Heythrop College
Research Strategy 2009-14

Heythrop College is a small college within the University of London, having three departments: Pastoral and Social Studies, Philosophy, and Theology. As of 2009, Heythrop College has 40 members of academic staff and 40 research students. It first became HEFCE-funded in 2006 and entered the RAE for the first time in 2008. Normal sources of research funding, such as QA funds and AHRC grants, were therefore not previously available to the College. The development and implementation of the research strategy is part of an ongoing process of implementing sector best practice within the College.

I. Definition of research

For the purposes of the Research Strategy, 'research' is defined as work involving the features of originality, significance and contribution to an academic discipline, resulting from a research process. It includes the dissemination of the results of research.

II. Aims

Overarching Aim: To make a significant contribution to the academic disciplines of theology, philosophy, sociology of religion and psychology

Individual Aims:
 (1) To recognize areas in which the College has, or wishes to develop, research strengths and foster their development
 (2) To enhance the research environment for both staff and students
 (3) To enhance the quality of research outputs
 (4) To enhance the national and international reputation of the College for research
 (5) To integrate and develop the contribution of Centres to research activity and environment
 (6) To foster the integration of research and teaching
 (7) In support of the above aims, to foster resources dedicated to research

III. Roles and responsibilities

The Research Committee (RC) and Senior Management Team (SMT) together hold overall responsibility for ensuring the success of the research strategy. 'We' in this document refers primarily to these two bodies, as it is their activities in the first instance which generate the support for and requirements placed on departments and staff.

The research strategy is pro-active, responsive to change and advised by recognized good practice. RC has primary responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the research strategy and progress towards the objectives indicated below, for developing policies that enable the College to meet these objectives by 2014, for assessing risks to strategic success, and for reviewing the continued appropriateness of both aims and objectives.

RC will develop an action plan structured by the aims and objectives of the strategy, monitor progress against agreed deadlines, and update the plan termly. In relation to each aim, it will establish Key Point Indicators and develop data sets to enable measurement of achievement against agreed targets. The appropriateness of the aims and objectives will be reviewed annually, and updates reported in the annual report of the RC to the Academic Board. RC will also enable and oversee the development and updating of Departmental Research Strategies, in accordance with the research strategy and action plan, to ensure departments contribute fully towards the timely realization of the aims.

Issues of management and governance, and final responsibility for implementing the strategy, lies primarily with SMT, which will receive at least termly reports from the Director of Research on those matters for which RC is responsible. In line with its other strategic aims, the College will foster the resources and develop the administrative and management infrastructure and processes necessary to enable staff to contribute fully towards the realization of the aims and objectives of the research strategy. This includes developing the necessary arrangements for supporting bids for external funding, managing research projects and meeting all internal and external reporting requirements.

IV. Commentary and Objectives

Aim (1) To recognize areas in which the College has, or wishes to develop, research strengths and foster their development

The pursuit of this aim supports both the prioritization of individual research of the highest quality, and is intended to create a critical mass of high quality researchers in specific areas in order to attract funding and secure an international reputation for the College in these areas. A further aspect is to identify those researchers whose work will be submitted to the 2013 Research Excellence Framework (REF).

We recognize at the outset that, in a number of areas, Heythrop staff bring an interdisciplinary approach to their research. We will identify the extent of this approach, and consider its status as a priority for the College.

Objectives and means
1.1   To recognize areas of research strength
- The Director of Research will undertake a comprehensive review of staff research interests and publications. The review will identify both areas of individual excellence and overlapping areas of activity. Areas of

research strength will be identified not just relative to other research projects within the College, but also in comparison with other HEIs. The results will be discussed by RC and reported to SMT.

- The Director of Research will oversee the development of comprehensive database of staff publications and research interests.

1.2 To identify areas of research in which the College wishes to develop strengths

- On the basis of the review of existing research strengths, and in discussion with departments and Centres, we will identify the areas of research which the College wishes to develop.

1.3 To clarify the position of interdisciplinary research within the College

- This will be done as part of the review of staff research and publications.

1.4 To identify knowledge transfer activities and distinguish them from research activities, in order to develop a greater clarity and focus regarding research strengths

- As part of the review of the Centres, SMT will identify activities of knowledge transfer as such, where these do not also involve original research. They will be recognized for their distinct value and contribution, and supported by other means. Knowledge transfer that builds on original research falls under this research strategy.

1.5 To revise Departmental Research Strategies to identify research strengths and departmental priorities

- Departmental Research Strategies will identify existing strengths, desired strengths, and the means to foster them within each department. Departmental Research Strategies will be aligned with each other, in order that individual and collaborative research projects are broadly consistent with the main concerns of the departments.

1.6 To identify individual researchers whose work will be submitted to the REF

- RC and SMT will use the reviews of staff research interests and publications and discussion of desired strengths to inform its decisions.

1.7 To review the status and designation 'research active'

- The status of 'research active', its meaning and application, will be reviewed by RC in line with the prioritization of research excellence, and recommendations made to SMT.

1.8 To establish clear and appropriate means of prioritizing support, both organizational and financial, for specific research strengths

- SMT will conduct a review of research management support structures and roles, to ensure that support is effective, efficient, and adequate.
- Concrete means for fostering specific research strengths will dovetail with other aspects of this research strategy. Examples of how resources could be prioritized in particular areas include holding related international conferences, prioritizing related funding bids, inviting

visiting scholars working in these areas, putting on related research seminars, advertising related professorships, or organizing a special issue of the Heythrop Journal.

Aim (2) To enhance the research environment for both staff and students

We will enhance the research environment in ways responsive to recognized good practice and changes in the national research context, monitored annually by RC. A new focus on the ongoing training and support for staff and students will be fostered, emphasizing the importance of a sustainable and forward-looking research environment. The enhancement of the research environment seeks to support of all research and researchers, while also fostering research excellence. The development and implementation of Departmental Research Strategies, which will encode many of the means and objectives below, will play a significant role.

Objectives and means

2.1   To enhance training and support for staff engaged in research and supervision
- The newly initiated programme of termly research supervisor development sessions will continue.
- Heads of Department will encourage the relevant staff each year to take research leave, and make the necessary arrangements to enable them to do so.
- Departments will encourage a culture of support and peer review for work, both by staff and students, intended for publication.
- Each department will be responsible for ensuring a programme of research seminars that reflects the research interests of staff, meets the needs of students, and provides both frequent opportunities to develop, and receive peer feedback on, their research.
- The Research Administrator will investigate opportunities for collaborating on projects with other universities nationally and internationally.

2.2   To increase the number of staff taking research leave each year in line with agreed targets
- Heads of Department will encourage the relevant staff each year to take research leave, and make the necessary arrangements to enable them to do so.
- Staff will be encouraged and supported to apply for externally funded research leave.
- Compliance with the requirement of research leave to feed back the results of one's research, either through teaching or seminar presentation, will be monitored.

2.3   To increase staff presentation of research papers at conferences, and hosting of conferences at Heythrop, in line with agreed targets
- Departments will encourage a culture of support and peer review for work, both by staff and students, intended for publication.

- Staff will be encouraged to apply for financial support for conference presentations, in accordance with the revised budget and procedure.
- The College will host at least one major international conference each year. RC will invite proposals from departments.

2.4 To increase the number and contribution of visiting research fellows in line with agreed targets
- Each visiting research fellow will be requested to present a paper at a research seminar.
- Each visiting research fellow will have a meeting with the Director of Research and their staff contact when they arrive at Heythrop.
- Staff will be asked to recommend appropriate academic contacts to RC.

2.5 To appoint emeritus research fellows for the first time
- RC will consult with Heads of Department annually for recommendations regarding retiring staff.

2.6 To increase the number of research students in line with revised targets
- A working group on marketing research degrees will be set up, and report to RC.
- Departmental Research Strategies will embed agreed recommendations by the RC, following the report of the working group.
- Particular attention will be paid to increasing overseas students.

2.7 To enable all research students to present their work to peer-review at least once a year
- Each department will be responsible for ensuring a programme of research seminars that reflects the research interests of staff, meets the needs of students, and provides both frequent opportunities to develop, and receive peer feedback on, their research.
- Students will be expected to actively participate in and contribute to the research environment, and will be offered more opportunities for the public presentation of and feedback on their work.
- The annual budget to support for research students presenting conference papers will be advertised, and reviewed in light of student need.
- The existing annual postgraduate student conference will continue.

2.8 To consolidate and enhance the existing training programme for research students
- Research Degrees Sub-Committee will review the training programme annually, and expand it as appropriate in response to staff and student feedback, annual review reports, and external good practice.

2.9 To enhance facilities for research students and visiting research fellows
- A common room will be provided as soon as practicable.
- The provision of workspace in College will be reviewed and expanded if possible.

2.10 To reduce the average completion time for research degrees in line with agreed targets
- The Research Degrees Convenor will provide a report on completion statistics annually to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, who will circulate the report to all supervisors, and draw attention to impending deadlines for current students.
- Annual reviews will continue to monitor student progress.
- Regulations governing the application for extensions will be advertised to supervisors and students.

2.11 To support and encourage research and MA students to apply for AHRC studentships
- MA and research students will be strongly encouraged to apply for AHRC funding. Both staff and students will receive the necessary training and support for making such applications.

2.12 To support and encourage research staff to apply for external funding
- The Research Administrator will regularly advertise opportunities for external funding to staff.
- Training of staff in applying for external funding will continue.
- Application procedures and support for staff, including the use of external advisors, will be advertised.

2.13 To overhaul the research area of the Heythrop website
- The working group for the website will report progress to the RC.
- The quality and accessibility of information about staff research, programme applications and procedures, support for funding applications, and Centres will be improved.

Aim (3) To enhance the quality of research outputs

We will seek to enhance the quality of research outputs to achieve international excellence in the 2013 REF and to contribute to the academic standing and research reputation of the College.

Objectives and means
3.1 To familiarise all research active staff with the information and practical skills necessary for successful publication of high quality research and application for external research funding
- We will continue and enhance the programme of research staff development, embodied in revised Departmental Research Strategies.

3.2 To support staff to place a higher percentage of their work in internationally esteemed and peer-reviewed journals in line with agreed targets
- We will put in place processes to support and encourage staff to submit work to internationally esteemed and peer-reviewed journals. Heads of Department will collate and circulate information on such journals,

departments will encourage peer and external feedback on outputs prior to submission for publication, and SMT will use workload analysis and arrangements and support for research leave to protect research time for staff producing high-quality research.

3.3   To achieve a significant percentage of 'international excellence' in the 2013 REF
- We will put in place appropriate policy and management structures for meeting the new requirements of the REF in a timely manner.
- Preparations for the REF submission will include the use of external advisors, and all staff involved in preparing the submission will receive relevant training.
- All reviews of undergraduate and MA programmes will take into account the implications – both opportunities and costs – for staff research.
- Successful external funding bids (see Aim 7) will buy greater research time.
- Individual research excellence will be protected and promoted through workload analysis and other means, for instance, by the use of Readerships.
- Means identified under Aims 1 and 2 will also contribute to this objective.

3.4   To recruit staff with demonstrated research excellence where possible
- Staffing Committee will incorporate this criterion as part of its recruitment strategy, and employ it in the recruitment process where possible.

3.5   To establish professorial posts for the first time
- SMT will consider the review the possibility of establishing professorial posts in time for the REF.

Aim (4) To enhance the research reputation of the College, nationally and internationally

This strategy is concerned only with that aspect of the College's reputation that relates to its research activity, and especially with this aspect of its reputation within the academic community.

The realization of aims is never mutually exclusive. A number of objectives identified in relation to other aims also contribute to College's reputation (not all the relevant means are repeated here). We recognize at the outset that the most direct way of enhancing the College's reputation for research is through publication and participation in conferences.

Objectives and means
4.1   To support staff to place a higher percentage of their work in internationally esteemed and peer-reviewed journals in line with agreed targets

- We will put in place processes to support and encourage staff to submit work to internationally esteemed and peer-reviewed journals. Heads of Department will collate and circulate information on such journals, departments will encourage peer and external feedback on outputs prior to submission for publication, and SMT will use workload analysis and arrangements and support for research leave to protect research time for staff producing high-quality research.

4.2 To increase staff presentation of research papers at conferences, and hosting of conferences at Heythrop, in line with agreed targets
- Departments will encourage a culture of support and peer review for work, both by staff and students, intended for publication.
- Staff will be encouraged to apply for financial support for conference presentations, in accordance with the revised budget and procedure.
- The College will host at least one major international conference each year. RC will invite proposals from departments.

4.3 To generate a greater national and international awareness of the research activity and expertise of the College
- A working group to revise publicity management will set up.
- Funding bid success and REF results will be publicized.
- More staff will be encouraged to sit on editorial boards of international journals and/or funding bodies.
- The research area of the Heythrop website will be revised to improve the quality and accessibility of information about staff research and the work of the Centres.

4.4 To increase the number and contribution of visiting research fellows, with greater international standing, in line with agreed targets
- Staff will be asked to recommend appropriate academic contacts to RC.

4.5 To support and encourage research students to apply for AHRC studentships
- Research students will be strongly encouraged to apply for AHRC funding. Both staff and students will receive the necessary training and support for making such applications.

4.6 To support and encourage research staff to apply for external funding
- We will create, maintain, and publicise a database of both public and private sources of funding relevant to the staff's research interests.
- The Research Administrator will regularly advertise opportunities for external funding to staff.
- We will establish and advertise the procedures, infrastructure, and training necessary to support staff in making bids for external funding.

4.7 To develop research links and projects with other universities
- Departmental Research Strategies will develop means to utilize existing links with other universities for research activity, to seek out new collaborative projects as appropriate, and to encourage staff to apply for visiting fellowships at universities around the world.

4.8   To build on the existing high reputation of the Heythrop Journal
- Negotiations will be undertaken with the publishers of the Heythrop Journal to utilize its reputation to enhance the international presence of the College.
- The College will seek greater involvement with the editorial policy of the journal.

Aim (5) To integrate and develop the contribution of Centres to research activity and environment

The term 'Centres' refers to all Centres and Institutes of the College, present and future. This strategy considers only the research aspects of the activities of the Centres.

Objectives and means

5.1   To revise existing management and reporting structures relating to the Centres, such that their research activity is monitored by RC
- The Centres, in cooperation with SMT, will analyse and review their aims and activities to develop a greater clarity regarding the relation between research and knowledge transfer activities.
- The relation between Centres and Departments will be clarified and formalized.
- The process by which new Centres come to be established will be reviewed and formalized.
- The Centres will be formally represented on RC, to which they will present an annual review of the research activities of the past year, and a report on their research activities planned for the forthcoming year. The report will be discussed in relation to the Research Strategy and other College research activities, and feedback given to the Centres.
- The work of the Centres will be included in the review of research strengths the College has or wishes to develop (Aim 1).

5.2   To formalize the assignment of individual research students to Centres, and advertise the Centres as places for research study
- In collaboration with the relevant department(s), each Centre will develop the means to take research students under its aegis.

5.3   For each Centre, to either be in receipt of research funding or involved in forming a funding bid at any time
- SMT will establish a support infrastructure for the activities of the Centres, including support for sourcing and making funding bids.

5.4   For each Centre, to organize at least one conference or seminar series each year
- Responsibility for organizing the conference/seminar series will lie with the Centre, and monitored in its annual report to RC.

Aim (6) To foster the integration of research and teaching

One aspect of undergraduate and masters teaching involves the transmission and development of students' research skills, involving both learning to do research and learning through doing research. While important, this aspect of research and its development is not the focus of this strategy, but of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. By the integration of research and teaching, we mean

a) the development of programmes, modules, and module content that reflects the research interests and utilizes the research expertise and outputs of staff;
b) the provision of research degrees and supervision of research students (many aspects of which are discussed under Aim 2);
c) support for and supervision of MA theses;
d) pedagogical research.

Objectives and means

6.1   To incorporate more staff research into teaching, including supervision
- All reviews of undergraduate and MA programmes and their respective modules will take into account opportunities for incorporating staff research.
- Applications for research funding that include research studentships will be encouraged and supported.

6.2   To increase publicity for research students which emphasises staff research interests and expertise
- A working group on marketing research degrees will be set up, and report to RC.
- Departmental Research Strategies will embed agreed recommendations by the RC, following the report of the working group.

6.3   To invite MA theses for public presentation, and where appropriate, to support their development into publishable work
- Each department will arrange a day conference, or other means, for such presentation.
- Students producing suitably excellent work will receive supervision and advice for developing publishable material.

6.4   To enable all research students to present their work to peer-review at least once a year
- Students will be expected to actively participate in and contribute to the research environment, and will be offered more opportunities for the public presentation of and feedback on their work.
- The annual budget to support for research students presenting conference papers will be advertised, and reviewed in light of student need.
- The existing annual postgraduate student conference will continue.

6.5   To support staff engaged in pedagogical research

- Staff engaging in pedagogical research will be encouraged and supported to the same extent as staff engaged in academic research, and specific funds will be identified for conference attendance and presentations relating to pedagogical research.

6.6   To provide teaching skills and opportunities to research students
- Tutorial assistant posts will be offered in the first instance to suitable research students.
- All research students will be offered training in marking essays and giving tutorials.

Aim (7) In support of the above aims, to foster resources dedicated to research

The successful achievement of the objectives listed in this strategy requires a marked rise in the resources dedicated to research. Following its entry into RAE 2008, the College received QA money for the first time in 2009, and with entry into HEFCE and the approval of a new research leave strategy, its staff became eligible to apply for and take up a variety of sources of external funding.

Objectives and means
7.1   To foster the resources and develop the administrative and management infrastructure and processes necessary to enable staff to contribute fully towards the realization of the aims and objectives of the research strategy
- A new post of Research Administrator will be created.
- SMT will establish a support infrastructure for the activities of the Centres.
- Individual research excellence will be protected and promoted through workload analysis and other means, for instance, by the use of Readerships.
- The efficiency and transparency of research management processes will be enhanced.
- The research area of the Heythrop website will be revised to improve the quality and accessibility of information about staff research, programme applications and procedures, support for funding applications, and the work of the Centres.

7.2   To familiarise all research active staff with the information and practical skills necessary for successful publication of high quality research
- We will continue and enhance the programme of research staff development, embodied in revised Departmental Research Strategies.
- The Research Administrator will advertise internal sources of funding and support available to staff engaged in research, including research assistantships, conference attendance, and research leave policy.

7.3   To support research active staff in applying for and managing external funding grants in line with agreed targets

- We will create, maintain, and publicise a database of both public and private sources of funding relevant to the staff's research interests.
- We will establish and advertise the procedures, infrastructure, and training necessary to support staff in making bids for external funding.
- The Director of Research will regular advertise opportunities for external funding to staff.
- We will establish procedures and infrastructure to manage research projects and meet reporting requirements.

7.4　To increase the average annual research income, in addition to QA income, in line with agreed targets
- We will create, maintain, and publicise a database of both public and private sources of funding relevant to the staff's research interests.
- Research active staff will be encouraged and supported in external funding bids as detailed above.
- SMT will establish a support infrastructure for the activities of the Centres, including support for sourcing and making funding bids.