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*Defying convention  
to break new ground*

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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. Gap Analysis

**Achieving the Vision set out in this Strategy will require targeted investments in personnel, assets, and infrastructure within established areas of expertise and in emerging fields, where Hull has the potential to establish and build distinctive research strengths.**

Recognising the necessity for efficiency in resource allocation, both funders and institutions must be discerning about where they invest financial resources.

In areas of research with high operational costs, the requirement for investment in underpinning facilities requires the concentration of activity within groups where these resources and capabilities exist. The issue of single-person risk underscores the importance of clustering research activities to some extent, even in disciplines where exceptional work can be produced by small teams or individuals.

In today's collaborative research landscape, achieving critical mass should be interpreted as Hull's internal research capacity, coupled

with its ability to tap into regional, national, and international networks, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation.

Our existing key strengths (detailed below) do not inspire the research community or enable the University to maximise the potential profile of our research within these areas.

There are no research leaders who are responsible for the delivery on these strengths which dilutes the narrative and does not enable the University to drive the innovation from bottom up or top down.

## 4.1 EXISTING 2030 STRATEGY STRENGTHS

- a. Accelerating a net zero future
- b. Improving health outcomes
- c. Promoting Justice and Fairness for all
- d. Living with water
- e. Enhancing heritage, creative and digital

These strengths are very broad but do cover our key strengths. Building on these we will adopt a thematic framework for research to guide future decision-making, including resource allocation. Utilising an evidence-based approach, and ensuring academic freedom is always respected, this approach will allow us to direct resources to achieve the best financial and intellectual outcomes, building our institutional capacity to deliver high quality, sustainable research.

Undertaking research within thematic areas will start from schools having their thematic research visions, through to Faculties and then the University. Supporting this thematic approach will be Centres, Institutes and new research excellence catalysts (see 9.1.1 Research excellence catalysts).

## 4.2 SYSTEMATIC GAPS

To support a strategic response to the need for investment, the following summary identifies the areas in which there are systemic gaps between the current research performance of the University and the goal defined in this strategy:

### a. Research Management

There are currently wide variations across the Schools in the structures, roles and governance associated with the management of research. REF 2021 resulted in a high degree of variability in performance across the institution, which can partly be attributed to inconsistencies in the processes of REF reading, mentoring, impact development and evidencing. The implementation of an institution-wide approach to REF oversight, will address this to some extent (with preparation already underway) and further steps are required to ensure that schools and faculties adopt a systematic approach to research planning, management and governance. This also has implications for developing and sustaining pipelines of external income generation in a way that is aligned with the requirements of the academic community.

### **b. Performance Indicators and Metrics**

The Research Review found that around one-third of schools had a research strategy and a clear sense of direction, whilst a further third had some pockets of strength and the final third were found to have 'no sense of research strategy'. Whilst it is unrealistic to expect uniform performance across the institution, there is a need for a cohesive plan for the research, and the development and adoption, of a consistent approach to the production of management information, and the setting and monitoring of research performance indicators across all schools and research institutes.

### **c. Research Staffing and Careers**

There has been a historical focus on emphasising the importance of building teaching capacity at the expense of making academic hires that align with the delivery of long-term research strength. The current academic career model delineates education, research, and knowledge exchange as three separate and distinct career tracks. There is evidence that this has created suboptimal incentives and raised concerns and questions about equality of experience, opportunity, and esteem between the three tracks. The development and implementation of a new Academic Career Framework will allow these issues to be addressed and provide a basis for positioning Hull as an outstanding organisation in which to develop a successful, well-rounded academic career.

### **d. Professional Services and Support**

Until 2023, Hull adopted a distributed approach to the delivery of research professional services, with a team that spanned schools, faculties, central directorates, research institutes and other operational units including the Aura Innovation Centre. Work is already underway to move to a cohesive institution-wide service model that ensures that academics can access the support they need, regardless of which academic unit they are based in. Alongside these structural and operational developments, there is a need to review research policies and associated guidance to ensure that they enable and facilitate the delivery of research and knowledge exchange work.

# 5. 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 (see section 9.1.1) 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.

## 5.1 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.

## 5.2 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.

## 5.3 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.



# 6. Strengthening our research and innovation environment

## 6.1 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.

## 6.2 KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES WITH ASSOCIATED POLICIES OR ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED POLICY OR ACTION
A1) Empower and enable our researchers and research-related staff through investment in training, support and development.	Establish a central 'Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE)', that provides institution-wide oversight of the design and delivery of researcher professional development opportunities.
A2) Enabling and supporting individuals to deliver high quality contributions to disciplinary knowledge.	Ensure that support and development is available to enable individuals to create appropriate open access outputs.
A3) Provide sustainable and accessible world class research facilities and attract external funding to support our research environment.	Make judicious investments in equipment, facilities and people, based on alignment with research priorities.
A4) Ensure that academics have sufficient effective research and knowledge exchange time.	Carefully consider the prioritisation and ringfencing of research time and focus in the new Academic Careers Framework and associated workload planning models.
A5) Enable research and knowledge exchange to be underpinned by the principles of open research.	Create a network of open research champions, who proactively support open research initiatives that reflect disciplinary norms.
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.	Complete the development of the Research Culture Action Plan and associated implementation plan. Review the policy, guidance, and associated engagement activities for research integrity, and take steps to ensure they are fit for purpose.
A7) Create opportunities for our research-related specialists and enable the community to expand and thrive.	Build communities around our specialists, including technicians and project managers, and proactively engage with the principles of the Technician Commitment. Ensure that the Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE) is fit for this wider purpose.

OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED POLICY OR ACTION
A8) Recognise and celebrate excellent research and KE activity delivered by both staff and students.	Create a cohesive, open plan for an annual programme of events and initiatives that showcase and recognise success in research and KE, alongside ad hoc celebrations of specific milestones such as KEF and REF results. Support staff and students to achieve national and international recognition by endorsing nominations to external awards.
A9) Ensure researchers have easy access to seamless support and expertise in research and business development, including commercialisation activity	Implement a cross-institutional research and KE support process. Enable accessible first point of call from the new Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE).
A10) Seek to maximise our research based impact and innovation	<p>Review the governance in place around innovation decision making to expedite processes in line with the Independent Review of University Spin out Companies.</p> <p>Ensure that the Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE) provides cross-institutional oversight of and support for KE skills development, capabilities and policy.</p> <p>Create 'University of Hull Innovation' that encompasses and expands upon Lampada Digital Solutions and the Aura Innovation Centre</p>
A11) Enhance income generation by fully utilising our research and KE environment.	Utilise equipment.data.ac.uk (and other catalogues) fully to hire out specialist facilities and equipment to external partners.
A12) Ensure that all research and KE active academics have an awareness of the external environments.	Encourage information sharing between communities and disciplines, including undertaking information awareness events and by celebrating research (see 9.5 Creating and celebrating excellence).
A13) Adopt a strategic approach to engagement with major research funders.	Implement communities of practice around specific funders to identify and implement systemic actions aimed at raising awareness of opportunities and successfully engaging with them, driving quality, volume and scale of ambition.



# 7. Supporting and developing interdisciplinary excellence

## 7.1 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.

## 7.2 KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES WITH ASSOCIATED POLICIES OR ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED POLICY OR ACTION
B1) Increase our research and KE income by widening the proportion of the academic body with successful awards and/or external income, increasing our ambition and supporting all researchers to prioritise opportunities, and not rely on small number of individuals to achieve success.	<p>Build engagement with external funding into the academic performance management and career frameworks.</p> <p>Implement a cross-institutional research development capability that is strategically connected to the academic planning processes and driven by the thematic research framework.</p>
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.	<p>Develop a five-year Research Communication Strategy that sets out clear priorities (based on the thematic framework), identifies key audiences, messages and communication channels.</p>
B3) Provide dedicated support and opportunities for the continuous development of collaborative research initiatives.	<p>Complete the KE Transformation project. Develop and implement an integrated approach to cross-institutional research and business development support.</p> <p>Provide opportunities to bring disciplines together to pump prime collaborations in areas of known external priorities.</p>
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.	<p>Undertake a review of PGR training provision, identifying current practice, the views of the PGR community at Hull and examples of best practice across the sector.</p>
B5) Support researchers to work across disciplinary boundaries, create new opportunities and raise expectations.	<p>Ensure that reward and progression systems appropriately recognise and do not disincentivise interdisciplinary research practice</p> <p>Establish a range of initiatives to proactively engage academic colleagues in research and KE activities and funding proposals that span disciplinary boundaries.</p>

OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED POLICY OR ACTION
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.	Develop future research plans at all levels in the academic community and link these to the priorities of the research development and researcher development teams to encourage and support growth of funded research fellows and postdoctoral researchers.
B7) Diversify the workforce by removing barriers across the entire research career pipeline.	Undertake a review of research careers at Hull, as a collaboration between HR, the Doctoral College and the Research and KE Services and provide new recruitment and development processes to break down these barriers. Ensure that the Academic Careers Framework enables research careers across diverse backgrounds.
B8) Maintain a key understanding of the recognised accreditations for equality, diversity and inclusion.	Ensure that processes and procedures adhere to our research culture action plan, Athena Swan action plan, researcher concordats etc.
B9) Be proactive in succession planning and strategically recruit to build critical mass and depth supporting our visibly leading research 'brands'.	Ensure that succession planning is explicitly addressed as part of planning processes at the level of the academic group, School/Institute and Faculty – using the thematic framework to assist with prioritisation of investments.



# 8. Developing our regional, national and international influence

## 8.1 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.

## 8.2 KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES WITH ASSOCIATED POLICIES OR ACTIONS

OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED POLICY OR ACTION
C1) Increase the visibility of our research, not just within an academic environment, but by contributing to public debate, engagement with policy makers etc.	<p>Review and develop the support capabilities to deliver support for policy-related impact from our research base and ensure that support is visible and readily accessible to academics.</p> <p>Include skills development for external engagement in the remit of the Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE).</p>
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.	<p>Ensure that training and development for improving the quality of outputs of our research and KE are available both within the School/Institute and within the Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE).</p> <p>Ensure that our systems and processes for the outputs of our research enable increasing recognition.</p>
C3) Provide a research underpinning to our Civic University responsibility via the inclusion of research within a strategic framework.	<p>Develop and deliver a Public and Community Engagement action plan, to be situated within a new cross-institutional strategic approach to regional engagement.</p>
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.	<p>Complete the KE Transformation Project, alongside associated systems developments (CRM) and the development and dissemination of related policies (including Intellectual Property and Consultancy).</p> <p>Ensure that the support structures for research impact are well aligned with the requirements of REF2029, including the need for broad impact support outside the scope of impact case studies.</p>
C5) Grow the regional, national and international reach of our research by supporting partnership development and networks.	<p>Complete the KE Transformation Project.</p> <p>Implement and embed key account management underpinned by a relationship management system (CRM) that will provide a real-time source of information and business intelligence.</p> <p>Ensure strong two-way relationships between the global professional services and the wider academic body to ensure international opportunities are maximised.</p>

OBJECTIVE	ASSOCIATED POLICY OR ACTION
<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete the KE Transformation Project.</p> <p>Review institutional professional support provision for research commercialisation and, where appropriate, ensure that this is incorporated into the scope of professional development support delivered through the establishment of the Academy for Research and Knowledge Exchange (ARKE).</p> <p>Review the governance in place around innovation decision making to expedite processes in line with the Independent Review of University Spin-out Companies.</p>
<p>C7) Seek to maximise the opportunities afforded by the regional changes in the governmental and industrial infrastructure (e.g devolution, Humber Freeport).</p>	<p>Ensure that appropriate provision for strategic oversight and operational provision of civic engagement is considered within the KE Transformation Project as well as the Public and Community Engagement Action Plan.</p>
<p>C8) Co-create our research with communities and stakeholders and apply our knowledge to real world challenges.</p>	<p>Develop and deliver a Public and Community Engagement action plan.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>Complete the KE Transformation Project.</p> <p>Develop a dedicated Executive Education and Continuing Professional Development Action Plan, that covers identification of opportunities, training, and support.</p> <p>Encourage the discussion of the needs of our local partners together with the ideas of our academic body to provide new externally focused training and development.</p>
<p>C10) Identify and develop active participation in / contribution to external networks (e.g. maximising on our global partnerships).</p>	<p>Ensure that external engagement is recognised in the Academic Careers Framework and in the criteria and objectives for the performance review of both academic and professional service staff.</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>Implement a regular series of review points in the process of implementing this strategy, to ensure that the Vision, Aims and Objectives remain relevant and realistic.</p>



# 9. Strategic Initiatives and Enablers

**Strategic initiatives are briefly described here to demonstrate the high-level initiatives that will require resource redistribution or financial investment to enable the delivery of the new research strategy. Full details (and investment required) will be in the implementation plan.**

## 9.1 RESEARCH STRUCTURES

### 9.1.1 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.

Research excellence catalysts will be developed both from bottom-up and top-down suggestions within our global challenge areas (see section 5). Each catalyst will have to develop a clear strategic plan that creates a self-sustaining research and KE environment and will be given time and resources to do this. Catalysts will be virtual endeavours with strong links to their host faculties, with individuals from across any of the schools and institutes, and will be dynamic. New catalysts will be created and catalysts that have achieved their visions will be deprioritised. Due to their virtual nature, they will be less formal structures than Institutes and Centres and therefore able to be more agile and quickly respond to new opportunities. Their primary focus will be to be more than the sum of their parts. They will bring together diverse research and KE excellence across the University to maximise external communication and enhance income generation.

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

### 9.1.2 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.

### 9.1.3 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.

## 9.2 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.

## 9.3 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.

### 9.3.1 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 existing Capital investment resources (RCIF and Internal ringfenced) as well as seek opportunities to co-fund with external partners.
- b. Enhancing the internal and external visibility. Move to a more modern facilities infrastructure with online booking for equipment, and associated cost recovery possibilities. Create internal brochures for existing equipment, and where appropriate advertise more widely with cost recovery mechanisms for external users.

### 9.3.2 Skilled technical workforce

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

### 9.3.3 Enhancing our internal funding

- a. Pump-priming and matching resourcing. Redistribute QR and indirect income to create strategic investment pots at the level of University, Faculty and School/Institute. Such pots would 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 and as indirect income grows they will grow to incentivise external income generation.
- 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. There needs to be some funding set aside for this, as well as a clear redeployment policy.
- 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.

### 9.3.4 Doctoral college

- a. Create a (non-compulsory) level 8 certificate. As part of the doctoral college review look at 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.

- b. As part of the redistribution of research funding look to evaluate the cost of our PGR offer and re-introduce research training support fees across all PGR studentships at three funding levels. Restructure our internal studentships for fewer better-funded students, and align with our research priorities and utilise them for external income generation.
- c. Re-examine how internally funded top-up international scholarships are utilised.

## 9.4 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.

### 9.4.1 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.

### 9.4.2 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]

### 9.4.3 Global fellows

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

## 9.5 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
  - Best thesis [5 a year]
  - 3 minute research talks

## 9.6 Hull University centenary fellows

**Purpose:** To provide sustainability and expansion within our research excellence catalysts, institutes, and centres to retain and recruit high-quality research and innovation leaders and future leaders to expand the breadth and depth of our excellence.

### 9.6.1 Leadership development academic fellows

- a. Provide a five-year future leadership fellowship programme (at lecturer grade 8 level) to enable research active early career researchers (ECRs) to establish themselves and their research and provide support and development for this cohort to enable them to obtain external fellowship income. Following successful 5 year programme will migrate onto continuing academic contract. Promotion within fellowship allowed and expected at the end.
- b. Existing Hull University fixed term ECRs applying for externally funded fellowships of five years length, which provide salary research support costs within fixed criteria, can apply to be a Future academic fellow. Fellows within the areas of the catalysts will be prioritised, but fellows in thematic areas of expansion within the Schools or Institute plans will also be eligible. With the agreement of their Head of School / Institute and Faculty Dean they will (subject to satisfactory progress) have a continuing academic contract at the end of their fellowship, if awarded. This commitment will be written into the letter of support.

## 9.6.2 Early career academic fellows

- a. Provide a two/three year fixed term career development fellowship programme (at lecturer grade 7 level) to enable the fellow to develop an early career externally funded fellowship (within fixed criteria).

### 9.6.3 Senior academic fellows

- a. Within our Catalysts and priority research areas in Faculties enable the prioritisation of recruitment of high-quality research active more senior academics that complement existing strengths and broaden their appeal. This will enable existing staff to create new interdisciplinary opportunities.

### 9.6.4 EDI Talent pathway fellows [EDI Masters / PhD / ECR recruitment]

- a. Create opportunities that clearly target areas of our talent pathway that have poor indicators of equality. Recruitment into these fellowships will be undertaken with clear training for the mentor to ensure that barriers to future advancement are minimised.

### 9.6.5 PhD studentship clusters

- a. Within the Catalysts, if suggested in their future plans, target the resources to high quality clusters that draw strength from our doctoral training centres to provide a high quality training experience.

# 10. 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.

Performance discussions at all levels will incorporate assessments of research quality and impact, emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration. Embracing a data-informed culture, faculties will utilize richer information to shape their distinctive plans. Increased strategic research collaborations and partnerships with industry and the public sector will underscore our success.

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 external validation in terms of comparison with our official comparator Institutions.

## **The factors will cover all the domains of the research strategy:**

- a. External income generation
- b. Excellence
- c. Post-graduate research students
- d. Training and development
- e. Culture
- f. Partnerships (non-commercial and commercial)
- g. International relationships, partnerships and networks

Engagement from Faculties, Schools and Institutes will be pivotal in implementing the strategy, with a focus on fostering responsibility and ownership. Positive accountability will be promoted, encouraging successful plan implementation and capitalizing on new initiatives. Additional support will be available where necessary, collaborating closely with Deans, ADRs and professional services to devise improvement strategies.

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.



# 11. 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.

# 12. Appendix B: UN Sustainable development goals







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