

## Section A: Official Development Assistance (ODA) and GCRF strategy

### The strategy

1. Summarise the key aspects of your three year **strategy for development related and GCRF research activity**, including:
  - a. Your institution's strategy and priority objectives for all development related research activity funded through all sources for three years from 2018-19.
  - b. Summary of the key aspects of your three year strategic plan for QR GCRF in light of the criteria and objectives for the GCRF outlined in the guidance.
  - c. How activity funded through QR GCRF fits into your broader strategy and priorities for all development related research activity.
  - d. How activity funded through QR GCRF relates to the UK strategy for the GCRF.<sup>1</sup>
  - e. How your development-related and GCRF strategies relate to your wider institutional strategy for using QR.
  - f. Likely key barriers and enablers to implementing your strategy.
  - g. The key activities by which you will realise your objectives, such as capacity and capability building; mono-disciplinary interdisciplinary and collaborative research; generating impact from research; meeting the full economic cost of GCRF activity funded through other sources; rapid response to emergencies with an urgent research need; and pump priming.
  - h. The main Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list developing countries you intend to collaborate with.

#### Institutional Overview

Birmingham City University is a post-92 regional anchor institution which is committed to excellent research that delivers real-world impacts to society and the economy. The University is research-engaged, with academic staff carrying out internationally-excellent research in some 15 Units of Assessment (REF2014 GPA 2.64, 11 UoA, 122 FTE). Our highest quality research is found in the creative arts subjects, attributable to our institutional heritage but we are developing rapidly our capacity and capability in STEM disciplines and the Social Sciences.

The predominance of practice-based subjects in our disciplinary mix means many of our staff bring to the University significant experience of professional-practice; excellent connections to the professions and many links with external organisations nationally and internationally. Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Exchange and co-creation activities therefore form a core part of the University's externally facing activity as part of the

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<sup>1</sup> UK Strategy for the Global Challenges Research Fund,  
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/gcrf/challenges/>

continuum of Research and Innovation activities, which complement our more commercially-focussed Enterprise activities.

With an institutional mission summarised by the phrase “The University **for** Birmingham”, as a regional anchor institution we deliver impact regionally and nationally to improve economic, societal and cultural well-being of the UK through research which is frequently collaborative with the public sector; private sector and third sector. We deliver global impact through international research and innovation partnerships with organisations of all types in a wide variety of countries including EC27 members and DAC countries. It is common for many of research-active staff to be involved in larger collaborative R&D and R&I projects, often as partners rather than as the lead organisation / project coordinator. This is quite normal in projects with a research and innovation focus, which tend to be led by the research-user beneficiaries rather than by academic institutions. Such projects generally have well defined pathways to impact built in from the outset, often with directly measurable impacts and outcomes forming part of the Case for Support to the funder to justify the investment of public funding.

Historically our research with a development focus has been in the arts and culture; social justice; education and healthcare and we are addressing increasingly a number of the complex global challenges. These oft-termed “wicked problems” require a multi-disciplinary approach and a sustainable partnership which includes research performers; innovation agents and end-user beneficiaries. A strong partnership approach with multiple stakeholders is required to translate effectively the outcomes of demand-led research into real on-the-ground transformative interventions, which effect economic and societal change.

Our commitment to addressing complex problems and translating excellent research into meaningful impacts and public benefit is illustrated by the work of our three Innovation Institutes in accelerating impact. The Institutes act as “thematic lenses” through which external organisations can discover and access our discipline-based research expertise. The Institutes provide the internal and external brokerage functions that link external stakeholder needs to the internal research expertise and capacity required to deliver sustained and impactful research and innovation actions through building collaborative partnerships. Our Institutes aggregate research capability and capacity from across our faculties to address multi-disciplinary thematic areas that align with many areas of the UK industrial strategy and global challenges:

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (iSF) focuses on future cities; construction; transport; advanced manufacturing; lightweight materials; renewable energy; water and the low-carbon economy.

The Institute for Health and Quality of Life (iHQL) focuses on healthy ageing; mental and physical health; health management; social well-being; science-enabled health and citizen-centred design.

The Institute for Creative Innovation (iCI) supports businesses, public and private organisations to apply cross-innovation techniques to share information, collaborate and

work with other sectors to generate new thinking to tackle major challenges. iCI has been the prime mover in the development of the University's STEAM philosophy, in which thinking and practices developed within the arts are applied within the STEM subjects to create disruptive approaches to innovation across multiple sectors and with different stakeholder groups.

#### Summary of Institutional QR Funding Allocations

Birmingham City University receives around £2.3M total QR p.a., approximately £1.6M mainstream QR attributable to REF outputs from academic staff in faculties and is scheduled to receive £90,769 p.a. of GCRF QR. The University currently reinvests the majority of mainstream QR back into Faculties, to both reward historic excellence and to develop new excellence in cognate subject areas. PGR, Charity and Business QR is held centrally by the University and reinvested strategically to enhance PGR provision and to catalyse and co-fund the development of new research with charities; businesses and other organisations.

#### Examples of Current and Recent Development Related Activities

The University is committed to the translation of research into meaningful impacts that promote the welfare and economic development of developing countries.

The School of Media and Cultural Studies in the Faculty of Arts, Media and Design has long-running engagement in projects to embolden the citizen voice during periods of societal change. Work funded by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences in 2011 involved working in Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Yemen with activists, archivists and grassroots media collectives involved in the documenting the 2011 uprisings to explore the successes, limitations and potentialities of camera-related practices to the objectives of contemporary protest movements across the Arab world.

Work funded by the Swedish International Development Agency SIDA Work in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and Palestine from 2012-2018 involved training of citizen journalists, grassroots organisations, activists and journalism students in the use of digital literacy tools to embolden public voice to increase the accountability of governments, strengthen civil society and challenge rising polarization and authoritarianism.

"Voices of War & Peace" funded by AHRC explored the contemporary legacies of the Great War on conflict-torn countries in the Middle East, with a specific focus on Yemen, Syrian, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt.

ERASMUS + ICM funding for Nigeria has enabled the development of research partnerships with three Nigerian universities to further explore capacity building activities.

Work in Europe funded by AHRC to understand and respond to the refugee crisis in Europe is exploring conflict, memory and displacement, working with asylum seekers and refugees in UK and Italy from countries including Eritrea, Columbia, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

Work funded by the Leverhulme Trust is exploring the loss of traditional Chinese crafts and ways of reinventing these in 21st century, working in China.

The Faculty of Health, Education and Life Sciences works in Malaysia, Vietnam and Zambia on pedagogy and teacher training standards and on the education and training of community health workers and nurses to improve educational outcomes and health of citizens.

In Malaysia, a partnership with the Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), one of the oldest functioning institutions of higher learning in Malaysia is implementing new teacher education standards which were peer reviewed by researchers in the School of Education. BCU plans to co-develop with UPSI new pedagogies which integrate Arts based thinking and creative practices in the Science, Technology, Engineering and maths curricula to create 'STEAM pedagogies'.

Researchers in Education have also worked in Vietnam in partnership with the national pedagogical universities in the North and South on practitioner research projects across three HEIs in Vietnam.

Nursing and Health education in Vietnam has been a long running development activity. Joy Notter, professor of Community Health was awarded the 'Campaign Medal for Services to Health' (the highest honour that can be bestowed on a non-Vietnamese citizen) by the Vietnamese Ministry of Health for her contribution to the health of the people of Vietnam. Starting in 2005, Joy embarked on a joint project to improve the quality of primary care improving the quality of nurse training at college and university level in Vietnam. With colleagues from Vietnam and the Netherlands, created a master plan for nurse training strategy in Vietnam, setting standards for nursing training institutions and formalising a nurse training curriculum at college and university level.

In Zambia, a project funded by DfID via Tropical Health and Education Trust focussed on knowledge exchange and evaluation of nurse education.

In the Faculty of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment development-related research has focussed particularly on renewable energy and water. A PhD student from the Philippines is currently researching modelling of renewable energy from wind power supported by the Newton Fund and DOST.

A further Newton Fund project is focussing on evaluation of flood risk management practices in Peru.

A project funded by ESRC, focussed on usefulness and impact of the current urban planning curriculum in South African Higher Education.

In the Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences, a project funded by Erasmus+ AHEAD African Higher Education Leadership in Advancing Inclusive Innovation for Development (2017-2020). The project is about capacity building in the field of

innovation and with a specific focus for us on entrepreneurship education. The Partner Countries (PC) are: Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania and research will start with EU partners (Romania, Bulgaria, UK, Ireland, Italy, Poland) developing guidance and benchmarking tools (based on the EU experience) to assist the analysis of the national innovation systems in PC countries and the innovation capacity in the participating PC HEIs.

The Centre for American Legal Studies is engaged in a collaborative comparative research with the Judicial Science Research and Extension Program Center (NUPEJ) in Brazil, a post graduate centre focusing on multidisciplinary research, extension and teaching programs devoted to the activities of the Judiciary. Prof. Perlingeiro is a federal judge with a particular interest in improving the quality of administrative decision-making and thereby reducing the currently over-extended judicial caseload. The research project is currently focussing on environmental and pharmaceutical regulation.

### **Institutional Strategy for Development Related Research**

The University plans to continue to build networks and partnerships with developing countries; seek funding for and deliver impactful research programmes collaborative with DAC countries as part of our core research strategy. Global challenges that align to the thematic foci of our Innovation Institutes are particular priorities, as these enable the University to build the external partnerships required and to aggregate multi-disciplinary expertise from across the University to address complex challenges that have the potential for high impact.

The University will continue to develop partnerships with and seek funding for ODA-relevant research through the Newton Fund and GCRF Challenge Funds, relevant primarily to the LMI and UMI countries. GCRF QR may be used to further collaborative research with ODA recipients which are not Newton fund partners.

A new area of strategically important and distinctive research is expanding rapidly through the recently created Centre for Brexit Studies (CBS). Research is focussing on international trade, economic development and supply chain developments and extending outside the EC27. Work with Romania and other EU member states is now broadening to include non EU member states and DAC counties. Regional partnerships are being developed with HEIs, government and trade bodies in Turkey focusing on economic development, international trade policy and the development of new international supply chains. It is planned this work will expand through partner organisations to include states neighbouring Romania and Turkey including DAC-list LMI counties Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and DAC-list UMI countries Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

### **Key Activities to Be Supported with GCRF QR**

Birmingham City University will focus on three key activities, supported by allocations of the institution allocation of GCRF QR, which will normally be matched by Faculties; from

mainstream QR allocations or other internal funds. It is anticipated the GCRF QR funding will be allocated equally across the three key activities, nominally £30K GCRF QR per activity. Funding will be awarded through an internal competitive process coordinated through the University's Research Committee.

#### Activity 1: Mobility: Capacity and Capability Building

The objective of Activity 1 is to establish new equitable and sustainable partnerships with researchers and organisations in ODA recipient countries through the award of mobility funds and partnership building funds to BCU researchers. This may involve supporting travel and subsistence for BCU staff to ODA recipient countries and funding of reciprocal visits from researchers in ODA recipient countries to the UK to develop partnerships with BCU researchers.

#### Activity 2: Collaborative Research

The objective of Activity 2 is to facilitate interdisciplinary research collaborative with ODA recipients aligned to GCRF priorities. Projects will commonly be brokered through the Innovation Institutes and the Centre for Brexit Studies to provide the reach to external partners and internal reach to relevant research and innovation expertise within our academic structures. The collaborative research awards will be allocated competitively to support part of the costs of carrying out of ODA-eligible research with existing or newly identified collaborative partnerships, including part-funding of travel, staff-time, research interns etc but excluding the cost of new partnership development (this will be supported through the Mobility funds).

#### Activity 3: Pump Priming to Underpin GCRF and Newton Fund Bids

To date, the University has worked on development activities with some LMI and UMI countries which are Newton Fund partners (Malaysia, the Philippines) and on other research with Brazil, China, India and South Africa (also Newton Fund partners). The objective of the Pump Priming funds will be to facilitate attendance of BCU staff at networking meetings and other events to develop partnerships specifically to form the basis for future Newton Fund and GCRF funding applications. The University may also fund small pump-priming projects once partners have been identified to generate preliminary data to support future applications to GCRF and the Newton Fund. The University will not use GCRF QR to fund staff time for the development of applications for funding, as this is not an ODA-eligible activity.

#### Main DAC List Developing Countries We Plan to Target Work With:

Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon, Vietnam, Malaysia, Zambia, Turkey, the Philippines, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Brazil, India, China

The exact list of countries we will work with on ODA-eligible activity using GCRF QR cannot be specified currently as the results on the competitive internal process used to allocate GCRF QR is unknown.

2. Provide details of the main intended **outcomes and impacts** of your strategy.

The main intended outcomes of the strategy will be:

Development of new and sustainable collaborative partnerships and enhancement of existing partnerships in DAC list countries, primarily LI, LMI and UMI countries through funding of mobility awards for outbound BCU researchers and for in-bound mobility of researchers and collaborators from DAC list countries to the UK.

Support for collaborative research; translation and impact activities with DAC list countries through funding of travel, subsistence, staff time and small equipment required to enable delivery of collaborative activity. Funds could meet the costs incurred by BCU staff or by partnership staff where their local organisations are unable to meet this cost from local resources.

The development of new applications for funding to the Newton Fund and GCRF for collaborative research, innovation and impact activities with DAC countries who are Newton Fund partners, primarily Turkey, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brazil.

### **Management of GCRF**

3. How will your HEI **monitor** and **evaluate** its progress and compliance in ODA and GCRF activity, including assessing geographical distribution of activity, outputs, outcomes and economic and social impacts?

Please describe the policies, procedures and approach you have in place to measure progress, evaluate outcomes, identify lessons learned, and ensure ODA compliance.

Internal applications for GCRF QR funding for each of the three supported activities (Mobility; Collaborative Research; Pump-Priming) will be in response to specific Calls for Proposals issued through an internal competitive process. It is currently planned this will run once per year through the University's Research Committee.

This mechanism is already used at BCU for the allocation of centrally held QR funding to support special research investment initiatives through competitive applications linked to REF Impact. Applications will need to identify clearly the intended outcomes from the activity for which GCRF QR funding is sought and provide a clear "Pathways to Impact" statement, in addition to justifying why the activity proposed is ODA-compliant. Each project will also require a Gant chart, list of project partners; work packages; deliverables and milestones. The University will in essence mirror internally the normal competitive processes and peer review used by research funding agencies, with which our academic are familiar.

The PRINCE2 project management method will be used to build, deliver and monitor each GCRF QR funded project. All research outputs from GCRF funded collaborative research will be deposited into the institutional Open-Access Repository within 3 months of acceptance as per HEFCE OA guidelines, We will create within the repository a

designated GCRF Collection where outputs of all types resulting from GCRF QR supported activity will be deposited, in addition to journal articles and conference presentations that fall within HEFCE OA scope.

Each GCRF QR supported activity will be brought within scope of the University's external project assurance process and all project records will be held within the current electronic folder structures used for all RCUK funded research.

Each project will follow the normal monitoring processes used for RCUK research grants, Innovate UK funding, etc. Each project will undergo a monthly updating of records of activity; expenditure; outputs and potential evidence of Impact with the project PI and an assigned Research Development and Support Officer, comparing progress with the project plan. Each project will be reviewed formally each quarter by the Associate Dean Research of the host Faculty. Each project will enter the six-monthly review cycle of the Vice Chancellors Office, overseen by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, Innovation and Enterprise used for all high-risk and / or high value projects.

The University's Delivery and Compliance Team will ensure that all activity supported directly from the GCRF QR allocation meets the definition of ODA-compliant activity, mirror the process adopted for externally funded projects from other funders including RCUK, Innovate-UK, Charities, The European Commission and European Structural funds (ESF and ERDF). Activity that is required to execute the project but which does not meet the ODA-compliance definition will not be charged to the GCRF QR but will be met from the allocation of co-funding to each successful GCRF QR application.

The University is currently implementing a new Oracle ERP system encompassing finance, HR and payroll functionality which will be instrumental in delivering the budget reporting to PIs and Faculties and to ensuring that all records of eligible project activity and expenditure will be maintained.

The CRIS system currently in procurement will keep detailed records of project activity by individual researchers both within and without the University to ensure comprehensive tracking of activity, outputs and impacts can be maintained from 2019-20 onwards.



## Section B: Use of QR GCRF 2018-19 allocation and future QR GCRF priorities

4. Please complete the table in Annex A2 detailing the expected spending and activities for QR GCRF in the academic year 2018-19. Note that the total QR GCRF spending must equal the indicative allocation (available in Annex C), and all activities must be ODA-compliant for strategies to be assessed as ODA-compliant overall.

5. Please add here any explanatory notes on how you have completed the table in Annex A2 that will help inform assessment of ODA compliance.

The University will launch internal competitive calls for GCRF QR. Detailed guidance on ODA-eligible activities will be shared with potential applicants through internal Town Hall meetings and detailed ODA-compliance guidance will be developed. Applications will be assessed for research excellence and potential impact by highly experience members of the University Research Committee and for strict compliance with ODA-eligible activities with ODA nations by the University's Delivery and Compliance Team. Each application allocated GCRF QR will be co-funded either 50% or 100% by the University. Any activities required within the project that are not deemed ODA-eligible but which are essential to the success of the project will be funded from the University co-funding contribution to the total project costs.

6. How would your **priorities and activities** for 2018-19 QR GCRF change if the funding level differs from that outlined in indicative allocations? Please include detail of how priorities will change with increases and decreases to QR GCRF funding, and details of how each priority meets ODA criteria.

If GCRF for 2018-19 was to reduce significantly from the indicated £90,769 it would be necessary to reduce the scale of activities supported. Mobility to establish new partnerships would be maintained but the number of collaborative projects in Activity 2 would be down-scaled, to maintain the per-project funding commitment. Pump-Priming funding would be reduced significantly. If GCRF was to increase significantly then we would increase the number of collaborative research projects with DAC nations that could be funded and possibly increase the per-project allocation from £15K per project to £20K or £25K.

7. Based on indicative funding allocations, what are your **priorities** for QR GCRF activity in 2019-20? Please include detail of how priorities will change with increases and decreases to QR GCRF funding, and details of how each priority meets ODA criteria.

The general priorities will remain unchanged, as these are longer-term strategic priorities for the University. Given the relatively small scale of funding and number of activities that can be funded, priority areas for 2019-20 will be those that could not be funded in 2018-19, due to lack of funds. New competitive calls will be issued for 2019-20 against priorities defined by Research Committee.

8. Based on indicative funding allocations, what are your **priorities** for QR GCRF activity in 2020-21? Please include detail of how priorities will change with increases and decreases to QR GCRF funding, and details of how each priority meets ODA criteria.

The general priorities will be unchanged, as these are longer-term strategic priorities for the University. Given the relatively small scale of GCRF QR funding and number of activities that can be funded, priority areas for 2020-21 will be those that could not be funded in 2018-19 or 2019-20, due to lack of funds. New competitive calls will be issued for 2020-21 against priorities defined by Research Committee, informed by any changes to ODA eligibility and GCRF priorities.