

UNIVERSITY of  
STIRLING



# RESEARCH AND INNOVATION STRATEGY 2024 - 2030









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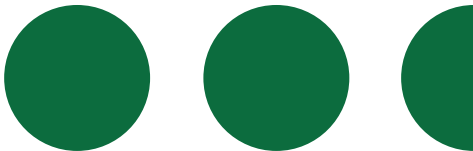
# INTRODUCTION

**Research and innovation, knowledge, and novel solutions, are the engines that drive our society forward and the University has a pivotal role to play in this.**

This strategy sets our intention as an organisation to be research intensive, producing world-leading research and innovation with national and global impact through a balance of discovery and applied research, where our research community contributes to societal, environmental, and economic development, in partnership with communities, policy makers, governing bodies and business.

We will continue to explore how we meet the needs of society through impactful solutions in our areas of strength and expertise, through three interconnected missions that improve the quality of spaces, places, and lives.

By focussing on our values, and how these are exemplified in our research culture and environment we will provide the framework for our research community to engage and contribute to our missions and our broader research and innovation activity.





# OUR VALUES, RESEARCH CULTURE AND COMMUNITY





# RESEARCH CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

**We bring together a wealth of perspectives, knowledge and experience in our research and innovation.**

Enriching our ideas through diversity and inclusion within our research community, we combine different skills and areas of expertise that collectively contribute to our research endeavour. We will undertake all our research and innovation activity to the highest standards of excellence and research integrity, co-producing research, knowledge generation, and solution-focused outcomes within equitable partnerships. Our institutional values of ambition, integrity and respect will inform how and what we do as a research community.

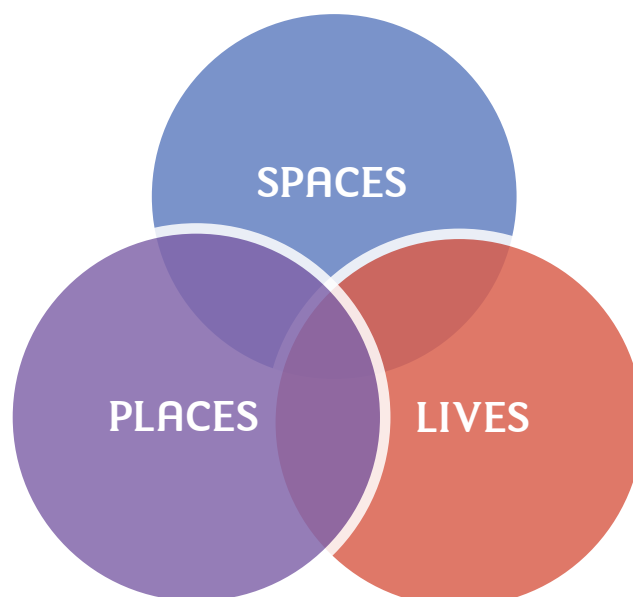
We will foster a sense of belonging across our research community, recognising that this community comprises academics and researchers, technical and professional services staff, and research students as well as partners, research participants and beneficiaries who share in our values and missions. We will do this by amplifying the collective understanding of how we all are contributing to the research and innovation endeavour within the university, and by focusing on supporting the delivery of excellent performance.

We will enhance support for interdisciplinary research through research teams and cross sector networks to help them develop novel ideas and insights, increasing further our capacity

for research and innovation activity. Through enabling co-production and participation, and with a continual focus on excellence, we will create new knowledge, innovation and solutions that deliver substantial benefits locally and globally. We are seeking to grow our research portfolio significantly, increasing the value of our research and innovation awards and income. In this, we will be supported by the enabling infrastructure delivered through our City Region and Growth Deal programme, partnerships, and investments.

Through a mission orientated approach, we will deliver:

- Meaningful improvements in all kinds of **spaces** and landscapes within the next decade (where space refers to a physical space or physical geography)
- Meaningful improvements to **places**, both locally and globally within the next decade (where place refers to a cultural or personal identity and gives meaning to a space whether physical or virtual)
- Meaningful improvements to people's **lives**, through wellbeing and health within the next decade









# MISSION-ORIENTATED MINDSET

**We recognise that as a society we are facing unprecedented global challenges that threaten our environment and the places and spaces we inhabit, which in turn has an impact on our health and well-being.**

These challenges expose inequalities in access to skills, development, healthcare, and justice, that are areas for action set out in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our research portfolio brings together expertise from across our five faculties to respond to the climate, biodiversity and health emergencies within our key areas of strength.

Facilitating interdisciplinary research teams and supporting underpinning disciplinary expertise will enable us to deliver valuable outcomes through our mission-orientated approach and a significant contribution to our institutional response to the SDGs.

This mission-orientated and outcome-based approach is best realised in collaboration and consultation with our community partners who inject urgency into the co-production of solutions. By deepening partnerships with local and national government, international bodies, fellow academic institutions, business and industry and civic society to harness research outcomes to stimulate growth, we can maximise the potential of initiatives such as City Region and Growth deals.

The set of three interconnected missions outlined here will seek to make meaningful improvements to the quality of spaces, places, and lives within the next decade and will provide the focus and delivery mechanisms to meet our institutional purpose. These missions and their intersections are reflective of where we can make a difference and speak to the values and purpose of our organisation. With our track record of research excellence and a commitment to innovation we can deliver positive impact and change at pace and scale.

Our missions set ambitious objectives that can only be achieved through large scale, sustainable programmes of research and innovation projects.

A more granular definition of the challenges for these missions, with focussed delivery plans adapted and shaped throughout the period of this strategy, will establish intermediate goals and deliverables supported by a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation. By anticipating need being agile in our approach, we can better respond to emergent needs across our missions.



# OUR INNOVATION COMMITMENT

Through inspiring, enabling, stimulating, and delivering innovation and thought leadership, we will create a culture and environment that delivers positive change and sustained impact through our research, knowledge exchange and innovation activities.

We will foster enterprise and innovation in our research community, our partners, our students, and our graduates.

By applying the outcomes of our research to facilitate solutions in partnership with business, public and third sectors, communities, and other stakeholders, we will deliver timely and scalable

change. We will be a key enabler of a dynamic, inclusive economy and society with a leading role in the regional innovation system to enhance productivity across the economy, bringing jobs, growth, and prosperity. Our Innovation Community model illustrates our approach and involvement in supporting the UK's research, development, and innovation system.

## SOLUTION CENTRE

### Delivering Innovation

- Identify problems
- Develop solutions
- Deliver projects
- Deploy prototypes
- Assess solutions

## BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

### Enabling Innovation

- Business space
- Business development
- Entrepreneur support
- Start-up support



## CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

### Stimulating Innovation

- Early stage research
- Commercial research
- Academic research
- Applied research
- Test facilities

## INNOVATION HUB

### Inspiring Innovation

- Open innovation networks and collaborations
- Challenge awards
- Scholarships
- Calls for ideas







# OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Demonstrating our commitment and delivering against ambitions within this Enabling Strategy for Research and Innovation requires investment in people, partnerships, place, and opportunity and these four pillars are key to its success.





## People

Our research community is at the heart of our strategy, and we will enable our people to undertake excellent research, create new knowledge and solution-focussed outcomes.

- Building capacity within our research community, with new opportunities, such as fellowships for staff to develop their research and innovation portfolios
- Developing research teams combining disciplinary expertise with an interdisciplinary approach to challenges, directly contributing to the delivery of our missions
- Creating professional development opportunities and recognition that support inclusive teams and that nurture leadership, across career stages and activities
- Creating an enabling environment for research and innovation activity, by removing barriers and simplifying processes
- Supporting the principles defined within Research Integrity, the Researcher Development Concordat, the Technician Commitment and other initiatives that address development of the research and innovation community
- Developing our talent pipeline with continued support and focus on our doctoral candidates, and early to mid-career researchers

## Partnership

Partnerships, within the university and strategically with other universities, third sector organisations and businesses, within our region, across the UK, and globally, add value to our mission-oriented, inter-disciplinary research activities.

- Creating an enabling environment for research and innovation partnership, by removing barriers and simplifying processes to work with partners locally and globally
- Engendering an understanding of and support for equitable partnerships, recognising and addressing power imbalances inherent in the wider research ecosystem
- Creating enabling structures that allow us to work in partnership with business, public and third sectors, communities and other stakeholders in a co-production model
- Identifying key strategic partners to work with us, contributing to our three missions of spaces, places and lives, and providing resources to facilitate activity for the partnership







## Place

The physical and virtual places of the University of Stirling have specific and distinct economic, social, and cultural identities.

By addressing challenges through a place-based lens, we can develop solutions that are scalable and deliver economic, social, and cultural benefits and solutions globally.

- Providing a welcoming environment for research and innovation activity wherever it is found, locally and globally, on campus and off
- Investing in world leading infrastructure including through the City Region and Growth Deals, both physical and digital resources, to deliver a set of defined benefits to the region, including skills development, company creation and growth, and job creation
- Embedding inclusive and co-produced research principles in our research and innovation activity with resources to enable participation from lower socio-economic places and communities

## Opportunity

Building an environment that nurtures enquiry, innovation, and entrepreneurship attracts people and investment, creates novel ideas, and generates impact and solutions.

- Creating a strong sense of engagement with our three missions that encourages our research community to be innovative in how we contribute to improved societal outcomes
- Committing to being an exemplary entrepreneurial campus, providing resource to inspire and facilitate future generations of entrepreneurs
- Providing support for the creation of new enterprises, technologies, products, and services through commercialisation of research outputs
- Seeding investment and resource into research and innovation activity to reduce risk on high reward opportunities





# DELIVERING THE DIFFERENCE

**By the end of the strategic plan period, we will have interdisciplinary, solutions-focussed research and innovation teams in all our areas of expertise.**

Teams with a critical mass, that are sustainable and resilient providing multiple roles and delivering multiple skills. We will be thought leaders, the partners of choice, by being engaged and relevant, with a reputation for excellence.

By the end of the strategic plan period, we will have developed sustainable world leading digital and physical infrastructure, living laboratories and research and innovation hubs across our campus and beyond. Through the creation of the Alloa Innovation Hub and the further development of the University of Stirling Innovation Park we will have the space to co-produce and deliver knowledge within the region and beyond.

Aligned to the performance measures as set out in our institutional strategy, Towards 2030 and beyond, we will have significantly changed the shape and scale of our participation in the research and innovation system and our contribution to our research and innovation missions.

This Strategy demonstrates our commitment and responsibility to ensuring that our research and innovation activity makes a substantial, positive, and enduring difference to lives, places and spaces. It demonstrates our institutional values and our determination to sustain a culture and environment that enables all our research community to thrive and excel. It places research and innovation at our heart.



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