

# **University of Stirling**

## **Research Strategy 2015 – 2021**

### **Research responding to society's needs**

The University of Stirling is a research-led institution, delivering research that makes a difference. We will produce world-leading research across a distinctive subject mix of sciences, social sciences and humanities. We will capitalise on this outstanding research portfolio, enabling our staff and students to make a significant contribution to conducting research that addresses key economic, societal and cultural needs, both locally and globally.

The University of Stirling's research portfolio is distinctive. We will continue to develop our unique range of strengths based on our ability to forge innovative inter-disciplinary collaborations across the university. Our research is focussed around key priorities, with emphasis on our unique knowledge base and the contribution it can make.

Our research portfolio encompasses broad strengths in health and wellbeing, culture and society, environment and communities, enterprise and economy, and sport. Within these areas we continue to develop, articulate and sustain programmes of research designed to address those societal challenges where we can offer profound insight which is translated into positive outcomes.

## Enhancing Research Excellence

We will:

Build upon our current level of research activity, support our researchers and grow further in our areas of research distinction.

*We will increase our research capacity by 30%, focusing on our areas of distinctive excellence*

We will achieve this by:

- Continuing to recruit and retain outstanding researchers at all levels, who enhance our research profile on an internationally excellent scale.
- Explicitly focussing on supporting and building research skills and capability at all levels from students through to the professoriate.
- Investing in the next generation of researchers by doubling the number of University funded research postgraduates.
- Ensuring all staff on Teaching & Research contracts have at least 40% of their time protected for research activity and are engaged with the aims and targets of the University, recognising how their intellectual contributions fit within the wider framework of the organisation.
- Facilitating self-reliance and entrepreneurship in research leadership through the innovative use of our resources and infrastructure.

## Leadership and Ambition

We will:

Nurture a culture of success and effective leadership across the University in order to enhance our competitiveness

*We will accomplish  
sector-leading  
performance in research  
income*

We will achieve this by:

- Increasing the conversion rate of research applications to awards to the upper quartile for our subject discipline mix.
- Further improving our performance in the Research Excellence Framework (REF), reaching the top 25% of institutions in the next REF.
- Building on our existing strengths in securing research funding and expanding our research income in particular from research councils, industry and the European Union.
- Encouraging outstanding research leadership, a clear focus on success and sustained attention to developing and supporting researchers, providing training opportunities and ensuring effective mentoring is undertaken.
- Continuing our commitment to equality and diversity including achievement of an Athena Swan silver award, and ensuring all staff and research students see themselves as an integral part of Stirling's research community.

## Partnership and Communication

We will:

Extend and strengthen our research partnerships and collaborations and ensure that our research gains the recognition it merits.

*Our research will gain greater international renown particularly in our areas of distinctive excellence*

We will achieve this by:

- Engaging with all relevant research, funding, policy and strategy organisations, involving them in our research from design to dissemination.
- Delivering our research outcomes through high quality channels, publishing in the most ambitious and prestigious outlets.
- Sustaining a multi-channel programme of research communication which highlights our strengths, capabilities and successes.
- Increasing the range of our international research collaborations through targeted partnerships with leading overseas institutions in our areas of distinctive strength.
- Building on our sector-leading commitment to open scholarship through our approach to research dissemination, including media presence; public engagement; research data management; and the highest standards of research ethics and integrity.

## Engagement and Impact

We will:

Ensure that our research activities are innovative and transformative, creating demonstrable impact that has reach and significance.

*We will make a sustained, tangible and evidenced contribution to addressing societal issues*

We will achieve this by:

- Sustaining and enhancing partnerships with policy makers, communities of practice and the public, engaging them in the research process.
- Delivering research-based solutions to societal challenges and communicating the difference our research makes.
- Providing advanced support mechanisms, with a highly efficient, effective online research infrastructure that focuses on improving our ability to deliver, enhance and evidence impact.

