



Strategic Delivery Plan for Research 2021/22

Completing interim activities as we transition to
our new strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27



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1 Executive Summary

The research strategy for 2021/22 comes at a natural juncture in the life-course of the current strategy as it draws to a conclusion and the University undertakes the foundational work for the new strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27.

The ambition for 2021/22 is therefore to maximise the achievements of the current strategy – gaining maximum value from the most successful elements – while foreseeing the evolution of the strategy for the next period.

The key objectives of the research strategy for 2021/22 are:

- Maximising our ability to take advantage of strategic research opportunities
- Further invest in the highest value elements of the current research strategy, to realise to the fullest the potential of this strategy
- Renewing our research culture and support for early career researchers, who have been particularly badly affected by the pandemic



2 Key Priorities

We have defined a number of key strands and priority research activities that will be progressed in advance of the new research strategy being finalised.

These form our programme of work for the academic year 2021/22 and provide the platform for delivery of the new strategy.

Our key priorities are:

2.1 Fostering a culture of ambition

We will define our research ambition for the next five years, informed by the development of the new research strategy and REF2021 results. Through this process we will define ambition at the granular level and identify the drivers and interventions to meet that ambition. This will involve defining targets and progress measures, and means of accountability.

Key actions:

- Identify drivers, interventions and resources required to deliver institutional change
- Review the size and shape of PGR cohort and develop an approach to DTP/CDT renewals
- Implement findings of lean process review for PGR life cycle and governance
- Introduce institutional KPIs for Research at Faculty & School Levels

2.2 Providing a research environment and culture to support excellence

We will grow a research environment that supports excellence for all, intervening to further support our ECRs, BAME and disadvantaged researchers. We will embrace the changes in research culture needed to support excellence in an inclusive and sustainable research culture. We will support potential through recruitment of staff with the highest potential and developing and nurturing our existing staff, particularly in terms of the ECR community.

Key actions:

- Recommence NRF/AMF fellowship programme recruitment to attract and retain outstanding ECRs



- Co-ordinating role to implement Research Culture (compliance, support and ambition) as a core strand of activity across the University
- Continued delivery of ECR and Nottingham Research Leaders Programmes as building block to support research culture

2.3 Enabling platforms and infrastructure

We will invest in core platforms and infrastructure which will facilitate success. These include digital research, R&I-related investments and our capacity for policy and outreach. We will review our policy around matched funding to maximise the value of our research investments.

Key actions:

- Digitally enabled research – collaborating virtually; accessing technology and equipment and agile infrastructure
- Match funding budget, review policy and process
- Institute for Policy and Public Engagement
- Define and deliver R&I Roadmap
- Continued support for Nottingham Invention Fund
- Implement findings of Research Planning Working Group

2.4 Developing our research pipeline through further international and multi-disciplinary collaboration

Ensuring we build on and develop new international collaborations to improve our performance and effectiveness and provide new funding avenues. Identify and pump prime strategically important research opportunities, providing support to researchers to develop and mature international collaborations. Support existing and emergent interdisciplinary collaboration to develop an enabling research culture and position for external funding opportunities. Delivering the next phase of development for Beacons of Excellence

Key actions:

- Further development of the Tübingen/Nottingham strategic collaboration, with additional partners from Germany/US
- Pump priming for strategically important research opportunities
- Consideration of the implications of export control risks on our ability to collaborate
- Maintain/grow EU funding post Brexit
- Foster and co-ordinate research collaboration opportunities (internal and external) across the tri-campus



2.5 Addressing local and regional research challenges and leading further national and international research

We will work with local and regional partners to deliver solutions to research challenges including zero carbon (which reaches into manufacturing, components, supply chain, energy production and storage, and local partnerships) and utilises Nottingham as a real-world test bed for innovation. We will continue to pursue frontier research initiatives of national and international importance, including the Ultra High Field Scanner investment, the National Rehabilitation Centre and Digital Nottingham. We will support discovery research, allowing us to take advantage of opportunities through the development of ARIA

Key actions:

- Support Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) Renewal and development of 'Tomorrow's NUH' research ambitions
- Continued expansion and development of Zero Carbon partnership activity, including TransMid, Freeport, EMHIZ and innovation cluster opportunities
- Enabling Digital Nottingham
- Deliver Ultra High Field Scanner as a national institute (subject to confirmation of funding)
- Supporting the establishment of the China Beacon Institute



3 Risk Management

All risks associated to this Interim Strategic Delivery Plan will be detailed in the individual project Risk Registers as necessary, and upwards to the programme risk register as appropriate, with agreed scores and mitigation. The central governance team will monitor the programme risk register and will step in to assist with remediation on any struggling projects, and in turn will update the programme sponsor and Research Committee.

4 Governance

Governance for the interim strategy will be delivered over three tiers.

Tier 1 – Project: Individual projects and/or activity within the programme will have its own governance that will provide oversight to the project, ensure that projects are making good progress against their plans, handle prioritisation/resourcing matters and support the project in making decisions.

Tier 2 – Programme: All projects will provide monthly reporting to a central governance team, who monitor ongoing project flightpaths and step in to assist with remediation on any struggling projects, and in turn will update the programme sponsor and Research Committee (Tier 3)

Tier 3 – Global (whole university): Research Committee acts as the programme board to bring together decision makers and key stakeholders to ensure the programme runs effectively, is delivered on time, and within agreed quality specifications and delivers the expected benefits.

5 Implementation

Professor Dame Jessica Corner, our Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, will lead the implementation of this SDP.