NEWMAN UNIVERSITY
Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Strategy 2015-2020

Introduction

“The basic mission of a University is a continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the good of society.” Ex Corde Ecclesiae, 15 August 1990.

Mission

With a distinctive commitment to transformational impact, Newman University maintains its mission to make a positive difference to individuals and communities through the contribution of its staff, students and graduates, producing excellent research and scholarship of benefit to society and providing high-quality, accessible academic and professional education based on respect for others, social justice and equality. Our aim for the duration of the strategic plan is to be recognised nationally and internationally for the integrity and quality of our research and scholarship. Key to this will be the maintenance of a sound platform for the achievement of Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) and an expanded submission to the next Research Excellence Framework (REF).

Benefits

Newman is committed to maintaining the link between teaching and research, and sees scholarship at the heart of the University’s life and its contribution to society. The University encourages partnership and collaborative research with public and third-sector bodies as well as fellow academics on a range of real-world issues including education and well-being, heritage and culture, community and professional development. It additionally advocates research-informed professional practice across all Subject Areas, enhancing the volume and quality of research and encouraging knowledge transfer into the community. The exchange of knowledge produced by the University through research and scholarship informs professional practice, contributes to improved public policy, social enterprise, and cultural understanding.

Purpose

Alongside other strategies underpinning the Strategic Plan, this Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Strategy is central to providing the University with a clear direction for the range of its research activities and the formation of its postgraduate research students and academic staff. Our focus will be on institutional strengths, such as those indicated by the REF, developing supervisory capacity, allocating resources strategically, growing and diversifying income streams, and helping to ensure the environment and culture necessary to progress towards the overarching goal of RDAP as an indicator of having successfully established a mature, self-sustaining research base at the University.
**Culture**

To achieve this goal, we will above all need to develop the research culture within the University. This means that we will expect all academic staff to be involved in advanced scholarship activity (the creation of new knowledge, or the critical reinterpretation, application and transfer of existing knowledge) with outcomes that contribute to the University’s journey towards RDAP. We will encourage our students to aspire to postgraduate study and build pathways to postgraduate research degrees through our taught Masters programmes. We will support collaborative staff research: internally through a small number of focussed research centres that build on areas of proven research strength and through supportive research groups to grow critical mass; externally through networks, collaborative projects, funding bids, and contributions to professional bodies as well as scholarly associations and societies.

**Staff formation**

Our measurements and targets for success to accompany the strategy will be framed by the key requirements for RDAP:

- **Professional affiliations**
  a significant proportion (normally around a half as a minimum) of full-time academic staff will be active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies.

- **Research activity**
  a significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of academic staff will have recent (within the past three years) personal experience of research activity in other UK or international university institutions, for example, by acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations.

- **Academic achievements**
  a significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of academic staff will be engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship and be able to demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing.

**Expectations**

It is our expectation that all members of academic staff will seek to contribute as appropriate to meeting these requirements by, for example, connecting with subject associations, delivering seminar/conference papers, collaborating with researchers beyond Newman, publishing and disseminating the results of research or advanced scholarship.
The strategy has four themes: Postgraduate Research; Staff Research and REF Engagement; Scholarship and RDAP; Enterprise and Income.

**Strategic Theme 1: Postgraduate Research**
Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) will be both a crucial staging-post in our development as an independent, fully fledged Higher Education provider and a badge of recognition that the University sustains a strong enough research base on which to award our own doctoral and other research degrees.

Our commitment to formation and to human flourishing includes the community of our research students and our approach to supervision is characterised by individual support as well as high-quality supervisory teams. We aim to create an environment that develops our supervisory capacity and enables our doctoral and MPhil students to reach their goals and realise their potential as early career researchers. Working with partners, as individuals or external supervisors, we aim to work within the Researcher Development Framework to enable our researchers successfully to make their own significant contribution to knowledge and to advance their own professional and career opportunities.

Our objectives in this area will be to:

1.1 Grow research student numbers and timely completions

1.2 Expand research supervisory experience alongside a programme of training and development for supervisors and students

1.3 Build our capacity to apply for research degree awarding powers

1.4 Sustain an appropriate environment to attract high-quality researchers and postgraduate students.

**Strategic Theme 2: Staff Research and REF**
Building upon the many positive outcomes of REF 2014, we will focus investment on securing a critical mass of academic staff who are engaged in research, practice, or other forms of advanced scholarship and can demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national or international standing.

Our research, whether foundational, applied or user-defined, is underpinned by a common aim to make an impact in society, contributing to social justice and well-being, to scientific, human, and cultural understanding, and to the sum of knowledge. Advanced scholarship encompasses appropriate forms of community engagement, knowledge transfer and professional practice, alongside discipline-based and pedagogic research.
Our objectives in this area will be to:

2.1 Plan for an increased number of staff submitted to the next Research Excellence Framework

2.2 Expand academic leadership through the appointment of Professors and Readers

2.3 Grow new researchers and sustainable, successful research centres through strategic investment and targeted support

2.4 Nourish our research culture by protecting research time, mentoring early-career researchers and recognising research achievement

2.5 Encourage engagement in collaborative research, advanced scholarship, and external research partnerships to build research capacity

2.6 Attract and retain academic and professional support staff who will help us to achieve a mature, self-sustaining research base.

**Strategic Theme 3: Scholarship and RDAP**

In addition to building our REF-oriented research outputs and impact we will ensure, as part of our efforts towards securing a research culture that can support an application for RDAP, that the majority of full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies. We will also support staff to expand partnerships and external engagements in order that a good proportion of academics have experience of research and advanced scholarship activity in other university institutions.

We will expect all academic staff to engage in scholarship and to be scholarly in their practices. Scholarship is purposeful, well-founded and appropriately conducted; it produces meaningful results which are communicated effectively. It may involve knowledge creation, integration, sharing or application, as well as the development of ways of knowing in others. Such scholarship may issue in research publication but equally may find expression in other disseminated outputs and forms of public engagement. The Graduate School and Academic Practice Unit will work with staff and students to promote scholarship, researcher development and the exploration of academic identities. Engagement with emerging professional researcher frameworks will be promoted alongside support for the co-production of scholarship at all levels within the University. Students will be engaged as researchers and scholars, supported by staff who participate pro-actively in professional development to support their scholarly teaching, supervision and broader academic practice.

Our objectives in this area will be to:
3.1 Promote dialogue about academic identity and the development of shared understandings about the nature of scholarship, including broad engagement with appropriate researcher development frameworks

3.2 Encourage the development of externality in research and scholarship; through contributions to subject associations, learned societies, relevant professional bodies and the research infrastructure of Higher Education

3.3 Stimulate the scholarships of discovery, integration, application and teaching, leading to the production of relevant public outputs

3.4 Deliver research-informed-teaching and practice to the benefit of students

3.5 Engage with and promote students as researchers, co-producers and partners in scholarship at all levels of study

3.6 Provide staff development and support, primarily through the Graduate School and Academic Practice Unit, for the development of scholarly practices, academic writing and public engagement

3.7 Grow a learning community which values, rewards and celebrates those who lead and engage with research and advanced scholarship for the common good.

**Strategic Theme 4: Enterprise and Income**
The University will need to expand income streams and continue to demonstrate the impact of our research and practice on the wider community, in keeping with the University’s social mission.

We will also seek to cultivate our third-stream and enterprise activity through knowledge transfer, consultancy and ethical employer engagement. These links can create opportunities and funding for research, as well as broaden student prospects, contribute to staff formation, and generate income. An emphasis on social enterprise is seen as particularly important to enable staff and students to work collaboratively to tackle social problems and improve communities. We will build our work as active members of key external partnership organisations and networks to ensure our contribution in the local, regional, national and international communities are known, understood, and valued appropriately.

Our objectives in this area will be to:

4.1 Increase externally-funded research and evaluation projects, independently and in collaboration with partners in the UK and overseas
4.2 Grow academic capacity to develop enterprise and third stream work

4.3 Promote research and scholarship which has demonstrable impact on the public good

4.4 Foster activity in social entrepreneurship and in supporting staff and students to develop successful social ventures and enterprises in partnership with others

4.5 Collaborate with external organizations and our alumni to develop our ability to offer excellent diverse opportunities for work placements, school experience and professional practice

4.6 Nurture staff and student civic engagement to develop varied community engagement activities promoting student learning from real-world challenges and also to engage the community in the benefits of Higher Education.

**Implementation Plan**

An action plan for the implementation of these objectives will be produced, and reviewed annually, focussed on staff formation around advanced scholarship and on the indicators that contribute to achieving the overarching goal of RDAP as recognition of having successfully established a mature, self-sustaining research base at the University.

Integral to the implementation of the research objectives will be the operation of the committee structure overseeing the University’s research activities and reporting to Senate: the University Research Committee, the Research Degrees Subcommittee, and the Research Ethics Committee. The committees play a decisive role in all aspects of sustaining a successful and ethical research culture and environment, ensuring that the University’s research strength and capacity are enhanced, that early career research potential is recognised and nurtured alongside established work and that resources are strategically targeted to build an externally-recognised research culture.

The implementation of the University’s research strategy will continue to be underpinned by the support provided by the Research Office and Graduate School, including: the maintenance of a University-wide comprehensive research data base; the preparation and provision for the Research Committee of up-to-date information on research performance in the University; coordination of all matters relating to postgraduate research students; oversight of the establishment and operation of the University’s research centres; organization of a seminar programme bringing together researchers with internal and external speakers to discuss research findings, methodologies and other academic issues; coordination of the University’s links with relevant research networks; support for the administration of the
University’s submission to the Research Excellence Framework and similar exercises; facilities for the bid writer to provide regular information on grants and external funding opportunities as well as assistance to academic staff in preparing research applications, including advice on costing and pricing, meeting funding eligibility criteria and submission of bids.

**The future**
As a Higher Education Institution founded in 1968, our longer term aim is to be included as one of the *Times Higher Education*’s 100 Under 50 institutions, which aims to list the world’s best young universities.

The methodology for the ranking is unique but draws on a range of performance indicators within the same five categories and with the same headline weightings as the World University Rankings:

- *Research*: volume, income and reputation (30 per cent)
- *Citations*: research influence (30 per cent)
- *Teaching*: the learning environment (30 per cent)
- *International outlook*: people and research (7.5 per cent)
- *Industry income*: innovation (2.5 per cent).

Within the methodology, many indicators are linked to research productivity:

*Research*: a count of the number of papers published in academic journals per academic staff member in quality peer-reviewed journals; university research income, scaled against staff numbers and each university’s distinct subject profile; reputation, measured through a worldwide poll of experienced scholars of the perceived prestige of institutions in research.

*Citations*: research influence draws on a five-year citation count, based on indexed journals.

*Teaching*: examines the ratio of doctoral degrees to bachelor’s degrees awarded by each institution; also, data on the number of doctoral degrees awarded by an institution, scaled against its size as measured by the number of academic staff.

*International outlook*: calculates the proportion of each university’s total research journal publications with at least one international co-author and reward the higher volumes.

*Industry income*: counts how much research income an institution earns from industry, scaled against the number of its academic staff.

The university will formulate implementation plans for the research strategy in the context of these indicators of research success alongside the University’s other...
strategies underpinning the current Strategic Plan, with its key themes of Formation for Students, Formation for Staff, Research, Scholarship and Enterprise, and Collaborative Partnerships.