

## Inspire Transformational Academic Practice through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): HE and Lifelong Learning Research Cluster Strategy 2023/24 - 2027/28

### Background

The Education and Enterprise pillar of Oxford Brookes Strategy 2035 establishes our ambition to offer outstanding, transformational education. The Office for Students and UK Quality Assurance Agency advise that pedagogic practice in HE should be evidence based. This calls for a scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)-led and -based approaches to practise, enhancement and innovation. There are discussions across the sector with regard to the definitions and distinctions between SoTL and pedagogic or educational research ([Tierney, 2019](#)).

“... the key distinction centers on the purposes of the scholarly inquiry being conducted; in educational research, the fundamental goal is generalizable knowledge, and in SoTL the core purpose is to improve teaching and learning for the particular students being studied (Geertsema 2016)”.

Healey, Matthews and Cook-Sather. 2020, p. 19

We use the definitions given here:

SoTL-led: the application (Boyer, 1990) of educational scholarship to pedagogic practice. When peer reviewed and published this might be categorised as 1\* research in the Research Excellence Framework (REF)

SoTL-based: original research where educational innovation is conducted and impact evaluated. This practice is also known as pedagogic research. Some disciplinary REF categories include pedagogic research (Cotton et al, 2017). This type of scholarship of teaching and learning can be understood as a contribution to, or discovery of new knowledge (Boyer, 1990). When extended beyond a single institution, peer reviewed and published it might be categorised as 3\* and 4\* research in the REF.

Both kinds of SoTL are included in Brookes' Scholarship workload tariff of 160 hours, and, subject to individual research interests, might be included within Research or Knowledge Exchange tariffs.

Oxford Brookes University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy underpins the University's strategic goal of being “committed to international and world-leading research that is exploited and disseminated for the benefit of our communities.”

As such this strategy is interested in supporting colleagues in making evolutionary steps enhancing their pedagogic practice taking a SoTL-led approach and progressing to SoTL-based research, contributing to Brookes' TEF narrative 2027; and disseminating findings to the benefit of our learning and wider HE community, thus potentially contributing to REF 2029 (for example through pedagogic research in their discipline or through the Education Unit of Assessment (UoA 23)).

## Vision

Advance knowledge and inspire adoption of transformational academic practice in HE and lifelong learning.

## Mission

1. Increase capability for SoTL-based innovation to offer our students ‘an outstanding education’ and support TEF (2027)
2. Further Brookes position at the forefront of evidence based, transformational academic practice
3. Support the HEALL cluster contribution to the Unit of Assessment 23 (Education) of REF (2028) and those Units of Assessment that includes pedagogic or educational research in their REF narrative.

## Aims

1. Nurture SoTL-based academic enhancement and development;
2. create practical, evidence based guidance for the enhancement and development of academic practice;
3. and produce high quality academic outputs.

## Objectives

### 1. Nurture HEALL research capability collaboratively

- Establish a HEALL community of practice (OCAED, PLESE's and friends)
- Promote and increase engagement with EXPLORE's SoTL - workshops
- Introduce a HEALL stream to OCAED's Talking Academic Practice (invite experts to share their knowledge and colleagues to 'show and tell')
- Invite PLESEs and others interested in HEALL to relevant HEALL stream in TAP (semester 2, 2023/24)
- Ensure OCAED academic staff complete the Brookes [research development matrix](#) to discern individual development need (in all relevant PDRs)

### 2. Build HEALL research capacity inclusively

- Communicate OCAED SoTL development and funding opportunities to the learning community
- Collaborate with SoTL active colleagues across the university, offering mutual learning, support and professional development
- Support all OCAED academic staff to construct individual [3 year research development plans](#) aligned to OCAED ambitions and University priorities
- Include in relevant OCAED academic staff's workload allocations time for scholarship ([OCAED workload planning framework](#))
- Effectively project manage OCAED enhancement and research activity, using the [OCAED Research Project Mandate](#)
- Horizon scan for funding opportunities
- Welcome visiting scholars to bring diverse perspectives, using the [HSS visiting academics](#) procedure
- Build an Academic Enhancement Tool Kit, with chapters covering Evidencing and Evaluating Impact; Designing and Delivering HE Inquiries; and Disseminating HE Inquiry Findings (2023/24 - 2024/25)

### 3. Disseminate HEALL research strategically (fewer, higher quality outputs)

- Invest in OCAED dissemination routes to benefit all stakeholders  
[International conference](#)  
 Transformational Academic Practice symposium  
[Brookes Briefings and other publications](#)  
[Talking Teaching Across the Globe](#)  
[IDEAS tool kit](#)  
[International HE Reading Group](#)  
[Teaching Insights](#)
- Extend reach through outputs:  
 high quality, eg. peer reviewed articles in high impact journals, chapters, edited collections, monographs (3 and 4\*)  
 wide reaching, eg. respected and credible social media outlets  
 and impactful eg tool-kits and text books
- Extend reach through activity:  
 conferences  
 guest speaking  
 consultancy

### 4. Evidence HEALL research impact systematically

- Measure impact of SoTL based enhancement using robust evaluation protocols
- Trace engagement (attendance, readership and downloads) of assets/guidance, outputs and activity
- Track academic influence through citations
- Follow how work is used in other institutions, (reach and impact)

Authored September 2022. Corresponding Operational plan below.

Consulted with OCAED team November 2022; School of Education REF Unit of Assessment Lead, November 2022; PVC Ed December 2022; PVC Research, Knowledge Exchange & Enterprise, February 2023; updated in light of Sustaining Educational & Academic Leadership Research April 2023; Research & Enterprise Researcher Development lead April 2023; PLESE/Prof ESE November 2023.

Updated (addition of Evaluation work) September 2024

Milestones 2023/24	Timescale
1. Update/Author an OCAED HEALL Research Strategy using HE Research Groups findings (Jen) (Summer 2023 <b>complete</b> )	Summer 2023 <b>Complete</b>
2. Consult OCAED ( <b>complete</b> )	<b>Complete</b>
3. Consult wider HEALL interested parties (HEALL and PLESE's) <b>April 2024</b>	<b>Complete</b>
4. Outline expectation of research in our specific roles. See appendix 1	S1 2023/24 <b>(complete)</b>

5. Research Development to be integrated within TAP: Sessions (Sue, see 14 and 15)	S1 2023/24 <b>(complete)</b>
6. Introduce the OCAED HEALL Research Strategy: OCAED Research priorities & opportunities; HEALL (Jen)	S1 2023/24 October 3rd; Nov 14 <b>Complete</b>
7. Map Individual research interests, projects and responsibilities to OCAED Ambitions and objectives: introduce the RDP (link) (Jen)	S1 2023/24 <b>Deadline</b> <b>December</b> <b>20th</b> <b>Complete</b>
8. Develop individual research capability and understand individual development needs using the Research Development Matrix: Time for everyone in OCAED to work through the matrix and identify activity they could engage with to develop research skills. (Sue) See 16.	S1 2023/24 TAP Nov 14 <b>Complete</b>
9. <b>Grow understanding of ethical research practices and Research ethics process at Brookes</b> (Sue invites RE Officer, liaise with Kat Kwok who as Educational Research Fellow will be OCAEDs RE Lead (DRAFT TBC with NB and KK: a leadership role that enables the wider centre to benefit from the Research Fellow's expertise: offering advice and steer on Brookes RE procedures; critical appraisal / friendship in support of ethical research practices and RE applications; supporting and where appropriate (for example when leading or project managing a research project or as a member of a research team) actioning RE approval procedures)	S1/2 2023/24
10. <b>Invite speakers from Research Support Team</b> in RBDO to talk us through REF 2028 (Impact, Engagement); WorkTribe and expectations (Sue invite to TAP)	S1/2 2023/24 <b>Complete</b>
11. <b>Understand Brookes publishing policy:</b> Library to outline Brooke's open access publishing policy (Sue invite to TAP) Note: we must upload outputs to Converis within a given timeframe of publication otherwise they are not submissable.	S2 2023/24 <b>Complete</b>
12. <b>HEALL symposia:</b> share OCAED and OCAED funded work, invite PLESE's (S2 2023/24) integrate within TAP dates. (Sue)  <b>Integrate within TTAG</b>	S2 2024
13. <b>Update individual staff profiles on OCAED webpages</b> (use simple Harvard, descending order with most recent output/activity first) and link to consultancy page (All, LD)	S2 2023/24 Deadline to send info to LD: 10 Jan -

	extend to 18th Jan LD refining
<p>14. <b>Define a HEALL research narrative and themes</b> (Jen) using individual research development plans Link individual interests/experience/expertise to priorities - in readiness for PDRS Current <a href="#">OCAED research projects</a> (PMs doc)</p>	S3 2023/24
<p><b>HEALL / OCAED Research Themes</b></p> <p><b>1.Increase engagement with SoTL &amp; Academic Development + 4.Enable and sustain educational leadership = Transformational Academic Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational leadership (SEAL, DAPL+Ts)(2023/24-2025/26)</li> <li>• Strategic deployment of the PSF (2025/26)?</li> <li>• Developing the developers (intersects with SEAL) (QAA project with Cambridge &amp; UoH; Look for further funding) (2023/24)</li> </ul> <p><b>2.Revitalise Academic Advising: enhance practice, increase engagement. IMPACT CASE STUDY TBC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of strategy, principles, guidance and policy</li> <li>• Transformational Academic Practice Synmpsia 2025</li> </ul> <p><b>3.Develop understanding of, engagement with and adoption of the IDEAS model IMPACT CASE STUDY TBC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Curricula Design Methodology</b> Chester? Identify Global Partner/s Comparative study (method ie. design thinking/personas 2024/25) Political Power of Partnership Working - BILT 2025</li> <li>• <b>IDEAS Elements (SoTL Leads)</b> Develop Assets for IDEAS Tool kit (2023/24-2024/25) £5k each over 2 years; each SoTL lead to produce a <a href="#">project mandate</a> Publish impact &amp; findings with colleagues (2025/26) Develop impact case studies, TBC (2027/28) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inclusive T&amp;L (audio processing)</li> <li>○ Digital inclusion (Brooke's VLE evaluation and digital capability; Future fit curricula: AI in HE (SEDA edition; ANTF Gen AI Innovation);</li> <li>○ Employability learning (BEE evaluation)</li> <li>○ Assessment as, of and for learning (QAA UA Project; HSS tool-kit)</li> <li>○ Sustainable mindset: Wicked Problems with TDE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>2023/24 - 2027/28</p> <p>2023/24 - 2027/</p> <p><b>2023/24-2027/28</b></p>

13. Identify suitable outlets ( <a href="#">journals</a> , <a href="#">conferences</a> etc) and <a href="#">Funding Opportunities</a> Nik and Polly	S1 2023 <b>Complete</b>
14. Identify Support for Research / SoTL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Research Development Matrix</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ACT</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Explore</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">RIE Directorate</a></li> </ul>	May 2023 <b>Complete</b> (see individual plans)
15. Invite Education to talk to the HEALL group about their research activity/output the REF	Sept 2022 <b>Complete</b>
16. Establish OCAED teams developmental needs (Appendix 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All research-work loaded academic staff to complete research development matrix. Integrate within TAP ( Sue)</li> </ul>	July 2022 <b>Complete</b> first iteration S1 2023/24 Individual planning (Intro Nov 16 23) <b>Complete</b>
17. Evaluation: phase 1 (Evaluating and evidencing impact) & 2 (Designing) & 3 (Disseminating)	phase 1 complete Phase 2 Jan Phase 3 July

### Rationale for OCAED's HEALL Research Strategy

1. Ensure OCAED research activity supports institutional priorities and furthers OCAEDs ambitions
2. Align OCAED and HEALL research cluster activity and contribute to Brookes' REF UoA 23 Education
3. Create synergies and mutual learning across the learning community
4. Capitalise upon the historic legacy of OCSLD

### Measures of success

1. Research Development / Strengthening across the OCAED team
2. Balance of research outputs & activity
  - Wide reaching: e.g. Brookes Briefings; blogs; short articles e.g. Educational Developments (SEDA);
  - High quality: Peer reviewed journal articles
  - Books and chapters
  - Conference presentations
  - Consultancy

3. Citations of OCAED outputs and invitations as speakers / consultants etc.
4. Impact Case Study selected for REF 2028

## Appendix 1

### Expectations of research activity in OCAED

Lecturers in Educational Development (all grades) are academic staff. As with all academic staff at Brookes if they have work loaded research time they are eligible for REF submission.

Note June 2024: We consider this to put staff under unnecessary pressure in our current context and so have allocated 'scholarship time' for colleagues to conduct scholarly activity.

Academic staff are expected to conduct pedagogic and institutional research. In particular they will initiate, lead and conduct pedagogic research projects in support of the Education and Enterprise pillar of Brookes Strategy 2035 and disseminate research findings through publication in academic journals, conference presentations and specialist lectures.

Each Lecturer will complete the Research Development Matrix to assess their individual research development needs and an Individual Research Development Plan to enable sensible work loading and strategic planning of all research activity.

Researchers within the OCAED team contracts vary and make clear if they are eligible for REF submission. They are expected to:

- Initiate and lead on pedagogic research projects. These can include internal Brookes-based projects (e.g. to support the activities of the Centre or the University more widely) and external projects such as externally-funded research.
- To undertake or provide support on research activities related to the research projects they are leading or otherwise involved in (e.g. preparing and submitting ethics applications, conducting literature reviews, data collection and analysis, reporting findings and preparation of research outputs including for internal and external audiences).
- Horizon-scan for funding opportunities and contribute to bidding activities.
- To provide ad hoc research advice or support to colleagues where appropriate/requested.

## Appendix 2

### OCAED Team Research Development Needs

Identified by Ed Strategy working group Summer 2022

1. Ethics applications at Brookes
2. How to structure good surveys/questionnaires and how to interpret data
3. Quantitative brush ups including R/Python for analysis
4. Unusual methodologies e.g. budgeting methodology

### References



Cotton, D., Miller, W., & Kneale, P. (2017). The Cinderella of academia: Is higher education pedagogic research undervalued in UK research assessment? *Studies in Higher Education*, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1276549>

Geertsema, J. (2016). Academic development, SoTL and educational research. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 21(2), 122-134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2016.1175144>