



NORWICH
UNIVERSITY
OF THE ARTS

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Vice-Chancellor: Professor John Last

RESEARCH STRATEGY 2015-2020

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Norwich University of the Arts

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *Research Strategy, 2015-2020* seeks to build on¹ Norwich University of the Arts' established – and growing – specialist reputation for excellence in research. The aim is to provide a framework that enhances the University's regional, national and international academic and industry profile by increasing the quantity, quality and visibility of academic staff and student research. Drawing on the deep understanding of the links between processes, materials and making implicit in the teaching and the learning undertaken at the University, this research strategy seeks to encourage collaborations within, across and beyond the creative disciplines. It also to leverage the University's ties to industries wherein the rigour and invention implicit in research in the creative disciplines is increasingly required to provide solutions to complex problems.

Although the *NUA Research Strategy, 2015-2020* concerns itself with relatively short-term themes and objectives, more generally it speaks to longer-term University goals, articulated through the lens of research as expressed through the work of academic staff and students. In the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) and 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) NUA was recognised for its work in theory, curation and practice, and its commitment to engaging new audiences with art, design, architecture and media research; this strategy looks to build on those successes. The rising profile of research at NUA directly contributes to the University's stated vision to be recognised as 'the best specialist University for Arts, Design and Media in Europe'² It emerges out of, and looks to complement a specialist academic culture that fosters world-leading, topical research that redefines the boundaries of the creative disciplines, supports innovation and entrepreneurialism, and leads to demonstrable educational, cultural and economic benefits for society.

Dr Alisa Miller, Director of Research
October 2015

¹ See also the University's *Research and Consultancy Strategy 2009-14*, 'Research Environment' and 'Research Impact' templates for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). The strategy also reflects an awareness of UK Higher Education sector drivers – for example, governing principles, policies and practices of the Quality Assurance Association (QAA) in relation to Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP), the UK Research Councils (RCUK) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) – that impact upon the ways institutions organise and develop research.

² *Norwich University of the Arts: Strategic Plan, 2014-2019*.

II. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Research Strategy and for the sake of clarity, **‘research’ is defined** as a process of creative inquiry that leads to new understandings effectively shared. The arising outputs of creative inquiry that leads to new understanding, for example, **practice, design, theory** and / or **pedagogy**, and expressed in any number of creative media – must demonstrate critical awareness and positioning, rigour, significance and originality, and be critiqued through a process of peer review. Dissemination to appropriate and varied national and international audiences is also a key factor of successful research, practice and pedagogical initiatives in art, design, architecture and media.

Research also encompasses **knowledge exchange** and / or **transfer**, involving collaborations undertaken with public and private sector partners and / or clients that involve, for example, consultancies and commissions in which an academic staff and students provide specialist knowledge, skills and expertise. These might lead to innovations in academic disciplines as well as creative, design and beneficiary industry processes, materials and practices. In some instances, this work may also result in the creation of Intellectual Property (IP) secured and exploited financially through trademarking, copyrights and patents.

All research must reflect the highest possible standards for **ethics** and **integrity** as articulated in the University’s *Code of Practice on Research Ethics* and the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*.

Scholarly Activity refers to endeavors that directly support and enhance teaching (for example, course developments). Although the *Research Strategy 2015-2020* only implicitly addresses ‘Scholarly Activity’, these may be developed to become research outputs in themselves *vis-à-vis*, for example, creative pedagogies and / or textbooks, provided that they are peer-reviewed and as such disseminated to audiences beyond the University.

***NOTE that throughout the Research Strategy ‘research’ should be taken as a shorthand for all of the approaches and activities described above, expressed and disseminated in the various media available to the creative disciplines.**

III. NUA RESEARCH STRATEGY, 2015-2020

This Research Strategy articulates how research will be developed and supported by Norwich University of the Arts in the immediate future. In its many articulations and expressions, research is fundamentally about a journey that involves different forms of practice, making, critical engagement with processes and materials, critical reflection and rigour and – perhaps most importantly – creativity. Hence it contributes directly to the vibrant academic culture of the specialist University.

Research at NUA focuses on generating new forms of practice informed by innovative critical and cultural perspectives. Mindful of 21st century challenges, the University and the research it supports is constantly evolving to reflect and respond to the demands of the art, design, architecture and media disciplines, and the rapidly changing creative industries that are so important to the cultural and material wealth of the region, the nation and the world.

The **overarching objectives** of the *Research Strategy, 2015-2020* are:

- To further NUA's specialist mission by raising the profile of research within and beyond the University;
- To identify entry points into research discourses across and beyond the University for colleagues new to this approach to creative practice;
- To discover new ways to articulate and expose innovations in thought, practice, processes and materials fostered in the University's studios, workshops and classrooms, and to engage new colleagues by providing various entry points into research discourses;
- To leverage the specialist expertise, resources and networks contained within the University with the aim of developing new academic and industry partnerships that will enhance its research environment and reputation for innovation in the creative disciplines;
- To support staff and students in their efforts to critically engage with, and ultimately take ownership of debates about new forms of research that resonate regionally, nationally and internationally.

The strategy and overarching objectives have emerged from individual and collective discussions with NUA staff and students, external academic colleagues and creative industry partners. Research Themes – designed to be expressed through practice-based and / or design research as well as theory and pedagogy – have been identified below in order to aid in the achievement of these objectives. The underlying purpose of the Research Themes is twofold:

- a) to encourage the development of partnerships and projects within the University, including cross-disciplinary and Faculty collaborations, in areas of research that the University has identified as strategically important;

and

- b) to publicly and cogently articulate for a range of audiences the purpose, outcomes and support that constitute research at NUA; these audiences include academic and Postgraduate Research Students (PGR's) but importantly, creative industry partners, external agencies and potential funders.

The strategy attempts to capture the nature of emerging work with the aim of raising the profile of research at the University, encouraging future collaborations and, wherever possible, securing external support and investment. Fundamentally it reflects a growing confidence in how research at the University both reflects and enhances its specialist reputation, and seeks to define a role for research that reflects the University's position as a centre for innovative thought and practice, taking in to account the key role played by academic staff and students in ensuring the continued vibrancy and relevance of the creative disciplines, within and beyond the academy, now and in the future.

A. Research Themes

The following Research Themes and sub-themes have been identified through an audit of staff practice, skills, expertise and existing research activity, and have been defined through debate and discussion at NUA Research Days, Research Seminars and written exchanges within the University's academic and professional services communities. The themes work to identify and to articulate what is distinctive about intellectual groupings and emerging communities of practice at the University. They will inform strategic planning and investment over the course of the next five years, as well as how the University presents research narratives to external audiences.

The themes and sub-themes are neither static nor definitive. Their ownership and articulation rests with the University's creative community, and they will be expressed through diverse approaches to research, including but not limited to:

- practice-based research engaging with materials, processes and making
- innovations in creative media (digital and analogue)
- design research and thinking
- curation and physical interventions in spaces
- theoretical and historical research
- pedagogical research

Research Themes and Sub-Themes

Pattern and Chaos

Creative processes
Materials
Mapping
Disruptive innovations
Design for extremes
Language and poetics
Aesthetic systems
Violence / anarchy
Human psychologies

Created and Contested Territories

Landscapes
Protection / Conservation
Interventions
Constructed Environments
Spaces and Places
Rural
Institutions
Workplaces

Human Interfaces

Learning
Narratives
Identity
Power and Empowerment
Gender
Memory
Play
Disruptions
Senses

To retain intellectual currency within and beyond the University they must also continue to reflect and inform innovative approaches to practice-based, design, theoretical and / or pedagogical research explored and expressed through teaching and scholarship within the Faculties, innovations achieved in the technical workshops and studios, new approaches to modern art practice, criticism and contemporary curation relevant to the East Gallery^{NUA}, and the enterprise and knowledge exchange partnerships initiated by the Ideas Factory^{NUA}. They will be formally reviewed every two years to ensure that they accurately reflect research at the University, and that they respond and contribute to discussions about the changing context in which the creative disciplines operate nationally and internationally.

B. Partnerships and Collaborations

Tactical and strategic partnerships and collaborations are vital to ensuring the continued health and relevance of research in the creative disciplines. This section of the Research Strategy articulates how the University plans to encourage and support collaborative working within and outside of the institution with relevant academic and industry partners. The aim is to generate sustainable, mutually-beneficial intellectual networks and partnerships that make it possible for emerging ideas to become defined projects, with identifiable outputs engaging a variety of audiences and beneficiaries.

i. Collaboration within the University

As asserted in the Introduction to this strategy, the variety of creative expertise coupled with the capacity for design thinking and innovative approaches to practice as research represented within the University is one of its greatest strengths. Research derives its context and momentum from the innovations in practice and processes – facilitated by creative pedagogies and course design – that take place in the workshops, studios and classrooms of the University, made possible by the NUA academic community and technicians. Research relies on all members of this community, including:

- undergraduate and PGR students, who challenge and enliven the disciplines by constantly questioning inherited and emerging tools and approaches;
- academic staff, who bring their expertise and experience of research, understanding of materials and processes, design thinking, creative pedagogies and industry contacts to bear on their articulations of the disciplines;
- and the Senior Team and Business Director, who support cross-Faculty and University innovations, and foster partnerships that enhance the University's national and international profile.

ii. Research Fora

Internal research gatherings (Research Days and Seminars) and increasingly externally-facing events (conferences, exhibitions, etc.) have and will continue to provide a forum for staff and students to consider critical developments in the disciplines and innovations in creative practice; they also provide opportunities to discuss new cross and / or interdisciplinary partnerships developing within and beyond the University, particularly those linked to Research Themes. They provide academic staff – including those undertaking Post-Graduate Certificate qualifications with action research elements – and Postgraduate Research (PGR) students with an initial opportunity to present and gain feedback about ongoing work. They will continue to provide a forum for discussion of key overarching issues concerning art, design, architecture and media researchers in the 21st century, from the effects of emerging design thinking and media platforms on research dissemination practices, to research ethics and integrity.

iii. Collaborative Research Projects

In order to encourage new research initiatives, and to help academic staff to gain experience and confidence in research project design, management and dissemination, academic staff will be invited to develop projects linked to the highlighted Research Themes. A Collaborative Research Fund (CRF), administered by the Research Committee (RC) in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and external peer-reviewers will be created to seed-fund initiatives with identified outputs that have the potential to develop into initiatives capable of attracting external funding and partners. Such projects might also grow to become sustainable groups and / or more formal research, practice and / or pedagogical networks hosted by but extending beyond the University; they also should have the potential to attract PGRs, who will bring with them new ideas and approaches, and help to ensure a sustainable legacy for collaborative research and University investment. Finally, such initiatives will enhance the overall environment for research and practice by building up a collaborative infrastructure, even as they raise the profile of University research regionally, nationally and internationally.

In order to attract CRF funding, project teams will need to be able to demonstrate that they have considered the following:

- how the proposal relates to and / or articulates University Research Themes
- the critical context of the project in terms of the broader development of the relevant discipline(s);
- the audiences for the research, and its potential to generate impact;
- representation from across the University on the project team. Wherever possible, academic staff will be encouraged to engage PGRs, Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and practitioners new to academic research in CRF funded projects;
- the feasibility and scope of the proposed initiative, articulated through a project plan that includes timescales and budgets with clearly identified outputs. Examples might include, but are not limited to seminars and conferences; joint exhibitions showcasing new practice-based artefacts; digital artefacts with significant design research elements; and special issue of a journals or edited volumes;
- how the group will go about sustaining activities beyond the initial CRF-supported period.

Although the CRF is designed to support the early-stages of research projects leading to defined outputs for academic staff, all projects would need to be outward-looking in the sense that they would, from the start, articulate how they engage with relevant academic and industry partners from outside of the University, in particular those with the opportunity to enhance the University's role as a European creative hub and enhance its reputation for international excellence. Projects that complement and / or make creative use of the history, resources and contacts of the University – including pedagogical innovations, technical and workshop facilities and studios, the East Gallery^{NUA}, University collections and the Ideas Factory^{NUA} – and / or involve research and innovations in materials and design processes, will be particularly welcome.

iv. European and International Partnerships

Research collaborations that establish European and International links are particularly important for the University given its mission statement, specialist heritage, growing intellectual networks, and collaborative work with partner Universities and galleries. NUA's growing

reputation in the creative disciplines and industries means that opportunities have, and will continue to emerge to collaborate with a variety of partners and projects. With respect to national and international policy fora, the University has been an active contributor to GuildHE and CREST-led, publications, initiatives and networks – for example, those involving Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) colleagues – as well as organizations such as CHEAD, GLAD and Ukadia, which offer further opportunities to build-up relationships and to influence discussions about the role of creative industries in generating cultural and economic wealth in Europe.

The University increasingly active role in regional networks – stimulated in part through active engagement with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALAP) – opens up further opportunities to engage in research with the potential to attract significant European investment and to produce substantive outputs and impacts that enhance its specialist research profile. The East Gallery^{NUA} and the Ideas Factory^{NUA} are increasingly attractive to partners interested in developing projects with significant practice-based and design research elements; areas of existing and growing expertise and strategic importance for University.

Further afield, the cross-disciplinary research initiatives³ pursued by RCUK in alignment with Horizon 2020 programmes – in particular the ‘Creative Europe’ strand – present opportunities for the University; not only those focused around obvious overlaps with University strengths – ‘Digital Economy’, for example, that play to the University’s role as a regional hub for research into digital design and user interfaces – but also areas such as ‘Smart Cities’, ‘Global food Security’, ‘Living with Environmental Change’ and ‘Lifelong Health and Wellbeing’ where expertise in design research linked to media, materials, processes and human interactions and psychologies are vital to achieving innovative and sustainable outcomes.

By maintaining and expanding networks over the course of the next five years, the University positions itself to take advantage of both recurrent and emerging funding strands, meaning that such collaborations build on existing infrastructure and hence can focus primarily on generating exciting research outputs that enhance the lives of communities at home and abroad. European-funded projects and partnerships tend to require significant commitments of staff and University resources. Hence they will be considered strategically in terms of how they enhance the University’s broader academic, practice and industry reputation, contribute to the sustainability of the research environment with respect to attracting and retaining academic staff and PGRs, and enhance and enliven University Research Themes.

C. External Research Funding

Building up a relatively stable external funding portfolio, derived from a diverse range of sources, is key to the future sustainability of research at the University. The ability to attract external investment also remains a benchmark, reflecting how the University’s research is perceived by national and international colleagues and potential collaborators. In an extremely competitive funding environment for the arts and humanities, academic staff and PGRs have begun to make inroads with key funders⁴ establishing a track record and helping to raise the profile of the University as a desirable partner bringing with it specialist skills, expertise and

³ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/xrcprogrammes/>

⁴ For example, the Arts Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, the DAIWA Foundation, the Hayward Trust, the Henry Moore Trust and the Higher Education Academy, to name a few.

resources. Technical facilities and workshops, the East Gallery^{NUA} and increasingly the Ideas Factory^{NUA} attract significant attention as University resources in bids made to a variety of regional, national and international research and industry funders, and will become increasingly important for academic staff and PGRs putting forward research proposals in the coming years.

Internal University investment, including the CRF, the Research Support Fund (RSF) and the Research Fellowships⁵, supports individuals and groups in their initial efforts to expand the audience for research and practice and to attract external funding⁶ as projects develop. The articulation of Research Themes and expanded University engagements with national, European and International organizations help to raise awareness of academic staff and the institution's offer to funders.

There is the opportunity to leverage the specialist position of the University in the future to continue to build on these partnerships, and to pursue new opportunities with the aim of diversifying the portfolio of partners for future research initiatives. With respect to horizon-scanning for emerging opportunities at the grass roots, researcher mobility and visibility of academic staff and PGRs will be vital for identifying and curating networks of contacts within the disciplines on which significant institutional collaborations with the potential to attract external funding are ultimately built.

i. Impact and Engagement

Key to the University's particular offer to funders is its demonstrated ability to generate impact from research. This is in part because the research pursued in creative disciplines is by its nature public facing and engaging, and the collective University staff – academic and professional services – work extremely hard to expand the audience for innovative practice. This is also because NUA has pursued and is continuing to develop mutually beneficial partnerships beyond academia with the aim of benefiting students and engaging academic staff in innovative approaches to the disciplines: with art, design, architecture and media-based practitioners and industries, and in areas where creative, practice-based and / or design research, skills and thinking are much in demand.

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 introduced a new criteria measuring impact from research. In this particular assessment, the University's submission received a rating of 90% world-leading and internationally excellent impact from research⁷. The impact case-studies⁸ reflected significant expertise in art curation in the twentieth century, with one project foregrounding a major artistic figure undertaken in partnership with national funders and major European and international galleries; and the other focusing on how an arts university can mobilise its networks and resources over a significant period of time to support the careers of emerging European artists. Both projects effectively engaged new audiences in discourses about the relationship between art and politics. Led by an established, senior University researcher, these projects engaged the broader University community, linking to teaching and creative pedagogies and practices, and to the development of new opportunities and collections relevant to PGR students.

⁵ See page 15 for additional information about these University resources supporting research.

⁶ For example, Erasmus, British Council and Academy-led initiatives and dedicated organizations like the Paul Mellon Centre promoting research and practice in British art and architecture history, and for pedagogical research the Higher Education Association (HEA).

⁷ <http://results.ref.ac.uk/Results/BySubmission/1874>

⁸ <http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/Results.aspx?HEI=198>

While not wishing to directly replicate these projects – and with the aim of increasing the profile of practice, design and pedagogical research at the University by engaging a wider pool of academic staff and students leading such these initiatives through active dialogue, project development, mentoring and training – these impact case studies provide a model of collaborative practice and engagement that has proved compelling to funders. Hence they inform thinking about strategic collaborations and the design of future research projects.

Looking to future endeavours, articulating new pathways to impact that make the most of the broad spectrum of experience and networks contained within the University, articulated through the Research Themes, will be a key priority. It is in this area where the full resources and expertise of the specialist University can be brought to bear with the aim of distinguishing research at NUA from that which is produced at other institutions.

a. East Gallery^{NUA}

Over the course of the University's 170-year history, various creative initiatives and work with a number of seminal artists, curators and designers have generated significant archives and collections of interest to current and future researchers and practitioners based both at NUA and abroad; securing funding for these, and finding new means of organising access to them will raise the profile of the University. Furthermore, as the East Gallery^{NUA} works to develop a formal network of partner galleries across the UK and Europe with the potential to host collaborative exhibitions, it becomes a key resource for NUA academic staff and PGRs as well as external colleagues as a forum through which research activity can be organised and disseminated; it provides infrastructure through which individual and collaborative research can be accessed and critiqued by international academic and non-specialist audiences.

b. Knowledge Exchange

Increasingly external funding for research and practice in the creative disciplines is orientated towards innovation beyond the academy. This is an area providing substantial opportunity for the University to leverage its specialist reputation, expertise and networks. Hence the importance of the technical resources and materials workshops as well as the University's in-house design agency the Ideas Factory^{NUA}. Its developing networks of collaborators have the potential to distinguish and to enhance the design and dissemination of future research projects. It provides a way to work with new research partners – local, regional, national and international – with whom the University might form long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships with. Building on past successes, a hybrid approach to practice-based and theoretical project design grounded in projects that appeal to traditional arts funders as well as heritage organisations, charities, industry partners and national and international research councils and innovation funders⁹ offer distinct opportunities for the University to secure external support for, and extend the impact of research in an extremely competitive environment where traditional sources of funding for the arts and humanities are relatively concentrated.

ii. QR Funding and Research Excellence Frameworks

Alongside central University investment in research and the various facilities that enable research, QR funding provides a relatively stable stream that allows for internal investment in academic staff, students, new research projects, events and developments. It allows for the steady development of research capacity with benefits accruing throughout the University

⁹ Including traditional HEFCE strands (QR) as well as Catalyst funding for innovation, enterprise and knowledge exchange, national funders like Innovate UK, European funding streams including HERA and Creative Europe, and national funders and partners from RCUK to ACE and Tate.

academic structures. It also remains key to the future of research at NUA in that it provides an independent benchmark for research successes, provides a snap-shop of select activities and outputs, and ultimately – through new initiatives like the CRF – can be leveraged to attract additional investment from national and international research councils and various third and private sector partners.

(REF) 2014¹⁰ submission to Unit 34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory was conservative in terms of the FTE. However, given the concentration of funding around 3 and 4* research, this resulted in a significant increase¹¹ to QR income, which has and will continue to be invested strategically to develop new and exciting researchers and practitioners and their associated outputs. It also provides a baseline that helps NUA, despite the proportionally smaller scale of its research budgets, to meet the demands of funders with respect to developments in policy and infrastructure.

A successful submission to the next REF¹² would see the University's quality and impact profiles maintained, alongside a steady increase in the number of academic staff contributing – in particular – practice-based outputs. This will also increase the University's submitted FTE, and provide the best scenario for securing maximum QR funding. Full exploitation of the University's collective resources, including its reputation for innovation in creative pedagogies, its technical facilities and workshops, and with respect to impact, particularly the East Gallery^{NUA} and the Ideas Factory^{NUA}, will be key to demonstrating its sustainable research environment. Emphasis on select, strategic partnerships with external HEIs, organisations and research funders, coupled with internal investment designed to seed fund new collaborations and projects linked to the development of Research Themes, will allow the University to enhance its research profile more broadly in the next REF in line with its specialist mission and identity.

iii. Open Access, NUARO and Research Data Management

The University has always encouraged the public presentation and debate of the work of its academic staff and students with the aim of engaging new audiences. Hence it supports the national and Open Access agenda as it relates to art, design, architecture and media research, while remaining aware of the changing technical demands related and cost implications for capturing – in particular – complex practice-based and technical outputs.

The University's repository – Norwich University of the Arts Research Online (NUARO) – which currently houses research outputs is an increasingly important showcase for work, and is now a piece of infrastructure required to meet the demands of funders, including, for example, HEFCE, RCUK, the Wellcome Trust and in many cases European and International partners. The University will continue to contribute to national and international discussions about how to implement Open Access, as well as those linked to the developing RCUK-led *Concordat on Open Research Data* to define what constitutes research 'data' in the creative and practice-based disciplines with the aim of exposing and preserving creative processes as well as final research outputs.

¹⁰ <http://results.ref.ac.uk/Results/BySubmission/1874>

¹¹ 30% for 2015/16

¹² The next REF submission and review date is expected to be confirmed in the late autumn of 2015, and is anticipated to be set for 2020.

D. Academic Staff

Academic staff at the University possess significant skill and expertise in their disciplines. Many have also worked in industry, developing significant portfolios of practice. They possess a deep understanding of the historical and contemporary contexts in which the creative disciplines exist and continue to develop, and of the many potential expressions of, and applications of, research.

This understanding of the relationship between theoretical enquiry and making is directly communicated to their students on a day-to-day basis. Reflecting a concern for the processes as well as final outputs, the academic culture at NUA foregrounds creation, critique and critical positioning. Live projects emphasising design research and an understanding of materials and processes further emphasise the links between creative pedagogies, practice-based research and innovations in the disciplines at the University and as they contribute to the success of the creative industries. The expertise of a growing cohort of academic staff has also been, and will continue to be important when it comes to expanding the University's research supervision capacity in line with existing strengths and the developing Research Themes.

At the centre of this strategy is the desire to find new ways to support staff in their efforts to conduct research that transforms disciplines, within and beyond the University. Encouraging staff mobility with the aim of developing new networks and raising the profile of research with national and international academic and industry audiences remains a key priority. All academic staff are and will continue to be encouraged to find new pathways of dissemination for their research beyond the University.

i. National Benchmarks

Over the course of the period covered by the University's previous *Research and Consultancy Strategy*, the seven principles articulated in the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*¹³ have been debated, discussed and implemented, taking into account the specialist context in which the University operates, by the Research Committee and Research Degrees Committee and, implicitly and explicitly, at University Research Days and events. Preparations for REF2014 and the University's Equality and Diversity Code of Practice offered another natural point of assessment and reflection on how the University supports academic staff at all stages of their careers with the aim of developing and sustaining a vibrant research culture in the short, medium and longer term.

ii. The Professoriate, Visiting Professors and Research and Innovation Fellows

The University's research culture benefits significantly from established staff with diverse expertise and experience of academia and industry. In recent years academic staff who have achieved a significant reputation in their fields have been encouraged to make applications to join the Professoriate, and will continue to be, taking into consideration their contributions to the creative disciplines articulated through research, practice, teaching and industry contributions and profiles. Finally, these individuals are key to developing the next generation of researchers; hence their contribution – formally and informally – to PGR supervision teams remains vital.

Over the course of the next five years, the University will also expand its capacity and versatility through the appointments of Research and/or Innovation Fellows whose particular specialist expertise in research and capacity for leadership and / or mentoring of emerging researchers is deemed to have the potential to contribute significantly to the advancement of the University's

¹³ www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/vitae-concordat-vitae-2011.pdf

research culture and the identified Research Themes, to attract external funding, to extend research and practice networks, to expand PGR supervision capacity, and (in the case of stipendiary Fellows) to enhance the University's REF 2020 submission. Applications will be considered with the aim of creating a balanced cohort at varying stages of their careers with the capability of contributing to, sustaining and expanding research activity at the University.

iii. Annual Reviews, University Resources and Planning

The overall aim of enhanced planning and annual review of research plans is to enable staff to produce outputs of high quality and to increase individual and collective University capacity and confidence with respect to:

- critical positioning of staff research
- encouraging recognition for staff research within the institution;
- raising the profile of staff and University research to new audiences and beneficiaries by developing enhanced dissemination and impact plans.

As the development and support of research remains central to the continued development of the academic culture and national and international reputation of the University, academic staff will in some instances require additional support and in some instances dedicated time to produce outputs of distinction that simultaneously advance their academic standing with academic and industry peers, as well as that of the University. The development of research plans has become increasingly important in order to assure that an appropriate balance between research and teaching is achieved based on individual and collaborative staff contributions to Research Themes and the overall research portfolio at the University. A collaborative approach to research planning and career development also helps academic staff to organise their time between research, teaching and administrative duties, to advance their public profiles, and to make best use of University resources, including the CRF, RSF and Research Fellowships:

Resource	Purpose
Collaborative Research Fund	Seed-funding for new research initiatives involving multiple academic staff and research students leading to the realisation of collaborative outputs.
Research Support Fund	Covers costs (>£500) associated with the dissemination of research outputs, for example, conference fees and travel, exhibitions, publications and costs associated with Open Access.
Research Fellowships	Support for extended periods of time (up to three months) devoted specifically to the completion of a particular research output.

The link between research plans and annual reviews, and the strategic involvement of Course Leaders and / or Line Managers in these discussions is important to growing a strong academic staff cohort that is increasingly confident with respect to its research.

E. Research Students

PGR students are important to both the vibrancy and the longevity of the University's research culture, as well as to the relevance and sustainability of the UK's international reputation for innovation in the creative disciplines and industries. These students are highly valued members

of the University's academic community, and as a result hold a permanent seat on the Research Degrees Committee, and are invited to contribute to the development of Research Seminars and Days. They are actively encouraged to develop academic and industry networks, and in turn bring their own particular approaches to research that directly enhance the overall research environment at NUA.

The small yet proportional scale of the PGR cohort provides them with the ability to access conversations, to raise their profile, and to influence the direction of research at the University. This collaborative relationship is vital to sustaining the specialist, student-focused environment that is one of NUA's hallmarks even as the research profile of the institution and, hence, its appeal to potential PGR recruits grows.

i. Progression, Recruitment, Training and Dissemination

In the next five years the University aims to further engage PGR students in collaborative research complementary to their doctoral enquiries linked to Research Themes and developing collaborative initiatives, internally supported through CRF and externally as the University's portfolio of funded research projects expands. The appointment of both a Director of Research and a Research Administrator in the period immediately anticipating the *Research Strategy 2015-2020* has provided additional individuals beyond core supervisory teams with whom PGR students can discuss and develop their research portfolios and profiles, both within and beyond the University.

PGR students will also be actively encouraged to develop projects that make creative use of the University's technical facilities and workshops, and the developing networks and resources associated with the Ideas Factory^{NUA}, the University archives and collections and the East Gallery^{NUA}. These provide the opportunity for innovations in project design and dissemination, particularly those relevant to design research, materials and processes, digital media, spatial interventions and contemporary art practice, criticism and curation. Linked to the University Research Themes, they will be supported in their efforts to disseminate research internally and externally at conferences, seminars, exhibitions and various events, some of which they will initiate.

The Masters (MA) student cohort has – particularly in recent years – become an active contributor to research discourses at the University. Increasingly, MA students chose to continue their academic studies at NUA. The University is working to actively encourage and support MA students aspiring to undertake research degrees, and to develop opportunities for dissemination of ongoing research as well as enhanced training facilities and discourses that bring together Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students and PGRs. This relies on a close collaboration between the Director of Research, the MA leader and the Research Administrator to articulate the increasing value of the MPhil and PhD to creative practitioners; the enhanced programme also complements training opportunities offered by NUA's research degree validating partner, the University of the Arts London.

More broadly, communication of the transferable skills – including versatility, rigorous attention to detail, ability to manage projects and the general creativity – associated with the successful pursuit and completion of a research degree at NUA is also a strategic priority. This relies on the contributions of academic staff more broadly and potential supervisors more specifically: the innovation and excitement they communicate through their research and teaching is key to attracting high-quality candidates nationally and internationally.

ii. Funding

In the longer term, the University will look to expand PGR student numbers; however this expansion will be guided by the quality of research projects and the potential identified in prospective students to become leaders in their respective fields. In order to attract students of the highest quality with the potential to contribute in innovative ways to University Research Themes and to broaden the disciplinary expertise of the cohort, the University will look for ways to attract and support PGRs through internal funding and bursaries. Simultaneously the University will explore strategic partnerships with external organisations that will allow it to attract and retain high-quality research students, linked to the development of Research Themes and on the potential these carry to encourage long-term, mutually beneficial institutional collaborations.¹⁴

¹⁴ For example, with local and regional cultural organisations and creative industry partners, national organisations like Tate and Arts Council England, and also potentially with multi-disciplinary partners like the British Library.

Appendix A: ACTIONS AND MILESTONES

A. Research Themes

	Action / Milestone	Responsibility
1	Annual meetings with Course Teams will be organised with the aim of enhancing and refining Research Themes within and across the respective disciplines, helping to ensure that they reflect developments and innovations taking place within the University's Faculties and Courses.	DOR, DfAD, DfM
2	Research events (University Development Days, Research Days) will be organized throughout the year, offering opportunities for staff and students to reflect on the themes, and to develop new sub-themes linked to individual and collaborative research.	RO, PVCA, DfAD, DfM, BD
3	Externally-facing research events (conferences, exhibitions, etc.) will be organised with the aim of exposing the Research Themes to debate and discussion with academics, research students, practitioners and industry colleagues.	RO, PVCA, DfAD, DfM, BD, AS, PGRs
4	Research Seminars speakers will be identified and invited to present to University academic and PGRs with the aim of providing new perspectives on Research Themes and related projects and initiatives.	AS, DOR
5	Applications for research funding (CRF, RSF and Research Fellowships) will be reviewed with an aim to encouraging the development of the themes, as well as with respect to increasing their profile beyond the University.	RC
6	All staff and students, and in particular the Professoriate, will engage in promoting the Research Themes externally through dissemination of their own and colleagues' research with the aim of raising their profile with potential funders.	VC, PVCA, DOR, DfAD, DfM, BD
7	Research pages on the NUA website will be updated so that they feature information about the Research Themes and current research developments and achievements (individual and collective); social networking tools will also be used to share information in real time.	RO, DOM
8	Milestone: Reviews and information collected throughout these actions will inform strategic planning over the course of the next five years. Research Themes will be further refined during the life of this strategy, and reviewed every two years	RO, RC, RDC, AS
9	Milestone: Working with colleagues, throughout the life cycle of the <i>Research Strategy 2015-2020</i> the Research Director will develop narratives and evidence associated with the Research Themes to inform preparatory work and documentations associated with the University's submission to the next REF; these will be reviewed every two years.	DOR, RC

B. Partnerships and Collaborations

1	University and Gallery Archives and Collections will be reviewed, organised and exposed to new research audiences, ideally with the support of external funders, with the aim of raising their profile.	PVCA, DOR, L, AS
2	Opportunities to build on and find new partners and audiences for existing and emerging research linked to the Research Themes with European and International HE and industry partners will be actively pursued through collaborative funding applications.	VC, PVCA, DOR, DfAD, DfM, BD
3	Academic staff and PGRs will be encouraged to present at and participate in European and international forums, in particular where these present an opportunity to enhance the dissemination and raise the profile of the Research Themes.	RD, RC
4	Milestone: The University's collaborative research portfolio of projects and networks will be audited and reviewed annually.	RD, RC, RDC

C. External Research Funding

1	Various sources, including (in 2015-16) the Research Professional database, will culled with the aim of building up a funding calendar, and key funding sources will be monitored and highlighted regularly for staff.	RO
2	Academic staff and PGRs will be supported in their efforts to develop high-quality, successful grant proposals to a variety of potential funders.	RO, DfAD, DfM, AS
3	In line with funders' requirements and the introduction of the University's Policy on Open Access, all staff will be required to submit a copy of accepted journal articles so that this can be stored and, where appropriate, made available to the public.	RO, AS
4	The University will transition from NUARO to the shared EPrints platform, CREST Collections, with the aim of providing a technically and economically sustainable system – drawing on the expertise of ULCC and various technical colleagues – funded through the annual CREST subscription. ¹⁵	RO (Jan-Mar 2016)
5	Milestone: The University will monitor and annually review external research income as they feed in to internal support in line with sustainability, and with the aim of reinvesting income and building up the number and quality of research outputs.	VC, DVC, PVCA, DOR, HOF
6	Milestone: The University will annually review its portfolio of grant applications and research funders with the aim of seeking out new opportunities.	RC

¹⁵ This is provided that the Consortium's JISC-funded work on CREST Collections and linked work on Research Data Management systems develops to accommodate the visual and sonic outputs produced by the academic staff and PGR student cohort.

D. Academic Staff

1	The University will review its research career development policies and practices by preparing applications to national and international benchmarks. (Athena Swann Charter, HR Excellence in Research Award), and will continue to work to implement the seven core principles of the <i>Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers</i> as they can best be translated into the specialist University context in order to fully support the development of academic staff.	PVCA, DOR, DfAD, DfM, DHR (2016-20)
2	Internal resources (the CRF, RSF and Research Fellowships) will be deployed to support all academic staff – established researchers and practitioners, and those who have recently moved from industry into academia – as they look to engage new audiences in research processes and outcomes, and to critically position ongoing work within academic and industry discourses.	RC, AS
3	In order to foster greater mobility, academic staff will be encouraged to develop their awareness of innovations in the disciplines by acting as External Examiners and Research Supervisors outside of the institution.	RC, RDC
4	Senior colleagues will identify ways to make full use of the opportunities presented by Erasmus academic and administrative staff mobility funding to build on scholarly and / or teaching collaborations and explore new international collaborations in research.	PVCA, DOR, IO
5	With the aim of expanding its research capacity, the University will appoint, by application, a number of stipendiary and non-stipendiary Research & Innovation Fellows who have the ability to contribute to the Research Themes and more broadly to the academic community.	VC, RC
6	Academic staff will be supported in their efforts to develop enhanced research plans linked to specific outputs, developed in one-to-one meetings with the Research Director, and these plans will inform and be recognized in annual reviews. This will also help to ensure that a broader cohort represents the University in external funding exercises, which in turn benefits staff in their personal career development.	DOR, LM / CL, RC, DHR
7	All academic staff will received support in identifying and taking advice on any issues that arise relating to the ethics and integrity of their research with am of achieving the highest possible standards, in line with the University's Code of <i>Practice on Research Ethics</i> and the <i>Concordat to Support Research Ethics</i> .	RO, RC
8	Milestone: The balance of time devoted to teaching, administration and research will be reviewed to ensure that there is sufficient time available for academic staff to develop new research and high-quality research outputs.	VC, DVC, PVCA, DOR, DfAD, DfM
9	Milestone: Applications to the CRF, RSF and Research Fellowships schemes will be reviewed annually in order to consider the balance of awards and, if necessary, plans will be developed to encourage greater take-up across the full academic staff cohort.	DOR, RC, DHR

E. Research Students

1	The University will invest strategically in supervisor training for academic staff, in particular for ECRs and / or for academic staff moving from industry work and / or practice to academia who can expand the appeal to potential PGRs working across the full disciplinary range represented by the academic community.	RC, RDC, LM/CL
2	PGR students will be invited to attend and present at University Research Days and Research Seminars.	RO, RDC, RS
3	PGR/T Student Seminars will be developed and refined with the aim of encouraging greater contact and discourse between PGR students in the first instance, and between PGR and taught MA students, particularly those interested in pursuing research degrees at the University.	DOR, MAL, RO
4	PGRs will be encouraged to present their research at external forums including, for example, conferences, exhibitions, CREST Summer School, relevant associations, societies, and national organisations.	RO, RDC, RS
5	PGRs will continue to be advised to engage with resources and training events offered through RNUAL.	RO, RDC, RS
6	The University will offer one to two fees-only full or part-time PGR Student Bursaries on an annual basis to outstanding research students with the potential to contribute to Research Themes, with applications advertised nationally	VC, RDC, RO
7	The University will actively pursue collaborative doctoral partnerships with external partners / funders with the aim of expanding the PGR student cohort and supporting excellent students in their efforts to innovate the creative disciplines.	PVCA, DOR, RO, RDC, RS
8	All PGR students will receive support in identifying and taking advice on any issues that arise relating to the ethics and integrity of their research with a view to achieving the highest possible standards, in line with the University's Code of <i>Practice on Research Ethics</i> and the <i>Concordat to Support Research Ethics</i> .	RO, RS, RDC
9	Milestone: The Annual Monitoring Report will provide a point at which the data associated with research degrees can be scrutinized to determine progress with respect, in particular to the recruitment and retention of research students, and will begin to inform medium-term plans for an application for Research Degree Awarding Power (RDAP). This will particularly apply to 2015-16, when the University will engage in its interim relationship review with its research degree validator, University of the Arts London (UAL) in anticipation of the full review of the relationship in 2018.	RC, RDC

VC: Vice-Chancellor
DVC: Deputy Vice-Chancellor
PVCA: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
DfAD: Dean of Arts and Design
DfM: Dean of Media
MAL: MA Leader
CL: Course Leaders
RS: Research Supervisors
AS: Academic Staff
BD: Business Director

DHR: Director of Human Resources
DOM: Director of Marketing
HOF: Head of Finance
DOR: Director of Research
RC: Research Committee
RDC: Research Degrees Committee
PGRs: Post-Graduate Research Students
RO: Research Office
L: Library
IO: International Office

Appendix B: RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

Risk	Mitigation
Failure of academic staff and PGRs to respond to and contribute to Research Themes. Themes become irrelevant.	Debate, review and refining of Research Themes over the course of the year: at relevant committees, Research Days, Research Seminars, conferences, etc. Continuous reiteration of the variety of articulations of research (practice-based, design, pedagogical, etc.) encouraged by the University in line with its specialist mission. Academic staff and students are made aware of themes at regular meetings with Course Teams and the Director of Research. Internal investment – including bursaries for PGR students – encourages engagement, but also allows for new articulations in response to innovations in the disciplines driven by academic staff and student work. Research plans and allocation of staff time for research activities also considered and reviewed <i>vis-à-vis</i> development of Research Themes.
Failure to attract sufficient external funding to achieve sufficient investment in research as outlined in Research Strategy, as well as to support the growth of such activity more broadly at NUA.	Initiatives outlined in the Research Strategy are designed to be scalable based on research budgets. Investments considered as commensurate to advancing general academic advancement / reputation of the University, taking into account the sustainability of core expenditure. Given potential threats to QR and the Research Councils more generally, a broad profile of potential funders / partners will be approached. Additional reviews mechanisms, coordinated by the Research Office but drawing on the expertise of various academic and administrative department of the University, ensure the quality of external bids, and will support staff and students new to academic research in gaining a foothold with funders. Increased communication and collaboration across University departments – including the Research Office and Marketing – to ensure the visibility of NUA research to academic colleagues, prospective students, the broader public and potential funders.
Failure to achieve sufficient impact from research, both with respect to broader definitions of engagement with academic and industry communities of practice, and in response to funders.	Development of and investment in academic staff and student plans that articulate disseminations plans, developed in partnership with academic colleagues and the Research Office. Potential to achieve impact a key criteria for internal investment in individuals and groups. Increased collaboration with technical and workshop staff, Ideas Factory ^{NUA} and East Gallery ^{NUA} . Research Office works with colleagues to develop impact narratives and to collect evidence continuously, as opposed to at the end of a project. Research Committee reviews this facet of research activity.
Inability to recruit and retain high-quality PGR students; risk to sustainability of research at the University.	Increased visibility of Research Themes with the aim of exposing key areas of individual and collaborative expertise. Introduction of fees-only bursaries that allow for co-investment in research careers for excellent candidates. Rising profile and diversity of expertise represented in the Research Supervisors cohort. Active pursuit of doctoral partnerships / external funding by the Research Office with the aim of supporting and engaging outstanding students. Greater collaboration around Erasmus and with International Office with the aim of raising the profile of research

	degrees at NUA to potential international recruits. Continued investment in estates and enhanced communication of the specialist resources available to PGRs, and involvement of existing PGRs in discussions about the future of research at the University.
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Appendix C: COORDINATION: NUA Research Office (RO)

The University's Research Office (RO) has been established with the aim of implementing the University Research Strategy on a day-to-day basis. It coordinates communication across all relevant departments to ensure that the full extent of the University's existing and developing resources are taken in to account and made best use of with respect to developing research at the University. It also looks for new opportunities to enhance, expand and promote the University's reputation for research to internal and external audiences. Hence the RO collaborates directly with colleagues working in the Faculties and the East Gallery^{NUA}, the Ideas Factory^{NUA}, the Library, University and East Gallery^{NUA} Archives and Collections, in partnership with University colleagues in the Registry, Finance, Human Resources, Marketing, and communicates regularly with the University of the Arts London with respect to recruiting, supporting – academically and pastorally – and administering PGR students.

The RO also coordinates University policy and practice to ensure that it aligns with national and international best practice in key areas, for example vis-à-vis Concordats around Research Careers, Public Engagement, Open Access and Research Data (in collaboration with CREST) linked to Quality Reviews and the University's RDAP portfolio, works to maintain NUA's research web and intranet pages and the overall analogue and digital presence.

Within the University quality reporting and review structure, the RO advises – and where appropriate – administers the University's Research Ethics and Integrity policies, and secures additional advice and expertise where required to align with best practice as recommended by HEFCE, the European Research Area (ERA) and the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, and as presented in the evolving discussions about integrity and ethics in relation to the creative disciplines. It also prepares reports to the University Research Committee, Research Degrees Committee, Quality Standards Committee, Council and Senate on issues and initiatives relating to research and practice. Moreover, the RO is a place where academics and PGRs can come to discuss their ideas about new initiatives relating to research, which then feed up through this review and support structure to ensure that the research community is both inclusive and representative.

At the recommendation of the Research Committee the RO administers University support for academic staff and PGRs through the CRF, RSF and Research Fellowships. The RO works with the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Deans, Business Director, Course Leaders and Supervisors to find new ways to develop academic staff and PGR student expertise and to raise the profile of University research as it is broadly defined throughout this strategy, and with Human Resources colleagues to encourage career development for staff. In collaboration with academic colleagues, supervisors and PGRs, as well as the University's Marketing and University administrative staff, the RO is also responsible for organizing and publicising research seminars, conferences and training events throughout the course of the academic year.

With respect to external funding, RO colleagues seek out new opportunities for the University, its academic staff and students to expand the research and practice portfolio. The RO also maintains and develops relationships with potential partner organizations and funders. The RO offers advice and support for academic staff and students looking to develop new projects and internal and external funding applications, and collects relevant data on developing research projects and reviews the University's research and practice with respect to the Research Themes with an eye to future REF submissions and work on the University's developing RDAP application.

STRATEGY & POLICY REVISION HISTORY

1. **Name of Document:** Research Strategy 2015-2020
2. **Originator:** Dr Alisa Miller
Director of Research
3. **Date of Origination** September 2015
4. **Senate Ratification:** 9 December 2015
5. **Assigned Ref Number:
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6. **Destruction Date Confirmation:** N/A