# Strathclyde Law School

## Research Strategy 2021-2027

### Ambition

Strathclyde Law School has, in its 60 year history, established and consolidated its reputation for research excellence in Scots, English, International and European legal scholarship. Research in the School is closely aligned with the University mission to be ‘a place of useful learning’ and the School is proud of its collegiate spirit and track record of attracting and growing talented researchers. The School was particularly successful in impact in REF2014 and has strengthened its capacity for the highest quality levels of research and impact in its work towards REF2021.

This research strategy is designed to guide Strathclyde’s ambition to strengthen research capacity and its reputation, whilst being fully in line with University policies and Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The Law School aims to be recognised in future REF exercises and league tables as a Top 20 UK research-led Law School and Top 3 in Scotland.

### Strategic goals for the period 2021-2027

1. To build on the School’s international reputation for research and strengthen the ability of staff to publish at the highest levels of international scholarship.
2. To increase the involvement of the School in major, University-led research grant applications, in line with Vision 2025, the Reid Report Recommendations (2020) and increase individual and collaborative success in grant capture.
3. To consolidate the School’s impact and KE capacity, experience and expertise, and ensure success is recognised at an individual and institutional level.
4. To continue to support an inclusive research culture in the School and enhance relationships with parts of the University that support research.
5. To recognise and enhance the synergies that exist between high quality teaching and research, and ensure that opportunities for all job families in the School are maximised in line with our commitment to research excellence.
6. To grow the number of high-quality PGR students in the School, ensure timely completion of PGR research students and continue to foster a supportive and collegiate environment for PGR students as future researchers.

### Operation

The responsibility for research in the School lies with the Research Director and Deputy Research Director, as appointed by the Head of School, and the Research Committee (or Research Team). A separate coordinator for the REF process may also be appointed. The School Director for Operations and Policy, the Director of Planning, the Director and Deputy Directors for Knowledge Exchange, Director(s) for Postgraduate Research, Directors and Deputy Directors of Research Centres, the Director of Internationalisation, the Ethics Convenor and the Library Representative are also be responsible for the development and implementation of research policy and practice in the School, and ensuring compliance with Vision 2025 and University KPIs. All these roles have established terms of reference and responsibility. Appointments will usually be made for a 3-year term by the Head of School.

Research is supported by University (RKES) and HaSS (RaKET) services. The School will build links with staff in post in both, such as the PURE team, the Faculty editor, the library and Open Access teams in order to make full use of services. The School will enhance working relationships to ensure that, inter alia, funding opportunities are shared widely and the process for bidding for grants is clear and transparent.

The School aims to grow its support for research, including obtaining funding, post-funding support and dissemination of research activities and publications, via enhanced administrative support.

### Research centres

The School supports research centres as a crucial part of bringing together researchers for collaborative work, to support funding bids and to create specific identifies that contribute to the School’s headline mission for research excellence. The School recognises that research centres are centres of expertise, which also have an important role in teaching, KE and outreach work, and are part of the School’s identity.

The current research centres in the School are:

* [Centre for the Study of Human Rights Law](https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/lawschool/centreforthestudyofhumanrightslaw/) (CSHRL)
* [Centre for Law, Crime & Justice](https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/lawschool/centreforlawcrimeandjustice/) (CLCJ)
* [Centre for Professional Legal Studies](https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/lawschool/centreforprofessionallegalstudies/) (CPLS)
* [Centre for Internet Law & Policy](https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/lawschool/centreforinternetlawandpolicy/) (CILP)
* [Strathclyde Centre for Antitrust Law and Empirical Study](https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/lawschool/strathclydecentreforantitrustlawandempiricalstudy/) (SCALES)
* [Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law & Governance](https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/) (SCELG)

Staff, both in and outwith the Law School, may belong to one or more research centres, or not. Membership of research centre(s) has no bearing on the allocation of individual research funding in the School.

Research centres will publish their own plans for development, their membership (including PGR students) and plans to obtain funding, with a view to being self-sustaining. The School will set out a programme for review of research centres every 3-4 years. Reviews should involve external reviewer(s) from outside the School and/or University, to ensure that the Centres are operating within the School’s research mission and have a continued presence and identity in the School, University and wider research or KE communities. Research centres should pay particular attention to involving members outwith the school, whether academic members at Strathclyde or other institutions, or in society, business or scientific communities. Research centres are one of the main ways in which the School, in line with the Reid Recommendations, can lead or be integrated in large-scale funding bids across the University.

Proposals for new research centres will be considered by the School. New research centres must ensure that they are able to support an appropriate number of core staff (to ensure continuity if a member of staff leaves).

### Staffing

29 members of staff were entered for REF2021. The School aims to grow its proportion of research-active staff, by supporting colleagues who wish to transfer from teaching track to research track contracts, in line with University guidance.

The School will continue to make use of University-funded opportunities, including Chancellors’ Fellows and the Global Talent scheme, to boost research expertise in new and existing areas. In line with the recommendations of the Reid Review, the School will pursue interdisciplinary appointments where appropriate to form sustained links with other departments and Faculties across the University.

The School recognises that teaching-only appointments are desirable to ensure appropriate staffing levels for our UG and PG teaching programmes, and to support teaching as a career pathway. Teaching-only appointments are often in core teaching areas where other experience (for example, in legal practice) is relevant and there are fewer candidates with extensive research expertise. The School will continue to make such appointments, and consider how this will help ensure appropriate cover for research leave and buy-out via research grants.

The School will continue to appoint Professors of Practice where appropriate, and use the experience of post-holders to enhance research, KE and teaching-focussed activities.

Staff across the school are encouraged to share vacancies widely within their research networks, and to suggest to the Head of School and Research Directors growth areas of scholarship where Strathclyde might wish to make future investment in research staff.

Staff in the school should identify potential academic visitors/Professors whose reputation would enhance that of the School. This might include impact-focussed appointments or where appointment would lead to entry into new networks for colleagues. Potential appointments should be raised with the Head of School in the first instance. Applications by PhD students to spend a period at Strathclyde should be raised with the Directors of PGR, Head of School and the Graduate School.

### Research culture

Strathclyde Law School has an excellent reputation as an inclusive, collegiate and supportive research environment. Staff should seek to further enhance this by acting as ‘critical friends’. This includes, inter alia, sharing drafts of articles or conference papers with colleagues (including their research ‘buddy’), including those outwith their own area of research. Annual research meetings between colleagues and experienced members of the research team are a way of gauging the scope of contemporary research undertaken in the School, discussing ambitions, funding and publications plans. The research meetings are complementary to the Accountability and Development Reviews (ADR) and mentoring/probation arrangements for new staff. They are designed to be supportive and encourage staff to think about short, medium and long-term research planning.

To ensure that the aims and workings of REF are understood throughout the School, regular briefings on developments will be led by the Research Director (or, if appointed, the Director of REF) (in School meetings, Away Days or other appropriate fora). The panel of internal REF reviewers should be expanded, to ensure a balance across sub-disciplines and methodological approaches with law, seniority, gender etc. Training for REF reviewers and guidance sessions on writing for the REF will be led by the Research Director.

The research seminars of the School and the research centres are an important dimension of the School’s culture. Events should be organised with adequate notice to ensure colleagues from other parts of the University and beyond are able to participate, and in particular members of the PGR community. The mix of dissemination of research work and capacity-building/training seminars should continue.

Smaller, internal events such as ‘brown bag lunches’ are an optimum way to share research ideas in an informal setting with colleagues. This would be suitable for ideas at the very early stages. Proposing innovative ways to share and discuss research and ideas is encouraged for all members of the school community, including PGR students.

### Income and research grants

The School supports the findings of the Reid Report on University-level research funding, in particular the need to diversify sources of potential funding and to engage in collaborative bids. The Faculty and the School Research Director(s) will be primarily responsible for sharing opportunities for funding internally to Strathclyde and encouraging individual researchers and research centres to participate or lead University bids. Special attention should be paid to collaborative relationships with the other faculties.

The School has established workable deadlines for expressions of interest in grants, in order to ensure that bids can be costed and reviewed fully. This will ensure a greater chance of success. Colleagues are encouraged to ask each other to look at draft bids, with a view to ensuring clarity of the language and building up expertise and best practice. The School will support, in collaboration with University and HaSS services, the bidding and post-award stages. Researchers who are employed as part of research grants will be fully integrated into the research life of the School.

The School will enhance strategic support and planning for grant applications on an individual level via the annual research meetings.

### Knowledge exchange, Impact and outreach

Engagement with non-academic partners in research is a key part of the School and University research environment. The School’s Knowledge Exchange agenda will be led by the KE Director and Deputy Director. Professors of Practice will continue be involved at all stages. Central to this task is embedding KE in Law School research to support the development of research impact. Also central is enhancing the Law School’s KE by formalising our approach to KE activity, reporting, and promotion including through the dissemination of KE expertise and the efficient and effective identification logging of examples of impact. This will be done in line with University KE Strategy and informed by the principles of the KE Concordat.

Members of the School are encouraged to identify their KE activities and share insights from successful KE activities in order to enhance KE overall in the Law School.

Individual researchers will keep PURE records up to date at all times, since this is crucial for outward-facing reputation and internal processes such as promotions.

Members of the School should share inquiries relating to expertise, such as media requests, if they are unable to participate or contribute individually. The School will enhance its relationship with the University Media Team and ensure that all instances of media engagement are logged with the team for inclusion in University publicity.

The School’s enhanced social media presence (via, inter alia, Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook (HaSS)) is vital in ensuring the visibility of the School to the University and wider community. Staff who are active on social media for professional purposes should try to share news in order to reach a wider audience. Announcements should be coordinated via the appropriate staff in both the academic and administrative support teams. The School will maintain a Social Media Champion and liaison with whom colleagues should frequently liaise.

Colleagues should try to publicise research outputs, either via the publisher (who are increasingly offering promotion opportunities) or via blogs. This includes the Law School blog, which will build on its early success in highlighting research excellence and linking to recent publications.

Staff will also be encouraged to take part in submissions to official enquiries (for example, of the Scottish or UK governments and Parliaments) individually, on behalf of a Research Centre or where a common, School-led approach would be worthwhile.

### PGR community

PGR students are an integral part of the research community in the Law School. Applications for PGR study and pastoral care for current students are the responsibility of the PGR Director(s). All research-active staff are encouraged to speak with outstanding Honours/Masters students about the possibilities for postgraduate research. The School aims to increase its number of high-quality PGR students and ensure timely completion of their research projects. Developing innovative Law or interdisciplinary pathways as a means of attracting PGR students should be pursued where possible.

The School will support PGR students by sharing opportunities for academic and non-academic career development, and ensuring that they are equipped with the skills needed to become future research leaders. The visibility of PGR students on the website should be enhanced. All staff are encouraged to play a role in the PGR review processes and support sharing of advice about enhancing career prospects for junior researchers.

## Annex: Action Plan

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| 1. Meeting the Strategic Goals | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| Report annually to the School, HaSS and University on progress towards meeting the strategic goals in this research strategy. Offer opportunity for School-wide reflection on the research direction, and how it continues to fit with School and University priorities. | Annual | Head of School, Director of Research, School Manager |
| Develop systems to gather, record and audit, on an annual basis, funding, publications and KE that will feed into eventual REF submission. | Annual | Head of School, School Manager, and overseen by the Director of Research |
| Conduct review every 3-4 years of Research Centres to ensure fit with Research Strategy | Every two years | Head of School, Director of Research and Deputy Director of Research (the latter two to oversee processes) |

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| 1. To build on the School’s international reputation for research and strengthen the ability of staff to publish at the highest levels of international scholarship | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| Encourage staff to share early-stage drafts of academic work and grants for informal review | Continuous | Director of Research, Deputy Director of Research |
| Train additional staff for REF reading | Annual | Head of School, Director of Research / [REF] |
| Organise annual research meeting for research active individual staff (including those on fixed-term contracts) to discuss short, medium and long term goals; support from the School and forthcoming opportunities | Annual | Director of Research, Deputy Director of Research |
| Ensure that the School’s communications and outward-facing profile (including on social media) is optimised | Continuous | Communications Officer |
| 1. To consolidate the School’s impact and KE experience and expertise, and ensure success is recognised at an individual and institutional level | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| To conclude, after consultation with staff and stakeholders, a School KE strategy | 2021-22 | Director of KE |
| To identify staff with potential future REF impact case studies and direct staff to University resources | Annual | Director / Deputy Director of KE;  Director of Research, Deputy Director Research, Research Centre Directors |
| Ensure web and social media content accurately reflects current School and Research Centre activity | Continuous | Research Centre Directors,  School Manager and  Communications Officer |
| 1. To increase the involvement of the School in major, University-led research grant applications, in line with Vision 2025, the Reid Report Recommendations (2020) and increase individual and collaborative success in grant capture | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| Circulate internal opportunities to all staff and encourage attendance at University-level information meetings | Continuous | Head of School; Director of Research, Research Centre Directors; FraKet |
| Organise periodic sessions to share best practice in grant writing, to increase confidence and awareness of timescales, costs etc. | Continuous | Director of Research,  Seminar coordinator |
| Engage fully with opportunities offered through the Overseas Strategic Partnership established by the University | Continuous | Director of Internationalisation, Director of Planning and Operations |
| 1. To continue to support an inclusive research culture in the School and enhance relationships with parts of the University that support research | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| Arrange annual meeting with RaKET to share new developments and interests in the School’s research profile, discuss how to facilitate smoother processes for grant applications and post-grant awards | Annual | Director of Research |
| Organise regular meetings with key HaSS and University academic colleagues, to ensure awareness of School’s research profile and that School is ‘plugged in’ to University initiatives (e.g. Director of Research, Associate Dean for KE etc) | Continuous | Director of Research |
| To ensure that School resources are used in a way that supports University and School Equalities policies, and that staff are directed to appropriate forms of research support |  | Director of Equalities |
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| 1. To grow the proportion of research active staff in the School, taking into account teaching needs and the synergies that exist between high quality teaching and research. | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| Use University GTAP and CF schemes to identify potential applicants | Continuous | Head of School |
| Ensure staff who wish to transfer to research contracts are able to access informal mentoring | Continuous | Head of School |
| Liaise with Research Centres and leaders of subject groups to ensure appropriate availability of research material in the library | Continuous | Library Officer |
| 1. To grow the number of high-quality PGR students in the School and ensure timely completion of PGR research students. | | |
| *Action Point* | *Timescale* | *Action by* |
| Develop PhD pathway to completion with milestone activities and skills training across the 3 years, recognised as part of PGCert | 2023 | PGR Director(s) |
| Provide supervision mentoring and workshops for new supervisors (if not already covered by OSDU/SPIRAL) | Annual (if new staff appointed) | PGR Director(s) |
| Monthly meetings with PhD students to provide pastoral care, career development opportunities and other initiatives to ensure PGR are fully part of the School community | Monthly (during semester) | PGR Director(s) |
| Promote PGR opportunities to current PGT / Honours students, including internal/external funding | Annual | PGR Director(s) |