The continued transformation of the University’s profile and reputation is predicated upon the deliberate and continuous acquisition, processing and dissemination of knowledge. We recognise that the innovation, insight, intellect and expertise of our staff and students will continue to be the engine for knowledge creation and transfer. Ambition 2018
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1.0 Executive Summary

Ambition: 2018 presents the vision of a University developing “creative professionals”. People. Knowledge. Impact. delivers the three underlying pillars of this vision: An environment supportive of developing staff expertise towards research; an infrastructure to create and disseminate innovation; and a reputation for improving the world in which we live through “useful knowledge”. Describing clear enablers which support the delivery of fourteen key performance indicators, this strategy will enrich and enhance the internal and external environment delivering directly to the aims of Ambition 2018.
2.0 Context

Ambition: 2018 presents the vision of a University generating “useful knowledge” through the development of “creative professionals” and acknowledges that the continued transformation of the University’s profile and reputation is predicated upon the deliberate and continuous acquisition, processing and dissemination of knowledge. The strategy recognizes that the innovation, insight, intellect and expertise of our staff and students will continue to be the engine for knowledge creation and transfer.

Translating knowledge into practice requires the eclectic mix only collaboration can deliver and that teaching; learning; research and enterprise are interdependent with knowledge providing the links in the chain. As the University moves forward this knowledge will be generated and disseminated through the seamless integration of expertise derived within and beyond the University and the boundaries between teaching, learning and research will be blurred. Our students on placement opportunities will develop solutions to contemporary issues in organisations who will fund further research and development within the University which in turn influences policy which becomes embedded in the curricula of the future.

3.0 Our Principles

Ambition 2018 seeks to promote and enhance Research & Scholarship within the University, where both are defined as:

Research: A process of original investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared thereby facilitating change or benefit (impact) to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life. “Useful knowledge”.

Scholarship: The University adopts a broad definition of scholarship based on Ernst Boyer (Boyer 1990) notion that scholarship is about ‘connectedness’ with colleagues, students, other fields of enquiry, industry, and ‘the larger world’. Scholarship denotes an approach to educational practice that includes teaching informed by research (RIT) and enquiry on one’s own practice (SoTL); awareness of the wider context; knowledge of HE frameworks; and a focus on developing students’ intellectual and professional potential.

4.0 Our Values

- To foster diversity of research (including pedagogic research) & scholarship expertise
- To encourage diversity of academic/discipline interests which support and inform the curriculum.
- To create a research culture that is accessible, engaging & enabling
- To facilitate impartial measurement/monitoring
- To drive & deliver quality enhancement
- To deliver reputational benefit to staff, students and the University.
5.0 Our goals

Ambition 2018 seeks to promote and enhance a Research & Scholarship ecosystem which:

- Actively encourages and pursues research and scholarly collaboration.
- Targets our investment into translational research that will have a local, regional, national and ultimately international impact.
- Facilitates and supports inter-disciplinary and collaborative approaches to research.
- Expands and increases the funding sources for our research, focusing upon promoting collaboration.
- Recognises the importance of postgraduate study and research in knowledge generation and links courses to emerging areas of research and scholarship through the Institute for Teaching, Innovation and Learning (INSTIL).
- Extends the opportunity for research by increasing the volume and breadth of expertise in supervisory capacity through high calibre internal and external appointments.
- Encourages current staff to complete doctorates and make it an essential criterion for new appointments in key areas.

6.0 Our broad measures of success

- Year on year increase the number of staff identified through annual appraisal to be actively engaged in research &/or enterprise activity, and the proportion of these with a doctoral qualification.
- Year on year increase in the number and benchmarked quality of peer reviewed journal/book chapter/professional monograph outputs from students and staff.
- Year on year increase in the number of registered postgraduate research students (including staff candidates) and the proportion completing within three years.
- Year on year increase in the number of students registered on taught postgraduate programmes and enhanced employment opportunities on graduation.
- Real term increases in research and enterprise income & contribution and the number of repeat contracts achieved.
- Creation of at least two new strategically-relevant inter-disciplinary institutes and wherever possible gain external funding for senior position therein.
- Increase the number and diversity of visiting fellows from relevant sectors to act as a bi-directional conduit of knowledge in and out of the University.
- Extend the reach of knowledge generated by the University through all appropriate channels including lecture series and digital communication platforms.

7.0 Our objectives to delivering success

Creation of an ecosystem driving research and scholarship throughout the University

In creating a research and scholarship ecosystem we have set ourselves three core objectives which lie at the heart of Ambition 2018

**Objective One** – People: Developing staff expertise

**Objective Two** – Knowledge: Create and disseminate useful knowledge

**Objective Three**: Impact: Engage with the wider world
8.0 Our specific objectives, enablers and performance measures

8.1 Objective One – People: Developing staff expertise

We will:

• Engage all staff in scholarship and dissemination of knowledge, and develop their potential as leaders in teaching and learning through building capacity in pedagogical research and scholarship.
• Adopt an escalator strategy to provide support and opportunity for all staff to be engaged in research-informed teaching.
• Enhance scholarship and the associated training infrastructure to provide an outstanding environment for staff and students to successfully undertake doctoral studies, including the provision of high quality training and support for all graduate students through The Graduate School
• Integrate scholarship as broadly defined into all areas of the curriculum
• Be responsive to local, national and international opportunities
• Continue to increase the doctoral profile of the University, including encouraging current staff to complete doctorates and by making a doctorate an essential criterion for new appointments in strategic research areas
• Extend the opportunity for research by increasing the volume and breadth of supervisory capacity through high calibre internal and external appointments and training
• Support and develop publication potential through the active management of research dissemination including the University's in-house journal and repository
• Provide opportunities to reach out to the wider academic and work-related communities, through promotion of collaborative work and exchanges
• Link professional development of staff to academic framework, appraisal and promotion opportunities, and Schools' business plans

Enablers:

• Implementation of Academic Employment Framework (AEF) supporting appraisal and promotion infrastructure;
• Launch of the Graduate School and associated research “tool-box” and support.
• Launch of New Vistas – the University's in-house journal
• Adoption of a research mentorship scheme
• University’s partnership and International strategy

Key performance indicators

• By 2015 - All staff will be able to evidence engagement in scholarship activities (monitored through appraisal)
• By 2018 - 80% of academic staff will be streamed as “teaching academics” or research academics
• By 2018 – 50% of academic staff will hold a doctorate and where relevant all will be trained doctoral supervisors.
• The number of graduate research students (FTE) will increase 10% year on year from 2014-2018.
• By 2018 – 95% of doctoral research students will gain their award within 4 years (FTE) of registration.
8.2 Objective Two – Knowledge: Create and disseminate useful knowledge

We will:

- Actively encourage and pursue research and scholarly collaboration through the creation of **strategic research ‘clusters’** which will provide structure and focus for areas where UWL has a critical mass of credible research. These clusters will support resource development; income generation and preparation for any external research quality assessments.

- Through strategic research clusters:
  - Stimulate interest in scholarly activity and research;
  - Help alleviate isolation of individual researchers;
  - Encourage colleagues to think critically and creatively about their discipline;
  - Foster the sharing of knowledge and ideas in a supportive environment;
  - Encourage collaboration and inter-disciplinary exploration;
  - Provide access to mentoring for early career researchers, to help build confidence;
  - Encourage colleagues to consider embarking on doctoral studies;
  - Facilitate the testing of research ideas, purpose, methodology, and likely impact.
  - Deliver research events that enliven our academic community and enhance the reputation of UWL.

- Evaluate ‘impact’ to help determine what we research, how we research it, and how we share its outcomes.
- Facilitate and support inter-disciplinary approaches to research through the research clusters, INSPIRE, the Graduate School, the Professoriate and academic schools encouraging researchers & doctoral projects to have affiliations to more than one research area.
- Expand and increase the funding sources for our strategic research clusters, focusing upon promoting collaboration. Clusters will develop and implement local plans for how best to target opportunities and deploy their resources.

**Enablers**

- The launch and pro-active professorial leadership of Research Clusters
- Creation of a Research Support Office to develop and deliver “practical tools” supporting research and research-income generation.
- Establishment and active management of the University’s research repository.
- Re-launch of the Graduate School

**Key Performance Indicators**

- By 2018 - delivering an annual output of 200 publications of a minimum 1* rating (against REF 2014 criteria)
- By 2018 - submitting £10 million of research bids per annum
- By 2018 - receiving £2 million of research income per annum
- By 2018 - supporting 200 FTE registered MPhil/PhD students
8.3 Objective Three: Impact: Engage with the wider world

We will

- Undertake research and scholarship conducted against a clear action plan for impact including:
  - The identification and support of research likely to be impactful;
  - Activities to ensure that we can foster/inculcate impact through engagement with the public and policy-makers;
  - Impact ‘tracking’ in terms of citations and monitoring the impact of work by colleagues who have left the University

- Strengthen our presence and esteem through the pursuit of targeted, significant and impactful research that resonates beyond academia.

- Build international research collaborations and partnerships aligned to the emerging research clusters of the University

- Expand our participation, and influence, in the number and range of relevant academic and non-academic networks, including the establishment of new and hosting of existing academic conferences and events.

- Create an appropriate, and welcoming postgraduate research environment to support and integrate an expanding and increasingly diverse body of research students of UK, EU and international origin.

- Enhance the appeal of the UWL research environment to potential future research staff and students through alignment of research activity with emerging research clusters of the University, and thereby establish a vibrant and vital community within which research can flourish and be sustained;

Enablers

- The launch and pro-active professorial leadership of Research Clusters
- Oversight of impact by the University Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Committee
- Requirement for the identification and analysis of impact of research & scholarly outputs during annual appraisal
- Re-launch of the Graduate School

Key Performance Indicators

- By 2018 - 60% of academic staff to be actively engaged in generating impactful research (as assessed through AEF) aligned to one or more research clusters
- By 2018 - research within the University will be generating a minimum of two patent applications per annum
- By 2018 – the University will have established, and be active participants in at least three international research partnerships
- From 2016 – the University will facilitate and host at least 5 international conference / network events per annum.
- By 2016 – the University will demonstrate full compliance with HEFCE 2016 Open Access policy.
9.0 Conclusion

Through the development of “useful knowledge” by our staff, our students and our partners, this strategy will enrich and enhance the internal and external environment delivering directly to the vision of Ambition 2018 which sees the University become a sector-leading institution specialising in the education and development of “Creative Professionals”.