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Theme 1: Our Globally Significant Transformational Research
The delivery of impactful research for societal benefit is a major pillar of our aspirational and ambitious research agenda including contributions to local, regional, national and international networks involving partners from academia, business, third sector groups, local government and policy makers. (RS 3.2)

Objective 1: Progress and implement plans for the next REF submission

1.1	Advance preparations for future REF performance	Revised Institutional submission strategy in relation to UoAs, to optimise REF performance across Contribution to Knowledge and Understanding, Engagement and Impact and People Culture and Environment developed and being implemented, responding to REF 2029 further decisions.	**PVC-R** July 2025 Head of Research Development and Impact UoA Leads and Directors of Research]
		Department/School growth and sustainability plans to support the optimal ASER staffing strategy for REF 2029 reviewed as an agile response to student recruitment and its implications for REF. This will ensure a continuing joined up approach to sustainability and research need.	July 2025 [Head of Department and Directors of Research]
		Development of Tableau Dashboards to support REF planning. This will include data on outputs, impact and various supporting metrics for Environment and Culture including grant capture, PGR completion, EDI and related information.	First iteration Summer 2024 [Head of Governance and Planning]
1.2	Maximising the positive impact of Postgraduate Researchers on our research and future REF submission. [see also EAP 4.2]	Growth in quality and quantity of the contribution from the PGR community in preparation for the next REF. Retain or grow match funding for PGR students resulting in PGR Student Growth.	**Dean PGRE** July 2025 [Senior Postgraduate Research Education Manager

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		Faculty Deans (PG) CER (Marketing and Student Recruitment and Communications)]
Objective 2: Optimise our strategic approach to KEF, delivering impact, knowledge exchange, and social, cultural and economic benefit through research		
2.1 Continue optimising our strategic approach to KEF in a way that achieves a top 50% in each perspective and maximises our HEBCI return	We are maintaining our top 50% performance in each perspective, while excelling in some perspectives. Our HEBCI return is optimised in a way that continues to maximise our HEIF income, increasing year on year.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Faculty Deans (R) Deputy Director (Enterprise) Communications and Web Teams]
2.2 Develop impact pipelines, media engagement and training to ensure that our academic research is valued by a wide range of external stakeholders, including policy makers, businesses and practitioner audiences (RS 3.2)	A systematic, proactive approach implemented to ensure sustainable development and delivery of impact, including 3* and 4* impact case studies for future iterations of REF. Bids submitted for future impact funds from UKRI and other sources to optimise Institutional approach to Impact. The Enterprise and Innovation Sub-strategy implemented, to embed an entrepreneurial culture and grow commercialisation activity and strengthen business and industry partnerships.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Faculty Deans (R) Departmental Directors of Research and Directors of Impact Deputy Director (Enterprise) Head of Research Development and Impact

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			Communications and Web Teams]
2.3	Further develop and optimise industry partners including the KTP portfolio increase external income and secure wider benefit	KTP portfolio expanded and diversified across the University's departments and top 3 position for KTPs in UK maintained. KTP opportunities for the HWC Hub to be explored with REO in the Autumn term 2024, when Hub is open. Apply established channels to B2B engagement to develop pipelines of leads for CPD and apprenticeships	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Faculty Deans (R) Deputy Director (Enterprise) Head of Research Development and Impact Head of Corporate Communications]
2.4	Embedding knowledge exchange (KE) as foundational in enabling the delivery of impact from our research and ensuring that our researchers are supported in this activity. (RS3.2)	The Enterprise and Innovation Sub-strategy implemented. More staff, including ECRs, engaged with KE through a range of mechanisms for connecting with business e.g., innovation vouchers, consultancy, collaborative and contract research.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Deputy Director (Enterprise) Head of Research Development and Impact Director of CPPE]
		Implementation of the CPPE Strategy is supporting the development of impact case studies and funding applications across UoAs.	**Director of CPPE** July 2025

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			[Head of Research Development and Impact]
2.5	Increase the visibility and provide support for commercialisation across the University.	A growing IP portfolio is supporting an increase in commercialisation activities. Business cases for new spin-outs are being developed and presented for approval	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Deputy Director (Enterprise), Director REO]
Objective 3: Ensuring that our research reflects a commitment to the Climate & Ecological Emergency			
3.1	Embed climate consciousness as a core aspect of our researching thinking and practice.	. Participation in the UKRI Environmental Sustainability in Research & Innovation Concordat is helping us develop an informed approach to measuring the carbon and ecological footprint of our research. A pan-institutional understanding of our existing research in climate, ecology and sustainability through identification of both key strengths and new research opportunities aligned to the declaration of a climate emergency.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [CEEAG Director of REO Head of Research Development and Impact]
3.2	Embedding UN Sustainable Development Goals	Our communications have built on and reflect our progress and international strengths as shown in our performance in the THE Impact Rankings. Our annual UN SDG report has been promoted, embedded on our website, and included in key messaging and identifying stories and case studies which powerfully illustrate our strengths to key audiences including students, applicants, partners, and stakeholders.	The THE report is completed between September and November with publication online in the first week of November to meet submission requirements. [Corporate Communications team Web and Digital Media team]

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3.3	Develop new and promote existing PGR offer in relevant areas, and across disciplines. [see also EAP 4.2]	Process for the development of new PGR courses and sources of funding in sustainability has been scoped.	**Dean PGRE** July 2025 Director, Centre for Environment and Society
Objective 4: Increasing our research capacity, visibility and reputation			
4.1	Use our Research Vision supported by Research Narrative and Challenger Refresh to raise the reputation of our research by developing 'research stories' in partnership with our academic community which will be a reference point for years to come.	Interconnected print, online and video content developed which tells our local, national and global research story as effectively as possible in support of our wider communications strategy. This includes stories which highlight our collaborative partnerships, knowledge exchange and research impact.	**Corporate Communications Team** Communications action plan to be reviewed by PVC Research, Director of REO and Director of Communications in September 2024 as part of regular termly meetings. [Web and Digital Media team Media Centre]
4.2	Fully exploit research Institutes and Centres to increase their visibility and external funding and explore opportunities for the future development of institutes and centres, including inter- and cross- disciplinary options.	Institutes and Centres are collaborating effectively to increase research capacity evidenced by high quality outputs/increased grant submission – including to Horizon Europe – and development of impact cases.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Faculty Deans (R) Director of REO Deputy Director (Enterprise)

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		Departments across the three Faculties are engaging more strategically in the work of our research Institutes – HRC, IADS, IPHW, ISER and UKDA - to bring a more fully interdisciplinary approach.	Head of Research Development and Impact Communications team Web Editing and Digital Media Team]
4.3	Fully exploit mechanisms already in place and new actions, identified on a rolling basis through ongoing reflection and innovation, to achieve citation levels comparable with our peers.	The Citations Action Plan implemented, and research visibility-raising activities embedded across the institution, functioning at individual, School/Departmental, Flagship Institute, Faculty and University-level.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Faculty Deans (R) Library and Cultural Services team REO team]
4.4	Enhance the University's global reputation and standing in the THE World University Rankings, in light the new methodology	An International Research Collaboration Strategy has been approved through USG and progress on implementing the strategy is being monitored through PAG, to improve international reputation and grow collaboration.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Executive Deans HoDs Dean of Partnerships (R)]
4.5	Implement the central open access fund for monographs, chapters and journal articles.	All monographs, chapters and journals articles, eligible for open access publication in 2023-24 have been funded. The full range of University funding mechanisms for open access publication have been communicated to all Departments and Institutes.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Director of Library and Cultural Services and University Librarian]

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Objective 5: Developing new and enhancing existing strategic partnerships			
5.1	Further develop partnership opportunities arising from Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) and Young University for the Future of Europe (YUFE) [see also EAP 3.2]	Stronger relationships with YERUN and YUFE, evidenced by at least one joint funding application, successful staff visits, and at least one joint workshop.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Dean of Partnerships (R) Director of REO Faculty Deans (R) Head of Research Development and Impact Deputy Director (Enterprise)]
5.2	Implement the vision for what the relationships with both YUFE and Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) should look like in the medium term. Embed research as a key aim, alongside educational goals, in our partnership activities, which is set out in the Partnerships sub-strategy [see also EAP 3.2]	The implementation of our European Engagement Plan, generally, and the Research Strategy EU Networks (YERUN, YUFE) specifically, are helping to optimise strategic and productive relations with YERUN and YUFE. Our participation in piloting the Southern Denmark University platform on research collaborations is developing and, once completed, is promoting enhanced collaboration across the YERUN network.	Dean of Partnerships (R) July 2025 [Director of REO Faculty Deans (R) Head of Research Development and Impact]
5.3	Continue to establish and nurture relationships with local and regional government and health	Active engagement to support Colchester City Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council is addressing local social challenges.	**PVC-R** July 2025

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	providers and housing stakeholders to identify future new innovation and partnership opportunities and contribute fully to delivering on Levelling Up.	Support development of Freeport East, including Bathside Bay and Gateway 14 sites, including the innovation and skills workstreams required by government. Delivery of work with Tendring DC to attract funding for pilot proposals for support of cluster formation around Bathside Bay Research aligned with East of England Applied Research Council (ARC), East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) partnerships and Integrated Care Board to access NIHR funding. Working with Health Education England to identify funding sources and opportunities to develop our health-related educational and engagement offer.	[Dean of Partnerships (R) Director of REO Faculty Deans (R) Deputy Director (Enterprise)]
5.4	Work with the Director of Eastern ARC to increase the reputation, visibility and impact of the Eastern ARC. Emphasis on the role of Eastern ARC as one of the University's key partners and strengthening that relationship.	Stronger collaborations across the Eastern ARC partners evidenced through grant capture, high profile events, and cross-Eastern ARC researcher mentoring. Realising the added value of University of Sussex joining EARC through strengthening research and KE collaboration in the form of cross-institutional culture and funded projects.	**Director of Eastern ARC** July 2025

Theme 2: Enhancing a Research Culture that supports our internationally renowned researchers and strengthens our research community

Core to our mission of excellence in research and education are the talented and creative people whose ambition is to produce new understanding and knowledge that is at the leading edge. To attract, retain and nurture the highest quality researchers we will provide the best possible intellectual, cultural, and physical environment. (RS 1)

Objective 6: Providing enhanced support for members of our diverse research community at every career stage

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6.1	Expand our support offer for researchers at all career stages.	The RDF is supporting researchers at every career stage to develop knowledge, skills and networks. An annual gap analysis on the content is implemented and resources, training, and events continue to be expanded. Impact on supporting our research environment is tracked and evaluated through delivery of the Research Strategy objectives. Established researchers at Essex are playing a key role in building a research culture within their respective discipline areas and more widely by offering, e.g., grant, publishing or impact masterclasses.	**Director of Organisational Development** July 2025 [Head of Academic and Professional Practice Head of Research Development and Impact Research Governance and Planning Manger Faculty Deans (R) Dean PGRE Director of Inclusion, People & Culture Head of Corporate Communications]
6.2	Deliver focussed support for Technicians	Delivery on the actions within the Technician Action Plan as revised for 2024 – 2027.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Faculty Dean (R) - Science and Health]
6.3	Improve the internal and external visibility of our Postgraduate Research and other funded doctoral training programmes	Communications plan developed for PGR community including promotion of *The Conversation*, social media skills development and media engagement.	**Dean PGRE** July 2025 [Corporate Communications team

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	using our website and social media. (See also EAP 4.2)	Research Groups and Areas web pages highlighting PGR support, PGR opportunities, and PGR work to strengthen the promotional opportunity to prospective PGR students in-line with our academic research	Web and Digital Media team]
6.4	Further Internationalise Postgraduate Research [see also EAP 3.2]	International joint PhD partnerships are developed strategically.	**Dean PGRE** July 2025 [Dean of Partnerships (R) Head of Research Development and Impact]
Objective 7: Nurturing a research culture and environment in which EDI exists across all of our activities			
7.1	Develop and begin implementing a Research Equality action plan to support the embedding of EDI considerations across all our research activities.	We have developed and approved an EDI action plan for research and are implementing this to ensure EDI considerations are embedded across our research activities and are continually strengthening our research culture. The Research Equality action plan is supporting our REF 2029 preparations and identifying, sharing and championing best practice with regard to the development of an inclusive and enabling research culture.	**PVC-R** July 2025 Research Committee Head of Research Governance and Planning. Director of People and Culture Director of Organisational Development Director of Inclusion, People & Culture
7.2	Engage fully with and maximise learning from our involvement in	We are engaging fully with the pilot though Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025 and establishing strengths and areas for improvement, including gaps in EDI data	**PVC-R**

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	REF 2029 People, Culture and Environment pilot.	collection and dissemination, practice and performance in relation to People, Culture and Environment. Knowledge sharing with other UoAs is routinised to maximise pan-institutional learning as we prepare for REF 2029.	July 2025 Head of Research Governance and Planning. Director of People and Culture Director of Organisational Development Director of Inclusion, People & Culture
7.3	Build on Transitions and Transformations Project ▪ Development of targeted mentoring and sponsorship programmes ▪ Championing EDI by removing barriers to the research environment and promoting an open and inclusive research community ▪ Ensure those responsible for making research applications are trained to understand the EDI considerations in research	Collaboration with Vitae on inclusivity within the RDF and EDF is enabling us to develop our support mechanisms to optimise their inclusivity. Major grant, Centre and DTP/CDT applications are reviewed to ensure that EDI considerations are embedded across research activities. Successful recruitment of the EDI-focussed, centrally funded PGR scholarship students from under-represented groups. Recruitment of ASER staff attracts and retains the highest quality colleagues from under-represented groups.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of People and Culture Director of Organisational Development Director of Inclusion, People & Culture Head of Research Development and Impact Faculty Deans (R) Dean PGRE Heads of Department]
7.4	Research at Essex is funded and conducted with due consideration for Academic Freedom and for	Research is engaged with and represented on the University HE FoS Working Group as the Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2003 is implemented, and University develops its overarching FoS code of practice.	Head of Research Governance and Planning.

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our obligations under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2003	Related research policy reviewed in light of new obligation under the 2023 Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act and required changes made to ensure compliance.	July 2025

Theme 3: Resources and Infrastructure

We will invest strategically in our research infrastructure and facilities, maximising supporting funding from external sources, to strengthen our peaks of excellence and enable the development of new interdisciplinary priority themes with the potential to be world class as well as uniquely Essex. **(RS 2.2)**

Objective 8: Invest in resources, infrastructure, and equipment to maintain existing and develop new research strengths

8.1 Develop project mandates to lead to business cases for identified investment priorities for research infrastructure across the University, with an emphasis on capacity to leverage external match funding in support of the University's research mission.	Improved research facilities are enhancing departments' capacity to produce high quality research outputs and/or generate funding bids. Areas for strategic investment are being identified, vision documents produced, and support provided to increase external income capture, staff retention and to build critical mass to enable global competitiveness. Trust and Foundations are engaged across infrastructure investment plans from an early stage to support research infrastructure priorities and secure external funding contributions. Collaborative mechanisms that maximise the sharing of equipment are fully exploited and centralised Inventory project is being delivered.	**Deputy Vice Chancellor** July 2025 [PVC-R Business Analyst (Equipment & Technician Support Review)]

Objective 9: Increase external research funding

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9.1	a. Strengthen relationships with key funding bodies to ensure we are well prepared to respond effectively to their changing priorities. b. Provide consistent support for our research community to identify funding opportunities, develop funding applications, optimise grant success, and ensure effective post-award management and delivery.	University external research funding has increased by at least 10% in comparison with 2022/23 position. Relationships across Eastern ARC are enhancing strategic engagement with funding bodies. Regular meetings with contacts in UKRI Funding Councils are generating actionable insights to support the strategic development of larger-scale funding applications.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Deputy Director (Research Support) Deputy Director (Enterprise) Head of Research Development and Impact Head of Philanthropy Faculty Deans (R) Director of Communications and External Relations Corporate Communications team Director of Eastern ARC]
9.2	Realise the potential of evaluation, CPD and Apprenticeship opportunities to maximise external income generation, strengthen partnerships and achieve impact.	Evaluation services are turbo-charged within the University and capacity is created to enable a more agile and comprehensive response to opportunities arising, increasing external income. CPD is being scaled up, with income generation supporting the appointment of resource manage new CPD development.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Deputy Director REO (Enterprise) Director, Institute for Public Health and Wellbeing]
9.3	Developing collaboration with businesses and charities and maximising opportunities for PGR	Business or charity funded scholarships, placements, and internship opportunities for PGRs further developed.	**Dean PGRE** July 2025

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	funding from these external sources		[Director of REO Deputy Director REO (Enterprise) Head of Philanthropy]
9.4	Continue to secure EU research funding as sole institution and in partnership with others	Deliver EU Research Strategy drawing on YUFE and YERUN partnerships. Academics are supported in applying for Horizon Europe grants following UK association.	**PVC-R** July 2025 [Director of REO Head of Research Development and Impact Dean of Partnerships EU Faculty Deans (R)]