



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Research Cultures Action Plan 2023-25

End of Period Progress Report

Alex Peden, Head of Research Cultures
July 2025

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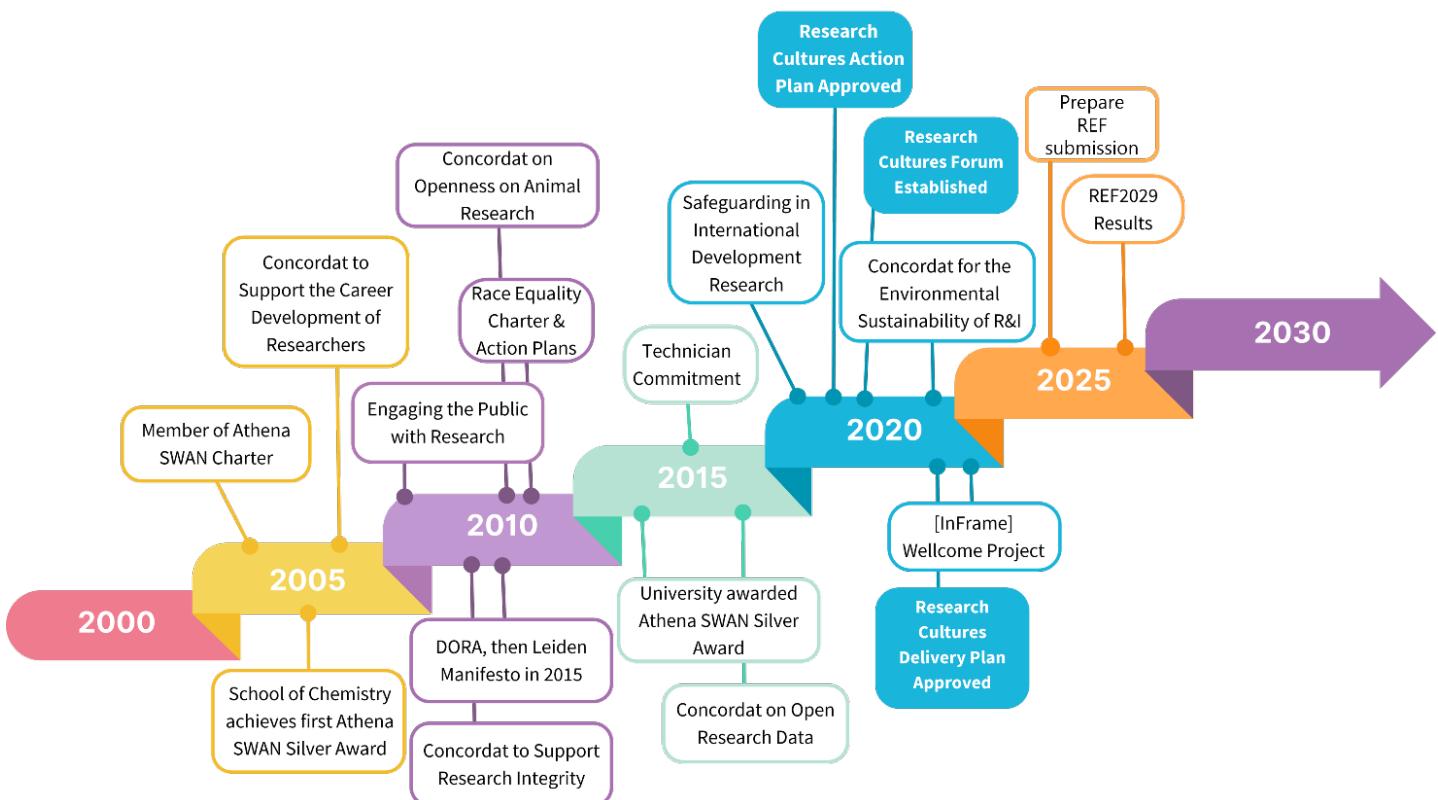
Introduction

We are committed to fostering an environment in which research, researchers, and those that enable research, can thrive.

Research sits at the core of the University's mission. It forms one of the four pillars in our [Strategy 2030](#) and we use research to advance knowledge and change the world for the better. Our ability to deliver excellent research depends on our research cultures. Our research cultures are built and maintained through the values, expectations and behaviours that shape how we support, deliver and communicate our research. It's our responsibility as an institution, and as individuals, to foster cultures where we are all encouraged, supported and recognised appropriately.

We've been engaged in improving our research cultures for decades, the university was a founding member of the Athena SWAN Charter in 2004 and we've continued to work across all departments, Schools, Institutes and Colleges to ensure our research is undertaken responsibly and our research and research enabling staff can develop themselves and their careers.

Our first Research Cultures Action Plan was agreed by University Executive in February 2023. This report highlights some of the considerable work that has taken place across the University since that point to improve our research cultures, both as part of our Research Cultures Action Plan, our Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan and beyond them. Our Action Plans only detail a part of the learning and improvement that services, departments, Colleges and Schools engage in continuously.

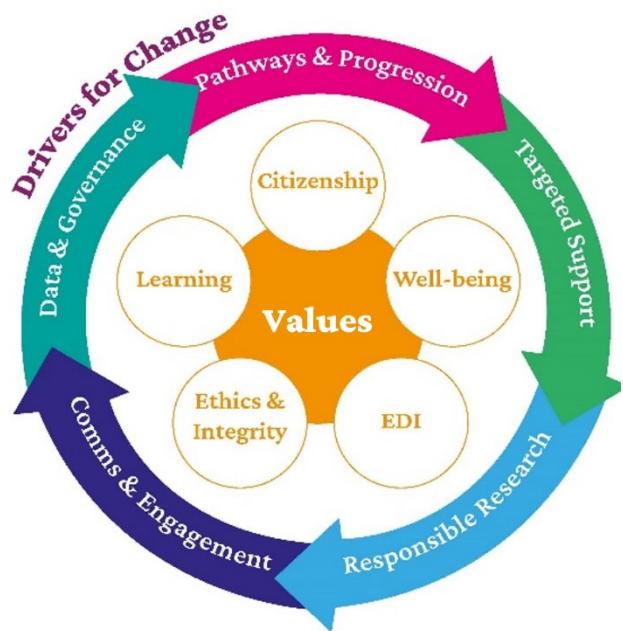


Our Research Cultures Action Plan 2023-25

Our Research Cultures Action Plan states our commitment to foster an environment where research, researchers, and those who support them, can thrive. The Action Plan is underpinned by a set of core values that guide all of our research activities, and the plan realises these values through practical measures across our drivers for change.

The research community encompassed by the Action Plan encompasses all those involved in research, from undergraduates gaining their first experience of research to established academics leading in their field and those providing the services and support that enable a flourishing research environment.

Our Research Cultures Delivery Plan was developed over the summer of 2023 to elaborate on the actions set out in the Action Plan. The group described the specific measures that will be taken to realise the 41 areas of the Action Plan, the timeframe for their delivery and which part of the University is responsible for their delivery.



The full Action and Delivery Plan can be found on our Research Cultures website.

- [Research Cultures Action Plan | Research Cultures](#)

Research Cultures Delivery Group

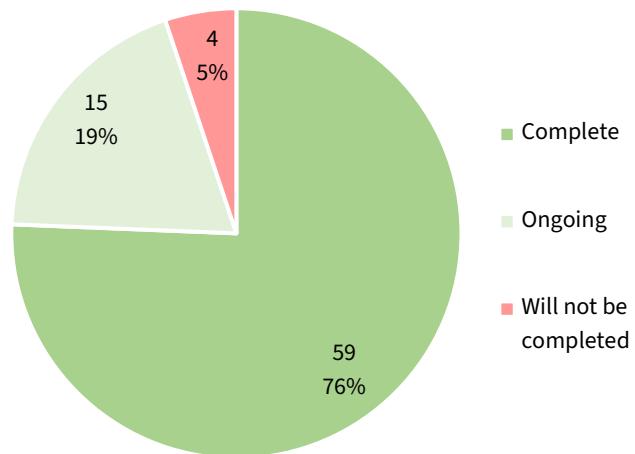
We established our Research Cultures Delivery Group, a sub-committee of our Research Strategy Group, in Spring 2024. The Group is chaired by the Head of Research Cultures and is responsible for the monitoring and delivery of the Research Cultures Action Plan, Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan and from May 2025 our Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) action plan.

The membership is comprised of representatives of units holding actions in the plan.

- [Research Cultures Delivery Group | Committee Site](#)

Progress on delivering our Research Cultures Action Plan

Six months before the end of the Action Plan period (July 2025) more than 75% of the actions in our plan have already been delivered and another ~20% are actively progressing. Four actions will not be delivered during the action plan period due to changes in resource and/or changes in the scope of actions since the plan was published.



Highlights

- **We have developed a suite of [resources to support and develop our Principal Investigators \(PIs\)](#).** We recognise that PIs hold a huge amount of responsibility in our cultures, undertaking line management, project management, financial management and holding responsibility for the quality of the research we produce. By providing additional resources targeted at PIs we wanted to provide opportunities for individuals to explore and understand how they can balance all these responsibilities. We also wanted to connect PIs, to provide an opportunity for mutual support.
- **We developed a specific [Post-graduate Research \(PGR\) Cultures Plan](#).** As part of the development of our action plan we recognised that a more focused plan was needed to support PGR students, their supervisors and the policies, procedures and services they draw on. We published our PGR culture plan in May 2024. As of July 2025, 10 of the 14 actions on our PGR Plan are complete (71%).
- **We published advice and [guidance for those experiencing online harassment because of their work at the University](#).** Online abuse of researchers is increasing in frequency and severity, and sometimes online abuse spills into real life with consequences for security. We published guidance about online harassment for researcher and their managers that suggests tips for online safety, and how to access university support if things escalate.
- **We signed the [UK Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice](#).** We were one of the founding signatories to the concordat and commit to reducing the carbon footprint and environmental damage of our research and innovation activities.
- **We have [appointed Deans of Research Cultures in each of our three Colleges](#).** Our Deans will work to develop research cultures priorities focused on the needs of their specific College.

Actions we have not completed in the action plan period

There are four actions that we will not be able to complete in the Action Plan period (before the end of December 2025). These actions are

- 1.2 - Undertake a scoping exercise to map existing provision and identify gaps and opportunities for improving progression, review and mentoring for professional services and technical staff.
- 6.1 - Develop the job description for a University Technical Skills Lead and recruit to the post.
- 14.4 - Deliver a series of workshops to scope development offer for research professional services staff

- 14.5 - Building on 14.4 develop and implement career development programme for research professional services staff

These actions were considered a priority in the development of our 2023-25 action plan, and during the action plan period there was a lot of progress made towards achieving these actions. However, due to challenges across the higher education sector and the change implications of the work undertaken to progress these actions, we will not be able to complete these actions within the period. That does not mean that the actions will be forgotten. We will continue to review the feasibility of undertaking these actions or other activities that achieve the same aims but may be more appropriate to the context, over the next three-year period. We will do this via progress reporting from the action holders during our 2026-28 action plan. For actions 1.2, 14.1 and 14.5 the action holder responsibility will transfer to the Research Operations Executive.

Transparency

We aim to be transparent in reporting progress against our action plan and our progress tracker can be viewed on our Research Cultures SharePoint site. Quarterly progress reports have been available publicly via the [Research Cultures Delivery Group committee site](#) since March 2024 and will continue to be updated until the end of the action plan period.

- [Progress on our Action Plan | Research Cultures SharePoint](#)

Detailed Action Progress

This progress report is organised into sections providing detailed action by action progress updates grouped under the **Drivers for Change** in our Action Plan: Career Pathways & Progression; Targeted Support; Responsible Research; Communication & Engagement; and Governance & Data. In each section there is a summary chart and a detailed description of progress of each of the 83 actions in our plan.

Career Pathways & Progression

In order to promote our values of citizenship, well-being, and equality, diversity & inclusion (EDI), actions in this section aim to establish and clearly communicate effective, appropriate and fair career pathways and opportunities for progression.

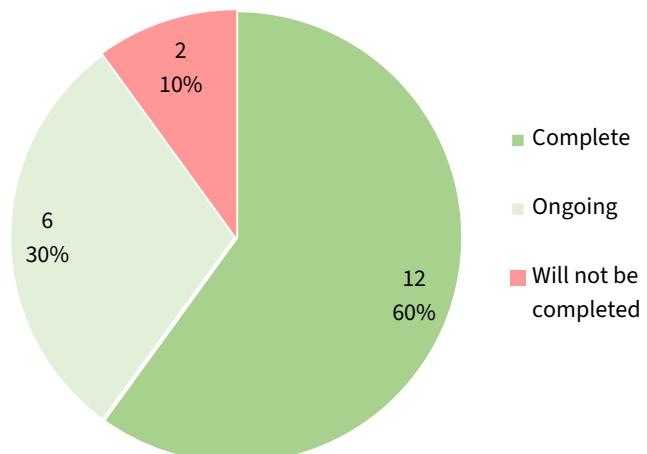
Researchers at all levels and in all roles, and colleagues supporting research, should have access to clear support for career development and progression, including moving across different types of research and research-supporting roles. This includes providing opportunities for our early career researchers, including our PGR students, to enhance their skills and build their professional attributes.

Such career development support and pathways should build in recognition for positive behaviours, including good citizenship and collegiality, support for EDI, and research ethics and integrity. We aim to incentivise and reward roles linked to citizenship and collegiality, such as membership of committees, organising peer groups and networks, and providing mentoring and peer support.

Progress on Career Pathways & Progression

90% of the actions in this theme are delivered and embedded, or the work is still ongoing.

Two actions will not be delivered, 1.2 due to the assigned resource being reduced, and 6.1 due to reconsideration of the scope of the role to be recruited.



No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
1.1	Undertake a root and branch review of the academic promotion process	HR	Ongoing	<p>Work is ongoing across 6 work streams including addition of collegiality into role descriptors and promotion criteria.</p> <p>Once completed and approved, updates will be incorporated into the 2026/27 process, as academic promotions process is not open in 2025/26.</p>

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
1.2	Undertake a scoping exercise to map existing provision and identify gaps and opportunities for improving progression, review and mentoring for professional services and technical staff.	HR, Growing Research Together	Will not be completed in this action plan period	Work as part of this action was to be undertaken as part of the Growing Research Together Project, but that project was descoped in July 2024 and this work was closed. HR plan to start scoping review processes related to Professional Services staff but are not planning to develop progression models during this action plan period.
2.1	Enhance the functionality of the Research Careers Support Tool by introducing customisable features and signposting to relevant resources	ERO, Office of VP Research & Enterprise	Complete	Career Support Tool available from Jan 2025
2.2	Embed the Research Careers Support Tool in relevant material e.g. annual review guidance	IAD, HR	Ongoing	Linked on Research Staff Hub and used as a resource by the IAD Careers Team.
3.1	Undertake a pilot study to assess scope and scale of introducing a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR)	Office of VP Students	Complete	Pilot completed May 2024
3.2	Develop the full PGR HEAR record	Office of VP Students	Complete	HEAR available for all PGR students August 2024

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
4.1	As part of 1.1 update promotion and review documents to include information on co-supervision, co-investigator status	HR	Ongoing	Ongoing as part of 1.1
4.2	Establish a task and finish group of RSG on implementing narrative CVs	Research Strategy Group (RSG)	Ongoing	CAHSS Dean of Research Cultures has been asked to lead on this action from March 2025. Group will hold its first meeting in Autumn 2025
4.3	Establish a task and finish group of RSG to implement research metrics workplan and develop CoARA action plan.	Research Strategy Group (RSG)	Complete	CoARA action plan approved by RSG May 2025 and published on website. New website and SharePoint resource to support responsible research assessment published.
5.1	Pilot, finalise and rollout guidance for promotions and scholarship panels on foregrounding EDI considerations	HR	Ongoing	Ongoing as part of 1.1
6.1	Develop the job description for a University Technical Skills Lead and recruit to the post	Corporate Services Group (CSG)	Will not be completed in this action plan period	Job description written, agreed and graded. Recruitment halted due to reconsideration of scope of post Option to commission external review of UoE Technician Commitment needs is being considered.
6.2	Implement deliverables and milestones set out in the Technician Commitment Plan	Technician Steering Committee	Complete	2021-23 action plan completed New action plan developed and confirmed in July 2024
7.1	Set up a website to raise awareness of rights of staff on fixed term contracts, including information relevant to UoE/UKRI funded PGR students.	IAD, HR, Doctoral College	Ongoing	Research Staff Hub contains this information for research staff. Doctoral College webpage in development.

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
8.1	Review proposals from fixed-term contracts working group and identify actions and timescales to take forward recommendations	HR	Complete	<p>RSG approved paper outlining next steps for fixed-term contracts actions</p> <p>When University financial situation improves RSG will commission a pilot of research staff pooling</p> <p>Schools and Colleges will be encouraged to adopt and maintain best practice outlined in working group papers.</p>
9.1	Promote initiatives which showcase different PGR career pathways	Doctoral College, Career Service	Complete	<p>Doctoral College has held PGR Career focused Forum Sessions</p> <p>PhD Horizons was held in 2024, and will be held in June 2025</p>
9.2	Promote Platform One as a resource for PGR students	Doctoral College, Development & Alumni	Complete	PGR networking event in Welcome Week 2023 and 2024 was sponsored by Platform One
9.3	Gather data and information on PGR mentoring schemes or equivalent at Edinburgh	Doctoral College	Superseded	This action was superseded by activity outlined in the PGR Cultures Plan approved in May 2024
9.4	Incorporate career questions in to the annual review forms for PGR students	Doctoral College, Student Systems	Complete	Actioned as part of HEAR implementation (action 3.2)
9.5	Promote the development of structured career plans for all PGR students	Doctoral College, Career Services, IAD	Complete	<p>Development Needs Analysis piloted and evaluated in Precision Medicine CDT and History, Classics & Archaeology</p> <p>Development Needs Analysis form, handbook and supervisor guidance available on Doctoral College site</p>
9.6	Undertake a feasibility study of introducing a student exit survey to monitor experience and career intentions	Doctoral College, Careers Services	Complete	Set of questions asked of students at graduation implemented in May 2024
10.1	Develop a PGR Research Cultures Strategy	Doctoral College, IAD	Complete	PGR Cultures Plan approved in May 2024. At July 2025 10 of 14 (75%) actions were complete.

Impact of our Activity

- 1,663 students have added information to their Higher Education Attainment Record (HEAR) since August 2024 when PGR students gained access
- 180 PGR students attended the Career Service's [PhD Horizons](#) event in 2024, and 147 attended in 2025. 89% of attendees in 2025 agreed they felt better informed about their career options after attending the event.
- At the end of July 2025 75% of actions outlined in our PGR Cultures plan have been completed with the remaining actions in progress
- Progress on our PGR Cultures Plan can be accessed on our [Research Cultures SharePoint](#)
- Progress on our CoARA Action Plan can be accessed on our [Research Cultures SharePoint](#)

Beyond our Action Plan

- A survey of all those eligible for academic promotion was conducted to gauge understanding of the academic promotion process. Several unofficial or ghost processes were found to be operating, where School management or line managers were referring to previous promotion processes, or misunderstanding the current process. As a result of the survey HR will be increasing the emphasis on training of panel members, line managers, and HR staff as part of our review of academic promotions. Summary results of this survey have been shared with the Health & Wellbeing team to feed into their work on workplace stress management.
- As part of our CoARA action plan development we have updated our [Responsible Research Assessment webpages](#) and created a [SharePoint page](#) to provide tools and resources.
- Professors Andrew Millar and Niki Vermeulen, with our Library Open Research team, have been awarded [CoARA Boost Cascade funding](#) to understand and facilitate sharing of good practice in supporting open research.
- UoE casualised researchers, Dr Cécile Ménard and Dr Lena Wånggren, in collaboration with Maria Stoian have produced a website with 8 comic strips telling the stories of casualised academics. [In Their Own Time: Precarious and Unpaid Work\(loads\) in Academia](#). The project was funded by the UKRI EDI Caucus.

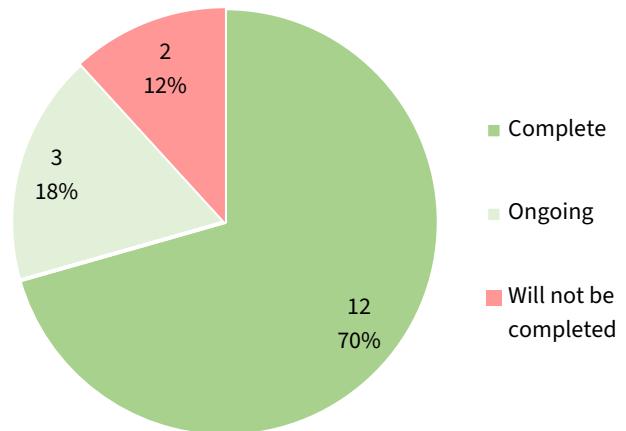
Targeted Support

As well as support for career development, actions in this theme provide additional opportunities for targeted training and support of particular groups. Our actions aim to support students and staff at different career stages, including postgraduate researchers and early career researchers; training for PIs and research leaders; training for PhD supervisors, targeted support for grant applications or industry engagement; and networks providing peer support for particular communities, such as the Disabled Staff Network, Staff Pride Network (which is open to PGR students), or the many networks and peer groups that exist for research staff, postdoctoral fellows, postgraduate researchers, technicians and professional support staff.

Progress on Targeted Support

Over 85% of actions in this theme have been delivered and embedded or are ongoing.

Two actions in this theme have not been delivered as the project resource to undertake them was closed during the action plan period. These two actions, 14.4 and 14.5, related to career pathways and development resources for professional services staff enabling research. We recognise that most actions in this plan are being delivered by professional services staff, and with the closing of these actions we acknowledge the relative lack of measures that benefit Professional Services staff.



No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
11.1	New Academic Developer role will review current training for Principal Investigators (PI) and managers of research staff and refresh future delivery	IAD	Complete	Appointment of new staff member to IAD made in 2024. Scoping and consultation with PIs and Colleges completed in August 2024
11.2	Roll out new training offer for PIs and line managers of research staff	IAD	Complete	New suite of PI training launched July 2024
11.3	Explore ways of monitoring participation in PGR training to ensure supervisors are compliant with university policy	IAD	Complete	Fundamentals of PhD Supervision online course is live in People & Money Learning. Completion recorded on staff profiles and reports sent to Schools monthly by IAD

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
11.4	As part of 1.1 integrate monitoring of training into promotion process e.g. PGR supervision training	HR, IAD	Ongoing	Ongoing as part of 1.1
12.1	As part of the PGR Research Cultures Plan identify actions to address imbalance of power dynamics in PGR – Supervisor relationship	Doctoral College, HR, IAD	Superseded	This action was superseded by activity outlined in the PGR Cultures Plan approved in May 2024
12.2	Develop and implement continuous improvement to tackle toxic working and studying conditions	Doctoral College, HR, IAD, Student Systems, Academic Services	Superseded	This action was superseded by activity outlined in the PGR Cultures Plan approved in May 2024
13.1	Research Cultures Delivery Group (RCDG) will amplify concordat work through signposting	IAD, Concordat Implementation Group (CIG), Research Cultures Forum (RCF)	Complete	Shared membership of RCDG, RCF and CIG. Concordat progress is monitored by RCDG. Research Cultures website links to Concordat
14.1	Careers consultants for research staff will review career development support and develop a plan for delivery	IAD	Complete	Additional Career Consultant role appointed to IAD Review completed March 2024
14.2	Roll out new career development support offer for research staff	IAD	Complete	New support offer available from March 2024
14.3	Develop and implement a plan for targeted career development support for technicians	Technician Steering Committee (TSC), HR, IAD	Ongoing	Career panel discussion held at Technician Week 2024, and 2024 Technician Conference focused on career development Short-life working group established by TSC to scope and develop career pathways

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
14.4	Deliver a series of workshops to scope development offer for research professional services staff	Growing Research Together (GRT)	Will not be completed in this action plan period	<p>The scope of the GRT project was reduced in July 2024 and this work was closed</p> <p>Aspects of this work are being undertaken through the newly constituted Research Support Operations Executive.</p>
14.5	Building on 14.4 develop and implement career development programme for research professional services staff	Growing Research Together (GRT)	Will not be completed in this action plan period	<p>The scope of the GRT project was reduced in July 2024 and this work was closed</p>
15.1	EDIC Disability Subcommittee will recommend approaches to raise awareness of and support for researchers with disabilities	EDIC Disability Subcommittee, CAM	Complete	<p>Inclusion essentials e-module now covers disability inclusion</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments policy and individual adjustment plans for disabled and neurodivergent staff launched Feb 2025</p>
16.1	Host learning session with participants of Women of Colour Leadership Programme	ERO, EDIC R&AR Subcommittee	Complete	<p>ERO worked with facilitators and participants on evaluation of programme in Jan 2025</p> <p>Cohort outputs, feedback and suggestions were shared with UoE Senior Leadership Team and Colleges for action.</p>
16.2	Run the Women of Colour Leadership Programme in 2023-24	ERO	Complete	<p>Programme ran in 2023-24 and an evaluation was completed in Jan 2025</p>
16.3	Trial, monitor & evaluate using protected characteristics to inform distribution of internal funding e.g. Big Ideas Accelerator, Chancellors Fellows	Office of VP R&E	Complete	<p>ED&I characteristics were used as a 'tie-breaker' in panel ranking decisions for Big Ideas Accelerator. Learning from this approach will be taken forward into future funding calls.</p> <p>2024 Chancellor's Fellow recruitment round stated and met ED&I targets of 50% women and 20% BAME candidate appointments.</p>

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
17.1	Publish web page containing information on funder adjustments and support, including ERO specialist contact	ERO	Ongoing	ERO SharePoint site is published, adjustment information is in development.
18.1	Continue to offer 1:1 support and advice to researchers who are subject to online abuse	CAM	Complete	Providing support and advise to staff and students experiencing online abuse is core activity in Communications & Marketing
18.2	Publish an online resource providing guidance and support for research subject to online abuse	CAM	Complete	Guidance on online harassment SharePoint site live in Feb 2025

Impact of our Activity

- We launched our PI Training Offer in September 2024. The offer has different components including a multi-day leadership programme, online spotlight sessions providing a brief overview of different topics, toolkits, panel discussions, opportunities for coaching and development conversations, and writing retreats. In the first year we had 45 participants on our 4-day Research Leader Programme. A 3-day course on Participative Leadership was also provided by a member of the InFrame team with 11 attendees. Spotlight Sessions were attended by 190 people, with an additional 58 views of session recordings. Spotlight sessions on 16 topics included – Sustainability in Research, Engaging with the Media, Self-doubt and the Inner Critic and Research Cultures. 8 people took up the offer of coaching provided by IAD. 4 individuals engaged in personal development conversations.
 - Feedback on the Research Leader Programme includes:

"I cannot rave about this course enough - it was amazing. This has been invaluable and I'm so glad I got a spot."
- In the five months between [August and December 2024](#) 403 research staff engaged with our expanded Research Staff Career Support team including
 - 148 attended a Career Development workshop
 - 68 attended an online panel event
 - 136 have undertaken a Career Development Consultation, an additional 11 have undertaken a consultation by email
 - Feedback received includes:

"[Research Staff Career Consultant] suggested key strategies for breaking down future applications, particularly printing off job specs and colour coding their requirements. This simple strategy made a huge difference! Thank you very much!"
- Our [Guidance on online harassment](#) SharePoint site went live in Feb 2025 and has been accessed 428 in the six months since its launch. The resources have been used to support the researchers that

produced our [Review of Race & History](#), and other academics who have had concerns about online harassment. The SharePoint resource is included in CAM media training.

Beyond our Action Plan

- We have integrated our Researcher Development Concordat work with our Research Cultures work through shared membership of committees, as well as connecting Research Staff Committees across Colleges and with College Research Cultures teams.
- We constituted our Research Support Operations Executive group, chaired by the Director of ERO and a subgroup of Research Strategy Group, to hold responsibility for operating decisions across University Research Support services. This group has inherited actions from the Growing Research Together programme to develop consistent and responsive research support processes and enhance the career development of research support staff.
- Our Head of Research Cultures has contributed to the development of research bids in supporting the development of research cultures plans and associated resources for MRC Core bids, Doctoral Training awards and Wellcome bids.
- IAD provided training and networking for our Chancellor's Fellows including leadership training, research proposal training, networking "Coffee Meet Ups", professional coaching and mentoring.
 - Example of initial feedback received on coaching
"I found these sessions incredibly helpful not just to meet my goal but to understand how to reflect on career strategies and steps."

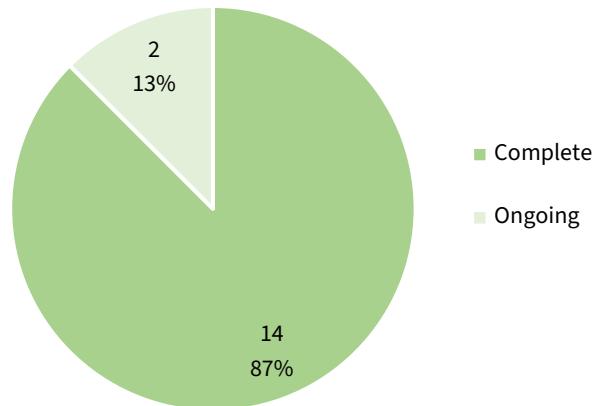
Responsible Research

We are sector-leading in many aspects of responsible research. We benefit from cutting-edge support for sustainability, open research, including through a number of 'early adopter' initiatives in Open Access, and our outstanding infrastructure for data processing, storage and sharing. We are also leading the way in the agenda on reproducibility, including through the Edinburgh ReproducibiliTea Network and the Edinburgh Open Research Initiative Network. The University recently developed a new Ethics Policy, which systematises our processes and scales up our ambition in this area. A further area of responsible research is the growing concern with security risks around research collaborations and data-sharing, captured in our trusted research processes.

Progress on Responsible Research

Over 80% of the actions in this theme have been delivered and embedded during the action plan period, with two still ongoing that integrate with the roll out of an ethics workflow system.

Several actions in this section commit to recurring activity such as annual Open Research Conferences and Research Support Services Conferences. We will continue to champion the benefits of these recurring activities through our 2026-29 Action Plan.



No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
19.1	Develop and refine Ethics & Integrity online modules	IAD	Complete	Appointment of new staff member to IAD made in 2024. Online module reviewed and relaunched Jan 2025
19.2	Review existing research integrity training and develop an offer for future provision	IAD	Complete	Online module reviewed and relaunched Jan 2025 AI ethics module under review by academic contributors and REIRG
19.3	Roll out new ethics & integrity training	IAD	Ongoing	AI ethics module under review by academic contributors and REIRG Integration with delayed Infonetica system limiting progress

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
20.1	Integrate questions on gender, race and disability into ethics forms	ERO	Complete	Toolkits supporting research that considers protected characteristics linked in Infonetica system. Updates on toolkits will be sent to ERO from relevant teams/groups Delay to implementation of Infonetica limiting progress
20.2	Scope other tools and resources to embed into research processes and resources	UoE ED&I Lead	Ongoing	ERO ED&I plan presented to RSG in April 2025.
21.2	Scope and develop a university wide fair publication policy	Library	Complete	Library team have developed fair authorship guidance
22.1	Pilot the Higher Education Export Control Training	ERO	Complete	Pilot successful
22.2	Implement the Higher Education Strategic Export Control Training Package	ERO	Complete	Training available from Sept 2024 and learners registered at point of need.
23.1	Sign the UK Concordat for Sustainable Research & Innovation Practice	SRS	Complete	Concordat published in April 2024 and UoE a signatory at launch.
23.2	Convene Group to understand Sustainable Research Concordat policy, practice and reporting requirements	SRS	Complete	Sustainable Research Working Group established May 2024
24.1	Undertake a pilot study to assess a School level Sustainability Framework	SRS	Complete	Piloted with CAHSS in summer 2023, with CSE, CMVM and Professional Services Spring 2024. Pilot complete Sept 2024
24.2	Roll out School's Sustainability Framework, including an assessment of carbon emissions related to projects	SRS	Complete	Sustainability Framework launched in October 2024

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
25.1	Run the Research Support Services Conference in 2023-24 and annually thereafter	ERO	Complete	Conference held in 2023, 2024 and planned for 2025
25.2	Host Technician Week in 2023-24 and annually thereafter	Technician Steering Committee	Complete	Technician Week held in 2023, 2024, planned for 2026 UoE are co-organising a Scottish Technician Conference in June 2025, hosted by University of Edinburgh.
26.1	Run the Open Research conference in 2023-24 and annually thereafter	Library	Complete	Open Research Conference held in 2023, 2024 and planned for 2025
26.2	Run Research Good Practice Week in 2023-24 and annually thereafter	ERO	Complete	Good Research Practice Week held in 2023, and February 2025

Impact of our Activity

- 697 students and 180 staff have undertaken our new ethics and integrity training “Introduction to Research Ethics” and “Introduction to Research Integrity” online courses
 - Of those that provided feedback in 2024 100% agreed that the training was “relevant to their research”
- 17 units across the University have developed sustainability action plans, including a total of 500 actions. Of these actions 110 are actively ongoing and 22 are already complete. Two areas have appointed Director of Sustainability positions, there are 2 new Sustainability Committees and 2 College Sustainability roles have been created.
- Participation in our Technician Week events has increased over the action plan period, in 2023 we had ~345 attendees, increasing to ~375 in 2024. Feedback has been positive with comments including

“That it was directly aimed at technicians and made them feel like they had an opportunity to engage, be present and grow - not many tech only events around in which to do this.”

- Our 2025 Open Research Conference had 93 in-person and 103 online attendees from across UoE, UK and international organisations. Event feedback was overwhelmingly positive. [Conference proceedings](#) were published in July 2025.
- Our [2025 Good Research Practice Week](#) was held on the 3-6 February, 27 sessions were offered, hosted by ERO, IAD, Library, SRS and all three Colleges. 190 individuals registered to attend, unfortunately we do not have attendance numbers. As part of the event we invited nominations for [colleagues to be recognised for their contributions to enabling and championing good research practices](#), we received ~30 nominations of which 11 were considered eligible by the ERO team and received a certificate and badge at a dedicated Recognition Event.
- Our 2024 Research Support Services Conference had 43 sessions attended by 281 people.

- Feedback includes:

“The conference is literally the highlight of the research support calendar year! Our team look forward to it for months beforehand. It gives us a good focus, and makes us feel more valued as part of the university community. We always come away with lots of information about new initiatives, and lots of ideas and enthusiasm for things we’d like to do and try in our own team”

Beyond our Action Plan

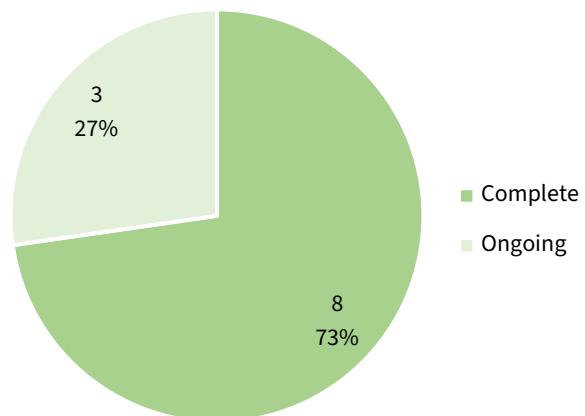
- We have invested in three new posts to create a new [Research Governance, Compliance & Risk team](#) in Edinburgh Research Office.
- Our [EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account](#) team in Edinburgh Innovations have developed responsible research and innovation guidance in partnership with our Department of Science, Technology & Innovation Studies.
- A review group has been set up to implement changes to our policy and processes to investigate research misconduct in the light of updated recommendations from the UK Research Integrity Office. This includes bringing PGRs into the research misconduct process.

Communication & Engagement

A key driver of culture change is recognising and celebrating positive behaviour. While the measures set out under Career Pathways seek to reward constructive behaviour through promotion and annual review, this section focuses on measures that publicly communicate our values and commitments across our community. It also covers measures to encourage engagement within and across different communities engaged in research and research support, fostering stronger peer support networks.

Progress on our Action Plan

Over 70% of the actions in this theme have been delivered and embedded, with the remaining actions ongoing.



No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
27.1	Share examples of good practice in celebrating research staff	IAD	Complete	<p>Several schools and colleges support Post-doc Appreciation Week annually</p> <p>CMVM research staff committee organised a Post-doc Forum in 2024</p> <p>CAHSS and CSE research culture priorities target support and increased recognition of research staff</p>
27.2	Explore opportunities for institutional-level support for celebrating research staff	IAD	Complete	<p>CSE are organising a Post-doc symposium in May 2025</p> <p>An increasing number of schools are supporting engagement with Post-doc Appreciation Week</p>
28.1	Develop case studies celebrating the achievements of researchers with disabilities	CAM, EDIC	Complete	<p>CAM working with Disability subcommittee members to develop profiles.</p> <p>First profile will be published in our staff newsletter Bulletin in September 2025</p>

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
28.2	Develop webpages to celebrate and profile researchers with disabilities	CAM, EDIC	Ongoing	Dependent on completion of 28.1
29.1	Agree a model for championing neurodiversity and define scope	HR, EDIC	Complete	Disability sub-committee identified actions to promote neurodiversity inclusion
29.2	Implement preferred model for championing neurodiversity	HR	Complete	Neuroinclusion Hub SharePoint site launched Feb 2025
30.1	Identify resource to collate a regular newsletter for PGR students	Doctoral College, IAD	Complete	PGR intern project running in 2025 to undertake a scoping project into communications & engagement with PGR students. Recommendations will feed into future PGR Cultures activity.
30.2	Integrate communication on PGR societies and community building activity into local and central mechanisms	Doctoral College, IAD	Ongoing	Support through PGR intern project in 30.1
31.1	Develop and implement a communication and engagement plan for research cultures, aligning with the R&I strategy	CAM	Complete	Research Cultures messaging built into communication plan for R&I strategy Research Cultures website and SharePoint site live
32.1	Prioritise research from under-represented groups in media training	CAM	Ongoing	UoE are working with STV 'Pass the Mic' and The Conversation to increase the diversity of staff and students contributing to the media Media training schedule will include sessions dedicated to supporting under-represented groups. Action remains ongoing due to staff vacancy in CAM.
32.2	Include media training as part of career development planning	CAM, IAD	Complete	CAM resources are linked throughout IAD website

Impact of our Activity

- Our [Neuroinclusion SharePoint](#) site launched in January 2025 and had 854 unique viewers, and 4,802 page views since its launch. Feedback received on the [Strengths](#) and [Areas of Difference](#) pages appreciated the clear explanation of neurodivergent experiences from a first-person perspective, making them relatable and shareable with colleagues and managers. Feedback also highlighted areas for improvement such as a need for more content on inclusive course design, which will be added to the hub as part of the next phase of development.
- Our [Research Cultures website](#) launched in April 2024, and has had 1,482 unique viewers, and 4,959 views since its launch.
- Our [Research Cultures SharePoint](#) site launched in February 2025, has had 113 unique viewers, and 830 page views since its launch.

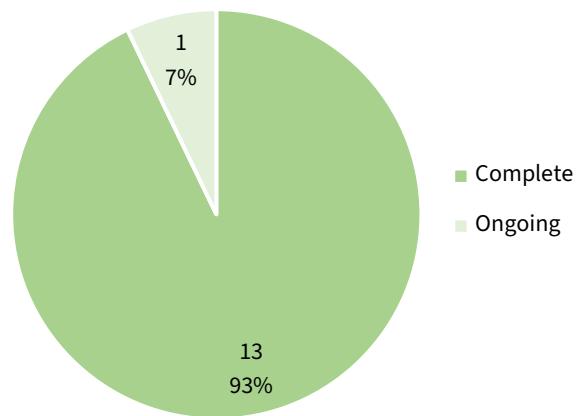
Beyond the Action Plan

- We invested in a new [Head of Research Cultures](#) post based in the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to bring together our research cultures activities
- Each college has appointed an [Academic Lead for Research Cultures](#) and [members of College Research Office staff](#) to develop discipline specific focus areas.
- Each College has developed a [Research Cultures Catalogue](#) to identify and share good practice across departments.
- We have published a [Research Cultures website](#) and [SharePoint site](#) to share our plans, progress and resources
- We have published a [Researcher Development Concordat Hub](#) on SharePoint to report on progress on our Concordat action plan and initiatives.
- In collaboration with University of Glasgow and St Andrews University we have been awarded Wellcome Institutional Research Cultures funding: [InFrame](#).
- Across the university there are several award and recognition campaigns to celebrate colleagues for their contribution such as [Technician Awards](#) and [Good Research Practice Awards](#), including a campaign run by the InFrame team: [Seek, Find, Celebrate!](#)
- Our Technician Steering Committee have started a podcast: [Technically Edinburgh](#).

Governance & Data

The success of our efforts to improve our research cultures depends on governance and data.

Governance refers to the structures and processes put in place to elaborate and implement the action plan, and monitor and evaluate progress in meeting its goals. It also covers procedures to ensure compliance with a range of other relevant University policies and guidance, including the Dignity and Respect policy, and channels for complaints and for addressing misconduct. The use of data is key to realising our goal of being a learning organisation.



Progress on our Action Plan

Over 90% of the actions in this theme are delivered and embedded, with the remaining action in progress.

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
33.1	Document the methodology for analysing the research cultures survey	Head of Research Cultures	Complete	PhD Intern project developed a dashboard to display survey data from 2020, 2022 and 2024. Documenting the data and analysis was part of this project
33.2	Establish dissemination routes for the survey and a mechanism for acting on results	Head of Research Cultures	Complete	PhD Intern project developed a dashboard to display survey data from 2020, 2022 and 2024. Dashboard is available on the Research Cultures SharePoint site Initial analysis of 2024 survey shared with Colleges and Research Culture Forum Chairs and reported to RSG Survey results will inform Research Cultures Action Plan 2026-29
33.3	Run the Research Cultures Survey every two years	UKRN Institutional Lead	Complete	2024 Survey launched in December 2024 and closed in January 2025.

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
34.1	Develop and implement a strategy for improving student engagement with the PRES survey	Doctoral College	Complete	Plan has been developed with Student Surveys to promote PRES in 2025.
34.2	Establish a mechanism to act on PRES survey results	Doctoral College, Colleges, IAD	Complete	Plan approved by Senate Education Committee and Quality Assurance Committee in May 2024
35.1	Convene a short-life working group to explore options for incentivising exit interviews, and reporting on bullying and harassment	HR	Ongoing	<p>Report + Support will be extended to staff, including a dedicated channel for bullying and harassment.</p> <p>HR note an increase in staff completing exit surveys however lack of resource to undertake this action currently.</p>
36.1	Embed the Dignity & Respect policy into School resources such as induction and P&DR	HR, Colleges	Complete	<p>P&DR resources are linked to Dignity & Respect Policy via the Behaviours Charter</p> <p>Dignity & Respect policy is shared as part of on-boarding through People & Money, and HR new joiners webpages</p>
37.1	Deliver a suite of initiatives to address structural barriers focussing on developing research leadership, attracting talent and promoting access to internal and external funding sources	ERO, Office of VP R&E	Complete	<p>Strategic Leadership in Research Programme ran in 2024, 2025</p> <p>Updated funding information available on ERO Research Community Hub</p> <p>ERO presented ED&I actions paper to RSG in May 2025</p>
37.2	Commission special projects to deliver insights into experiences of under-represented groups	EDIC, HR, Office of VP R&E	Complete	<p>Review of Race & History report endorsed by EDIC and published in August 2025. Race Review Response Group to be established.</p> <p>University approach to anti-Semitism reviewed and endorsed by EDIC, with University Executive for approval</p>

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
38.1	Establish the Research Cultures Forum ensuring membership is extended to PGR community	Co-chairs Research Cultures Forum	Complete	<p>Research Cultures Forum holds 6 meetings a year, two of which are open to the whole University community.</p> <p>EUSA PGR representative is a member of the Forum.</p>
39.1	Develop Terms of Reference setting out the purpose of the group, roles and responsibilities	Co-chairs Research Cultures Forum	Complete	<p>Terms of Reference for the Research Cultures Forum developed and approved in May 2024</p> <p>EUSA PGR representative is a member</p>
40.1	Establish the Research Cultures Delivery Group	Head of Research Cultures	Complete	<p>Terms of Reference for the Research Cultures Delivery Group developed and approved in May 2024</p>
41.1	Colleges to develop local research cultures plans	Colleges	Complete	<p>All Colleges have appointed Deans of Research Cultures</p> <p>All Colleges have developed Research Cultures Catalogues</p> <p>All three College Research Cultures priorities shared with Research Cultures Delivery Group in Dec 2024</p>
42.2	Colleges to share Research Cultures priorities with Research Strategy Group	Colleges, Research Strategy Group	Complete	<p>All three College Research Cultures priorities shared with Research Cultures Delivery Group in Dec 2024</p> <p>Colleges presented their progress and plans to Research Strategy Group in June 2025</p>

Impact of our Activity

- In 2024 1,069 members of staff and PGR students took part in our Research Cultures Survey, an increase in participation from our 2022 and 2020 survey.
- PRES survey participation for 2025 was 29.6% (1,564 responses) which is higher than both 2023 and 2021. All survey themes show a statistically significant improvement from 2023 results.

- In the year up to July 2025 155 individuals attended our 6 [Research Cultures Forum](#) meetings, two of these meetings were open to participants from across the University Community and were attended by ~50 attendees each.

Beyond our Action Plan

- Our College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine has convened a [Research Cultures Collaboration](#) group to develop and deliver their local research cultures priorities
- Progress on our PGR Cultures Plan, our Researcher Development Concordat action plan and our CoARA action plan will be monitored by the Research Cultures Delivery Group (RCDG).
- We have developed a PGR Strategy which includes research culture. An action plan is being developed, and this will include new actions relating to improving research cultures for PGR students.
- IAD recruited a PGR Intern to develop a dashboard to view the results of the 2020, 2022 and 2024 research cultures survey which were made available on the [Research Cultures SharePoint](#) in July 2025.
- Working with HR our Head of Research Cultures has access to the summary results of the UoE Staff Survey 2025 to inform the refresh of the Research Cultures Action Plan.
- Activity undertaken as part of this action plan is now reported in our annual [People Strategy Report](#).

Progress on our Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan

Postgraduate researchers are vital to our success as a leading research-intensive University. They form a large and varied community and bring new approaches, insights and creativity which enrich our research and environment. However, research is highly pressured, and for postgraduate researchers who are at the beginning of their careers this can be particularly challenging. In order to address the specific needs of our PGR students we developed our Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan as part of our Research Cultures activity.

At Edinburgh, we have gained a sense of the main challenges in postgraduate research cultures from our student representatives, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and Pulse survey responses, and various other forums. These largely align with the wider nationally and internationally recognised challenges, but there is a particular emphasis on the difficulties around community building, understanding and communicating effectively with a diverse postgraduate research population, and setting and managing expectations for students and supervisors and teams.

There are other significant pieces of work at the University which are important to consider along with this plan as they have impact on the postgraduate research student experience. These include:

- Work on Tutors and Demonstrators
- Student Support Model
- Stipends and Fees

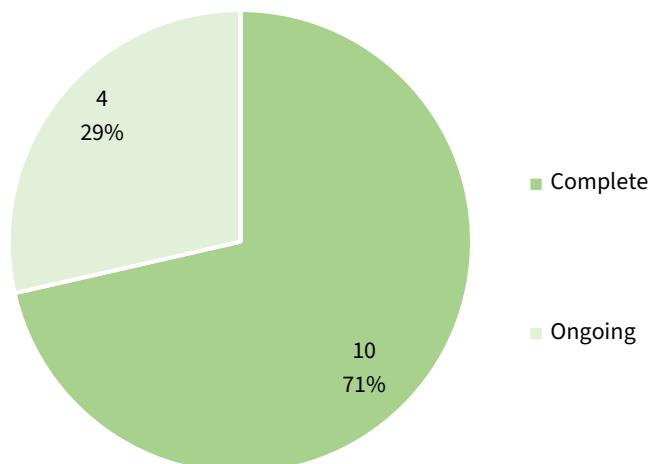
Our PGR Cultures Plan is organised under the five drivers of the University Research Cultures Action Plan (RCAP). Under the drivers we set out the main known challenges and issues for postgraduate research cultures, summarise some of the work already ongoing or started, address the specific deliverables for each driver as set out in the RCAP and identify areas for future development.

The full Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan can be found on our Research Cultures website.

- [Research Cultures Action Plan | Research Cultures](#)

Progress on our PGR Cultures Plan

Over 70% of the actions in our Postgraduate Research Cultures Plan are delivered and embedded, with the four remaining actions in progress.



No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
Career Pathways & Progression				
1.1	Promote and publicise initiatives which showcase different PhD career pathways RCAP action 9.1	Careers Service, Doctoral College	Complete	Doctoral College has held PGR Career focused Forum Sessions PhD Horizons was held in 2024, and will be held in June 2025
1.2	Promote and publicise Platform One as a resource for PGRs to meeting others, network and find mentors RCAP action 9.2	Development & Alumni, Doctoral College	Complete	PGR networking event in Welcome Week 2023 and 2024 was sponsored by Platform One
1.3	Incorporate career - related questions into the annual review forms for PGRs RCAP action 3.2 PGR action 1.6	Student Systems, Doctoral College	Complete	Actioned as part of HEAR implementation
1.4	Promote the development of structured career development plans for all PGRs RCAP action 9.5	Careers Service, IAD, Doctoral College	Complete	Development Needs Analysis piloted and evaluated in Precision Medicine CDT and History, Classics & Archaeology Development Needs Analysis form, handbook and supervisor guidance available on Doctoral College site
1.5	Undertake a feasibility study of introducing a student exit survey to monitor experience and career intentions RCAP action 9.6	Doctoral College, Careers Services	Complete	Set of questions asked of students at graduation implemented in May 2024
1.6	Introduce a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) RCAP action 3.1 & 3.2	Office of VP Students	Complete	Pilot completed May 2024 HEAR available for all PGR students August 2024

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
Targeted Support				
2.1	Strengthen supervisor professional development through design and implementation of a supervision framework, including opportunities for peer support and recognition	IAD, Doctoral College	Complete	<p>University wide Supervisor Community of Practice launched in Jan 2025</p> <p>Workshops on commonly requested topics launched in April 2025</p>
2.2	Develop work already started by the Doctoral College on widening participation and inclusion for PGR	College PGR Deans	Ongoing	
Responsible Research				
3.1	Systematically roll out research ethics and integrity training.	IAD, REIRG	Complete	<p>Corresponds with RCAP 19.2</p> <p>University Lead for PGR is now a member of REIRG, and is working towards inclusion of PGRs in research misconduct processes.</p>
Communication & Engagement				
4.1	Identify and secure resource to collate regular newsletter and calendar to circulate to all PGR	Doctoral College, College PGR Deans	Complete	<p>SFC Research Cultures funds employed a PGR intern to review communications to PGR community. Report completed in Aug 2025 and shared with Doctoral College and CAM.</p>
4.2	Integrate communication on societies and community building into local and central mechanisms	Doctoral College, College PGR Deans	Ongoing	<p>DC and CAM considering recommendations from action 4.1 PGR Intern project</p>
4.3	Pilot and evaluation the effectiveness of a programme of outreach activities to allow direct interaction with the PGR student body	College PGR Deans	Ongoing	<p>Contribution to pre-arrival briefing event for offer-holders and events run by Wellbeing Service</p> <p>Doctoral College run Welcome Week events, ~230 attendees</p> <p>Increased interaction with PGR student reps including EUSA PGR Rep.</p>

No.	Deliverable	Responsibility	Status	Progress
4.4	Work in partnership with the Students' Association and Colleges to strengthen postgraduate research representation and reporting processes for Student-Staff Liaison Committees	College PGR Deans	Ongoing	<p>The Student Association has set up a Teams site for PGR reps</p> <p>Doctoral College representatives and PGR Deans meet monthly</p> <p>The Doctoral College and the Academic Engagement & Policy Officer are increasing their connection</p> <p>The Student Association passed a motion to increase PGR representation in the Students' Association, which may lead to a sabbatical officer for PGR students.</p>
Governance & Data				
5.1	Continuing to conduct the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) every 2 years	Doctoral College, Student Analytics Insight & Modelling, College PGR Deans	Complete	<p>Plan agreed with Student Surveys to promote PRES and outcomes and approved by Senate Education Committee</p> <p>DC will hold discussion on outcomes in February and April</p>

Impact of our Activity

- 1,663 students have added information to their Higher Education Attainment Record (HEAR) since August 2024 when PGR students gained access
- 180 PGR students attended the Career Service's [PhD Horizons](#) event in 2024, and 147 attended in 2025. 89% of attendees in 2025 agreed they felt better informed about their career options after attending the event.
- At the end of July 2025 75% of actions outlined in our PGR Cultures plan have been completed with the remaining actions in progress
- Progress on our PGR Cultures Plan can be accessed on our [Research Cultures SharePoint](#)
- 697 students and 180 staff have undertaken our new ethics and integrity training “Introduction to Research Ethics” and “Introduction to Research Integrity” online courses
- PRES survey participation for 2025 was 29.6% (1,564 responses) which is higher than both 2023 and 2021. All survey themes show a statically significant improvement from 2023 results.

Beyond our Action Plan

- We have appointed a new role of University Lead for Postgraduate Research to lead our Doctoral College
- We have developed a PGR Strategy which includes research culture. An action plan is being developed, and this will include new actions relating to improving research cultures.
- Changes are being made to the research misconduct policy and procedures to include PGRs.
- A PhD intern has collated data from surveys of our Schools in relation to PGR student support and made recommendations on how to improve provision locally which will help to tackle research culture issues around, for example, toxic research environments.
- Doctoral College webpage were updated and refreshed in June 2025
- The Chaplaincy is running a [PGR Spa](#) to provide support beyond what a supervisor provides to support health, wellbeing, community building and personal development.

Glossary

CoARA	Coalition for the Advancement of Research Assessment
EDI	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
EDIC	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee , University of Edinburgh
EPSRC	Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council
ERO	Edinburgh Research Office , University of Edinburgh
EUSA	Edinburgh University Students' Association
GRT	Growing Research Together , University of Edinburgh
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Record
HR	Human Resources , University of Edinburgh
IAD	Institute for Academic Development , University of Edinburgh
MRC	Medical Research Council
P&DR	Performance & Development Review
PI	Principal Investigator
PGR	Postgraduate Research(er)
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
RCAP	Research Cultures Action Plan
RCDG	Research Cultures Delivery Group , University of Edinburgh
RCF	Research Cultures Forum , University of Edinburgh
RSG	Research Strategy Group , University of Edinburgh
SRS	Social Responsibility & Sustainability , University of Edinburgh
UoE	University of Edinburgh
VP	Vice Principal
VP R&E	Vice Principal Research & Enterprise