Department of History

Research Strategy

**Background:** The purpose of this document is to inform policy-making in the Department with respect to all research-related issues. It was originally drafted by the then Director of Research, in consultation with the Research and Innovation Committee, prior to 2009, and was last approved by the Department Meeting on 14 December 2011. This version was revised by the current and previous Director of Research, in consultation with the Research Committee and the Department Executive Board, between April 2019 and October 2019. The Department aims to revise this strategy biannually.

1. **Research Vision**

We undertake a broad range of research activities, involving undergraduates, postgraduates, and academic staff in a research community of shared endeavour. We conduct research of the highest standards, reflecting critically on all aspects of human society and culture, past, present, and future, and on the process of reflection itself. Our research fields are wide ranging, methodologically, chronologically and geographically. We aim to continue to strengthen the global, international, and transnational dimensions of our research. We draw upon multiple disciplinary perspectives, including working collaboratively with colleagues from the University, the wider academic world and external partners. We aim to be at the forefront in developing new perspectives on the past. We are strongly committed to disseminating the results of our research to a wide range of audiences, and in innovative ways.

2. **Strategic Objectives**

2.1 We continue to support outstanding research, whether conducted individually or collaboratively, developing and enhancing the discipline both nationally and internationally.

2.2 All research practitioners in the Department from undergraduate honours level onwards have the opportunity of involvement in the research enterprise, and the research environment is managed in such a way as to enable this as effectively as possible.

2.3 Postgraduates and academic staff are encouraged to engage with the research of those around them by taking an active interest in and by supporting the research of colleagues from across the University and beyond.

2.4 The Department has active fora for the dissemination of research findings.

2.5 We facilitate research collaboration both within the Department and with partners in the Faculty, University, and beyond, by supporting research hubs, centres, networks and discussion groups.
2.6 We support and sustain a thriving postgraduate research community, recognizing, integrating and facilitating the contribution of PGR students to both our research and the wider discipline.

2.7 We conduct our research according to expected ethical standards of the discipline and the University. These mandate that any research that involves living human participants, personal data, or human tissue is subject to a formal ethics review. We have recently audited and updated our ethics procedures.

2.8 Our research informs our teaching at all levels. We make undergraduates in the Department aware of our research, incorporate the research materials we develop into our teaching, introduce students to research methodologies, and provide them with opportunities to undertake individual research.

2.9 We seek to maximise our share of external research income, where appropriate, in the context of the changing climate for research funding.

2.10 We are committed to sharing the results of our research with as wide a public as possible.

2.11 We continue to nurture the international and global context of our research, seeking to increase the visibility of our research and our range of overseas collaborators.

2.12 In identifying fields for new academic appointments, we seek to identify significant emerging themes and approaches within the discipline. Research excellence is a key criterion in all academic appointments.

3. Support for Research

The Department, in conjunction with the Faculty and University, supports the research of academic staff by:

- maintaining a regular research leave programme, with transparent arrangements for applications to undertake periods of research leave

- providing targeted support for research expenses through the Department’s research fund, supplementing funding provided by the Faculty and the Learned Societies Fund, and by external funders

- assisting colleagues, through Research Services, the Faculty and in the Department, in pursuing external funding opportunities

- providing an opportunity for all staff to discuss their research plans in a Research Support Meeting with the Head of Department and Director of Research once a year

- liaising with the library about the purchase of research materials, as resources allow
• fostering the research culture of the Department, Faculty and University by holding a regular programme of research seminars and by supporting, as resources allow, other research dissemination events including conferences, workshops, and postgraduate discussion groups

• encouraging public engagement activities and knowledge exchange.

• providing support for postgraduate research through the maintenance of a substantial PGT programme and provision of expert supervision of PGR research, and by supporting, within the constraints of available resources, postgraduate discussion groups.

4. Responsibilities of Academic Staff

The Department of History expects all academic members of staff with significant responsibility for research to be actively engaged in research. That engagement implies a clearly identified research agenda over the medium term, involving:

• a commitment to researching and publishing in their specialism

• providing a report using the standard format to the Faculty following each period of research leave undertaken and keeping individual MyPublications profiles up to date

• engagement, where possible, with research group at Faculty and University level

• playing a part in the wider research community at national and international levels

• contributing to the Department's submission to all national research assessment exercises

• communicating the results of their research to diverse audiences, where appropriate

• applying for external research funding where appropriate

• pursuing opportunities for funded postgraduate research studentships, and undertaking research supervision as requested

• a commitment to making all teaching at a minimum research informed, and, wherever possible, research led.

5. Academic Freedom

Academic freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of the Department’s mission to discover and understand within the discipline of history. The Department guarantees and will defend the academic freedom in research of its researchers. Academic
freedom in research includes the freedom within the law of the researcher – without interference, penalty, or placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges – to determine the purpose, subject matter, and methods of their research; to question and test received wisdom; to disseminate the results of their research, including new, controversial, or unpopular ideas; and to determine the forms and formats in which they disseminate those results.

6. Department Research Governance

The Department’s Research Committee is chaired by the Director of Research. Its members, who, with the exception of the PGR students, are appointed by the Head of Department, include the Department’s Impact and Public Engagement Officer, the Research Ethics Officer and (when in post) the REF coordinator. There are two PGR representatives, selected by the postgraduate community. The Committee reports to the Department Executive Board and the Department Meeting on all matters of research policy. It sets policies for the distribution of the Department research fund and a sub-committee evaluates applications to that fund. It oversees the organisation of the Department’s research seminar, and the publicising of our research on the Department’s web pages. Members of the committee take responsibility for monitoring and disseminating information on Open Access issues and the use of MyPublications by members of the Department.

The Director of Research advises the Head of Department on Research Leave issues and participates in the annual individual research planning meetings. Along with other senior colleagues, s/he provides advice about external funding and offers feedback on drafts of all applications. The Director is a member of the Faculty Research and Innovation Committee and is in regular touch with the Faculty Director of Research.

7. Strategic Priorities 2019-

7.1 We will facilitate the further development of our research hubs and, where appropriate, the Faculty’s interdisciplinary research centres, by reviewing their activities at Research Committee meetings and by offering, where possible, funding for their activities.

7.2 We will seek to diversify the sources of our research grant income.

7.3 We will seek to maximise the research income we derive from all appropriate external funders, including those under the UKRI umbrella, by supporting colleagues in the development of research plans which meet the criteria for such schemes.

7.4 In a research environment where externally available research funding is still decreasing, we will explore methods of arranging workloads and research leave in order to provide sufficient time for undertaking major research projects.

7.5 We will seek to develop the Department’s seminar programme to reflect the methodological, chronological and geographical range of our research interests.

7.6 We will further develop our research impact, knowledge exchange and public
engagement activities.

7.7 We will continue to develop research collaborations within the Faculty, University, White Rose Partnership, and beyond. In addition, where appropriate we will pursue research collaborations with local, regional and national archives and libraries and similar institutions.

7.8 We will develop and refine the Department's website to highlight our research activities and successes and promote public engagement, impact and knowledge exchange.

7.9 We will endeavour to maintain PGT and PGR recruitment and funding in light of an increasingly challenging environment.

7.10 We will reflect on gender, diversity and race-ethnicity issues related to individual research projects and our research community in light of two recent Royal Historical Society reports.