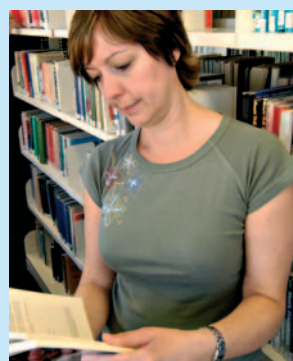
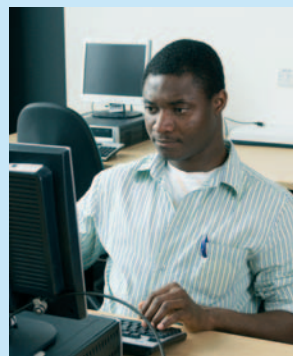




UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Research Strategic Plan

2007-2012



The Research Strategic Plan 2007-2012



Welcome to the latest Research Strategic Plan.

This is part of the University Strategic Plan 2007–12, which sets the broader context for the future development of the institution. This Plan has been subject to wide consultation. It involves all staff within the University, including those in both academic and support areas. Over the next few months the Plan will be more fully operationalised, enhancing the research environment at Lincoln. Successful delivery of the Plan – and its further articulation as the detail of the new national Research Excellence Framework becomes clearer – will make the University a more dynamic, diverse and stimulating place for research, scholarship and academic study. As part of this, our emphasis on research-informed teaching will ensure that research becomes a more pervasive component of the academic life of the University, involving all staff and students in the development of our scholarly community.

Professor Mike Saks
Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor

Professor Andrew Hunter
Dean of Research

1.0 Strategic overview

1.1 The wider context

Research, teaching and learning and engagement with enterprise are the core activities of the University, and central to its mission as expressed in the 2007-12 Strategic Plan to improve its standing as a university of quality and distinction.

The Research Strategic Plan 2007-12 is one of a number of interlinked strategies supporting this mission; there are also cognate plans for faculties and specific areas such as teaching and learning, enterprise, learning resources, information systems, human resources, estates and the wider student experience. The Plan operates within the University's policy framework, which includes policies spanning from ethics to equality and diversity, the principles of which apply to all research activities.

The Plan builds on the significant advances in research activity that the University has made in recent years, which culminated in the submission of over a third of our academic members of staff in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) – the minimum entry to which is national/international research standing, rated on a 1* to 4* scale. It sets ambitious, but achievable, targets for the future. Underpinning the Plan is the conviction that the engagement of members of staff and students more broadly in the development of research, within a framework of equality and diversity and a devolved faculty structure, produces a vibrant scholarly community, contributes to society, keeps the University at the forefront of its mainstream disciplines and underpins excellence in teaching and learning.

1.2 Central aims

The major aim of the strategy is to establish a reputation for world-class research in our areas of expertise and to develop a growing profile for relevant research that engages individuals and organisations within and beyond the University. This is expressed through four major subsidiary aims:

- To establish high quality research as a pervasive component of the academic life of the University, in association with partners as appropriate
- To ensure that a rich variety of research occurs, including curiosity-driven enquiry that opens up new avenues of thinking and insight, and 'engaged' research that informs policy and practice
- To grow our research income significantly, and thus to enhance the sustainability of research
- To link research and teaching through research-informed teaching, so that students at all levels enjoy benefit from our scholarship, and contribute to our research culture.

1.3 Key strategies

A university is a scholarly community, and as such it is the culture, values and aspirations of the members of the community that drives the development of research. Accordingly, this strategy emphasizes the need for support for, and the development and recruitment of, research active members of staff and research students – and the further development of a culture, infrastructure and systems that promote and nurture research in faculty and other contexts.

A key requirement to achieve our aims for the development of research is a significant increase in research income, both through the Quality-Related (QR) funding stream of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which is based on the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and its successor the Research Excellence Framework (REF), and through specific grant and project funding. This will ensure the sustainability of research within the University, increase the engagement of academic members of staff in research projects, and support a growing community of students and research assistants involved in research.

At the same time, the University is committed to the exercise of academic freedom in research, and this freedom should be exercised responsibly by members of academic staff in accordance with the University's policies on academic freedom and freedom of expression, and its policies and procedures for the ethical approval of research.



1.4 Shaping the strategy

The Plan has been shaped by a wide-ranging process of consultation. This has included discussions at Academic Board, Core Executive, Academic College, Research Policy Committee, in focus groups in faculties and across departments, and in open discussion forums. These consultations have made clear the great enthusiasm for, and commitment to, research development among members of staff. The plan is also influenced by our need to respond to the external context for research, including the RAE and the REF, Research Councils, the European Union research framework, commercial partners, government agencies and charitable bodies.



1.5 Implementing the strategy

The implementation of the strategy will be a staged process, involving the Core Executive, faculties, service departments and the formal committee structure of the University. The role of faculty research committees and Research Centres will be particularly important in embedding the principles of the strategy at grassroots level. The Research Policy Committee will adopt a full implementation plan in 2008/09, consulting across the University during its development, and will monitor its progress throughout the plan period – taking into account such factors as the introduction of HEFCE's Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology for costing research and teaching that may impact on the internal funding of research.

Two key events during the 2008/09 academic year that will influence the developing implementation plan are, first, the results of the RAE that are declared in December 2008, which will have a significant influence on the University's external

research reputation, in addition to the level of direct and indirect sources of income throughout the plan period; and, second, the emerging details of the REF, in the wake of the sector-wide consultation exercise that has given qualified support to a more metrics-driven approach – albeit with light touch peer review through expert panels and less differentiation between the science-based and other subjects than originally anticipated.

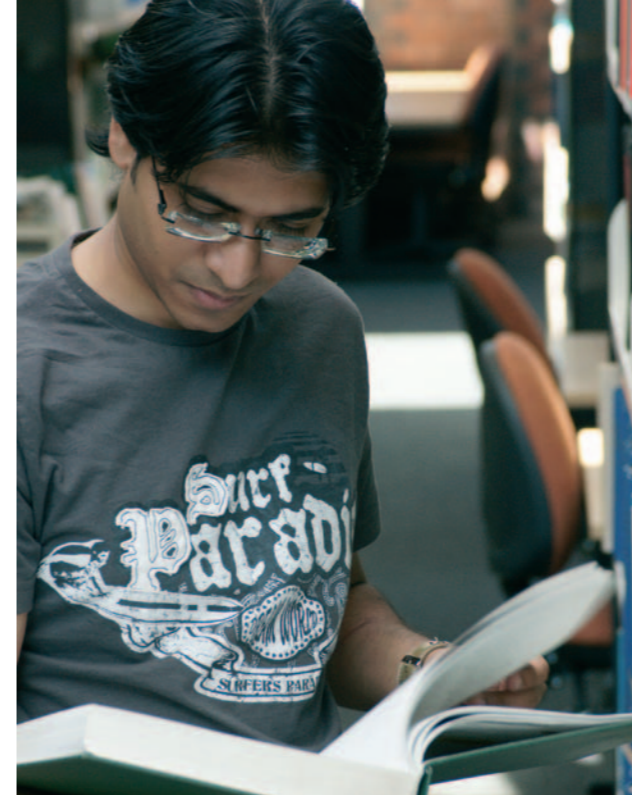
Central to this process is the University Research Office which is being re-launched, with the Graduate School as an integral part, to provide a single focus for central research support, under the direction of the Dean of Research. This parallels the role of the Centre for Educational Research and Development (CERD) which, under the direction of the Dean of Teaching and Learning, has responsibility for providing central support to teaching and learning development. The University Research Office will work closely with CERD, to support research-informed teaching, and with Enterprise@Lincoln, to develop engaged research. As such, it will cover a range of agendas in close liaison with the faculties, from facilitating the growth of external research income to supporting postgraduate research students.

1.6 Where we are now

The University has made significant progress on the research agenda over the past few years. During the period 2002-2007 we have recruited many excellent research active staff including some 60 top-ranking professors, established a Graduate School and Research Office, improved our research committee and regulatory structures, enhanced our research environment and infrastructure, become TRAC compliant giving a fuller economic return for research bids, and invested substantial sums of money in pump-priming research activity.

As a result of this investment and other initiatives, we have seen the growth of a research culture across the University, with significant improvements in our rate and quality of research outputs, a three-fold increase in external research income, increasing postgraduate research numbers, Research Council recognition for selected research degrees and expanding research links with other prestigious academic institutions.

As a consequence in 2007/08, following rigorous scrutiny and recommendations by external RAE assessors who were almost all previous panel members/chairs, we submitted 35% of our staff in RAE 2008 in 14 Units of Assessment. This compares favourably with the 21% of staff at the University who were submitted in six Units of Assessment in RAE 2001, where no Unit of Assessment reached national/international standard – and indeed with many other post-1992 universities with a much enhanced position in RAE 2001. It therefore leaves us well-placed to further strengthen our research profile in the period up to 2012.



The Units of Assessment entered in RAE 2008 are:

- 12 Allied Health Professions and Studies
- 16 Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science
- 23 Computer Science and Informatics
- 30 Architecture and Built Environment
- 36 Business and Management Studies
- 38 Law
- 39 Politics and International Studies
- 40 Social Work and Social Policy and Administration
- 44 Psychology
- 45 Education
- 62 History
- 63 Art and Design
- 65 Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
- 66 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies.

The University's research profile in these and other areas is particularly, but not exclusively, focused on our 20 largely recently established Research Centres. Research Centre status is granted by Core Executive and Academic Board to centres of national/international research excellence with a specific research focus and a critical mass of staff, including one or more nominated Directors. The existing Research Centres in the University are as follows:

- Centre for Animal Welfare and Para-Veterinary Sciences
- Centre for Art Media
- Centre for Clinical and Academic Workforce Innovation
- Centre for Comparative Cognition

- Centre for Critical Design Practice
- Centre for Dispute Resolution, Compensation and Risk
- Centre for Educational Research and Development
- Centre for European Cultural Studies
- Centre for Health Improvement and Leadership in Lincoln
- Centre for Innovation in the Performing Arts
- Centre for Management and Business Research
- Centre for Media Policy, Regulation and Ethics
- Centre for Regional and Local History
- Centre for Research in Open Source Software
- Centre for Sustainable Architecture and Environments
- Centre for Vision and Robotic Research
- Lincoln Social Computing Research Centre
- Mental Health Research Centre
- Policy Studies Research Centre
- Workforce Innovation Research Centre.

1.7 Key objectives

This document identifies a number of key high level strategic objectives as central to the Strategic Plan, which are listed below:

- Realise the research potential of academic members of staff
- Increase research income and attract high quality research funding
- Provide a focus for research development through Research Centres and other Research Groups
- Achieve enhanced performance in the Research Excellence Framework
- Give effective, professional support for research
- Increase the recruitment of postgraduate research students and enhance the environment for their studies
- Strengthen external and internal collaboration in research
- Strengthen the links between research and teaching activities
- Enhance the links between research and enterprise.

The background to these objectives and the specific strategies designed to address them are set out in the next section.

2.0 Strategic objectives



2.1 Realise the research potential of academic members of staff

Academic members of staff in the faculties are the key to a successful research strategy – it is largely academics that secure grant funding, direct and conduct research, and produce publications and other research outputs. It is therefore critical to give members of staff the environment needed to succeed in research. We therefore need to take steps to ensure that academic members of staff have the time, resources and expertise to undertake high quality research. To do this we shall:

- Ensure that research activities – such as the management of funded projects, the preparation of applications for funding, the generation of outputs, research student supervision and the conduct of approved research projects – are taken into account in setting staff workloads
- Provide structured opportunities to undertake research activities that allow significant periods of time for research, such as research sabbatical schemes, to which members of staff may apply against specific objectives
- Support academic members of staff through the Academic Appraisal System in developing a clear strategy for their personal research development
- Continue to provide support for some academic members of staff to register for doctorates and other relevant higher degrees, where this aligns with the research strategy – in addition to other staff development in relation to research opportunities
- Develop schemes to make research mentors available to academic members of staff, including those who have previously not been research active. This may include external mentors where appropriate
- Encourage the development of other mechanisms for mutual support, including ‘buddy’ systems, reading groups and support groups, and disseminate best practice – ensuring that support schemes recognise and are sensitive to the needs of under-represented groups
- Increase the proportion of research active members of staff over the Plan period, including by employing research active members of staff to fill vacant academic posts, wherever practicable.



2.2 Increase research income and attract high quality research funding

Research income is critical in supporting the development of the research culture and may come from a variety of sources. HEFCE QR funding is critical in providing long-term, sustainable non-project focused funding for research, and enhancing the University’s RAE/REF performance is a key part of the strategy.

The University is also committed to significantly increasing research and research-related income from other sources – not least from Research Councils and other high quality competitive research grant funding. This is a key responsibility of academic members of staff in the faculties and has been assisted by the development of the TRAC methodology for costing research, which positively impacts on the funding of research. At the same time, research grant application writing is a skilled and time-consuming process and the University recognises the need to support the academic members of staff so involved. We shall therefore:

- Recognise the importance of research income generation and grant authoring by taking account of these activities in assigning academic duties
- Support research grant writing activities through a variety of mechanisms, including identification of possible funding sources and advice by the University Research Office, guidance from mentors, internal peer review, training in bid writing, and maintenance of a grant application repository
- Provide subject-specific information on sector norms for income generation and external exemplars of best practice through the University Research Office
- Explicitly link research income targets through Faculty, Department/School and Research Centre strategic and business plans, which will be subject to regular review – not least as part of the Annual Conversation
- Ensure that an appropriate proportion of the research income generated is allocated to the Faculty, Department/School or Research Centre responsible for generating the income.



2.3 Provide a focus for research development through Research Centres and other Research Groups

Research in Faculties and Departments/Schools is primarily structured through Research Centres. These act as focal points for the development of research, provide an identity for academic staff, research staff and research students, and enhance the external profile of the University. However, it is also important to allow for a diversity of approaches – reflecting the different scale, cohesiveness and development of research in various subjects – and support new Research Groups and their potential development into Research Centres. The most mature Research Centres may have significant research income and budgets, employ full-time research staff, and be financially self-supporting. In contrast, Research Groups sanctioned by the Dean of Faculty may be part of larger Research Centres, or independently constituted, with a less formalised and self-sustaining structure. In this light, we shall:

- Coordinate strategic research planning at Department/School, Faculty and University level through the Research Centre and Research Group structure
- Ensure that all formally constituted Research Centres develop business plans, establishing specific targets for income generation, recruitment of research staff and students, and other research activities – including publications and other outputs
- Encourage the employment in Research Centres of research staff, research students and research administrators and other support personnel, line managed by their Directors, where the business plan justifies this
- Develop the concept of Research Centres as cost centres, with a proportion of research income generated provided to support targeted research activity and/or core staff – with accountability to the Head of Department/School and the Dean, as appropriate

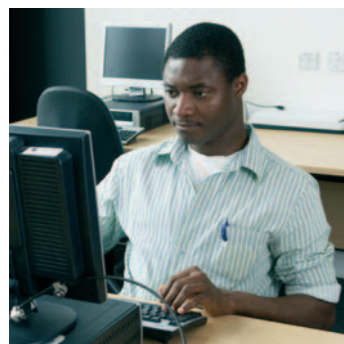
- Facilitate the development of new postgraduate and, where relevant, undergraduate courses, aligned with research strengths in Research Centres
- Organise research support activities, including research mentoring, research seminars and postgraduate research student induction, through Research Centres and Research Groups
- Raise the externally facing profile of Research Centres and Research Groups, where appropriate, on websites and elsewhere
- Encourage the development of relevant Research Groups, whilst recognising their distinction from Research Centres.



The implementation of the Research Strategic Plan will ensure that research becomes a more pervasive component of the academic life of the University, involving all staff and students in its development.

Professor Mike Saks,
Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor





2.4
Achieve enhanced performance in the Research Excellence Framework

HEFCE is currently developing the specific form of the REF, which is also at present being piloted. This will succeed the current RAE as a basis for funding. Whilst the timetable for its introduction has been extended by a further twelve months, it is likely to be introduced relatively soon – possibly for some science-based subjects as early as 2011/12. The University's performance in the REF, which will be fully implemented in 2013/14, is critical given its importance in generating background research income for the University. We shall therefore seek to improve our performance in relation to the RAE/REF by:

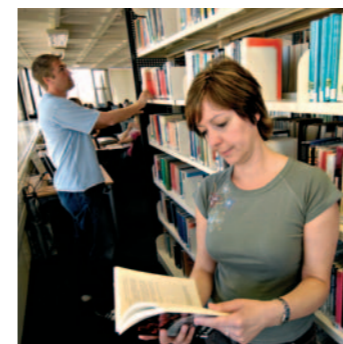
- Disseminating information to staff on the consultations over, and future structure of, the REF as this becomes available
- Producing University and faculty plans for the development of the REF submission throughout the Plan period
- Monitoring progress against these plans on a regular basis, including through the Research Policy Committee and Research and Enterprise Committee and relevant faculty committees
- Using key metrics such as research income, citation rates and postgraduate research student data in this monitoring exercise
- Tracking the development of academic staff both individually and collectively against REF requirements
- Providing support to academic staff to enhance their REF performance.



2.5
Give effective, professional support for research

Effective research takes place in a supportive environment, which includes professional support for income generation, project management, research students and other aspects of research. This support is provided at a variety of levels, centrally through the University Research Office and other service departments, and locally at Faculty and Department/School level. We shall enhance the research support mechanisms by, amongst other things:

- Forming an integrated University Research Office, of which the Graduate School will be a part
- Focusing the Graduate School primarily on supporting postgraduate research students, with faculties taking more responsibility for postgraduate taught students
- Providing more support for bid-writing and other research income generation activities
- Working across the University to improve research-related processes, and ensuring the most efficient and effective service within the institution in promoting research
- Strengthening administrative support for research within Faculties, Departments/Schools and Research Centres
- Ensuring that ethical review processes and staff development on ethical issues in research are appropriate – including providing policies, procedures, training and infrastructure for the proper storage and protection of confidential data
- Facilitating the development of the institutional e-prints repository and embedding the use of this within the University to maximise the impact of our research work
- Developing the provision of research resources, including electronic subscriptions and inter-library loans, and ensuring that we make best use of these, aligning provision with research strength
- Conducting an academic staff research expertise audit, and maintaining a central database on expertise to which staff have access.



2.6
Increase the recruitment of postgraduate research students and enhance the environment for their studies

Postgraduate research students play an important part in generating a research culture in Faculties and Departments/Schools. They may, in conjunction with their academic supervisors, open up new lines of enquiry and deepen and broaden research projects. They bring a fresh viewpoint to bear and revitalise the research culture. Through their involvement in teaching activities, they can help to enhance the research-informed teaching experience of undergraduate students, bringing additional and different insights to those students. They act as a recruitment pool for future academic staff. For these and other reasons, the University is committed to increasing the number of postgraduate research students and to providing the best possible environment for their studies. We shall therefore:

- Increase their recruitment through targeted activities, including internationally and by encouraging undergraduate students to stay on for postgraduate study – as well as augmenting applications for Research Council and other scholarships
- Give bursaries and/or scholarships to high quality postgraduate research students where appropriate. Such internal awards may be targeted at areas where recruitment is important or serves other strategic aims. Externally we should strive to achieve and maintain Research Council recognition where this is a pre-requisite for scholarship applications
- Use our increasingly strong portfolio of postgraduate taught programmes in the faculties as a pool for recruitment of future postgraduate research students
- Ensure that all postgraduate research students have adequate infrastructural support, including access to supervision, equipment, materials and facilities

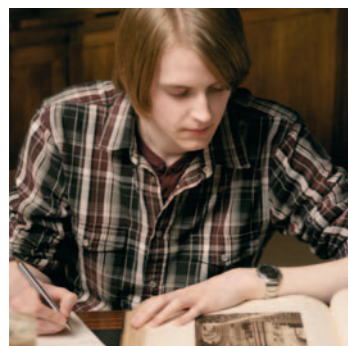
- Establish facilities, including office space, for the use of postgraduate research students within faculties, to encourage a culture of day-to-day interaction with academic staff
- Provide funding to allow postgraduate research students to present results of their studies at relevant international and national conferences
- Provide high quality training for postgraduate research students, including both central generic transferable skills research training and more focused training through faculties – taking up opportunities to share research training across faculties between postgraduate research and taught programmes.



Successful delivery of the Research Strategic Plan will make the University a more dynamic, diverse and stimulating place for research, scholarship and academic study.

Professor Andrew Hunter,
 Dean of Research





2.7 Strengthen external and internal collaboration in research

The University seeks to encourage engaged research, which involves a variety of stakeholders such as other research institutions, public organisations, commerce, charities and voluntary organisations, both in the UK and overseas. External collaborative activities are vital in ensuring that our research is aligned with the wider community and is relevant and influential. Collaboration also enhances our reputation, brings additional expertise to bear on the development of our research culture and is ever more important in research success. For these reasons, we are committed to increasing external collaborative activity – as well as internal collaboration which can bring great benefit to the University. We shall therefore strengthen collaboration externally and internally by:

- Maintaining a strong community of Visiting Professors, Visiting Senior Research Fellows and Visiting Researchers
- Seeking to establish further links with researchers at leading international institutions, coordinating cross-institution links centrally to strengthen relationships where appropriate
- Encouraging members of staff to undertake collaborative research – including joint funding applications – with researchers elsewhere as appropriate, and providing support through the University Research Office to identify potential collaborators
- Facilitating links with relevant external regional, national and international research bodies.
- Holding regular University events to disseminate information on, and to discuss, research across the institution, encouraging more cross-department and cross-faculty research – not least through an annual University Research Conference
- Encouraging inter-disciplinary collaboration within the University, including through cross-disciplinary Research Centres, where appropriate.



2.8 Strengthen the links between research and teaching activities

Research is an integral part of the University's activities, and is intimately related to its teaching mission. The University community of scholars includes academic staff who develop their own knowledge through research, and students, who develop their knowledge through a combination of guided scholarship and teaching by academic staff. Research-informed teaching implies a combination of teaching subjects that are drawn from the research interests of staff, teaching by methods that may align with the research methods used by staff, and teaching by the direct engagement of students at all levels in research activities. This objective of the Research Strategic Plan is closely aligned to the Teaching and Learning Strategic Plan, in which the Centre for Educational Research and Development plays a pivotal role in liaison with the faculties. In the context of the research strategy, we shall:

- Seek to align research interests and teaching where appropriate by developing Research Centres in areas of major student recruitment, and developing new programmes based upon the specialist research interests of Research Centres
- Support research staff and postgraduate research students in engaging in some level of teaching activity
- Encourage academic staff to engage in research relating to their teaching – providing rewards for staff achievement in research-informed teaching and learning
- Further embed research skills amongst academic staff and students, providing regular updating
- Develop student projects and other major learning activities attached to research projects and activities, so that undergraduate and taught postgraduate students may contribute to and benefit from research activities
- Encourage the development of pedagogical research and its integration with research-informed teaching activity.



2.9 Enhance the links between research and enterprise

The University is committed to both curiosity-driven enquiry that opens up new avenues of thinking, and 'engaged' research that informs policy and practice. In the context of the latter, it is particularly important to involve external partners in relationships that may include activities such as research, consultancy, knowledge transfer and teaching-related activities (for example, placements and projects). Research may also lead to the generation of valuable intellectual property, which can be exploited to the benefit of both the University and the businesses concerned. We thus see research and enterprise engagement as complementary activities, in which the newly formed Enterprise@Lincoln can play a significant part. We shall therefore:

- Encourage collaborative research with external partners in industry and commerce, the public sector and the charitable sector
- Provide mechanisms and support to identify, protect and exploit intellectual property arising as a result of research activities, including through licensing and spin-out companies
- Maintain close liaison between the University Research Office and Enterprise@Lincoln, recognising that much enterprise activity can be classified as research
- Significantly enhance our Knowledge Transfer Partnership activities and ensure that this has a clear research dimension which leads to research publications and other relevant outputs
- Ensure that research benefits are also accrued from the investment of HEIF 4 funding within the institution at faculty and other levels.



Performance indicators

Throughout the lifetime of the Plan, we shall monitor progress using a variety of performance indicators, including amongst others:

- Percentage of academic members of staff who are research active
- External research income
- External research income overhead recovery
- Volume of external research grant applications
- Value of external research grant applications
- Number of postgraduate research students
- Number of externally funded postgraduate research students.

These align with the University Strategic Plan 2007–12 and with certain Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) already regularly monitored as part of the Strategic Plan. For example, the Strategic Plan envisages that the percentage of research active staff will progressively increase from 40% in 2007/08 to 60% in 2011/12, while external research income will grow from £1.625m to £2.830m, as part of the wider external income growth from £5.1m to £8.3m by the end of the planning period.

University of Lincoln

Brayford Pool

Lincoln

LN6 7TS

Tel +44 (0) 1522 882000

Fax +44 (0) 1522 886041

Minicom 01522 886055

enquiries@lincoln.ac.uk

www.lincoln.ac.uk