



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

University of Edinburgh

Research Cultures Delivery Plan

August 2023

1. Introduction

The University of Edinburgh's [Research Cultures Action Plan](#) (RCAP) was adopted by the University Executive in February 2023.

This counterpart **Delivery Plan**:

- Elaborates the specific measures that will be taken to deliver each of the 41 actions set out in the Action Plan
- Clarifies the timeframe for their delivery
- Establishes which parts of the organisation are responsible for delivery

The Delivery Plan was developed by a short-life working group, formed in March 2023 and chaired by the Vice Principal for Research and Enterprise. The Research Cultures Delivery Group members were selected to represent those parts of the University responsible for delivering the bulk of the RCAP, specifically Edinburgh Research Office, the Institute for Academic Development, Human Resources, and Communications and Marketing. It also included the Academic Lead for Research Improvement and Research Integrity, and academic representatives from each of the Colleges, as well as representation from the Research Cultures Working Group and the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The full list of members is provided at the end of this document.

The Delivery Group adopted a thematic approach, scoping and prioritising actions grouped under each of the RCAP's five drivers for change (Figure 1). In doing so, the Group was guided by the five underpinning values set out in the Action Plan. For each action, the Group examined issues around effective coordination and implementation of the specific measures, feasibility and resource implications.

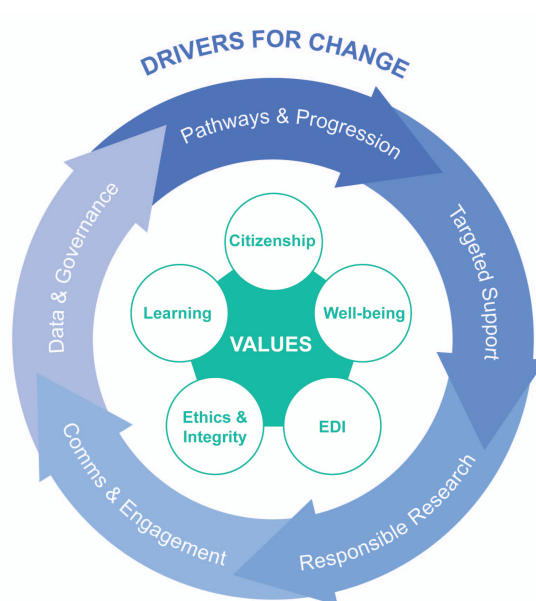


Figure 1: Research Cultures Action Plan underpinning values and drivers for change.

The resulting Delivery Plan is codified within this document as a:

- **Visualisation** showing, at a glance, the full set of specific measures to be taken, timescales, and the parts of the University responsible for delivery
- **Set of tables** containing detailed information on the proposed actions, specific measures to be taken, timescales, and areas and individuals tasked with delivery

2. Implementation & Monitoring

The Research Cultures Delivery Group will continue to meet to monitor and report on progress against the delivery plan. From autumn 2023 onwards, the new Head of Research Culture will act as Chair and will have responsibility for oversight of the Delivery Plan.

Alongside the Delivery Group, the refreshed Research Cultures Forum will continue to act as a representative forum bringing together members from across our diverse research community. The Forum will play a key role in identifying challenges in our research culture, and advising on the delivery of the RCAP.

4. Detailed Delivery Plan

Career Pathways and Progression

No.	Action	No.	Specific Measures	Timescale	Responsibility
1	Integrating citizenship and collegiality into criteria for academic, professional services & technician progression*, review and mentoring. In order to encourage and reward research citizenship, contributions to collegiality should be recognised in career progression and appraisal.	1.1	Undertake a root and branch review of the academic promotion and review process, including: a) updating guidance on mentoring (2023/24) b) publishing and promoting new guidance and processes for academic promotion and review (2024/25) c) launching a newly revised academic promotion and review process (2025/26)	2023/24 to 2025/26	HR, Colleges
		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.	2024/25	HR, GRT
2	Rolling out the Research Careers Support Tool. In order to promote well-being and avoid our researchers becoming overstretched, researchers should be supported in selecting and prioritising across research activities, using this newly developed tool	2.1	Enhance the functionality of the Research Careers Support Tool by introducing customisable features and signposting to relevant resources.	2023/24	ERO, Provosts Office (R&E)
		2.2	Embed the Research Careers Support Tool into the relevant RCAP initiatives such as annual review guidance and new IAD talent initiatives.	From 2023/24	HR, IAD
3	Introducing a PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) that will include evidence of good citizenship, such as contributions towards student and staff communities	3.1	Undertake a pilot study to assess the scope and scale of introducing a PGR HEAR record (January 2024)	2023/24	Provosts Office (Students)
		3.2	Develop the full PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR), including: a) publishing and promoting guidance and processes (2024/25) b) launching a newly developed PGR Higher Education Achievement Record (2025/26)	2024/25 to 2025/26	Provosts Office (Students)
4	Reducing reliance on metrics and embracing the narrative CV. Processes for recruitment, promotion and review should align with the sector-wide shift away from reliance on narrow	4.1	As part of 1.1 a), update existing promotion and review documentation to remove the box on outputs, include information on co-supervision, and extend coverage of funding metrics to co-investigators	2023/24	HR

*action updated April 2024 to clarify that all progression routes will be explored as part of this action, rather than solely in-post promotion routes, which was intimated by previous wording.

	sets of metrics, including through adopting the narrative CV	4.2	Establish a task and finish sub-group of Research Strategy Group (RSG) focussing on recommendations for implementing narrative CVs	2023/24	RSG
		4.3	Establish a task and finish sub-group of Research Strategy Group (RSG) to decide on the approach to implementing the Research Metrics Work Plan, including any new requirements resulting from the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)	2023/24	RSG
5	Producing guidance for promotions and scholarship panels on foregrounding EDI considerations. We will provide clear guidance and appropriate data for those involved in recruitment, internal grant review and internal funding and scholarship schemes to factor EDI goals into decision-making	5.1	Pilot, finalise and rollout guidance for promotions and scholarship panels on foregrounding EDI considerations.	2023/24	ERO
6	Establishing a University Technicians Lead. The crucial role of technicians should be supported and developed, through our Technicians Commitment plan and by establishing a new role as University Technicians Lead	6.1	Develop the job description for the University Technicians Lead and recruit to the post (expected autumn 2023).	2023/24	Technicians Steering Committee
		6.2	Implement the deliverables and milestones set out in the Technicians Commitment plan	2023/24 to 2025/26	Technicians Lead, Technicians Steering Committee, RSG
7	Raising awareness of employment rights and benefits of staff in fixed-term employment, as well as rights and benefits open to UoE/UKRI-funded PGR students. We will provide a website laying out specifics such as CPD, holiday entitlement, sick leave, parental and sickness leave	7.1	Set up a website to raise awareness of rights of staff on fixed term contracts, including information relevant to UoE/UKRI funded PGRs.	2023/24	HR, Research Cultures Forum
8	Supporting those on fixed-term (or open-ended with review dates) contracts into more stable positions. We will establish a working group to understand the population on fixed-term contracts, and how/where steps can be taken to address job precarity	8.1	Review the forthcoming proposals from the short-life working group on fixed-term contracts and identify actions and timescales to take forward recommendations.	2023/24	HR

9	Develop and promote initiatives and opportunities for postgraduate research career development	9.1	Promote and publicise initiatives which showcase different PhD career pathways (e.g. annual PhD Horizons Conference)	From 2023/24	Doctoral College, Careers Service
		9.2	Promote and publicise Platform one as a resource for PGRs	From 2023/24	Development & Alumni, Doctoral College
		9.3.	Gather data and information on PGR mentoring schemes or equivalent at Edinburgh	From 2023/24	Doctoral College
		9.4	Incorporate career-related questions into the annual review forms for PGRs	2023/24	Student Systems, Doctoral College
		9.5	Promote the development of structured career plans for all PGRs	2023/24 to 2025/26	Doctoral College, Careers Service, IAD
		9.6	Undertake a feasibility study of introducing a student 'exit survey' to monitor experience and career intentions.	2023/24 to 2025/26	Doctoral College, Careers Service
10	Developing a strategy for promoting more effective support, integration and representation of our PGR community.	10.1	Develop a PGR Research Cultures Strategy for promoting more effective support, integration and representation of PGRs (expected December 2023).	2023/24	Doctoral College, IAD
		10.2	Implement the PGR Research Cultures Strategy (10.1).	2023/24 to 2025/26.	Doctoral College, IAD

Targeted Support

No.	Action	No.	Specific Measures	Timescale	Responsibility
11	Providing systematic training for PIs and line managers of research-conducting staff, and for supervisors of PGR students. We will roll-out further training to equip research leaders to promote a positive and supportive culture within their teams, including through a new post within IAD. This will enhance existing resources developed within IAD	11.1	Newly recruited Academic Developer (IAD), will undertake a review of existing training for PIs and line managers of research-conducting staff and develop a plan for future delivery	2023/24	IAD
		11.2	Roll out new training offer for PIs and line managers of research-conducting staff	2024/25	IAD
		11.3	Explore ways of monitoring participation in PGR training to ensure supervisors are compliant with University policy	2023/24	Doctoral College, IAD

		11.4	As part of 1.1, explore opportunities to integrate monitoring data into processes and forms (e.g. PGR training compliance - 11.3)	2023/24 to 2024/25	IAD, HR
12	Addressing challenges and imbalanced power dynamics in PGR relationships; ensuring appropriate processes and structures to tackle potentially toxic working and studying conditions	12.1	As part of the PGR Research Cultures Development Strategy (10.1), identify short-term targets for addressing challenges and imbalanced power dynamics in PGR supervision/support relationships	2023/24	Doctoral College, HR, IAD
		12.2	Building on the short term targets identified as part of 12.1, develop and implement a longer-term project to ensure appropriate processes and structures are in place to tackle potentially toxic working and studying conditions	2023/24 to 2025/26	Doctoral College, HR, IAD, Student Systems, Academic Services
13	Ensuring rigorous implementation of the Concordat for the Development of Research Careers. This includes ensuring researchers have access to support for professional development, including through the dedicated 10 days pledged for research staff in the Concordat	13.1	Research Cultures Delivery Group will strengthen and amplify Concordat work through signposting, joined up messaging and communications and links between the Concordat implementation Group and Research Cultures Forum.	2023/24 to 2025/26	IAD, Concordat Implementation Group, Research Cultures Forum
14	Rolling out targeted career development support for early career researchers through the careers support provision for research staff in IAD, and for technicians, through the Action Plan on the Technicians Commitment. Through Growing Research Together, we will also actively explore more comprehensive support for our professional services staff	14.1	The Careers Consultant's for research staff (IAD), will undertake a review of existing career development support for early career researchers and develop a plan for future delivery	2023/24	IAD
		14.2	Roll out new career development support offer for early career researchers	2024/25	IAD
		14.3	Develop and implement a plan for targeted career development support for technicians (similar to that proposed for 14.1 and 14.2)	2024/25	Technicians Lead, Technicians Steering Committee
		14.4	Deliver a series of workshops (summer 2023) to determine the basic support offer for professional services staff	2023/24	GRT
		14.5	Building on the findings of 14.4, develop a comprehensive programme of targeted support for professional services staff	2023/24 to 2025/26	GRT

15	Awareness raising and support for researchers with disabilities. We have identified a particular gap in support for this group, and a need for greater recognition of their positive contribution to the University, including in our external communications	15.1	As part of its broader action plan currently in development, the Disability Equality Subcommittee will set out recommendations for raising awareness and support for researchers with disabilities.	2023/24	Disability Equality Subcommittee of EDIC, CAM
16	Strengthening cohort building, support and leadership development opportunities for researchers with black and ethnic minority backgrounds. The plan sets out measures to sustain and strengthen targeted support for this group of researchers	16.1	Dig deeper into issues unearthed through the Women of Colour Leadership Programme by hosting a learning session with past participants	2023/24	Research Cultures Forum
		16.2	Run the Women of Colour Programme again in 2023/24, building on issues unearthed from previous cohorts (16.1)	2023/24	ERO, IAD
		16.3	Trial, monitor and evaluate using protected characteristics to inform distribution of internal funding e.g. Big Ideas Accelerator, Chancellors Fellows	2023/24 to 2026/27	Provosts Office (R&E)
17	Awareness raising and guidance on available funder adjustments and support for research applicants/awardees with disabilities, caring responsibilities and other needs, including making medical certificates available where required	17.1	Publish and promote a webpage containing general information on funder adjustments and support, as well as named experts in ERO who can advise on specific funders.	2023/24	ERO
18	Ensure a more coordinated approach to support researchers who are subject to online abuse	18.1	Continue to offer one-to-one support and advice to researchers who are subject to online abuse	From 2023/24	CAM
		18.2	Publish an online resource, setting out guidance and support for researchers who are subject to online abuse	2023/24	CAM

Responsible Research

No.	Action	No.	Specific Measures	Timescale	Responsibility
19	Systematically rolling out research ethics and integrity training. As set out in the new Ethics Policy, all staff and students engaging in research will receive training in ethics and integrity through online resources	19.1	Further develop and refine IAD ethics and integrity online modules	2023/24	REIRG, IAD
		19.2	Undertake a review of existing research integrity training and develop a plan for future provision	2023/24	REIRG
		19.3	Roll out new research integrity training offer	2024/25	REIRG

20	Integrating EDI and equitable partnerships considerations into research ethics review. We will work with our ethics and equalities experts to develop guidance on how to embed these considerations into ethics review processes, including through wider use of the GENDER.ED toolkit for promoting inclusive research and research partnerships	20.1	Integrate questions on gender, race and disability into university research ethics form	2023//24	RACE.ED, Disabled Staff Network, Research Cultures Forum, ERO
		20.2	Establish nature and scope of other tools (in complement to GENDER.ED toolkit), promote them, and ensure they are embedded into relevant resources and materials	2023/24	Research Cultures Forum, Local (College/School) Ethics Committees
21	Promoting guidance on authorship and acknowledgement in outputs, adopting a University-wide Fair Publication Policy. This will include acknowledging the authorship contribution of technicians and other staff; as well as the role of supervisors in PhD publications, to protect postgraduate researchers	21.1	Set up a task and finish group to develop a university-wide fair publication policy, articulate a plan to measure compliance, and develop a framework to deal with issues of non-compliance	2023/24 to 2024/25	REIRG
22	Creating learning materials and guidance on trusted research partners and export control legislation. We will continue to monitor and advise our research community on evolving requirements, as well as helping shape the UK-wide agenda	22.1	Pilot the Higher Education Strategic Export Control Training package, an online, freely accessible resource developed by the Higher Education Export Control Association in collaboration with Cranfield University.	2023/24	ERO
		22.2	Implement the Higher Education Strategic Export Control Training package	2024/25	ERO
23	Ensuring UoE is an early adopter of the UKRI Concordat for Sustainable Research. We will be sector leads in good practice on sustainability, including through our refreshed Climate Change Strategy and embracing the Concordat	23.1	Sign the UKRI Concordat for Sustainable Research (summer 2023)	2023/24	SRS
		23.2	Convene meetings with key colleagues to understand the implications of the UKRI Concordat for Sustainable Research for policy and practice, data and reporting (3-4 months following signature of the concordat)	2023/24	SRS
24	Enabling PIs and facility managers to assess the environmental cost of undertaking their research, to contribute to the University Net Zero emissions target	24.1	Undertake a pilot study to assess the scope and scale of introducing the School's Sustainability Framework	2023/24	SRS
		24.2	Rollout the School's Sustainability Framework, which will include an aspiration to provide a comprehensive one stop assessment of carbon emissions related to single projects.	2024/25 to 2025/26	SRS

25	Hosting an annual Research Support services conference (relaunched in 2022), as well as a new Technician Conference that we hope to run annually	25.1	Host the annual Research Support Services Conference again in 2023/24 (October 2023) and annually thereafter.	From 2023/24	
		25.2	Run Technician Week for the first time in 2023/24 (September 2023) and annually thereafter.	From 2023/24	Technicians Lead, Technicians Steering Committee
26	Hosting an annual Open Research conference (launched in 2022) with student and staff involvement. This will be an internal University event to highlight evolving values, goals and activities within Open Research, and celebrate best practice. We will also continue to run Good Research Practice week annually.	26.1	Run the Open Research Conference (ORC) again in 2023/24 (May 2024) and annually thereafter.	From 2023/24	ORC Lead, Information Services
		26.2	Run Good Research Practice Week (GRPW) again in 2023/24 (September 2023) and annually thereafter; the leadership team will be expanded for 2023/24.	From 2023/24	GRPW Lead and Leadership Team, ERO

Communications and Engagement

No.	Action	No.	Specific Measures	Timescale	Responsibility
27	Instigating a Postdoc Appreciation Day bringing together researchers from across the University. This will be an opportunity for cohort building and skills development, covering aspects such as career development, authorship and promotions	27.1	Share examples of good practice across Colleges in celebrating post-doctoral researchers, supported by messaging about existing resources to fund activities	2023/23	IAD
		27.2	Start to explore opportunities for institutional-level support for celebrating post-doctoral researchers	2023/23	Provosts Office (R&E), RSG
28	Celebrating the achievements of researchers with disabilities. We will develop a set of webpages celebrating and profiling the careers of our researchers with disabilities, to empower others who may be just starting on their careers	28.1	Work with community representatives to develop case studies celebrating the achievements of researchers with disabilities	2023/24	CAM, Disability Equality Subcommittee of EDIC, Disabled Staff Network
		28.2	Develop and publish a set of webpages celebrating and profiling the careers of our researchers with disabilities	2023/24	CAM, Disability Equality Subcommittee of EDIC, Disabled Staff Network
29	Establishing a Neurodiversity Champion for research. This role will be responsible for developing a support network, guidance for	29.1	Convene a short-life working group to decide on the preferred model for championing neurodiversity and define the scope/remit	2023/24	HR

	PIs and PhD supervisors, and informative webpages	29.2	Develop and implement the preferred model for championing neurodiversity (29.1)	2023/24	HR
30	Systematically collate, share and curate information on PGR societies and community-building events	30.1	Identify resource to collate and put together a regular newsletter or equivalent on community building activities to circulate to all postgraduate researchers.	From 2023/24	Doctoral College, IAD
		30.2	Roll out, publicise and integrate communication on societies and community building activity into local and central mechanisms.	2023/24 2024/25	Doctoral College, IAD
31	Developing a communications and engagement plan setting out clear and consistent messages about our aims, plans and commitments on research culture	31.1	Develop and implement a communications and engagement plan for research culture, ensuring strong alignment and synergy with communications planning for the Research & Innovation Strategy.	2023/24	CAM
32	Working with Communications and Marketing to continue to promote under-represented groups in external communication of research	32.1	As part of existing media training provision, implement a plan to prioritise researchers from under-represented groups	From 2023/24	CAM
		32.2	Undertake a short-term project to understand and communicate approaches to media engagement as part of career development planning	2023/24	CAM

Data and Governance

No.	Action	No.	Deliverables	Timescale	Responsibility
33	Committing to 2-yearly research culture surveys. These will provide an evidence base for monitoring progress with our research culture, and allow us to continue to identify gaps in our approach, and further areas for action	33.1	Document the methodology and coding for analysing the results of the research cultures survey.	2023/24	Malcolm McLeod
		33.2	Establish consistent and effective dissemination routes for the survey, as well as mechanisms for acting on the results	2023/24	Head of Research Cultures
		33.3	Continue to run the research culture survey every 2-years.	From 2024/2025	Malcolm McLeod
34	Continuing to conduct the 2-yearly Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, drawing on responses to inform our strategy for supporting PGR students	34.1	Develop and implement a strategy for improving student engagement with the survey, with a particular focus on raising its visibility (next PRES survey is open March to May 2025).	2024/25	Doctoral College, PGR College Deans
		34.2	Establish clear mechanisms to act on the outcomes of the survey, including measures to reinforce and learn from positive feedback, and actions to address low scoring areas.	From 2023/24	Doctoral College, IAD, Colleges, Schools/Institutes

35	Incentivising wider use of exit interviews to surface issues of concern, with a focus on the particular challenges faced by fixed-term staff, including under-reporting of bullying and harassment or complaints	35.1	Convene a short-life working group to explore options for incentivising wider use of exit interviews to surface issues of concern.	2023/24	HR
36	Finding measures to strengthen compliance with the Dignity and Respect policy, and as well as increasing the efficacy of, and confidence in, Research Misconduct, and Complaints and Whistleblowing procedures	36.1	Embed the Dignity and Respect policy into relevant resources, in particular those produced for induction and PDR.	2023/24	HR, Colleges, Schools/Institutes
37	Addressing structural barriers in support for under-represented groups, including through supporting research into the experiences of these groups.	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.	From 2023/24	ERO, Provosts Office (Research and Enterprise)
		37.2	Commission special projects to deliver insights into experiences of underrepresented groups, drawing on data and information from the implementation of the suite of initiatives designed to address structural barriers (37.1).	From 2024/25	Research Cultures Forum, EDIC, Provosts Office (Research and Enterprise)
38	Maintaining the Research Cultures Group as a representative advisory group and sounding board, and expand its membership to include PGR representation, to ensure accountability, voice and representation of key communities of the University. The Research Cultures Group will invite independent external evaluation of progress when appropriate	38.1	Establish a new Research Cultures Forum as the successor to the Research Cultures Group, ensuring membership is extended to representatives of the PGR community.	2023/24	Research Cultures Forum
39	Sustaining the Research Cultures Group's role as a platform for reflection, analysis and learning on aspects of research culture across the University, convening experts and those with lived experience to support continual improvement of our research culture	39.1	Develop terms of reference for the newly formed Research Cultures Forum setting out the purpose of the group, roles and responsibilities, and governance arrangements.	2023/24	Research Cultures Forum
40	Establishing a Delivery Group including leads for each of the drivers and from across the Colleges. The Delivery Group will be tasked with developing a Delivery Plan, and ensuring	40.1	Confirm the future membership of the Research Cultures Action Plan Delivery Group, and develop terms of reference and governance arrangements.	2023/24	Provosts Office (R&E), Head of Research Cultures

	robust commitment to, and delivery of, the plan across the University				
41	Devising a light-touch College-level process for Schools and Institutes to update on their progress in implementing delivery of relevant aspects of the Action Plan	41.1	Colleges to develop local plans for improving research culture featuring those elements of the Research Cultures Action Plan most relevant to local priorities.	From 2023/24	Colleges
		42.2	Colleges to share local reports on progress made against delivering plans for improving research culture with Research Strategy Group (RSG).	From 2023/24	Colleges, RSG

Research Cultures Delivery Group Members

- Christina Boswell, Vice Principal Research and Enterprise (Chair)
- Kirsty Collinge, Senior Project Officer Research and Enterprise
- Susan McNeil, Director HR Partnering
- Lorna Thomson, Director Edinburgh Research Office
- Fiona Philippi, Head of Researcher Development
- Philip Graham, Deputy Director Internal Communications
- Sudeepa Abeysinghe, CAHSS Associate Dean (Research Ethics & Integrity)
- Karen Haliday, CSE Dean for Systemic Inclusion
- Patrick Hadoke, CMVM Director for Postgraduate Research and Early Career Researcher Experience
- Malcolm McLeod, University Academic Lead for Research Improvement and Research Integrity