

The Courtauld Research Strategy

2024-29





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Values and principles

Research underpins everything that we do at The Courtauld. As The Courtauld approaches its centenary in 2032, we renew our commitment to world-leading research that shapes collective understanding of the visual arts past and present and champions the importance to our society of cultural knowledge, understanding, and practice.

Our research culture is diverse, rigorous, and reflective, and fosters robust, ethical, and open research practices at all career stages. Our research is conducted individually and together, uniting the missions of the Courtauld Gallery and Institute. Our research also harnesses the power of collaboration with academics in other institutions and disciplines, and with a diverse range of organisations and communities beyond academia.

In line with The Courtauld’s core mission and its Strategic Plan 2024-29, the implementation of this strategy must:

enable and ensure ambitious, innovative, and rigorous research.	support diversity, equity, and integrity in our research practices and community.
strengthen the meaning and impact of our research beyond academia.	ensure the financial and environmental sustainability of our research.
enhance The Courtauld’s international reputation.	



Empowering researchers

Over the next five years, we will continue to strengthen and diversify our research base, recruiting and retaining world-leading researchers in art history, conservation, and curating.

We will empower Courtauld researchers to undertake ambitious and cutting-edge research and impact, and to become leaders and advocates for their fields and disciplines. We will champion innovative and original research, recognising the benefits of both curiosity-led and challenge-led research. We will play a crucial role in the research ecosystem in the UK and internationally.

- a. We will foster a healthy and diverse researcher pipeline and a culture of research development and reward, with clear expectations for researchers at all career stages and across The Courtauld. Our recognition mechanisms will acknowledge that research can take many forms and address a range of stakeholders.
- b. We will shape a world-leading, funded doctoral programme, including a practice-led route for Conservation and Curatorial Practice. We will seek funding for doctoral research via research funding bodies, grant-awarding trusts and foundations, and philanthropy.
- c. We will re-energise our early career researchers' network and engage strategically with external researcher development programmes.
- d. We will encourage and recognise participation in broader research ecology, for example via journal editorship, AHRC Peer Review College, REF Panel membership.
- e. We will adhere to principles of responsible assessment of research and researchers as laid out by the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), remaining mindful of the individual and collective impact of research assessment.



Building foundations for excellence

Over the next five years, we will nurture a rigorous, healthy, and resilient research culture and advanced research infrastructure, ensuring that we are agile in responding to disciplinary and sector developments.

We will purposefully activate our collections, exhibitions and public programmes as drivers for advanced research. Our research mechanisms will support research at different stages and scales, including ongoing support of individual research and targeted generator funding to enable collaborative, methodologically innovative research projects and collaborations. New research centres will amplify areas of critical strength at The Courtauld to effect step-changes in scholarship, to grow our reputation as field-leaders, and to attract large-scale and sustained research funding.



a. We will continue to undertake advanced research into our Collections and will support other researchers and institutions to do the same via access, loans, and strategic initiatives. We will develop new routes for driving research engagement with our digitised Photographic Collections.

b. We will renew our commitment to resource research via a 40% research workload allocation, sabbatical entitlement, and internal non-discretionary funding for all staff with a significant responsibility for research (SSR). We will expand and strengthen the Courtauld research office to support the conception, development, completion, dissemination, and impact of individual and collaborative research.

c. We will set ambitious targets for external research funding, seeking to expand and diversify our grant capture, including increasing applications to large-scale collaborative and institutional schemes. We will seek strategic philanthropic funding to advance our ambitious research priorities.

d. We will develop our digital capabilities in research, expanding our engagement with digital humanities research, open research and open access publishing, including via our strategic partnership with King's College London.

e. We will place research at the heart of our capital project, integrating outstanding and forward-looking research facilities and infrastructure, including the Research Forum, Courtauld Library, and digital estate.

f. We will develop our practice-led research capabilities, including in curatorial practice, education and learning, and public programmes, including developing a strategy for research conducted in the Gallery and learning spaces.

Working collaboratively

Over the next five years, we will strengthen the ways in which we work with other disciplines, organisations, and communities in the UK and internationally, to expand the global significance and reach of Courtauld research.

We will leverage existing strategic partnerships and will develop new institutional relationships to invigorate our research practice and supervision in three areas: strengthening collaboration with adjacent humanities disciplines; expanding collaboration with digital cultures and creative industries research; and pursuing new interdisciplinary dialogues beyond the arts and humanities.

- a. We will cultivate partnerships with other HEIs and research institutes, reaching beyond our disciplines to develop cross-disciplinary collaborative research projects with partners in the UK and internationally, including via strategic memoranda of understanding.
- b. We will strengthen collaboration across The Courtauld, amplifying research links between the Courtauld Gallery and Faculty. We will strengthen partnerships with cultural and creative organisations locally, nationally, and internationally, placing Courtauld research at the heart of the creative and heritage sectors.
- c. We will foster exciting international partnerships, leveraging our existing relationships and communities to develop high-profile collaborations and funding.
- d. We will strengthen the ways in which we showcase our research partnerships, collaborations, and sponsors, including via improved research webpages, press announcements, and presence at major international events.
- e. We will work ethically with source communities wherever we research and will develop new strands of participatory and co-produced research.
- f. We will support researchers to participate actively in disciplinary and sector networks to contribute to a healthy and robust research ecosystem.



Making change in the world

Over the next five years, we will grow the global reach and impact of Courtauld research. We will be purposeful in working with artists, curators, conservators, interest groups and communities beyond academia to expand cultural understanding and to bring change.

We will expand and strengthen the reach and significance of Courtauld research and its impact on diverse audiences and beneficiaries. The Courtauld will play a vital role in advocating for the role of art and its histories in all spheres of society. We will be guided by principles of diversity and inclusion, research integrity, and sustainability.

- a. We will substantially increase institutional understanding of and commitment to research knowledge exchange and impact and to open research practices. We will create a new Impact Manager role and will integrate impact into all internal research planning and evaluation mechanisms, auditing existing activity, developing a robust impact case study pipeline for REF2029, and maximising the impact potential of Courtauld Gallery exhibitions.
- b. We will develop our knowledge exchange and public engagement capabilities via a new Public Engagement Strategy. We will leverage our learning and public programmes to develop research impact on school teaching practice and curricula. We will explore the potential of Courtauld research to impact on public policy, expanding our community of interlocutors beyond arts and heritage.
- c. We will review The Courtauld's publications to develop a new Publications Strategy that expands the breadth and reach of our research audiences and increases public recognition of The Courtauld as a leader in arts research. We will harness our open access web and digital capabilities to disseminate our research to a general audience, including via podcasts and short films.
- d. We will develop robust evidence-gathering and evaluation mechanisms that enable us to describe, document and evaluate our research impact.



Measures of success

Our top-level key performance indicators (KPIs) are:

- HR and HESA data, including FTE staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR), career stage spread, and new posts;
- Research grant income and spread of research funders;
- Number and quality of research outputs;
- People, Culture, and Environment data;
- Outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework (REF2029);
- Higher Education Museums Galleries and collections (HEMG) funding outcomes;

These are supplemented by additional metrics designed to support decision making and guide the delivery of discrete initiatives, including those specified by funders.



Implementation

This Research Strategy belongs to The Courtauld research community and its multiple internal stakeholders.

Primary responsibility for its implementation and progress monitoring lies with the Dean for Research on behalf of The Courtauld Senior Management Team. The Dean for Research will be supported in this work by the Research Office. At department level, responsibility for implementing this Research Strategy will also sit with the Head of Conservation, Head of Art History, and Head of the Courtauld Gallery. Work to implement this Research Strategy will involve teams across The Courtauld, including the Library; Advancement; Public Programmes; Marketing and Communications; Finance; People Services; Estates; and ITS.

This Research Strategy intersects with The Courtauld's Strategic Plan 2024-29 and with other high-level strategic plans, including The Courtauld Gallery Strategy, Internationalisation Strategy, Public Engagement Strategy, and Teaching Strategy. Implementation of this Research Strategy will be undertaken in line with The Courtauld Research Ethics Policy and Statement on Research Integrity, and research-related operational policies and processes.



The Courtauld Institute of Art

Vernon Square, Penton Rise
London WC1X 9EW

The Courtauld Gallery

Somerset House, Strand
London WC2R 0RN

courtauld.ac.uk

 **[@courtauldres](https://www.instagram.com/courtauldres)**

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