

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. A 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.¹
 - 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 developing countries, included in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list, which you intend to collaborate with.

The mission of the Open University (OU) is to be 'Open to People, Places, Methods and Ideas' and this has driven years of active engagement in development related research and teaching activity.

The OU's International Development Office (IDO) was launched in 2011 in order to expand The OU's reach across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. IDO utilises the teaching and research expertise of The OU and the skills, knowledge and experience of its academic staff, and transposes this unique pedagogical approach to address major long term issues in Africa and Asia relating to Teacher Education and Health.

The prominence of programmes such as TESSA (Teaching Education in sub-Saharan Africa) and TESS-India mean that the OU brand is known and respected in many DAC Countries, which has helped facilitate research collaborations.

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

Since 2015, International Development and Inclusive Innovation (IDII) has been a strategic research focus for the OU and internal funding (which will exceed £2M over the period 2015/16-2018/19) has driven the growth of interdisciplinary research in this area. Decades of top-down aid and development policies have failed to address global inequity and grinding poverty for billions of world citizens, so the OU is pioneering a different approach to development research known as 'inclusive innovation', which involves academics working directly with local stakeholders to developing their own solutions. As a result of peer support, internal networking and other facilitated activities, academics who have never engaged in development focused research are turning their attention to inclusive innovation and using their expertise to tackle problems faced by those in DAC list countries.

The OU three year strategy for QR GCRF will align with the OUs overarching 'Students First' Strategy and will have the following key aspects

1. To grow and strengthen the research capability of students from DAC based countries through funded studentships and summer schools
2. To enable OU academics to build collaborations with academics and students in DAC list countries via pump priming funding, that will enable an increase in the volume of externally funded research undertaken with DAC based collaborators
3. To ensure that the practise of engaged research promoted by the OU leads to meaningful impact of development focused research, resulting in both greater public understanding of international development and high impact of this research in DAC list Countries (as illustrated by 4* REF impact case studies).

Key OU research strengths mean that we will focus our activities primarily on the following three of the five areas that the UK strategy aims to create new knowledge and drive innovation that helps to ensure that everyone across the globe has access to:

- sustainable health and well being
- inclusive and equitable quality education
- affordable, reliable, sustainable energy

The GCRF QR strategy aligns with our broader strategy for QR income, which funds research activity as well as the Central Research Fund which is used to support strategic research areas, driving impact related activity, REF preparation, Postgraduate Research Students associated with doctoral training centres and partnerships competitively awarded to the OU by RCUK and enhance income generation.

A portion of the QR GCRF will be allocated directly to Faculties that currently hold GCRF projects to meet the full economic costs of research. The remainder will be held centrally and managed like the current central research fund.

The OU undertook a series of internal networking and awareness raising activities when GCRF was launched, and have been encouraging academics to use their research strengths in new areas to address problems in DAC list countries. There is a strong

interest amongst OU academics which will be a great enabler in the successful use of the QR GCRF allocation. The pump priming funds will be allocated to help academics grow their networks with academics in DAC list countries to better understand the needs and develop innovative solutions.

The key activities by which the OU will realise our objectives, are as follows:

1. Summer schools. An annual summer school will be run for PhD students engaged in the Open University's Affiliated Research Centre (ARC) programme, providing an opportunity to develop their research skills and networks in the UK. QR GCRF would provide travel and subsistence funds for four students from each of our ARCs based in developing nations (Vietnam, Gambia and Zambia)
2. PhD studentships: A competition will be run to fund at least six PhD studentships for students from DAC list Countries. Students will be able to work on any area of OU research strength and will be trained in a variety of transferable skills. They will be expected to share their learning and new networks with colleagues at the home organisation. The stipends for the final year of five existing International Development and Inclusive Innovation students will also be covered from the QR.
3. FEC of eligible projects: The OU has been awarded 8 GCRF projects to date with several more pending outcome or in preparation. A portion of the QR will be used to meet the part of the full economic costs of the project not covered by the eligible funder.
4. Dissemination and outreach activities: funds will be available to help generate impact from ODA compliant research and to increase awareness of development related research. This includes supporting the organisation of the high profile Development Studies Association annual conference, which will be hosted at the OU in 2019. Travel bursaries will be made available to delegates from DAC list based organisations.
5. Consortium building: Travel and subsistence will be made available to bring potential collaborators from DAC countries to the UK to network, develop research projects and funding applications for GCRF. This will allow for the co-development of research.
6. Capacity building in the OU; the academic lead of the 'International Development and Inclusive Innovation' strategic research area, Prof. Mohan, will mentor academics from across the OU to enable them to deliver ODA-eligible research. He will foster interdisciplinary groups in the OU and make connections with his and his teams external networks, to increase the volume of engagement with international development focused research.

The QR GCRF strategy of the OU will enable collaboration with Gambia, Vietnam, Kenya through the ARC summer schools; Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria through existing GCRF projects and Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, India, Zimbabwe through the existing PhD student projects.

The Student competition, consortium building and dissemination activities will undoubtedly reach new developing countries.

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

Over the next three years, it is envisioned that the strategy will lead to the following outputs and impacts:

1. A greater portion of DAC list based collaborators on GCRF project applications thanks to availability of pump priming funds to build networks and consortia. Stronger networks and the ability to co-develop future applications and research projects mean that the activity is more likely to achieve real change in the target countries.

2. Six students from DAC list countries to have completed their PhD studentship and returned home to share the knowledge and networks with colleagues, thus growing the research capability in the home nation.

3. Thirty students from ARCs to attend a summer school at the OU, providing direct contact with academics, experience of the OU research environment and learning valuable transferable skills. There will be a requirement for delegates to share their learning with fellow ARC students in Gambia, Kenya and Vietnam.

3. Impact will be generated from GCRF funded activity. It is anticipated that activity will generate new high impact case studies and we aim to generate greater public understanding of international development research and the activity taking place at the OU and our DAC list based collaborators.

4. The capacity of the OU to engage in ODA-eligible research will increase as a result of activity undertaken by the International Development and Inclusive Innovation strategic area, which will lead to a greater number of collaborative research projects, funded by GCRF or other sources, which have demonstrable impact on the developing nations involved.

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.

The OU's International Development Office (IDO) have been undertaking large scale ODA activity and have developed processes for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. This experience is shared with staff planning GCRF applications and activity.

The OU does not have a policy purely dedicated to monitoring all GCRF activity, this is currently designed and agreed upon on a project by project basis. GCRF projects (applications and success) are logged and geographical distribution is monitored. The Research and Enterprise team, located in the central Research and Academic Strategy

unit (RAS) facilitate internal networking and sharing of overseas collaborators to help grow networks.

The Impact Manager, based in RAS, works with academics in development of major GCRF applications and on funded projects to ensure that they meet their full impact potential.

Staff in the RAS Unit regularly monitor and evaluate outcomes of existing pump-priming, ARC activity and student funding. Lessons learned from the activity influence activity in the following year. The RAS Unit will manage the GCRF QR allocation activity, allocating funding and running the competitions – ODA compliance will be assessed prior to allocation of funding. For example, the RAS unit will assess all studentship project applications prior to offers being made to assess for ODA eligibility.

The RAS unit will monitor spend and evaluate progress on a six monthly basis and will liaise with the International Development Office over any queries regarding ODA compliance.

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.

As many of the costs are open to competition (PhD funding, summer schools) or relate to future activity it is not possible to ascertain all of the DAC list countries that will benefit, or the exact nature of the output and impact. Assessment of ODA-eligibility will be made prior to the internal allocation of any funding.

The student competition would involve advertising funded PhD placements for students based in any DAC list country to undertake a PhD studentship in an area of OU research strength, thus growing research capability in their home nation upon their return.

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.

Should the funding allocation change, the priorities and activities would remain the same, but the scale of activity would decrease. Fewer studentships would be provided and if needed, fewer places on the ARC summer schools would be funded.

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.

In 2019/20, we would build on the activities undertaken in 18/19. Growing research capability via student funding (PhD studentships for students from DAC list countries and summer schools for ARC students from Kenya, Gambia, and Vietnam) will continue to be priority. We anticipate further GCRF awards, so meeting the FEC of eligible GCRF funded research will continue. Should the OU RCUK collective call application be successful, the QR funding will be used to support the project endeavours to provide energy to millions in target countries of Ghana, Tanzania, India and Pakistan.

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.

Growing research capability via student funding (PhD studentships for students from DAC list countries and summer schools for ARC students from Kenya, Gambia, and Vietnam) will continue to be priority. We anticipate further GCRF awards, so meeting the FEC of eligible GCRF funded research will continue. In addition, we anticipate that activity on growing capability within the OU to undertake development related research will be taking effect. So it is likely that less funding will be spent on pump priming and more on translation to impact as research collaborations strengthen.