



ACADEMIA EUROPAEA

CARDIFF

PROMOTING
RESEARCH
EXCELLENCE
FOR POLICY
AND
PROGRESS

CARDIFF
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL
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STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PURPOSE, MISSION, VALUES.....	4
OUR CORE COMPETENCIES AND AREAS OF FOCUS	5
OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS	6
OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.....	7
Strategic priority 1: Continue to play a major role in providing science advice for policymaking, and exploit our competencies in this field of work	7
Strategic priority 2: Promote outstanding research, and advocate for excellence in research culture, practice and infrastructure.....	7
Strategic priority 3: Build productive connections with our stakeholders and associated networks.....	8
Strategic priority 4: Ensure our future sustainability	8
GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	8

INTRODUCTION



by Professor Ole Petersen CBE FMedSci FLSW MAE ML FRS
Academic Director, Academia Europaea Cardiff Knowledge Hub

Welcome to our new Strategic Plan. Academia Europaea is an international academy of over 5,500 world-leading scholars and scientists, and Cardiff University is one of the UK's foremost research universities as well as the top research-led university in Wales. We are working together to showcase and promote excellence in research and scholarship for the benefit of society.

Academia Europaea Cardiff is active in two vital areas of work. The first is **science for policy** – synthesising and interpreting knowledge from across different academic disciplines to inform policy. The other is **policy for science** – examining how research is done, and how culture, processes and infrastructure can be improved.

The Hub's role in **science for policy** is our core activity. As members of the SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) consortium, we are an integral part of the European Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM), which provides independent scientific evidence and policy recommendations to the College of European Commissioners. With an extended remit for the SAM that now includes the European Parliament and European Council in addition to the European Commission, we are working on a range of global policy challenges, including food security, health, democracy, climate change and environment. Exploiting Cardiff University's historic strengths in systematic literature review, we have partnered with specialist units in the University's Library Service to perform systematic reviews within the SAM – a service we have gradually built up over several years and for which there is now significant demand, including from the European Commission and the European Group on Ethics. Following the UK's association to Horizon Europe, we are participating as full beneficiaries in the new phase of SAPEA, starting in 2025. It is vital that we leverage the competencies we have developed through our work in the SAM, and therefore we are delighted to be working with Cardiff University's School of Earth and Environmental Sciences on a new Horizon Europe project. Led by Utrecht University and starting in March 2025, our role in the P2F project is to foster policy engagement with important work on climate change.

The other facet of our work is **policy for science**. In 2019, we led an evidence review for the European Commission on *Making sense of science*, examining the role of science and science advice in policymaking. Our annual programme of events examines topical issues related to science policy. Events are co-created and hosted with strategic partners and attract worldwide audiences. We are also proud of our work in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). As partners in the CALIPER project, a Horizon 2020-funded initiative, we were responsible for stakeholder communication, in a consortium that promotes gender equality in research and innovation. The quality and professionalism of our communications work is recognised by Academia Europaea, and we lead communications activities across the whole AE network, on a funded basis.

I extend my thanks to our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Lerner FRSNZ FLSW, and to our Steering Group and its Chair, Sir Mark Walport FRS FMedSci FRSE MAE, for their support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ole H. Petersen'.

Professor Ole H. Petersen CBE FRS FMedSci ML MAE FLSW

PURPOSE, MISSION, VALUES

Our Purpose and Mission

AE Cardiff's purpose is to signpost and recognise European excellence in research to inform and enlighten and, specifically, to contribute to policy development, thereby benefiting society. As a Knowledge Hub, we act as a catalyst for collaboration across academic disciplines and fields, facilitating discussion and examining potential solutions to pressing problems. We strive to:

- Connect research and scholarship with policymaking, addressing global challenges and contributing to a brighter future for all
- Generate debate – and action – around how we establish a positive research culture, alongside processes and infrastructure in which rigorous research can thrive
- Promote outstanding research and scholarship, through effective science communication and an exciting international programme of events
- Maximise engagement with vital stakeholders, including our 'parent' organisations Cardiff University and Academia Europaea, plus major research and policy organisations throughout Europe and the world.

Our Values

In line with Academia Europaea and Cardiff University, we strive towards shared values of:

- Freedom and independence of enquiry and thought
- Engagement with wider society
- Environmental sustainability
- Collegiality
- Equity, diversity and inclusion

The Cardiff Knowledge Hub will promote these values throughout our work.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

We have taken care to ensure that our strategic planning reflects the priorities of our 'parent' institutions, Cardiff University and Academia Europaea.

Cardiff University



Founded in 1883, Cardiff University is established as one of Britain's leading research universities and a member of the Russell Group of research-intensive universities. Cardiff is an ambitious and innovative university, located in the thriving capital city of Wales. Under the leadership of its Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Larner, the University has published a new strategy, *Our future, together*. The Hub seeks to be an asset to the University in meeting its strategic objectives.

Academia Europaea



Academia Europaea is a non-governmental association, acting as a pan-European academy. Founded in 1988, Academia Europaea now numbers over 5,500 members in Europe and worldwide, including 87 Nobel laureates. Election to membership is based on academic excellence. The registered legal entities of the Academy are in London and Munich, but the Academy's work is carried out through an expanding European network of knowledge hubs in Barcelona, Bergen, Budapest, Cardiff, Munich, Tbilisi and Wroclaw as well as the Information Centre in Graz. Academia Europaea is particularly active in science advice. Academia Europaea is a partner in the SAPEA project, with the Cardiff Hub delivering the major part of its work. Academia Europaea is also the EU's representative on the S20, the science advice body of the G20.

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES AND AREAS OF FOCUS

Since our launch in 2016, we have built a set of core competencies and networks in two key areas, **science for policy** and **policy for science**.

Science for policy

Our position within the European Scientific Advice Mechanism gives us a major role in science for policy, an increasingly vital area of work in addressing global challenges.

Scientific Advice Mechanism to the European Commission

Cardiff University, through its relationship to Academia Europaea, has played a special role in the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM), as the sole university in the SAPEA consortium. In the third SAPEA project, starting in 2025, it is joined by the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU), one of Europe's leading research institutions, which is taking the role of project coordinator.

Cardiff's role is to coordinate rigorous evidence reviews that inform policy. We also offer unique capabilities in the SAM, conducting systematic literature reviews, bibliometric analyses, impact data and policy mappings, through a partnership between the Hub and the Library Service. There is growing demand for our work.

We play a prominent role in outreach activities, hosting events and supporting media campaigns designed to promote the work of the SAM. Upcoming policy-related outreach includes the risks and possible opportunities for technology in addressing climate change, specifically, Solar Radiation Modification.

Our other major responsibility has been the coordination of strategic planning for SAPEA, where we help to deliver strategic development plans that shape the continuing evolution of SAPEA within the SAM.

Policy for science

As the position of science and research grows within a more complex society, science comes under increasing scrutiny. The Cardiff Hub plays an active role in communicating about science, and also in putting research culture and practice under the spotlight.

Our events are popular and wide-reaching. Developed and delivered with strategic partners, online events are completely free and open, attracting a worldwide audience (typically from around 30 countries for each webinar). Examples of topics covered by us include trust in science, gender equality in STEM, AI in science, open research, academic publishing, interdisciplinarity, international research networks and public engagement. Future topics we are exploring include metascience, research integrity, and strengthening UK-European research cooperation.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

In addressing our areas of focus, we seek closer collaboration with colleagues at Cardiff University, alongside other networks across the UK and Europe. We will investigate funding and project opportunities in these areas. An immediate success is our involvement in *Past to Present*, a project that includes Cardiff University's School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, starting in 2025.

Over the coming period, we anticipate that technological innovation, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), will impact on aspects of our work, presenting us with both opportunities and challenges to which we must respond. This is an important part of the next SAPEA project, and the Hub will use the opportunity to bring together groupings of experts at Cardiff University who understand the theory and practice of using AI in evidence review, particularly for literature reviews.

Since we were established, we have built relationships with a wide and diverse range of stakeholders, working on projects, project bids and co-created events. Examples are varied and include strategic partners of Academia Europaea and Cardiff University (for example, the University of Bremen, KU Leuven, Welsh Government, Learned Society for Wales, the Royal Society, the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina), as well as networks engaged in science for policy (such as Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), Research Impact Canada (RIC), Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) and South African Higher Education Community Engagement Forum (SAHECEF)). We also cooperate closely with early- and mid-career researchers through the Young Academy of Europe and YASAS (Young Academies Science Advice Structure). We voice support for researchers in conflict areas, such as Ukraine. We believe we can do more to nurture and sustain relationships such as these, to the benefit of our 'parent' organisations.

The overriding risk to the Hub, a 'no-deal' Brexit, has been resolved through the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the UK's subsequent association to Horizon Europe. With a new UK Government, the UK is looking to rebuild research links with Europe and has expressed its interest in associating to FP10, successor to Horizon Europe, the largest international research and innovation programme in the world. Europe is also a high priority of the Welsh Government, under its International Strategy.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Continue to play a major role in providing science advice for policymaking, and exploit our competencies in this field of work
2. Promote outstanding research, and advocate for excellence in research culture, practice and infrastructure
3. Build productive connections with our stakeholders and associated networks
4. Ensure our future sustainability

Strategic priority 1: Continue to play a major role in providing science advice for policymaking, and exploit our competencies in this field of work

Objective

We will continue to play an extensive role in the Scientific Advice Mechanism, building our profile in areas where there is growing demand (such as literature review). We will also seek wider opportunities for participation in activities and projects related to science advice and policy engagement.

Actions

- As a member of SAPEA, we will deliver comprehensive evidence reviews to the European Commission, on-time and to-budget.
- We will produce high-quality systematic literature reviews and related services, in partnership with other specialist units across Cardiff University.
- Together with colleagues at Cardiff, we will examine the opportunities brought by AI to enhance our work, developing a competence centre for the use of AI in literature reviews for policy, including systematic review.
- We will lead work on the future strategic development of SAPEA, with a new strategy due in 2028.
- We will explore wider opportunities that arise in science advice and policy engagement, seeking project work and funding, in collaboration with partners. The first of these is *Past to Future*, a Horizon Europe funded initiative, running from 2025.

Strategic priority 2: Promote outstanding research, and advocate for excellence in research culture, practice and infrastructure

Objective

We will showcase outstanding research by Academia Europaea members (MAEs), as well as work led by us in external projects. We will engage in open debate on topical issues in research culture and practice.

Actions

- We will organise and publicise an exciting international programme of activities and events, linked to our work and strategy.
- We will further enhance the Hub website as an attractive showcase, with a fresh design and new content, and also seek to engage a worldwide audience through the effective use of social media.
- We will do more to promote our work through the channels of Cardiff University, as well as Academia Europaea.

- We will continue to lead communications work on behalf of Academia Europaea, on a funded basis.

Strategic priority 3: Build productive connections with our stakeholders and associated networks

Objective

We will expand our reach and engagement with Hub stakeholders and associated networks, including higher education and research institutions, policymaking bodies, academies and learned societies.

Actions

- We will seek project opportunities and seize other opportunities for beneficial collaboration with Hub stakeholders
- We will engage with stakeholders through joint events and through channels such as the Hub website and social media
- We will continue to advocate on behalf of underrepresented and other at-risk groups in research.

Strategic priority 4: Ensure our future sustainability

Objective

We will strive to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the Cardiff Hub

Actions

- We will produce a Sustainability Plan for the Cardiff Hub
- We will seek opportunities for participation in externally funded projects, in addition to the higher level of income already secured for SAPEA3 and contributions from other work.
- We will pursue sponsorship and other forms of support for events and activities.
- We will continue to lead Academia Europaea's communications work, on a funded basis.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Steering Group

Cardiff Knowledge Hub activities are overseen by an international Steering Group, chaired by Sir Mark Walport FRS FMedSci MAE. Membership comprises:

Professor Rudolf Allemann FLSW (Cardiff University)
 Professor Nora de Leeuw MAE FLSW (University of Leeds)
 Professor Pearl Dykstra MAE (Erasmus University Rotterdam)
 Professor Lorna Hughes MAE (University of Glasgow)
 Professor Wendy Lerner FRSNZ FLSW (Cardiff University)
 Professor Genoveva Martí MAE (University of Barcelona)
 Professor Valerie O'Donnell OBE FMedSci MAE FLSW (Cardiff University)
 Sir John Skehel FRS FMedSci MAE (Francis Crick Institute)
 Professor Hywel Thomas CBE FRS FREng MAE FLSW (Cardiff University)

Professor John Tucker MAE FLSW (Swansea University)
Sir Mark Walport FRS FMedSci MAE (Chair) (Imperial College Health Partners)

Leadership

The Academic Director of the Cardiff Hub is Professor Ole Petersen CBE FRS FMedSci ML MAE FLSW.

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