

Institution: University of Suffolk

1. Context and mission

5a.1.1 Established as a community impact institution in one of the UK’s higher education cold spots, the [University of Suffolk \(UoS\)](#) incorporates the best university traditions, delivering high-quality higher education that’s fit for the 21st century of employment and entrepreneurship. In just a few years, we’ve built a distinctive, thriving academic community with incisive research that’s driving positive change across our region.

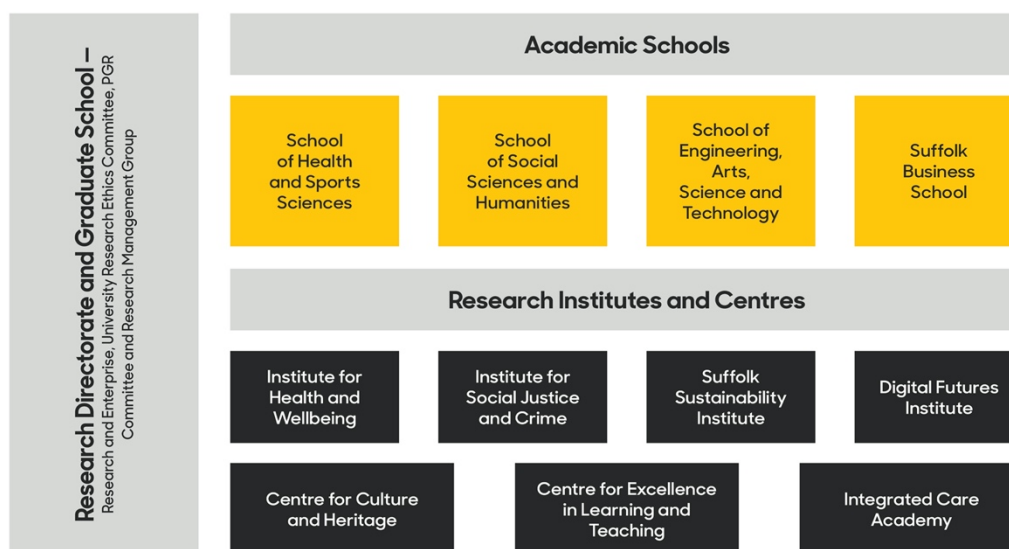
Previously University Campus Suffolk, (a partnership between the universities of East Anglia and Essex), taught-degree awarding powers were granted by the Privy Council in 2015, and the University of Suffolk established the county’s first independent university in 2016. Deeply rooted in the region, our strong partnerships with local colleges is central to our success.

UoS, recognised for widening participation, is ranked third in the country by HESA for the proportion of students from low-participation backgrounds – 25% compared to 11% in England. We specifically work with Care Leavers, Young Carers, mature students, BAME students and students with disabilities and our [Access and Participation Plan](#) reflects this.

Supported by ten [Professional Services Departments](#), our university comprises:

- four academic schools: [School of Health and Sports Sciences](#); [School of Social Sciences and Humanities](#); [School of Engineering, Arts, Science and Technology](#), and [Suffolk Business School](#)
- six pan-university dedicated research institutes and centres: [Institute for Health and Wellbeing](#); [Suffolk Sustainability Institute](#); [Digital Futures Institute](#); [Institute of Social Justice and Crime](#); [Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#), and [Centre for History and Heritage](#)
- an Integrated Care Academy (covering health and social care research within a wider remit).

Academic and Research Structures



5a.1.2 Based in Ipswich, our academic community is composed of:

- 3,500 undergraduate students
- 430 taught post-graduate students
- 70 post-graduate students
- 252 academic staff – 39 at Professor, or Associate Professor level
- 29 (11%) of our academic staff were CAT A eligible on date of census
- 312 Professional Services Staff.

With partner organisations London School of Commerce, Global Banking School, Unicaf, Unitas and SCITT (see below) we serve a further 7,777 undergraduate and 634 taught post-graduate students.

Governed by the Board of Directors, the executive and senior leadership teams make formal decisions, leading our academic and executive governance structures. The Research Directorate oversees all research and PGR activity.

5a.1.3 Reflecting our ambitions to gain research degree awarding powers (RDAP) and engage in the Research Excellence Framework for the first time, our research and enterprise endeavours have increased significantly. While our PhD community has grown to 70, our major investment in research leadership, appointing seven professors in our areas of distinctiveness, has established [six new research institutes and centres](#) and the [Ipswich Waterfront Innovation Centre \(IWIC\)](#). However, as our priority is supporting and widening access to HE, teaching (evidenced by TRAC data) remains our main activity (90%).

Located in one of the UK's fastest growing economies, UoS has had [substantial economic impact](#) on the region. However, high levels of deprivation persist. Suffolk is:

- over-represented in the most deprived 10% for children's education and accessibility to services
- a rural county, facing significant barriers to economic growth with substantial areas of low HE participation. Ipswich, identified as a social mobility cold spot in the [Social Mobility Index](#), is one of 12 designated [Opportunity Areas](#), part of the government's national plan for dealing with social mobility through education.

5a.1.4 Categorised in Cluster M (Research England, 2018), we are a member of [Guild HE Research](#). Our [Strategy and Vision](#) introduced in 2020 states: *"by 2030 we will be recognised as an empowering force for individual and community growth and development. We will be recognised for the major contribution we are making to the health and wellbeing of the people in our region and acknowledged for lasting social and sustainable economic transformation"*.

In addition to our partner colleges (Suffolk New College and East Coast College) and our Research Degree validating institutions (University of Essex, University of East Anglia and University of Brighton), we enjoy several key partnerships for undergraduate and postgraduate courses:

- [London School of Commerce](#) – a UoS Associate College, based in London, with overseas campuses including Malta and Sri Lanka
- [Global Banking School](#) – a UoS partner institution, operating from four UK campuses
- [Unicaf](#) – a UoS global delivery partner, amalgamating resources and capabilities from both organisations to offer innovative online programmes including MSc Public Health and MBA

- [Unitas](#) and the Youth Justice Board – UoS partner organisations, delivering online courses in criminal justice
- We have one of the largest [School Centred Initial Teacher Training](#) (SCITT) in the country.

5a.1.5 Our growing, vibrant research community has a range of specialist academic expertise. The Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy (2018) identified six distinctive areas on which our interdisciplinary research institutes and centres are built:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainability
- Digital Futures
- Crime and Social Justice
- History and Heritage
- Excellence in Education.

Although not in receipt of HEQR funding, we continue to attract considerable funding for research (for example, from the Home Office, Ofsted, Comic Relief, The Police Innovation Fund, the Royal Academy of Engineering, and Nominet) – in total, £1,867,000 since 2015 across wide-ranging disciplines that include Nursing and Health, Biosciences, Information Technologies, Social Sciences, Education and History.

Given we have relatively few CAT A eligible staff (<5 FTE) in some areas, we were successfully granted exemptions in the following units of assessment in 2019:

- 2 - Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care (1 FTE)
- 4 - Biological Sciences (4 FTE)
- 11 - Computer Sciences and Informatics (1 FTE)
- 13 - Architecture, Built Environment and Planning (1 FTE)
- 19 - Politics and International Studies (1FTE)
- 24 - Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism (3 FTE)
- 28 - History (1 FTE)
- 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory (2 FTE).

Our remaining CAT A eligible staff ($n=15$) are being submitted in a single UOA, as our emerging research profile develops from being a community impact university (given our research initially sought to understand and help solve social problems). Our interdisciplinary research centres around welfare – especially in relation to children and young people, policy, practice and social justice – providing critical insights in new areas of research such as social class, sexuality, special needs and disability, children's rights and migration. Our research in other areas such as Health, Wellbeing, Sustainability and Digital is also growing rapidly. We will be making strategic investments in other areas to make a more substantial submission to other UOAs in the next REF.

2. Strategy

5a.2.1 Our [Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy](#) (2018) set out our aims for research and institutional KPIs. Since it was introduced, we have delivered a significant development programme that has established a sustainable research portfolio, thereby:

- Increasing our annual funded research income average to over £400,000
- Appointed a Director of Research
- Increasing the proportion of staff with significant responsibility for research to 17%
- Established a Graduate School and grown our PhD provision to over 70 students in 2020, while introducing 20 PhD bursaries

- Providing extensive early career researcher support through a [comprehensive programme of training](#) and mentoring, gaining the [HR Excellence in Research Award](#)
- Established six research institutes and centres
- Investing in seven professor posts
- Introducing the Suffolk Academic Model, and identifying three promotional pathways:
 - **Category A** – Excellence in Research and Scholarly Activity, Learning and Teaching, and Knowledge Exchange
 - **Category B** – Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Scholarly Activity, Community and Business Engagement
 - **Category C** – Excellence in Research and Scholarly Activity and Knowledge Exchange
- Appointing an Associate Dean for Research in academic schools and introducing Associate Professor roles
- Implementing a Workload Allocation Model to manage dedicated time for research and ensured all our CAT A staff are members of a research institute or centre
- In collaboration with BT's Tommy Flower Network, established the DigiTech Centre for research, creating new research and teaching labs in Cyber Security, Smart Living and Future Networks by attracting £6.4m external capital funding
- Established the first UK Integrated Care Academy, with funding from [Integrated Care System](#)
- Developing new, strategic research partnerships with NHS South Norfolk CCG, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, the Marie Collins Foundation, Better Policing Collaborative, the UK Safer Internet Centre, Sue Ryder Foundation and Office for Students.

5a.2.2 By 2026 we will:

- significantly strengthen our research governance and scholarly culture with new professorial appointments leading research institutes and centres, and new research partnerships
- obtain HEQR funding, enabling us to engage in long-term strategic planning for research
- double our income from externally funded research
- enjoy a proven track record internationally for high-quality research
- establish a M-Res programme and achieve RDAP
- extensively invest in our research environment for workforce planning and workload allocation, to achieve a critical mass of CAT A (60%)
- improve resources to support research, including an interdisciplinary research hub, new posts, as well as technology for capturing and recording research activity and impact
- build a substantial submission for the next REF, supporting staff to develop high quality research outputs, extensive knowledge exchange activities and impact case studies.

Our partnerships with local public and private sectors underpin our collaborative approach to research. Our distinctive areas directly reflect five key sectors for growth identified in the New Anglia Local Economic Partnership (NALEP) strategic economic plan and [local industrial strategy](#). These **priority themes** are economy wide opportunities, wherever the evidence shows that investment and action will have the greatest impact.

5a.2.3 In 2019, an independent [economic impact report](#) by BiGGAR Economics showed that in 2017/18 we generated £103m Gross Value Added and supported 2,270 UK jobs. The report identifies how we have been a catalyst for change in the regeneration of Ipswich

Waterfront where our campus is based, our support towards delivering key frontline public services in health, social work, and education, and our efforts establishing an educational institution that is embedded within the local business community and responsive to its needs. Our knowledge exchange activities will generate research with impact through these collaborations including:

- [IWIC](#), our £5.8m ICT incubation centre and 3D productivity suite
- the [DigiTech Centre](#), a £9.8m research and engineering facility
- The [Hold](#) – a flagship heritage archive and community facility
- the Integrated Care Academy
- contributing to the taskforce for the region's post COVID-19 recovery.

5a.2.4 As an organisation, our approach to research is transparent, collaborative and efficient. We encourage and support open access through our open access repository ([OARS](#)) and so we are:

- compliant with the [Concordat for Open Research Data](#)
- committed to the [Declaration on Research Assessment's](#) responsible use of metrics, and in 2020 implemented a policy for the Use of Metrics in Research
- adopting the principles in the [Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research](#)
- embedding support for activities which foster public engagement with research in all our lead strategies.

5a.2.4 Our research institutes and centres design robust, efficient solutions to real world problems, adopting the principles of interdisciplinary work with national governments, local authorities, charities and private sector companies. Through the research directorate and committee structure, our centralised support for research forges collaborative partnerships across the university with academic schools, institutes and centres. Our professoriate agrees research priorities, identifies new opportunities for alliances and supports the advancement of our research culture. Subsequently, we invite and host external researchers and have an active network of visiting research posts.

We are committed to ensuring our research meets the highest professional and ethical standards. The University Ethics Committee is interdisciplinary, with vibrant representation from all four Academic Schools as well as lay membership. It is responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing our institutional procedures and guidelines. We are compliant with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), which is well-supported by our Research Misconduct policy. Our Research and Enterprise committee and Research Management group ensure that our core values of honesty, rigour, transparency, care, respect and accountability are firmly upheld.

Resulting from collaborative work, nearly half of our outputs on OARS have internal, external and international co-authorships (48%). Our knowledge exchange activity has both increased income and national recognition through the Knowledge Exchange Framework, including Continuing Professional Development, work-based learning, scale-up and innovation support, and knowledge transfer partnerships. The numerous conferences and public engagement events we host cover a wide range of research-related topics including: International Sustainable Ecological Engineering Design for Society conference; Regenerative Medicine; Dementia Research; PhotoEast; the Maritime Festival, and we also host Safer Internet Day each year. Our free, public, open lecture series also delivers over 70 lectures to more than 8,000 members of the public.

3. People

5a.3.1 The values and professional behaviours that define our culture are detailed in our Equality and Diversity Policy and our People Strategy. These include an emphasis on

wellbeing, connected leadership, and supporting career development – for all our staff. We are a Disability Confident Employer and part of the Working Families initiative, with flexible working, flexible retirement and a suite of family-friendly policies and practices. Our annual Staff Wellbeing Audit is insightfully supported by Suffolk Mind, and the university provides a comprehensive range of wellbeing resources through [SilverCloud](#) (the leading digital mental health platform).

Through wide-ranging consultation with unions and staff, we introduced the Suffolk Academic Model in 2018, opening promotion opportunities to all staff (including part-time and fixed-term staff). We also initiated a Workload Allocation Model in 2019 that has distinct workload allocations and a transparent model of backfill for staff with research projects. Also applying to all academic staff, our Support for Staff Academic Study and Continuing Professional Development Policy provides 18 days paid development time. All CAT A are guaranteed at least a day dedicated each week for research, and academics seeking to become CAT A have half a day each week.

5a.3.2 Our [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) outlines our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and equality of access to our services, and how we uphold the principles of diversity and inclusion throughout the institution. Our clear governance structures ensure leadership, responsibility, accountability and oversight of equality and diversity. This is why we are confident that staff are able to progress within the university at all levels, and we regularly review and monitor to ensure this. The workforce remains predominantly female (64%:36%) as does our student population due to the portfolio of programmes we deliver (71%:29%) with PGR (57%:43%).

All our employment-related policies and procedures reflect our commitment to equality and diversity, which helps us to achieve and retain a diverse workforce and PGR community. All our staff undertake mandatory Equality and Diversity Training, and all Research Directorate and Graduate School staff complete unconscious bias training. Our Equality and Diversity Policy promotes the benefits of diversity management. We actively monitor our diversity, as well as the effects of related policies and processes (such as recruitment and progression) publishing the results annually on our [website](#).

UoS' main governance is through the Equality and Diversity Committee, chaired by the Director of People and Organisational Development. This is the primary forum for management, staff and our recognised trade unions to discuss and make recommendations to the senior leadership team and executive on equality, diversity and inclusion.

The university has established a number of sub forums and groups reflecting the breadth of the protected characteristics, including BAME staff, disability and LGBTQI+, as well as other groups such as our family and carers group. We are members of the disability confident scheme, the Mindful Employer scheme and have been a Top 30 Employer for Working Families. We will be making an application for an Athena Swan Award by 2022/2023.

5a.3.3 Gaining the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2017 and 2019, we have consistently demonstrated a continued commitment to developing and supporting our research staff. We invested in [AdvanceHE's Research Leadership Training](#) and [Research Impact Workshops](#) and the [Developing Excellence in Research Supervision award](#) from [UK Council for Graduate Education \(UKCGE\)](#). We have implemented [two bi-annual action plans](#) as part of the concordat establishing new support networks for early career researchers (ECR) – increasing the number of mentors by 25% and the number of CAT A staff facilitating research training sessions to 100%.

Our training and development opportunities for our staff create personalised learning pathways that identify training opportunities relating to each individual's current or future job

requirements. And these are reviewed through appraisals. Subsequently, we supported 14 staff to move to CAT A in Autumn 2020.

5a.3.4 As members of [Vitae](#) and UKCGE, our Research Development Programme, informed and guided by the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) (as endorsed by the Research Councils UK and the Quality Assurance Agency) provides research training in research methods, ethics and research conduct. Widely praised by our validating bodies, the programme provides over 40 face-to-face (online during COVID) workshops on an annual basis to ECRs and PGRs, and includes an online suite of specialist research training resources. We provide support in writing for publication, mentoring schemes, and funds for attending and presenting at conferences and academic networking. We also actively encourage experienced staff, ECRs and PGRs to collaborate. And in 2021, we will introduce a PgC in Research Practice as part of our Academic Professional Apprenticeship for ECRs.

PGRs complete a training needs analysis every year. The Graduate School coordinates and facilitates this in order to ensure consistency of training experience and opportunities for all PGRS. We also create networking opportunities for them with fellow doctoral researchers, early career researchers, experienced academic staff from across the university, as well as external expert speakers from industry. All supervising staff undertake supervisory training (refreshed every three years) and in 2020 we offered all supervisory staff the opportunity to undertake the UKCGE Research Supervision Recognition Programme.

Supported by our validating universities, we have so far had four completions, and our growing PGR community is funded in various ways that support full-time, part-time and international students. In 2019/2020, the Executive approved 20 fee-waiver scholarships and two graduate teaching assistant posts, and invested in a brand new, spacious, dedicated space in the library for PGRs, with study areas, networked PCs, research resources, a recreational area and a space for socialising.

The principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity are at the centre of the processes we have designed in preparation of our first REF submission, and our inclusive ethos underpins our [Code of Practice](#).

5a.3.5

Early career research staff profile	13% of submitted staff (FTE) defined as early career researchers, on REF 2021 census date at institution level
Staff on permanent/ fixed-term/atypical contracts	100% staff eligible (FTE) and submitted are on permanent contracts, on REF 2021 census date at institution level
Disability profile of staff	93% of submitted staff (FTE) returned with no known disability; 7% disability declared, on REF 2021 census date at institution level
Gender profile of staff	Gender of submitted staff (FTE) returned are 53.84% female and 46.16% male
Ethnicity profile of staff	67% of submitted staff returns as White British, 20 % BAME and 13 % White other
Gender pay gap	Institutional Mean gender pay gap for academic staff in 2019 was 13.3%, as a result of men being under-represented in more junior roles

Our REF 2021 submission does not discriminate because of age, disability, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or beliefs, sex or sexual orientation, or maternity. Fixed-term and part-time employees are treated equally. All criteria and procedures applied in the assessment process were explained openly and for accessibility, including having REF equality as an agenda item for all appropriate committees. All decisions relating to REF, eligibility and the selection of outputs are documented in the minutes of committees, and communicated through all staff events, all staff emails, school deans, school research leads, school executives and other school meetings.

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

5a.4.1 Our research-related KPIs are agreed by the senior leadership team and regularly monitored to ensure that we are delivering on our strategic objectives. Although we have not yet been eligible for mainstream QR funds, we have increased grant funding from a wide range of external funders to secure a relatively stable and sustainable financial base for enhanced research activity. This income – over £1.8m in total since 2015 – reflects the diversity of funding sources that we have promptly secured while establishing our research reputation. 62% of our research income was generated from UK Government/local authorities, health and hospital authorities; 13% from UK based charities; 7% from UK industry; plus 9% from EU Government sources.

5a.4.2 The university's Research Directorate, established in 2018, oversees all research activity and ethical scrutiny. Working with our finance department, it also supports academic staff in developing and submitting bids and administrates research projects. Any member of academic staff can access opportunities for research funding, including support in applying for it, and we actively encourage all staff to do so. New funding opportunities are sent to relevant staff and updated on a regular basis on our intranet. Supported by senior research staff, our Research Development Manager provides weekly 'drop-in' research surgeries for staff and regular bid-writing workshops. Chaired by the Director of Research, the Research Management Group coordinates and monitors all research and related knowledge exchange activities, utilising our four academic schools, together with colleagues from finance, marketing, library services and research on a regular basis.

The university has invested in library facilities, access to databases and collections (full-text and index subscription databases) as well as print and electronic journals. Our e-first approach to collection development maximises the reach of the collection and supports researchers wherever they are. Additionally, our resource request service can source more specialist texts whenever our researchers need them.

5a.4.3 Our campus is designed to create a positive and engaging research environment and offers a range of modern academic facilities to meet the needs of each of its subject areas. Substantial investment has radically transformed our research environment. Examples include:

- A UK government award of £6m in 2020 to launch the Suffolk Data Science Academy in the DigiTech Centre (in partnership with BT). The new centre has access to over £5m of specialist computing infrastructure optimised to the development of artificial intelligence and big data analytics research, with a focus on machine learning application
- £13m investment including from NALEP, Health Education England, NHS Trusts and Ipswich Borough Council to build a state-of-the-art Health and Wellbeing

Institute, Integrated Care Academy, and new accommodation for our Health and Social Sciences School

- A substantial refurbishment of the northern part of our campus has been completed over the last few years. This includes a £5.5m building refurbishment to create The Atrium, another of our flagship buildings, which brings STEM subjects together and houses the Ipswich Waterfront Innovation Centre, a Virtual Environment for Radiotherapy Training suite, psychology labs and network and software engineering labs to support research and knowledge exchange
- The School of Science, Technology and Engineering, which has delivered a comprehensive laboratory and specialist teaching infrastructure upgrade project within recent years, investing over £900k in facilities such as the human performance lab, biological science labs, the biotechnology lab, an advance microscopy suite and investment in arts facilities.

And opened to the public in August 2020, *The Hold* offers an exciting new county archive and research facility on our campus, and is a project we've partnered with Suffolk County Council on, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund with significant potential for research and impact