-Assessment Team (SAT) committee, led by the Dean of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and supported by the D&I Advisor, represents all aspects of the university and oversees an extensive action plan which prioritises making St George's an inclusive environment for all, widening the development opportunities to support our workforce and student body, and embedding consultation on equality and diversity with researchers at all stages. We also hold a European Commission HR Excellence in Research award (HREIRA), renewed in 2019. We are a signatory and committed to the Vitae Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. We are a Stonewall Diversity champion, and have Disability Confident Employer status. We have new networks for LGBT staff and allies, staff with disabilities, a mental health network and an emergent BAME network. Regular surveys and events are held, such as our Thrive programme, exploring staff's perspective on culture and development, including a sense of community, respect for individual differences and effectiveness of Institutional support. Most recently, in June 2020 we launched a Race Equality Review and developed and approved a new comprehensive action plan to address the issues identified in consultation with our community.

3.8. Specifically, we have reviewed the critical transition points in career development and the associated challenges, for both scientific and clinical researchers. Enhanced diversity data collection, including investing in upgraded HR data systems, has been key to evaluating our actions. Our inclusive ethos takes an intersectional approach, and in the last few years staff engagement in both development and support schemes has improved.

3.9. SGUL has an institution-wide annual Personal Development Review (PDR) programme managed by Human Resources. This ensures staff have access to line-management, advice, training and resources and their research aligns well with institutional strategies and opportunities. It is also a formal opportunity to recognize and reward good practice, support promotion and other career-development opportunities. HR conduct CROS/PIRLS and/or staff pulse surveys nearly every year, resulting in improvements in PDR and supporting Athena Swan and HREIRA actions.

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3.10. SGUL provides an extensive range of training opportunities in recruitment, management, student supervision, wellbeing, and mental health. We provide 1-2-1 coaching for senior staff and fund at least five Aurora Leadership programme places per year. Each Research Institute has an annual training budget.

3.11. A mentoring review through the university in 2018 led to a three-year road-map, including the Aurora mentoring plan, career counselling for line managers, a PhD/Post-doc mentoring pilot, membership of B-Mentor for our ethnic minority staff, and our Manager as Coach programme.

3.12. The annual academic promotions round is widely advertised and supported by training workshops. Suitable candidates are identified during the PDR process and encouraged to build a focused portfolio of appropriate activities to ensure success in promotion application.

3.13. Our early-career researchers have respective PhD, Post-doc, Lecturer, and Senior Lecturer groups, which meet regularly and play an active role in SGUL's decision-making. Representatives sit on key decision-making committees including university Research Committee and Senate.

3.14. Between 27 and 40 PhD and MD(Res) students graduate per year across the university. The Graduate School oversees all students ensuring they take part in a wide range of training and personal development opportunities. Initiatives to enhance the quality of supervision, including requiring supervisors to have a current 'licence to supervise', six-monthly reports and a transfer exam in the first year have led to over 95% of students completing successfully on-time. Many students are funded by our MRC-LID consortium. Our PhD students are encouraged to explore routes to impact with several recent prize-winning successes, including Natasha Clark (2018 MRC Max Perutz prize for science writing), Quentin Leclerc (2019 Wellcome Trust data-reuse prize for his work on antimicrobial resistance) and Mohammed Hudda (2019 Sam Ramaiah award from the Faculty of Public Health for work reducing inequalities in the BAME UK community).

3.15. SGUL has an internal bridging fund scheme that covers short-term funding for staff employed on fixed-term contracts to help retain researchers between grants, to support continuity and retain expertise. 14 recipients were funded over 2014-2020, valued at £363,014.

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

4.1. Income from external research funders has increased consistently over the last six years, despite a recent dip due to Covid underspend, from £13,662,749 in 2014/15 to £18,259,234 in 2019/20. Our major funders include NIHR, UKRI, European Commission, British Heart Foundation, The Wellcome Trust, specialist charities and industry.

4.2. SGUL was awarded two Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) grants over the period (£1.5 and £1.2 million) used to employ and support early career researchers, buy out clinician time, fund core research facilities notably bioinformatics, and support public engagement. SGUL works closely with St George's Hospital Charity to improve the patient experience at St George's and is a member of the Charity's Medical Advisory Group. As part of their work, the Charity has funded research at SGUL totalling £545K (2013-2020).

4.3. SGUL and St George's Trust co-led an NIHR Collaboration for Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC) South London award in collaboration with Kings Health Partners (King's College Trust, King's College, Guys and St Thomas's Trust, South London & Maudsley Trust) for £9 million (and matched with another £9 million) to research implementation into routine practice and care. The programme has recently been renewed as an NIHR South London Applied Research Collaboration (ARC), with Kingston University joining the consortium, the initial grant is valued at £7.049 million. SGUL leads on providing research training and education, mentoring and network support particularly at the pre-doctoral, doctoral and post-doctoral stages.

4.4. The MRC London Intercollegiate Doctoral Training Partnership (MRC-LID) between SGUL and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) funds 10 studentships per year

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over six intakes (2016-2021). The research themes are Global Infectious Diseases, Qualitative skills for Large Datasets and Evaluating Complex Interventions. New collaborations with students supervised across both institutions access support, training and resources at both sites, as well as provision for three-month external professional internships. Our partnership with LSHTM for over a decade is enhanced through the Bloomsbury Wellcome Trust Centre for Global Health Research and Clinical PhD Programme.

4.5. SGUL commercial income from research includes contracts, consultancy and intellectual property licence income. Our Higher Education Business and Community Interaction (HEB-CIS) eligible income has risen from £2.9M in 2015/6 to £6.7M in 2018/19 which reflects our five-year knowledge exchange strategy, and lead to our HEIF increasing from £330K in 2017/18 to £663K in 2020/21. Additional funding was used to support our industry interaction and knowledge exchange.

4.6. SGUL's Research Operations team consists of 24 staff (21.65 FTE; excluding BRF and IRF below) providing a comprehensive laboratory and administrative support for research. A recent restructure enabled streamlining of services, creating capacity within the university to deliver a thriving environment, and strengthening the university's regulatory compliance. Support is focused on provision of key research facilities and communal laboratory equipment such as centrifuges, freezers, hot and cold rooms, liquid nitrogen supply and storage, storage of samples, containment level 3 Laboratories, autoclaves, microbiological safety cabinets/laminar flows, CO₂ and O₂ monitors. Staff also support adherence to relevant licences (e.g. Human Tissue Act Research Licence) and safety standards (e.g. Biological Safety Officer).

4.7 SGUL's annual capital equipment budget is approximately £200K, providing communal equipment, as well as equipment enabling delivery of cross-cutting research initiatives by competitive bidding. A recent strategy has been introduced to provide a generous 50% matching funds for major pieces of equipment funded by external research income.

4.8. The Biological Research Facility (BRF) is headed by the UK's Laboratory Association Secretary General (elected) and Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology. BRF provides facilities and expertise for research projects involving animals and employs five staff. Specific strengths are in murine aerosol models using containment level 3 organisms and zebrafish, as well as avian facilities for external partners. The university's Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body oversees UK legal compliance and governance and we were an early signatory to the Concordat on Openness in Animal Research in 2014.

4.9. SGUL's Image Resource Facility (IRF) employs three full time staff and enables light microscopy (confocal, epifluorescent, bright field, DRC and phase contrast), fluorescence-activated cell sorting and a histology embedding station. A collaboration with Nikon has enabled live time lapse imaging using a Nikon A1R microscope, and we have agreed to purchase a £160K Phasefocus Liveocyte microscope to further extend our live-imaging capacity.

4.10. SGUL hosts a large modern containment level 3 laboratory facility, supporting studies on tuberculosis, HIV, Coronavirus and other pathogens. A dedicated greenhouse for the cultivation of genetically modified plants for the harvesting of vaccines is located on the roof of Jenner building. The Applied Diagnostic Research and Evaluation Unit (ADREU) includes a Good Clinical Laboratory Practice laboratory and network of experts to evaluate diagnostic microbiology test accuracy from proof-of-concept to late-stage products. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) facilities are managed jointly with the Trust to enable multimodal MRI imaging and spectroscopy for diagnostic and treatment research. SGUL's Jenner Building also houses South West London Pathology (diagnostic services for the Trust and surrounds), and our spin-out companies including TiKa and BuGsBase.

4.11. The University Estates and Facilities Master Plan has completed Phase 1 upgrading foyer and new publicly accessible state-of-the-art Lecture Theatre (opened in early 2020 by the Government Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Patrick Vallance), refurbished offices and laboratories,

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new deionised water plant, chiller plant for air-conditioning, a new liquid nitrogen storage facility, upgrade of containment level 3 laboratories, cold rooms, upgrade to IT server equipment, BRF and IRF, installation of autoclaves, and refurbishing space for a third party provider (Congenica). There is an ambitious new plan to modernize additional sections of the Jenner Building that is currently on hold due to Covid.

4.12. The university's Safety, Health, Environment and Wellbeing provision, employing three staff, is overseen by the Safety Management Committee which reports to Senate. The Safety Representatives committee, Genetic Modification, Pathogen Management and Radiation committees ensure we support and facilitate safe research and practices meet legal and ethical standards, reporting and auditing requirements. Each Research Institute has its own Safety Committee responsible for dissemination and implementation of good practice. Estates and Facilities also lead on our Environmental Policy, Environmental Strategy and Action plan, which include researcher driven proposals for reducing travel and research waste.

4.13. The impact of our research is encouraged by our representation on key and influential advisory and guideline bodies, such as the World Health Organization, and the ability to combine applied and multidisciplinary research teams. We are particularly influential in global health, with projects and partners based around the world for clinical trials (tuberculosis, cryptococcus, malaria), and with strong local presences in Ecuador, Uganda, and South Africa. SGUL and St George's Trust partners are global leaders in sudden death, lymphoedema, rheumatology, neuroscience, vaccinology, and antimicrobial resistance. We also host a Cochrane group investigating the reproducibility and quality of research evidence. Our strong Impact Cases demonstrate our ability to recruit, support, develop and translate our research.