<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pro-Director and Vice-Dean Research and Development Foreword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>IOE and its Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Our Research Vision and Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Core Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Our Strategic Research Priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strategic Priority: Research Culture and Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Strategic Priority: Research Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Strategic Priority: Engagement and Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Strategic Priority: Researcher Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Strategic Priority: Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Looking Towards the Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Acknowledgments and References</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cover image: The Secret Life of Bees
Eman Seddaoui, Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment
Shaping the future of research

IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society, celebrates its 120th anniversary in 2022. On this momentous occasion, it is timely to reflect on our strategic priorities for research and our approach to realising them amidst a changing landscape. For over a century, IOE has contributed cutting-edge research in education and society. Our work is rooted in a mission to further the development and wellbeing of children and young people, families and wider communities. We remain steadfast in this endeavour, leveraging our significant disciplinary expertise while innovating and setting new research agendas.

As an institution, we recognise that these commitments have played an important part in establishing IOE’s world-leading standing. This achievement is due, of course, to the researchers and academics who devote their careers to advancing new knowledge that delivers transformative impacts and the dedication of the colleagues, partners and funders who support that activity.

At the heart of this strategic plan is our priority to nurture a positive research culture and environment in which all staff and students feel truly supported to make their fullest contribution to IOE’s mission. Our strategic plan sets out how we will achieve that, by bringing people together across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries, supporting colleagues’ development as research leaders and innovators, and capitalising on our existing infrastructure and networks. Above all, we present a renewed ambition for a globally engaged IOE, dedicated to shaping and applying our research excellence and innovation for the benefit of humanity.

Professor Lynn Ang  
Pro-Director and Vice-Dean Research  
IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society  
March 2022

In this plan, we present a renewed ambition for a globally engaged IOE, dedicated to creating an inclusive and supportive research culture as we shape and apply our research excellence and innovation for the benefit of humanity.
This strategic plan outlines our vision for IOE’s research over the next five years, through which we can inspire and sustain the aspirations of our researchers, share our vision with our partners, and fulfil our responsibilities to the wider community.

As well as our vision and mission, this plan also highlights IOE’s research achievements, our distinctive profile and strengths, and the areas we seek to consolidate. Our foundations in research excellence and disciplinary expertise provide a strong basis from which to sustain and grow our distinctive contribution to our fields and continued impact. The reach and significance of our work are helping to reframe debates and influence the development of policy and practice to address critical societal challenges.

At the end of this strategic plan, key indicators are identified through which we will measure our success. An action plan will follow to deliver on this roadmap.
Through its size and shape, IOE makes a powerful statement in and of itself about education and society, and the interconnections across these domains. Our research community comprises over 1,000 academic staff and six departments, which together host 38 research centres. At any one time, we are conducting over 100 externally-funded projects¹, and each year manage a portfolio of research worth an average of over £15 million.² As well as research on education and social research across the life course we make contributions in broader social, psychological, arts, humanities, health and technological research. We work with a wide range of partners nationally and internationally including universities, schools and colleges, charities, NGOs, government agencies, local authorities, employers, trades unions and professional bodies. As a mark of our international standing, IOE is ranked first in the world in its field and has been for the past eight years since 2014 (QS World University Rankings by subject).³

Our major contribution to research is reflected in our portfolio of funders. The largest part of our research funding (44%) comes from Research Councils; the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is our largest single funder.⁴ IOE’s other major funders include the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), the Nuffield Foundation, and philanthropic and charitable organisations. We value our partnerships with funders to further robust evidence for education as well as associated domains such as health, welfare and employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st</th>
<th>1st in QS World University Rankings for Education eight years in a row⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Over 100 active externally funded research projects at any point in time¹²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1st in UK for research power in Education (REF 2014)⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Over 1,000 academic staff⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cross-sector partnerships spanning more than 10 countries and 5 continents¹⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>70+ professional services staff for research⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>Over 170 research collaborations with institutions worldwide¹⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900</td>
<td>Over 900 PGR students⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>5 major longitudinal national cohort studies in the UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15m</td>
<td>An average research income annually of over £15 million¹⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>of research funding in Education in the UK¹¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ First in QS World University Rankings for Education eight years in a row.
² Over 100 active externally funded research projects at any point in time.
³ First in UK for research power in Education (REF 2014).
⁴ Over 1,000 academic staff.
⁵ Cross-sector partnerships spanning more than 10 countries and 5 continents.
⁶ 70+ professional services staff for research.
⁷ Over 170 research collaborations with institutions worldwide.
⁸ Over 900 PGR students.
⁹ 5 major longitudinal national cohort studies in the UK.
¹⁰ An average research income annually of over £15 million.
¹¹ Of research funding in Education in the UK.
¹² First in UK for research power in Education (REF 2014).
¹³ Over 100 funders support our research.
¹⁴ Cross-sector partnerships spanning more than 10 countries and 5 continents.
¹⁵ Over 170 research collaborations with institutions worldwide.
¹⁶ Over 900 PGR students.
¹⁷ 5 major longitudinal national cohort studies in the UK.
¹⁸ An average research income annually of over £15 million.
¹⁹ Of research funding in Education in the UK.
Our Research Vision and Mission

Vision

Our vision is to serve as an international beacon of excellence in education and social research to positively impact the development and wellbeing of children, young people, families and communities by informing public policy, debate and professional practice to transform lives and for the long term benefit of humanity.

Mission

Our mission is to conduct research at the leading edge of our disciplines to enhance educational access, experiences and outcomes to shape wider social and cultural policy and practices that benefit lives and communities. In so doing, we adhere to the highest standards of academic rigour and are guided by the principles of equity and integrity and an ethos of inclusivity, engagement and collaboration.

We pursue our mission by:

- Nurturing a diverse, inclusive and enabling research environment
- Undertaking outstanding research of national and international significance
- Collaborating to produce outcomes from our research that bring impact and benefits to the wider community outside UCL
- Working in close partnership with organisations that share our values and aspirations
- Sharing the findings and data generated by our research and building a dialogue around them
- Curating and maintaining data resources for use by the wider research community
Our vision and mission are rooted in the values of:

- Integrity and mutual accountability
- Openness and inclusion
- Care and respect
- Rigour and innovation

These values focus our attention on the needs and aspirations of society, working in genuine partnerships to change lives for the better. They remind us of the importance of working in a transparent and accessible way in support of diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. They root that work in the distinctive role of universities as spaces for research and education that are both rigorous and critical, underpinned by the epistemic power of academic disciplines.

These values are reflected in UCL’s code of conduct for research and Statement on Research Integrity, which provide the frame of reference for our work and stipulate five fundamental principles as contained in the 2019 Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity:

**Core Values**

- **Honesty**
- **Rigour**
- **Transparency and open communication**
- **Care and respect for all participants in research**
- **Accountability to collectively create an environment in which individuals are empowered and enabled to own the research process.**
Our Strategic Research Priorities

“IOE is a powerhouse of research on education and society, contributing evidence of international significance to pressing social issues and global challenges. As we mark IOE’s 120th anniversary we are also looking to the future. This strategy sets out how we will keep our research at the leading edge through a renewed commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive and dynamic research environment.”

Professor Li Wei
Director and Dean
IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society

The research environment in the UK and globally is instrumental in shaping our research vision and strategic priorities. Our focus on research culture, researcher development, research excellence, knowledge exchange and impact has to be responsive to the needs of the community. These characteristics depend on and thrive in a research culture which fosters radical conceptual thinking and where the research community is supported and valued.

The pages that follow set out our five strategic research priorities:

1. Research culture and community
2. Research excellence
3. Engagement and impact
4. Researcher development
5. Infrastructure
Strategic Priority: Research Culture and Community

i. Foreground diversity and inclusion in the development of our research culture

Supporting a healthy research and innovation culture has been under the spotlight nationally. Our strategic priorities for the next five years will grow from a culture and environment that embraces a diversity of thought, people and ideas that engenders inclusivity, dialogue and collaboration. This works best to support researchers who are passionate about their work and who are proud to be part of IOE’s research community. By embedding equality, diversity and inclusion principles across all areas of our work, we will maximise the impact of our research to involve and benefit all parts of society.

IOE holds a Bronze Athena SWAN national award. We are collaborating with UCL initiatives such as Fair Recruitment and Inclusive Advocacy, and have made public commitments as part of UCL’s race equality action plan, against which we monitor progress annually. This work will inform a research-specific strand within our Athena SWAN Action Plan to enhance research leadership opportunities for under-represented groups.

To build on the diversity and inclusion agenda, we will:

- Support IOE as an expansive and pluralistic research environment that promotes discussion, productive disagreement, and critical engagement based on robust evidence.
- Use the process of applying for a Silver Athena SWAN award to understand the issues facing underrepresented staff groups and to ensure that the interventions that we design are impactful.
- Embed detailed monitoring of equalities data across research-related planning, to identify and design new equity needs-based support for researchers, such as internal funding opportunities.
- Support a diversity of research agendas, recognising the value of the research endeavour while balancing the sustainability of research in a metric-based system.
ii. Support research ethics and integrity

The promotion of ethical research practice is a vital element in ensuring a rigorous as well as inclusive research culture.

We pursue ethically responsible research agendas and recognise the importance of upholding the highest ethical standards of research. This means engaging closely with and prioritising the interests of those who will be involved in our research activity, minimising the negative environmental impact of research, and enhancing the public benefit derived from research. IOE has its own faculty Research Ethics Committee, dedicated professional services team and a senior academic lead as Head of Research Ethics and Integrity.

Our interpretation of UCL’s commitment to integrity is reflected in our ongoing attention to rigour, transparency, open communication, care and respect for participants and self-care for researchers. Recent activity reflecting this includes our consultative and dialogic approach to developing our research ethics response to COVID-19, initial and refresher training for our IOE reviewers, and regular assessments of a random sample of our reviews.

To build on our work in supporting research ethics and integrity, we will:

- Increase our portfolio of ethics training to include online access as well as examples of best practice in research ethics.
- Make ethics training a mandatory part of new starters’ induction.
- Implement an IOE-wide project on the teaching and learning of research ethics at IOE, for students on undergraduate as well as postgraduate taught and research programmes. This will create a shared set of materials to support the teaching and learning of research ethics, which can be adapted and developed by staff to meet the needs of all students across their programmes.
- Develop our specialist expertise in the ethical issues for research involving children and young people, including exploring how to increase participant involvement in the design and creation of our research ethics processes. Our expertise in this area is informing UCL’s Research Ethics and Integrity work.
- Monitor the impact of the inclusion of ethics-related institutional service in the UCL Academic Career Framework, which informs the career progression of academic staff, in order to acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable role that our committee members and our college of ethics reviewers have in the delivery of this strategy.

Supporting research ethics in turbulent times

The need to respond swiftly to the research needs and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic required us to revisit our existing provisions for ethical approval of research. During the pandemic we learnt to be adaptive and responsive to the changing external research environment. We re-designed our ethics review guidance, provided additional training for researchers and ethics reviewers, and created new guidance on the safety and wellbeing of research participants and staff, and for the resumption of fieldwork and risk assessment. We recruited and trained new volunteer reviewers who worked alongside our usual IOE Research Ethics Reviewers with the support of our professional services staff to process a record number of ethics applications expeditiously within less than half of the standard review time. We are continuing to learn from these experiences to ensure our research ethics processes, which are informed by our methodological innovations in research, remain robust and resilient.
i. Extend our research portfolio

IOE was founded over a century ago with an initial focus on ‘classroom education’. Since then, we have evolved a broad and distinctive portfolio of research in education, the wider social sciences and the humanities spanning education, children and families, health and wellbeing, work, housing and labour markets, culture and media, and international development.

In education, our intention is to maintain strength across all phases and across formal and informal settings, which remains a distinctive feature of IOE’s research nationally and internationally. As part of that, we will reinforce the already strong links between our research expertise and teacher education programmes, continuing to grow the research base for our own provision as well as our expertise in how teachers develop a research-informed approach to their practice. This is reflective of our broader commitment to promoting research-informed practice and policy.

We will continue to grow the disciplinary breadth of our work and its reach across social domains, further developing and extending the scope and power of our analysis. Closely tied to that, we will build on the multi-disciplinary profile of IOE as a faculty and of wider UCL, combining disciplines and working across stakeholder communities where that can generate new insight and knowledge.

This approach has long been exemplified, for instance, in the work of the IOE Centre for Longitudinal Studies and its leadership of four national cohort studies: Millennium Cohort Study [MCS], National Child Development Study [NCDS], Birth Cohort Study 1970 [BCS 70], and Next Steps. A further example of our multidisciplinarity and collaborative working is provided by our role in UCL’s newly established School for the Creative and Cultural Industries, a partnership with colleagues in the arts and humanities and social sciences. This emphasis will inform and be further informed by UCL’s new strategy and emerging plans for its ‘Grand Challenges’ programme which helps forge cross-disciplinary collaborations to address societal issues.

Cross-disciplinary working to understand the social impacts of COVID-19

Within weeks of the first national lockdown, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) convened an interdisciplinary team, across economics, health, psychology and sociology, to assess the scope for additional surveys as part of the five longitudinal cohorts that we host. The team was subsequently awarded funding to research the changing impacts of the pandemic on different aspects – education, physical and mental health, work, finances, family and relationships – of the lives of up to 50,000 members from the five cohort studies.

The Centre, in collaboration with UCL Faculty of Brain Sciences, has introduced a new birth cohort study to follow the lives of children born in 2021 – Children of the 2020s.

A new school for creativity and culture in the digital age

With colleagues in UCL’s faculties of Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences we are developing cutting-edge research partnerships with leading media institutions and industries, including the BFI and BBC, the UCL East Olympic Park partners, including the V&A and Sadler’s Wells, and local community arts groups in East London. This School for the Creative and Cultural Industries will bring together research, learning, public engagement and enterprise to support and develop the next generation of practitioners in the cultural and creative industries and includes the Future Media Studio. Its range of new production, editing and screening facilities will facilitate IOE research related to digital media.
Across our work, we will recognise the value of research that offers conceptual and theoretical insight as well as challenge-led research and innovation.

To support these objectives, we will:

- Support major new strands of research, including in relation to pressing contemporary challenges, such as educating and training for digital work futures and the growing application of artificial intelligence, as well as supporting research and new knowledge in response to climate change and sustainability education.
- Continue to promote a research-informed approach to teacher education and practice, and one that is inclusive of a broad church of educational research.
- Invest in researcher development to support a strong pipeline of leading edge proposals, as well as providing match-funding for prestigious external fellowships that offer a high-quality opportunity for researchers to lead their own research and create their own agenda.
- Continue our investment in and leadership of UCL’s Collaborative Social Science Domain, established to support research across the social sciences and other fields within UCL to address societal challenges.
- Continue to innovate and engender disruptive cutting-edge research including through our co-leadership of UCL’s eResearch and Collaborative Social Science Domains.

ii. Advance methodological innovation

IOE has a strong tradition of methodological innovation, as exemplified by our contributions in systematic reviews, longitudinal and cohort research. We are a leading centre for quantitative analysis in education and related areas of social policy. Our researchers have helped to refine the use of randomised control trials (RCTs) and experimental approaches to classroom and other areas of professional practice. IOE researchers have also made substantial contributions to the use of ‘big data’ to investigate social phenomena and the linkage of that data to our cohort studies. This sits alongside cutting-edge work using new technologies such as haptics. Through Research England’s Research Capital Investment Fund since 2018 we have been able to invest over £1m in specialist research equipment, for instance in affective and educational neuroscience, to support and further expand this innovation.

As well as being recognised as experts in their design and application, our researchers are at the forefront of debates about the use of randomised control trials (RCTs) in the context of educational research. This has included advice on the evaluation of complex whole school intervention in the report Evaluation of Complex Whole-School Interventions: Methodological and Practical Considerations which informed the Education Endowment Foundation’s (EEF) approach, as well as collaboration between IOE’s Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunity and Loughborough University’s Centre for Mathematical Cognition, taking a deep dive into aspects of the RCT ecosystem in educational research. This is a field ripe for interdisciplinary working, such as with public health epidemiology.
To advance methodological innovation, we will:

- Support exploration of emerging methodologies such as those based in the collection of data from technology that stimulates the senses of touch and motion and their potential to enhance understandings of daily experiences and the implications for wellbeing, learning and expertise.
- Accelerate the take-up of co-produced research design and citizen science methodologies to remove barriers to user participation in research and inform wider research engagement and practice.
- Actively engage with research around the ethical implications of technological innovations in methodology and share that with the wider research community through our specialist research centres.
- Promote our innovative research on the production of evidence-based reviews that provide a comprehensive and unbiased assessment of research evidence to inform decision-makers about whether policies are likely to be effective, for example, through the EPPI-Reviewer software platform.

Championing peer research to give voice to vulnerable groups

To better understand the wellbeing outcomes of unaccompanied migrant young people, the ESRC-funded Becoming Adult project adopted a peer research approach. Unaccompanied young people subject to immigration controls were core members of the research team and involved in all aspects of the research, from refining the design to collecting and analysing data and producing outputs for publication and public engagement. This meant the research objectives and methods were relevant to what the young people valued, drawing out more effectively the disconnects between current policies governing young migrant’s outcomes and their lived realities of migration to the UK.
i. Engage in partnerships, collaborations and knowledge exchange to enhance our research impact

A core part of IOE’s vision concerns enabling and facilitating the impact of our research to benefit individuals and communities on a local, national and global scale. We want our research to provide knowledge and insight for societal benefit, be that ‘instrumental’ or conceptual research, or research pertaining to global challenges, local regeneration or individual need. Our mission is broad – from responding as an international community to the challenges set out in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to enabling individuals to analyse the context of their professional practice and effect change.

Through collaborations, we have shown that what we can achieve collectively is greater than what can be achieved alone. In the last five years, we have collaborated with over 170 universities and institutes worldwide, including over 50 UK universities. The geographical reach of our cross-sector partnerships spans more than 10 countries and 5 continents.

The value of our research activity involving cross-sector partners continues to grow year on year, with our current portfolio of 31 collaborative awards worth £44m in 2022. This has enabled us to bring together the most relevant expertise to address the issues in question.

To build on our collaborations, we will:

- Continue to invest in strategic institutional partnerships, for example, through our membership of The Bloomsbury Colleges, University of London, that can lead to the creation of new boundary-crossing research activity and external funding.
- Stimulate collaborative activities with existing and new institutional partners.
- Incorporate capacity building into our research projects to increase independent research capability around the world, such that our partnership working has sustainable impacts beyond the immediate research programme.
- Seek new channels for engaging in Europe post-Brexit, for example, by continuing to support research that aligns with Horizon Europe, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.
- Explore how our research outputs can enhance knowledge exchange across Research England’s seven Knowledge Exchange Framework perspectives.
ii. Build capacity for research and innovation engagement

We pursue an expansive and inclusive impact strategy, embedding knowledge exchange, impact literacy, co-production and collaboration in our research culture. Over the next five years we want to take our engagement and impact strategy further by making the boundaries between our academics and policy and practitioner audiences even more permeable, by building stronger dialogues with wider communities as part of our knowledge exchange efforts and by growing our innovation and enterprise portfolio.

To build capacity for research engagement, we will:

- Encourage innovation, enterprise and knowledge exchange, including facilitating more colleagues to participate in exchanges, secondments and advisory roles (e.g. with government departments).
- Support our researchers to take a user-centred approach in research bids, through direct involvement of stakeholders, active consideration of user voices and co-production.
- Support in particular our early career researchers to engage in innovation and enterprise to build their profile.
- Ensure that engagement and impact are embedded in our research and innovation projects from the start, informed by ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- Use data driven approaches in researcher and professional services teams to enhance strategies to generate and support impact.
- Amplify our research through our faculty events programme, including lectures, debates and the opportunity to put questions directly to our experts.
- Disseminate our research through online platforms such as dedicated webpages, policy briefings, podcasts and seminar events.

In 2020, we launched Research for the Real World, an IOE Podcast series that brings conversations about our research and its impact on policy, practice and our everyday lives to the wider public. This is the flagship series of IOE podcasts. The series is underpinned by a strong commitment to representation of diverse voices and has so far featured 40 colleagues discussing their research evidence and how it informs change. In 2021, Research for the Real World podcasts were played over 14,000 times by listeners in 117 countries. The series represents IOE’s commitment to maximising engagement with the wider public and promoting our research best practice globally.
iii. Foster accessibility and accountability through open science and transparency

Research outputs need to be curated and managed effectively to achieve research impact. The accessibility and discoverability of our work amplifies its reach to diverse audiences, from policy makers to journalists and members of the public, as well as our academic peers. We are committed to the transparency and potential reproducibility of research. Our Research Support and Special Collections Librarian trains and supports staff and research students in information and digital skills, including research data management and harnessing the powers of social media for disseminating research and networking.

To support the accessibility of wider research in our field, we host five diamond open-access journals: Research for All; the London Review of Education (LRE); International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning; Film Education Journal; and History Education Research Journal. LRE is the only education journal with an editorial perspective that is focused on London’s status as a global city. The journal publishes contributions from around the world and its papers were downloaded over 30,000 times between September 2020 and 2021.

To amplify the accessibility and discoverability of our research, we will:

- Encourage our researchers where appropriate to upload new and past anonymised research data onto a dedicated open access data repository to encourage further interrogation, collaboration and reproducibility.
- Support staff to engage positively with the Open Science agenda by providing training in emerging technologies and new initiatives related to open access, open data, open educational resources and open notebooks, as part of the move towards open, transparent and reusable research outputs.
- Continue to invest in our open access journals.
IOE is home to a world-class community of researchers that has historically and in recent years made major contributions to new knowledge about social change around the world and helped to shape public policy and understanding through the provision of cutting-edge research.

We are committed to developing our research community and the next generation of key thinkers in our field. This means developing a healthy and diverse community of talented researchers who are leaders in their areas of expertise, capable of galvanising teams and conducting ground-breaking research. It also requires a broader talent framework that encourages and facilitates mobility in and out of academia in ways that reflect the changing nature of research careers and presence of researchers from a range of professional backgrounds.

i. Nurture research leadership

In an increasingly demanding higher education climate, career progression for researchers depends on being able to demonstrate success across a variety of skills. We are committed to supporting a “talent pipeline” by nurturing and developing different forms of research leadership, ranging from leadership in influencing an area of study to leading large national and international collaborations with partners from diverse communities.

To ensure that existing staff and new recruits are supported to fulfil their leadership potential, we will:

• Nurture research leadership to support research excellence across all career stages including by encouraging participation in existing research leadership schemes at UCL.
• Develop a bespoke IOE Research Leadership programme focused on research innovation through interdisciplinarity and engagement in education and the social sciences.
• Use a ‘leadership in action’ approach to encourage action learning, mentoring and peer support groups to add value and drive a reflective approach to research leadership practice. Successful team leadership is recognised, celebrated and promoted by our increased emphasis on mentoring within academic promotion criteria as part of an annual assessment of staff using the UCL Academic Careers Framework.
• Encourage colleagues to apply for university-wide research leadership roles, such as chairs of UCL Grand Challenge working groups and UCL Research Domains.
• Incorporate equity needs-based analysis and continued evaluation of our research leadership and development programmes. This will be underpinned by the activities undertaken as part of our Athena SWAN work to understand the issues facing underrepresented staff groups and patterns of career progression and to ensure that the interventions that we design are impactful.
ii. Support mentoring and development of early- and mid-career researchers

We fully support the Vitae Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers to nurture future researchers and innovators in our field. Central to our research vision is mentoring and development for early- and mid-career researchers. This is even more important given the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced the opportunities for researchers to engage with established networks overseas and locally.

Our provision of different types and levels of research development opportunities will provide bespoke support to our early and mid-career researchers. Initiatives include our refreshed IOE Early Career Network (ECN), research mentorship, research centre membership, and the creation of different types and levels of research leadership roles. We continue to seek ways of further strengthening the culture, employment and professional and career development of staff.

This includes ‘mainstreaming’ research mentorship for all colleagues, including teaching staff who have up to 15% time for research and scholarship as set out in the UCL Teaching Concordat. At IOE we want to support colleagues who have moved into academia following a professional career, typically in teaching, to develop their research profile and to support research-informed practice across our teacher education provision.

To support the development of early- and mid-career researchers, we will:

- Continue to support our IOE ECN through co-design and co-creation in building a friendly and accessible community that supports academic development and career trajectories. The ECN is peer-led and open to all who identify as ‘early career’. It hosts seminars, writing clubs and training as well as social meetings.
- Further invest in the ECN by providing a dedicated workload allocation for the Co-Chair roles.
- Launch the IOE ECN’s podcast series Academia et al., which gives a voice to early career academics from all career trajectories and provides a forum for discussion of topical issues in the academic career lifecycle for our own colleagues and the wider research community.
- Enhance the quality of our mentoring provision by creating opportunities for research mentoring training.
- Increase support to our research community to engage in the diverse training and professional development opportunities available to them at UCL and more widely. This includes monitoring training uptake and reviewing training needs as part of the annual appraisal process to understand where there may be gaps in provision that we can seek to address.
- Continue to design our organisational structures to promote capacity building for senior research leadership roles, for instance in relation to engagement and impact, ethics, innovation and enterprise leads.

Mentoring and developing exceptional researchers of tomorrow through our impact fellowships

The IOE Early Career Impact Fellowship is a five-month researcher development programme, co-created with our Early Career Network, which provides funding for the award holder to participate in engagement and impact activities. Through the fellowships, IOE early career staff work with highly experienced academic colleagues, expert professional services specialists and other stakeholders to enhance their skills and knowledge for research engagement and impact and then apply that learning to engage with external audiences, be they policymakers, practitioners, under-represented groups and organisations beyond academia. The success of the pilot programme is informing provision for this cohort of researchers going forwards.
iii. Sustain a diverse and integrated postgraduate research community

Doctoral students are an integral part of our research community. Our doctoral provision is managed through the IOE’s Centre for Doctoral Education (CDE) and the ESRC-funded Doctoral Training Partnership (DPT) (UBEL – comprising UCL, Birkbeck, SOAS, LSHTM and the University of East London). With approximately 1,000 PGR students registered with us at any one time, we seek to provide an inclusive, distinctive and stimulating research environment at scale, and one that prepares our students for research careers in academia and beyond. As part of this, a priority is to instil a sense of belonging and integration for our doctoral students throughout their studies.

We are proud of the diversity of our doctoral student population, including the large proportion (approx. 60%) of students who undertake their programmes on a part-time basis, often whilst working full-time. We want to further increase this diversity, among Home and International students. IOE is a partner in UCL’s project with the Office for Students, ‘Building a scalable PGR access and progression programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students’.

Matters such as intergenerational fairness are informing our wider work on researcher development and emphasis on support for early career colleagues. To support our new doctoral graduates, in 2021 we launched a two-year IOE Honorary Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme. This enables students who have completed their doctorate to retain their institutional affiliation with IOE as well as full electronic access to the library and research training opportunities.

To sustain a diverse and integrated postgraduate research community, we will:

- Further formalise the relationship between students and their supervisory team by introducing a ‘first meeting form’ for new Mphil/PhD students to ensure that the nature of the supervisory relationship and the support available to the student are clear to both parties.
- Promote the development of Special Interest Groups for our PGR students, with the involvement of members of staff where possible to maximise sustainability.
- Work with Departmental Graduate Tutors and Programme Leaders to support supervisors in providing appropriate support to their supervisees, acknowledging their diverse backgrounds. Training will be provided, where required.
- Continue to build on IOE’s standing as a major centre for research on doctoral education, as integral to our provision becoming more strongly research-informed, as well as developing our reputation for research excellence in this area.
- Closely monitor the impact of our widening participation efforts and Honorary Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme, adapting them as necessary to maximise the benefits for our new and graduate PGR students.
We will continue to invest in our estate and research infrastructure to ensure that it takes account of technological change and evolving researcher needs. Our datasets as well as library and archive remain a vital resource for IOE researchers as well as the wider research community.

i. Increase investment in and access to world-leading research infrastructure

The IOE masterplan is a £55 million upgrade of space to provide outstanding facilities for our research environment which will be delivered in 2023. Additionally, the aforementioned Future Media Studio, linked to UCL’s School for the Creative and Cultural Industries, will be equipped to support staff and student research in digital games, digital production in film and animation, and digital embodiment and digital making.

With a view to sustainability, to enhance the accessibility and discoverability of our research equipment, we are creating a Research Equipment Portal to act as a hub for research staff and students to identify equipment suitable for their research projects, reserve equipment for use, and receive guidance and training, fostering collaboration across departments and research disciplines. In line with the university’s priorities we will seek to align and consolidate the connections between our research, education, and operations to create a stronger platform from which to respond to the climate crisis.

Our Newsam Library and Archive continues to be the flagship of the scholarly infrastructure we provide for staff and students, as well as the wider research community worldwide. It is a foundational resource for education and social research both nationally and internationally. In 2014 it was awarded accredited status by the National Archives (the accreditation was renewed in 2021). It remains the largest education library in Europe and the special collections holds an extensive collection of current and historical papers. The library’s collection of IOE authored books represents almost 120 years of history and scholarly output, while its open access Digital Education Repository Archive (DERA) has quickly established itself as the national resource for education. IOE’s collection of rare books includes c.80,000 textbooks which represent the history of schooling, and other unique materials on education history dating back to 1797.

A data-rich, computationally intensive, global research environment is essential to accomplish our mission. Our data infrastructures include a portfolio of IT networks, data collections, information security systems, and research capital investments that enable high-quality, high-impact, ethical research. Our specialist teams of technicians are central to maintaining and optimising the use of these resources and UCL is a signatory of the Technician Commitment.

Our research IT team provides specialist support for a portfolio of applications commonly used by our researchers (e.g. SPSS, Stata, R-Studio, Nvivo), managing our High-Performance Computing clusters (Myriad, Grace, ...

IOE’s open access Digital Education Repository Archive (DERA) provides a unique digital archive of documents published electronically by government and related agencies in the areas of education and training, and children and families. DERA was set up to address the increasing number of publications available only in electronic format, the problem of broken links, churn in government agencies and ‘disappearing’ documents. It is valued internationally and in 2021 received 278,618 page visits by 111,165 users. We intend to expand DERA’s scope and reach to include digital publications from charities, think tanks and pressure groups, representing our commitment to open science.
Legion), as well as delivering practical workshops for researchers on how these tools can be used to answer research questions. A new area of work is to collaborate with specialist teams in UCL’s Centre for Advanced Research Computing (ARC) to utilise existing expertise and support new technologies.

**ii. Continue to build capacity with the value and impact of longitudinal datasets**

Our five major ESRC infrastructure investments (Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resources, Millennium Cohort Study, National Child Development Study, Birth Cohort Study 1970, and Next Steps) are world-renowned for their value and impact in providing high quality social science research. Our longitudinal studies continue to be core-funded through rigorous competitive renewal processes. Scientists, policymakers, the third sector and the wider public use these national assets whose unique scale, longevity and quality increase their value over time. This is made possible by the team of specialist technicians that support the maintenance of these vital and increasingly sophisticated datasets. Their specialist expertise also makes an essential contribution to the training of students, researchers and wider audiences to maximise the use of these data.

**iii. Refresh and enhance our data security**

We will continue to refresh and enhance UCL’s Data Safe Haven (DSH), which provides critical infrastructure for research involving sensitive data. It has been designed and implemented to meet the requirements of the NHS patient data and system toolkit and the internationally recognised ISO 27001 Information Security standard.

We will continue to maintain new bespoke facilities created to enable our researchers to access the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS) from IOE buildings. Our Assured Organisational Connectivity accreditation from the ONS has facilitated wider use of this service and was vital in enabling research projects to progress during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also deployed endpoint ONS SRS computers. This local facility is strategically important for our research, which often involves both primary and secondary datasets pertaining to children (which may be considered special-category data) and in particular the Department for Education’s National Pupil Database.

During the pandemic, the switch to remote working required a change in accessing the UK Data Service Secure Lab. We have deployed 12 endpoint machines, located on campus, locked down for secure remote access and will release a virtualised environment to facilitate ease of management.

---

**A leading voice in data linkage**

Specialist skills are needed to link and harmonise large-scale datasets. The Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resources (CLOSER) centre has linked longitudinal survey data with government administrative registers to generate new knowledge about education, employment, income, health and social participation, and issues of agency, choice, inequalities and identity. In 2018, its findings informed the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee’s recommendation that academic researchers be enabled to access administrative data, with appropriate privacy and safeguarding mechanisms. The government has since committed to providing secure access to de-identified data for accredited researchers.
"IOE embodies UCL’s emphasis on cross-disciplinary working and close engagement with stakeholders to produce research that has both scientific and societal impact, pushing forward academic inquiry as well as policy, practice and public debate. I very much welcome the focus in this strategy on inclusion as well as the development of researchers as leaders, which will add to the vitality of our research community in the faculty and wider university."

Dr Michael Spence AC
President & Provost
UCL

We are forward-looking. This strategic plan articulates IOE’s aspirations and priorities for research as part of a global university. It develops our research vision in the 21st century context of a rapidly changing world and provides a framework to inspire, empower and build capacity in research leadership to deliver impact for the benefit of individuals, communities and societies. This research plan underpins the roadmap to realise our future opportunities and ambitions, while recognising our aspirations as researchers and academics need to also be responsive to a shifting funding landscape and the sustainability of the wider institution.

Our success in realising these aspirations will be measured by the following indicators:

- Volume of research activity and success in securing external funding
- Reach and diversity of funders
- Increased partnership-working and participation in exchanges and secondments
- Uploads of new and past anonymised research data onto dedicated open access data repository
- Invitations for IOE expertise and evidence including from government, public sector and voluntary organisations
- Levels of engagement with our research through media outlets and social media
- Scoping of new provision, including mentor training and our new Research Leadership Programme
- Diversity of staff serving in research leadership roles across UCL and externally
- Career progression among IOE research community
- Diversity of take up of our Early Career Impact Fellowships and evidence of long-term benefits of the scheme
- Diversity of staff accessing IOE and UCL research-related development programmes
- Volume of users accessing our library and archive and related digital resources
- Volume of users accessing the databases we host and maintain
- Increased use and take-up of research equipment across departments, facilitated by the Research Equipment Portal
- Increased monitoring and evidence of the engagement and impact of IOE’s work with our partners and the wider community
Acknowledgements

This Strategic Plan has very much been a collaborative endeavour, created through an extensive nine-month consultation with all staff across IOE. Thanks are due to the IOE Head of Research Development and the Research Development Team, and IOE Head of Policy and Public Affairs for their invaluable leadership and support throughout the development process. My thanks in particular to the Heads of Research, Heads of Department, Departmental staff, and Professional Services teams for their valued contributions, and a special thank you to our IOE senior academic peer reviewers for being a source of wisdom and guidance.

The logistics of producing a strategic plan that combines the voices of many individuals is far from straightforward and the document was re-drafted several times in light of feedback received from staff. This strategic plan would not have been possible without the support of all my fellow colleagues whose ideas, perspectives and collegiality have been instrumental in planning the future of research at IOE. Thank you.

Professor Lynn Ang
Pro-Director and Vice-Dean Research
IOE, UCL’s Faculty of Education and Society

References

Data cited is from UCL systems.

3 Source: UCL QS WUR Rankings by Education and Training, Guardian.
5 Source: UCL QS WUR Rankings by Education and Training, Guardian.
7 Source: HR Reports team, retrieved February 2022.
8 On the staff census date of 31 July 2020. Source: REF2021 environment statement.
9 Including PGR students on completing research status. Source: Centre for Doctoral Education, retrieved February 2022.