Research and Knowledge Exchange (KE) Strategy

Research is central to delivering the highest quality university educational experience. The scholarship that staff undertake makes their teaching unique and this, in turn, impacts positively on what students can learn and aspire to. Equally, student research—whether undergraduate projects, master's dissertations, or PhD theses—defines us further as the community that we are. Smaller universities, such as ours, gain recognition in certain areas of research simply because they understand that they cannot cover all subjects in equal depth and focus instead on their strengths. London Met, in particular, has an excellent reputation in subjects where high-quality research is connected to the real-world objectives of external partners, both in London and other regions and cities in the UK and internationally.

We are all familiar with what constitutes research and furthermore, research of the highest quality. The metrics of measurement are clear, and we are confident we can continue to support work of the highest quality and standards.

Knowledge Exchange (KE) is a newer concept. Broadly, it embraces many facets of the work that we do and is a natural expression of our research. More specifically, KE is defined as 'a two-way exchange between researchers and research users, to share ideas, research evidence, experiences and skills It refers to any process through which academic ideas and insights are shared, and external perspectives and experiences brought in to academia.' by the ESRC. The Office for Students also has a usable definition:

> 'Knowledge exchange is a process which brings together academic staff, users of research and wider groups and communities to increase the impact of research.'

Where a body of research empowers and influences partners both inside and outside the academy and then becomes an Impact Case Study for the REF, we see the perfect alignment of all elements of the Research and KE journey.

1. Our Mission

Derived from wider University ambitions, the University's Strategy - 2019/20-2024/25[1] commits us to:

- To establish an improved infrastructure to support high-quality and high-impact research
- To grow the volume of world-leading and internationally excellent research that we undertake
- To improve the visibility of our research and the impact it has on some of the biggest challenges facing society today
- To ensure our staff with research workloads, and those promoted via the research route, reflect the diversity of our staff
- To challenge and support our Centres and Groups to drive research by supporting their communities in the round, from providing PGR training and recruitment to promoting collaboration and supporting bidding.

To achieve these five goals, we have undertaken to drive the following objectives:

1. To make the best possible REF submission we can in 2021
2. To significantly increase the proportion of our academic staff with ring-fenced time to conduct research
3. To strengthen the infrastructure that helps all of our students to succeed
4. Create a visible and vibrant University-wide taught postgraduate community
5. Embed impact and knowledge exchange within our research culture and exploit external relationships
6. Take forward plans to tap into the full breadth of research funding
7. To increase postgraduate recruitment and improve completion rates.

Work is already underway in many of the key areas outlined in the University Strategy. During the first year of the new University Strategy, we, the holders of these roles, have:

- Set up a new Research and Postgraduate Office to support staff to achieve their ambitions
- Established a Graduate School for research and professional doctorate students underpinned by excellent training and support and led by a senior professor
- Reviewed and strengthened our research centres, have supported the formation of groups to frame new, interdisciplinary and/or cross university initiatives

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[1] London Metropolitan University Strategy 2019/20 - 2024/25

- Established numerous university-wide dissemination initiatives, such as the Inter-disciplinary Research Forum and the Research Showcase, as well as supporting many School- and Unit-based fora
- Developed initiatives to build a stronger PhD community through co-operation with students in our new PGR Forum; and in a refreshed and expanded PGR training programme
- Formed a Peer Review College to support high quality funding bids
- In liaison with our Communications Office, we have sought to maximise the means to communicate the full range of our work to the widest possible audience, improving our web presence in all facets, from our Research and KE front pages, through our London Met Lab, individual research centres and groups, and so on
- Maintained and enhanced our new research mentoring scheme and Research Leave initiative across Schools to support staff's research development
- Made research and digitised special collections material available via open access platforms (Institutional Repository, Special Collections web pages)
- Enhanced our support for PGR students via designated study spaces and improved access to digital content.

Our REF submission in March 2021 includes 25% more staff FTE than was included in 2014, although we also will submit in a reduced number of units (seven in total). This will determine the basis, both intellectual and financial, from which we proceed.

As we continue to pursue the goals outlined in the University Strategy, our approach across Research, Impact and Knowledge Exchange has evolved and developed in multiple related and new directions. Going forward our key mission is to develop greater strength, depth, breadth, intensity and inclusivity in all seven of our strategic goals (above).

The RKE Strategy represents that evolution and how we wish the process of development to continue.

2. Our Philosophy

Providing a supportive and inclusive infrastructure as the basis for strong Research and KE is central to our philosophy.

Starting with our people, the first stages in the development of a vibrant research community are to develop those who will lead our teams, to lay down support structures, and to communicate effectively. These are now well under way. We have sought to provide a supportive research environment to develop staff and student research capabilities across the full breadth of our disciplines. The University has invested in a PVC role, a Director of London Engagement, a Head of Research Policy and Implementation, a Head of Researcher Development and a Head of Graduate School to lead in the key areas. As well, we now have a Research and Postgraduate

Office (RPO) which is providing dedicated support for postgraduate students; staff submitting research bids; and for those developing Impact Case Studies for REF and evolving KE more generally, for example, by supporting and promoting research events and projects, creating further opportunities for collaboration, growing the profile/increasing visibility for RKE at London Met.

We have also strengthened our research capacity in the Schools through the development of roles such as Research Lead, PGR Coordinators, and through the award of workload allowances for staff working on research, KE, impact, partnership and other interconnected agendas.

This collaborative approach with dedicated teams across all areas ensures our values are consistently upheld throughout the work that we do. They are involved in driving development and supporting fairer and more equitable processes, including the distribution of funds through competitive tender.

Our commitment to providing an inclusive and equitable environment for our entire community are at the heart of our drive to support the development of our staff and students. Moving forward, the work that we do will uphold and drive the principles and objectives outlined in the new University Race Equity Strategy.[2]

Inclusivity is the foundation of our overarching philosophy. We believe all research outputs are a product of complex collaborations, often between staff, sometimes industry and students, and always with facilitators from archives and museums to governments and commercial ventures. Whatever forms partnership and cooperation take, they play a very important role in meeting the long-term objectives of our university.

We consider the majority of our colleagues to be pursuing research interests which amount to exchangeable knowledge, including 'pure' research: that is, research for the sake of knowledge and enquiry. We support our colleagues to do the research

they are world experts in; we support those whose research has KE-added value to probe such potential; and we expect our research and KE to be of benefit to students, either in their curricula experiences (for example Work-Related Learning), in opportunities for participation and experiential learning, as aspirational role models through staff diversity and through the prism of potential employability.

Many areas have research expertise which moves through the full cycle from pre-creation, through fieldwork/laboratory to publication and application. Our work in health science and policy, in arts research, in business studies, and in applied social studies, commands respect as evidenced by CPD and other training, contract research and consultancy, in publications of many sorts, and in measurable impacts. As well as doing real-world relevant work, we at London Met also support pure forms of research

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in numerous social science and arts subjects. As befits a university with many smaller clusters of research, our main multi-and interdisciplinary groupings come together in larger federations, especially Allied Health, Area Studies, Art and Design, and Education. As research projects develop, the opportunities for further partnerships and the transfer of knowledge become greater, opening doors for further collaborations and pathways to impact.

3. Our Impact

Our research already makes a difference to some of the most pressing problems facing London and the wider world, signalling its value to practitioners, policy makers, partners, funders and the public. Across our University our academic staff are using innovative methodologies to understand complex issues such as educational inequality, environmentally friendly urban policy, ethical business practices and changing working lives. Our researchers are at the heart of urgent debates such as youth violence and crime, and the legalisation of drugs. Our Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit has a long and proud history of researching and challenging violence, working with organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank, and contributing to the UK's Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

Our scientists and health practitioners are helping to address major nutrition and food-related issues that affect populations at local, national and global levels. They are also developing effective interventions to address human diseases including COVID and advancing research in biomedicine, biochemistry and chemistry. Our award-winning School of Art, Architecture and Design is researching the changing urban fabric of London and helping to drive the switch to a green economy, with the design of low-carbon buildings, biodiverse environments and products incorporating upcycled, recycled or repurposed materials. Our cyber security staff are involved in cutting-edge innovation and training partnerships with, among others, Lloyds Bank, Cisco and Palo Alto Networks. Staff are also conducting high-quality research within large multinational EU projects. In our Guildhall School of Business and Law, staff are researching international capital markets and the psychology of management, as well as sustainable and socially responsible corporate governance. Our Translation, Interpreting and Applied Linguistics specialists are exploring how meaning is created through language and context.

At the same time, we recognise that much of our transferable knowledge comes from professional expertise and takes the form of training, consultancy, co-working with external partners. For example, **Short Courses** are one of our most productive forms of engagement in terms of building links and drawing HEIF funding.

As a university we sign MOU's and Civic Uni Agreements through London Met Lab and enable students to make such connections through our Empowering London Module, where student work, led by academics, is designed to be useful for the

community, for example our work on digital inclusion and evaluating impact of specific community projects.

We wish to continue to develop these fields and to ensure that our research will drive real impact and change in London and beyond, and the work that we undertake with our London partners and stakeholders will be at the forefront of initiatives to keep the capital great.

4. Our Knowledge Exchange

Much of what constitutes Knowledge Exchange is already in action at London Met, with many areas touching on more than one type. Examples of KE that we are traditionally involved in, include:

1. Entrepreneurship and enterprise education
2. Working with partners in producing various outputs, from research and reports, to products and systems
3. Knowledge networks with partners, alumni, professional bodies, etc.
4. Capitalising on the institution's physical (e.g. the Science Centre) and intellectual assets through incubators, clinics, partnership working and public fora.
5. Commercialisation of research and technology transfer
6. Skills and human capital development, both as a university and with other university partners, for students and external businesses
7. Supporting the community and public engagement, making partnerships in education and enterprise.

Our Accelerator is a hub for both 1 and 2 in that staff there provide training for our students and students of other institutions, nationally and internationally, to develop their capacity for entrepreneurship. Our London Met Lab: Empowering London and our community clinics touch on most of the others, especially 4 and 5. We offer short courses and CPD to develop 4 and 5. In terms of commercialisation (3), we offer elemental analysis in the Science Centre as a small business and hire out the Superlab for external science training and short term commercial partnerships and location shots for film and TV.

Other examples of knowledge exchange with businesses we have engaged with have been through Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) projects. This is a government funded initiative that promotes research and development collaboration between academia and businesses. SCDM has an excellent track record of winning KTP projects over the past several years. Such projects enable research students to apply the latest technological advances to realise innovative solutions for real-world applications that improve the competitiveness and productivity of businesses. KTPs provide opportunities for impact case studies and third-stream income generation through consultancy work.

5. Building durable partnerships

Linking research and KE, the University Strategy also talks about our place in London, one of the world's great cities, where fabulous wealth and global commercial values sit alongside some of the biggest social challenges in the UK. We are aware of and understand London's challenges. Contribution towards meeting those challenges is a key plank of our institution's strategy via London Met Lab: Empowering London. Integrating and extracting value from the research we do by co-working with external businesses, agencies, third sector and local governments, providing training and upskilling, advice and guidance, strategy consultancy, practical interventions and developing our long-standing Accelerator to drive entrepreneurship and to open up opportunities for our students and others wishing to develop business, remains a core element of what we do. Training, start-up support, and the deployment of students in research and KE, often in co-working environments with our staff and partners, will drive our ambitions forward.

We have a strong presence within our communities in Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets, where our campuses and Accelerator are based. We have long exploited our space for public good and with values of civic and social responsibility, opening our doors to the community, putting on excellent and popular events. We do this for councils, businesses, charities, community groups, and our professional associates. We will also work closely with external bodies through official and durable memoranda of understanding, concordats, and also ways that respond to new challenges. Under this theme we also will work with our partners on COVID recovery programmes.

We consider projects related to consultancy and innovation as important vehicles for both producing valuable research output and for implementing knowledge exchange with industry. In social sciences and humanities, the community-oriented projects bring valuable data and provide the foundation for significant research, but in technical areas, in addition to the purely theoretical research, there are several other types of projects which can generate valuable research output. Amongst them are industrial research, proof of concept, and innovation type of projects, e.g. projects in Computing funded by Lloyds Bank and Innovate UK at Cyber Security Research Centre.

6. Our Objectives - meeting the national principles and drivers of KE

Our success in developing KE will be determined by our ability to meet the ambitions of Research England (RE), The Office for Students (OfS), and the Government Roadmap for Research and Development. All three are involved in setting, deploying and utilising the measuring tools which RE and OfS apply.

The results of our Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) submission will allow us to evaluate and measure our areas of strength and where we need to improve.

For KEF (with our KEF2020 position), the themes are:

KEF1 Public and community engagement (top 50%)
KEF2 Local Growth and Regeneration (Bottom 30%)
KEF3 Working with Business (top 20%)
KEF4 Skills, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (top 20%)
KEF5 IP and Commercialisation (bottom 30%)
KEF6 Research Partnerships (bottom 30%)
KEF7 Working with public and third sector (bottom 30%)

For the Government Road Map on R&D, the headline drivers are:

G1   Being honest about where we need to improve (G1)
G2   Raising our Research Ambitions (G2)
G3   Increasing innovation and productivity (G3)
G4   Levelling up the UK (G4)
G5   Being at the forefront of global collaboration (G5)
G6   Developing world-leading infrastructure and institutions (G6)

These things are measured by KEF and by our **commitment to the KE Concordat**, which has eight principles, very much focused on people, the integrity of the work that we do and how we support this and our ways of working:

KEC1   That KE is part of the University's mission
KEC2   Clear policies determining KE
KEC3   Engagement, access points, mechanism to help partners reach and work with us
KEC4   Ethical, transparent working
KEC5   Capacity building through training and opportunity
KEC6   Reward and Recognition for KE and staff engagement in it
KEC7   Continuous improvement
KEC8   Evaluation

KEC1-KEC2 and KEC4 will be enshrined in our University Strategy plan and evidenced in our way of working.

Implementation of the plan will begin immediately in parts, with further consolidation in the Autumn of 2021, and continue with a process of implementation, monitoring and evaluation and delivery over the next four years to 2025 underpinned by a set of six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

In May 2021, we will submit a HEIF plan which will commit our expenditure to staffing, programmes, activities, etc., and this will be the basis for continuing to expand our knowledge exchange offer

By the first semester of 2021-22, work will be underway in the following areas:

- Research, Knowledge Exchange, Accelerator, and the London Challenges themes (Social Wealth, Environment, Health Improvement, Crime, Discrimination, Poverty & Deprivation) will be more integrated
- Bringing together these strands will require a coordinated administration, and we will seek to develop and implement that for 2021-22
- Introduction of a CRM system to make sure we can support ongoing and productive relationships with our KE partners
- We will take forward plans to expand opportunities for the commercialisation of our research, technology transfer and the exercise of our Intellectual Property
- We have recently invested in our engagement with policymakers through the Strategic Priorities Fund, and we seek to maintain and develop this initiative in the form of training and support for relationship building
- By Dec 2021, we will have an open access content management platform to showcase digitised special collections and archives material making it freely available for research or private study to our communities and stakeholders

Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1. Knowledge Exchange, Enterprise and Partnerships

1.1. Each year from 2022, we will utilise London Met Lab as a hub to help partners develop their businesses, to support public and third sector organisation, and to develop their capacity for self-review, or to fund graduate partnership programmes (KEF1, KEF2, KEF3, KEF4, KEF6, KEF7, KEC3, G4, G6)

1.2. By 2023, The Accelerator will be a hub for entrepreneur training and start-up location for the students from other universities where they have no incubation facilities (KEF1, KEF3, KEF4, KEC5, G2, G3, G4, G6)

1.3. By 2025 10% more of our own students will have started companies (KEF3, KEF4, G2, G4, G6)

1.4. By 2025 the income generated by our start-ups will have returned to pre-Covid values of around £250k per year (KEF2, KEF3, KEF4, G1, G2, G3, G6)

1.5. We will have a variety of measurable outcomes in co-production with non-academic partners, including publications, reports and funding bids (G1, G4, G5, G6, KEF6)

1.6. We will develop the assessment tools to capture our R&KE activity and to ensure its quality, its reach, and its value, whatever its natural audience (G1, G2, G6)

1.7. Each year between 2022 and 2025, the Accelerator will provide 5 internships for our graduates to work with tenants or the Accelerator team (G2, G6)

1.8. We will continue to seek out opportunities for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. We will seek to successfully tender a minimum of one KTP per year from 2022 (KEF1, KEF2, KEF6, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6)

1.9. We will review, improve and monitor our metrics, and will assess the pattern and scale of our impacts at least annually (KEF1-7)

1.10. We will be less tentative in asserting out IP in commercialisation processes (KEF5)

2. Supporting and Developing our Staff

2.1. By 2025, over half of our academic staff will be producing internationally excellent and world-leading research, with this figure growing year-on-year (G1, G2, G3, G5, G6)

2.2. By 2025, the numbers of Black and Asian Minority Ethnic colleagues with allowances for research will grow in line with the general application of workload for research activity (G1, G2, G4, G6)

2.3. We will provide a continuing range of in-person and online training and events for our researchers and research students (KEC5, G1, G2, G4, G6)

2.4. We will ensure research staff have the equivalent of 10 days' training and career development available to promote their personal development (KEC5, G1, G2, G4, G6)

3. Supporting and Developing our Postgraduate Researchers

3.1. By 2025, we will have improved our PGR offer by increasing graduating numbers to 35 per annum (currently 30) (G1, G2, G4, G6)

3.2. By 2025, we will have shortened the average length of time it takes to graduate to 4 years FT and 6 years PT (G1, G2, G4, G6)

3.3. We will introduce PhD scholarships to drive improvements in our research culture (KEF1, KEF2, G2, G4, G6)

3.4. We will continue to facilitate PhD students to gain AFHEA accreditation to improve their employability We will give all PhD students the opportunity to shadow lecturers to gain teaching experience and will prioritise PhD students, where possible, for ASL work (G1, G2, G4, G6)

3.5. By 2025, we will be offering students the possibility to work with relevant partners (museums, businesses, galleries, authorities, charities, and so on) to increase the relevance of their work and their prospects of employment (KEF1, KEF2, G2, G4, G6)

3.6. We will create opportunities for students as researchers on the majority of our internally funded research projects where research assistance (below the level of PhD qualified) is utilised (G2, G4, G6)

4. Research and KE Growth: Our Output

4.1. By 2025 we will have no less than four 3* Impact Case Studies to choose from per 20 FTE of staff per Unit, with some 4* work in all units (G2, G3, G5, G6)

4.2. By the next REF, we will have a viable submission in Psychology and strong separate units in Art and Design, and Architecture (G2, G6)

4.3. We will increase our bidding for contract, research council, and charity funding to conduct all kinds of research and KE a 25% per annum growth till 2025. We will maintain a bidding success rate in line with scheme averages (normally 10-15%). (G2, G3, G5, G6)

4.4. We will monitor our KE performance through engagement with our partners to ensure we provide the best support we can (KEC7, KEC8)

5. Research and KE: Development and Integrity

5.1. We will maintain an annual promotion round for academic staff which rewards both R and KE career routes (KEC6, G2, G3, G6)

5.2. Establish and maintain at least 6 pro bono clinics that focus on enhancing the UG student experience and graduate outcomes. Work undertaken by students in London Met pro bono clinics will be both credit-bearing and integral to their programme of study (KEF1, KEF2, G2, G6)

5.3. Support of teaching programmes to boost interest in entrepreneurialism (KEC1, KEC5, G2, G4, G6)

5.4. We will ensure support staff are rewarded in line with their contribution to the RKE Strategy and our success in delivering (G3, G6)

5.5. Our support staff will facilitate the empowerment of our RKE by enabling all points of contact and interaction to run smoothly (G1, G2, G3, G6)

5.6. By 2023 we will have established an annual programme of policymaker engagements to improve the exposure and impact of our work (KEF1, KEF2, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6)

6. Digital Strategy

6.1. We will have increased the online utilisations of our Archive holdings by 50% (KEF1, KEF2, G2, G6)

6.2. We will continue to provide a safe and compliant research environment, with robust ethical consideration, robust data management, the best possible Open Access systems for our work, an effective web presence, and regular review of our compliance. (G1, G2, G6)