

# PESS RESEARCH STRATEGY 2022-2027



UNIVERSITY OF  
**LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Department of  
Physical Education  
and Sport Sciences



@PESSLimerick



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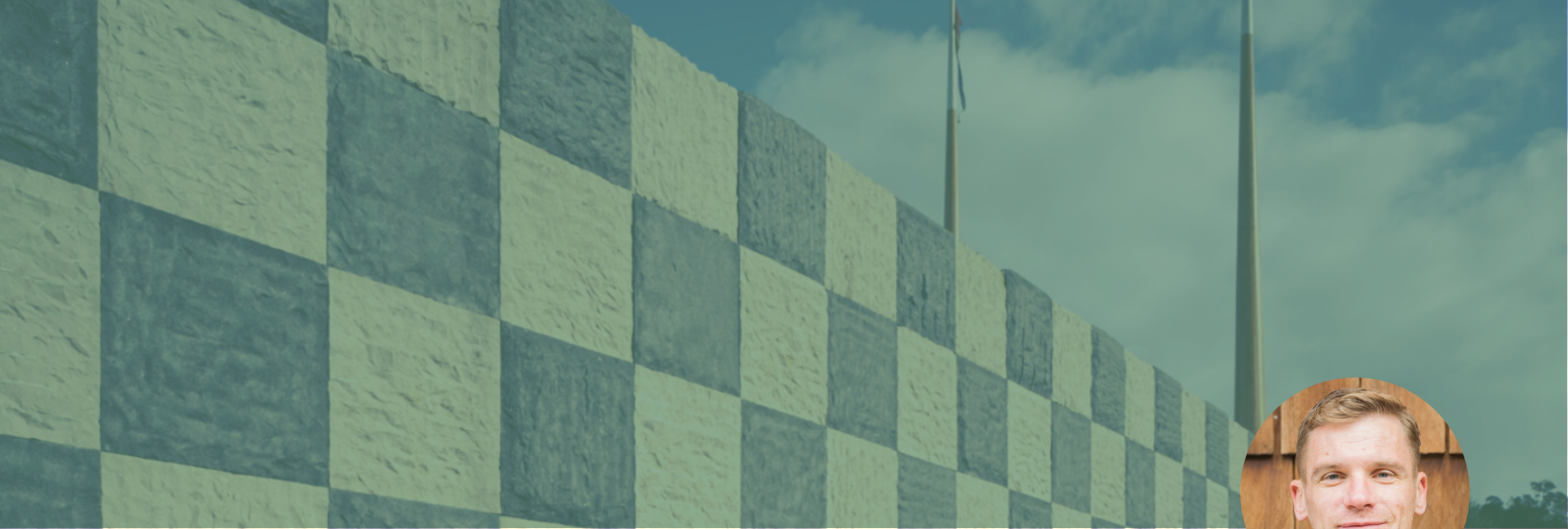
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# FOREWORD

Research is a core element of what we do here in Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS). Over the last decade we have made significant progress in building our research infrastructure, capacity and priorities while delivering research with significant societal and economic impact. This approach has enhanced our national and international reputation with PESS now recognised in the top 50 (48th) in the 2021 Shanghai Global Ranking for 'Sport Science Departments/Schools' and top 100 (51-100) in the QS World University Ranking (Sport-Related Subjects), as well as the top ranked department in Ireland. This suggests that our approach to date has been successful and that we do not need to deviate significantly from what we are already doing. However, we are an ambitious department and therefore it is natural that we seek to advance our research agenda over the next 5 years.

The overarching aim of our new strategy is to enhance the overall research experience in the department and to advance further the quality and impact of our research in line with our mission and vision statements. The strategy draws on key national and international policy documents such as the [National Research and Innovation Strategy, 2021 to 2027](#), [Research Priority Areas 2018 to 2023](#), the [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), as well as aligning with the University of Limerick's (UL50) and the Education and Health Sciences (EHS) faculty draft strategies. The strategy was developed in an iterative process through the PESS research committee and through consultation with all PESS stakeholders as well as EHS and Health Research Institute (HRI) representatives.

It is envisaged that this strategy document will act as a guiding framework for the PESS research committee, to maintain and develop initiatives across five strategic priorities which can sustain and augment the capabilities of our four research priority areas. It is also hoped that this document can act as a resource for researchers which lists key initiatives which are in place across the University to support our research agenda as well as highlight what is yet outstanding or in need of development. There is flexibility built in to the strategy with a review and evaluation at the mid-point and end.

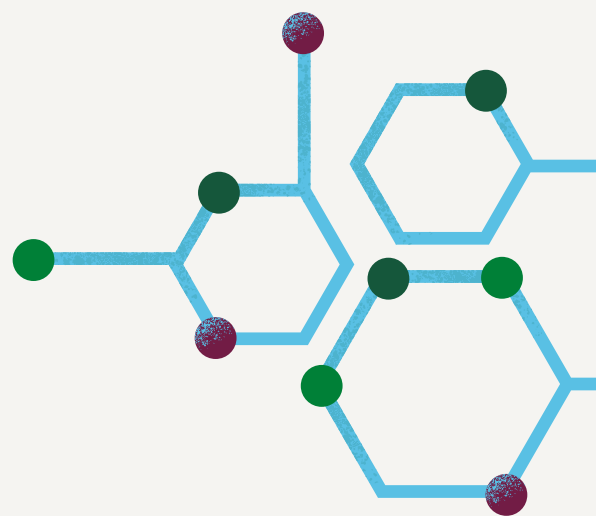
On behalf of the research committee, I hope this strategy will serve the department well and I am excited to see how the department develops and grows over the next 5 years.

**Brian Carson PhD**

*Research Committee Chair,  
Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS)*



# PESS Research Mission, Vision, Values & Priorities





## Mission, Vision, Values

1

### **PESS Research Mission**

To advance knowledge, professional practice and policy in our priority research areas in the related fields of physical education and sport and exercise sciences through high quality, innovative and impactful research

2

### **PESS Research Vision**

The Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) will conduct research to have significant impact on society and the economy through influencing practice in Physical Education, Sports Performance, and policy in Sport and Health. Ultimately, PESS department will continue to grow its reputation as a national and international centre of excellence for high impact research in physical education and sport and exercise sciences.

3

### **PESS Research Culture & Environment**

The Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences will create a culture of undertaking high quality research of national and international strategic importance with impact for all stakeholders and sponsors of our research. We aspire to provide a supportive, dynamic and innovative research environment to attract and retain the best staff and students worldwide to further enhance our reach and international reputation.

**1**

**Sport and Human Performance**

**2**

**Physical Activity for Health**

**3**

**Sport Pedagogy**

**4**

**Food and Health**



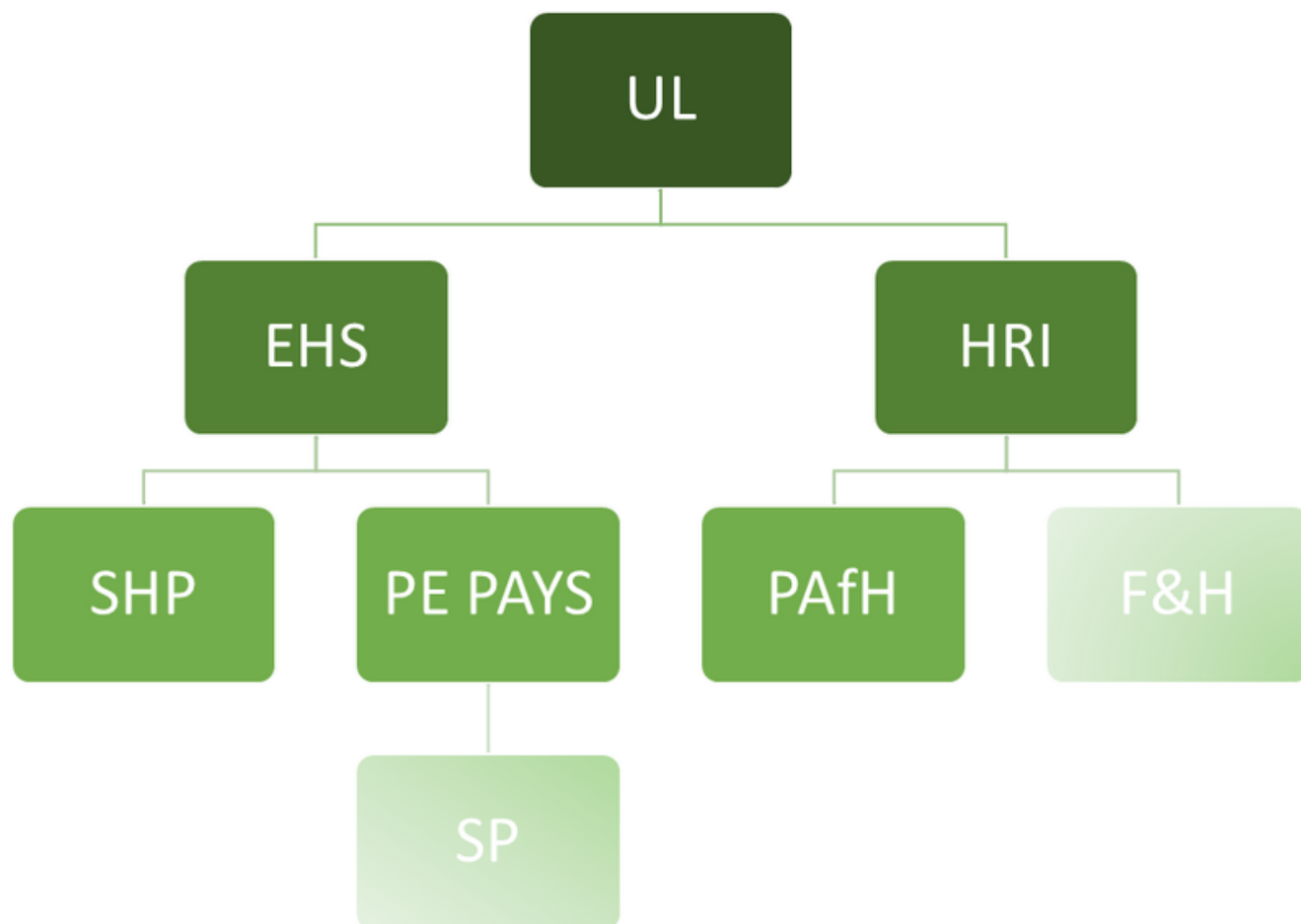


# PESS Research Organisational Structure



# PESS Research Organisational Structure

Research Institute/Centre/Cluster Organisation and Hierarchy

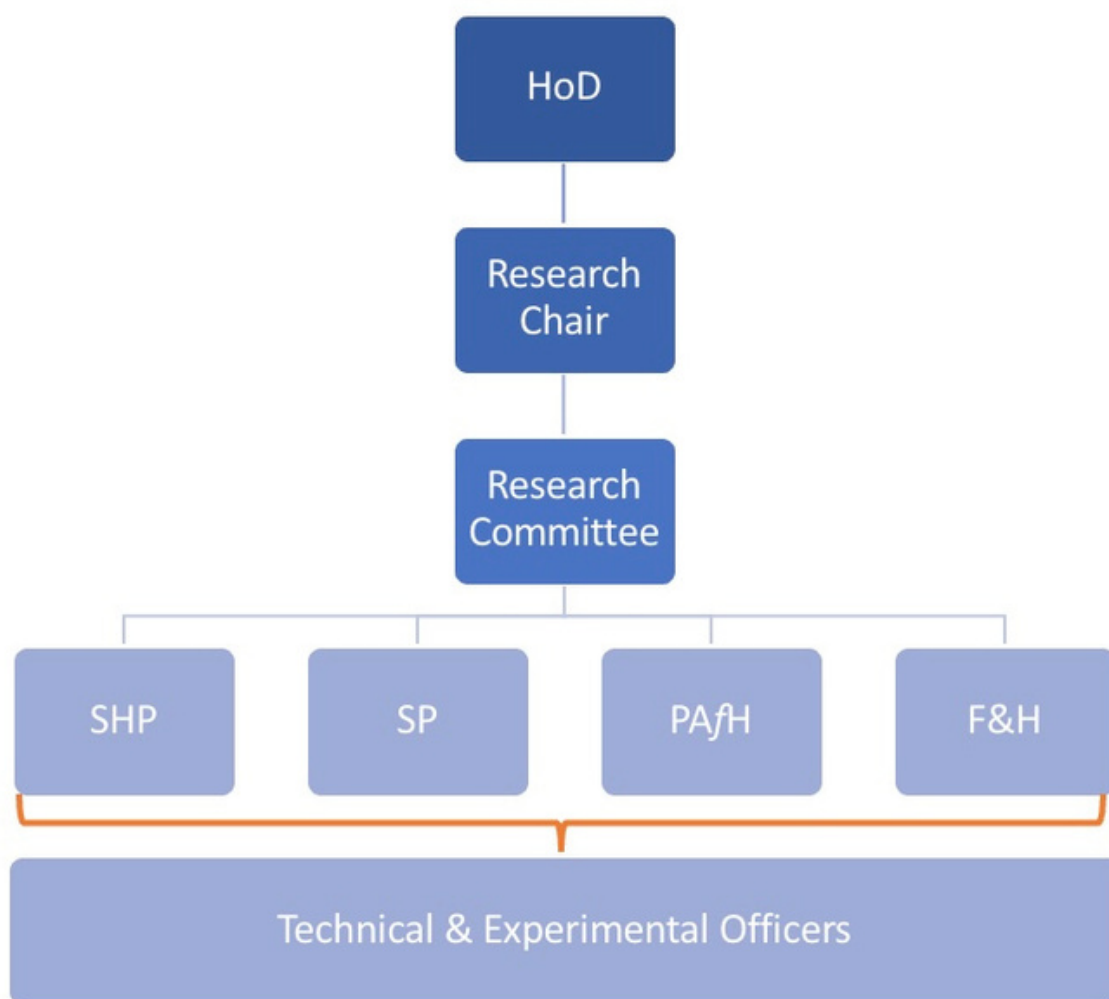


**Figure 1: Institutional research hierarchical and organisational chart.** Faculty: Education and Health Sciences (EHS); Institutes: Health Research Institute (HRI); Recognised Centres and Clusters (Darker colours): Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sport (PE PAYS), Sport and Human Performance (SHP), Physical Activity for Health (PAfH); Unofficial cluster/groupings (lighter colours): Sport Pedagogy (SP); Food and Health (F&H).



# PESS Research Organisational Structure

## PESS Research Management/Support Structure



**Figure 2: PESS Internal Research Management and Support Structure.** Sport and Human Performance (SHP), Physical Activity for Health (PAfH), Sport Pedagogy (SP), Food and Health (F&H).



# PESS Strategic Priorities 2022- 2027



# PESS Strategic Priorities 2022-2027

## Enhance the Research Culture/Experience

- ↳ The Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (PESS) endeavours to enhance the research culture, environment and experiences of all our researchers (faculty, research staff, postgraduates and experimental and technical officers). Creating positive experiences for our staff and students will make PESS a better environment to conduct research and therefore should attract talented researchers and help us to retain them. The priority is to create a positive research culture, which is equitable, inclusive, diverse, open, supportive, collegial, dynamic and innovative.

## Support Our People

- ↳ PESS recognises that our people are our greatest asset and should be supported. This support differs across career stages and research journeys. The department endeavours to provide the appropriate support for each of its staff and students to enable us to achieve our mission.



## Build Capacity - Through People, Partnerships, Training & Infrastructure

- ↳ PESS has been successful in recent years in building research capacity, particularly in terms of postgraduate student registrations. There is scope to build capacity further, specifically at the Postdoctoral and faculty level (where not linked to taught programmes). There remains significant scope for development of our research skills through on-going professional development and training and investment in the physical and technological infrastructure within PESS. We can further increase our capacity through building partnerships with stakeholders locally (e.g. UL Sport), nationally and internationally.

# PESS Strategic Priorities 2022-2027

## Deliver high quality research with greater Impact (Academic, Societal, Economic, Cultural)

- ↳ PESS conducts research with potential impact across academic, societal, cultural and economic domains. Specific challenges our researchers face are in planning, documenting and communicating that impact. This priority area will strive to elevate the quality of our research to deliver greater impact in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), specifically Goal 3 “Good Health and Wellbeing” ([Target 3.4.1](#)) and Goal 4 “Quality Education” ([Targets 4.3-4.5, 4.7](#)). Develop our capabilities in the documentation and communication of our research impact as individuals and groupings.

## Commit to Open Science

- ↳ Internationally there is a movement towards Open Science, the goal of which is to make scientific research, data and their dissemination available to any member of an inquiring society, from professionals to the general public. This movement aligns with research integrity and is linked to each stage of the research process. This priority aims to develop our skills and enhance our open science practices at each stage of the process, including publication of protocols, pre-registration of studies, pre-print publications, open access publication, and open data repository publications.





# Implementation Plan - Roadmap to achieve our priorities



In order to successfully pursue the priorities set out in this strategic plan, it is important that we outline the processes which will be put in place to enable us to achieve them. In this section we outline key strategic initiatives which have been identified to support the delivery of the strategic plan over the next 5 years. It is recognised and accepted that a degree of flexibility is required, that new ideas and processes may emerge which will better enable us to pursue these priorities and that there is space for that within the strategy. It is also acknowledged that not all of the initiatives outlined below should or need to be delivered at departmental level but that we utilise the wider institutional research structures available to us to achieve our aims.

## Strategic initiatives to implement and support strategy

- Initiatives are listed by primary priority area, with other priority areas of impact included in brackets
- Each initiative is coded by a traffic light system which indicates the readiness or timeline for implementation:

Existing, in place or to be expanded ●











Immediate development and implementation ●

Mid-term development and implementation ●

## Priority 1: Enhance Research Culture

Strategic initiatives to implement and support strategy	Priority Areas	Readiness
Undertake research culture/experience survey/workshop (Repeat at mid and end points)	(1,2)	●
PESS Funding application feedback forum (FAFF)	(1,2,3)	●
PESS Café Series e.g. Triumph and Failure	(1,2)	●
Celebratory events (e.g. PESS Research Days, PhD Graduations, Funding Success Parties)	(1)	●
Science/Innovation Discussion Hubs (PhD, Staff symposia)	(1,2)	●
Research Priority Area Away Days (PAfH, SHP, SP, F&H)	(1)	●
Community of Learning Groups	(1,2,3)	●
PESS PhD Writer's Group	(1,2,3,4)	●

## Priority 2: Support Our People

Strategic initiatives to implement and support strategy	Priority Areas	Readiness
PDRS system	(1,2,3)	
Lbb Start up funds (studentships)	(2,3)	
Research Skills Training Workshop Series	(2,3)	
Engagement with international societies (workshop)	(1,2)	
PESS and/or UL Mentorship/Buddy System	(1,2)	
Linking in with career stage support groups such as HRI PG/PD Hub and UL EMerge network	(2)	
PESS Funding application feedback forum (FAFF)	(1,2,3)	
PESS Strategic Grant Application Support Fund	(2,3)	
Impact Case Study Workshop Series (Planning, Documenting, Communicating)	(2,3,4)	
HRI Biostatistical Support via HRI Biostatistician	(2,4)	



HRI Travel fund	(2)	●
Clinical Research Support Unit (HRI)	(2)	●
Trials Methodology Research Network via HRI	(2,3)	●

## Priority 3: Capacity Building

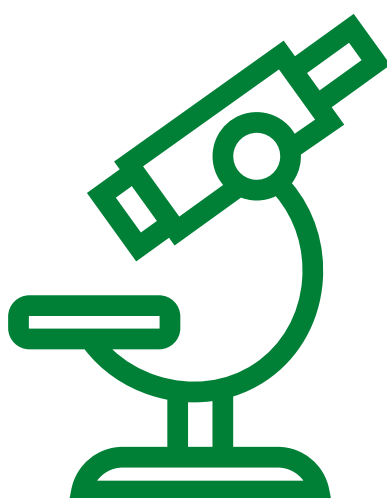
Strategic initiatives to implement and support strategy	Priority Areas	Readiness
EHS Irish Research Council (GOI) scholarship support programme	(2,3)	●
Support for Infrastructure Applications (SFI), advocate at faculty and University	(2,3)	●
PESS Strategic Grant Application Support Fund	(2,3)	●
Lbb Start up funds (e.g. studentships)	(2,3)	●
Strategic Grant Targeting (e.g. MSCA, link to faculty/HRI)	(2,3)	●
EHS MSCA support programme	(2,3)	●

Research Skills Training Workshop Series (linked to HR development programme)	(2,3)	●
EHS Succeed and Lead postdoctoral training programme	(2,3,4)	●
International Placements/Internships/Exchanges	(2,3)	●
EHS Funding clinics (1-to-1) and EHS/HRI Research funding officer support	(2,3)	●
Diversification of funding workshops	(2,3)	●
PESS Recruitment/Retention Strategy	(1,2,3)	●
Develop a plan for a National Graduate School (Link to DCU)	(3)	●
HRI Fundamentals of Health Research Series	(2,3)	●
HRI Training series including (Statistics; Good Clinical Practice; Critical Appraisal Skills Programme; Data Management; Clinical Trials Regulation)	(2,3)	●







**Priority 4: Deliver high quality research with greater Impact (Academic, Societal, Economic, Cultural)**

Strategic initiatives to implement and support strategy	Priority Areas	Readiness
Impact Case Study Workshop Series (Planning, Documenting, Communicating)	(2,3,4)	●
Stakeholder Identification Session(s)	(4)	●
Create links to Industry (e.g. meet and greet sessions)	(3,4)	●
PPI support and funding via HRI	(2,4)	●



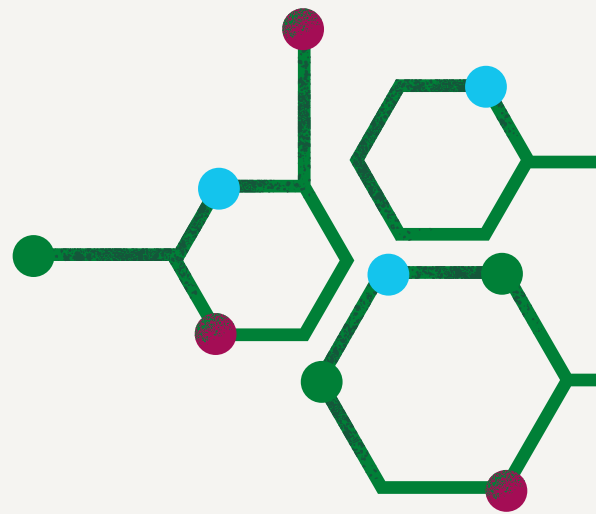
## Priority 5: Commit to Open Science

Strategic initiatives to implement and support strategy	Priority Areas	Readiness
Open Science Training Series	(2,3,5)	
PESS Open Access Fund	(5)	
HRI Open Access Fund	(5)	
IreL Agreements	(5)	





# How Will We Evaluate Success?



# Timeline

**Success under each priority area will be evaluated at the mid- (Q4 2024) and post-implementation (Q1 2027) points against identified markers of success. These markers of success will include a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures such as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and process outcomes (e.g. delivered/not delivered, achieved/not achieved).**

## Key Performance Indicators and Markers of Success

### Research Culture/Experience

- PESS Researcher Experience Survey (to be developed by research committee)
- Section 4 Initiatives Delivered (n)/Not delivered
- Success: Feedback from survey addressed and improved outcomes on re-test at mid- and end-points.

### Supporting our people

- Section 4 Initiatives Delivered (n)/Not delivered
- Success: Development and delivery of new initiatives to support staff; improved outcomes on survey re-test at mid- and end-points.

### Build Capacity – Through people, partnerships, training and infrastructure

- Section 4 Initiatives Delivered (n)/Not delivered
- Student/staff recruitment and retention (Year on Year and 5 year rolling averages/totals)
- Document new infrastructure
- Document new partnerships
- Success: Development of new initiatives to build capacity; New Key partnerships; New Infrastructure; Increased staff and student numbers.

### Deliver high quality research with greater Impact (Academic, Societal, Economic, Cultural)

- Section 4 Initiatives Delivered (n)/Not delivered
- New Impact Case Studies
- Documented impact (Academic, Societal, Economic, Cultural) to be furnished by researchers to research theme leads. (For example, where full impact case studies have not been progressed what short summary statements documenting impact can be made, e.g. coverage in national/international media).
- Success: Development and delivery of new initiatives to enhance impact;  $\geq 1$  new impact case study per research priority area.

### **Commit to Open Science (Year on year and 5 year totals)**

- Section 4 Initiatives Delivered (n)/Not delivered
- Registered/published protocols
- Registered Trials
- Pre-print publications
- Open Access Publications (including UL repository)
- Open Access datasets
- Success: Development and delivery of new initiatives to support open science; increased open science publications (at each stage) by >15%.

### **Publication Metrics (Year on Year and 5 year rolling averages/totals)**

- Publication Number
- \*Web of Knowledge (WoK) Quartiles and top decile (\*As long as WoK remains the priority UL metric, if this changes we will adapt accordingly)
- WoK citations
- Select top disciplinary journal publications (to be informed by research staff via theme leads)
- International co-authorship
- Success: Increase publication number (>5%); Increase top decile and Quartile 1 publications (>15%); Increase international co-authorship (>15%); Increase citations (>15%)

### **Funding Metrics (Year on Year and 5 year rolling averages/totals)**

- Research Income
- Sources (e.g. National, International, EU, Industry)
- Success: Increase total research income (>30%); Increase EU funding (>30%)