

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

OUR RESEARCH STRATEGY



At the heart of our University lies the imperative to search for answers to the world's most complex questions, and to share the knowledge we gain to build a better world for everyone. As a university community engaged in progressive research, education, and innovation, it's up to us to continue pointing the way ahead: to be bold in exploring, creating, curating, sharing and applying new knowledge in the world.

At Warwick we undertake truly amazing research and are passionate about it as the route to credible, quality knowledge creation and global innovation. The excellence and originality of our work, and dedication of our researchers, is what defines us. Our research is internationally leading, impactful, and provocative. It influences regional, national, and international agendas. It creates cutting-edge innovation and real-world value. We change lives for the better.

As members of the Warwick community, we are proud of what we collectively achieve. The way ahead is not only driven by our pioneering researchers who are exploring new ways to create a better world for everyone, but also with the hugely important contribution by colleagues in our professional and support services which is sometimes less visible, but their commitment, and resourcefulness, underpins and enables all that we do.

Our research is made possible by the brilliance of our PhD students, researchers, technicians, and academics - the foundation of our research community. They are encouraged to leverage experimental ways of thinking and develop new synergies across disciplines to ensure a dynamic, interdisciplinary approach. Our funders and partners help us to create lasting value in society and the economy by collaborating with us and supporting our work.

Whilst the future can feel uncertain, the excellent research undertaken at Warwick enables us all to see clearly over the horizon.

Professor Caroline Meyer
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)

THE SIX STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

- 1 Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Excellence:** Enhance our existing strengths and develop others to make a step change.
- 2 Excellence with Impact:** Extend and apply the best research to drive real-world change.
- 3 Research Culture:** Foster a positive, inclusive, collegiate and dynamic research environment where all those working on or supporting research can thrive.
- 4 Communications:** Deliver and promote our research on the world stage, by raising its profile through showcasing via multi-media communications.
- 5 Partnership:** Celebrate our collaborations with industry, regional, national and international organisations, institutes and other higher education providers.
- 6 Innovation & Sustainability:** At the heart of everything we do.



UNDERPINNING THESE PRIORITIES ARE SEVEN WORK STRANDS:

WORK-STRAND 1

► Foster a world-leading research culture

Our University is one in which talent and ambition are recognised and nurtured through a supportive culture and environment for staff and students across all faculties – from students, early career and doctoral researchers, to research leaders and experienced professors, as well as those individuals who support research.

We are committed to leading the way by providing a positive research culture that is both inclusive and collegiate, and which supports all to thrive and deliver the best research. We have a dynamic programme of work underway to strengthen research culture at Warwick. The aim is to benefit our researchers and partners, as well as those individuals who play a crucial role in supporting the delivery of research.

- We have developed a People Strategy which recognises the contributions and value of all individuals within the organisation.
- We have launched a Social Inclusion Strategy which seeks to remove economic, social and cultural barriers to support individuals to achieve their potential and to make Warwick a more diverse and inclusive organisation.

- We have established a Research Culture Forum which brings together researchers at all career levels and Professional Services Staff, to share best practices, influence, drive forward and effect positive change in areas such as researcher working conditions and career development support.
- The ambition of all our researchers is supported by an academic promotion process that recognises the importance of contribution across the full range of academic activity. This includes research and scholarship, impact, teaching, outreach and public engagement.
- We will encourage and support the nomination of our researchers for prestigious national and international research prizes and fellowships. We will celebrate success through communications both internally to our own community, as well as externally by reaching out to wider audiences.
- We will recognise and showcase academic endeavour in research and impact, launching our research stars of the future and communicating the strengths of our important external research partnerships.

The important place of the individual researcher and their group in the complex landscape of different University structures will be reaffirmed and work is being undertaken to simplify and optimise processes to support research life at Warwick.

WORK-STRAND 2

► Undertake world-leading research at the forefront of knowledge

The enhancement of our facilities, recruitment and retention strategies will ensure that we are best placed to attract and nurture the best scholars. Warwick faculties will be encouraged and supported to collaborate regionally, nationally and internationally. This will include the establishment of new strategic partnerships in addition to the Monash-Warwick Alliance. The Study Leave Scheme will continue to be protected and valued in support of the best research outcomes.

The central pillar of academic research excellence remains publication in high quality journals, or publication of monographs with leading publishers. In a climate where open access and open research data are increasingly standard, we will support the academy via the provision of the necessary Library services, funding and support, to ensure our researchers embrace the open research agenda.

We will grow our PhD student base, attracting students of the highest quality, by institutional

investment and through the leverage of significant external funding. This will include, for example, competitions for Centres of Doctoral Training and the provision of a central scholarships budget.

The challenges and opportunities of a shifting external funding and policy environment will be addressed by a strategic forward-thinking approach. Departments will be supported to deliver high quality research plans and generate research income to ensure necessary and timely investments to progress and grow activities. Specialist knowledge will be appropriately deployed for initiatives arising from the UK's Innovation Strategy, Levelling Up agenda, Global Challenges, EU R&D programmes (or alternatives) and interdisciplinary calls under UKRI - over and above our usual indicators.



WORK-STRAND 3

► Spearhead research with relevance for impact, policy and innovation

Our refreshed Research Strategy will take a synergistic approach to impact and innovation, providing a framework in which impactful research is recognised, supported, and celebrated.

Our faculties will be supported to deliver wide ranging impact via the Warwick Impact Fund and through our portfolio of Impact Acceleration Accounts, with academically-led internal panels reviewing and awarding internal grants for innovative ideas with high potential for future impact.

Internal investment will be available to support a range of innovation activities, from industry-University secondments, industrial fellowships in areas of relevance to the Government's Industrial Strategy, collaborative research projects with practitioners in the public and private sector and with creative industries, 'industry engagement days', 'proof of concept' and commercialisation funding.

Our investment into a central Impact Team will support departments to embed impact within the University's research environment, whilst also providing specialist practitioner support to deliver and evidence impact across multiple sectors. The University's expert commercialisation team, Warwick Innovations, will increase its service delivery with regards to business development, innovation and commercialisation across all departments, supporting impact from the Arts, Social Science, Medicine and Science.

An Impact Capture System will support the academy in the preparation of REF impact case studies. This in itself is an example of innovation at Warwick - being developed internally by colleagues in Warwick Business School.

Impact, outreach and public engagement are now included within academic promotion criteria. We will build on this by celebrating innovative and impactful research through impact events.

Bespoke training for impact and public engagement will be provided, hosted and arranged by the University's Learning Development Centre and Research & Impact Services. This will encompass impact in a variety of contexts, including public policy impact, social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes, and commercial exploitation.

We have developed a Research Impact Strategic Development Plan, which sets out how we will achieve our ambitions to grow the impact from our research, further enhancing its reach and significance, through increased collaborations and partnerships.



WORK-STRAND 4

► Cultivate world-class interdisciplinary research communities

Interdisciplinary research is ubiquitous at Warwick. As such, we are in a strong position to attract research collaborators and external investment, and to contribute meaningfully to national and international challenges.

The University's programme of Global Research Priorities (GRPs) was relaunched as a coherent programme, well-placed to support transformative, truly interdisciplinary research that spans across all University faculties. A clearer vision describing this interdisciplinary landscape and how it relates to our discipline-focused departments will be showcased and communicated, including clear articulation of the connection of the GRPs to Research Centres.

The Institute for Global Sustainable Development (IGSD) will be strengthened to provide a focal point for Warwick's work on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, serving as a gateway to research addressing both environmental and social sustainability. The important relationship between the GRPs and the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS), with its cohort of ECRs, will be further enhanced.

Continued development of interdisciplinary research in response to the Innovation Strategy, the Levelling Up Agenda and Global Challenges will be supported through our cross-faculty centres, institutes and GRPs, as well as round table events to discuss opportunities, pump-priming funding to develop proposals and specialist research support.

We will work to develop interdisciplinarity throughout our faculties, through initiatives such as the STEM and Social Science Grand Challenges, and with key partnerships, collaborations, and innovations. Recognising the step change in approach that can be achieved through interdisciplinary working, we value the contributions of all disciplines to challenges such as Sustainability, understanding Data and Artificial Intelligence or the value of cultural industries. This will also help leverage our involvement in national ventures such as the Alan Turing Institute and the Faraday Institution.

We recognise that Interdisciplinarity is present in much of our research. As such, we will nurture these activities through a range of internal support mechanisms and funding stream. This includes Warwick's Research Development Fund that helps academics establish networks and develop future funding applications, and the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS), which funds visiting academics and practitioners as well as interdisciplinary activities aligned to Warwick priorities. The key connectivity of inherently interdisciplinary Departmental entities, such as the Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies (CIM), will be embedded fully to enhance our structures. In addition, the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) will facilitate student interdisciplinary research and students will be encouraged to engage with research across the University.





WORK-STRAND 5

► Pioneer state-of-the-art accessible research infrastructure

Our researchers will be supported to deliver world-leading research and innovation by access to centrally maintained state-of-the-art equipment and facilities and a continued emphasis on strong analytical science training and skills. This will include the provision of bespoke training, input from dedicated technical staff, and access to printed and electronic journals and other media.

To achieve this, we will take a proactive approach to the future planning of our research environment to ensure that investment is strategic and targeted, making us an attractive place for highly talented research staff.

Our institutional Research Technology Platforms (RTPs) will provide an integrated network of world-class technologies for our users, with each servicing a multidisciplinary user base. The programme will meet the changing needs of our research community, with expansion into new cutting-edge technologies, creating new platforms to facilitate this where required. We will develop our digital capabilities and invest in state-of-the-art digital technologies.

We will periodically review the costing procedures and requirements within each individual RTP to ensure each contains internationally competitive technologies and is fully utilised, both by researchers at Warwick, as well as externally through collaboration with industry partners and other HEIs.

Our technical staff are recognised as a valuable asset, and we continue to develop our Technician Commitment action plan to ensure recognition, visibility, sustainability and career development for this staff group. We have committed to address the recommendations of the TALENT Commission with our Midlands Innovation (MI) peers.

We will continue to build on the opportunities we provide for our technical staff to develop, with access to training, regular events and funding opportunities. We will ensure technical staff receive the recognition they deserve for their input to research, from acknowledgement and authorship of research articles, to being named Co-I or PI on research grants where appropriate. We take a strategic approach to succession planning and retention, with investment in the future of our technical workforce through staff and degree apprenticeships.

WORK-STRAND 6

► Communicate our research to provide leadership and influence in the global knowledge economy

Our Research Communication Strategy will support a refreshed approach to the internal and external communication of our research and impact. We will publicise our research strengths regionally, nationally, and internationally to ensure that the valuable work of individual academics is recognised by the local community, and on the world stage.

We are committed to translating our world-leading research to wider society, reaching out to connect our research to the issues that matter to people and to help solve real-world problems. We are committed to addressing the climate emergency, with sustainability as a key priority and at the heart of everything we do – from undertaking research sustainably to using our research insights, expertise and ingenuity to help chart the way for a sustainable future.

Our integrated approach to communications will see us showcase our research through multi-media channels to highlight interesting and newsworthy articles. We will ensure our web presence is vibrant and engaging, by reacting to audience feedback and keeping our stories up-to-date and relevant.

Researchers at the University will be encouraged to share their insights and the outcomes of their work, and to act as agents of change in their fields of expertise.

We will provide them with the knowledge and support to use social media effectively to disseminate the results of their research and to reach audiences through new channels. This will include targeting potential collaborators and future post-graduate students.

We will enable more internal research collaborations by raising the profile of research successes and expertise on internal communications channels, including the University intranet and regular research news circulations.

The investment made into our research by funders and partners will be demonstrably justified by the regular presentation of exciting and innovative case studies that showcase how our research makes a positive contribution to society. We will promote the impact of our research by presenting impact case studies on the University web pages, through high quality publications and via impact related events.

Warwick has a vibrant research environment that reflects our world-class areas of research excellence and curiosity-led research. The breadth and depth of our research areas enable us to respond dynamically to external changes and needs. Our track record in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research, encapsulates and accentuates our reputation for world-leading and purposeful disciplinary and interdisciplinary research.



WORK-STRAND 7

► Build an income and partnership platform to sustain and grow our world-leading activity

We have ambitious plans to increase our research income. We will support our researchers at all levels and in all disciplines to apply for and be successful in winning research grants and securing contracts for research. We will encourage and support high quality grant applications and contract negotiations and ensure delivery to funders' requirements whilst providing a research culture and environment that enables our researchers to focus on undertaking research.

In the changing funding landscape, the University will seek to diversify sources of funding, and to compete successfully for new funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) by demonstrating the relevance and excellence of our research in high quality applications. In response to Brexit and changes to European funding, we will continue to focus on the opportunities presented by the European Research Council (ERC) or alternative programmes, building on previous successes in these prestigious competitions. We will also look to establish partnerships that support continued European collaboration.

Our links to industry partners and collaborations with organisations such as The Turing Institute and the Faraday Institution will act as a catalyst for new research networks that in turn will attract investment from a range of funders.

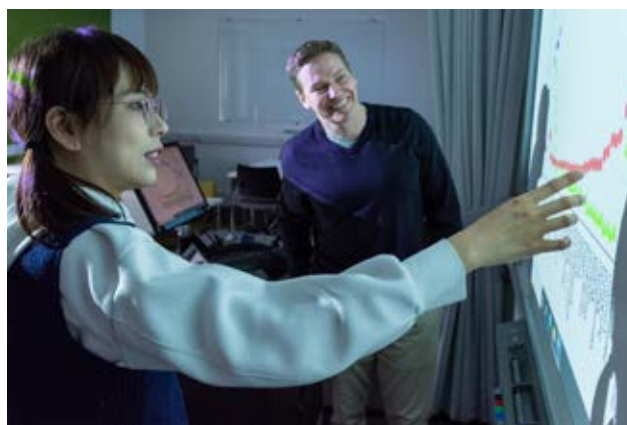
We will provide dedicated support for all our researchers - from early career through to midpoint and senior professors - to ensure that the volume and quality of our research bids continue to grow, and to facilitate competitive interdisciplinary research applications in response to funder demand. We will strengthen our post-award support through collaboration across professional services teams and departments, as well as simplifying processes and systems to enable researchers to focus on delivering their research.

Within our departments we will support the formation of internal peer review processes and will support academic mentoring schemes to ensure that our bids are highly competitive across a range of funding schemes.

We will also make sure that our strategic partnerships with funders and collaborators are nurtured so that we understand the key challenges and ensure that our research applications are best placed to meet them.

We recognise the importance of collaboration with industry. We will look further to build existing partnerships and develop new partnerships with companies of all sizes in order to undertake world-class and innovative research. We will explore key research themes and global challenges, and operate in areas of strategic importance regionally, nationally and internationally.

Warwick was a principal partner in Coventry UK City of Culture, which provided a further opportunity to strengthen our relationships with local government, artists, SMEs and third sector organisations developed through our large body of collaborative and co-produced research. We will continue to build on this, leveraging new and impactful research partnerships to improve social and economic outcomes across the city-region. We will also work within the cultural sector to bring fresh approaches and thinking to our research and wider community engagement.







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