



Call for Papers

Mind the Gaps: Evidence-Based Learning and Teaching for Student and Staff Success

20th - 21st January 2027 | Birmingham, UK

The 2027 joint conference of the [Teaching-Focused University Network \(T-FUN\)](#) and Oxford Brookes Centre for [Research About Learning in Higher Education \(REAL-HE\)](#) invites academics, practitioners, educational developers, educational leaders, and students to explore the theme '*Mind the Gaps: Evidence-based learning and teaching for student and staff success*'.

The conference will take place on the 21st January 2027 in the heart of Birmingham, an historic city of rich heritage, iconic canals, and world-class culture.

The conference will be preceded by a free pre-conference workshop on 20th January, 12-5pm, in which we will explore '*The Science of Learning: Integrating Experimental Psychology into Higher Education Research*' funded by the [Experimental Psychological Society](#).

Conference Theme

High-quality teaching is central to the mission of higher education, yet important questions remain about how teaching is informed by evidence, recognised within academic careers, and experienced equitably by students. This conference provides a forum to showcase research, share effective practice, and foster collaboration across institutions and disciplines to address these challenges.

We welcome submissions that demonstrate how teaching can be strengthened through research and evidence, while advancing career development and promoting equity of student outcomes in higher education.

Specifically, we invite proposals that address one or more of the following themes.

1. Bridging the Research–Practice Gap

How can research more effectively inform teaching practice in higher education?

We welcome submissions exploring the application and evaluation of evidence-based pedagogies and those which translate educational research into institutional practice

2. Rewarding Teaching Excellence

How can institutions better recognise, reward, and support teaching-focused academic careers?

Relevant topics include:

- Promotion and recognition frameworks
- Leadership in teaching and education
- Professional development and mentoring
- Workload, identity, and career progression
- Models of excellence in teaching-focused careers
- Institutional policy and culture

3. Dismantling Equity Gaps

How can research and evidence-informed practice contribute to more equitable and inclusive higher education?

Relevant topics include:

- Student retention and success
- Awarding and attainment gaps
- Inclusive curriculum and assessment
- Belonging and student engagement
- Widening participation
- Accessibility and universal design for learning
- Interventions that improve equity across diverse student populations

Submission Types and Requirements

We welcome proposals for individual papers (15 mins), workshops (30 minutes), lightning talks (3 mins), and posters (portrait, A1) that offer new data, critical perspectives or evidence-informed practical tools to help 'Mind the Gaps' in higher education.

Submissions may include completed work or work in progress, with lightning talks particularly suited to works in progress. Any data collected from human participants must have received ethical approval and followed appropriate ethical guidelines (such as those from the [British Psychological Society](#)).

You will be invited to submit up to two contributions with an abstract for each contribution of up to 200 words (excluding title). It can be written in the past or present tense, and may include up to three references (not included in the word count).

Submissions from interdisciplinary teams and collaborations with students and professional service staff are particularly encouraged.

Submissions will be peer-reviewed for relevance and quality, and we hope to inform you of the committee's decision within 3 weeks of the submission deadline.

Individual papers and Posters

Provide theoretical background/context and outline the aims/purpose or research question posed. Explain methods and participants or key theoretical positions/arguments. Provide the results or outcomes of the inquiry and analysis methods used. Explain practical/theoretical recommendations and/or policy implications, alongside any limitations. Works in progress should explain expected findings and potential implications.

Posters should be prepared in portrait format, size A1.

Workshops

These should provide an opportunity for participants to actively engage with the topic. They should demonstrate clear practical relevance, foster discussion, and offer knowledge/skills that can extend beyond the session.

In the abstract, explain the topic, the evidence-base, its relevance, and what participants expect to gain from attending. Provide a brief description of the structure of the workshop (eg time on presentation, demonstration, discussion, practical activities etc).

Lightning Talks

Explain your question or problem or insight. Explain how you have tackled it or will tackle it. Provide the key finding/outcome or potential significance.

We suggest you prepare your talk with a maximum of 5 slides, with each communicating a single idea with minimal text and strong visuals.

Registration and Submissions

Pre-conference registration

To attend the pre-conference workshop on 20th January, generously funded by the [Experimental Psychological Society](#), registration is essential as we have fixed room capacity.

[Click here to register your pre-conference workshop place via Qualtrics](#).

Conference Submission

[Click here to submit your conference abstract via Qualtrics](#) by Monday 26th October.

Join the Conversation

Whether you are generating new evidence, translating research into practice, shaping institutional policy, or leading initiatives that advance equity and teaching excellence, we invite you to share your work and contribute to the conversation about how evidence can strengthen teaching, how institutions can better value educational expertise, and how higher education can become more equitable for all.

Further Information

The conference registration fee will be £55 to cover catering and room hire, and we are pleased to be able to provide bursaries to cover this fee for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

We are grateful to generous financial support from Oxford Brookes University, Head of Department of Psychology, Social Work and Public Health for the conference.

Please contact katy.burgess@cardiff.ac.uk or Louise.e.taylor@brookes.ac.uk if you have any questions