

RESEARCH CULTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL





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Research Culture at the University of Bristol

The people that conduct and support our research activity, and the environment that they work in, are critical to our success. In recent years there has been growing recognition that “there is nothing more important than how we attract, retain and develop ... people” ([UK Government R&D People and Culture Strategy](#)). The University of Bristol’s vision and strategy for research, enterprise and innovation (see box) can only be successfully delivered if it can support the people involved in the research process, and create an enabling and supportive environment.

The University of Bristol’s commitment to fostering a positive research culture is reflected in the creation of the position of Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research Environment and Culture, and the establishment of a Research Culture Committee, a formal sub-committee of University Research Committee. Here we set out our aspirational, medium-term vision for research culture at the University of Bristol – the end state we hope to reach by 2030. We also describe our work to date, much of it supported by our Research England Enhancing Research Culture allocation.

To move us towards realising our vision, Research Culture Committee will publish an annual strategic plan that will include specific areas of focus for that year, and how success will be measured against pre-defined criteria. This annual plan will be overseen by Research Culture Committee, which will review progress against these objectives at the end of the year, and approve the plan for the next year. This will allow us to constantly refine our approach, and update our objective and indicators of success, as we as an institution progress and the sector evolves.

Each annual plan, including a report on progress against that plan after a year, will be added to this document, so that it will eventually capture our progress towards our vision. Each plan will also be accompanied by an equality, diversity and inclusion impact assessment, allowing us to

review whether our plan successfully identified possible impacts, and mitigated them appropriately. Finally, we will also implement a proportional approach to bureaucracy, for example selecting indicators – where possible – that can be drawn from information already routinely collects.

Overall, we hope that this approach will allow us to remain agile and able to adapt, whilst remaining focused on achieving our vision, and foster a culture of reflection and continuous improvement.

The **University of Bristol’s vision and strategy for research, enterprise and innovation** is to deliver world leading research and innovation with local, national and global impact, with the following specific objectives:

- Build working environments in accordance with our principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Support research career-development at all stages, from technical through postgraduate to professor, to leadership positions in universities and beyond, by promoting holistic, versatile, and sustained researcher development and career progression, and embedding a transparent and rounded reward and recognition framework, which values all involved in the research and innovation system.
 - Promote a positive and responsible culture of research integrity, research transparency, and continuous improvement by maintaining high standards of quality and rigour, methodology, compliance and ethics, which we embed throughout our activities.
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“I would like us to continuously develop as an organisation to be more open and inclusive, providing a place to do research for all and a home for practitioners across disciplines, career stages, and workplaces.”

Daniela Schmidt, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor
for Research Environment and Culture
(apvc-research-environment-culture@bristol.ac.uk)



Our Research Culture Vision

Valuing and supporting the teams and individuals that enable and deliver research in all its forms, through a positive, thriving and sustainable research environment

Our research culture and institutional values underpin, support and enable the University's ambition to be a world-leading global and civic research-intensive university.

To achieve this, the University, through our programme of research culture activity, will:

- promote openness and transparency in how we work,
- empower staff and students through effective leadership and management at all levels,
- provide a range of stable career opportunities for those who enable and deliver research,
- embed diversity in those who enable and deliver research,
- encourage internal and external collaboration, and foster innovative approaches.

Our vision is for a research culture where – as a community – we value research for its quality and impact on knowledge, and its potential to benefit diverse communities across society.

In this vision, staff and students who are part of and contribute to the research process feel supported in working towards their research goals. They are supported by the facilities, training and opportunities available to them, and are recognised and valued for their diverse expertise, experience, and contribution – across disciplines, backgrounds and career pathways. Research is conducted to both the highest ethical principles, and to the most rigorous standards, with the knowledge and resources we generate made as widely available as possible, in accordance with [FAIR](#) principles (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable). Our research environment is open, inquisitive, inclusive and equitable – one where we all feel supported, empowered, trusted and enabled, and where we can all connect, collaborate and thrive.



Promoting Openness and Transparency In How We Work:

Why? An institutional culture of trust and trustworthiness will allow us all to feel empowered and valued – regardless of discipline, background, career pathway or seniority – and help foster an inclusive and equitable environment, as well as ensuring that our research process is open to scrutiny and therefore conducted to the most rigorous standards.

How? By fostering an institutional culture of openness, transparency and engagement, both in how decisions are made and communicated in our organisational and working processes at all levels, and in the research process and research outputs that we produce, striving for continual improvement.



Empowering Staff and Students Through Effective Leadership and Management At All Levels:

Why? A culture of effective leadership and management – including supervision – at all levels ensures that all staff and students involved in the research process are supported in working towards their research goals, recognised for their contributions, and enabled to work in a distributed but coordinated way, so we can respond to emerging opportunities and challenges.

How? By empowering staff and students to make decisions, take the initiative, and contribute in a way that is aligned with the University's mission and strategy, supported by effective and enabling structures and processes, thereby allowing them to have an impact and exert an influence at the University and beyond.



Providing a Range of Stable Career Opportunities for Those Involved in Research:

Why? Providing a range of stable career opportunities enables us to attract and retain the best global talent, whilst also being able to nurture and develop internal talent. This, in turn, ensures that staff and students involved in the research process feel supported in achieving their goals, can thrive personally and professionally, and can engage in activities that are meaningful to them.

How? By ensuring our career structures, role profiles, workforce planning, development opportunities and balance of core and externally funded posts are fit for purpose and effective, and by promoting and highlighting the diverse research career pathways open to all staff and the impactful contribution they can make.



Embedding Diversity in Research and Those Involved in Research:

Why? An inclusive and respectful research community that brings together people from diverse backgrounds with a broad range of expertise and experience ensures that the contributions of those involved in research are valued, fosters intellectual and scholarly diversity, and raises the quality and impact of the research we do.

How? By championing and enabling research activity across disciplines and career pathways, ensuring that a diversity of people can engage in, take part in and lead our research activity, and by developing a research portfolio that is diverse and inclusive, encourages internal and external collaboration, and fosters innovation.



Encouraging Internal and External Collaboration and Fostering Innovative Approaches:

Why? Collaborative working and innovative approaches ensure that our institution – and the research we conduct – is dynamic, high quality and impactful, ultimately advancing knowledge and benefitting society. Consistent with our inter-linked research and enterprise, civic and global agendas, collaboration within and beyond academia is central to our vision.

How? By working with stakeholders at all levels to embed our research culture vision – in particular our principles of transparency and openness, leadership, and diversity – into our research and innovation, civic and global agendas, allowing for exchange of people and ideas and ensuring our work is informed by a diverse range of perspectives.



The History of Research Culture at the University of Bristol

As a research-intensive university with an international reputation for high-quality scholarship, and a commitment to supporting the production of high-quality research, the University has always strived to ensure a positive and inclusive research culture. This is reflected in a well-established research infrastructure, a highly collegial and academically-led research environment, wide disciplinary spread, and strong external connections to academic and non-academic partners.

Together, these have encouraged, fostered and facilitated the production of world-class research with global academic and non-academic impact.

The University has always aimed to recruit and retain people of the highest quality by providing an intellectually open, vibrant and collegiate research environment, ensuring all staff realise their full potential regardless of career-stage, background, working pattern, and balance of research and teaching responsibilities. Staff surveys have been conducted regularly to canvass views and ensure that decision-making is well-informed.

Research Ethics and Integrity, and Open Research

The University has always promoted the highest standards of ethical, scholarly and professional integrity, endorsing the Commitments of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. As a [signatory to the Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) the University has also adopted a responsible approach to the use of metrics in research management and assessment, developing a set of institutional principles that underpin the use of metrics and indicators in our internal planning processes and revised promotions framework.

The University has a newly adopted [Open Research Policy](#), containing a suite of four sub-policies reflecting the broader open research environment and expectations around research culture. These sub-policies include Open Access, Data Sharing, Open Code and Pre-Registration. The University is also a founding member of the [UK Reproducibility Network \(UKRN\)](#), which it hosts, and lead organisation on the Research England funded [UKRN Open Research Programme](#).

The institutional sub-policy on Open Access, including the Scholarly Works Policy, mandates making research publications open access. The University supports this by providing the infrastructure and support to help researchers make their work open access.

The sub-policy on Data Sharing sets out the expectation of making all research data [FAIR](#) (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable). The University supports this through the provision of an institutional research data repository to allow researchers to publish their data. The University has also committed to the Concordat on Open Research Data principles, promoting and implementing these through various groups, committees and services – for example, by including Open Research as a criterion in revised promotions procedures.

The sub-policy on Open Code includes the expectation that all new source code, regardless of size or programming language, should be made open and reusable, and be published under an appropriate license. Finally, the sub-policy on Pre-Registration recommends that study plans or protocols be pre-registered on a suitable repository, ideally before the study begins, so that it is free to read and reuse, either immediately or after an embargo period.

Promotions and Progression

The Academic Promotions Framework describes the full extent of academic contributions the University values and recognises, including external engagement, impact-oriented research, and work crossing disciplinary boundaries. All academic staff, from the start of their postdoctoral career, can apply for promotion. Staff can submit details of individual circumstances that may have impacted on their ability to meet the criteria (e.g., where caring responsibilities may have restricted opportunities for international travel). Guidance on recognising and disrupting bias is provided to ensure we adopt a consciously inclusive approach to promotions.

Leadership and Citizenship are included in the Academic Promotions Framework; this category captures much of the work that enables research and education to happen, as well as helping to foster an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. Leadership in this category recognises our wide-ranging leadership responsibilities at all levels of the organisation, and in all roles. In terms of citizenship, this is intended to reflect our shared responsibility to each other, and the different ways in which we can achieve this.

An academic line management project is part of the University Career Development Programme, and aims to implement shared management practices within Schools across the University. The intention is to go beyond structure and encompass management and leadership practice at all levels, and ensure the sustained development of and practice in leadership and management as part of the whole academic endeavour and everyone's academic career.

Support for Research Staff and Postgraduate Researchers

Research staff at the University of Bristol are supported through Bristol Clear, which was established in 2018 as the University's Research Staff Hub in recognition of the specific needs of research staff. The remit of the Bristol Clear team is to provide skills and career support for academic staff with a research focus across the University. The University has always strived to ensure that early career researchers are well-mentored and advised on career development. Our Cultivating Research And Teaching

Excellence (CREATE) scheme offers a wide range of professional development programmes, enabling staff to enhance their skills and practice, and gain national recognition with Advance HE.

The University was one of the first universities to sign the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The University has also invested in research-focused technical staff and are a lead signatory to the [Technician Commitment](#) which aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines. A Research Staff Working Party (RSWP) reports to Research Culture Committee, and a Research Staff Representatives Committee represents research staff on a range of University bodies, including RSWP.

Support for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) is led by an Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for PGRs and by the [Bristol Doctoral College \(BDC\)](#), who coordinate a comprehensive personal and professional development programme of workshops, seminars and online resources (open to all PGRs). The BDC oversees the operation of a PGR hub, a central space for PGRs to connect, collaborate and learn. It is a focal point for valued and varied activities exclusively for PGRs, to increase their sense of belonging and community at the University.

The [Be More Empowered for Success PGR advocate programme](#) aims to explore the experience of current home Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic PGRs at the University of Bristol and plays a key role in influencing positive change for postgraduate research students within the University. As part of our commitment to the Black community, and with the aim of addressing under-representation in postgraduate research, we have launched a number of [postgraduate research scholarships](#) exclusively for students of Black heritage for 2024/2025 entry. Through [Opportunity Bristol](#), we also provide funding for research-focused Masters-level programmes, and help successful awardees to gain the research skills and experience needed to apply for funded doctoral research opportunities in the future

Library Services includes a dedicated Research Support Team, which supports staff and students with their open research needs, including data management planning, digital scholarship, open access publishing, FAIR data publishing, and bibliometrics. The Research Support Team runs

online and in-person training on open research topics throughout the year. As part of the Library Services Strategy project, the Research Support Team are reviewing current workflows and processes to make them more streamlined and accessible to researchers, and refining and maintaining our research data publication infrastructure (data.bris) and associated data release procedures (e.g. Data Access Committee). The Data Access Committee (DAC) is an essential part of the University's sensitive data release process, comprising senior academics and individuals from IT Services, Library Services, the University Secretary's Office and DREI. It scrutinizes and decide on access requests for controlled datasets in data.bris, playing a key role in enabling all published data to be FAIR.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is described as a cross-cutting theme in our University Strategy and as such is embedded within all of our activities. We do not see EDI as a separate, stand-alone entity, but rather as integral to everything we do, engaging all members of our research community in building a culture of inclusion and belonging where everybody feels connected, empowered and respected. The University [reports annually](#) on work undertaken to improve representation, build a culture of belonging, and deliver equitable outcomes for students and staff.

EDI training is part of essential training for all staff, to help colleagues understand how their own behaviours and attitudes influence our EDI culture. Our 'Being Anti-Racist: Awareness Change Transform' programme has been designed to help participants develop a greater understanding of how each of us has a crucial role in tackling racism through a blend of in-person and self-directed learning. As part of our Stand Up, Speak Out initiative, we offer training on microaggressions and active bystander techniques.

The University has committed to be [anti-racist](#), and to [gender equality](#). It is a founding member of the [Athena Swan Charter](#), and currently holds a silver institutional award. It is a founding signatory of the [Bristol Women in Business Charter](#), and also committed to the [Bristol Equality Charter](#), a city-wide initiative co-designed by private, public and voluntary sector organisations that aims to create a fairer, safer, accessible and inclusive city where everyone feels they belong, has a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed.



The Anti-Racism Working Group develops strategies to address individual, cultural and structural racism, and launched an institutional antiracism action plan. As a member of Bristol's Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group, the University works with public sector organisations in a city-wide approach to tackle race equality issues. The University also played a key role in launching the [Africa Charter](#), and contributed to the [RACE charter](#) for co-production through an anti-racist lens.

A [Global Majority Staff Network](#) creates a community for, and improves the experiences of, Global Majority staff at the University. It is supplemented by a Black Workers Group, which provides a space for Black and Mixed Black staff members to come together to connect, support each other and build a community. The University is also participating in the Women's Higher Education Network [100 Black Women Professors NOW Pipeline Programme](#).

The University is a member of the [Stonewall Diversity Champions](#) programme, and has LGBT+ staff and student networks that help us identify actions to advance LGBT+ equality. It annually sponsors and participates in Bristol Pride and was named Best Employer in the 2016 Bristol Pride Awards. It also has a number of other [Staff Networks](#) for staff with shared experiences or identities (e.g., disability, neurodiversity), to ensure that staff voices are heard and reflected in decision-making processes.

Our TheirStories programme, which uses personal storytelling from staff as a vehicle for building workplace inclusion, improving employee engagement, challenging bias and developing a culture of belonging, won the national Universities HR award for initiatives that improved EDI.



Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap

A detailed analysis of gender employment and pay at the University was undertaken in 2018 and an inaugural Gender Pay Gap Report published, resulting in actions focused on three areas: flexible working, career development, and promotion.

An enhanced package of family-friendly measures for carers has also been developed. The University has a Returning Carers' Scheme, which offers support to staff seeking to re-establish their research following extended leave due to caring responsibilities. Childcare is also now recognised as an allowable expense that can be reclaimed to facilitate conference/training attendance,

The University is committed to addressing the ethnicity pay gap and improving the representation of Global Majority staff. The University now reports on the ethnicity pay gap using the methodology developed for gender reporting.

Workload, Staff Wellbeing and Reducing Casualisation

To support high-quality research, the University has strived to maintain good student-staff ratios as student numbers have grown, and have developed common principles on the equitable allocation of

workloads, under which 40% of the time of staff on Pathway 1 (teaching and research) is normally dedicated to research.

The University has taken steps to support staff wellbeing, signing the Time to Change Pledge to end the mental health stigma, setting up drop-in clinics run by the Staff Counselling Service, organising a range of sessions on managing mental health at work, and promoting Wellness Action Plans to facilitate conversations about managing mental health at work. Mental Health Champions are in place across the institution and represent staff interests at a University Mental Health & Wellbeing Steering Group. Staff can also access the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#), a free 24/7 counselling and information service provided by Care first for University staff.

The University and Bristol UCU are united in their commitment to reducing casualisation, avoiding the unnecessary employment of staff on fixed-term contracts, and providing secure terms and conditions of employment and fair and equitable treatment to part-time colleagues. We are also exploring – with input from the relevant communities (e.g., early career researchers) - ways to address issues of precarity related to external funding.



Recent Research Culture Activity at the University of Bristol

[Research Culture Committee](#) was established in 2022 as a formal sub-committee of University Research Committee. It is the main body that leads on [research culture activity](#) across the University, and aims to ensure a positive research culture supported by a cycle of continuous improvement. It is responsible for creating a vision, strategy and annual action plan for improving research culture, and is made up of academic researchers, research professionals, technicians.

It is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture, a role created in 2021 in recognition of the importance of fostering and sustaining a positive environment for research, and supporting those engaged in the research process. The Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture reports to the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, working alongside the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Researchers and the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Enterprise and Innovation, and with the wider senior management team.

Since 2021, the University – along with other institutions in England that receive quality-related funding via the Research Excellence Framework – has received an annual [Enhancing Research Culture](#) allocation from Research England to support research culture activity. This has been used a programme of activity to support both a small number of high-level major initiatives and a larger number of grassroots initiatives identified through open competition. Since 2022, this has also included continuation funding for some projects.



Research Culture Committee is a formal sub-committee of **University Research Committee**.

It is responsible for strategic direction for research culture at the University and overseeing delivery of the Research Culture strategic plan. Research Culture Committee is responsible for, or provides input into, a number of relevant Concordats, Agreements and policies. Various groups also report to Research Culture Committee.

These groups include: **Task and Finish groups**, which are set up on an occasional basis to deliver defined pieces of work; the **Open Research Working Group**, which oversees delivery and implementation of our open research policies and related activities; the **Research Culture Strategy Steering Group**, which oversees the ongoing review and delivery of our Research Culture strategic plan; the **Responsible Research Assessment Working Group**, which leads development and delivery of the University's CoARA Action Plan and embeds responsible research assessment principles across institutional processes; the **Research Staff Working Group**, which receives input from the **Research Staff Reps Committee** and **Concordat Champions Forum** which advocate for research staff and their development across the University; and the **Research Professionals Network**, a peer learning network for those involved in any stage of the research process to share best practice.



Working Groups and Task and Finish Groups

The **Open Research Working Group** reports to Research Culture Committee, and is focused on open research and related issues, including oversight of the University's open research policies. In 2023, the Group began a revision of these policies, to bring them under a single over-arching policy, with individual sub-policies on open access publishing, data sharing, open code and pre-registration. It is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture.

The **Research Staff Working Party** reports to Research Culture Committee, and is focused on discussing, actioning and escalating issues, perspectives and areas of work that are relevant to research staff. It is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture. It receives input from the Research Staff Representatives Committee, which is comprised of representatives of postdoctoral researchers from each School across the University, and raises and discusses issues, shared best practice and offers support to research staff.

The **School Research Directors Forum** was established to provide an informal mechanism for allowing Research Culture Committee to engage more directly with Schools. It meets every 3-4 months, bringing together School Research Directors and the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture. Others are invited on an ad hoc basis to discuss specific issues, new policies, etc. It provides a forum for honest and open conversation, and constructive challenge.

Since its establishment, Research Culture Committee has overseen a number of Task and Finish Groups, which are established to complete a specific piece of work within a finite period.

For example, the **Task and Finish Group on Continuing Professional Development** was directed by University Research Committee to [identify ways to embed our commitment](#) to providing a minimum of ten days of professional development activity every year for research and research professional staff. The **Task and Finish Group on Protecting Quality Research and Enterprise Time** was tasked with updating the [University policy on research leave](#), ensuring all Schools had an individual policy in place, and clarifying the distinct support provided by research leave policies, and other mechanisms for supporting research and enterprise activity (e.g., University

Research Fellowships, the Returning Carers Scheme). A **Task and Finish Group on Teaching Activities for Research Staff** convened by the Research Staff Working Party developed an updated [policy for research staff who teach](#), which focuses on teaching as career development opportunities for researchers and is designed to ensure fair and transparent access to these opportunities.

Finally, we have supported two reviews of bureaucracy, one focused on [research](#) and one on [teaching](#). These have provided a better understanding of the experience of staff in relation to existing systems and processes, and identified areas for improvement. To complement these, Research Culture Committee has established two suggestions "dropboxes" that allow staff – anonymously if they wish – to identify areas for improvement, either with respect to [research culture](#) generally, or [bureaucracy](#) specifically.

Promoting Openness and Transparency In How We Work

In partnership with UKRN, we have supported collaborative projects (2022-present) focused on identifying good practice, challenges, guidance, examples and case studies of institutions working to support open data, and improving the use of applied meta-research evidence in institutional decision-making on research culture.

The UKRN Open Research Programme also includes a train-the-trainer initiative, intended to improve open research and reproducibility through a series of [train-the-trainer courses](#) on open research topics including reproducible research, virtue ethics and open research, data management, preregistration, software for open and reproducible research, open science and research collaborations. train-the-trainer courses on open research topics including reproducible research, virtue ethics and open research, data management, preregistration, software for open and reproducible research, open science and research collaborations.

The Research Support Team is developing new online training for postgraduate students, and establishing support for undergraduate, research professionals and civic researchers. The University is exploring how institutional ethics procedures and policies could and should incorporate and embed environmental sustainability principles as part of our research ethics

ecosystem. Identified models will be disseminated to the University Research Committee, central ethics committee and Faculty Ethics Committees.

We have supported the [Data Hazards](#) train-the-trainer programme (2022-2023), which encourages data scientists to think about the ethical implications of their work through [shared resources and vocabulary in the form of data hazard labels](#). Workshop structures and materials are available to enable researchers to recreate this format in their area. These resources were developed with data scientists and research groups across the University.

We have also supported work on **open research and sensitive data in qualitative research** (2022-2023), supporting qualitative researchers across all disciplines through a series of workshops to make informed decisions and establish best practice regarding ethical open science, particularly when working with participants in situations of vulnerability.

Empowering Staff and Students Through Effective Leadership and Management At All Levels

The [Leadership Ethos project](#) (2022-present) focuses on supporting staff and students to become effective leaders irrespective of position or authority through the development and embedding of a leadership behavioural framework that includes [tools and resources that are openly accessible](#).

The **extending transformative leadership** project (2022-present) supports transformative leadership through the development of an innovative and bespoke training programme within the School of Education. Current work is focused on expanding the programme beyond the School, trialing the model in other areas and developing a 'pick up and play' toolkit of resources that can be accessed by anyone.

The **Working Well Together resource** (2023-present) is designed for individuals and groups to develop a sense of agency and understand their personal influence on the culture around them. It is built around the notion of what it feels like working in a team, described as climate, to then build on that to take action and move forward. This will be accessible via Microsoft Teams and will launch in Autumn 2024.

The [Inclusive Research Collective](#) was set up in the Faculty of Life Sciences in 2020 with the aim of

educating University of Bristol staff and students on non-inclusive research practices and to challenge these methodologies within our biomedical and healthcare research. This resulted in an [Inclusive Research Toolkit](#) that will be made available across the sector in the future.

The Enhancing Research Culture programme has also supported work developing PGR supervision and research culture across the university (2023-present), by developing both **PGR research supervisor training**, and resources for all PGR research supervisors across the University. This work was developed by BILT and feeds into PGR strategy led by the Bristol Doctoral College.

Providing a Range of Stable Career Opportunities for Those Who Enable and Deliver Research

The **Fellows Development Retreat** (2022-2024) has been running for 5 years, and funded through our Enhancing Research Allocation for the last 3 years. Retreats are delivered to externally-funded fellows to provide time and space to support career development, and review where they want their research to go and what they need to do to get there. It provides the space and community for reflection and stimulation of creative ideas, and helps overcome barriers to development.



The **PGR Career Booster** (2023-2024) supports PGR students to develop and recognise their transferable skills and plan for their future careers (whether in academia or beyond). It includes a series of events and ongoing resources/training for final year PGRs; a video series about inclusive postgraduate research and career prospects; a series of events with alumni on future careers for PGR students; and an introduction to mentoring schemes.

The **Pathways to Professorship** project (2022-2024) began with a workshop originally run within Faculty of Science, and since broadened to the Faculties of Engineering and Life Sciences, focused on empowering participants at early career stages to prepare for building a successful academic career. The workshop prioritises participation from female/non-binary and BAME researchers who are final year PhD students or first year postdoctoral researchers as these are underrepresented in academic roles, particularly at more senior levels.

The **Academic Career Development Fund** (2023) was made available to support those who encountered barriers due to their individual circumstances that have negatively impacted their research career, including any ongoing impact due to Covid-19. It gave successful applicants the time to work up research ideas and apply for fellowships or grants, publish key work, and fill any development gaps to support their next career step.

The **RESURG project** (2021-2023) provided **research experience for students from under-represented groups**. Undergraduate students took part in a seven-week interdisciplinary PhD taster programme designed to give them research experience and encourage and equip them to join Masters and consequently PhD programmes.

Embedding Diversity in Those Who Enable and Deliver Research

Building on previous work in this area, the [Recognising Diverse Contributions to Research campaign](#) (2021-2023) showcased the range of unique contributions made by technical and professional staff to the research endeavour, in the form of videos, written content and podcasts from across the University.

The **Returning to Research: Enabling Mature PGRs to thrive in environmental research careers** (2023-2024) project aims to increase insight of the needs of mature environmentally focused PGR students and to develop low-cost and self-sustaining mechanisms for support, networking and connection.

The **Empowering Parents in HE** project aims to use embodied activism and policy work to enhance research culture for parents (2022-2024). This seeks to understand and build community across parents working within research, with the central premise that staff and students with caring responsibilities bring new perspectives to their work and transferable skills such as empathetic listening, experience of time management and juggling multiple priorities.

Work to **understand the research activities of professional services staff** (2023-2024) focuses on assessing the availability of resources and support to inform actions on how to support and recognise these contributions and foster an inclusive research culture.

Encouraging Internal and External Collaboration, and Fostering Innovation

Work is underway – led by the **Brigstow Institute** – to consolidate and augment toolkits for co-produced, collaborative and creative research (2023-2024), which will enable researchers to more easily access these resources and ensure they are supported to conduct meaningful co-produced and collaborative research, thus supporting a positive research culture.

Work is also underway on **promoting, supporting and celebrating inclusive patient and public involvement and engagement** (PPIE) in Bristol and beyond (2023-2024). This project will develop a suite of resources and deliver innovative events to enable research groups to be more inclusive in their PPIE practices and build community and collaborative working to share best practice.

The **Towards Equitable Partnership with Global South Research Partners** project (2023-2024) aims to co-create pragmatic interventions to address visa and passport inequities and promote equitable budget spends and allocations for Global South research partners to promote a culture of inclusive, equitable and collaborative research.



Implementation Plan

Every September we will publish an annual implementation plan. This will have been approved by Research Culture Committee, who will be responsible for oversight and delivery of the plan, and will outline our primary activities over the forthcoming year in our five priority areas. Progress against this plan will be reviewed by Research Culture Committee the following September, when a new plan for the forthcoming academic year will be approved. In this way, we will be able to monitor our progress and update our plans in way that allows us to maintain our focus whilst adapting to the evolving landscape around us.

The implementation plan will include details of the overarching objectives we aim to achieve, the actions, initiatives and / or projects we will take to achieve these objectives, who is responsible for each objective, what outcomes we are hoping to achieve, and how we will measure success. We will use a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators, and will identify a small number of key performance indicators. The annual review of our implementation plan will allow us to update these indicators (including our key performance indicators) as necessary (for example if we feel we have made sufficient progress against a particular indicator).

Consistent with the University's approach to responsible assessment, we recognise that indicators and metrics need to be treated appropriately. This is why we will use both quantitative and qualitative indicators, and a range of indicators, to capture progress against a range of dimensions. It is also part of why we will review our implementation plan annually, so that we can evolve how we assess the success of our research culture activities. For example, we may wish to initially focus on one metric (e.g., completion of annual reviews), but when this reaches a certain threshold move to another (e.g., the substance and quality of these reviews).

Ultimately, our implementation framework is intended to allow us to monitor our progress against our past selves, so that we can determine the extent to which we are successfully progressing towards our vision.

Appendix

Relevant Concordats, Agreements and Policies

- Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
 - » [What we are doing at Bristol](#)
 - » [Find out more about the Concordat](#)
- Concordat to Support Research Integrity
 - » [What we are doing at Bristol](#)
 - » [Find out more about the Concordat](#)
- Technician Commitment
 - » [What we are doing at Bristol](#)
 - » [Find out more about the commitment](#)
- [Concordat on Open Research Data](#)
- San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)
 - » [What we are doing at Bristol](#)
 - » [Find out more about the Declaration](#)
- [Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Information](#)
- [Open research policy framework](#)
- [Research leave policy](#)



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[https://uob.sharepoint.com/sites/researchculture
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