

### Research Wales Innovation Fund Strategy 2020/21 – 2022/23

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#### Section A: Overview

##### 1. Strategic ambitions

*Please provide an overview of your institution's 3 year [and beyond if longer term plans are available] approach to research and innovation activity which will be supported by RWIF. You may wish to highlight broad areas which you are targeting, and describe how RWIF funding will align with your institutional mission and internal strategies. [max 300 words]*

The Open University's mission is to be open to people, places, methods and ideas.

In light of the crisis posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, we have chosen to focus our funding on the OU in Wales' unique areas of strength, namely support for skills, and civic mission and public engagement. These investments will have the greatest impact in Wales in terms of meeting HEFCW's vision for Research and Innovation and enabling social and economic prosperity across the country. As the situation changes, we will review annually the split in the use of the RWIF funding.

This aligns with our Research and Enterprise Plan (2018-2023) which includes the following objectives:

- Build our capacity in distinctive engaged, open research through increased and widened public and stakeholder engagement with OU research
- Develop the number and significance of our large-scale, external research and enterprise partnership.

Our OU Knowledge Exchange (KE) plan is being updated in 2020/21 to align with the KE Concordat and actions within the RWIF strategy will feed into this.

In Wales we will create opportunities:

1. To build a skilled and productive nation by supporting employers and individuals to upskill and reskill through flexible distance learning progression pathways
2. To build innovation capacity and impact throughout Wales by delivering and supporting citizen-engaged and applied research and sharing across communities
3. To share our expertise as leaders in researching and producing high quality flexible online and distance learning with partners – building on needs identified as a result of Covid-19
4. To align our work to the present and future needs of Welsh society by co-producing and developing new distance learning content arising from our academic research
5. To support the development of a highly skilled and socially aware nation by fostering critical thinking and building an informed and engaged citizenship.

As an all-Wales university, we will seek to deliver positive economic and social outcomes, public engagement and impact to all areas of Wales, including the most marginalised communities.

In doing so, we will demonstrate our values of inclusivity, innovation and responsiveness, working with partners in further and higher education, and with the public, third, and private sectors, to ensure our innovation and engagement activities achieve reach and significance.

## 2. Capacity Grant

*Provide some narrative on how your institution plans to make use of the capacity grant included within RWIF, and the one-off Innovation Capacity Development Fund (see paragraph 14 in Circular W20/09HE for further guidance on the Capacity Grant). How will this be used to support and enhance capacity and incentivise and improve performance in knowledge exchange? [max 300 words]*

The RWIF Capacity Grant and the ICDF allocation will be prioritised to:

- secure the learning and investment of the initial HEFCW I&E funding
- supporting existing posts and activity
- embedding work which is at early stages of development
- learning from evaluation.

From this strong base, we will be able to:

- Grow our partnerships with FE
- Develop our work with employers on skills development
- Extend our programme of public engagement and civic mission work.

There will be four continuation posts which will build on previous HEFCW investment. We will be boosting our civic mission work, particularly in light of Covid-19, sharing our expertise as a high-quality, flexible, distance learning

provider through a programme of support to other organisations and through the development of new, free, online, bilingual learning material.

New staff will also build capacity to support new programmes for skills, enterprise and employability aligning to national and regional sector priorities, in particular in digital skills, health and social care, and leadership and management, and aligned to OU research. They will build on the public engagement work started through HEFCW Civic Mission funding to support critical thinking, citizenship and public debate.

This funding will also ensure sufficient administrative, activity, and programme support resources to be made available from the OU in Wales office.

We will develop and deliver programmes and activities which align to the present and future economic and social needs of Wales by drawing on research and innovation capability from across The Open University's four faculties and our world-leading distance learning production expertise. Activity will be benchmarked against the university's work in all four nations of the UK, sharing best practice, improving performance, and building capacity for innovation and engagement from The Open University in Wales.

**Section B: Specific content**

**3. Commercialisation / income generating activity**

*RWIF has been designed to incentivise and reward performance, particularly in terms of external income capture. Outline the direction of travel for the next three years which will support delivery of the KPIs outlined in 3.1. Provide details on key areas of investment and growth. Outline where RWIF will be used to add value to existing activities, or how it will support new developments. Further guidance on this section is available in Circular W20/09HE. Your response should be framed in terms of social and economic prosperity for Wales. [1000 words max]*

The Open University in Wales is not planning to develop this area further with the Research Wales Innovation Fund. We have made a strategic decision to focus on other areas for impact as we do not have sufficient funds to significantly develop activity in commercialisation/ income generation. While the CPD activity outlined in section 4 has scope for commercial return and could generate income, OU revenue is not the primary driver of the activity.

**3.1 Provide details of your institution's strategic KPIs for Commercialisation / income generating activity**

n/a

**3.2 How will your strategic approach in this area align with HEFCW's [Research and Innovation: the Vision for Wales](#)? Select the pillars supported:**

Excellence

- Place
- Innovation
- Collaboration

**3.3 How do your strategic ambitions for commercialisation and income generating activity support the Vision’s goals, milestones and ambitions?**

[Max 250 words]

**4. New business growth and skills support**

*Outline the support you intend to provide for new start-ups, spin-offs, and meeting the targets of schemes such as the WG’s Youth Entrepreneurship Programme. Provide information on where RWIF will add value to existing activities, and where it allows you to invest in further growth. Further guidance on this section is available in Circular W20/09HE.*

*Your response should be framed in terms of social and economic prosperity for Wales. [1000 words max]*

As the only university which serves every community in Wales, (and the whole of the UK), we are in a uniquely advantageous position to be able to support skills development across the whole country and this will be our focus for this section.

While the aftereffects of Covid-19 are yet to be fully experienced, it is accepted across most sectors and governments that a large-scale national effort to upskill and reskill organisations and learners will be necessary in order to support our recovery. As a society, we will need a renewed focus on the importance of systematic life-long learning.

We have been the leading innovator in the field of distance learning for over 50 years, and the leading provider of online learning since the turn of the millennium. During the crisis, we have responded quickly to requests for support in developing online distance learning from a range of organisations, helping them in the initial stages of the online pivot. The focus of our skills support will be to continue to contribute to the recovery during the next year, adding value to existing work and growing the significance and reach of partners’ online pivot through a range of activity.

Capacity in this area will enable us to work more closely with Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) and provider fora, aligning sector skills priorities across all three regions in Wales with a more targeted offer. We will identify priority sector skills gaps and develop solutions to be piloted through our place-based local engagement and then rolled out at a regional or national level. This will help the economy in allowing people to find and keep suitable employment in their local communities.

Our strategic focus will be:

- i) Building CPD capacity**

We will continue to work with partners to understand their staff CPD needs and will offer bespoke, timely and relevant training packages. Where courses are not available, we will commission the co-creation of Open Educational Resources (OER) and content relevant to partner and wider socio-economic needs. We will work with a range of partners including SME employers, industry, government bodies, FE colleges and schools to scope and develop new and relevant CPD courses.

We will enhance the growth potential of SME employers and help raise the skill levels of their employees. These employers are vital to the Welsh economy and are often deeply embedded in their communities. It is crucial for their success that the workforce is given the opportunity to continuously develop its skills and be resilient to turbulent economic forces, which can have wider social impact in disadvantaged areas. We will focus on two key areas:

- a) Developing competent digital skills at all levels
- b) Developing improved leadership and management.

We will work with education providers in local authorities, FE colleges and schools to support the pivot to online learning, creating webinars, courses and bespoke support. We also aspire to build our schools CPD research capacity, aligned to our PGCE team, listening to what works and how things can be improved as part of the current crisis and with regard to the Curriculum for Wales.

We will also evaluate employability opportunities for students of all ages (aligned with the current [GoWales criteria](#)) with a view to funding in Years 2/3 and will work with the Welsh Government to explore opportunities to develop proposals under the Youth Entrepreneurship programme to support students and increase opportunities in their communities.

## **ii) Further education collaboration**

Developing better HE collaboration with FE colleges is one of HEFCW's priorities. Our model of open access across all areas of Wales enables learners to stay in their communities to learn at a higher level. We will work with FE colleges to build progression pathways from level 2 to level 7, including degree apprenticeships.

Building on the previous HEFCW funding, we will seek to develop partnership projects to identify gaps aligned to regional skills need, develop new progression pathways and provide opportunities for staff to upskill.

We will establish partnerships across Wales which build upon successful pilot initiatives to increase awareness and opportunities amongst FE students of a wider range of higher learning opportunities. By Year 3, we will have worked with FE colleges across every region to approve partnership agreements, deliver pilot activities and successfully develop FE/HE progression pathway programmes. We will have built mutually beneficial FE/HE relationships that increase knowledge and awareness of additional higher learning opportunities within learners' communities.

Closer collaboration with FE colleges will help identify regional skills priorities and local gaps in learning provision and opportunities for joined-up FE/HE provision.

We know that collaboration with FE colleges can take time to develop. Building on our existing collaboration with FE college partners, we will roll-out a programme of academic/industry workshops and bespoke Strategic Insight Partnerships (SIPs) both as part of the HEFCW-funded Pie programme within the Cardiff Capital Region and extending it pan-Wales. These will successfully support the development of closer institutional ties between FE/HE and industry partners when identifying employer skills needs and the provision of industry relevant FE/HE curriculum. We will work with other HE providers to provide synergy in this area.

We will also work closely with FE college staff to identify their own CPD needs and build provision to support collaboration. We will build sustainable staff expertise and networks between HE/FE and industry that creates stronger regional focus and capacity around key skill sets. This would also create opportunities for staff and learners to engage with research and innovation, which will include the creation of HE/FE learning resources and support for the online pivot.

We will also build clear connectivity between industry future skills needs and regional demand in priority sectors across Wales and support the development of a talent pool from L2 – L7.

Whether learners are currently in post and looking to upskill or change careers and reskill, we are well positioned to identify progression pathways to support the Welsh economy and align to the sector skills priorities most in need. After Covid-19, it is likely that there will be a need to radically relook at the way we structure our workforce and develop new skills. We can work with employers and key stakeholders to create resources to provide support to enhance place-based skills in industry.

#### **4.1 Provide details of your institution's strategic KPIs for new business growth and skills support**

One of the OU's strategic objectives is to enhance our future **growth and sustainability** by diversifying our reach and sources of income. We will do this through:

- Devising a clear approach to developing offers for students and corporate customers focusing on our short, flexible, learning development provision using both OU and FutureLearn platforms for the UK and international audience
- We will continue our focus on growing degree apprenticeships in the UK
- We will prioritise resourcing for strategic change that adds value and operational activities to increase student numbers.

High level measures of success:

- Increase income through diversification
- Continue to increase directly registered student numbers at all levels (new and continuing).

We are also currently reviewing our pricing strategy in Wales.

Another OU strategic objective is to support **student success**. Our Student Employability Strategy is focused on Enhanced Employability for Student Success and deepening our employer engagement is one of the key themes.

**Building CPD capacity**

Through building CPD capacity we will contribute to the growth and sustainability strategic objective by growing our partnerships and increasing learner numbers while diversifying our reach across Wales.

<b>CPD KPIs (using HE-BCI survey data)</b>		<b>Y 1</b>	<b>Y 2*</b>	<b>Y 3*</b>
Total learner days of CPD/CE courses delivered (FTE equivalent)	Target (cumulative)	+5%	+15%	+25%
Baseline: 298 (HE-BCI 2018/19)				
Number of partners/employers participating in CPD increased	Target (cumulative)	+5%	+15%	+25%
Baseline: 138 (HE-BCI 2018/19)				

\*Dependent on funding. Targets to be reviewed annually in light of actual funding received.

**Further education collaboration**

Through building opportunities with FE colleges we will contribute to the growth and sustainability strategic objective by increasing learner numbers, including degree apprenticeships and testing new collaborative projects while diversifying our reach across Wales. We will also contribute to student success and employer engagement through a better understanding of industry needs.

<b>FE Collaboration KPIs</b>		<b>Y 1</b>	<b>Y 2*</b>	<b>Y 3*</b>
Increased number of learners on co-developed courses and through new progression pathways	Target (cumulative)	+1,000	+2,000	+3,000
Baseline: 6,850 (2019/20)				
Number of pilot activities developed with FE colleges	Target	3	5	7
Number of pilot activities rolled out	Target	-	2	4
Number of HE/FE/Industry workshops/SIPs delivered	Target	4	8	16

\*Dependent on funding. Targets to be reviewed annually in light of actual funding received.

**4.2 How will your strategic approach in this area align with HEFCW's [Research and Innovation: the Vision for Wales](#)? Select the pillars supported:**

- Excellence
- Place
- Innovation

## R Collaboration

**4.3 How do your strategic ambitions for new business growth and skills support the Vision's goals, milestones and ambitions?**

[Max 250 words]

The OU in Wales has a broader view than the Vision's specific goals, milestones and ambitions due to the skills focus of this section of the strategy.

## Short term goals

- Supporting employers' recovery from Covid-19 through upskilling staff through CPD in online provision
- Exploring practical solutions for FE/HE collaboration and industry engagement
- Identifying gaps in skills provision for regional sector skills priorities and progression pathways from FE/HE

## Medium term milestones

- Welsh workforce has increased digital skills
- Increased HE-FE industrial collaborations built from FE/HE workshops and SIPs
- Positive working relationships between FE/HE and early progression pathways formed anticipating the intent of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research
- Better course provision aligned to sector skills priorities and progression pathways

## Long term ambitions

- Full economic impact of Covid-19 on workforce mitigated by short/medium term actions
- Clear progression pathways in key priority sectors
- HE and industry research and scholarship collaborations and a clear understanding of the OU's unique offer across the whole of Wales.

**5. Civic Mission and Public Engagement**

*Outline how RWIF will support continued or new activity across your communities. Place-based civic mission is broad, incorporating a vast range of activities including support within the community to meet the skills needs of industry, HE-FE partnerships in skills, innovation and engagement, public engagement through research, and meeting societal challenges. Support for the community within university premises for e.g. events, lectures etc, would also be a means of supporting civic mission. Further guidance on this section is available in Circular W20/09HE.*

*Your response should be framed in terms of social and economic prosperity for Wales. [1000 words max]*

The OU is not just a university. We are a movement for social change. At the heart of our mission is to build a better, more engaged, and more informed society by making higher learning open to all.

We recognise that Wales faces myriad changes and challenges over the coming years. These have been made more urgent because of Covid-19. We seek to play our role in meeting those challenges and equipping the nation to respond to those changes.

Our social mission forms the basis of our work in this area and is embedded throughout all our activities across teaching, research and scholarship. Our civic mission work will enable people to change their thinking and knowledge.

Funding in this area of work provides us with an opportunity to develop new ways to support society and the economy through and post Covid-19, as well as continuing and growing existing work.

We will boost staff capacity and activities in this area to work in and with communities and those who serve them, listening to their needs, and offering co-produced solutions to enhance critical thought and sharing our research and knowledge to improve lives.

Our strategic focus will be:

**i) Fostering critical thinking and building an informed and engaged citizenship**

We believe that education as a public good is much wider than the teaching of course-specific subject matter; it is also about fostering critical and independent thought.

Skills like these are inherently valuable to the economy and society at large but must also be part of the national effort to address misinformation and democratic disengagement. Critical thought has become so important to help us all understand the daily mass of information we are presented with and which is now necessary to keep ourselves healthy.

We will:

- Provide resources and information to encourage critical thinking and create active citizens through the creation of learning resources by working with and in different communities, listening to their needs and building a strong pool of knowledge exchange.
- Enhance our own understanding of Wales' varied communities by building relationships with key stakeholders and by building on our current local engagement pilots and working with national bodies and think tanks.

- Amplify the voices of our communities and understand more fully the barriers which under-represented groups of people face by providing opportunities for public debate on societal challenges.

We will share our learning within the OU and through the Universities Wales Civic Mission Network, which is chaired by the OU in Wales' Deputy Director, to other HEIs in Wales and beyond.

**ii) Enhancing our offer of free, bilingual, online learning**

As a university, we believe that Welsh citizens have a right to learning throughout life, and that learning should not be a one-off experience which ends at 21 years of age. It can and should take many forms – online and in-person, formal and informal.

Through our commitment to our own civic mission, we will:

- Invest in new, bilingual educational resources and skills-focused courses on our free online learning platform, [OpenLearn](#), to inspire achievement and support employability for informal learners via digital credentials. Much of the course development will be co-produced with partners and communities of interest for Wales-specific content.
- Work with organisations and local communities, including schools and FE colleges, to use public libraries as a space for engagement activities. We will also explore the potential to offer access to learning content and support across the wider public library network and community learning hubs, so that libraries become study centres for the general public as part of their lifelong learning provision.
- Explore opportunities with partners to pilot digital learning initiatives, adding value to local core learning programmes by developing blended face-to-face and online learning opportunities that raise awareness and progression to higher learning, particularly in Wales' most deprived communities.

This work will seek to incorporate our Reaching Wider OpenLearn Champions and OU Ambassador programmes and our OpenTalks series, which all aim to widen access to our free learning.

**iii) Developing and sharing OU research and knowledge to the people of Wales**

Many communities feel that they do not have a voice, feeling marginalised and subject to stigma due to misrepresentation of their communities.

We will:

- Grow capacity for open, citizen engaged research to amplify the voice of people from diverse communities, providing platforms for their views to be heard, building on the initial success of the co-produced UKRI place-based

public engagement research project and extend its reach to wider communities. We will work with academic staff to develop further engaged research collaborations.

- Develop robust Wales-centred research capabilities with both Wales-based academic staff and our central academic schools. This allows us to develop place-based research-led community engagement programmes. These will be co-designed with local partners and communities and will support increased awareness and progression opportunities into higher learning for non-traditional learners from some of Wales’ most deprived communities.
- Increase the amount of homegrown applied research in Wales through building capacity with academic staff based in Wales, especially in core areas such as education, and health and social care. Our aspiration is to build on the foundations of work we are currently doing with schools to:
  - Support the online pivot and blended learning approach to education
  - Conduct research on the impact of new curriculum and teacher CPD needs in Wales
  - Roll out the [school governors programme](#) to provide enhanced resources for CPD and continue collaborative working with Cardiff University and Wrexham Glyndŵr University
  - Support partnerships with schools to include provision of free resources to help classroom discussion and debate
  - Coordinate the wide variety of engagement with schools across the OU in Wales.
- Build the amount of OU co-produced research conducted in Wales, based on OU research priorities, including by showcasing our research across Wales through public engagement events, live streaming and outreach, building on the success of the funded HEFCW OU/BBC co-productions programme.

As a result of this funding, we will reach communities that do not traditionally have a voice and introduce our research and resources to foster critical thinking, leading to an increased understanding of citizenship and genuine public engagement.

**5.1 Provide details of your institution’s strategic KPIs for civic mission and public engagement**

Civic mission and public engagement contribute to a number of the OU’s strategic objectives: growth and sustainability; technology that enables success; excellent teaching and research; and student success.

A key objective in our Research and Enterprise Plan is to build our capacity in distinctive engaged, open research through increased and widened public and stakeholder engagement with OU research. We will do this through building on our long-term partnerships with the BBC and other organisations, our open

educational platforms, and our existing commitment to the [National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement \(NCCPE\) Manifesto for Public Engagement](#).

Furthermore, our civic mission and public engagement work also aligns with our Learner and Discovery Services Strategic Framework:

- Design and production - collaborate to design and produce world-class modules, short courses, digital content and learning experiences at scale to ensure student success, drive new student registrations and deliver the OU's curriculum plan for all four nations
- Knowledge and information - unlock institutional knowledge and information to advance learning, teaching and research
- Services and support - deliver high quality services that support student success, employability, research and scholarship
- Innovation - drive innovation in everything we do
- Engagement, enterprise and partnerships - build partnerships, encourage enterprise and engage with a wide range of diverse communities to ensure the OU delivers its social mission.

In order to foster critical thinking and build an informed and engaged citizenship we will engage with potential learners through national and place-based strategies with communities and our partners by listening to their needs and co-creating opportunities for knowledge exchange. Our free, online learning, research and outreach facilitate a lifelong learning culture across all areas of Wales, including the most marginalised communities.

### **Civic Mission KPIs**

- **Number of people reached through our CM and PE activity**

Year 1 – 10% increase on baseline

Year 2\* - 15% increase over baseline

Year 3\* - 20% increase over baseline

(Baseline: 456,554 - HE-BCI 2018/19 data)

With the embedded aims of working across sectors, working with communities of interest such as BAME communities and people with disabilities as well as by the end of Y3\* (subject to funding) engaging with place-based communities across all 22 local authorities in Wales.

*Measure includes: numbers of learners in Wales who attend our public events (in person and online), our OpenLearn courses and our multi-media.*

- **Number of new community place-based or communities of interest pilots and roll outs**

Year 1 - 3 new pilots

Year 2\* - 3 additional pilots and roll out 2 projects

Year 3\* – 3 additional pilots and an additional 2 rollouts

Building on our current partnerships work in six local authority areas in Wales, we will develop pilot projects to test what works and if successful, roll out into wider projects in local areas or with communities of interest.

- **Development of new, funded citizen-engaged and applied research activity in Wales**

Year 1 - 1 additional  
 Year 2\* – 1 additional  
 Year 3\* – 1 additional

(Baseline: 1 - 2019/20)

We are seeking to grow our home grown and funded research and will work with academic staff to support them to develop externally funded research in Wales.

\*Dependent on funding. Targets to be reviewed annually in light of actual funding received.

**5.2 How will your strategic approach in this area align with HEFCW’s [Research and Innovation: the Vision for Wales](#)? Select the pillars supported:**

- R Excellence
- R Place
- Innovation
- R Collaboration

**5.3 How do your strategic ambitions for civic mission and public engagement support the Vision’s goals, milestones and ambitions?**

[Max 250 words]

The OU in Wales has a broader view than the Vision’s specific goals, milestones and ambitions due to the civic mission and public engagement focus of the overall strategy.

**Short term goals**

- Develop new resources by listening to communities on key issues that affect them across Wales
- Provide leadership on the development of framework for civic mission
- Partner public, third and community sectors upskilled in digital literacy and digital learning
- UKRI engagement strengthened through delivery of BG Reach project and follow-on funding sought.

**Medium term milestones**

- Increase understanding awareness across Wales of the benefits of critical thinking in deciphering information from different sources
- Libraries and community learning hubs fully aware of free learning resources available to all communities in Wales

- Growth of research capacity to undertake citizen-engaged and applied research in Wales and increased grant capture.

Long term ambitions

- Wales to be internationally recognised as the exemplar of civic mission
- Public awareness of the benefits of HE as a key contributor to social and economic success in Wales
- Improved digital skills and digital literacy across the whole of Wales leading to a more equal Wales
- OU in Wales respected for civic mission-related research and providing an increased contribution to REF 2028.

**Section C: Alignment to policy and priorities**

**6. Wales and UK Policy**

*Describe how your RWIF strategy aligns with relevant place based regional, Welsh, and UK policies such as e.g. local city region / regional growth deals; [WG's Prosperity for All: economic action plan](#); [UK Industrial Strategy](#); [Public Services Boards](#); [UPP Civic University Foundation](#); [Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy](#); [Science for Wales](#); [Regional Economic Frameworks](#) etc.*

[500 words max]

The proposal supports the UK's Industrial Strategy aims for *People* in particular by addressing UK challenge in meeting business needs for talent, skills and labour. By supporting education and continued professional development we can help narrow the disparities between communities in skills and education and remove barriers faced by workers from under-represented groups in realising their potential.

The OU mission to be open to people aligns closely with the UPP Civic University Foundation ambitions regarding access and retention, which is that everyone with the potential and ambition to go to and succeed at university should have the ability to do so, regardless of background, family income or disability. Our proposals give the OU further opportunity to engage with potential students and make their ambition of university a reality. The UPP fully supports innovative projects that enhance young peoples' social capital and skills development that are so important in helping them become employable, such as our student entrepreneurial activity. Finally, our plans here all demonstrate a commitment to be a Civic University that fosters partnership and collaboration with communities across the whole of Wales. The outcomes of our activity can contribute to the UPP Foundation policy platform on ways in which universities and their communities can build mutually beneficial relationships for the public good.

This strategy aligns very clearly with a number of the key themes set out in Prosperity for All, and in particular skills and employability. Through this strategy, we will be building skills capacity in the workforce, filling regional and national skills gaps and meeting national skills priorities, and enhancing the nation's capacity to think critically and socially.

There is also an important indirect link with mental health, which is another theme of Prosperity for All, given the wide body of research that shows continuous learning helps maintain well-being and good mental health. This has been shown to be particularly important during the Covid-19 crisis, and we believe it will be continue to be of importance in the recovery period.

In addition to supporting the general themes of Prosperity for All, this strategy sets out how we will support its more specific Calls to Action. Particularly in terms of research and development, our planned activities will support businesses to innovate and to upskill and will support individual employees across the three regions of Wales to upskill and reskill so that they are able to support the research and development capabilities of their employers.

Further, this strategy allows us to think much more broadly about national trends which span across the Calls to Action, as well as the general themes, of Prosperity for All, and to align our activities to those themes as they emerge and evolve. By building in the values of collaboration and integration, as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act, we can be responsive to the changing needs of the economy, society, and across sectors and communities.

Through this strategy, and through our other core work, we are building a highly skilled population and contributing to our skills-based economy. The Open University offer is crucial to this: making learning throughout life the norm and opening up education to those who would not otherwise have the opportunity. While that is a valuable pursuit in its own right, it also contributes to local, regional, and national prosperity across Wales.

## 7. Meeting the requirements of the UK Knowledge Exchange Concordat

*Institutions in Wales must demonstrate through their RWIF strategies commitment and alignment to the principles of the UK Knowledge Exchange Concordat. A development stage will take place during 2020-21 to implement a Welsh model.*

*For this initial stage we are asking institutions to confirm, through their strategies, that they are aware of the KEC principles which were outlined as part of the initial [consultation](#), and that they are committed to alignment through the Welsh model for engagement. Revised RWIF strategies can be submitted annually as part of the monitoring procedure, and this process will be utilised to demonstrate full KEC commitment following the development year.*

[500 words]

The OU is committed to the KEC principles and has established a KE Working Group which will help formulate the new KE Action plan for the University. The KE Group will also act as a community of practice to enable all four OU nations to deliver high quality public engagement and knowledge exchange activity and champion the principles of the KEC.

The new KE Action plan will replace the existing OU impact plan, whilst complementing and building upon the Research and Enterprise plan (2018-2023). The ambition is to create a plan that enables cross-OU collaboration and contributes to devolved policy and strategy, adhering to the priorities of each nation government and funding body.

The KEC provides an opportunity to better coordinate activities that are already well aligned to the principles of the KEC. For example, our Enhanced Employability and Career Progression (EECP) strategic programme which enables employers to contribute to curriculum development (Principle 2), our extensive training and academic professional development programme (Principle 5) and our clear KE promotion pathways (Principle 6).

The original intention for institutional sign up to the KEC principles has been paused due to coronavirus emergency, but the OU will become a signatory once the KEC implementation is restarted.

## 8. Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015

*Provide specific information on the RWIF strategy will support the seven goals, and five ways of working in [the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015](#);*  
[250 words max]

Well-being goal	Notes
Prosperous Wales	Bridging skills gaps; promoting innovation; promoting learning throughout life; supporting deprived communities.
Resilient Wales	Citizen-led and place-based research; promotion of learning at home, thereby limiting travel; advancement of critical thinking about society.
More Equal Wales	Specific support and activities targeted at Widening Access communities, thereby opening up learning to those who would not otherwise have the chance; enhancing critical thinking and the notion of active citizenship; provide platforms for underrepresented groups.
Healthier Wales	Direct correlation between learning and improved health outcomes.
Wales of Cohesive Communities	Citizen-engaged research and activities bringing people together; using public spaces in communities to provide learning; focus on the role of the school at the heart of the community.

Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	Changing the way society thinks about learning and the culture surrounding that; commitment to making free online learning resources available in both languages; activities based in Welsh-speaking deprived communities.
Globally-responsible Wales	Enhancement of critical thinking and the notion of active citizenship; part of a UK-wide university; enhancement of homegrown research and what that can contribute not only at home but also to the world.
<b>Way of Working</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Long-term	Focus on long-term skills gaps and economic trends; tackling intergenerational poverty through learning; increasing the nation's long-term capacity for critical thought.
Integration	Homegrown research integrated into the needs, trends and priorities of localities and regions in Wales; collaboration with FE and across other sectors; part of a UK-wide university linked into UK Government priorities as well as Welsh Government priorities.
Involvement	Working directly with citizens; specific in-community work using community assets such as libraries and schools.
Collaboration	Collaboration with FE, private sector built in throughout; integration with e.g. Regional Skills Partnerships built in throughout.
Prevention	Focus on long-term trends, using learning and research to plug gaps, identify trends, meet regional and national needs.

### 9. Impact on Welsh Language

*Outline the positive impact RWIF investment will have on opportunities to use and support the Welsh language. Where appropriate you may wish to refer to the themes in the [Cymraeg 2050](#) action plan.*

[250 words max]

**Cymraeg 2020 theme**

**Notes**

<p>Increasing the number of Welsh speakers</p>	<p>Working with Coleg Cymraeg to develop their associate lecturer distance learning skills.</p> <p>Explore opportunities with the Coleg Cymraeg to involve Welsh users in research opportunities</p> <p>Through our links with FE colleges, introduce bilingual OpenLearn courses as part of Welsh medium learning pathways</p>
<p>Increasing the use of Welsh</p>	<p>Increasing the number of bilingual courses and resources available on OpenLearn.</p> <p>Promoting <a href="#">Croeso! beginners Welsh</a> to partners to help upskill the basic language skills of their workforce.</p> <p>Ensure that staff recruited through the funding have Welsh as a desirable or essential skill and give staff the opportunity to learn Welsh in the workplace.</p> <p>Ensure that Welsh speakers can continue to contribute in Welsh at OU public learning events</p>
<p>Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context</p>	<p>Promote the <a href="#">Rural entrepreneurship bilingual</a> course to partners as part of entrepreneurial programmes (see 9.5, Cymraeg 2050)</p>
<p>Other opportunities to use and support the Welsh language</p>	<p>Promote Welsh language OpenLearn courses – such as <a href="#">Everyday Skills in Maths</a> – to Welsh-medium employers as part of CPD.</p>

**Section D: financial assurance**

**10. Use of Research Wales Innovation Funding**

*How is your RWIF allocation 2020/21 being used to deliver the strategy set out in Section B, and what are your anticipated priorities for the use of RWIF funds in future years? [250 words max – or append a table outlining broad investment areas]*

Our RWIF allocation 2020/21 is being used to:

- fund several strategic posts, building on the capacity the ICDF allocation previously received (staff costs - 75% funding)
- maintain and leverage the collaborative relationships developed through the FE community, business community (non-staff costs – 12.5% funding), and
- maintain the regional partnership networks existing as a result of our previous civic mission work (non-staff costs 12.5% funding).

The funding will provide continuity to 4 posts working in these areas previously supported by HEFCW I&E project funding in 2019/20, and create 3 new roles, increase our capacity to deliver additional learning materials and further our cross-sector partnerships.

One of these new roles will be focused exclusively on the development of further online content with specific Welsh interest, related to innovation, skills, and engagement for our open-access platform OpenLearn.

The other 2 roles will support the regional and online engagement and activity portfolio, working with partners where possible, to deliver on the strategic KPIs.

Funding will also be used for recurrent costs in relation to public facing activities, and to cover leadership and management time to support development.

Looking forward to future years, it is expected that the future RWIF funding will maintain the created posts and continue to fund activity around engagement and learning opportunities in line with this strategy.

**Section E:**

**Regulatory Requirements**

*NB: HEFCW may request further information / clarification on any of these areas*

i) <a href="#">Welsh Language Standards (2018)</a> <i>[Use the drop down menu]</i>	This strategy complies with Welsh Language Standards 2018
ii) Equality Impact Assessment <i>[Use the drop down menu]</i>	This strategy has been Equality Impact Assessed
iii) <a href="#">Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)</a> <i>[Use the drop down menu]</i>	This strategy will contribute towards the aims of the WFG Act 2015
<b>Signature: Vice Chancellor</b>	 Louise Casella
<b>Date</b>	30/06/2020