



*Defying convention
to break new ground*

RESEARCH
2025-2030

Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2025-30

**Elevating Excellence: Accelerating Our Research
and Knowledge Exchange Trajectory**

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1. Introduction and Context

Research excellence underpins the profile, character and reputation of all leading universities, driving success in the recruitment of staff and students, and supporting income streams that deliver a strong research environment, underpin financial sustainability, and drive growth.

The University Strategy sets out a path for the University of Hull that situates it as an outstanding research-led university, securely placed in the top 50 UK universities, with a focus on achieving significant increases in research quality, income and impact. This document builds on Research Strategy 2019-2024 and the Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2020-2025, to enable the delivery of our Strategy 2030 ambitions and more.

The landscapes of research and knowledge exchange (KE), both within the UK and globally, are undergoing rapid transformation. Government and UKRI strategic priorities delineate crucial national objectives, while, for example, associating to the

EU Horizon scheme in January 2024 opened new avenues for international collaboration. Securing increased external income requires a compelling demonstration of the societal and economic impact of our research.

Meeting substantial challenges necessitates the formation of interdisciplinary teams, both within the University and in collaboration with external partners. To cultivate a workforce capable of addressing these challenges, we must address and resolve skills gaps and potential constraints in both the researcher's career pipeline and our systems and processes that support our research and knowledge exchange activity.

Throughout this process, our overarching goal is to establish and nurture an environment that encourages innovation, creative and critical thinking, and a relentless pursuit of excellence across the entire University (see principles in Appendix 11).

Central to the expansion of our research and KE is the need to bridge the gap between this strategy and our education strategy, leveraging research findings to inform and enhance the educational experience for students, and supporting innovation in teaching practices.

We will strive for excellence across all of our research, knowledge exchange and enterprise, and ensure that our research makes a distinctive impact. We will ensure that our research and KE community upholds the principles of integrity, diversity and inclusivity in all of its activities. Throughout this strategy the word research includes the knowledge exchange that emanates from research activity within the University. It is this union between education, research and knowledge exchange, and between the local and the global, which defines our internationally engaged civic university.



2. Vision

To establish the University of Hull as an institution in which high-quality impactful research and knowledge exchange is created and sustained across all Schools and Institutes.

3. Aims

1. Promote a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility to advance excellence in research and enterprise.
2. Conduct impactful and robust research and innovation that generates fundamental knowledge and research outputs that translate into benefits for the community, economy, and society.
3. Enhance our research and knowledge exchange through improved infrastructures, communication and environments, empowering every colleague and student to realise their potential.
4. Work with regional partners across diverse organisations, businesses and the community to ensure our research responds to the challenges of the local area and enables the University to undertake its role as an anchor institution.
5. Cultivate partnerships that strengthen our position as a prominent leader in research and knowledge exchange regionally, nationally and internationally.

4. Priority areas and global challenges

Three main priority areas to support, enable and develop our excellence in research and knowledge exchange were identified in the review and are the focus of the new strategy. These priority areas will enable us to grow our research and knowledge exchange in both size and quality, thus increasing our research power.

There are links between the three areas, but they enable within each area some specific objectives to be prioritised with new policies, initiatives and prioritisation of existing resources as detailed in the next three sections.

The three areas are:

1. Strengthening our research and innovation environment
2. Supporting and developing interdisciplinary excellence
3. Developing regional, national and international influence

Areas of strength: Strategy 2030 is about “A fairer, brighter, carbon neutral future”. Our research and KE focus will still be dedicated to achieving this. The research excellence catalysts will all be linked to the UN Sustainable Development goals (see Appendix B: UN Sustainable development goals) and be related to our three global challenges.

41 CREATING A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Research to address pressing global challenges to ensure the longevity of our planet and its inhabitants by providing just transitions towards sustainable development. This multidisciplinary approach encompasses innovative solutions and inclusive approaches in areas such as renewable energy, flood resilience, and living with climate change.

42 CREATING A HEALTHY WORLD

Research to improve human health and well-being at individual, community, and global levels. Our broad range of research includes biomedical research, palliative care, public health interventions, diagnostic innovation, and behavioural health initiatives. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and evidence-based approaches, we strive to address health disparities, undertake translational research, and improve overall quality of life for populations worldwide.

43 CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORLD

Research focused on understanding and addressing systemic inequalities and social injustices to foster a more equitable and inclusive society, including access and barriers. This encompasses a wide range of research domains, including social sciences, humanities, arts, law, economics, and public policy. Our researchers investigate the root causes of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion, seeking to develop evidence-based interventions and policies that promote fairness, justice, and equal opportunities for all individuals and communities.

5. Strengthening our research and innovation environment

5.1 PRIORITIES

- a. Creating a vibrant and agile culture that nurtures creativity, collaboration, and continuous learning among all is key to the success of this strategy. We will ensure an inclusive community from research-active students through to all staff involved in research and knowledge exchange (KE). We will also ensure that educational delivery is underpinned by the research and knowledge exchange activity.
- b. By investing in our researchers, providing cutting-edge equipment, and upgrading infrastructure, we aim to create an environment that enables groundbreaking discoveries and fosters a spirit of excellence. We will cultivate both individuals and the research community, enabling new heights of achievement, making a lasting impact on knowledge, society, and the world.
- c. We will value and understand the challenge of the work carried out by research and research-related colleagues. We will cultivate depth within research areas, acknowledge and value diverse skill sets ranging from disciplinary expertise to societal impact, and ensure that all contributions are appropriately recognized and rewarded within the frameworks of recruitment, promotion, and reward.
- d. To foster a strong research culture, we must provide appropriate support and incentives while prioritising professional development opportunities across all job families. This includes establishing robust professional support mechanisms and offering guidance and training to enable staff to effectively navigate the constantly evolving national and international research policy landscape, shaped by the directives of the UK Government and funding bodies. Key focus areas include the Trusted Research agenda, promoting open research practices, upholding integrity standards, fostering a culture of citizenship, and nurturing a supportive research environment.

OBJECTIVE
A1) Empower and enable our researchers and research-related staff through investment in training, support and development.
A2) Enabling and supporting individuals to deliver high quality contributions to disciplinary knowledge.
A3) Provide sustainable and accessible world class research facilities and attract external funding to support our research environment.
A4) Ensure that academics have sufficient effective research and knowledge exchange time.
A5) Enable research and knowledge exchange to be underpinned by the principles of open research.
A6) Support and reward an enhanced research culture with appropriate provision and training for open research, open access and monitoring for the adoption of our research values.
A7) Create opportunities for our research-related specialists and enable the community to expand and thrive.

OBJECTIVE

A8) Recognise and celebrate excellent research and KE activity delivered by both staff and students.

A9) Ensure researchers have easy access to seamless support and expertise in research and business development, including commercialisation activity.

A10) Seek to maximise our research based impact and innovation.

A11) Enhance income generation by fully utilising our research and KE environment.

A12) Ensure that all research and KE active academics have an awareness of the external environments.

A13) Adopt a strategic approach to engagement with major research funders.

6. Supporting and developing interdisciplinary excellence

6.1 PRIORITIES

- a. The priority in fostering interdisciplinary excellence lies in expanding and valuing both disciplinary excellence and the creation of new interdisciplinary connections within and between schools and institutes. This necessitates a strong foundation of excellence within disciplinary teams engaged in research and KE activities. Achieving this goal requires each school and institute to develop and sustain a clear plan encompassing the acquisition of necessary income, expertise, partnerships, and infrastructure to support high-quality research and KE endeavours.
- b. Research and enterprise take place in a constantly evolving environment that requires the development of systems, processes, people and infrastructure that are agile and responsive to change. The investment of time, resources and effort in driving interdisciplinary research will improve the research environment, the underpinning funding base that supports it, and the outputs, outcomes and impact it generates.

OBJECTIVE
B1) Increase our research and KE income, increasing our ambition and supporting all researchers to prioritise opportunities, and not rely on small number of individuals to achieve success.
B2) Build our national and international profiles by actively working on promoting and disseminating our research and knowledge exchange findings across a wide range of audiences.
B3) Provide dedicated support and opportunities for the continuous development of collaborative research initiatives.
B4) Innovate our post-graduate research students' training provision to provide all students, whether externally funded scholarships or self- funded, with high quality training and development.
B5) Support researchers to work across disciplinary boundaries, create new opportunities and raise expectations.

OBJECTIVE

- B6) Remove barriers to career progression within the University by increasing our numbers of externally funded fellows and postdoctoral researchers and actively support their career development.
- B7) Diversify the workforce by removing barriers across the entire research career pipeline.
- B8) Maintain a key understanding of the recognised accreditations for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- B9) Be proactive in succession planning and strategically recruit to build critical mass and depth supporting our visibly leading research 'brands'.

7. Developing our regional, national and international influence

7.1 PRIORITIES

- a. Connecting our research at all geographical scales with collaborators, research users, beneficiaries, policymakers, and funders is fundamental to a vibrant research environment. We are dedicated to delivering impact from our research on a global scale through strategic international partnerships, cross-cultural research collaborations, and research and knowledge exchange activities that address pressing global challenges. We will ensure that we develop as a globally connected University to enable benefits for individuals, research groups and the wider University.
- b. We are committed to leveraging our collective expertise to positively benefit our region, ensuring that our research addresses local needs and contributes to national challenges and opportunities. Where appropriate, we will align our research and innovation priorities with the University of Hull's role as a civic institution and anchor organisation within the Hull and Humber region, actively shaping local economic development strategies and seizing funding opportunities to foster growth and prosperity.

OBJECTIVE
C1) Increase the visibility of our research, not just within an academic environment, but by contributing to public debate, engagement with policy makers etc.
C2) Create training and development opportunities that will enable higher quality publications and improve our citations, in turn growing our reputation, influence and connections within the global research community.
C3) Provide a research underpinning to our Civic University responsibility via the inclusion of research within a strategic framework.
C4) Build strategic partnerships with external organisations that are mutually productive and delivered effectively to maximise impact for the University and benefit to the partner.
C5) Grow the regional, national and international reach of our research by supporting partnership development and networks.

OBJECTIVE

- C6) Build on our IP creation through an innovation pathway from research to license / sell off / spin out. Create the expertise and knowledge to ensure that the translational pathway is understood and ensure that we innovate at speed.
- C7) Seek to maximise the opportunities afforded by the regional changes in the governmental and industrial infrastructure (e.g devolution, Humber Freeport).
- C8) Co-create our research with communities and stakeholders and apply our knowledge to real world challenges.
- C9) Combine our excellence in teaching, our world leading research and our external partnerships to create innovative and dynamic professional education offers to business and communities.
- C10) Identify and develop active participation in / contribution to external networks (e.g. maximising on our global partnerships).
- C11) Create the ability to be agile in the face of potential changes in opportunities for the University (e.g. changes to the external strategic environment or strategic priority changes).

8. Strategic Initiatives and Enablers

A selection of the strategic initiatives are briefly described here to demonstrate the high-level initiatives to enable the delivery of the new research strategy.

8.1 RESEARCH STRUCTURES

8.1.1 Research excellence catalysts

Purpose: To develop our research and KE there is a need to retain and develop greater strength within our existing and emerging areas of excellence. By creating more visibility and prioritising resources in these areas of excellence we will accelerate their influence.

The research excellence catalysts will be prioritised for strategic and pump priming resources with clear success factors as proposed in their development plans.

8.1.2 Research Institutes

Purpose: Research Institutes are physical or virtual multi-faculty cross-disciplinary thematic structures that develop research, KE and teaching around several broad themes. Physical Institutes are academic units, in the same structural way as Schools, that provide both professional service and academic staff appointments. All Institutes will have strategic plans with clear priorities. There is an expectation that all Faculties will have at least one research institute.

8.1.3 Research centres

Purpose: Research centres are virtual themes. They are smaller focused activities around single disciplines or themes, but will usually be focused on more than one School. They aim to create a nurturing environment for research activities to grow, have clear development plans. They enable the creation of new groups and may grow into catalysts.

82 Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE)

Purpose: To coordinate the activities, training and development that are utilised by all the research and knowledge exchange staff and students, increase engagement of staff and research active students across the University and share and disseminate best practice.

We will launch a new Academy to join the Teaching Excellence Academy. Building on the existing resources including the Knowledge Exchange Sharepoint and research culture development ongoing activities will be drawn together into a single point of access for all staff and PGR students. This will enable the ARKE to provide a single access solution to enable researchers to access the information when they want and how they want it.

Information and opportunities provided by the ARKE will include:

- a. Create training opportunities and support, including in person workshops and online repositories, across research related and transferable skills for all career stages (including PGR students).
- b. Provide mentoring training, matching and oversight for research and KE mentoring programmes and join up existing provision.

- c. Create peer-to-peer and other networks to enable appropriate structured development programmes.
- d. Deliver accessible and tailored training and development assistance to staff and students interested in launching and advancing novel enterprises or initiatives.
- e. Create KE fellowship opportunities across all staff to recruit into a 2 year programme of support and mentorship, with opportunities for industrial, entrepreneurship, and policy exchange.
- f. Provide a coordinated approach to policy, consolidate efforts across the university, and equip academics with knowledge, best practices, and equal opportunities for engaging effectively with policymakers.
- g. Function as an interdisciplinary nexus to support and guide the university in becoming a more influential policy player at local, regional, and national level.

83 RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Purpose: Restructure, reprioritise and redistribute existing resources across the University to make them fit for purpose and scalable to support a larger research and KE environment.

831 Fit for future equipment

- a. Research capital equipment prioritisation. Create a dynamic understanding of the existing equipment resources for research and KE and together with the Faculty, School, and Institutes research plans prioritise our investment.
- b. Enhance the internal and external visibility of our equipment infrastructure. .

832 Skilled technical workforce

- a. Technicians commitment. Create vibrancy across our research and KE technician community and ensure that they have the appropriate mechanisms to drive forward our technical knowledge and expertise. Ensure that the ARKE enables their ongoing development.

833 Enhancing our internal funding

- a. Pump-priming and matching resourcing - enable better oversight of our internal investment in research and KE and more flexibility at the school level to invest in the most appropriate way for their discipline.
- b. Bridging. With increased numbers of externally funded post-doctoral researchers there is a need to enable a smooth transition for this community between different external funded awards which may not run contiguously.
- c. Enhancing opportunities. Creation of sandpits and workshops to bring together groups of individuals around core strategic funding opportunities.
- d. Catalyst pump-priming. Enabling the community to develop and deliver on the research catalysts.

834 Doctoral college

- a. As part of the doctoral college review our existing certificate and diploma offer and reframe it for skills development as well as training across all three years of a PhD. Ensure that all relevant training in the ARKE is available for PGR students.

84 EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

Purpose: To provide opportunities for exchange of knowledge from local to global and between academia and industry / commerce / policy and fast-track expansion within these activities.

841 Industrial / policy exchange, secondments and internships

- a. Cross-sectoral exchanges; interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange between academia, industry, government and non-profit sectors.
- b. Entrepreneurship exchanges: Develop exchange programs for aspiring entrepreneurs to learn from successful start-up ecosystems around the world. Participants can visit start-up hubs, attend workshops and networking events, and engage with entrepreneurs, investors, and mentors to gain insights into building and scaling innovative ventures.

842 Post-submission PhD internships

Provide competitive 12-week opportunities to PhD students to seek internships that enable them to utilise the period between submission of their thesis and viva to obtain additional skills and expertise in three priority areas.

- a. Industrial /commercial placements
- b. Policy / government placements
- c. Research excellence internship [deliver on output / impact generation]

843 Global fellows

- a. Visiting scholar programme (early career and senior, inward and outward)

85 CREATING AND CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

- a. University-level annual conferences of our research and KE [encourage Faculty and School events] – with prizes for excellence and mentoring that enhance our research culture (best outputs, best impact, best mentor)
- b. Enable Faculty-level annual celebrations of research excellence
- c. Sustainable development goals – research excellence awards
- d. PhD excellence prizes
 - 3 minute research talks

9. Understanding success

The strategy outlined here aims to foster substantial sustainable improvements in research performance and expansion of knowledge exchange throughout the University of Hull. It is crucial to continually evaluate and monitor this transformative process.

The adoption and execution of the research strategy will vary across Faculties, Schools and Institutes. Within an 18-month timeframe, we anticipate observable enhancements across the University, including initiatives to support our professional services community, ensuring an enabling environment for all stakeholders. Colleagues will be more self-aware of the meaning and delivery of excellence, have enhanced knowledge of the external environment and be confident to discuss the strengths we have. They will feel supported and able to support others in the delivery of their research plans in a manner that is inclusive and fair.

By the conclusion of the strategy, we envision a robust pipeline of skilled researchers emerging from our doctoral training programs directly into our research. Support for post doctoral endeavours will nurture talent development, fostering the retention of exceptional researchers and attracting fresh talent to the University. Our research leaders will gain global recognition in their respective fields. We will prioritize equality, diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing in all facets, from recruitment campaigns to promotion processes.

Professional services staff will find enriching career prospects within a thriving research culture. Our environment will facilitate optimal research outcomes and recognize performance.

A range of performance indicators, encompassing responsible metric guidelines, will be developed and monitored to understand our progress towards delivering on the strategy. The basket of factors will be scalable from University- to School-level, adjust for disciplinary norms, and wherever possible provide external validation in terms of comparison with our official comparator Institutions.

The successful execution of the research and knowledge exchange strategy will position University of Hull as a leading institution in a targeted array of disciplines. Our research will garner recognition for its impact, attracting both talent and students to our University.

Appendix A: Underpinning Principles

The following Underpinning Principles will drive the objectives and actions set out in this Strategy:

- i. **Excellence:** Develop critical mass in focused areas of research and KE excellence across all Faculties, Schools and Institutes, whilst maintaining our strong institutional commitment to inclusion, promoting and ensuring equality and diversity among our students and staff across all career stages.
- ii. **Integrity:** Embed a culture of research integrity and openness, with robust training and governance policies and processes which ensure we exceed the standards exemplified by the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.
- iii. **Collaboration:** Create an environment that makes collaboration easy – across disciplines and between the University and external bodies.
- iv. **Professionalism:** Remove barriers to quality research and develop systems and processes that are effective, efficient and agile through appropriate infrastructure, training and development. Enable skills development and training across all career stages.
- v. **Leadership:** Transform the University's research and innovation reputation and profile, so that our national and international peers see us as partners and leaders across our disciplinary strengths.
- vi. **Growth:** Grow our research community from within in our strategic priority areas to provide a clear framework of research and KE aligned to our strengths and reflective of emerging opportunities. Create early-stage development funding opportunities (pump-priming).
- vii. **Facilitation:** Create the time, space and support to enable research and innovation. Challenge the barriers to research, particularly within the Schools, to ensure all career stages have time in their workload to develop and sustain their research excellence.
- viii. **Sustainability:** Create a sustainable research base by increasing the sustainability of our income, environment and our talent pipeline. Ensure ongoing support for high quality research by accelerating external funding development.
- ix. **Community:** Deliver a well-funded vibrant research community that is inclusive of all research active staff and students. Ensure that all our postgraduate students, including both full-time and part-time and from traditional and alternative routes, have excellent research and innovation training.

Appendix B: UN Sustainable development goals





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