Research culture framework

The behaviours and values that enhance research culture
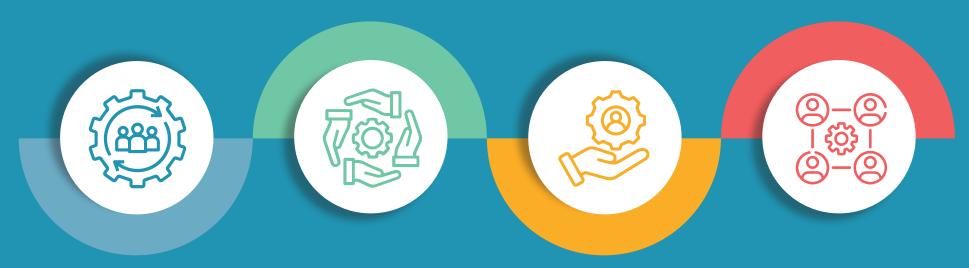
Developed by Vitae as part of a project for UKRI on Research Culture Initiatives in the UK

What is it?

The Research Culture Framework is a tool for employers, funders, and policymakers to support strategic planning on research culture. It describes 13 elements of research culture across four overlapping areas:

- **How research is managed and undertaken**

- **How research ensures value**

- **How people are supported**

- **How individuals engage with others**

Each element of research culture is described in terms of values and behaviours, and provides a way of understanding the breadth of what is encompassed by research culture.

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How research is managed and undertaken

· Effective research governance and management
· Achieving the highest levels of research integrity
· Actively promoting sustainability

How people are supported

· Employment and conditions
· Recognition and assessment
· Embedding professional and career development
· Ensuring inclusive and healthy working environments

How research ensures value

· Taking an open approach to research
· Communicating research
· Realising impact

How individuals engage with others

· Providing effective leadership and management
· Empowering individuals
· Building collegiality

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How can it be used?

The framework is intended to be used flexibly: it can be used in part or as a whole; in isolation or in combination with other tools or frameworks. Depending on the research setting, not all aspects of the framework will be relevant.

Based on your priorities, you can use the framework to:

- **Facilitate conversations on research culture between researchers, research enablers, research participants, employers, and other key stakeholders**

- **Co-develop research culture definitions, priorities, and goals**

- **Conduct gap analyses, considering available evidence and existing policies and practices**

- **Create targeted action plans, prioritising actions to address gaps and agreeing measurable outcomes**

How was it developed?

The framework is firmly rooted in the sector. Initial research brought together the different definitions and perspectives on research culture across a wide range of documents and reports, including from the Royal Society, the Concordats and Agreements Review, Science Europe, and 20 university research culture strategies and action plans.

The structure, content, and language of the framework was then evolved and refined through consultation and participatory workshops. The final framework reflects the perspectives of a wide range of role holders across a variety of institution and organisation types, as well as from individuals identifying as LGBTQ+, disabled, Black and minority ethnic, and women.

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Research culture framework

1. HOW RESEARCH IS MANAGED AND UNDERTAKEN

Effective research governance and management

The standards, structures and policies to ensure good research practice, integrity and equity	Mechanisms to ensure transparent, accountable governance
	Implementing effective policies and processes
	Providing open, competent and effective research leadership
	Providing appropriate, safe and accessible workspaces

Achieving the highest levels of research integrity

Undertaking research with integrity, honesty and rigour to ensure confidence in the methods and results	Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity
	Being accountable for all aspects of the research process
	Being transparent and honest about all aspects of the research process
	Caring and respecting the participants in and beneficiaries of research

Actively promoting sustainability

Minimising the impact of research on environmental, social and economic resources	Using sustainable approaches to research
	Effective use of resources to make the research system accessible to all
	Ensuring the efficient use of finances, resources and infrastructure
	Investing appropriately in talent and sustainable employment
	Considering the impact of research on the environment and people

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2. HOW RESEARCH ENSURES VALUE

Taking an open approach to research

Undertaking research that is openly accessible, collaborative and increases research integrity bringing public value and innovation	Supporting open, collaborative, interdisciplinary and team science approaches to research
	Ensuring research is understandable, explainable, reproducible and accessible
	Engaging and partnering with potential beneficiaries
	Co-creating and learning with research users and society
	Being open, agile and responsive to new technologies and research approaches

Communicating research

Making research and knowledge available and accessible to all	Connecting with others in accessible and inclusive language and media
	Inspiring curiosity and learning
	Sharing research, data and other outputs openly
	Acknowledging and building on the research and knowledge creation of others
	Open to new forms of communication methods and spaces

Realising impact

The translation of research into value for communities, society, culture and economy	Understanding what value and impact means for different stakeholders
	Advancing discovery and driving innovation
	Capable of translation and innovation
	Contributing to knowledge creation and teaching
	Informing policy and practice
	Developing a highly-skilled and engaged workforce

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3. HOW PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED

Employment and conditions

The recruitment, employment and progression of a diverse research workforce	Providing transparent, equitable and competency-based recruitment and recognition, recognising diversity
	Providing structured and varied progression routes
	Providing appropriate remuneration and employment benefits
	Ensuring healthy working conditions, accommodations and flexibility based on ongoing needs
	Recognising wider contributions to research within job descriptions, workload models and progression criteria
	Valuing the full range of experiences, skills and contributions of all who contribute to the research endeavour
	Acknowledging and mitigating effects of career breaks and other disruptions, and inequalities

Recognition and assessment

Broadening what is recognised and valued as contributing to the research endeavour	Valuing research wherever it is undertaken
	Broadening the concept of excellence within the system research
	Using appropriate qualitative and quantitative assessment methods
	Valuing diverse approaches, methods and contributions
	Recognising and valuing the diverse range of competencies needed for the research endeavour
	Valuing failure and risk-taking as a healthy possibility of research

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3. HOW PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED

Embedding professional and career development

Integrating professional and career development into all career stages	Valuing continued professional development
	Addressing development needs at all career stages
	Providing a wide range of professional and career development opportunities
	Engaging in regular career development reviews
	Enabling access to inspiring mentors and role models
	Recognising and awareness of diverse career opportunities

Ensuring inclusive and healthy working environments

Environments where all individuals are free to be themselves, feel included, well supported and confident to express their views	Ensuring the research environment is accessible, inclusive and equitable for all
	Embracing and valuing diversity
	Fostering psychological safety
	Zero tolerance of and taking action against bullying and harassment
	Supporting good mental health and wellbeing
	Promoting balanced, flexible and achievable workloads

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4. HOW INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE WITH OTHERS

Providing effective leadership and management
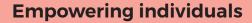
The performance and line management of individuals	Providing responsive and empathetic line management
	Providing honest and constructive feedback
	Valuing and responding to differences in supporting others
	Effective performance management
	Being effective role models and mentors

Empowering individuals

Individuals having ownership and responsibility for their own careers	Clear lines of responsibility, accountability and autonomy
	Recognising motivations and ambitions, and facilitating professional visibility
	Encouraging a culture of reflection and learning from experience
	Enabling creativity and encouraging innovative, imaginative, entrepreneurial mindset
	Generating confidence to speak out without repercussions
	Encouraging all to invest in their continuing professional development

Building collegiality

The creation of healthy, inclusive, supportive communities	Creating welcoming and inclusive communities for all
	Recognising individual and diverse contributions, advocating for others
	Engendering a sense of identity and belonging for all
	Recognising that individuals' behaviours shape cultures
	Providing access to networks and communities

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