University of the Arts London

RESEARCH STRATEGY 2015-2022

Vision

We ask original questions and arrive at new insights through the creativity and rigour of our practice and research.

UAL Medium Term Strategy 2015-2022

Aims

I. **UAL recognizes that excellence in Art, Design and Communication** is central to all the University's work and the support for world leading research in our subject areas will underpin our plans for the future.

II. Our talented staff create and interpret cultural value in all of its forms. By supporting their work, **creating a dynamic research environment** and through the enhancement of our extensive knowledge base, we aim to enrich and expand lives, imaginations and sensibilities.

III. The role of the University of the Arts London as a lead institution in its subject area will be enhanced through increasing external understanding of **the importance of the arts to wider public concerns**.

IV. **The University of the Arts London's core subject areas will be given greater visibility and its areas of excellence further enhanced** by continuing to support and develop individual and group research through investment in cross-university research centres, hubs and networks; an expanded sabbatical scheme; seed funding for new projects; early career researcher support; enhanced support for external funding bids.

V. The University will work globally with other institutions and industry partners to develop the intersections of our own fields of knowledge in order to link art, design and communication to those of other distinct specialisms. In this our research will be outward looking, highlighting the importance of art and design for society. Through its **collaborative research partnerships, creative enterprise and wide cultural contribution** the University will address the following internationally shared research challenges:

- **Living with Environmental Change:** through creative practice increasing understanding of environmental change, communicating the issues and designing for new business models, social innovations and sustainable living. Using design to reduce waste and to change producer and consumer behaviours.
- **Lifelong Health and Wellbeing:** designing for people's life long economic, social and health impact, in order to maximize societal gains and minimize issues of dependency, isolation, and inequality.
- **Digital Futures:** exploring through practice how technology affects lives, changes the way society interacts and impacts on communities, cultural production, future society, and economic growth.
- **Community Resilience:** using art and design to support communities in understanding how to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to the issues they face, through co-design, co-creation, socially responsive practices and social entrepreneurship.

Strategic Priorities

Developing World Leading Research and Enterprise requires us to create and apply knowledge that develops our disciplines, makes a positive contribution to society and the economy, and generates new sources of income to support our academic ambition. To support the development of a strong, outward looking and sustainable research environment in the period 2015-2020:

We will:	We will do this by:
1. Expand and enhance public understanding of the University's key subject areas and their social, economic and cultural impact.	• The creation of strategic senior academic and practitioner appointments; • The organisation of high profile research focused events; • Leading in the development of wider debates around the role of the arts in social, economic and environmental change; • Supporting innovation and applied research across Research and Enterprise
2. Develop the quality and depth of our research activities, build on proven areas of research excellence and support the growth of new ways of thinking about the core subject areas.	• Working towards enhancement of our world leading research in the REF2020 submission; • Creating institutional partnerships, both internationally and within the UK; • Developing strategically important areas of research growth; • The development of cross-University research themes that address emerging social issues; • Sustaining longer-term explorations of the shared concerns of our own researchers and those of distinct but complementary subject areas; • Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.

We will:	We will do this by:
3. While sustaining our leadership in core areas of arts research we will develop our subject portfolio to compliment existing research strengths through interdisciplinary collaboration.	• Developing new areas of research collaboration informing our own subject research, but also redirecting the development of other disciplines, including: • Fashion with partners in medicine, psychology and sociology (well-being); • Documentary film and photography with partners in anthropology and political science (representational models of conflict and social change); • Graphic design with partners in computing and information technologies (digital life and information systems); • Design with partners in social policy and urban planning (socially responsive design); • Fine art and curation with partners in environmental science (arts, activism and ecology); • Fine art and design with political theories of race and post-colonialism (transnational cultures and curriculum change in art and design).
4. Develop greater opportunities for our staff to produce world-leading research that impacts on a wide international audience through providing a sustainable and supportive research environment.	• Increasing external funding for research through pre-application support; more incentives for making grant applications; increased training for early and mid-career researchers in funding applications; and linking with expertise in enterprise to diversify support for research; • Implementing an enhanced sabbatical leave offer (targeted particularly at mid-career researchers and those in course management roles); • Expanding our provision for post-doctoral opportunities; • Extending supervisory capacity in areas of strategic importance for PGR growth; • Further developing cross course/college subject communities' potential for research project development.
5. Work collaboratively across the sector and our enterprise links to develop new and enhanced ways of supporting our PGR students.	• Working more closely with external institutions to support PhD activities, collaborative doctoral partnerships and projects with consortium partners in UAL's funded BGP2 collaborations, TECHNE and LDOC; • Developing industry funded PhD scholarships; • Building on links with international university partners to support shared PhD activities.

We will:	We will do this by:
6. Ensuring our research informs and impacts on the development of the art and design sector in the UK and internationally.	• Working with academic enterprise to expand the impact of our research; • Promoting arts, design, fashion and communication as forms of productive knowledge that contribute positively to society and support scientific and cultural development; • Developing the relationship of our research activities with SMEs, professions, and international industry partners; • Ensuring consistency of message in communicating our research agenda to the external public; • Increasing the visibility of our staff in national and international media forums.
7. Strengthen both physical and digital resources to support new research initiatives and expand audiences and impact for its research outputs and activities.	• Developing the role of our institutional repository through partnership across the arts sector; • Supporting the requirements of Open Access while taking account of the specific needs of our disciplines; • Exploiting the research potential of our archives and special collections, through a planned development of research activities in relation to our collections and archives.