

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

To: School of Education Board

From: Professor Dan Davies, Head of Applied Research and Consultancy

Subject: School of Education Research Strategy 2009-2012

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Introduction

This new School of Education (SoE) Research Strategy has been drafted in line with the University's strategic paper *New Research Strategy – a discussion document* of 18 January 2010. It also draws upon the following documents:

- School of Education – Strategic Plan 2009-12
- School of Education – Research Strategy 2006-09
- School of Education – Research Action Plan 2009-10

It was discussed at SoE and University Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committees on 22 and 25 March 2010 respectively.

The SoE has a long record of research and publication which has been derived largely from its core activity as a provider of initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CPD). During the late 1980s and 1990s, the emergence of the National Curriculum and strong accountability measures on initial teacher education required the appointment of a large proportion of staff with professional classroom experience rather than publication profiles. 1994 saw the strategy of diversification from ITE with the development of International Education as a small degree subject, followed by Education Studies as a major subject in 1999. This engendered a stronger context for publication among a small core of staff

The main features of publication have been critical texts on theoretical and professional aspects of education, rather than empirical research studies. Little of the work has been externally funded, with the exception of grants for primary science research from AstraZeneca Science Teaching Trust (AZSTT) and National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA). As part of the strategy to increase funded research in 2007, a Head of Applied Research and Consultancy was appointed and steady progress has been made with a small number of successful bids, such as £50K from BECTA, £20K from TDA and £10K from The Gulbenkian

Foundation and Fareham Trust. The School achieved a respectable RAE score in 2008 (15% 3*, 30% 2*, 35% 1* by comparison with an overall score of 2 in RAE 2001). Colleagues responded well to the University's invitation in 2008 to fund research centres with five centres created:

- Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (CEIT)
- Centre for Research in Early Scientific Learning (CRESL)
- Centre for Research in Arts Education (CRAE)
- Children and the Environment Research Centre (CERC)
- Centre for Research into Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners (CRIVL)

These are beginning to be successful in attracting research funding, notably with the successful Big Lottery bid by CRIVL in partnership with the British Dyslexia Association.

Four appointments made to the School during the last 12 months have used research potential as a criterion and individuals with strong research profiles have been appointed. Another change in the research landscape for the School is that there is now a requirement for ITE to have a stronger research base, and the former distinction between 'teacher educators' and 'research active staff' should disappear.

1. General Aims

- 1.1** To develop an enabling environment within the SoE, which helps to increase research activity amongst academic staff, particularly of the kind which has the potential to lead to high quality research outputs.
- 1.2** To increase expectations and accountability associated with research, consultancy and scholarship activity so that initial research follows a pathway from internal seminar presentations to external conferences to publications.
- 1.3** To identify academic staff with the potential for submission to REF2013 and provide the support necessary to enable them to realise their research publication potential.
- 1.4** To support and enhance the role of SoE research centres in inducting and mentoring staff new to research, building up a critical mass of research activity and bidding for external research funding.
- 1.5** To identify and further investigate the actual and potential impact of SoE research associated with outputs entered for RAE 2008 and REF 2013.

2. Specific Initiatives

- 2.1** To initiate and maintain an annual cycle of research activity monitoring meetings with academic staff within the SoE (one-to-one or in small groups engaged in collaborative research) carried out by the Head of Applied Research and Consultancy (HoARC) or research centre leaders as appropriate. These

meetings will set individual targets for research output by agreement with staff, which would be communicated to line managers and feed into the annual appraisal process. Staff will be encouraged through these meetings to negotiate the necessary time with their line managers to carry out the research, consultancy and scholarship specified, and will be accountable to the HoARC for agreed outputs, such as articles submitted to journals. An anonymised summary of the outcomes from this cycle of meetings will be monitored by the SoE Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee.

- 2.2** To supplement the existing SoE research seminar series and reading group with a series of writing and publication workshops, aimed at staff, PhD and Master's students. These workshops will provide protected space for colleagues to pursue their research writing commitments, with support from experienced published staff, either through co-authoring, mentoring or short inputs on specific topics relating to the publication process.
- 2.3** Through the research activity monitoring meetings (see above), to identify a core group of research-active staff with the potential to be entered for REF2013. The HoARC will draw up a specific publication plan with each of these individuals and will invite bids for QR funding (from RAE 2008, currently around £24K per year) to release them from other commitments at key periods to fulfil their writing commitments. Applications for such funding will be assessed against criteria such as the potential status and impact of the publication in question, and the viability of the publication programme to secure REF 2013 submission. In developing specific enabling strategies for these key individuals, the HoARC will draw upon external expertise, such as that potentially available from a newly-appointed Honorary Visiting Professor with a very strong research profile.
- 2.4** Through negotiation with the Dean of Education and Assistant Dean, Staffing and Resources, to agree new job descriptions for research centre leaders. The expectations of these leaders would then include active recruitment of staff and research students to their centres; mentoring and monitoring staff research activity within their centres; making at least one substantial bid for external research funding per year per centre and ensuring that the work of each centre is promoted through website, conferences and high quality publications. This enhanced role will require negotiating with existing centre leaders, with potential substitution from within centres if their other responsibilities cannot be reduced accordingly. Strategic collaboration and potential mergers between centres will also be encouraged to increase the 'critical mass' of available researchers for specific projects.
- 2.5** To develop the administrative support for research within the SoE through the allocation of dedicated, specialised

administrative time to support the work of HoARC and research centre leaders in monitoring research activity and output; bidding for and managing external funding in collaboration with the University Research Office; maintaining the SoE research and research centre web pages and collating the submission for REF 2013.

- 2.6** Establish a working group from within SoE Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee to trawl RAE 2008 submission to identify outputs with potentially high impact upon research users (schools, government agencies, local authorities etc). The originator of the research (if applicable) would then be commissioned to carry out further impact evaluation research to develop case study material to be submitted to REF 2013. The HoARC and research centre leaders will identify current research, likely to produce outputs for REF 2013, which has also the potential for significant impact upon the sector. Staff associated with such research within the SoE will then be commissioned to carry out additional impact evaluation research to generate further case study material. The final case study(ies) to be submitted to REF 2013 will be determined by SoE Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee.

3. Targets and Monitoring

- 3.1** Annual targets for SoE external research and consultancy income will be set by the University Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee. They will form part of the SoE Annual Research Action Plan, and will be monitored by the SoE Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee, reporting to School Board.
- 3.2** Annual targets for SoE research publication will continue to form part of the SoE Annual Research Action Plan, and will be monitored by the SoE Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee, reporting to School Board. However, the institution of research activity monitoring meetings with individual staff (see 2.1) will enable closer scrutiny and monitoring of these targets. Additionally, the publication targets for potential REF 2013 entrants (see 2.3) will in future be separately identified within the SoE Annual Research Action Plan, and will form a standing item on the agenda of the SoE Research, Consultancy and Scholarship Committee.