

Research & Knowledge Exchange Strategy: 2024-26

Ambition

Research and knowledge exchange are at the heart of Health Sciences University's (HSU) reputation, growth, and academic success, and are critical to the achievement of the institutional strategy, *Fit for the Future 2021-26*.

Our ambition is to transform our research culture to enable us to be:

- A leading health sciences university for applied research, with talented staff and students committed to research excellence and to undertaking research that has a positive impact on the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, or quality of life.
- A preferred partner within specialisms for research in the health sciences community.
- An anchor university for knowledge exchange within our local communities.
- A university that nurtures a diverse, inclusive, and sustainable environment in which we support our people and develop our activities, spaces and facilities to excel at research and knowledge exchange.

We will achieve this through sparking staff interest in research and knowledge exchange (RKE), developing their RKE skills, and creating capacity for them to undertake RKE. Investment will be made through three interconnected themes:

Theme 1: RKE culture and support infrastructure

Strong research support infrastructures underpin sustainable and vibrant research cultures and environments. These fundamental building

blocks include the facilities, resources, structures, policies, procedures, and services that are used by the research community to conduct research, foster innovation, and build capacity. Research culture “encompasses the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms of our research communities” (The Royal Society). It influences who is doing research, what research is done and how it is communicated. Research culture impacts on all aspects of research including integrity, diversity, career paths, reward and recognition, open research, and the ethos of collaboration.



We will build a vibrant and collegiate environment that enables RKE to flourish by:

- Providing our staff and students with access to seedcorn funding, high-quality training and development, and networking and collaboration opportunities.
- Building an RKE support infrastructure that it is valued, lean, and enables collegiality.
- Embracing open research and responsible research assessment.
- Promoting and enabling collaboration, partnership working and external engagement.



Theme 2: High-performing and high-potential teams

People and teams are at the heart of our strategy. Through our RKE culture and support infrastructure, we will enable our staff and students to reach their full RKE potential by:

- Nurturing a strong interprofessional RKE community, supported by a visible and engaged community of practice, by investing time and resources to enable their success.
- Attracting and retaining excellent researchers, building teams and critical mass in areas of research excellence, and creating opportunities for collaborative and collegiate ways of working.
- Growing our cohort of doctoral students and providing them with a personalised learning experience.
- Optimising engagement with our visiting staff and using their expertise as a catalyst for research excellence through mentorship, peer review, and collaboration.
- Protecting time for staff to engage in research and allocating blocks of time for RKE.



Theme 3: RKE profile, engagement and influence

Increasing the breadth and depth of our external engagement is essential for achieving our ambition. This will ensure our research is informed, relevant, and impactful, which is central to our institutional mission.

We will raise our profile and engage constructively with external stakeholders by:

- Increasing the breadth and significance of our research impact by working with partners in our communities and with research beneficiaries.
- Embedding meaningful patient and public involvement and engagement throughout our RKE activities.
- Expanding our strategic collaborations with key RKE stakeholders, ensuring these relationships are mutually beneficial.
- Investing in our communication and influencing skills so that we can enhance our public and community engagement, impact and profile.
- Having a more dynamic presence on the web, organised through our strategic research narratives and themes.

- Offering a programme of public and community engagement activities throughout the year.



By 2026, we will have:

- Enhanced the quality and impact of our research outputs and increased the proportion of our staff and students who are publishing.
- Increased the volume and size of our RKE bids and awards and achieved a sustainable growth in our annual RKE income.
- Grown our PGR student cohort and created an attractive and stimulating environment for our students.
- Developed the vibrancy and maturity of our research culture so that staff feel a tangible difference in how they are supported and enabled to undertake RKE.
- Developed and embedded a more sophisticated and formalised KE strategy.
- Increased the breadth and significance of our research impact.



We are agile, innovative and collaborative and are open for greater partnership working to improve health, wellbeing and quality of life.

For any enquiries or to discuss ways of collaborating with us on RKE, please contact us at: research@aecc.ac.uk