

Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (2025 - 26+2)

Dr Matthew Carlile, Dean of Education, Centre for Academic Excellence

Executive Summary: Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (2025–26+2)

Purpose and Vision

This strategy sets out a short-term, achievable plan to consolidate and grow research and knowledge exchange (RKE) across GBS. It positions RKE as a vital tool to enhance teaching quality, curriculum design, staff expertise, and student employability, especially within a teaching-intensive institution serving over 40,000 students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Context and Principles

Despite the absence of formal research titles, GBS has strong disciplinary expertise and growing interest in RKE. Existing initiatives include mentoring, seminars, a research community, repository, annual conference, ethics committee, and open access publishing. The strategy is guided by three principles:

- Supportive and enabling
- Teaching-enhancing
- Culturally inclusive

Defining RKE at GBS

RKE includes pedagogic research, applied and practice-based projects, and knowledge exchange with employers and communities. Outputs range from publications to curriculum enhancements and teaching innovations. RKE is framed as professional development that enriches teaching and student outcomes.

Strategic Objectives (2025–26+2)

1. Consolidate and Expand Existing Assets

- Expand mentoring, seminars, and repository visibility.
- Promote open access publishing.
- Reframe the ethics committee as supportive.

2. Build Staff Capacity

- Strengthen mentoring and deliver targeted workshops.
- Empower librarians as research partners in data literacy and referencing.

3. Develop Hub-and-Spoke Model

- CAE as central hub; Faculties as spokes.
- Nominate RKE contacts, host seminars, embed initiatives locally.

4. Strengthen Knowledge Exchange

- Pilot community-focused KE projects.
- Develop employer partnerships for curriculum co-design and applied projects.
- Facilitate public engagement through the Library.

5. Enrich Curriculum and Student Experience

- Link RKE to curriculum development and dissertation supervision.
- Embed research-informed teaching.
- Launch Discipline Review Groups to inform curriculum updates.

6. Enhance Employability

- Position RKE as a bridge to employment.
- Collaborate with employers to shape modules and provide project opportunities.
- Celebrate alumni and involve employers in seminars and conferences.

Implementation and Success Measurement

- Coordinated by CAE and the Library, supported by Faculties.
- Delivered via mentoring, workshops, seminars, conferences, and KE events.
- Success measured through staff engagement, curriculum impact, student outcomes, and institutional culture.

Review and Future Outlook

- Annual review by RSPPC with Faculty and Library input.
- Adjustments based on feedback and policy changes.
- Long-term goal: a sustainable RKE culture that enhances teaching, staff expertise, student learning, and community contributions.

Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy

1. Introduction and Purpose

This strategy sets out a short-term, achievable plan (2025 – 26 +2) to consolidate and grow research and knowledge exchange (RKE) across GBS. It is developed and implemented under the oversight of the Research, Scholarly and Professional Practice Committee (RSPPC), as set out in its Terms of Reference.

Our mission is rooted in teaching and widening participation. With more than 40,000 students, many of whom are mature, first-generation, working-class, or studying with English as an additional language, we are proud to provide opportunities to learners who are under-represented in higher education. In this context, RKE must be understood not as a separate or elite activity, but as a vital means of enhancing teaching quality and curriculum design, improving staff expertise and confidence, enriching students' learning and employability, and contributing to the communities and industries we serve.

This strategy is designed to guide internal practice, enabling Faculties to engage with RKE in ways that are sustainable, developmental, and aligned with our teaching mission. It also positions our work in relation to external frameworks, particularly the Teaching Excellence

Framework (TEF), where research-informed teaching, graduate outcomes, and knowledge exchange are increasingly significant.

2. Context and Principles

Our institution is teaching-intensive. There are no research titles, and our lecturers carry demanding teaching and marking loads. Yet within our community, there is considerable disciplinary expertise, and a growing appetite to contribute to research, scholarship, and professional practice.

The CAE, with the Projects and Research Coordinator, already coordinates a number of initiatives: research mentoring, a programme of seminars, a developing research community on Teams, a growing repository of outputs, an annual conference, a Research Ethics Committee, and funding for open access publishing. The Library, under the new Directorship of Dr Janice Fernandes, is also emerging as a partner in supporting scholarly work. These assets provide a strong foundation to build upon.

Three principles underpin this strategy. First, it is supportive and enabling: RKE should feel achievable and rewarding, not an additional burden. Second, it is teaching-enhancing: all RKE activity must directly strengthen teaching quality, curriculum relevance, and student outcomes. Third, it is culturally inclusive: research and KE will be broadly defined to include pedagogic, practice-based, and applied projects, as well as community and industry engagement.

3. Defining Research and Knowledge Exchange at GBS

We adopt a deliberately broad and inclusive definition of RKE. It includes pedagogic research and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), applied and practice-based projects linked to staff subject expertise, and knowledge exchange with employers, professional bodies, and local communities. Outputs are not limited to traditional publications but also include curriculum enhancements, teaching innovations, and projects with measurable benefit to students or external partners.

RKE in this context is not an end in itself, but a process of professional development. It strengthens staff subject knowledge, builds confidence as dissertation supervisors, enriches curriculum design, and supports staff retention. Crucially, it benefits students by

embedding research-informed teaching, improving their learning experience, and preparing them for graduate careers.

4. Strategic Objectives (2025 – 26 +2)

4.1 Consolidate and Expand Existing Assets

Over the next two years, we will make the existing structures, developed with the Projects and Research Coordinator, more visible and effective. Research mentoring will be expanded and promoted so that more colleagues, particularly early career staff, benefit from experienced guidance. Our seminar programme, Teams communities, and annual conference will be better publicised and linked to staff development plans. The Repository will be positioned as a showcase of staff outputs, accessible both internally and externally, while the Research Ethics Committee will develop its role as a supportive structure rather than merely regulatory. In parallel, we will expand the use of open access publishing funds to ensure that staff outputs reach wider audiences.

4.2 Build Staff Capacity through CAE and Library

We will place staff development at the heart of this strategy. Mentoring will be better advertised, connecting early career lecturers with more experienced colleagues. CAE will continue to deliver targeted workshops on research methods, publishing, funding, and project planning, while the Library will play an enhanced role as a research partner. Librarians will support open access, systematic searching, referencing, and data literacy, reinforcing their status as professional academic partners. In doing so, we will frame RKE as a pathway for staff career progression and professional identity, thereby contributing to improved retention.

4.3 Develop a Hub-and-Spoke Model with Faculties

To ensure that activity is embedded locally, we will continue to adopt a hub-and-spoke model. The CAE will act as the central hub, coordinating and resourcing initiatives, while Faculties will serve as spokes, taking on modest but meaningful responsibilities. Each Faculty will nominate a contact for RKE, host at least one seminar annually, and embed CAE's initiatives (mentoring, repository use, and workshops) into local routines. This approach balances consistency with flexibility and ensures that ownership is shared across

the institution. Some Faculties already have research groups; in others the Faculty Research Ethics Group may choose to add this element to the agenda.

4.4 Strengthen Knowledge Exchange and Community Engagement

We will run an invitation to pilot a small number of modestly funded community-focused KE projects in disciplines such as health, counselling, and business, addressing local needs and demonstrating impact. Partnerships with employers will be developed to co-design curriculum, create dissertation opportunities, and provide applied projects that build employability. The Library will also be involved in KE activity, facilitating public engagement and exploring ways to extend access to knowledge into the communities our students come from. In addition, CAE will coordinate showcase events where staff and students present work to employers, communities, and professional partners.

4.5 Enrich Curriculum and Student Experience

RKE will be explicitly linked to curriculum development processes, ensuring that disciplinary expertise informs programme design. Dissertation tutor training will be enhanced so that colleagues draw upon their own research and KE experience in supervising students. Across subject areas, research-informed teaching will be embedded as a hallmark of our provision. Students will also be offered opportunities to engage in small-scale applied projects, equipping them with problem-solving and analytical skills directly relevant to graduate careers. The CAE is facilitating the development of cross-institution Discipline Review Groups - subject expertise groups- who will lead and facilitate subject specific research seminars and also produce reports to Academic Board about the state of the discipline (i.e. statutory changes, scientific breakthroughs, updated subject benchmark statements) to inform, enhance and update GBS curriculum.

4.6 Strengthen Student Employability through Research and KE

Employability is a central driver of this strategy. We must position RKE as a bridge between study and work by ensuring that curricula reflect real-world practice. In collaboration with Employment and Entrepreneurship colleagues, structured employer partnerships will be developed to shape modules and create applied project opportunities. KE projects will be framed as employability training, enabling students to apply disciplinary knowledge to practical challenges. Employers and professional bodies will be invited to contribute to CAE

seminars and the annual conference, while alumni will be celebrated as role models who demonstrate the value of research-informed learning for career success.

5. Implementation

The CAE, with the Projects and Research Coordinator, in collaboration with the Library, will act as the central hub, coordinating activity. Faculties will act as spokes, ensuring local relevance and ownership through nominated contacts and modest commitments. The strategy will be delivered through an annual calendar of mentoring, workshops, seminars, the conference, KE events, and funding calls. Existing resources (seed funding, open access funds, Comms and Events teams) will underpin delivery, with a focus on efficiency and visibility.

A comprehensive communications plan will be developed, including the introduction of Research Representatives at every campus to act as local RKE champions. An updated SharePoint page will serve as the central repository for RKE resources, funding calls, events, and success stories, ensuring visibility and accessibility for all staff and students

A new small grants scheme will be launched to support research costs such as participant vouchers, research activity refreshments, and open access publishing fees. Clear eligibility criteria and an application process will be published on the SharePoint page. Applications will be reviewed by a dedicated committee comprising representatives from CAE, the Library, and Faculties, with transparent decision-making and feedback provided to all applicants. The committee responsible for reviewing applications to the small grants scheme and the annual community research competition will report outcomes and impact data to the RSPPC, which retains ultimate oversight of research funding decisions and may review, or revise eligibility criteria and processes as needed.

To further our commitment to community engagement, we will launch an annual competition inviting staff and students to apply for funding to support research projects that directly benefit the communities we serve. Winning projects will be showcased at institutional events and promoted through our communications channels.

We will invest in enhanced research resources, including access to qualitative and quantitative analysis software such as Nvivo and SPSS, to support staff and student

research projects. Training and support for these tools will be provided through the Library and CAE workshops.

The research mentoring programme will be relaunched with a refreshed structure, clearer matching of mentors and mentees, and regular evaluation to ensure it meets the evolving needs of early career and established staff alike.

The institutional repository will be relaunched with improved functionality, user guidance, and proactive support to encourage staff to deposit and share their research outputs. Success stories and new uploads will be regularly highlighted via the SharePoint page and communications plan.

6. Measuring Success

Progress will be measured through a combination of staff development, curriculum impact, student outcomes, and institutional culture. Success will be evident in the number of staff who engage in mentoring, training, and publishing; in the visibility and usage of the Repository; and in the enhanced role of librarians as research partners. Curriculum improvements will be tracked through evidence of research-informed teaching and stronger dissertation supervision. For students, outcomes will be measured in employability, graduate destinations, and the relevance of curriculum to their career aspirations. Knowledge exchange will be evaluated through the number and quality of employer partnerships, community projects, and Faculty-hosted seminars. At the institutional level, success will be reflected in improved staff retention, a stronger academic identity, and contributions to TEF narratives.

7. Review and Next Steps

All new initiatives and funding schemes described in this strategy will be subject to approval, ongoing monitoring, and annual review by the Research, Scholarly and Professional Practice Committee (RSPPC), in line with its Terms of Reference. The RSPPC will receive regular progress updates and may recommend adjustments to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and resource constraints.



Our longer-term ambition is to foster a sustainable RKE culture that strengthens teaching, improves staff expertise, enriches student learning, and enhances our contribution to employers and communities. The next two years will lay the foundations for this journey.