



INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH

LJMU Institute for Health Research (IHR) 2016

Research, scholarship and knowledge exchange for health across the life course

The IHR is a LJMU-wide research institute that brings academics together to facilitate the development of progressive and impact-driven health related research in partnership with a range of external stakeholders, collaborators and organisations that are engaged in or fund health research.

Introduction and Context

Health-related research and scholarship is significant within LJMU and is embedded in all four Faculties. The IHR was created in 2006, driven by strategic developments in line with national and international health policy, but also as a reflection of the vibrancy of LJMU's research culture and its commitment to interdisciplinarity. A decade on, the IHR has taken the opportunity to redefine itself in terms of leadership, strategy and activities in light of changes to the internal and external research community and research priorities. Our vision is to establish the IHR as a world leading institute at the forefront of health research, scholarship and knowledge exchange across local, national and international platforms.

This report describes the structure and governance of the IHR, outlining the strategic aims and the activities that will be undertaken over the next two years prior to the submission of a biennial review in 2018.

The IHR supports and develops health-related research that is internationally excellent and ensures the evolution of a dynamic, inclusive and interdisciplinary research culture. Researchers undertake activities with the potential to improve health locally, nationally and internationally and to impact on procedures, policy, practise and technology. To achieve this, the IHR provides direction through sound leadership and a vision informed by both internal drivers and external forces. The integration of the IHR across four LJMU Faculties is highly dependent upon the engagement of staff, a willingness for knowledge exchange, the identification of common or complementary research expertise and the discovery of opportunities for collaborative activities such as supervision of postgraduate research students and joint applications for funding. The IHR not only aims to raise the research profile and demonstrate quality in research activity, but also to enhance the presence of LJMU within the community through enterprise, consultancy and educational activities.

Strategy

The philosophy of the IHR is to improve human health across the life course by gaining a better understanding of disease, healthy behaviours and the prevention of illness, therapeutics and novel technologies and the improvement of community and hospital based healthcare. This is portrayed within the three IHR themes:

- **Understanding and changing behaviour**
- **Understanding and treating disease and illness**
- **Educating the workforce via evidence based practise**

The strategy of the IHR will be achieved by meeting the following objectives to:

- Provide leadership, direction and unity for health-related research and scholarly activities across LJMU.
- Enhance the research environment and individual researcher capability by promoting researcher development, the sharing of ideas and increasing cross-discipline collaborations through participation in shared projects, PhD supervisions, discussions, workshops and seminars.
- Align our research and activities to external priorities and increase the acquisition of funding from a variety of external sources to support projects ranging from small targeted developmental studies to sustained programmes of research.
- Promote the publication of world-leading outputs co-authored by researchers from across LJMU and to increase the overall quality profile of UoA3 and the other UoAs submitting health-related research to REF 2021.
- Develop capacity and capability in focused health-related research disciplines to enable swift, targeted responses to external drivers, policy initiatives and workforce needs.
- Explore all potential opportunities for effective external engagement and establish productive partnerships with local, national and international organisations.

Structure and Governance

The IHR is a virtual organisation bound by partnership, collaboration and networking that is a hub for collaborative health-related research from across the Institution. This approach to the structure of a Research Institute is unique for LJMU and enables greater fluidity with existing internal Research Institutes, Centres and Groups providing an infrastructure for cross disciplinary research to grow. The IHR supports a culture of research and the building of capacity so membership is inclusive and open to all members of staff and students engaged in, or with an interest in health research in the broadest sense. Accessibility to all events, interest group meetings and website content is not restricted and will be open to all LJMU staff and postgraduate students, and potentially external colleagues. At this current time, it is assumed that most researchers submittable to UoA3 (PBS, PHI NAH and NSP) and UoA4 (NSP and SPS), the majority of researchers from RISES (UoA26) and researchers from FET and APSS with an interest in health research are members.

The IHR is governed by an **Executive Board** chaired by the Head of IHR, Dr Gillian Hutcheon and includes the Pro-VC (Scholarship, Research and Knowledge transfer) and the four Executive Deans of the Faculties of; Science, Health, Education and Community, Engineering and Technology, and Arts, Professional and Social Studies. Meetings of the Executive take place biannually or when the Head of IHR needs to discuss bespoke strategic issues as they arise. The current membership is as follows:

Membership of the IHR Executive Board	Name
Head of IHR	Dr Gillian Hutcheon
Pro-VC (Scholarship, Research & Knowledge Transfer)	Professor Robin Leatherbarrow
Dean of Faculty EHC	Professor Phil Vickerman
Dean of Faculty SCS	Professor Peter Wheeler
Dean of FET	Professor Ahmed Al-Shamma'a
Dean of Faculty APSS	Professor Joe Yates

An Advisory Board consisting of representatives from schools, research centres and institutes across the university with an interest in health-related research serves to focus, expand, facilitate, and modernise the research activities of the members. As appropriate, other researchers or external representatives may be asked to join this board. The Advisory Board also serves to insure parity in research and scholarship across the IHR and within the Faculty/School structure and to strategically align these priorities with investment in infrastructure. This board will meet bimonthly during 2017 as the institute re-establishes itself and quarterly thereafter.

Membership of the IHR Advisory Board	Name
Head of IHR	Gillian Hutcheon
Associate Dean Research: ECL	David Morley
Associate Dean Research: SCS	Keith George
Representative from FET	Paulo Lisboa
Representative from APPS	Daniel Silverstone
Representative from RIS	Alan Welby
Representative from PHI	Kate Fleming
Representative from NSP	Helen Poole
Representative from NAH	Ian Jones
Representative from PBS	Charles Morecroft
Representative from RISES and Doctoral Training representative	Claire Stewart
SCS/FET Cross Faculty Representative	Mark Murphy

Alignment with LJMU strategic plan

The IHR contributes to the LJMU strategic plan by seeking to be a 'Beacon of Excellence' by supporting a culture of research and scholarship that encourages and facilitates collaboration, not just between academics within LJMU but which extends to colleagues working in the health services, commercial sectors and industry and also with patient populations and local communities. The IHR engages with international research communities to ensure that LJMU health-related research is recognised as world class and funding opportunities that encourage staff exchanges, meetings and collaboration across the globe are embraced. The branding of health-related research within the IHR will enable a visible presence both within and external to LJMU <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/IHR> Health research at LJMU has a very broad base, and its breadth is reflected in the number and type of external stakeholders and organisations we currently interact with and aspire to work with. Our research aligns with UK and European Science health research goals and these external priorities inform IHR initiatives. Working directly with professionals enables a rapid response to significant events such as the introduction of new health policy and guidance, the emergence of strategic health priorities and/or new product development. We are currently preparing a MRC Proximity to Discovery funding application to support early interactions, knowledge exchange and collaboration between academic researchers at LJMU and industry leading to future joint funding applications such as MRC Confidence in concept and Innovate UK calls. We already work with many of the local NHS trusts and now have a formal partnership with Liverpool Health Partners (LHP) and are members of Innovate UK.

The IHR does not operate in isolation from enterprise activities and the role of the Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation team, in identifying opportunities to tender/bid for both research and enterprise activities and for supporting academics in their pursuit of these, is recognised as being essential to fulfilling the IHR strategy. The IHR embeds research and scholarship within its activities and informs the curriculum across LJMU for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and via project students that experience a multidisciplinary research environment. Collaboration internally within the IHR and externally with local NHS trusts enables the identification of new educational and training needs and accordingly, the development of educational programmes to meet emerging health care needs are informed by the practise and research activities ongoing within the IHR.

Research environment

The integration of the IHR virtual infrastructure across LJMU is facilitated by the operation of **Interest Groups** that enable the; exchange of knowledge, identification of common or complementary research expertise, identification of opportunities for collaborative activities and establishment of new relationships. The IHR nurtures interest groups composed of staff from across the university offering a variety of different expertise and facilitates broader activities and membership than enabled by those individual structures. This also ties in pockets of unviable, isolated activity and reduces fragmentation or duplicity of activities that benefit from the support and facilitation offered by the institute. There will be a balance of interest groups across disease states, health areas, methodologies and technologies and it is anticipated that an individual Interest Group will contain a broad range of researchers from different disciplines. Interest groups will be fluid and may grow, merge or disappear depending on staff interest and external drivers. A key challenge will be to generate research income to support these groups in the long-term and external collaborators will be encouraged to join workshop activities and collaborative grant applications. Income generated will lie within the Faculty/Schools of the Principal- and co-investigators as usual and not with the IHR.

The Advisory Board approves all Interest Groups based on their sustainability in terms of availability of an active coordinator, structure, funding applications under preparation etc. (as per LJMU Research Group Guidelines). Interest Group Coordinators are appointed to oversee the activities of the group and support progress towards external funding opportunities. They also identify and encourage ECRs and less active members of staff to integrate and utilise their expertise out with their native field. Progress and outcomes will be monitored on an annual basis and reported to the advisory board for inclusion in the biennial review. Current interest groups are outlined below.

Interest Group	Co-ordinator
Healthy behaviours	Keith George
Preventative and Predictive Modelling	Paulo Lisboa
Integrated care	Helen Poole
Cardiovascular Health	Ian Jones
Sensors for Health	Andy Shaw/Alex Mason
Children's Health	Lorna Porcellato
Green spaces	Zoe Knowles
Image and performance enhancing drugs (IPEDs)	Jim McVeigh
Food, nutrition and health	Ian Jones/Julie Abayomi
Workforce Education	Raphaella Kane

Outputs and outcomes

A key measure of success will be the magnitude of the added value of the IHR beyond existing research structures which will be judged from:

- The number of active interest groups established.
- An increase in collaborative funding applications (internal and external).
- An increase in external engagement and knowledge transfer activities.
- An increase in the volume and quality of outputs (of a variety of sorts).
- The number and completion of Cross Faculty/IHR PhD studentships.

For Example:

- In 2015/16 academic year four EHC-SCS Cross-Faculty studentships were funded and students appointed.
- This academic year 2016/17 a further four studentships have been awarded and the appointment process is ongoing. Additionally in 2016/17, a further two FET-SCS health-related studentships have been awarded.
- These students will be asked to present their work at IHR events (talks/posters)