

# Research Environment Document (RED)

April 2025

## Purpose of this document

Grounded in our ethos of intellectual independence and mentorship, this The Research Environment Document (RED) outlines how Buckingham provides a distinctive space for researchers to flourish across disciplines and career stages.

The Research Environment Document (RED) describes and showcases the research culture, infrastructure, support systems, and overall research environment one can expect at the University of Buckingham. The document serves staff, students, collaborator, funding bodies and other external stakeholders who have interest in the research activities and the overall environment at University of Buckingham.

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# 1 Overview

As the UK's first independent university, the University of Buckingham has always approached research with a spirit of innovation, agility, and academic freedom. The University's intimate scale creates a research environment that is agile, personal, and deeply supportive. We foster a culture where ideas grow through close collaboration, academic freedom, and a strong focus on real-world relevance and impact.

## 1.1 Context and Vision/Mission

Our mission is to *“To inspire and empower individuals through excellence in education, research, innovation, and service”*.

At the heart of Buckingham's mission lies a commitment to fostering a dynamic and inclusive research environment—one that encourages curiosity, innovation, collaboration, free speech and an understanding of the importance of academic freedom amongst students and staff. Our research culture thrives on interdisciplinary collaboration, global engagement, and a belief that innovation emerges not only from cutting-edge facilities, but from diverse minds working together.

## 1.2 Strategic Goals

The University of Buckingham's Research Strategy 2022 – 2027, and underpinning operational framework, is shaped by its unique vision and distinctive mission within British Higher Education, as outlined in our Strategy and Vision Statement. It should be read alongside the University Strategy, and used in conjunction with:

- The Research Degrees Handbook, which details the essential procedures and regulations for the conduct of all research degrees
- The University Research Centre, the University's central online access page for research-related resources and events
- Individual School's research related resources

### 1.2.1 Research Base and IRO Status

The University of Buckingham is in an exciting phase of growth as it aims to expand its research capacity across all disciplines. While it currently has a smaller research base compared to larger UK institutions, it has made meaningful strides in cultivating a dynamic and active research environment.

As part of its strategic development, the University has applied for **Independent Research Organisation (IRO)** status—a major step toward unlocking broader access to research funding. Achieving IRO recognition is a strategic priority and will further enhance the University's ability to support high-quality research and strengthen its evolving research infrastructure.

## 1.3 Objectives

- 1 Promote a visible and vibrant research culture, in which a sustainable body of leading scholars engages the wider public with our research ideas and our research community.
- 2 Build a strong research infrastructure and environment for academic staff, encouraging successful and innovative applications for external funding, and will fund partial and full-fee research scholarships to encourage early-stage researchers.

- 3 Ensure all research supervisors and research officers are suitably qualified experts in their field, and are wellinformed, resourced and supported in their work.
- 4 Benchmark our research against national and international standards of excellence by whatever means look most certain to secure due recognition for the University as a whole, as well as for its individual members, and to confer advantages on our students.
- 5 Support and build on centres of existing research excellence, as well as establishing new areas of consequence by raising significant external funding so that student fees are no longer the primary means of research support – and in doing so, we aim to raise the profile and impact of the new ideas and knowledge our researchers make available.
- 6 Provide opportunities for researchers to link their research to their teaching practice for the mutual benefit of our staff and students.

## 2 History & Growth

Over the past decade, the University of Buckingham has significantly expanded its research activities across various disciplines, including Accounting & Finance, Business, Computing, Education, Humanities, Social Sciences, Law, Medicine & Health Sciences and Psychology. This growth reflects the University's commitment to fostering a dynamic and interdisciplinary research environment.

The University is home to nationally and internationally reputed high-profile researchers and has a track record of successfully leading national and international research projects and partnerships. Academics at all stages of their career are encouraged and supported to pursue their research interests, both in pursuit of knowledge as well as to enhance the quality of teaching.

The University hosts the following research centres:

- Buckingham Centre for Astrobiology (BCAB)
- Centre for Education and Employment Research (CEER)
- Centre for Research in Expertise Acquisition, Training and Excellence (CREATE)
- Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies (BUCSIS)
- Centre for Topological Machine Learning and Innovation (CTMLI)
- Centre for United Nations Studies
- Dyslexia hub
- Humanities Research Institute (HRI)
- Institute for Biomedical and Biosciences Research (IBBR)
- Max Beloff Institute
- Vinson Centre

Research in all areas are growing with a high demand for master's and PhD programmes across all disciplines. Over the past five years, the University has enrolled over a thousand PhD students and many more on research master's programmes.

See individual school resources for details of research centres.

### 2.1 Grants

The University has a strong track record of attracting researching funding from funding organisations, charities, industry and through philanthropic donations. Research funding from the Leverhulme Trust, AsilEurope, the Rothschild Foundation, Innovate UK, The British Horse Society,

Ten-D Energy, Deepnet Security, Russell IPM, IONIS Pharma and TBD Foundation are some recent examples.

Over past 10 years, the University has secured over £7.5 million in external funding for research, which is a major achievement for a university of our scale.

See individual school's research resources for details of specific grants.

## 2.2 Collaborations

We foster a culture of collaboration both within and outside the University. Over the past 10 years, the University has successful collaborations with academic partners, industries and charitable organisations both nationally and internationally to carry out impactful research. In addition, the University has academic partnerships that offers master's and PhD research programmes making Buckingham research degrees accessible to a wider audience.

See individual school's research resources for details of specific collaborations.

## 2.3 Students and Success Stories

Our research students come from diverse backgrounds and nationalities. Our alumni hold leading positions in academia (including at University of Buckingham), government, industry, charitable and non-governmental organisations.

See individual school's research resources for detailed success stories.

## 2.4 Outputs

Research outputs include peer-reviewed journal and conference publications, conference presentations, books, book chapters, monographs, and contributions to regional, national and international policies.

Most of our digital research outputs are available in the [Buckingham E-Archive of Research \(BEAR\)](#).

See individual school's research resources for details of research outputs.

# 3 Current Research

All schools have active research projects led by academics and/or research students. The following is a brief overview of key research areas. See individual school resources for more details.

## 3.1 Areas of Research

**Accounting & Finance:** Public debt measurement and sustainability in Sri Lanka; The Impact of Ownership Structures on ESG Performance in the Banking Sector; Accountability and Transparency; Financial Transparency and ESG Reporting in Shaping Investor Decisions and Corporate Performance.

**Business:** The role of women on Boards (sustainability and corporate governance); Conceptualising service anxiety (services marketing and management); entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education in China; corporate governance and sustainability; learning pedagogy, exploring perceptions of belongingness and temporality in service settings.

**School of Computing:** primary research areas include Artificial Intelligence (including ethical and trustworthy AI), Cybersecurity, Computer Vision, Digital Twins, Internet of Things, Machine Learning, Topological Data Analysis, Model Theory and Wireless Technologies. Application areas include agritech, biometrics, education, health, medical imaging and sustainability.

**Humanities and Social Sciences:** History and History of Art; English Literature, and Security Studies. Potential exists to expand projects and outputs in a range of other area, including global affairs and international relations; and economics and finance. Research centres in the school, the Centre for UN Studies, and the Centre for Cuban Studies, have been strong in attracting notable speakers and events, and have the potential to translate this into heightened activity in research students and projects.

**Medicine and Health Sciences:** as an institution committed to advancing medical knowledge and improving healthcare outcomes, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences engages in a wide range of research areas, from clinical studies and translational research to public health initiatives and innovative medical technologies.

**Law:** Law School's research endeavours are designed to address the complexities of modern society and contribute to the development of robust legal frameworks. Key areas of focus are: Human Rights; Financial Services / Fintech; Corporate Law, Intellectual Property; Legal and Ethical implications of AI technologies; Family Law; Indigenous Rights and Cultural Heritage; Law of War; World Trade Law; Medical Law; Judicial System; Criminal Law and Criminal Responsibility; Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG); Intangible Cultural Heritage; Sustainability; Women's Rights in Law and Society; and Trusts Law.

**Psychology:** research in Psychology spans a wide range of psychological areas, using a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods. These can be broadly aligned with the following: Social and Cognitive Experiences; Creativity and Performance; Self and Identity.

## 3.2 Research Programmes

The University offers a wide range of research programmes leading to master's, PhD, Professional Doctorates and PhD by publication.

See our website and individual school's research resources for details of research programmes.

## 3.3 Staff Profile

See our website for staff profiles: <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/directory/>

# 4 Environment

## 4.1 People

The University of Buckingham is home not only to some of the most well-known research-active academics in their fields but also to hundreds of keen research students reading for postgraduate degrees in their specialist areas.

The University promotes a visible and vibrant research culture, in which a sustainable body of leading scholars engages the wider public with our research ideas and our research community.

#### 4.1.1 Staffing Strategy

Our staffing strategy is to recruit, retain, and support skilled research staff to foster a rich, inclusive, and innovative research environment.

All academics are expected to be research active – be it in research in their subject areas of interest or pedagogic research to delivery excellence in teaching, learning and assessment. The University provides opportunities for postdocs and early career academics to develop and pursue their own research interests as well as to join established research groups.

The Academic Promotions and Progression Policy sets out routes for promotion and progression that considers evidence of excellence and impact of research. It makes provision for part-time academics and applicants with extenuating circumstances.

Our University Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028 sets out our mission to inspire and empower individuals to achieve the extraordinary through excellence in learning, teaching, research, and entrepreneurship. To achieve this, the University understands the importance of fostering a flexible working culture whereby we trust and have confidence in our people to bring our mission to life through working towards achieving outcomes while managing their time efficiently.

The Inclusion Committee is accountable to the Council and the Senate for the scrutiny of equality of opportunity across the University and to ensure the University fulfils its statutory obligations in respect of equality and diversity for our students, staff and wider community.

#### 4.1.2 Training for Staff

Staff development and training needs are identified through Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) and during annual Personal Development Reviews (PDR). The goal is to ensure that staff members have access to continuous professional development opportunities, with a strong emphasis on inclusivity and equity in research.

Most academics in schools that operate Buckingham's four-term academic calendar has a "Study Leave" term to engage in research and scholarly activities, including training.

The University and individual schools support continuous professional and scholarly development and provide funding for such staff development activities.

The University's flagship Leadership Development Programme for Managers, "Accelerate", provides leadership training for staff with management responsibilities.

The newly formed "Research Champions" group organises training workshops based on ongoing training needs.

Research related training for staff includes structured training workshops (e.g. research supervision, budgeting, proposal writing), mentoring by senior research-active academics, shadowing and observations (e.g. supervision session, viva examinations), support for participation in external training events and conferences, and being a second supervisor to master's and PhD students before taking on the lead supervisor (first supervisor) role.

#### 4.1.3 Training for Students

The goal is to equip research students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a diverse and inclusive research environment.

Training for postgraduate research students include activities offered to all postgraduate research students as well as subject specific training offered by respective schools. Typical training activities include structured research methods modules, training on accessing library and digital resources, advanced academic skills, academic integrity and research ethics, reference management skills and presentation skills.

Students have opportunities to attend taught modules relevant to their research and training needs.

#### 4.1.4 Skills Development

ASK is the University's **Academic Skills Service** and it provides academic skills strategies to support students with their studies. ASK can help students understand how to achieve their assignment brief, structure their written work, write in the required academic style, act upon feedback and so much more... ASK works with students in all disciplines and at all levels of academic study, from Foundation to PhD students. Students may wish to consult ASK for a one-off session on, for example, referencing or book a series of appointments in order to develop their thesis structure and build critical thinking into their work.

ASK offers an inclusive learning environment and supports students from a wide range of educational backgrounds. ASK welcomes students who have been away from education for a while, international students, and those who are looking for tools to become independent learners and researchers.

The University's **Careers and Employability Service** provide support and opportunities to help students develop professional skills and prepare for them for future employment.

Schools provide opportunities for students to present their work-in-progress enabling them to develop communication skills and to receive constructive feedback. There are opportunities for PhD students to develop teaching skills. Some PhD students get opportunities to teach at local schools. The University has some funding to support conference attendance and presentations.

#### 4.1.5 Intellectual Exchange

The University fosters a vibrant intellectual community that encourages collaboration, diversity of thought, and interdisciplinary research. The **Vice-Chancellor's Speaker Series** at the University of Buckingham is a distinguished platform that brings together influential thinkers, innovators, and public figures to engage with students, staff, and the wider community.

The University has established numerous international collaborations, enhancing its global presence and facilitating cross-cultural academic dialogue. These partnerships encompass a wide range of disciplines, including business, computer science, education and humanities.

The University's research centres are hubs of intellectual exchange, engaging in interdisciplinary collaborations that bridge academic and practical domains. These centres exemplify the University's commitment to fostering a collaborative research environment that encourages the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

The University hosts conferences and festivals bringing world leading experts to Buckingham and creating platforms for staff students to communicate their research achievements. Examples include the **Buckingham History Festival**, **Buckingham Literary Festival**, **International Conference on Human Rights, Sustainability, and Climate Change**, the **British Academy of Management's Corporate Governance Special Interest Group** conference and the **UK Creativity Researchers' Annual Conference 2024**.

The University of Buckingham supports a diverse range of academic journals through its publishing arm, University of Buckingham Press (UBP). The **Denning Law Journal**, The **Buckingham Journal of Education**, and the **Journal of Medical Education Research (JMER)** are sponsored by the University enabling open-access publication by researchers from around the world.

Individual schools hold weekly or termly research seminars and work in-progress meetings providing opportunities for students and staff to present their research. Staff and students receive comments, questions, feedback, and respond to these, promoting a vibrant and robust exchange of information in an intellectual exchange. These seminars are platforms for external speakers to share their latest research.

The University Research Committee has annual conference fund to support postgraduate research students in attending and presenting at conferences. Schools also supports staff and students with conference funding.

#### 4.1.6 Welfare and Feedback

The **Wellbeing Skills and Diversity (WSD)** Department provides pastoral support to all students. The team includes mental health support, mental health first aiders, counselling services (in-house and external providers), domestic abuse champions, mentoring services, wellbeing advisers, student information advisors, drug and alcohol support, inclusivity advice, specific learning difficulties support and adjustments, on-site GP service and two therapy dogs. 1-1 sessions are available, and staff also deliver workshops throughout the term to offer support.

The **faculty mentor** is based in the faculty and works closely with the faculty staff to identify students who require additional support to develop strategies to overcome barriers to learning. The most common areas of support we provide involve time management, stress and anxiety management, motivation, procrastination and perfectionism. The Lead mentor is also involved in providing support with mitigating circumstances applications and support for both staff and students through the Fitness to study policy.

Research students feedback through the annual review process as well as through annual feedback surveys. Postgraduate Research representatives are appointed at the University, Faculty and School level.

## 4.2 Ethics, Inclusivity, Sustainability

Research at the University of Buckingham must be carried out according to the principles set out in the University's 'Code of Practice for Study by Research', as set out in section 7.2 of the Research Degrees Handbook. The University requires the investigators on all research projects to complete an ethics form to indicate whether ethics approval is required, and if not, why not.

The University's Equality and Diversity Policy set out the University's commitment to equality and diversity, its legal duties and the rights and responsibilities of members of the University community.

University's Royal Charter states:

*"The University shall abide by all relevant discrimination legislation and discrimination will not affect admittance to the University, the holding of office therein or the bestowing of any advantage or privilege therein."*

The University's **Inclusion Committee** – a sub-committee of Senate – oversees policies and processes related to equality, diversity, and inclusivity.

Sustainability is an area of research focus for both staff and students at Buckingham. The University has an Executive champion to lead sustainability initiatives at the University of Buckingham, and is in the process of identifying Sustainability Champions to drive initiatives forward.

The University provides laptops with docking stations and monitors to staff, instead of PCs we used to get. This supports flexible working practices, and off-site working, and enables staff to take their work machine to internal meetings so they can access electronic documents, instead of printing papers.

Where possible and appropriate, the University encourages virtual meetings and conferences presentations reduce its carbon footprint.

### 4.3 Infrastructure

The **University Research Committee** is accountable to the Senate for the oversight of learning and teaching pursuant to research provision as well as research strategy across the University.

The **Faculty Research Committees** are accountable to the Faculty Boards of Study and the University Research Committee for recommendations on the management and delivery of learning and teaching across all research provision.

The **Scholarships & Bursaries Committee** is accountable to the Senate for the oversight of the approval and disbursement of scholarships and bursaries across the University.

The Central **Research Office** provides administrative support for research students from registration to the final examination stage.

The newly formed **Research Champions** group work closely with the University Research Committee in creating a vibrant research environment for staff and students.

**Research Officers** in each school/department encompasses a range of responsibilities aimed at supporting and enhancing the University's research activities. They conduct induction sessions for new research students, check termly progress reports, chair annual reviews, and monitor student feedback. Research Officers share best practices across different disciplines.

A **Personal Tutor** is allocated to each student on registration and retained for the duration of study. Personal Tutors are often a first point of contact and will refer or signpost students to University student services such as the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team (directly or via the Faculty Mentor), Student Fees, Academic Skills Knowhow team, Visa, etc.

**Finance Business Partners** support budgeting aspects of grant applications.

### 4.4 Facilities

The University provides a range of physical and digital facilities to support staff and student research.

#### 4.4.1 Library

The Library has a digital first book acquisition policy but also holds a print collection of approximately 900 individual titles including copies of every core textbook for every course. Print copies of all additional recommended reading are also held in the library along with more general reading. All eBooks and eResources are accessible on and off-campus. Where full text articles are not

available via the databases there is generous Inter Library Loan provision which is available to all students.

#### 4.4.2 IT Services

Computer rooms, specialist labs, Virtual learning Environments, network infrastructure, printers, and secure data storage are supported by the University's IT Services Department. IT Services provide general support such as University WiFi access. Useful guides and videos are available on University SharePoint site.

Dual factor authentication facilitates secure remote working, and use of personal mobile devices to access work related software such as Office 365, One Drive and MS Teams, should staff and students wish to do so.

Software packages specific to research needs as required by schools are provided by the IT Services.

#### 4.4.3 Study spaces

The University has made significant investments in modernising its study spaces on all its campuses/sites in Buckingham. These include individual quiet study spaces, group study spaces and social learning spaces. Recently introduced study spaces have increased the overall accessibility and availability of study spaces.

#### 4.4.4 Hotdesking

Dedicated hotdesking spaces are available for research student who are either on part-time programmes or visit the campus only few days a month/term. These spaces are available in Hunter Street and Verney Park Campuses at Buckingham, and in London.

#### 4.4.5 Specialist labs

Dedicated specialist labs equipped with high-spec machines, specialist software packages and technologies are available particularly for research students in Biomedical and Biosciences Research, Computing and Psychology.

Dedicated workspaces are assigned to research students in Biomedical and Biosciences Research and Computing due to the nature of their work and the time spent on campus to carry out their research.

See individual school's research resources for details of research facilities on offer.