



Research Strategy

2019/20 - 2022/23

Research Aims - Summary

Aim 1 (supports strategic aim of Improving Relevance)

To ensure that our research work is timely and draws on a robust evidence-base in order to progress the Association's strategic objectives.

Aim 2 (supports strategic aim of Improving Impact)

To influence decisions about the student experience at the OU and within the wider HE sector.

Aim 3 (supports strategic aim of Extending Reach)

To engage the student community in our research work and disseminate research findings in fresh and innovative ways.

Research Aim 1

To ensure that our research work is timely and draws on a robust evidence-base in order to progress the Association's strategic objectives.

Objectives:

- To engage relevant stakeholder groups including the student leadership team and the OU in order to identify and prioritise research requirements.
- To identify clear mechanisms through which we invite student views and ensure that research topics are meaningful to them.
- To enable informed organisational decision-making.

Measures of success:

- Clearly articulated annual research business plans setting out priorities and resources.
- Annual Membership Survey delivery and analysis embedded in business-as-usual activities, aiding understanding of the current and future needs of our student membership.
- Organisational decision-making based on reliable and robust evidence that will withstand scrutiny.

Research Aim 2

To influence decisions about the student experience at the OU and within the wider HE sector.

Objectives:

- To enable our student volunteers to represent the interests and voice of OU students at the University and national levels.
- To identify the stakeholders and decision-makers who can help us to influence the part-time and distance-learning experience.
- To partner with other organisations in the HE sector in areas where we can build on our experience and expertise.

Measures of success:

- A strong community of practice for research and policy-making is established, working in partnership with student volunteers and the OU.
- Collaborative opportunities are identified for sharing ideas and good practice with the OU and the wider sector.
- An evidence base is established for policy-related decision-making at the Association.

Research Aim 3

To engage the student community in our research work and disseminate research findings in fresh and innovative ways.

Objectives:

- To create more opportunities for students to get involved in and contribute to research projects.
- To raise awareness of research work and available evidence using a variety of formats and communication channels.
- To tie research activities with other Association events (e.g. conference, freshers) and OU events (e.g. student consultations).

Measures of success:

Increased student engagement as evidenced by:

- volunteer numbers and positive volunteering experiences
- webpage analytics and social media.