



DEVELOPING BUSINESS-AWARE ACADEMICS

Call for researcher training and
networking trial partners

31 March 2026

*Please note this session is being recorded, and will be
uploaded to our website and public YouTube channel.*



University of Exeter
Business School

All content © 2026 Developing Business-Aware Academics



Research
England

AGENDA

- Overview of the DBAA project and background to this call
Professor Alison Truelove, Project Director
- Trial initiatives
Dr Jo Bowler, Impact Fellow
- Application overview and how to get involved
Dr Eleanor Browne, Engagement Manager
- Question and Answer segment

Please keep mics muted during the presentation; there will be an opportunity to ask questions during the Q&A at the end.

A recording of the presentation will be made available.



OUR TEAM



Project Director
Professor Alison Truelove



Research Impact Fellow
Dr Jo Bowler



Lecturer in Business Education
Dr Felipe Do Nascimento
Rodrigues



Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Dr Kate Ellis



Graduate Research Assistant
Holly Frostwick



Lecturer in Business Education
Rachel Vowles



Project Manager
Samantha Dyer



Project Support Officer
Dylan Bower



Engagement Manager
Dr Eleanor Browne



Project Co-ordinator
Helen Chapman



Engagement Manager
Kirsty Kelley



Engagement Manager
Greg Salmon



OUR PROJECT

- £5m Research England-funded project.
- Focus on early-career researcher readiness to engage beyond academia for impactful research and careers.
- Partners within and beyond academia.
- Seeking alignment with national priorities and strategies especially economic (place-based) growth & talent pipelines.
- Aiming for sustainable policy and practice outcomes that meet the needs of all stakeholders.



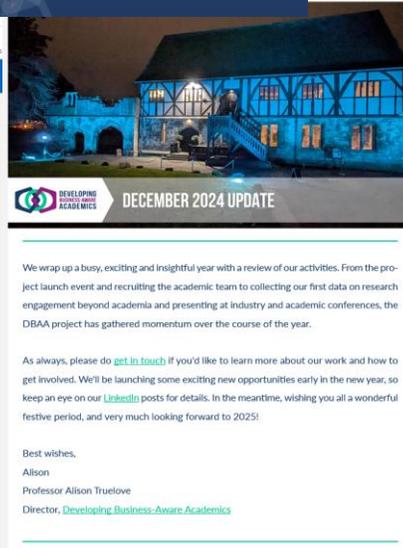
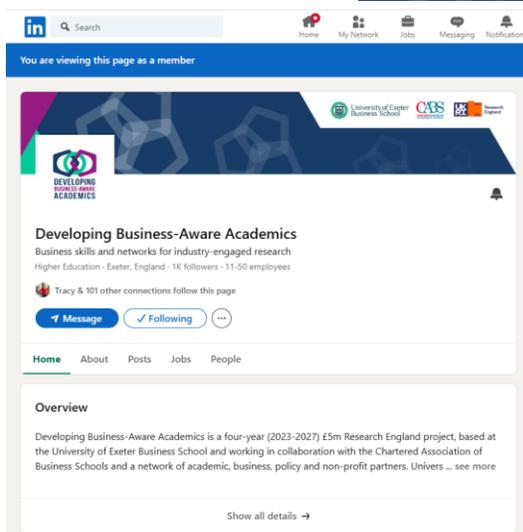
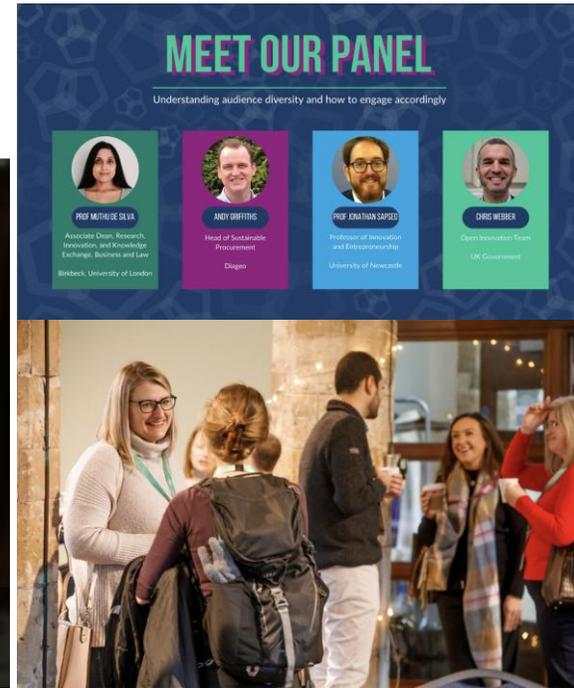
DBAA CAMPAIGN: TRANSFORMING IDEAS INTO ACTION

1765 LinkedIn followers

792 newsletter subscribers

19,000 website users

22 case study interviews



University of Exeter Business School



RESEARCH

Understanding the barriers to, and enablers and motivators for, better collaboration and research impact.

Learning from literature and existing approaches & building an evaluation framework.



INSPIRE

Demonstrate the value of engaging beyond academia.

EQUIP

Skill & mindset development, and awareness of opportunities.

ENGAGE

Curate initiatives for supported engagement.

RESEARCHERS &
EXTERNAL
PARTNERS



IMPACT

EVIDENCE BASE

502 survey respondents across three surveys / 246 focus group participants

Both researchers and industry responded that **greater collaboration** would unlock and accelerate **innovation** and that academic researchers are currently **not well-equipped** for working with business.

Industry wants:

1. Simpler collaboration processes
2. Business priorities reflected in research
3. Increased awareness of opportunities
4. Networking opportunities

Researchers want:

1. Recognition of industry collaboration for career progression
2. Funding for joint projects
3. Networking opportunities
4. Increased visibility of opportunities to collaborate

BARRIERS	ENABLERS	MOTIVATORS
Lack of knowledge of opportunities	HEIs' recognition of non-traditional REF outputs for career progression	To contribute to societal, environmental or health improvements.
Budgetary constraints	Increased funding for joint projects	Career progression / job security
Pressure to produce REF-returnable outputs	More networking opportunities	Associated job opportunity
Time constraints	Increased visibility of collaboration opportunities	Opportunity to reach new audiences
Perceived differing values	Simplified collaboration processes	Financial incentive (e.g. increased salary)
Language/terminology	Increased understanding of researcher skillset	Access to resources
Pace of working	Brokerage	Existing examples
Bureaucracy	Training	Encouragement to think laterally
Insufficient skills or knowledge	Increased exposure	Recognition

Further research in progress via industry roundtables and collaboration with CRAC/Vitae (CEDARS analysis)

KEY OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED

- Embed business-awareness into existing researcher development provision.
- Create better connections across innovation/enterprise teams, disciplines and researcher developers.
- Harness existing networks, connections and collaborations.
- Help researchers to explore the potential value of their expertise beyond academia.
- Develop academia/industry co-mentoring opportunities.
- Focus on experiential learning opportunities, supported by workshops.

PILOT INITIATIVES



RESEARCHER WORKSHOP

90 minutes-1 day



EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

1-2 days



WORKPLACE VISIT

Up to 1 day



NETWORKING EVENT

Up to 2-4 hours

EVALUATION

CONFIDENCE

COMPETENCE

CONNECTIONS

Captured via short surveys immediately before and after the initiatives, and then again after one and six months.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP



1

Inspires and equips researchers for effective external engagement

2

Uses DBAA resources and activities to address specific knowledge and skill areas

3

Ideally includes co-facilitation by external partners and post-workshop networking

RESEARCHER WORKSHOP



NETWORKING WORKSHOP

90 minutes – 1 day

Summary: Designed to equip academic researchers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to connect with non-academic organisations and enhance the impact of their research.

Format: Combination of knowledge and skill development activities, tailored to specific intended audience. Ideally serves as preparatory event for more immersive, experiential learning initiative (exhibition experience, workplace visit, or networking event). Template formats available, and content must align with DBAA provision Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

Duration: Typically delivered in 90 minutes, but can be longer.

Delivery: Ideally in-person by an experienced facilitator. Potential for online delivery where in-person is not practical.



TRANSFORMING RESEARCH INTO ACTION: AN
INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP FOR AI-FOCUSED
RESEARCHERS – 13 JANUARY 2026

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE



1

Immerses participants in an industry environment

2

Gain practical experience communicating research with non-academic organisations

3

Natural, low pressure, networking as conference delegates approach the conference stand

EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE



EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE

1-2 days

Summary: Immersive, experiential initiative that provides an introduction to face-to-face industry networking at a conference exhibition with the support of an experienced facilitator.

Format: Researchers join a departmental or university exhibition stand at conferences that have non-academic attendees and exhibitors.

Duration: The experience may run from one day to several days depending on the length of the conference.

Delivery: An experienced facilitator joins the conference stand and supports research participants. Conferences may be internal to a university, regional or national.

Preparation: We highly recommend that researchers attend a DBAA workshop in advance of the visit.

EVENTS



EXHIBITION EXPERIENCE - 18 NOVEMBER
2025

ABOUT THE WORKPLACE VISIT



1

Experience industry workplace cultures

2

Contribute to industry-academia knowledge exchange

3

Build relationships, skills, and confidence

WORKPLACE VISIT



WORKPLACE VISIT

Up to 1 day

Summary: Visit to a non-academic workplace aligned with research areas.

Format: The visit may comprise a tour of facilities, presentations on university and industry cultures, networking activities, and facilitated round table discussions exploring innovation, challenges or topical themes.

Duration: Typically one day.

Delivery: Requires an industry contact at the workplace to support the tour and convene industry employees. An experienced facilitator should lead the activities.

Preparation: We highly recommend that researchers attend a DBAA workshop in advance of the visit.



BRIDGING CULTURES TO TRANSFORM IDEAS
INTO ACTION - 11 FEBRUARY 2026

ABOUT THE NETWORKING EVENT



1

Collaboratively explore different approaches to innovation and problem-solving

2

Network with a mixed academic-industry group

3

Build relationships, skills, and confidence

NETWORKING EVENT



NETWORKING EVENT

2 hours to 1 day

Summary: Immersive, experiential initiative for researchers and industry to explore new perspectives and pathways to collaboration.

Flexible format: Speakers, panel sessions, facilitated networking activities, roundtable discussions, and informal networking. The initiative may be a stand-alone event or embedded as part of existing conferences, events or workshops.

Duration: Two hours to one day.

Delivery: An experienced facilitator leads the event and supports participants.

Preparation: We highly recommend that researchers attend a DBAA workshop in advance of the visit.

EVENTS



RESEARCH-INDUSTRY CHALLENGE! - 2 MARCH
2026

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



- University of Exeter Business School ethics ref: 10665280
- Facilitator briefing
- Informed consent is paramount
- Participation must be voluntary
- Evaluation
- Data collection, management, and storage

APPLICATION OVERVIEW – ELIGIBILITY & FUNDING SCOPE

- Open to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) eligible to receive Research England funding.
- We will also consider applications that bring together researchers from a range of HEIs, through mechanisms such as consortia, mission groups, collaborations, or networks, but funding and responsibility for outcomes must sit with a **single lead HEI in England**.
- Funding can be used to **cover delivery costs** such as hire of rooms or equipment, refreshments, exhibition stands, reasonable travel expenses (in line with institutional policy) and additional staff brought in to facilitate, organise, recruit to, or deliver events.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1

Stage One: Expression of Interest (Eoi) - deadline **1st May 2026** at midnight. Your Eoi will outline your suitability to organise and host the proposed initiatives, and some indicative details of events, external partners and timelines. The DBAA team will then apply selection criteria and invite successful applicants to take forward a full proposal.

2

Stage Two: Full Proposal. Your proposal will include full details of your chosen initiatives, including identification of external partners and facilitators, target groups of researchers and/or research networks, as well as a budget breakdown and your legal and finance contacts.

OVERVIEW OF SELECTION CRITERIA

- Applicant has suitable **role and connections** to broker collaborations across their university's professional services teams (primarily those supporting innovation, knowledge exchange and researcher development) **and** academic departments/research units.
- If convened by consortia (e.g. a mission group), existence of well-established connections **across a region or identified network** to broker collaborations and involve researchers from more than one HEI.
- Confirmation of **institutional support and capacity**.
- Targeted plan for identifying and recruiting **at least 20 PGRs and/or ECRs per initiative**, as well as non-academic partners and (where relevant) identification of specific external events.
- **Value for money**, including a plan for how initiatives might be incorporated into 'business as usual' within their HEI beyond the DBAA-funded period.
- Suitability of the EoI overall in terms of geographical location of the HEI(s) involved, type and/or size of HEI(s) and/or discipline-focus to ensure that the DBAA trial initiatives take place across as diverse a **range of contexts** as possible.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Go to our website for:

- Expression of Interest form & supporting documents
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Sign-up form for the optional Open Q&A Sessions

Email us for:

- Questions not covered in call documents or FAQ

Meet with us for:

- Support to develop Expressions of Interest
- Optional Open Q&A Sessions
 - Thursday 16 April 1-2pm
 - Monday 20 April 11am-12pm



Contacts:

dbaa@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Eleanor Browne
is your lead contact



www.business-aware-academics.org

Q&A

CONNECT WITH US

Use the QR code to sign up to
our mailing list

dbaa@exeter.ac.uk

www.business-aware-academics.org



University of Exeter
Business School



Research
England

All content © 2026 Developing Business-Aware Academics