

Institution: University of Chichester

1. Context and mission

Introduction to Context and Mission

The University of Chichester (UoC) is an ambitious and dynamic institution, committed to achieving world class academic excellence. Our research community is comparatively small (99 'Category A' staff and 99 PGRs) but rapidly developing in scope and diversity, with new departments, collaborative initiatives and a growing portfolio. The REF2021 submission this statement supports, which represents a **doubling of Units of Assessment (UoAs)** for the University over REF2014, bears witness to this remarkable trajectory. UoAs listed in **bold** are making their first REF submissions:

UoA 4: Psychology
UoA 12: Engineering
UoA 17: Business and Management Studies
UoA 20: Social Work and Social Policy
UoA 23: Education
 UoA 24: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
 UoA 27: English Language and Literature
 UoA 28: History
UoA 31: Theology and Religious Studies
 UoA 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

Year-on-year total registered student numbers are as follows (HESA):

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
PGR	68	68	89	94	91	95	99
PGT	755	731	755	796	963	1000	1050
UG	4792	4647	4674	4651	4464	4374	4395
Total	5635	5472	5546	5574	5566	5530	5595

Our unique context and profile offer up several advantages that we have sought strategically to exploit across the REF2021 assessment period. As the only university in West Sussex, we recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of 'place'. Our size and structure have also allowed us to adapt quickly to the challenges we face, affording us an unusual level of administrative agility. In a related way, we have been able to hardwire interdisciplinarity into our research, fostering innovative ways of thinking and working that set us apart from other institutions.

This commitment to wide-ranging and place-centred academic excellence has led us to invest heavily in our research capabilities, particularly at our Bognor Regis Campus (BRC), which is bringing essential research and innovation (R&I) activity to a neglected south coast region. Centred around a GBP35,000,000 Tech Park, opened in October 2018 by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, the BRC is home to some of our newest subject areas, including Engineering & Design, and Creative Digital Technologies, and is fast becoming a key regional hub for interdisciplinary STEAM research. Alongside our historic Bishop Otter campus (BOC) in Chichester, this state-of-the-art infrastructure looks simultaneously forwards and outwards to the cultural, economic and environmental challenges facing a competitive twenty-first-century global economy.

Our vision for the future is securely rooted in our past, which began in 1839 with the establishment of a teacher training college in memory of Bishop William Otter. Preserving this

heritage in education is one of our [Key Strategic Themes](#), which we keep it at the heart of everything we do, and which also commit us to:

- Keeping the Chichester student experience high-quality, personalised, accessible and aspirational
- Increasing the size and diversity of our student body
- Providing an excellent staff experience based on the core values of the University community
- Achieving disciplinary and cross-disciplinary excellence in research and innovation
- Increasing external academic engagement, meeting regional needs and securing national and international recognition
- Contributing to the development of a strong economic ecosystem in West Sussex through imaginative business partnerships, enterprise education and support for graduate start-ups

Put simply, we want to benefit the world through outstanding research, innovation and education.

Institutional Structure

The strength of our institution lies in the ability of our academic and administrative subject teams, backed by effective Professional Services, to undertake rigorous and interdisciplinary research. These are led by the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG), which meets regularly to discuss matters relating to the strategic direction of the University.

Our academic teams operate within the following **Institutes and Departments**:

- 1.) Institute of Sport (IoS)
- 2.) Institute of Education, Health and Social Sciences (IEHSS)
- 3.) Institute of Arts and Humanities (IAH)
- 4.) Chichester Conservatoire
- 5.) Business School
- 6.) Department of Creative and Digital Technologies
- 7.) Department of Engineering and Design

The IEHSS and IAH were established in 2018 as part of a strategic restructuring of the University's diverse academic strengths. Bringing together the areas of Childhood, Social Work and Social Care, Psychology and Counselling and Education, the IEHSS ensures the sustainability and effective leadership of each area within the sphere of health (broadly construed). The IAH combines the Department of Humanities (History, English and Creative Writing, Politics, Theology and Philosophy with Theatre) with Law, International Relations and Product Design. The IoS, the oldest of our Institutes, conducts a wide range of internationally recognised and world leading research into exercise physiology. The UoC has just opened a new School of Nursing and Allied Health, which will build on our longstanding institutional links with nearby St Richard's Hospital.

This institutional structure affords these areas two key advantages. First and foremost, academic leadership teams and staff are uniquely placed to foster interdisciplinarity within and across the subject areas under their remit. Research projects, portfolio development, continuous professional development (CPD), consultancy, bidding and income generation all benefit from the coordinated approach it facilitates, whilst also maintaining the distinctive methodological traditions that underpin each traditional academic area. In this way, the UoC avoids monolithic research structures, and enables new kinds of interdisciplinary work that are reflected in the remarkable diversification of our REF2021 submission.

Secondly, it enables our academic staff easily to participate in tightly knit leadership teams, at both institutional and subject-specific levels. As a consequence, UoC strategic planning in relation to research is delivered for and with the academic community at large.

Research Governance

Research at the UoC is supported by the [Research Office](#), which, under the leadership of **Professor Simeon Keates** (Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) with responsibility for R&I) and **Dr Antonina Pereira** (Cross-Institutional Lead for Research), coordinates and assists with researcher CPD, bid funding activity, monitoring research ethics, and managing PGR administration (including registration, progress monitoring and examinations). It also ensures the smooth functioning of our 7 research-related committees:

- **Research and Innovation Committee (RIC)**. Chaired by the DVC, RIC meets 5 times per academic year, reporting directly to Academic Board, the UoC's most senior academic committee. The RIC brings together staff with responsibility for research, innovation and apprenticeships, and thus fosters the cross-fertilisation of our R&I activities.
- **Research Degrees Board (RDB)**. Chaired by the DVC, RDB confers research degree awards.
- **Research Ethics Committee (REC)**. REC is the central vehicle through which research ethics and integrity are monitored at the University, in accordance with our [Research Ethics Policy](#).
- **Research Degrees Group (RDG)**. Meeting at least 4 times per academic year, RDG oversees all matters of research degrees governance at the UoC except those related to ethics.
- **REF Project Team (REFPT)**. Chaired by the Cross-Institutional Lead for Research, REFPT meets a minimum of 5 times per academic year to discuss preparations and staff support for REF.
- **Impact Working Group (IWG)**. Chaired by **Professor Iain Greenlees**, IWG provides all UoC researchers with an open forum for sharing best practice on how to produce and evaluate impactful research.
- **Equality and Diversity Sub-Group (E&DSG)**. Chaired by **Dr Barbara Thompson**, E&DSG meets roughly bi-monthly to discuss concerns and initiatives related to Equality and Diversity (E&D).

As is the case within Institutes, the leadership and Terms of Reference guiding each of these fora proactively encourage and require the involvement of academic staff from all subject areas, alongside **PGR representatives** (in RIC and RDG) to participate in the University's administrative and strategic leadership in matters related to research.

Research Ethics

The UoC's **Researcher Code of Conduct** (available on our [Research Governance](#) webpage) offers a comprehensive overview of our commitment to upholding rigour and integrity in our research. Key principles include producing work of the highest quality; maintaining a culture of research that fosters and rewards honesty and accountability; providing an effective safety net for the declaration and minimisation of conflicts of interest; promoting the open exchange of ideas, research methods and results; ensuring our researchers have access to adequate skills training; and protecting the dignity, rights and safety of all stakeholders.

Since 2014 the UoC has subscribed to the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), and is committed henceforth to publishing an annual statement outlining how we satisfy its requirements.

2. Strategy

‘Open for Change’

The UoC’s Strategic Plan, ‘[Open for Change 2018-2025](#)’, signals our increasingly externally-facing approach to (1) R&I; (2) academic engagement; and (3) learning, teaching and student experience.

Underpinning ‘Open for Change’, and the UoC’s fundamental philosophy of who and what a university serves, is a conviction in the interrelated importance of these 3 concerns. We are committed to achieving excellence through a supportive research environment in which all of our academics are encouraged and expected to contribute to knowledge creation through both research and teaching, so that ‘***all of our teachers research and all of our researchers teach***’.

This approach ensures that our academic community remains open to the productive cross-fertilisation of research and pedagogical expertise; it prevents (alongside our institutional structure) the emergence of insular ‘ivory towers’ within our academic areas; and it ensures that, at an individual level, all staff are able/expected to build research profiles of international repute. Our [Research and Enterprise Sub-Strategy](#), which forms part of our ‘Open for Change’ agenda, thus recognises that research prepares and qualifies academics as deliverers of outstanding learning and supervision, and is a fundamental part of the Higher Education offer.

‘Open for Change’ also summarises our institutional approach to Open Access (OA). Since initiating a plan to create an institutional OA repository (‘ChiPrints’) based on EPrints open source software in 2011, and introduced a formal [OA Policy](#) in early 2015, we have overseen the OA uploading of **3,320 research outputs** (including articles, monographs, edited volumes, chapters, theses, shows/performances, compositions and videos), which have now been **downloaded over 200,000 times**. Between January 2014 and July 2020, the proportion of ChiPrints deposits including full-text rose **from 15% to over 50%**.

Since launching ChiPrints, the UoC has implemented a variety of initiatives to increase advocacy for OA, including a 1,000th deposit milestone award from the Vice-Chancellor (most recently in December 2019), a deposit amnesty, and a summer project to encourage the creation and connection of ORCID. The Electronic Resources and Research Support Librarian, who oversees ChiPrints, is a member of the REFPT, and provides an OA update at every meeting.

Enabling Research

Across the REF2021 assessment period, the UoC Research Office has sought to enable research activity among our community, playing to our researchers’ strengths and making seed money available to develop and nurture emerging research to the point where external funds can then be attracted.

One key way of doing this – especially among our early career researchers (ECRs) – is through our internal **Research and Innovation Fund (RIF)** (previously the Research Facilitation Fund/Researcher Development Award, which funded more than **250 research projects** (over **GBP500,000**) and, in 2015-17, fast-tracked the career development of **13 ECRs**). The RIF comprises the following:

- The **Research Facilitation Fund** – that aims to foster research activity and local, national and international impact projects
- The **Networking and Dissemination Fund** – that aims to support conference presentation/attendance and CPD
- The **Postgraduate Fund** – that aims to develop and nourish our research culture and community through the attribution of postgraduate fee-waivers

With over 50 bids awarded between November 2019 and July 2020, the RIF is catalysing a remarkable uptick in research activity at the University. In taking advantage of this funding, each UoA is expected to demonstrate annually how funding has enabled further research activity, external funding, publications, and impact. Going forwards, we plan to introduce a graduated accessibility level to RIF funding provisions, with ECRs given the priority funding needed to spark their research and develop their careers.

Another key UoC strategy for enabling research across the REF2021 assessment period is our provision of **protected research time**, which we provide our research staff through **research leave** (25 days, over and above their 35 days' annual leave (pro-rata)) and **research sabbatical leave** provisions. The latter can be applied for via our **Research Sabbatical Policy**, and provides opportunities for 1-12 month periods away from teaching and administrative duties (typically salaried), for the completion of specific and agreed research/writing schedules.

Fostering Impact and Engagement

Our strategy in this area can be described broadly within two overarching themes:

Fostering impactful research that delivers tangible benefits. Drawing on the same wide-ranging and inclusive view of research championed by REF, we recognise the need for a positive culture that motivates people to do diverse/risk-taking and impactful work, moving away from a narrow (or 'traditional') view of what research can and should be. This is supported both within institutes and through the Impact Working Group.

Fostering enterprise and employer engagement. We are continually seeking to embed employer engagement and enterprise culture across the University, to make undertaking employer engagement and enterprise activities an aspiration for all staff and a reality for a significant number. In this way, we are committed to making a significant contribution to the sustainable economic, cultural, social and educational regeneration of the communities that the UoC serves, particularly in coastal and rural West Sussex.

As part of this commitment, successful bids to both the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) have provided an injection of funds (over GBP500,000 since 2014) that have allowed the Business School and the University's Research and Employer Engagement Office (REEO) to occupy an extensively re-furnished listed building on the BRC, and to become a lead element in the education-led regeneration of the area. The UoC is also a signatory to the newly-established [Knowledge Exchange Concordat](#).

3. People

A Place of Empowerment

Our institution brings out the best in its researchers by supporting and empowering them wherever possible, rather than adopting the more coercive 'publish or perish' policies that otherwise dominate the HE sector. We believe this fosters the attainment and wellbeing of our community, in a career sector that frequently reports high levels of anxiety and stress. Between 2013 and 2017 the UoC was a signatory of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#), leading to us gaining the European Commission's **HR Excellence in Research Award**.

Staff and Staffing

Bucking another sectoral trend, the UoC does not typically employ fixed term academic staff, believing it inimical to the welfare of academic people and academia more broadly. Our academics thus have the ability invest, both practically and emotionally, in their research profiles and environments.

All UoC staff benefit from participating in a **Performance Review Development Plan (PRDP)** – a tailored CPD programme that caters to the personal and professional (including skills-based) needs of everyone within our professional community. At the same time, every UoC staff member is able to take advantage of our University **Mentor Scheme**, through which they are assigned a contact beyond their Department/line manager to whom they can consult for support and guidance.

Beyond these provisions, we offer rapid career progression opportunities, including annual chances to apply for Readerships/Professorships; flexible and remote working options; and support for staff with caring responsibilities, ill health, and other equality-related circumstances.

While ECRs are essential to the development of a vibrant and sustainable research environment, they often suffer from limited opportunities in the HE sector. In recognition of this, we are constantly looking to develop strategies to support our ECR community, developing specialist CPD workshops that cater to the unique challenges they face.

The UoC subscribes to both [UKCGE](#) and [Vitae](#), the UK's pre-eminent researcher training organisation. Alongside Vitae's widely used Researcher Development Planner framework, our researchers are thus able to take advantage of a vast archive of online training materials.

Supporting PGR Culture

Our integrated approach to teaching and research offers tangible benefits for our PGRs, as well as the staff who supervise and support them. It ensures that supervisors are able continually to sharpen their pedagogical skills, whilst fostering an inclusive research community that breaks down the staff/student divide. The UoC has held **research degree awarding powers** since September 2013.

The vitality and sustainability of our research environment is reflected in our extremely strong PGR recruitment rates. These amount to percentage increases of **45.6%** (HESA/FPE) and **56.6%** (total registered PGRs numbers, inclusive of 'PhD by publication' candidates, but exclusive of intermitting or withdrawn students), in our PGR student body:

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
PGR numbers (FPE/HESA)	68	68	89	94	91	95	99
PGR (total, excluding intermitting/withdrawn)	83	85	102	117	119	129	130

Over the REF2021 assessment period the UoC has awarded over **80 bursaries/stipends** (with a total value of **GBP1,165,051.12**), and **over 60 fee waiver awards/staff sponsorships** in support of PhD study.

We also run a [Pre-PhD](#) Preparation programme, through which prospective MPhil/PhD applicants can register for 6 one-to-one supervision tutorials to help them prepare for doctoral study. Candidates have found this scheme of great benefit when submitting formal research proposals and applying for funding – whether at the UoC or elsewhere.

Our PGR community is able to take advantage of **dedicated study spaces** within our **South House** building (BOC) and Tech Park (BRC), which provide **24 allocated desks**, a further hot desk with printer, kitchen facilities and lockers. Students with disabilities are typically catered for in addition to these provisions, or as best fits their individual needs. Individual **study rooms** are also available to book on both campuses.

Training and Presentation Opportunities

Across the REF2021 assessment period the Research Office has developed a wide-ranging suite of annual research training and presentation opportunities that are open to all academic staff and PGRs. These are set out in our annual **Professional Development Handbook**, and typically include:

- Independent Chair and Research Degree Examination Training (including for viva voce examinations)
- Training on: NVivo and Mendeley
- Open Access Training (ChiPrints)
- Training in 'SPSS' or 'R' Software for Statistics in Research
- PGR Supervisor Workshops and Training
- Research Bid Costing and Pricing
- Amplifying Research in the Media
- How to Get Your Research Published
- PGR Focus Week: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters
- PGR Study Days (AKA 'Shut up and Write')
- Annual PhD Research Day

UoC PGCert teaching programmes are run twice annually, offering all research staff and PGRs a route to attaining Fellowship/Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

The UoC also subscribes to the [University of East Anglia \(UEA\) Online Training Series](#), which offers wide-ranging research and professional skills training for PGRs in a 'live-taught' online format.

Equality and Diversity

The UoC's commitment to equality and diversity are outlined in our [E&D Policy](#) and other annually published [inclusivity documentation](#).

The REF2021 assessment period has coincided with the following developments:

- A greater proportion of UoC **academic/research staff** self-identify as having one or more 'protected characteristics' (Equality Act 2010), including those with black or minority ethnic ('BAME') heritage (**161.5%** increase) and those with a disability (**30.2%** increase).
- The proportion of UoC starting **PGRs** (MRes and PhD) of black or minority ethnic ('BAME') heritage has steadily increased from **21.2%** to **34.6%** from 2015/16 to 2019/20. This reflects (and exceeds) a more general increase within our wider student body.
- The UoC **gender pay gap** (figures published annually) has steadily fallen at all pay and age levels. The most up-to-date available government sectoral gender pay gap data (31 March 2019 census, filtered by 'University') places our overall mean gender pay gap (11.1%) at **36th out of 110 HEIs**.

The UoC works closely with the **UoC Students' Union** (UCSU) to advance its equality, diversity and inclusion aims by participating in a range of activities and awards/initiatives:

- We are registered as an organisation with **Dementia Friends**, an Alzheimer's Society initiative
- We maintain **Disability Confident Employer** status
- We adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism
- We are a signatory to the **Mindful Employer** 'Charter for Employers who are Positive About Mental Health', and the Time to Change Pledge (made jointly with UCSU), upholding a non-stigmatising culture around mental health
- We are a member of **Stonewall Diversity Champion's Programme**, and a joint signatory (with UCSU) to the **Government's Sports Charter**, to advance gender identity equality and sexual orientation equality
- From 2015/16 to 2016/17 the UoC subscribed to Advance HE's leadership development programme for women, the **Aurora Programme**
- We provide a wide range of related professional development opportunities for staff through our Professional Development Programme, including sessions around unconscious bias (now mandatory), race awareness, mental health, trans awareness and sensory impairments. In 2021 we will fund at least two places on Advance HE's [Diversifying Leadership Programme](#).

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Research Income

The UoC punches well above its weight in supporting the development of impactful, needs-focused R&I activity through a variety of funding streams. Our funding allocations across the REF2021 assessment period (UKRI figures for 2019/20 combining QR, SPF, GCRF and HEIF monies) **currently rank 5th out of 15** Cathedrals Group HEIs (GBP1,169,343), behind only the Universities of Roehampton, Canterbury Christ Church, Chester, and Gloucestershire. This is especially notable considering that, by student numbers, the UoC is the 10th smallest HEI in this group.

These achievements are exceeded by our other externally sourced annual research income streams, which amount to over GBP1,300,000 (2019/20). Most notably, since 2015, the Institute of Sport (IoS) has worked to deliver on a series of prestigious contracts with the UK Ministry of Defence, receiving a total research income of **GBP5,272,915**. We are committed to raising these figures substantially over the coming decade.

Functional Infrastructure

As part of our flourishing research culture, we have, across the assessment period, hosted 10 formal **Research Centres** and **Research Groups** dedicated to specialist areas of academic interest. These reveal the diverse range of research specialisms at the UoC – a key means of facilitating cross-institutional impact:

- Centre for Sustainable Business
- Centre for Special Education and Disability Studies
- Iris Murdoch Research Centre
- People and Wellbeing in the Everyday Research (POWER) Centre
- Centre for Workforce Development
- Chichester Centre for Fairy Tales, Fantasy and Speculative Fictions
- South Coast Eighteenth-Century and Romantic Research Group
- Occupational Performance Research Group
- Clem Burke Drumming Project
- Anita White Foundation

Alongside regular research seminars, all our academic areas host Public Lectures, Open Lectures and Inaugural (Professorial) Lectures, which are typically [advertised centrally](#) and open to all.

Physical Infrastructure

The UoC's cutting-edge Tech Park puts a little STEAM behind STEM. By bringing together science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics courses on one state-of-the-art site, with a wealth of industry-standard facilities, we are producing graduates that have enterprise skills, creativity, technical knowledge and are equipped to enter the graduate workforce. Our existing departments of Engineering and Design and Creative and Digital Technologies are based in the Tech Park, alongside the Business School. The Tech Park has received funding from HEFCE and the [Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership](#).

Our campuses offer a wide range of facilities, available to all our research-active staff and PGRs. Both have **Learning Resource Centres (LRCs)** containing a **Support and Information Zone** (our 'go-to' professional services interface), **Mac and PC suites**, **printing and scanning facilities**, **PrintShop services**, **equipment loan services** and **dedicated/flexible study spaces**.

Additionally, our research community is able to take advantage of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **2 library buildings**, containing **802 study spaces**, **208,081 physical items**, access to over **200,000 ebooks** and **80,000 journal titles**, and 614 metres of **archival and special collection materials**, all available to view on request (including through an in-house digitisation service)
- **Dedicated laboratory facilities** for all relevant subject areas
- World class interdisciplinary facilities at the BRC **Tech Park** (including one of only 3 recording spaces nationwide that can house a symphony orchestra)
- **The ShowRoom** (BRC), a 250-seat theatre with advanced sound and light equipment
- The world class **Tudor Hale Centre for Sport** and **Sports Dome** (BRC)
- A state-of-the-art **Music Block** (BRC)
- A large, flexible 400 square metre **'CDIO' 'making space'** where engineers and artists alike can realise their visions in material forms