



Cyngor Cyllido Addysg  
Uwch Cymru  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales

hefcw

# Research Wales Innovation Fund

## Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2020–2023

### Delivery Report

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## What is the Research Wales Innovation Fund?

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales' (HEFCW) Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF) is designed to support a broad range of Knowledge Exchange (KE) activities that contribute towards economic and social impact, including working with industry and businesses, as well as supporting entrepreneurship and skills. The fund also supports the wider civic mission and public engagement role of Welsh universities.

At Aberystwyth, the work of designing and delivering an Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy funded by the RWIF is led by the Department of Research, Business & Innovation and this report details the activities and projects delivered during the 2020-2023 funding period.



Aberystwyth University's [Research & Innovation Strategy](#) for 2019-2024 set out the institution's vision for its role in the social and economic development in Wales through the application of its knowledge to regional and global challenges.

This vision informed our RWIF [Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy](#) for 2020-2023, which put forward a programme of work across four pillars - Excellence, Place, Innovation and Collaboration - to be delivered through 40 projects within the strategic time frame.

The RWIF Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy, along with its funding, programme of activity and resource management, are all managed by the University's Department of Research, Business & Innovation (RBI).

The RWIF capacity grant awarded by HEFCW was primarily used to increase resources dedicated to delivering the portfolio of RWIF projects at RBI. In collaboration with partners and drawing on our place-based strengths in language, teaching and research, we also ensured the capacity grant was used to embed the Welsh language and culture in our innovation and knowledge exchange activities.

New programme and project managers, as well as administrative staff brought innovative ways of working. The commissioning of a number of digital tools enabled fast, simultaneous, remote access and communication on several streams of work that enabled us to multiply our capacity to deliver of the programme within the strategic time frame.

Recruiting talent for this dedicated programme of work proved to be the greatest challenge throughout 2020-2023. This constraint was mitigated by embedding portfolio, programme & project management methodologies in the departmental operation, introducing innovative recruitment and structural changes to ensure maximum flexibility across all functional pillars that addressed three themes of major change: digital transformation, knowledge exchange channel development and focusing on engagement to ensure long-term impact from our research and innovation relationships.

Improvement of staff's digital skills enabled effective hybrid working that was imposed on us by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also improved cross-team and cross-project working, including online co-development of projects. This innovation highlighted the future need for integrated systems and transparency to manage our many activities and continually improve our knowledge exchange practices.



### An outline of the key enablers and achievements of the Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy over the three-year period from 2020-2023:



#### Investment in Skills, Staff and Services

Increasing staff dedicated to delivery of knowledge exchange projects and improving our performance included the integration of 12 new posts, with dedicated training across professional service and academic staff, complemented by key experts that coached and shared best practice.



#### New and Improved Digitalisation

Introducing new software systems that increased our service capacity and speed in a remote working world, improving the collation and delivery of data that enhanced communication, accuracy and decision making, as well as enabling the effective measurement of our performance improvements.



#### Longer-term Planning

Enabling future investments in infrastructure, skill and capacity were embedded alongside institutional strategies.





### Developing a Dialogue Centre: Stage One

**Goal: To establish a Dialogue Centre at Aberystwyth University, which creates innovative opportunities for collaborative knowledge exchange.**

The Aberystwyth Dialogue Centre was developed in consultation with Simon Fraser University's Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver, Canada as well as other international advisors from Australia and New Zealand. It was officially launched in November 2022 at a dialogue event with the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Professor Rowan Williams.

Consultations establishing strategic relationships and international recruitment resulted in the appointment of Dr Jennifer Wolowic as the Principal Lead of the Dialogue Centre in early 2023. Since its launch, the Dialogue Centre has facilitated events ranging from internal away days and staff training, to student workshop and engagement events at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay. Each external activity involved between 20 and 50 participants from across the community, public, business and third sector, as well as academic researchers.

An internal funding call identified projects well suited to pilot the Dialogue Centre's potential for engaging academic leaders of dialogue and their communities. A total of five projects were delivered on topics such as One Health, Wellbeing, Constitutional Futures and Healthy Ageing.





## Developing the Dialogue Centre: Stage Two

**Goal: To relocate the Dialogue Centre's Activities to the Old College.**

Significant delays in the construction timelines due to the war in Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic have postponed the Old College refurbishment. As a result, the planned relocation of the Dialogue Centre was moved to the next strategic cycle.

An interim space for innovative knowledge exchange, Tŷ Trafod Ymchwil (Research Dialogue Hub), opened in August 2023 on the University's Penglais Campus. This is a bespoke space for researchers to interact, develop and collaborate with each other and external partners on knowledge exchange activities. This room facilitates adaptable set ups to allow in person, hybrid and online events.



Plans for an additional Dialogue Centre space in the Old College will be realised in years 4 and 5 of the next strategic period.



## Actively Engaging with Regional Funders

**Goal: To actively engage and partner with regional funders in Ceredigion and Powys through the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, supporting the "Vision for Mid Wales", the ESF Priority 5 programme, the Mid Wales Growth Deal and regional working groups in enterprise support, employability and skills.**

All planned activities were delivered during this strategic period. Two major bids were submitted in 2023 for funding through the Mid Wales Growth Deal and in 2024 were being appraised at the Outline Business Case stage. In addition, representatives from the University sit on the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnerships Board and Regional Skills Cluster Groups, working with stakeholders to drive investment in skills by understanding local and regional skills gaps. We are also actively pursuing Innovation funding opportunities through Horizon Europe now that the UK are eligible partners in the programme.







## Mid Wales Funding for Growth

**Goal:** To secure a minimum of £20M in capital investment from the Mid Wales Growth Deal, linked to initiatives in Aberystwyth University's strategic priority areas of Industrial Innovation Research.

Aberystwyth University presented two major capital projects to the Mid Wales Growth Deal team, which have progressed to the Outline Business Case stage. The first involves developing a business incubation and collaborative innovation space at Aberystwyth University, focused on Green Future Innovation. The second bid involves the development of a multi-site facility for digital technology innovation, proof of concept and enabling capability work, known as the National Spectrum Centre. Both projects will reach across Ceredigion and Powys regions and the delivery of both projects will form part of the next RWIF strategic plan.

A third initiative was explored to develop a Farm of the Future: an agricultural living lab network with a concentration of research and commercialisation at Aberystwyth University's Trawsgoed Farm. This concept builds on the strengths of the region and the University in agriculture, food, renewable energy, and veterinary science. To ensure connected capabilities across living lab sites and initial project deployed LoRaWAN capability across the University's farm and facilities. Further development of this digital connectivity as well as energy sustainability will occur in the next strategic period.

A fourth initiative to develop a Crop Innovation Hub as an industry-linked knowledge exchange facility for plant crop technology was explored in collaboration with the Welsh Government. Further investigation and viability studies would be required in the next strategic period.





## Increase Activity in Industrial Innovation Research

**Goal:** To work with new and existing industrial partners to develop the University's translational research pipeline.

Aberystwyth University appointed a new Director to lead the National Spectrum Centre in 2023. Professor Amit Mishra will help develop the centre's governance frameworks, product lines and operational plans. An identifiable pipeline of projects will continue in the early stages of next strategic period with the final stages of major investment expected in mid 2025 and beyond.



## Developing Rural Resilience through Innovation

**Goal:** To establish an enterprise network that builds economic Growth, Rural Resilience and Innovation (GRRaIN).



This network was set up to transfer knowledge and best practice to rural businesses and provide opportunities for training. Its activities were championed by the University's Business School and now form part of our Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub programme. Network activity completed in collaboration with AberInnovation included webinars and workshops on topics such as: "Rural Crime in Wales", "Creative industries in the Rural Economy", "Green Jobs and Sustainability" and "Application and development of LoRaWAN technology in rural areas".



## Knowledge Exchange Toolkit

**Goal:** To develop an online toolkit and deliver academic staff training in Knowledge Exchange

Training online and in-person was delivered by RBI. Sessions were designed for researchers to learn and share best practice related to knowledge exchange, commercialisation and business engagement. Guide materials were also launched on our website, collating all [training resources as a KE toolkit](#).

### Knowledge Exchange Toolkit

Resources to support Knowledge Exchange activities, including Bid Development, Building Networks and Intellectual Property.

Knowledge Exchange Model	▼
Identifying Funding	▼
Bid Development	▼
Networking	▼
Communicating	▼
Intellectual Property	▼



## Strategic Partnerships with Industry

**Goal: Use a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system along with a Contracts and Partnership Records System to identify key strategic partnerships.**

CRM commissioning began in 2022 and relationships are now logged centrally, however integration with other service systems that enable knowledge exchange will extend into the 2023-2028 strategic period. The integrated systems will enable growth with strategic partnerships, alignment with regional sector strengths and the University's research capabilities through multi-level engagement plans. An example of such a partnership is that with the local University Health Board (UHB), which includes, co-delivery of research, delivery of innovative medical interventions direct to local patients and local GP surgeries by connecting private and public service providers at a local level.



## UKRI Applications

**Goal: To increase the number of UKRI funding applications led by Aberystwyth University.**



The 2019-2020 baseline target of six successful and strategic Innovate UK bids was exceeded. Innovate UK grant successes in 2023 led to awards worth over £750,000. External expertise was contracted to upskill academic and professional services staff in developing non-HE collaborations, developing competitive funding applications as well as funding bid writing support. Support for 10 targeted academics was delivered as a result of this work. This tailored support extends into the next strategic period and the next round of submission deadlines in September 2023.



## Innovative Funding Applications

**Goal: To increase the number, value and quality of applications to translational research funding programmes.**

The planned activity for the strategic period was successfully delivered and included new awards for internal translational funding projects of over £35,000; a series of training sessions on Intellectual Property; software development and non-STEM commercialisation as well as leveraging member-based innovation collaboration networks.







## Consultancy income

**Goal: To increase consultancy income by 15%, using 2019-2020 Higher Education Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey data published in March 2021 as a baseline.**

The target was exceeded with consultancy income increasing by 25%. One of the key factors in this achievement was a focused approach on engaging consultancy champions in academic and service departments to shape their consultancy offering and lead generation. In addition, the University's Consultancy Policy and Intellectual Property Policy were reviewed and revised to improve clarity and understanding across the researcher community. New metric collection systems and procedures were introduced for consultancy activity across the institution. Further scalable improvements to this work are planned for the 2023-2028 strategic period.



25% increase



40% increase



## Contract Research Income

**Goal: To increase Contract Research income by 15%, using 2019-2020 HE-BCI survey data published March 2021 as a baseline.**

The planned target was exceeded and income for contract research increased by 40% with the adoption of measures listed above.



## Customer Relationship Management system

**Goal: To develop and implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to capture, monitor and develop strategies for external engagement across the University.**

Microsoft Dynamics was selected as the CRM system that best aligned with other Microsoft platforms used by the RBI department. Uploading data from several historic data management systems, programmes and research projects continues to be a labour-intensive element of this project, and will therefore continue into the next strategic period. It will be integrated with our finance and HR system in Spring 2023, with a new research management system: Worktribe, due for launch in the summer of 2023, and our contracts management system: Minuet in the Autumn of 2023.





## Knowledge Exchange Concordat

**Goal: To introduce policies, principles, strategies and procedures which support and promote the requirements of the KE Concordat.**



The Knowledge Exchange Concordat is a sector-led initiative set up to recognise, develop and improve how higher education providers engage in knowledge exchange. To support its aims, we carried out a self-assessment and stakeholder engagement exercise before commissioning an action plan in 2021-2022. Implementation continued during 2022-2023 and our alignment with the KE Concordat principles through key institutional deliverables is embedded in our 2023-2028 RWIF Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy. In implementing

the Concordat's principles relating to engagement, working transparently and ethically, as well as building capacity for KE, we initiated an internal open call for KE funding in the last two years of the strategic period. This identified the appetite and skill to undertake KE and the support we could offer to scale up KE activity in the future.

Over the three rounds of open call funding, we processed over 40 applications and distributed funding of £360,000 to engaged academics to undertake KE activity supported by the RBI team. Insights gathered from this process are now being used to inform the RBI support mechanisms for the next strategic period.



## Wales Innovation Network (WIN)

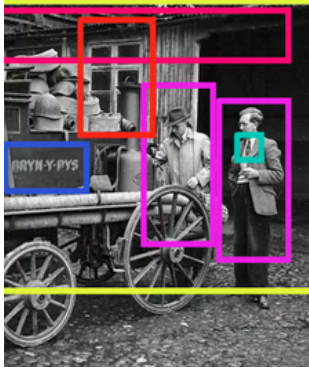
**Goal: To engage with the Wales Innovation Network to support the delivery of the Network's aim of securing an additional £30m to Welsh institutions over an initial three-year period and to report data on bids developed.**

Four applications for Wales Innovation Network (WIN) projects were successful in October 2022, bringing in funding worth around £150,000 and cementing our role in the network's planned activity. Applications will continue for future rounds of funding. We have institutional representation on the WIN Board, the WIN collaboration in commercialisation initiative, as well as academic representation on the thematic steering groups. In addition, our RBI professional service staff represent Aberystwyth University on the WIN Operational and Development Group.





## Wales Trusted Digital Repository (WTDR)



**Goal:** To establish the Wales Trusted Digital Repository (WTDR) initiative with regional partners and secure £70m+ investment for the region.

The WTDR initiative aims to create a national AI-enabled repository in collaboration with the National Library of Wales. Our [pilot project](#) delivered in collaboration with the Arts & Humanities Research Council tested a machine learning prototype in preparation for a larger project to develop a national infrastructure for digital innovation and curation in arts and humanities.

## New business growth and skills support



### Continuous Professional Development Provision - Strategic Planning

**Goal:** To develop a central strategy, policy and procedures for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) provision.

Prior to developing a centralised strategy, an internal audit of CPD provision and stakeholder engagement exercise were completed in 2021-2022. The next stage was intentionally delayed to ensure the improvements and impact of the Distance Learning provision provided as a result of COVID-19 pandemic guidelines did not influence our future data or decisions. An independent market analysis and opportunity assessment exercise was commissioned post-COVID in 2022-2023, with the findings reviewed and then informing the strategic, governance and operational plans for the 2023-2024 period.



### Continuous Professional Development Provision - Expansion and Diversification

**Goal:** To expand and diversify the current CPD provision and target new sectors. To increase Learner Days by 10% per annum, using 2019-2020 HE-BCI survey data as a baseline.



Having delayed the development of the strategic, governance and operational plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the growth aspiration was consequently replaced by a predicted 16% decrease in learner days the 2020-2023 period. This decline will be reversed once the new strategy, policy and procedures are in place in the next RWIF strategic period.





## Bio-Accelerator Programme

**Goal: To fund two Bio-Accelerator programmes for start-ups and spinouts through AberInnovation.**

The Bio-Accelerator programme was initiated in 2022 and funded through the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). The programme was successful in supporting budding entrepreneurs and as a result, RWIF funds were used to develop a complimentary accelerator programme in 2023, branded as AberCURE. This programme was tailored as a lead-in for the larger UKRI iCURE programme. As a result of the AberCURE call for applications, six projects were selected for a special bootcamp, which involved developing their commercial offering, value proposition and marketing strategies. Three standout projects were identified during the bootcamp, and each of these have made significant advancements in refining their offering, with a view to pursuing larger funding opportunities to take their ideas to market.



## National Spectrum Centre

**Goal: To establish industry funded students for the Spectrum Technologies MSc through the National Spectrum Centre.**

As a commitment to deliver skills to industry we enabled business-funded learning at the Master's level for those employed in or seeking to enter the spectrum technology sector. We achieved this funding in the latter two years of the strategic period, with the intention to continue and extend places in future. We envisage expanding this offering to include degree apprenticeships in the first three years of the next strategic period.





## VetHub1

**Goal: To develop the commercial offering of establish a strategy and procedures to target, cost and deliver commercial screening for VetHub1.**

A review of the VetHub1 facility upon completion of construction concluded a broader commercial potential than originally anticipated. We commissioned a market validation exercise and the creation of a business development plan across the full breadth of possible VetHub1 services. This exercise did not delay the operation of the facility as supply chain and service delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine had already impeded the establishment of the laboratory's containment certification. The plan implementation will begin in the next strategic period.



## Old College Enterprise

**Goal: To produce an operational plan for the Enterprise and Innovation Zone.**

As with many capital projects across the University, significant delays in the construction timelines due to the war in Ukraine and COVID-19 has extended this project into the next strategy. As an interim measure, the Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub has become the focal point of enterprise support programming (please see below).



## Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub

**Goal: To establish a Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub and develop a cohesive strategy and coordinated processes for enterprise support for students, graduates, staff and businesses.**

The Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub was delivered in 2022 on the Aberystwyth Science Park and is co-located with the KE professional service teams. A new strategy for enterprise support was developed in 2022 and its implementation continues into the next strategic period, with consolidation of student and staff support enterprise schemes underpinning the hub's workstreams and governance framework. With support from the KE Enterprise Hub and the RWIF grant allocation, three cross-disciplinary research hubs were also established. Each has a specific knowledge exchange strategy that aligns our research strengths with local economic development aspirations for a resilient rural economy, as well as investment in innovation that achieves an impact across the whole of Wales.





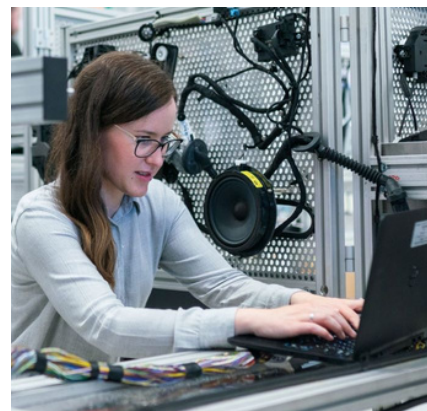


## Engage with and Establish Business Networks

**Goal: To host and establish new networks with local and regional Business Networks.**

The Growth and Rural Resilience Innovation Network project successfully delivered support for rural enterprises. With the successful recruitment of dedicated partnership managers in 2023, this can now extend to a larger network with greater activity planned through the Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub.

Integration of the newly-commissioned CRM system will align this work with strategic partnership development as well as the network generation of our cross-disciplinary research hubs and their knowledge exchange programmes.



## Alumni Entrepreneur Group

**Goal: To establish an Alumni Entrepreneur Group, working with the University's Development and Alumni Relations Office.**

This collaborative project was paused due to changes in the Development and Alumni Relations office that affected resource availability. New appointments in July 2023 will enable this project to be implemented in the next strategic period and we expect the project's scope to be developed and agreed by the end of the first year, with the ambition of the project remaining unchanged.



## Academic Champions of Enterprise (ACE)

**Goal: To culturally embed entrepreneurship in academic faculties through a network of enterprise champions.**

This has been co-delivered with the University's Careers Service Team and the Strategic Enterprise Group. The Academic Enterprise Champion (ACE) network was established across 14 out of 19 targeted academic and service departments. The "Meet the Youth Entrepreneur" Scheme graduate start-up surpassed targets of 20 in 2021 and achieved targets of 22 in 2022 and 24 in 2023.







## Entrepreneurial Support

**Goal: To support enterprising staff and postgraduate and doctoral students to develop start-up and spin out opportunities.**



A competitive funding scheme was co-delivered with the Careers Service Team and the University Strategic Enterprise Group, including the student "InvEnterPrize" competition rewarding entrepreneurial students with new business ideas and ventures. The "AberPreneurs" programme included tailored support and training in the areas of targeted market research, evaluation of commercial viability, partnership and co-development opportunity assessment and business modelling.



## Spinout Policy

**Goal: To establish an institutional spinout policy and encourage activity leading to spinouts.**

The new spinout policy was approved by the Executive Committee in July 2023 following a complete review of the University's Intellectual Property (IP) portfolio and IP policy, as well as a revision of the Consultancy policy. Alongside the release of these new and revised policies, all RBI staff received business development, knowledge exchange and commercialisation training to ensure a thorough understanding of the policy content and how this related to business development processes, knowledge exchange terminology and industry best practices. This activity also meets on priorities outlined in our KE Concordat action plan for this strategic period.



## New Spinouts

**Goal: To establish three new spinouts based on Aberystwyth University's Intellectual Property over three years.**

Two spinouts were established (ArcitekBio Ltd and IOMICS) in the 2020-2022 period while the third spinout product (Auxilium) is in beta phase development, with founders attending the AberCURE program.





## Commercialisation of non-STEM Research

**Goal:** To develop initiatives to engage with and support the commercialisation of research in social sciences, humanities and the arts.



This has been delivered with the support of the ASPECT network as an associated partner. Non-STEM entrepreneurship has been rewarded through our internal "InvEnterPrize" programme and we had external success within the Modern Languages department as part of the ASPECT ARC Accelerator programme.

The development of a mobile app from a non-STEM subject area is an output from our commercialisation training and competitive funding scheme focused on app development.



## Software Application Development

**Goal:** To develop a strategy, policy and processes for Software Application development and distribution including support and mentoring.

This internal programme of training and competitive seed funding was launched in 2022-2023. Training from an established app developer was provided, attendees could qualify for further commercialisation funding for their concept on a competitive basis. Professional app development agencies were engaged to validate concepts and provide commercialisation support for future funding awardees. This programme's success for identifying engaged staff and students and developing their commercial potential will see it continue into the next strategic period, with realised benefits expected to emerge in year 4 or 5 of that period.



## Interactions with Further Education Colleges

**Goal:** To work closely with the Learning and Teaching teams to increase interactions with local FE Colleges.

With significant delays caused by pandemic-reduced resource availability, stakeholder ambitions will be revisited in the next strategic period, where a rescoping exercise will ensure that we include the new strengths of the Learning and Teaching provisions of the University, particularly in relation to the new Veterinary School and the new School of Nursing.

## Civic mission and public engagement



### State-of-the-art Interactive Audio and Video Infrastructure

**Goal:** To establish state-of-the-art interactive audio and video infrastructure across the University to take advantage of the post COVID-19 digital shift and enable hybrid events.

The opening in 2023 of [Tŷ Trafod Ymchwil \(Research Dialogue Hub\)](#) delivered state of the art audio and visual infrastructure for hosting live 360 degree, hybrid and online events. With a capacity of 60, this dedicated space for creating knowledge exchange is complemented by smaller spaces with the same hybrid capability installed in the Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub.



### Host Online Cultural and Creative Events



**Goal:** To host online cultural and creative events *via* the new AV infrastructure across the University.

During 2022-2023 several events were delivered using the University's existing infrastructure, which included hybrid and online only events. Two online public lectures were delivered during the 2021 Festival of Research with three panel discussions, a symposium and two public lectures during the 2022 Festival of Research.



### Hay Festival Activities

**Goal:** To work with the Hay Festival to develop digital content for wider access, including schools.

Digital content was created and distributed as part of the Hay Festival between 2020 and 2022. The Hay Festival collaboration continues into 2023 and beyond, and four of our University researchers delivered a series of lectures as part of the festival's programme. In line with the requirements of the Hay Festival organisers, these public lectures were delivered in person and the recordings are now available on the University's website. The collaboration will be reviewed in the next strategic period.



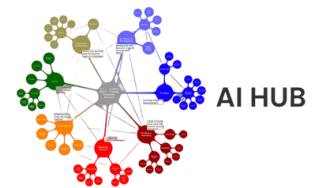




## Establish “The Worlds We Want” Programme

**Goal:** To develop a Aberystwyth University’s interdisciplinary hub for future generations thinking and research.

This goal was expanded to support three cross-disciplinary research and knowledge exchange hubs, following a consultation with hub members. All three hubs have been in operation since 2022 and all work to long term objectives that generate a competitive case for external centre funding within a five-year timeframe. The three hubs are: [The Worlds We Want](#), [Rural Futures](#) and [Our AI Enabled World](#).



## Memorandum of Understanding with the National Library of Wales

**Goal:** To build on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Library of Wales and collaborations with other stakeholders e.g. Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, with a view to establishing a cultural Research and Innovation Hub.

Aberystwyth University has proactively worked on developing an MoU that incorporates broad stakeholder engagement for the project. Partnership development is ongoing, with activities co-delivered as part of the University’s Festival of Research contributing to the strengthening of this relationship. A pause in activity in 2023 presents an opportunity to refine and enhance the relationship as well as project plans for future success.

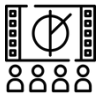




## Wales Civic Mission Network

**Goal: To engage with the Wales Civic Mission Network to enable sharing of good practice with other Welsh Higher Education Institutions and explore more dynamic ways of engagement.**

The University delivered on its commitment to attend and participate in the Wales Civic Mission Network and to exchange best practice. This will inform the next phase of work championed by the Dialogue Centre Principal Lead, to generate an institutional strategy around our civic mission and participatory community engagement. The strategy will align with the Welsh Civic Mission Framework established by Universities Wales along with the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.



## Festival of Research

**Goal: To host an annual Festival of Research, starting in 2021.**

The annual Festival of Research has been delivered each November since 2021. In 2022, Aberystwyth University hosted 17 events as part of the festival, whilst 4 further events were



hosted in collaboration with external organisations. The festival has increased opportunities for public engagement, enabling the University to interact with local communities and broader society. The 2023 program will last seven days, host 20 events in 10 different locations, with an estimated audience of 600 people. We will review this initiative in early 2024.

## Closing Remarks

Researchers at Aberystwyth have been making new discoveries and sharing knowledge for 150 years. Their work has made a difference to the lives of people in Wales and beyond. Varieties of grass bred here have led to improved crops for farms while bringing environmental benefits too; our computer scientists are exploring the use of deep learning algorithms to help improve the early detection of prostate cancer, breast cancer and diabetes; our social scientists are at the forefront of work to safeguard the elderly from domestic violence and abuse.

Taking our research outside the lab and applying our findings to real-world problems are core to our mission as a university. As Director of Research, Business & Innovation, it is my role to nurture and facilitate this important flow of expertise and knowledge exchange between our researchers and external communities, ensuring appropriate systems and professional support are in place to promote innovation and develop partnerships.

Support from the Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF) in 2020-2023 has enabled us to strengthen and further develop this important aspect of our work and I am grateful to staff across the University who have helped to deliver so many innovative projects during the first strategic period. We are now focusing our efforts and working with colleagues on ensuring the success of our second round of RWIF support for the 2023-2028 period.

Thanks to RWIF, we have established a Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise Hub to provide a gateway to the University for external organisations interested in collaborating with our researchers or using our facilities. We also offer practical help and expert advice to the University's researchers and academics on Intellectual Property and collaborative research contracts. In addition, we support researchers setting up start-up or spin-out companies based on University Intellectual Property. Examples of recent spin-outs include ARCITEKBio which produces natural, sustainable sweeteners from waste streams, and PhytoQuest which develops quality-controlled cosmetic, food and animal health ingredients.





Responsibility for scoping, managing and delivering the Innovation & Knowledge Exchange Strategy funded by the Research Wales Innovation Fund lies with the Department of Research, Business & Innovation. The work is led by the Director of the Department, Helen Jones.

As a professional support service, our aim is to provide guidance to research staff and equip them with the tools they need to help find funding, develop applications, cost proposals, manage grant awards and advance collaboration with academic partners, business and industry. We also monitor and record research impact and offer professional development opportunities, including workshops and sandpit events for developing inter-disciplinary projects.

If you're interested in discovering more about how you can work with us to harness the power of research and bring about positive change, visit our [website](#) or email us at [drbi@aber.ac.uk](mailto:drbi@aber.ac.uk). We look forward to hearing from you.

September 2023

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