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.

Maximum 3,000 words

The University of Sunderland is committed to the aims of the Global Challenge Research Fund and fully supports the vision for change agreed in 2016 to deliver internationally excellent research within the 3 thematic areas:

•   Equitable Access to Sustainable Development
•   Sustainable Economies and Societies
•   Human Rights, Good Governance and Social Justice

We therefore welcome the opportunity to submit our institutional strategy for the use of the indicative QR GCRF of £56,150 per annum. The funding allocation is vital to our institutional plans to undertake research that directly promotes the economic

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

development and welfare of developing countries. It provides important flexible investment to develop interventions that meet ODA principles and underpins our intentions to secure project-based grants allocated by other GCRF partners.

In developing our strategy we have adopted the 4 core criteria used by GCRF partners in assessing bids, that:

• Activity should be focused on the problems and solutions
• Activity should be underpinned by research excellence, and partners in developing countries should play a significant role in this where possible
• Activity should have a high likelihood of positive impact on the economic development and welfare needs of developing countries
• Activity should promote strong, enduring and equitable partnerships in the UK and in the global south.

It is our intention that all decisions relating to the internal allocation of QR GCRF will be made against the GCRF criteria. We will ensure all academic members of staff are aware of ODA requirements in developing projects through Research Office published guidance and individual support, and will ensure that activity is monitored for compliance. We will maintain the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of ODA eligible recipients and notify staff of any changes.

The QR GCRF strategy has been aligned to our current institutional commitments and priorities for research. In June 2017 the university implemented a revised Research and Innovation Strategy focused on 6 key objectives:

1) Create sector-leading, applied research

Our research will offer innovative solutions to societal and economic challenges, working closely with business, industry, the public sector, third sector, policy-makers, cultural organisations and communities. This research will be adaptive, agile enough to respond to the demands of a changing world and always focussing on areas of need.

We will:
• support high-quality research, recognised as internationally excellent or world-leading, and encourage research with potential to achieve at these levels
• build research collaborations with our business and industry networks and through governmental, public sector and academic partnerships; regionally, across the UK and internationally
• identify pathways to impact in all research areas, including business innovation, knowledge transfer, policy development, continuing professional development and academic teaching, with an effective system for recording and evaluating impact

- ensure equality and diversity is embedded in all aspects of our research practice, support and recognition, measured against benchmarks including Athena SWAN

2) Develop centres of innovation, excellence and collaboration

By establishing centres of excellence in the University's six areas of academic strength, we will lead high-quality research aligned to – but going beyond – Research Excellence Framework units of assessment. Through sustained, interdisciplinary research, designed to produce impact, we will identify and develop new synergies between research questions, methodologies and practices.

We will:
- create Research Institutes to lead and coordinate faculty research and innovation activities, establishing distinctive research themes and working closely with external partners across academia, business and the public sectors
- concentrate strategic investment to develop sector-leading research profiles in key specialisms within our six areas of academic strength
- drive cross - and interdisciplinary research to strengthen and broaden current research and to create new core areas of research, with a focus on impact

3) Provide a research-led curriculum for active learning

Our research and professional practice will inform all levels of teaching, ensuring the relevance and competitiveness of our taught courses. We will ensure that all students gain insight into the research and professional practice of staff as a model for their own learning.

We will:
- create opportunities at all levels of study for students to undertake activities relevant to the research specialisms and professional expertise of academic staff
- offer learning and assessment methods that explore research methodologies, Identifying research questions and pursuing academic inquiry, analysis and reflection
- align our taught postgraduate programmes to our research and innovation strengths, strengthening our taught postgraduate offer and providing career development for our graduates

4) Promote a dynamic research environment, reaching out to our external partners and audiences

The profile of our research will be raised through a proactive and engaging media presence, and by building our relationship with external organisations, academic networks and the wider public. Our lively campus research environment will host research-led events of international significance, increase opportunities for staff and

doctorial students to present and debate and offer an inclusive and supportive environment to our research partners.

We will:

- showcase and celebrate our research institutes, networks, students and staff through symposia, the press, social media and the web including our institutional research repository SURE
- engage in research collaborations with international partners through staff mobility and exchange schemes, linked to postgraduate research portfolio and the activities of our transnational education partners where possible
- continue to augment our dynamic research environment, with international conferences and events, increased numbers of postgraduate research students, and by developing our network of fellows and visiting professors
- provide excellent resources and support for postgraduate research students, creating opportunities for collaboration, networking and sharing work in appropriate external forums

5) Drive entrepreneurial, commercial and income-generating activity

With a long-term plan for strategic investment, we will enhance areas of strength that offer clear USPs for the University, respond to regional need and address wider societal, economic and cultural opportunities. Our Directorate for Enterprise and Innovation will provide expert guidance and support that maximises opportunities for externally-funded research, innovation and knowledge exchange.

We will:

- ensure our research is aligned to external funding agencies and commerce, achieving a return on the investment of staff research time, internal funding and Research Office support
- exploit the relationships between the publication and dissemination of research and opportunities for commercial activity through spin-out and the licencing of intellectual property
- facilitate knowledge exchange, commercial and consultation activities through staff appraisal, workload planning and Enterprise and Innovation support
- promote postgraduate research through engagement with business, industry and the public sectors

6) Develop and nurture our academic staff

To help create a dynamic research culture across our three campuses, we will offer a dedicated research support programme and ensure there is an effective use of research time supported by internal and external funding. We will encourage academic staff at all levels to undertake ambitious, innovative and rigorous research.

We will:

- actively manage and support all individual research and innovation activities through an annual planning process related to allocated research time
- develop our early career academic staff and researchers through a mentoring and support scheme, increasing research output, funding applications and PGR completions
- build the research profile of our subject areas, recruiting academic staff with a track-record of excellent research and recognising success through regular and transparent promotion opportunities
- provide opportunities for staff to pursue research degree programmes

Aligning the QR GCRF strategy to these wider objectives ensures that activity is embedded within the university's research support infrastructure and that our institutional commitment to partner aims for the Global Challenge Research Fund is fully recognised by university staff, stakeholders and international partners.

The university's global business is focused on attracting high quality students in key subject areas, developing compelling overseas partnerships, and encouraging staff and student exchange. The university is currently in the top 5 UK institutions delivering overseas programmes. Our commitment to transnational partnerships is underpinned by research-informed practice in programme delivery and education. There is an on-going commitment to widening our international offer and building on our existing international partnerships to attract more high quality students to key subject areas, developing strong mutually beneficial overseas collaborations and encourage staff and student exchange.

The university's global footprint is an important consideration in our QR GCRF strategy. Over the last decade the university has invested significant resource in establishing strategic partnerships with educational providers in a range of ODA eligible countries such as Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Botswana, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Mainland China, Vietnam and Hong Kong. Central to our international strategy is an understanding that our collaborations must equally support the interests of our overseas partners and that these will mature over time. Within this context, the university has supported a number of our long-term international partners to attain degree-awarding powers in their own right, building capacity within ODA territories through the provision of higher level skills and elevated the status of institutions as providers of higher education. The next step in the evolution of these strategic relationships is to support the development of research within and through partner institutions.

Professor John MacIntyre, Pro-vice Chancellor (International Office) leads international development at the University of Sunderland and has facilitated discussion with a number of partner institutions to identify GCRF priorities in ODA territories. These include:

Botswana Accountancy College, School of Computing and Information Systems, Botswana - Supporting our international partner through collaborative research in establishing the Francistown Campus as a facilitator for economic growth and development. The government of Botswana has designated Francistown as a 'tech hub'

within its economic strategy and will be supported by the university in adopting the Sunderland Software City model for research, innovation and enterprise. This work is being led Prof Alastair Irons, Dean of Faculty of Technology and Dr Susan Jones.

Hong Kong College of Technology, Hong Kong – Developing research capability and capacity in relation to the transferability of western design methods and approaches within the context of the Chinese/Eastern economy. This work is being led by Prof Kevin Petrie and Dr Lee Jones.

Management Development Institute of Singapore (Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Myanmar) - Supporting the development and implementation of research in computer science, specifically in relation to cyber security, data science and software development. This work is being led Prof Alastair Irons, Dean of Faculty of Technology

International College of Business and Technology, Sri Lanka - Development of research capability around international business management, tourism and hospitality. The work is being led by Prof Donna Chambers.

The University's newly acquired campus in Hong Kong presents an opportunity to strengthen collaborative research activity with academic communities in mainland China. Building on existing research collaborations with City University of Macau, Shanghai University and Sichuan University we will look to support further research activity in the areas of Big Data, AI and the Digital Economy, Cyber Security, Public Health, International Business Management and Tourism. This work will be led by Dr Steven Ng, Campus Director, Hong Kong Campus.

We will use a proportion of the QR GCRF allocation to support strategic engagement with our international partners in forging strong and enduring partnerships with local academic communities, building capacity and capability in these ODA territories and supporting appropriate collaborative research projects. The focus will be on establishing strong international networks involving researchers, policy makers and practitioners, with partner institutions facilitating dialogue in civil and governmental arenas. Our focus will be on building capacity within overseas locations to make it possible to initiate research and implement change informed by local economic priorities.

However we do not intend to limit activity to these territories or partners. The strategy seeks to support a balanced portfolio of activity, providing a flexible approach to maintaining existing projects and collaborations whilst providing a mechanism to respond to emerging opportunities and threats. This flexibility is important due in part to the modest amount of funding available and our ambition to support high quality, impactful research across the academy. The university will manage this portfolio of activity and investment through the annual research planning process.

Our portfolio of activity will primarily focus on the following:

- Capacity and capability building
- Mono-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative research activity
- Generating impact from research and beyond the sector
- Pump-priming activities to underpin GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building

We will support our research community to engage in international development challenges through facilitating exchange activity and establishing and enhancing sustainable partnerships with researchers and other organisations in developing countries. QR GCRF will be available to support university staff to engage in mono-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative research activity that sustainably promotes the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The university will continue to support the translation of high quality research into impactful interventions for ODA eligible recipients. The opportunity to use QR GCRF allocations to prepare for future ODA activity is of strategic and operational importance to the university. Pump-priming activity such as facilitating meetings with international partners, generating data for future applications and supporting ODA-compliant research activity overseas is fundamental to our capacity to support partner aims for the Global Challenge Research Fund.

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

Maximum 500 words

The main intended outcome of our institutional strategy is to develop and sustain a balanced portfolio of research activity that attends to partner aims for the wider GCRF and enhances opportunities for university staff to engage and have an impact on economic and societal challenges in developing countries. This is underpinned by an institutional commitment to work with our international partners in ODA territories in establishing longer term, area-based strategies for tackling economic and societal challenges. A key outcome of the strategy will be to formalise an engagement process with international partners that supports equitable and sustainable collaborative working that is both challenge-led and directly relevant to those countries.

The university already supports a number of its staff to engage in ODA activity and projects (Annex A2).This activity is funded through a combination of QR and Newton funding and has enabled staff from across the institution to extend the relevance and impact of their work. In implementing the QR GCRF strategy the intention is to engage a broader number of staff in eligible activity. This will be facilitated through the active promotion of the GCRF strategy and funding opportunities to the academic body. A proportion of QR GCRF support will continue to be available to staff through the annual planning process to support the development of relevant projects. Increasing the number of university staff engaged in GCRF activity will be a significant outcome of the strategy.

Fundamental to the strategy will be our ability to secure project funding from GCRF delivery partners. This will be a key criteria in our decision making process in allocating QR GCRF to staff and potential projects. The university will provide dedicated support to staff and partners in submitting GCRF project proposals through the University Research Office. A key outcome of the strategy will be to facilitate interventions in ODA territories through project funding.

Our current portfolio of projects is already demonstrating real-world impact in developing countries. A number of projects have already had demonstrable impact in ODA eligible territories and are now been considered for adoption in other developing countries. This kind of intervention represents the pinnacle of our impact ambitions. Developing sustainable and equitable partnerships with international researchers and other organisations is also an important outcome of the strategy. Under such conditions the opportunity to develop a substantial body of work over an extended period of time is likely to result in long-term impacts from the collaboration.

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.

Maximum 1,500 words

The University of Sunderland maintains an annual institutional research planning process. The process invites all academic staff to submit an individual research plan for the year ahead and identify any additional resources required to undertake their work. Institutional panels review all of the submitted plans and rank requests against institutional priorities. This informs the allocation of mainstream QR funding on an annual basis.

From 2018/19 the allocation of the QR GCRF will be integrated into this individual planning process with staff able to request support for GCRF eligible activity. These requests will be considered against the 4 core criteria used by GCRF partners in assessing bids, that:
•   Activity should be focused on the problems and solutions
•   Activity should be underpinned by research excellence, and partners in developing countries should play a significant role in this where possible
•   Activity should have a high likelihood of positive impact on the economic development and welfare needs of developing countries
•   Activity should promote strong, enduring and equitable partnerships in the UK and in the global south.

The review panels will then recommend projects to be supported from the institutional QR GCRF allocation for expenditure in 2019/20

All projects awarded funding will be subject to the usual university checks before being awarded a project code to access funding. This involves an independent check of eligible expenditure undertaken by University Research Office staff and strategic sign off by Academic Deans in the Faculties.

Further to the normal monitoring requirements of projects, the annual research planning process requires all staff in receipt of funding to report against proposed activity on a yearly basis. Additionally, the university will establish a separate process to monitor and evaluate QR GCRF projects. This will involve meetings between those staff in receipt of QR GCRF and the Head of University Research Office. Meetings will take place twice a year and will focus on progress against planned activity compliance with ODA requirements. This monitoring activity will be reported to the University's Research and Innovation Group and Academic Board.

Evaluation of project performance will inform institutional guidance for QR GCRF applicants in the annual research planning process and review panel members. An annual report on QR GCRF performance will be submitted to the Research and Innovation Group, a standing committee of the Academic Board, to highlight emerging issues and opportunities.

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.

Maximum 200 words

Planned QR GCRF expenditure in 2018/19 supports a portfolio of ODA compliant activity. In the absence of final confirmation of institutional allocations, priorities for expenditure has been divided between support for established projects and supporting activity to build capacity and capability; and pump-priming activities to underpin GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building.

In 2017 the university received a small amount of Newton Funding designed to stimulate GCRF activity. The open call for potential projects received a positive response and resulted in a small proportion of those being supported due the amount funding available. In allocating the available funding all projects proposals were evaluated against ODA criteria and the list of eligible recipients. In prioritising potential QR GCRF expenditure for 2018/19, applicants were asked to confirm the validity of their 2017 proposals and checked against revised the ODA compliance note.

The proportion of QR GCRF reserved for activity to build capacity and capability; and pump-priming activities to underpin GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building will be used to promote the approved institutional strategy through a new open call once the institutional allocation is confirmed. All proposals will be subject to evaluation against ODA criteria.

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.

Maximum 500 words

In the absence of any detail on the scale of any potential changes it is only possible to provide a high level response. A decrease in the indicative amount of QR GCRF would necessitate a prioritisation of expenditure on existing projects and collaborative activity. The university would seek to preserve activity that is already in receipt of investment and which has already been assessed as satisfying ODA criteria. An increase in the QR GCRF would enable the university to increase activity to build capacity and capability; and pump-priming activities to underpin GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building

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.

Maximum 1,000 words

In 2019-20 the university will continue to support a balanced portfolio of activity with a commitment to growing and maintaining existing collaborations and enabling a broader proportion of the research community to engage in GCRF projects. 2019-20 is likely to produce the highest demand for QR GCRF pump-priming activity such as facilitating meetings with international partners, generating data for future applications and building capacity to address challenges in developing countries. The timing of the university's research planning cycle means that the

2019-20 academic year will be the first opportunity for all research active staff to request support for QR GCRF activity in their individual plans. It is reasonable to assume that much of this activity will be embryonic and requiring capacity building support. Providing a detailed breakdown of activity is beyond the 2018-19 academic year is problematic as the indicative allocation of QR GCRC is so modest. £56,150 limits university activity to short-term investments to develop projects, establish collaborative agreements and support funding bids. As previously stated, securing project funding from the other GCRF delivery partners will be essential to project delivery.

The university has a strong track record for supporting the development of credible research funding bids. Over the last 2 years, the success rate of institutional bids is over 50%, well above the sector norm. Underpinning this success is an application process that focuses on demonstrating a clear understanding of the strategic aims and objectives of funding organisations and individual calls in developing meaningful project proposals. These institutional processes will ensure that all QR GCRF activity meets the prevailing ODA criteria.

Again in the absence of any detail on the scale of any potential changes, the university is likely to respond as outlined in the previous section

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.

Maximum 1,000 words
For reasons outlined in the previous section, the university would continue to prioritise a balanced portfolio of activity managed through the annual research planning process and informed by monitoring and evaluation processes previously described. The focus again will be short-term investments to develop projects, establish collaborative agreements and activity to support funding bids.