



The  
Oxford  
Education  
Deanery



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# The Oxford Education Deanery:

Progress Report 2025

# Welcome

Research impact may be likened to the quest for the Holy Grail: valuable yet elusive; sought after yet rarely attained, at least not without difficulty. Moreover, impact is something that cannot be claimed by researchers alone. This ‘Holy Grail’ is revealed only when researchers walk with those who will ultimately use their work — the teachers, policymakers, and communities whose lives and decisions stand to be transformed by the knowledge that, together, they generate. While researchers might be possessors of the map on this quest, it is the people who stand to benefit from their research who are holders of the compass. A fellowship of those within and without the academy knows both the lie of the land and the direction of travel. Together, this fellowship can turn discovery into lasting change.

— The Oxford Deanery Team



# Introduction

The Oxford Education Deanery was initially established in 2013, with a focus on research collaboration and engagement between the Department of Education and state secondary schools in Oxfordshire.

Since its relaunch in 2022, the mission of the Deanery has greatly expanded both geographically and in terms of its audiences to more broadly empower educators and policy professionals worldwide to understand, use, and co-produce world-leading, high-quality research evidence in education. Today, the Deanery aims to facilitate a two-way conduit between the wealth of expertise in Oxford's Department of Education and the stakeholders for whom the Department's research is conducted. It offers a mechanism to support professional learning and research engagement with audiences, including practitioners, policy professionals, parents and carers. It also offers a mode of support to Department researchers looking to engage with research audiences. Currently directed by Hamish Chalmers and Laura Molway, it has several activities focusing on achieving this mission:

- A programme of online and in-person events
- 'Deanery Digests'—short, plain-language summaries of Department research for wide audiences
- A podcast series, seeking to break down the implications of Department research for lay audiences
- Online learning content, including self-paced modules of training, and postgraduate diplomas launched in September 2025
- Resources developed for and through research projects from across the Department of Education for practitioner, policy and wider audience use
- An 'opt-in' mailing list, enabling subscribers to receive information about events and Deanery news notifications, a termly newsletter, and/or information on research involvement opportunities from Department researchers.



**Laura Molway**  
Co-Director



**Hamish Chalmers**  
Co-Director



**Joe Bullough**  
Engagement & Partnerships Lead

Since taking the reins of the Oxford Education Deanery in 2022, our mission has been to empower education practitioners and policy professionals worldwide to understand, use, and co-produce high-quality research evidence in education. We started modestly by facilitating a handful of workshops, inviting teachers into the Department to learn about the work of our colleagues. The summer of 2023 saw us host three daylong workshops, one on Early Years education, one on teaching learners of English as an Additional Language, and one that saw local teachers getting their hands dirty (literally) in the glorious woods at Wytham to learn about sustainability and climate change.

On the heels of the success of those events, in 2024 and 2025, we grew our portfolio to include twilight sessions, conferences, online webinars, online self-paced learning, and a dedicated space on the Department website for the resources and materials that so often result from our work. We established Deanery Digests, short plain language summaries of the Department's work, to ensure that our research is available to all, not just locked behind journal paywalls. The Deanery Digests Podcast series swiftly followed to help maximise reach and provide ways to engage that take advantage of the multimedia world we live in.

Honoring the mission to empower educators not just to understand and use but to co-produce world leading research, we have recently helped colleagues in the Department to host knowledge exchange events, bringing educators, parents, and policy makers together with researchers at the very beginnings of the research process to ensure that their quests get off on the right foot. We established scholarships to underwrite the cost of attendance at Deanery events for educators working in challenging or under-represented contexts, thus supporting the University-wide commitment to widening participation. We have built a network of research engaged practitioners through our mailing list, allowing our researchers to speak directly with people who are committed to involvement in the research process. Throughout, our work has been guided by our committee, consisting of colleagues at the Department and local and national educators, to ensure that we live by our commitment to inclusivity.

Three years on from the Deanery's relaunch, we felt it was time to formally take stock of how we are doing in achieving our mission. Local teacher, Jonny Tridgell, was engaged to review the last two years of the Deanery's work, scrutinise feedback from attendees at Deanery events, and speak directly with colleagues, collaborators, and our wider community, to capture our successes and areas for growth in the report you now hold in your hands.

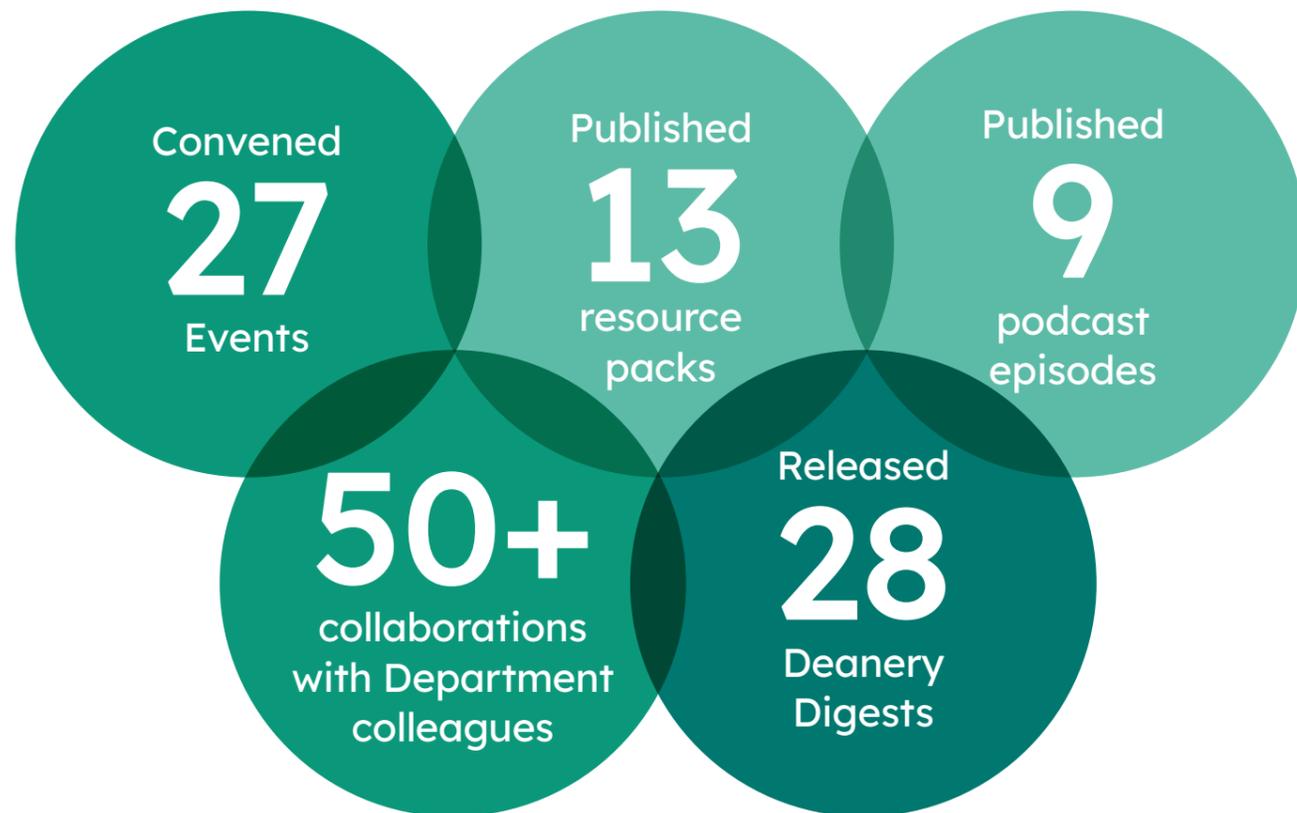
We are proud of our achievements, none of which could have been realised without the involvement and engagement of the whole community at the Department of Education: researchers, administrators, the communications team, the operations team, the finance team, our students, collaborators from other institutions, Honorary Norham Fellows, and Mariana, who always ensures the coffee is piping hot and on time when we invite the wider community to come to the Department to share in our work.

This report demonstrates the Deanery's successes, but also identifies where there is more work to do. We welcome the recommendations made by the report and are committed in our work towards implementing them. We look forward to you joining us in that quest in 2026 and beyond.

– Hamish Chalmers, Laura Molway  
and Joe Bullough

## Scope and reach

In the period covered by this report (February 2023 to February 2025), the Deanery...



In summary, responses to the wide range of Deanery events and opportunities has been excellent. Two thirds of attendees providing feedback on Deanery events found them to be 'very' or 'extremely useful' for their practice, while fewer than 1% registered as unsatisfied. The opportunities offered to engage with experts, network with like-minded colleagues, try new skills, and participate in research were particularly valued.

The clarity of the Deanery Digests was frequently noted by research participants. Colleagues who have worked with the Deanery to produce resources or run events spoke warmly about their experience and the Deanery's mission.

Data gathered for this report offers useful insights into the Deanery's strengths, as well as strategic recommendations for its growth.

## Deanery events

More than 1,000 people have participated in the 27 events convened by the Deanery.

Our events have engaged professionals in a range of roles.

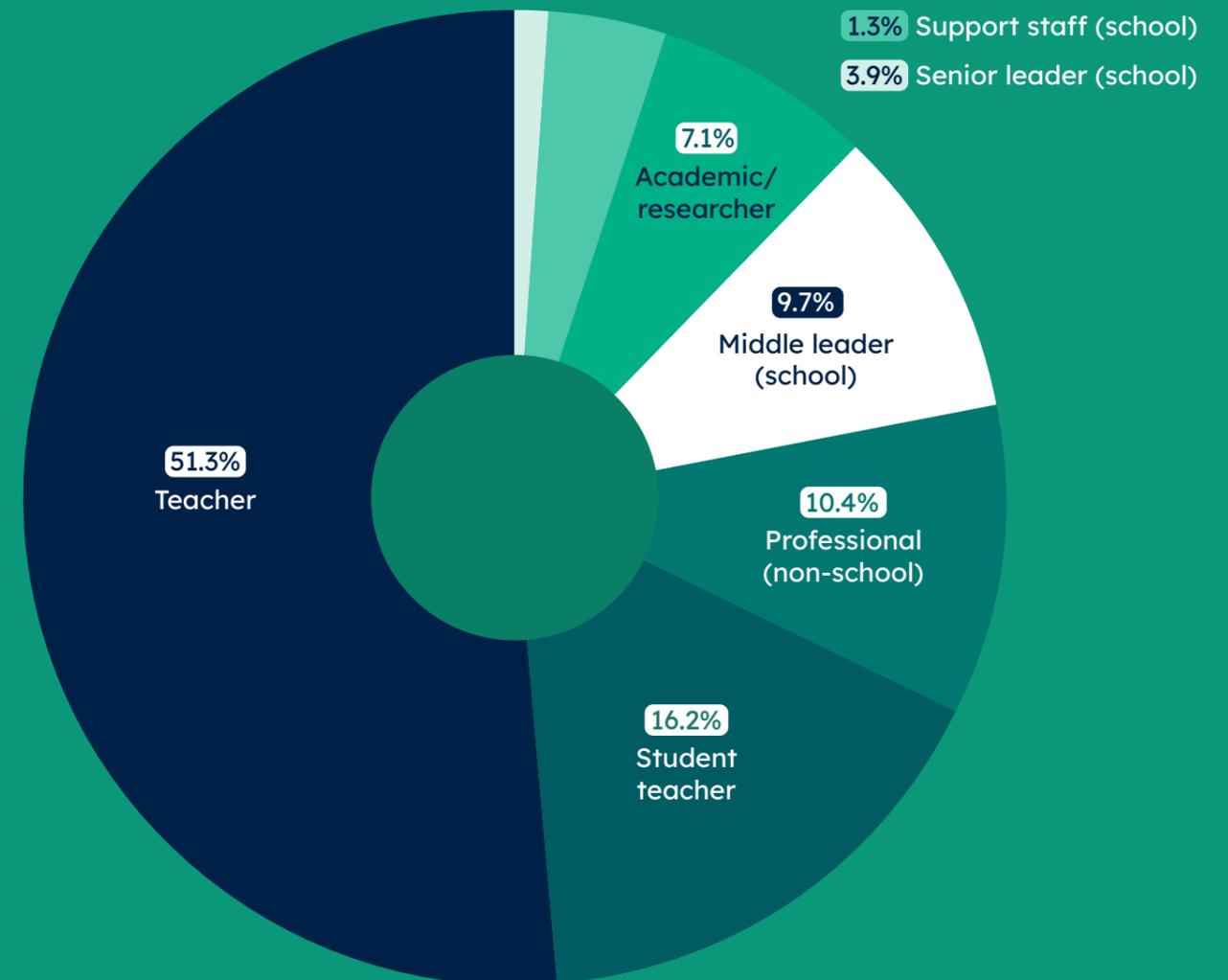


Figure 1 - Participant by Job Role

## Deanery events received extremely positive feedback from respondents

When asked how useful the event they attended was, over 75% gave a score between 8-10/10. Only 0.6% of respondents gave a low satisfaction rate for the event's usefulness for their own practice. When asked about whether the event changed their perceptions, 73% indicated that it had.



**“I enjoyed the chance to breakout and hear from people across different jurisdictions.”**

Teacher, Greening the Gavel, 2024



**“It was great to hear from the experts about their views on the curriculum and how Climate Change/ethics can be part of it.”**

Student teacher on the Seminar: A New Vision for Science in the National Curriculum: How Should the Curriculum Deal with Climate Change? (2025)



## Respondents highlighted five key aspects they particularly valued:

### 1. Attendees valued insight from experts and high-quality explanation (mentioned in 64% of responses)

- “It was great to hear from the experts about their views on the curriculum and how Climate Change/ethics can be part of it.”  
Student teacher, Seminar: A New Vision for Science in the National Curriculum: How Should the Curriculum Deal with Climate Change? (2025)
- “Learning about different types of issues faced by foreign language learners was so relatable. The phonological perspective was very well explained.”  
Academic researcher, Oxford Association for Language Learning Conference (2025)
- “I enjoyed the chance to breakout and hear from people across different jurisdictions.” Teacher, Greening the Gavel, (2024)
- “Henry at Microsoft delivering a practical demonstration was very effective.”  
Teacher, Exploring generative AI (GenAI) for Education (2024) workshop

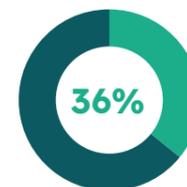
In some cases, respondents were keen to hear from other stakeholders, like students. Some also wished for opportunities to stretch their knowledge or be challenged further; this included requests for wider reading lists, for example.

### 2. Attendees found practical suggestions and links to resources they could use especially helpful

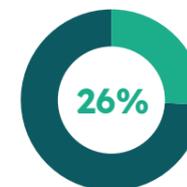
- 36% of responses emphasised the value of practical suggestions and signposting to further reading or to classroom resources, especially in seminars related to AI and languages.
- “Maud Waret was really helpful! Very interesting content about how to make my classroom and content more inclusive.” Teacher, The Association for Language Learning Oxford Conference (2024)
  - “Also brilliant, practical takeaways provided by Microsoft for use of generative AI in the classroom.”  
Teacher, Workshop: Exploring generative AI (GenAI) for Education (2024)
  - “Great to see many book recommendations.”  
Teacher, Seminar: A New Vision for Science in the National Curriculum: How Should the Curriculum Deal with Climate Change? (2025)
  - “I particularly enjoyed Michael’s section and lots of useful links posted in the chat.” Middle leader, Seminar: A New Vision for Science in the National Curriculum: How Should the Curriculum Deal with Climate Change? (2025)



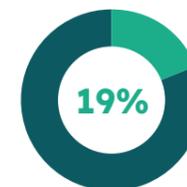
Insight from experts and high-quality explanation and engagement



Practical suggestions (including links to other resources)



Opportunities for discussion and active participation



Personal development/ inspiration



Networking with academics and teachers

Figure 2 – Percentage of responses where theme was enjoyed

### 3. Attendees enjoyed opportunities for discussion and active participation

- “I enjoyed the interactive aspect. It was really interesting and useful to hear other perspectives.” Teacher, Greening the Gavel (2024).
- “The afternoon sessions allowed for critical discussion of generative AI and how it should be used and regulated.” Student teacher, Exploring generative AI (GenAI) for Education (2024)
- “[I] especially enjoyed the Cheney [local school] case study and accompanying group discussions.” Museum / library learning project manager, Oxford History Teachers Network Annual Conference (2024)
- “The action-oriented final activity to push us all into delineating specific strategies and frameworks for climate inclusion in schools. The outdoor setting was great.” No role given, Sustainability Colloquium (2023)

### 4. Attendees sought opportunities for personal development and inspiration they could point to (and pass on)

19% of respondents noted how the event they attended contributed to their personal or professional development, with several referring to individuals or discussions as inspirational.

- “Rekindled my wish to integrate song.” Middle leader, Oxford Association for Language Learning Conference (2025)
- “Having a speaker from UNESCO, which is inspiring.” Student teacher, Workshop: Exploring generative AI (GenAI) for Education (2024)
- “The first presentation with Robert Woore and Laura Molway was quite impactful and relevant to my field.” Teacher, Oxford Chinese Language Teaching Research Forum (2024)
- “Loved Esther’s content also. Very inspiring.” Teacher, The Association for Language Learning Oxford Conference (2024)

### 5. Attendees were interested in networking opportunities with academics and teachers

The opportunity to network with academics, teachers and other professionals was noted in 18% of responses. This included praise for structured networking opportunities – e.g. through planned discussions – but also the chance to interact informally with other participants and researchers.

- “Connections with others who are doing great work in this space.” Teacher, Webinar: Greening the Gavel - The Potential of Climate Litigation in Climate Education (2024)
- “The opportunity to meet and develop ideas with other subject specialists, the practical classroom applications for these ideas, the links to the advanced pedagogy.” Oxford History Teachers Network Annual Conference (2024)
- “Connecting with others. Being able to ask academics some questions I had.” Workshop: English as an Additional Language: Understanding Evidence for Policy and Practice (2023)

Respondents were keen to see more opportunities for networking at future events alongside further mechanisms of whole-community exchange.

These findings were also reflected when respondents selected what they felt the purpose of the Deanery ought to be (see Figure 3).

**“I enjoyed the interactive aspect. It was really interesting and useful to hear other perspectives.”**

**Teacher, Greening the Gavel (2024)**

Figure 3 - Purpose of the Deanery

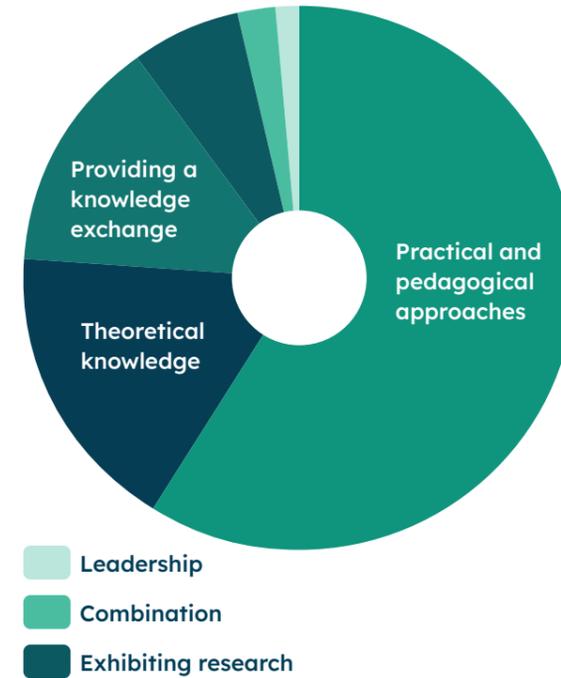
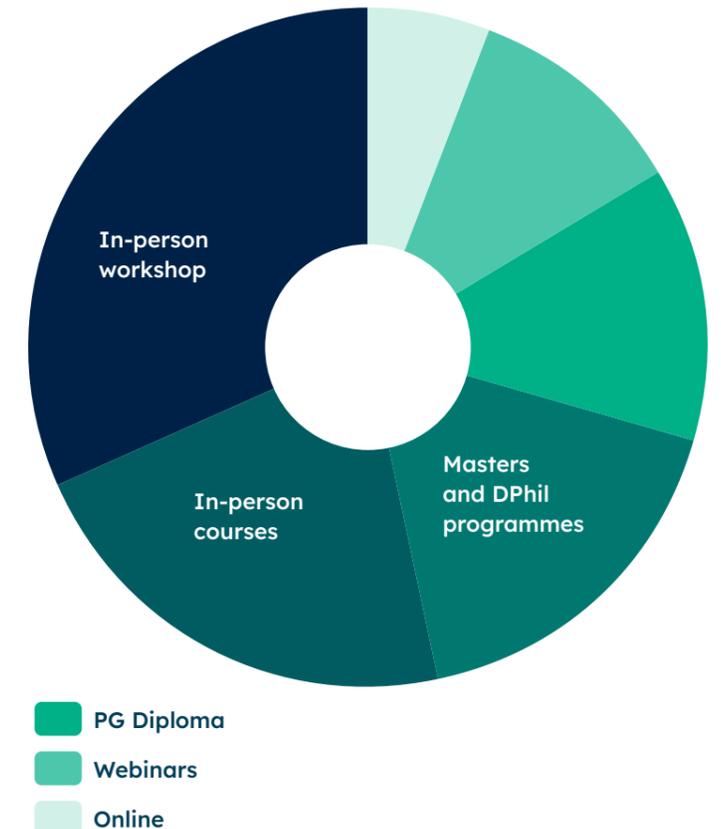


Figure 4 - Preferences for Type of Training

### Preferred event formats

Respondents indicated a clear preference for short courses of training (online or in-person). There was a strong preference for events to be held during termtime where possible, either during the school day or in the evening. There was no clear preference for time of year, demonstrating the general challenge for teachers managing their workload and the academic calendar.

It is difficult to measure the impact of cost, as feedback can only be gathered from those who were able to engage with Deanery events. However, overall, respondents found paid events value for money and many stated they would be happy to have paid to attend events that were free.



# Deanery engagement

The Digests have been accessed by 1,311 active users and 1,849 visitors, but with an average bounce rate of 23%. Whilst encouraging that the Digests are receiving positive readership, the high bounce rate suggests that the majority of Digests are looked at briefly. However, this may also point to the limited time audiences have to engage with written content or research, making the case stronger for more concise and quickly digestible formats. Analytics also showed that most users were directed from Google, rather than social media or elsewhere on the website.

The Deanery Podcast is still in early adopter/development stage (at the end of its first year) but has already received over 500 listens overall. Listeners responded positively to it in interviews, expressing interest in there being more episodes. It will be important to consider further ways of promoting the podcast; there is currently an average of 102 page views per podcast episode and statistics from Spotify and Apple show a total of 239 plays by 75 listeners. This suggests an average of 45 plays per episode up to February 2025.



20k  
webpage visits

2k  
digest reads



500  
podcast listens



1.3k  
newsletter subscribers



# What our audiences said about our activities

Ten members of the Deanery mailing list agreed to participate in semi-structured interviews via Teams for 20-30 minutes; seven of these were classroom teachers; the remainder were researchers or educational advisors. Six participants had attended Deanery events, and four had engaged with Deanery online resources (including the podcast). Analysis of these conversations offered answers to the following questions:

## 1. What do audiences value?

Participants were enthusiastic about engaging with experts and accessing research, whether that be through the Deanery Digests or by attending events. Video content linked through the Deanery (e.g. OUCEA's videos on educational assessment) was celebrated and Deanery Digests were said to be very helpful.

## 2. Are there any barriers to engaging with activities?

A key theme was time and cost, particularly in relation to travel or cover for work. One participant noted that not all content was necessarily relevant to them, as they had only a narrow area of interest (in this case, Chinese language teaching), emphasising the importance of targeted notifications on select or specific areas of interest. Several participants also raised the visibility of the Deanery as a core issue, noting that they heard about it by word-of-mouth, which suggests that further advertising or promotional work to increase visibility could be well-received.

## 3. What other future activities would you like to see?

In line with feedback from the events, there was a keen interest in networking and practical engagement with theory. Suggestions for further development included a reading group, or the chance to “talk back” to academics through, for instance, research participation. Participants also requested more content shared more regularly, including events, podcast episodes and online resources.

## 4. How might we try and build engagement with audiences further?

Participants were unanimously enthusiastic about the value of the Deanery and wished for it to be promoted further (e.g. through social media), especially to school leaders, focusing on the practical benefits for educators in engaging. Participants mentioned the possibility of the Deanery further incentivising involvement through the development of microcredentials, certification, or championship roles in schools. Participants also recognised the intrinsic value of engagement for their own practice and were keen that this be shared more widely.

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**“Participants also requested more content shared more regularly, including events, podcast episodes and online resources.”**



# What Department researchers said about us

Four interviews were conducted with colleagues at the Department who had either organised events with the Deanery or contributed to Deanery Digests, online resources, or the Deanery Podcast. Analysis of these conversations focused on the following questions:

## Why engage with the Deanery?

One participant described engaging as a “no-brainer”; they saw it as an important way of “making the path less steep” for researchers. The Deanery was also seen as a useful mechanism to promote issues like sustainability education. There was also a key emphasis on moral purpose, the common good, support for colleagues and the education sector, and being a “good citizen.”

## What did you value?

All participants spoke very positively about the Deanery team. This included the statements “we love working with them, it’s like a dream” and “I couldn’t believe how easy it was.” This included noting how straightforward the Deanery Digest writing process was.

Participants noted how important it was to allow expertise to be the focus of work. This might not necessarily mean focusing on a specific research paper, for example, but allowing organisers or contributors to speak to their wider expertise and how this might relate to educators (e.g. in the A Level Results’ Day Podcast). One participant also shared that briefing speakers before events was useful, including sharing questions.

## Are there any barriers to engaging with the Deanery?

A key factor related to the pressures on academics to publish, gain funding and to teach, all of which might preclude them from engaging with the Deanery. While the process of writing Digests could be straightforward for some research, producing Digests that communicate what the author intends and are useful to practitioners was said to be quite challenging and potentially time-consuming. Nonetheless, this was seen to be an important exercise. It was emphasised that it would be important to show colleagues why working with the Deanery is helpful, both for the Department and in the context of their own educational research.

## What might help the Deanery achieve its mission?

Researchers highlighted the role the Department can play in encouraging contributions to the Deanery and showing how useful and easy it is as a means for disseminating research, building a case which demonstrates the value of engagement with the Deanery.

Crucially, it was seen to be important to build enthusiasm for the Deanery beyond those who already contribute. This may be linked to building the Deanery’s visibility across social media (e.g. LinkedIn) and thinking of ways to ease colleagues into less intensive participation, or to factoring contributing to the Deanery into workflow plans. Some also suggested the Deanery selecting useful themes and then making calls for contributions in relation to such a theme.

Some suggested engaging more with Honorary Norham Fellows, as well as within the Postgraduate Certificate of Education Partnership to draw on a wider range of expertise. Engagement with the wider University was also mentioned. For example, drawing on collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and other Departments. One researcher noted that “when you see it, you want to be involved in it.”

There was also discussion about positioning the Deanery as a resource for wider media and policymakers. In this, there was an emphasis not on researchers necessarily speaking about their specific research but rather being resources for their wider expertise: while a specific paper might be cause for comment in the media, the Deanery might promote specific members of the Department as experts available to speak to crucial or relevant issues.

# Recommendations

## Continue to build on success with events

### Consider further ways of building engagement and networking into all event offerings

Participants welcomed further opportunities to network during or after events. Suggestions included developing check-ins or catch-ups for participants to further discuss topics with each other and researchers.

### Build opportunities for long(er)-term engagement (pilot event series)

Participants were interested in programmes which ran over several events, both as a chance to build continuous relationships but also from the perspective of wanting to feedback on implementation to academics (and so influence research).

### Hear from audiences too (teachers, students and policymakers)

Participants were enthusiastic about hearing from academics and leaders in the field, but there was some interest in hearing more from educators, students and policymakers about their experiences too.

### Ensure there is always a practical element

A useful metric here could be to incorporate questions into the event, such as: “What can I do tomorrow?”, “What can I do over the next term?” and “What can I do next year?” to structure reflection. Participants were grateful for practical tips, as well as the space to reflect on or consider implementing these. This suggests that events moving beyond the inclusion of resources to emphasise tangible practical applications of learning and approaches.

### Clearly define target audiences and time commitments

As noted earlier, relatively few of those who engage with the Deanery are senior leaders in schools, which may limit wider impact beyond individual classrooms. One possible consideration could be to emphasise a target audience (i.e. who events or Digests may be best suited for) and clearly identify the time commitments this might entail.

### Incorporate the above into guidance for organisers

This could draw on specific feedback given from previous events and identify a set of key desirables.

## Building Engagement

### Investigate further ways of building the Deanery’s network of educators and policymakers

Participants suggested promoting the Deanery across the Divisions of the University and the Alumni Network, which may generate greater access to policymakers and the media. Colleagues within the Department could share the Deanery with their own network; for example, through a referral programme, where if a person signs up to the website or an event, they name where they heard about the Deanery and any people named in this might be entered for a prize draw or receive special recognition.

There were also references to the use of social media and a suggestion that it may be worthwhile for the Deanery to have its own socials, particularly LinkedIn. Using this to also promote research, book launches and other events of interest to the Deanery’s audience could also mean that other institutions then promote Deanery events and content. However, it was also emphasised that this must not eclipse the overall role of the Department itself in impact and engagement work, recognising that the Deanery’s mission sits within that of the wider Department, which has its own very successful mechanisms for outreach and promoting work.

### Develop CV-building microcredentials or roles for educators who champion the Deanery

The Department’s Honorary Norham Fellowships set a precedent for this and developing microcredentials or certification for participation in courses or webinars might also drive engagement.

### Build a case for contributing to the Deanery

It will be important to continue to make the case clear to researchers for working with the Deanery, and it may help to more clearly define time-commitments for contribution (for example, how long it should take to write a Digest or help plan an event). In doing so, it may also be helpful to include data on engagement with its activities for Department researchers.

Central to this is providing opportunities for current contributors to show not simply its value but how they have made this work for them.

## Developing Themes and Calls for Contributions

Themes have developed in the Deanery’s events, with language teaching, the climate crisis, and artificial intelligence occurring regularly within the programme. Themes with calls for contributors may help build engagement further, while also allowing contributors to speak to their areas of expertise. This places the emphasis on contributors responding to a call for a specific theme, rather than having to develop and propose a specific idea. This could also meet the wider objectives of the Department or respond to emerging issues in education and society, such as equality, representation and inclusion. However, this needs to be balanced with the Deanery not becoming an obligation to fulfill but a service of support.

## Further Improving the Deanery’s Online Offerings

Some key suggestions from audiences and researchers included:

### Make the Deanery Podcast a more frequent fixture and consider including video content

There was enthusiasm for the Deanery Podcast having set (for example, monthly) release dates, which could also be situated around specific themes (e.g. LGBT+ History Month, A-level and GCSE results days, Black History Month, International Multilingualism Day) and could include video content as well as audio

### Deanery Newsletter

A regular Deanery Newsletter linking to events, research opportunities, podcasts, links to recordings and new Digests was welcomed by participants. This may also help boost engagement with members of the Department.

### Deanery Reading Group

Several participants suggested developing regular opportunities to engage with other practitioners and/or with academics. There was enthusiasm for reading groups focused on specific papers of interest to the group.





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