

modified 20.11.09

## **Department of European Languages: Research Strategy<sup>1</sup>**

### **A. GENERAL.**

The Department has the following **research aims**:

- To **increase the quality and the quantity of research**;
- To **increase research income**, i.e. both QR and research grants;
- To **maximize the impact of the Department** in its field(s) at both national and above all international levels.

These aims are both **collective** and **individual**, and whilst they have traditionally been realized most commonly at the individual level, it is increasingly apparent that serious, large-scale research, even in the humanities, is a collective operation. Typically, this involves collaboration with relevant scholars, typically elsewhere. The Department's 'research environment' is in large part externalized – and international.

**Academic staff** must:

- Publish regularly at as high a level as possible.
- Measure themselves realistically against only the highest standards of work in their field.
- Publish enough to be returnable in the RAE.
- Give a minimum of one paper per annum in the UK and one at an international conference abroad.
- Apply for research funding for any project or activity for which it is available.
- Apply for AHRC Research Leave funding for sabbaticals unless there are good reasons not to do so.

**The Department** will provide:

- Regular sabbatical leave at the rate (approximately) of one semester in seven. All research-active staff are allocated leave on a rota basis (with some limitations as to its strict application: it is not for example possible to have two colleagues teaching the same language absent in any given academic year).
- Support (advice and assistance) for grant applicants and for research projects generally.
- Funding for activities not eligible for other support (e.g. falling outside the time-scales of AHRC or BA programmes).

### **B. SPECIFICS.**

#### **Quality enhancement.**

Research output is not synonymous with publication: the key is the quality and importance of what is produced. Measurement of research quality is the first step towards enhancing it. Staff who are unaware of what distinguishes good from very good research cannot improve their own work. This is not just a matter of being familiar with the work in the field and developing the ability to discern what is best. Colleagues are expected to pursue:

- Membership of and involvement in major international academic societies, and in work (refereeing, reviewing, editorial activity) for major journals.
- Publication in the best journals. This has the effect of both raising the standards of work submitted (an awareness of the greater challenge of getting published in a top-flight journal should act as a stimulus) and (it is to be hoped) of the quality of feedback received on submitted work.
- Attendance and presentations at major, international-level conferences.

#### **Research income.**

QR income is largely (at least 70%) conditioned by research quality. Research grant income is dependent on proposals being made, but they must be good enough to be funded. All research-active staff are expected to secure external funding. The aim is to sustain and develop, rather than radically to increase, this income. A specific goal is to have further major AHRC-type projects in the Department, and to sustain the current average £100,000 per annum research grant income (RAE cycle 2001–2007).

#### **Maximization of impact.**

- The impact of research on the discipline is not solely a result of its quality: researchers who are more visible achieve more impact for their work.
- In a small unit (especially), colleagues must have a very high level of scholarly involvement and must make determined attempts to maximize individual and thus collective visibility.
- Funded research with paid researchers increases output and provides a crucial 'gearing' effect in terms of output and of scholarly activity in the Department.
- All colleagues must not only regularly give papers at conferences at the highest level, chair sessions, etc.; they must be connected to and part of high-level international networks, both formal and informal.
- The Department must regularly organize and host international conferences here and elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> With some changes, notably provoked by the advent of large-scale research grant funding with the establishment of the HRB then AHRB and now AHRC, the Department has had a formal research strategy along these lines since 1993.