

# **Research Strategy**

**2019-22**



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## Committee Approval

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>	<b>Date</b>
QAEC	Recommended approval	20 November 2019
Academic Committee	Approved	27 November 2019
	<b>Date in force</b>	27 November 2019

This Research Strategy 2019-22 will be reviewed annually by our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC). Any amendments will be subject to approval by the Academic Committee.

# 1. Introduction

This Research Strategy 2019-22 document provides a detailed outline of our four Research Goals and Objectives (Section 3), including our definitions of research and scholarship, impact and research environment (Section 2).

Our Research Strategy 2019-22 places development and empowerment of our staff and students at its core in supporting their efforts to engage in research and scholarly activities. This helps us to ensure that we retain and continue to recruit highly qualified, experienced and motivated members of staff who recognise and embrace the importance of research-informed teaching to enhance experience of our students in higher education.

Whilst we recognise that most of the research activity will be undertaken by our academic staff, we believe that our Research Strategy 2019-22 will help to create an environment that encourages and supports all staff members to engage in research that has internal and/or external impact, as highlighted in Sub-Goal 5.2 of our Strategic Framework 2019-22. We also recognise that being research active is something that takes time to 'achieve' and people need to be provided with opportunities to start their research journeys. As such, this strategy outlines the support we give to new researchers as well as that provided to those with more experience. Additionally, in 2019-20 we are setting up a Widening Participation Forum, through which staff can:

- share their experiences in Higher Education
- contribute to research and initiatives which improve access to and participation in Higher Education

Goal 3 of our Strategic Framework 2019-22 provides that we will deliver high-quality education, in partnership with the University of Northampton for our validated degree programmes. The quality of our design and delivery of courses, particularly at Level 6 and beyond, will be enhanced by ensuring that our teaching is informed by research in our validated degree programmes in Business, Law and Accounting. In response to this, our Research Strategy 2019-22 helps to strengthen our commitment to establishing and widening participation of all staff members (academic and professional services) in research and scholarly activities. We strongly believe that our research outputs, including opportunities for collaboration with our partner institutions in higher education, will contribute in raising our regional, national and international profile through external relevance and impact of our research and scholarly activities as underpinned by our Research Strategy 2019-22.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1 Research and scholarship

We established our Centre for Research and Enterprise (CRE) in September 2015 to provide strategic leadership for our research activities.

All staff (academic and professional services) are developed, supported and empowered to engage in research. All academic staff are required to engage in scholarship.

We have simple, clear and distinct definitions of research and scholarship:

- **Research** is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared<sup>1</sup>. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of the public and voluntary

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<sup>1</sup> This definition of research is partially taken from the REF 2014 Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions, July 2011 (Document REF 02.2011), available at: <http://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/pubs/2011-02/>

sectors, commerce, industry and ourselves. It includes work that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of research outputs<sup>2</sup>, for example:

- Presenting a research paper at one of our Research Seminars or our Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- Presenting a research paper at an external conference
- Publishing a research paper in our Working Paper Series
- Publishing an article in a peer-reviewed journal
- Publishing a monograph
- Publishing teaching materials that embody original research
- Publishing other academic-related materials that embody original research
- Publishing professional services materials that embody original research
- **Scholarship** is defined as activities which are undertaken to ensure academic staff have an up-to-date and current knowledge of their discipline, with appropriate breadth and depth to enable them to create high-quality learning experiences for students, and which of itself could lead to other outputs that have internal and/or external impact. It includes, *inter alia*:
  - Responding to developments within the discipline to ensure the curriculum remains current
  - Reflecting critically on teaching performance, making improvements to its practice and engaging with pedagogical issues
  - Keeping up-to-date with the use of learning technology
  - Undertaking personal research (to include undertaking a doctoral degree)
  - Attending internal forums (e.g. Research Seminars; Teaching and Learning Forum)
  - Attending our Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
  - Attending external conferences
  - Writing student textbooks
  - Publishing short articles in professional journals
  - Development of case studies

## 2.2 Impact

We do not seek to enter into research without a purpose. The purpose of our research is that all outputs will have a very considerable internal and/or external impact in terms of their reach and significance. As stated above, scholarship itself could lead to outputs that have internal and/or external impact

Internal impact is defined as a positive effect on, or benefit to:

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<sup>2</sup> By implication, contract and consultancy research that is subject to a confidentiality statement and which cannot, therefore, be “published, disseminated or made publicly available” does not come within our scope of research, although it could lead to a scholarly output that has an internal and/or external impact.

- Students
- Staff
- Teaching
- Other academic and scholarly activities

External impact<sup>3</sup> is defined as a positive effect on, change or benefit to:

- The economy
- Society
- Culture
- Public policy or services
- Health
- The environment
- Quality of life
- The higher education sector (including teaching, students and staff) where the impact extends significantly beyond our institution

## 2.3 Research environment

Through this Research Strategy we will create a research environment<sup>4</sup> that is defined as one that is conducive to producing high-quality research, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.

## 3. Research Goals

Our Research Goals and Objectives for the Research Strategy 2019-22 are set out below:

1. Develop, support and empower all our staff to achieve excellence in research that has internal and/or external impact, reflected through direct relevance to the needs of public and voluntary sectors, commerce, industry and ourselves.
2. Design and deliver courses that are informed by research, and through which we will develop and empower students to engage in their own research.
3. Undertake an internal assessment of the quality of research outputs, impact and environment.
4. Develop our partnership with the University of Northampton to extend to the joint supervision of doctorate research students.

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<sup>3</sup> This definition of external impact is partially taken from the REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (see footnote 1).

<sup>4</sup> This definition of research environment is partially taken from the REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (see footnote 1).

## Research Goal 1

Develop, support and empower all our staff to achieve excellence in research that has internal and/or external impact, reflected through direct relevance to the needs of public and voluntary sectors, commerce, industry and ourselves.

We are committed to developing, supporting and empowering all our staff to achieve excellence in research. This is led through our Centre for Research and Enterprise (CRE). Membership of the CRE is open to all our staff.

As stated at **Section 2.1** above, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of public and voluntary sectors, commerce, industry and ourselves. It includes work that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of research outputs. As stated at **Section 2.2** above, the purpose of our research is that all outputs will have a very considerable internal and/or external impact in terms of their reach and significance.

Research-active staff are categorised as new, junior, or senior researchers.

Researchers, regardless of their category (i.e. new, junior or senior), will work under an agreed Research Development Plan (RDP). This RDP is an overarching statement which is developed and agreed between the researcher, mentor (if applicable) and the RDP Coordinator.

The RDP provides the researcher with a clear direction and strategic approach towards undertaking agreed research activities and achieving agreed research outputs that will have a considerable internal and/or external impact in terms of reach and significance (see **Section 2.2** above).

Mentors will assist new and junior researchers to formulate the RDP, which will include a staged output progression (e.g. internal Research Seminar presentation, external conference paper presentation, joint peer-reviewed publication, sole peer-reviewed publication, and contribution to our research environment).

The RDP will set out the development and support available to each researcher. This development and support includes:

- Allocation of a senior researcher to act as mentor for new and junior researchers
- Internal Research Methods module (and supporting Research Methods Training Manual)
- Internal Research Forum
- Internal Research Seminars
- Internal Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- Internal Working Paper Series
- Individual £1,000 annual research allowance for each permanent member of staff on a contract of 0.5 FTE or greater, with an approved Research Development Plan (RDP) in addition to the £500 CPD and training budget (or £250 allocated to each part-time or sessional staff member employed on a contract of less than 0.5 FTE) for external research and scholarly activities
- Research leave based upon tangible research outputs that have internal and/or external impact; and contribution to our research environment
- Scholarship to cover fees for the University of Northampton PhD by publication

As stated at **Section 2.1** above, research includes work that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of research outputs, for example:

- Presenting a research paper at one of our Research Seminars or our Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- Presenting a research paper at an external conference
- Publishing a research paper in our Working Paper Series
- Publishing an article in a peer-reviewed journal
- Publishing a monograph
- Publishing teaching materials that embody original research
- Publishing other academic-related materials that embody original research
- Publishing professional services materials that embody original research

All researchers are expected to contribute to the ongoing development of our research environment; an environment that is conducive to producing high-quality research, in terms of its vitality and sustainability (see **Section 2.3** above).

We expect that our researchers will carry out their research to the highest ethical standards, while respecting the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech. Regulation 3 of our Articles of Association provides that we will:

- Respect the principle of academic freedom, subject to compliance with the company's equality, diversity and inclusion policies and procedures, and subject to compliance with any legislative or regulatory requirements
- Respect the principle of freedom of speech for all students enrolled on a course delivered by the company, members of the Bloomsbury Institute Student Guild, staff employed by the company, external speakers, the directors and the shareholders, subject to compliance with the company's equality, diversity and inclusion policies and procedures, and subject to compliance with any legislative or regulatory requirements.

Our research ethics approval procedures set out how we achieve this (see **Research Ethics Code of Practice**).

## **Objectives (Research Goal 1)**

- Provide all staff (academic and professional services) with the opportunity to engage in research that will be of direct relevance to the needs of public and voluntary sectors, commerce, industry and ourselves and that will have an internal and external impact.
- Ensure all staff who engage in research, work under an agreed Research Development Plan that will record the agreed research outputs over a three-year period, the intended internal and/or external impact of such research in terms of its reach and significance, and the support to be provided.
- Ensure all staff who engage in research are categorised as new, junior or senior and provide appropriate support and development depending upon the category, to include:
  - Allocation of a senior researcher to act as mentor for new and junior researchers

- Internal Research Methods module (and supporting Research Methods Training Manual)
- Internal Research Forum
- Internal Research Seminars
- Internal Annual Teaching and Learning Conference
- Internal Working Paper Series
- Individual £1,000 annual research allowance for each permanent member of staff on a contract of 0.5 FTE or greater, with an approved Research Development Plan (RDP) in addition to the £500 CPD and training budget (or £250 allocated to each part-time or sessional staff member employed on a contract of less than 0.5 FTE) for external research and scholarly activities.
- Research leave based upon tangible research outputs that have internal and/or external impact; and contribution to our research environment
- Scholarship to cover fees for completing a PhD by publication with our academic partner the University of Northampton, in addition to the £1,000 annual research allowance
- Ensure staff who engage in research contribute to the ongoing development of our research environment.
- Ensure staff who engage in research carry out their research to the highest ethical standards.

## Research Goal 2

Design and deliver courses that are informed by research, and develop and empower students to engage in their own research.

In developing this Goal, we have taken into account the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which, with regards to Expectations for quality has a core practice that:

- The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

We currently design and deliver our own undergraduate degrees that are validated by the University of Northampton. We deliver postgraduate degrees that are franchised by the University of Northampton.

We develop, support and empower our staff to undertake, *inter alia*, discipline-based and pedagogic-based research that will enhance the students' learning experience.

This research informs:

- The design and delivery of our University of Northampton validated undergraduate degrees.
- The delivery of our University of Northampton franchised postgraduate degrees.

With the exclusion of practice-based modules, we aim to ensure that:

- Level 6 modules (on our validated undergraduate degrees) are designed and taught by researchers.

- Level 7 modules (on our franchised postgraduate degrees) are taught by researchers.

All undergraduate and postgraduate degrees include a research-based principle module that is designed to develop and empower students to engage in their own research.

We have made an application for our own Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP). Once TDAP is conferred, we will be responsible for designing and delivering our own degrees. The above principles will be applied to the design and delivery of our own degrees.

## Objectives (Research Goal 2)

- Ensure that research informs the design and delivery of our University of Northampton undergraduate degrees, and the design and delivery our own undergraduate degrees once TDAP is conferred.
- Ensure research informs the delivery of our University of Northampton postgraduate degrees, and the design and delivery our own postgraduate degrees once TDAP is conferred.
- With the exclusion of practice-based modules, aim to ensure that Level 6 modules are designed and taught by researchers.
- With the exclusion of practice-based modules, aim to ensure that Level 7 modules are taught by researchers.
- Ensure that all undergraduate and postgraduate degrees include a research-based principle module that is designed to develop and empower students to engage in their own research.

## Research Goal 3

Undertake an internal assessment of the quality of research outputs, impact and environment.

In developing this Goal we have taken into account the guidance published for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.

Goal 1 above provides that researchers, regardless of their category (i.e. new, junior or senior), will work under an agreed Research Development Plan (RDP). This RDP is an overarching statement which is developed and agreed between the researcher, mentor (if applicable) and RDP Co-ordinator.

The RDP provides the researcher with a clear direction and strategic approach towards undertaking agreed research activities and achieving agreed research outputs that will have a considerable internal and/or external impact in terms of reach and significance (see **Section 2.2** above).

### **Research outputs**

Each research output will be internally quality-assessed. The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are originality, significance and rigour. Each output will be graded as follows:

- Four Star: Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- Three Star: Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour, but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
- Two Star: Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

- One Star: Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
- Unclassified: Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work.

### ***Impact***

There will be an assessment of the internal and/or external impact of individual research outputs in terms of reach and significance (see **Section 2.2** above).

By 31 March 2021, the RDP Co-ordinator will develop two case studies to highlight the internal and/or external impact of our research in terms of reach and significance (see **Section 2.2** above), as opposed to the impact of individual research outputs.

The following impacts will be applied:

- Academic impact: The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to academic advances, across and within disciplines, including significant advances in understanding, methods, theory, application and academic practice.
- Bloomsbury Institute specific impact: The demonstrable contribution that research makes to areas such as student support/experience, teaching and learning practice, and policy and procedures at Bloomsbury Institute.
- Wider impact: An effect on, change to, or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond academia.

Examples of impact will be underpinned by excellent research. The underpinning research will be deemed to be excellent if it has been assessed as being a minimum of Two Stars, i.e. the underpinning research is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.

Evidence of impact will be provided as follows:

- Audit evidence: Corroborating information that underpins the truth of the claims being made in the case study, for audit purposes.
- Assessment evidence: Information and indicators in the case study that will enable an overall judgment to be made about the reach and significance of the impacts described.

In assessing the impact described within a case study, an overall judgement will be made about its reach and significance as a whole, rather than separately. Impact will be graded as follows:

- Four Star: Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
- Three Star: Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
- Two Star: Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
- One Star: Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance.
- Unclassified: The impact is of minimal reach and significance.

### ***Research environment***

The Chair of the Research Forum will undertake an assessment of our research environment that may include:

- Research and knowledge, engagement and impact strategy.

- Innovative interdisciplinary research initiatives and participation in major regional, national or international research collaborations with other academic and non-academic partners.
- Contribution to the wider academic community such as journal editing, conference convening, working for learned societies and peer review, as well as other indicators of recognition and contribution.
- Contribution to the wider non-academic community through engagement and impact-related activities, including membership of major policy committees or industry partnerships.
- Provision of research facilities and research support.
- Research grant income.

Our research environment will be assessed in terms of its vitality and sustainability. It will be graded as follows:

- Four Star: An environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
- Three Star: An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally excellent quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
- Two Star: An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
- One Star: An environment that is conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability.
- Unclassified: An environment that is not conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality.

### Objectives (Research Goal 3)

- Continue to retain a central record of research outputs for all research-active staff.
- Ensure, wherever possible, that research outputs are made available in open access form in accordance with the Open Access Policy<sup>5</sup>.
- Undertake an internal assessment of:
  - The quality of individual research outputs.
  - The impact of individual research outputs.
  - Our research environment.
- By 31 March 2021 the RDP Co-ordinator will develop two case studies to highlight the internal and/or external impact of our research in terms of reach and significance (see **Section 2.2** above), as opposed to the impact of individual research outputs.

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<sup>5</sup> (July 2014), available at: [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201407/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201407/)

## Research Goal 4

Develop our partnership with the University of Northampton to extend to the joint supervision of doctorate research students.

Successful implementation of Goal 1 will further develop our research base and our research environment. Once these are at a mature stage of development, we will have the necessary capacity to start supervising research degree students.

By December 2021 we will have concluded an agreement with the University of Northampton to provide for the joint supervision of doctorate research students.

In 2022-23, we will recruit 5 doctorate students who will be jointly supervised with the University of Northampton.

Once we have sufficient doctorate supervisory experience we would intend to make an application for Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP).

### Objectives (Research Goal 4)

- By December 2021 conclude an agreement with the University of Northampton for the joint supervision of doctorate research students.
- In 2022-23, recruit 5 doctorate students who will be jointly supervised with the University of Northampton.

## 4. Related regulations, policies and procedures

### 4.1 Internal

- Articles of Association
- Strategic Framework 2019-22
- Bloomsbury Institute Conference Papers
- Bloomsbury Institute Research Seminar Series
- Bloomsbury Institute Working Paper Series
- Expression of Interest to become a Bloomsbury Institute Active Researcher
- Research Development Plan 2019-22
- Research Ethics Code of Practice
- Research Methods Training Manual

### 4.2 External

- REF Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (July 2011, Document REF 02/2011)  
<http://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/pubs/2011-02/>
- REF 2021 documents

<http://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/>

- [Open Access Policy](#)

[www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201407/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201407/)

- UK Quality Code for Higher Education

[www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code)

## **5. Review of the Research Strategy 2019-22**

This Research Strategy 2019-22 will be reviewed annually by our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC). Any amendments will be subject to approval by the Academic Committee.