International Research Culture Conference 2024

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Conference organisers

Dr Rika Nair, Dr Marie Sams, Professor Sotaro Kita, Vicky Strudwick, Adele Kenny and Carole Harris

Editors

Vicky Strudwick, Marie Sams, Rika Nair and Sotaro Kita

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Plenary sessions

'How do we work at scale in a research culture that's like a bowl of cold spaghetti?'
Shomari Lewis-Wilson - Senior Manager (Research Culture and Communities), Wellcome Trust

This talk will explore what is needed for meaningful research culture change, including the application of strategic design and systems theory, along with adapting tools to foster greater inclusivity and accessibility in research careers.

'Research integrity, the heart of research culture'
Louise Dunlop - UK Committee on Research Integrity and Head of Research Governance and Ethics, Queens University Belfast

This talk will cover the central role of research integrity within research culture, sharing work that the UK Committee on Research Integrity has been developing in this area. The talk will consider strategies for facilitating reproducible research and global perspectives on transparency.

'Developing inclusive research cultures for our academics of tomorrow'
Dr Maisha Islam - Doctoral College Research Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Southampton

This talk will explore embedding inclusion in research culture for current and future doctoral students. Using the University of Southampton as a case study, it will highlight strategies and challenges in creating an equitable and diverse environment to support minoritised researchers.

Closing remarks

'The future of research culture – what's next?'
Professor Sotaro Kita - Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) and Director of the National Centre for Research Culture, The University of Warwick

Theme 1: Catalysing Research Culture Change at Scale

10 years of defining research culture from the Nuffield Council report to the REF indicators
Ben Bleasdale, Karen Stroobants
CultureBase Consulting

The term 'research culture' rose to prominence in the UK in a 2014 report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (1), as a way of describing a range of linked factors that influence how research is done. Although many of these factors, such as open research or EDI were already well-established as topics, the popularisation of this umbrella term has helped inspire a series of initiatives with a broader view on improving how research is done, including from the Royal Society (2) and Wellcome Trust (3).

Over the subsequent decade, improving research culture has increasingly emerged as a priority across UK institutions and funders, and become a feature of cross-sector initiatives including the Research Excellence Framework (4) and the UK Government's R&D People and Culture strategy (5). The increased engagement has come alongside ongoing dialogue about our collective understanding and definition of research culture - which themes and activities it encompasses, and what practical actions it can influence.

This talk will offer a review of the evolution of 'research culture' as a unifying term and explore how this has influenced the growing engagement seen in different parts of the research community. We will reflect on how definitions are being debated and refined and share our views of how this might position research culture discussions in the future. We share our insights from the perspective of having been leading voices in the Royal Society and Wellcome Trust programmes, respectively, and having supported developments in research culture over the years since.

Keywords: research culture, definition, evolution, reflection, REF

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(4) https://www.jisc.ac.uk/future-research-assessment-programme/initial-decisions
(5)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004685/r_d-people-culture-strategy.pdf

'A lot of evidence percolates in through people's expertise....': How HEIs use meta-research in decision making for research culture change

Robbie Clark, Gemma Derrick, Lorna Duncan, Pen-Yuan Hsing, Neil Jacobs, Rosalind Strang
University of Bristol

This research explores decision-making around the concept of 'research culture' within UK universities. It explores how different forms of meta-research evidence inform university management decision-making, and factors that facilitate or hinder its use.

Nineteen interviews were conducted with 12 institutional decision-makers and 7 meta-researchers across 15 UK universities. One focus group was also conducted (n=3 decision-makers). Data were analysed using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and thematically ordered around the topics of: how universities make decisions around research culture; and the barriers and enablers to research impact on decision making.

Findings illustrate how research culture change within UK HEIs has been informed by indirect and direct channels of meta-research evidence, relying heavily on 'research culture advocates'. These advocates typically have domain expertise within the broad remit of research culture. The 'indirect' channel of evidence involves these advocates leveraging their research knowledge and expertise to inform institutional decisions. The primary 'direct' channel of evidence is through 'in-house meta-research' - where institutions are evaluating both their current culture and implemented research culture initiatives.

In addition, factors associated with academic-status, research capital, and power (Bourdieu, 1986) were prominent as both an enabler and barrier to the utilisation of meta-research in decision-making. Whereas more senior academics were involved in established high-level institutional committees, some early-career meta-researchers found it hard to 'get a seat at the table'. This finding echoes previous work on leveraging research impact from ECR-sourced research more generally (Wróblewska et al., 2023), and questioning the ability of research voices without traditional notions of academic capital, to change their own cultural conditions and expectations.

Having identified many other barriers and enablers to meta-research impact, this work provides powerful evidence and recommendations to improve HEI decision-making around research culture.

Keywords (up to five): institutional decision-making; research culture; meta-research

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The Unnamed Research Culture Event

Emma Spary, Samantha Aspinall and Katie Jones, on behalf of all attendees
University of Leeds

Background: DORA, the Declaration on Research Assessment (1).....It is just a word, isn't it? Could something similar be useful for Research Culture? That is the question we hope to answer on 15th and 16th July at The Unnamed Research Culture Event (2). DORA started as a group of interested parties coming together to create a set of recommendations to support the research community. But it is so much more than a word. A co-created declaration, statement or word can hold a lot of power for those who feel they have none. It provides a safe way to tackle or call out behaviours that 'are not in the spirit of'. A way to encourage others, to set expectations and most importantly, bring cultural change.

This event offers a novel collaborative approach. Deliberately unnamed and with no set agenda, we are not pre-empting the content or committed to a pre-defined output. We are asking the questions and are excited to see where it leads.

Findings: These aren't known yet, but we plan to share the discussions and findings from this important first step. With over 80 participants registered from 44 institutions/bodies, we will ask 3 main questions:

 - What is the scope? What themes could 'it' cover and what does 'it' need to cover?
 - What would 'it' look like?
 - Who needs to be involved in the co-creation?

Discussion and Next Steps: Will 'it' help to reduce ambiguity when dealing with inappropriate conduct, provide a positive rather than punitive approach to culture change, and help individuals to focus on how they can contribute to culture change outside REF and quantitative metrics? Could 'it' promote additional benefits including encouraging collaboration over competition and fairness and equity in research? Ultimately, on July 16th we will answer this and decide what next and who is in!

Keywords (up to five): Culture change; co-creation; empower; tackling behaviour; discussion

References:
1. San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA): https://sfdora.org/read/
2. https://researchculture.leeds.ac.uk/the-unnamed-research-culture-event/

The value of an All-Island Research Culture Network

Colleen Thomas [1], Chris Browne [2] Gillian Boyle [1], Hugh Campbell [1], Sonya Deschenes [1], Hugh Fulham-McQuillan [1], Maura Hiney [1], Grace Mulcahy [1], Ivar McGrath [1], Adrian Ottewill [1]
[1] University College Dublin, [2] Queen's University Belfast

1) Background

Changing research culture is a process that takes time and requires like-minded community members who will contribute ideas and support new initiatives. The All-Island Research Culture Network began as friendship between the research culture teams at University College Dublin (UCD) and Queen's University Belfast (QUB). With support from the Wellcome Institutional Funding for Research Culture (WIFRC), it now includes more than 20 research performing organisations (RPO) across the island.

For both Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) there has been a strategic agenda to foster research relationships across the Island. North-South funding streams encourage collaboration across the border. A memo of understanding between UCD and QUB provided a solid basis for cooperation between the two universities. This relationship was further nurtured to mutually support research culture strategies in each institution through bilateral meetings over the course of the last two years.

The WIFRC call provided a unique opportunity to build upon this growing partnership, with both institutions recognising that their efforts thus far had the potential to benefit a much wider community of research organisations across the island. While both institutions submitted unique and ultimately successful proposals to the call, they mutually agreed to include provision for the establishment of an All-Island Research Culture Network, ensuring that their projects and wider activities would have a wider impact beyond the two institutions.

2) Findings

Separated by borders and ecosystems: NI and ROI research contexts differ. NI = REF and two main institutions: one an established traditional university, and the other a younger 'post-92', along with a broader ecosystem of research-active organisations across a range of sectors; ROI = traditional universities and newly formed technological universities.

Connected by shared values: Research is a competitive environment. While collegiality and collaboration are values shared by the UCD and QUB teams, this was tested by the application for WTIFRC. Mutual trust was required to proceed with two applications, each having shared components.

3) Discussion

Diversity of institutions and dynamic solutions: The network includes a range of RPOs from research institutes to universities and national cultural institutions. New research culture tools will be informed by experiences across all types of institutions. Sharing resources across the network will democratise access and ensure all can participate in the journey.

Keywords (up to five): research culture change, collaboration, cross-border network

Theme 2: Removing Barriers to Inclusion

Race-inclusivity in research culture: UoB ASPIRE Project

Prof Etlyn Kenny; Prof Chris Millward; Prof Yemisi Takwoingi; Dr Tish Kriznik
University of Birmingham

Designed to increase understanding of how to identify and address inclusion challenges for racially minoritised staff in higher education (HE), the University of Birmingham's Access to Success Pathways for Inclusive Research Excellence (ASPIRE) project is a £1m programme of research, training and capacity building initiatives that will facilitate new approaches to making our research culture more race inclusive. Funded by the Wellcome Trust, ASPIRE is a test bed for new ideas to enhance inclusion for racially minoritised researchers and research-related professional services staff, paying particular attention to addressing barriers faced by mid-career academics. In addition to advancing race inclusivity across the University of Birmingham, the project aims to work with funders and other universities to create sector-wide knowledge and applications. ASPIRE adopts an evidence-based approach to the design and delivery of interventions for influencing institution-wide culture change. The project aims to gain a deeper understanding of race inclusion barriers within research environments. It will then apply this knowledge in the development of initiatives aimed at both providing targeted career support for racially minoritised staff and working with leaders and colleagues to create a more supportive and race-inclusive research culture. This presentation will recap the race-inclusion problem in HE research culture, and then provide an overview of the initiatives being trialled with exemplars of underpinning models that have been used to shape our approach. We will discuss how we tailor interventions to meet the needs of the full range of research environments present in a complex multi-faculty research intensive institution. We will also touch on some of the challenges inherent in work on race inclusion and the stakeholder management implications.

Keywords: Race-inclusive research culture; inclusive research excellence; mid-career academics; inclusive leadership; cultural intelligence.

Research Culture Data - Possibilities and Next Steps
Dr Mark Whelan
Queen Mary University of London

Background:
Universities increasingly need to evidence and measure their research culture in concrete terms to meet the rising expectations of funders and in preparation for the People, Culture and Environment section of REF 2029. This paper will briefly examine how the university sector in general is approaching this issue, before assessing how Queen Mary is creating a bespoke suite of data resources and dashboards to help assess distinct facets of its research culture in quantitative terms, the preliminary findings so far, and the issues the pilot work has revealed.

Findings:
The research culture team at Queen Mary has so far focused on establishing three data pipelines using PowerBI: (1) a funding success dashboard for all staff profiled according to EDI characteristics; (2) a research outputs dashboard profiled according to EDI characteristics; (3) and a promotions and internal career trajectory dashboard. Pilot work has confirmed that these dashboards can shine a novel light on our research culture and help us address with more nuance this basic question: how inclusive is our research culture? After all, there is little point in having a diverse and "inclusive" staff profile, if our funding is still held predominantly by white professors, if our outputs are predominantly authored by white staff on permanent contracts, and if it is taking longer for underrepresented staff to achieve promotion than other colleagues.

Discussion and next steps:
Preliminary findings so far include that women and minoritised staff groups are underrepresented in certain internal funding schemes and in our outputs, while the pilot work has revealed a series of complex data-related issues, including low underlying disclosure rates of protected characteristics, missing data points, and variable match rates when linking different university datasets.

Keywords: research culture data; EDI; researcher careers; researcher success; REF 2029

Embedding Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in your Research Delivery and Planning
Dr Anna L. Seager; Elizabeth Kenny
Swansea University

How can we create a thriving research environment that includes and values a diversity of approaches, skills and perspective? Why do we need it? How can we benefit from it? In the pursuit of excellence in research, the integration of equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) is not just a moral imperative but a strategic advantage that drives innovation and comprehensive understanding.

In this workshop you will learn about the benefits of promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) principles throughout the research lifecycle, strategy to create a more inclusive research and innovation system, and what it means to you when planning and delivering research. Considering EDI in research activities, includes the research team as much as the research methods, communication, and delivery. Much good practice and good research citizenship, such as open research, mentoring others, and equitable support and training, are examples of EDI within research.

Through case studies, we will showcase and discuss opportunities to embed EDI in research projects to produce real change and transform the way we create knowledge and impact on society. We will also discuss useful tools and resources to help assess your current research activities and help develop solutions that establish EDI into the fabric of research processes, from conception to execution.

Neurodivergent Employment Opportunities (NEO): A Positive Action Approach to Diversifying Research Teams within the Faculty of Science at the University of Nottingham

Helena French; Harry Moriaty; Jules Bellingham
University of Nottingham

Background:
The Faculty of Science at the University of Nottingham launched the Neurodivergent Employment Opportunities (NEO) Programme in Spring 2023. Since the launch of the programme, 21 individuals have joined the Faculty on paid 10-month part-time work placements.

NEO was designed to address two key issues:
- To diversify the Faculty's workforce through providing routes to employment for neurodivergent adults who have faced barriers to entering or remaining in the workforce
- To address succession planning challenges in the Technical staff space, where the workforce is ageing and key technical skills are at risk

NEO runs in two streams:
NEO Next: collaborating with a local special school to provide supported internships as work experience, enhancing participants' future employability
NEO Now: working with neurodivergent adults who are seeking to join the workforce

Findings:
Throughout the first fifteen months of the NEO pilot programme, the team have co-developed the programme with participants (placement holders and line managers) to build a resilient model of delivery. This includes team training, structured induction, job coach support while on placement and reflective/career planning workshops to support individuals at the end of the programme.

Discussion and Next Steps:
This presentation will explore learning so far from NEO, reflecting on some of the challenges faced and opportunities uncovered in delivery, participant case studies and the impact on research teams who have hosted a NEO placement.

Keywords: Neurodivergence; neuro-inclusive; technicians; research teams;

Theme 3: Improving the PGR Experience for All

Developing Inclusive Postgraduate Admissions

Dr Bing Lu; Dr Rebekah Smith McGloin; Lauren Russell; Dr Bamba Khan; Owen Gower; Julie Sheldon; Scott Foster
Nottingham Trent University

Background:
The Equity in Doctoral Education through Partnership and Innovation (EDEPI) project is one of 13 Research English and Office for Students funded projects, aiming to tackle persistent inequalities that create barriers to access and participation in doctoral education for candidates from racially-minoritised groups. The EDEP project is a partnership between three UK institutions with three distinct Work Packages addressing recruitment, admissions, and transition as critical points of systemic inequality.

Findings:
Informed by the data collected regarding admission, this talk presents a summary of findings from a survey on PGR admissions practice in UK HEIs, including 253 responses received from staff involved in PGR admissions and 46 universities represented. This presentation will showcase examples of good practice that support and enable inclusion at doctoral level in terms of fair admission. This presentation also highlights priority areas for improvement. The recommendations are clustered around ten barriers categorised in three aspects to inclusive PGR admissions that the survey identified.

Discussion and Next Steps:
A PGR competency-based admissions framework developed from this project is presented at the end. The speaker(s) will introduce the framework and explain how it can be used by institutions to scaffold the entire PGR recruitment processes. The project is currently half way through and is seeking collaboration with more institutions that are keen in enhancing their inclusive PGR admission through adopting the competency-based admissions framework.

Keywords: EDEPI, Inclusive PGR admissions, Competency-Based Admissions Framework

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Supporting part time PGR students through a co-designed residential writing retreat

Cat Jones, Chris Guerin, Azizul Haque, Sarah Emmerson, Louise Rixon, Chinyere Magulike, Rachel Rowntree & Olympia Palikara.
University of Warwick

Background:
Supporting the progression of part-time postgraduate research students (PT PGRs) is vital, not least because part-time doctorates are a route into research for many underrepresented groups (HESA, 2023). This student-led project sought to increase support for PT PGRs through co-designing, delivering and evaluating a residential writing retreat. Writing retreats can build community and support academic career progression (Benvenuti, 2017; Stevenson, 2021), with overnight retreats providing more focus and collegiality than day-only events (Keane, 2017; Tremblay-Wragg, 2021). However, there is little institutional knowledge of how to design residential writing retreats for PT PGRs.

Findings:
During the formative research, PT PGRs indicated that their priorities were progress on their thesis, coaching/ mentoring, and meeting other PGRs. They identified work commitments and travel expenses as potential barriers. The event programme was therefore designed around focussed writing sessions, with built-in networking and social time, and bookable 1:1 coaching. The event took place across a weekend and travel bursaries were offered.

24 PGRs and 4 academic staff attended. The retreat was evaluated using questionnaires and a focus group. The questionnaire showed high satisfaction with the timing/ location (M=9.23), content (M=9.09), writing progress (M=8.96) and connections with other PGRs (M=9.41), all scored out of ten. Delving deeper, the focus group highlighted how the experience helped to combat the isolation associated with being a PT PGR. Attendees also made significant progress with writing because the retreat provided 'headspace' away from other commitments. Attendees recommended that similar events be embedded into PT PGR programmes.

Discussion and Next Steps:
The overnight writing retreat was a successful first step for supporting part-time PGRs within the academic community. Our student-led presentation will explore learning from this project, including discussion of the unique challenges faced by PT PGRs and recommendations for how they could be better-supported to get the most out of their PGR journeys.

Keywords: part-time; postgraduate studies; PGR; writing retreat; coproduction

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Cultivating Community Among Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs): Leveraging Peer Support Resources for Enhanced Cohort Collaboration

Dr Alice Beck; Dr Vitalie Duporge
The Cabot Institute University of Bristol

Background:
Recent studies have identified the prevalence of loneliness experienced by postgraduate researchers (PGRs) (Harrison et al. 2023). Poor research culture expressed in increases in remote-based working, unmanageable workloads and lack of institutional support, all contribute to feelings of isolation and overwhelm that negatively impact the PGR experience (Watson and Turnpenny 2022, Wilson et al. 2023). Emerging work highlights the powerful role that peer-support networks can have in equipping PGRs to develop emotional resilience and improve general research experiences (ibid). This paper explores peer support networks in a UK university and highlights the positive impact of novel peer support resources on PGR community wellbeing.

Findings:
The project revealed a significant shortage of dedicated support resources for PGRs. Consequently, many PGRs continue to face emotional challenges during their studies. To address this, we developed and trialled a comprehensive toolkit designed to serve as a dedicated resource for PGRs. When trialled, we found that the use of the toolkit can drastically enhance peer support while also contributing to PGRs feeling considered and involved in the department.

Discussion and Next Steps:
The paper discusses key strengths of the toolkit, barriers to success and its impact on research culture. We highlight the widespread lack of understanding about what peer support is and investment in developing it. Addressing these barriers is crucial for fostering effective support systems. We outline our future research plans to trial and evaluate the toolkit over a year and highlight the important role peer support plays in upholding a thriving research culture.

Keywords: Peer support, postgraduate researcher, research community

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Enhancing inter-cultural awareness among international postgraduate researchers and their research supervisors at Warwick

Dr Shi Ha; Gabriella Crawford Koltai; Maryam Masood; Asima Iqbal; Ninna Makrinov
University of Warwick

The increasing internationalization of postgraduate research (PGR) education in the UK has brought attention to the unique challenges faced by international students. Approximately 40% of postgraduate students in the UK are international (HESA, 2022), highlighting their significant presence and contribution to the research landscape. Despite this, international PGRs encounter many challenges, including financial pressures, cultural integration difficulties, language barriers, workload management issues, mental well-being concerns, and mismatched supervision expectations, lack of adequate support and mentorship for international PGRs. Supervisors may often be unaware of these hidden barriers faced by international PGRs, making it difficult for them to provide proper support. A critical challenge emerging from recent literature is the intercultural dynamic for fostering effective interaction between PGR students and their supervisors. Cultural awareness encompasses knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are essential for effective communication and building positive relationships in a multicultural and global context. In light of these issues, this project aims to investigate the impact of intercultural awareness on the relationships between PGR students and their supervisors at the University of Warwick. Using semi-structured interviews, it will delve into the experiences and perspectives of both international PGRs and supervisors, allowing for an in-depth exploration of how intercultural competence influences communication, expectation alignment, and overall research experience. By addressing the cultural, linguistic, and educational challenges inherent in the PGR experience, this research seeks to enhance inclusivity and support within the academic environment. The outcomes will inform the development of training programs to improve PGR supervisors' intercultural competence and establish robust support networks for international PGRs, ultimately fostering a more inclusive research culture and improving international postgraduate researchers' academic and personal experiences.

Keywords: Intercultural Awareness, Postgraduate Researchers, Research Culture, International Education, Supervisor-Student Relationship

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Theme 4: Promoting Reproducibility and Research Integrity

Facilitating the publishing of reproducible and high-quality research

Catherine L. Winchester
CRUK Scotland Institute

Research integrity is an essential component of a positive research culture that enables research excellence. At the CRUK Scotland Institute we have established a mandatory pre-submission review of manuscripts to support researchers to publish their research with the highest standards. The objective is to increase the accuracy and transparency of papers and the reproducibility of research findings, and it forms an integral part of our research integrity strategy.

Supporting researchers at the Institute is a dynamic and iterative process, and the reviewing of manuscripts prior to submission to a journal or posting on BioRxiv is just one initiative we have introduced to safeguard research integrity and our researchers. The pre-submission manuscript review starts with a check for text plagiarism using iThenticate software. Details pertaining to the authors, such as their funding, affiliations and contributions to the paper, are also scanned. The abstract and introduction are then read with a view to increasing communication and accessibility to a wide readership as well as for being informative and accurate. The methods are scrutinised for depth and detail and for compliance with field reporting standards. Attention is paid to the accuracy and representation of the data in the results text, figures and figure legends. Figures are checked by eye, to ascertain the quality of the data, appropriate data presentation and for responsible processing of images, and with imagetwin, an AI tool for detecting image integrity issues. This review is not intended as peer review and as such the discussion is not checked. Recommendations and advice on manuscripts are communicated with the authors, via a report, for inclusion in the final version of their manuscript.

We have been conducting mandatory pre-submission manuscript reviews for 10 years, a process that contributes to embedding research integrity as a normal part of a positive research culture.

Keywords: integrity, support, culture, safeguard, reproducibility

Preprints: Bridging the Gap Between 'Positive' and 'Negative' Research Outcomes

Queen Saikia, Dr Jonny Coates
University of Leeds

Funding agencies and journals often appear to value and encourage research with 'positive' conclusions, leading to 'publication bias'. However, to fully embrace scientific integrity, we must also acknowledge and disseminate findings that do not support existing hypotheses. This session will underscore several case studies highlighting the significant challenges faced in publishing research that contradicted traditional hypotheses. With the Open Science movement in place, preprints have evolved as a strategic tool in disseminating knowledge even prior to submission in a journal. In this session I will discuss opportunities to enhance the visibility of research outcomes that 'do not work' and explore how preprints can serve as an effective tool to foster a more balanced research culture. In a world with growing biases and limited resources, this could benefit everyone.

Keywords: open science, preprints, research culture, open access

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Helping institutions incentivise Open Research through reward and recognition of transparent research practices at the OR4 project

Dr Karen Desborough (1); Robert Darby (2); Prof Candy Rowe (3)
1. Cardiff University, 2. University of Reading, 3. Newcastle University

The principles of Open Research are now well established, with growing recognition that transparency, reproducibility and re-usability can enhance the quality and impact of research and should be considered in the assessment of research and researchers. However, apart from Open Access mandates, Open Research practices have largely not been monitored or incentivised by institutions or funders of research. Very few institutional recruitment, promotion and appraisal frameworks provide any reference to Open Research criteria, and there is lack of institutional guidance, training and support related to Open Research for candidates and staff involved in assessment. This leads to Open Research practices being rarely evidenced or considered in research assessment. However, with the drive for research assessment reform gathering pace, including the emergence of initiatives such as CoARA, many institutions are reflecting on their assessment practices.

The OR4 project, which is part of the UKRN Open Research Programme, aims to address the disconnect between institutional commitments to the principles of Open Research and the actual practice of research assessment, which currently fails to recognise and reward Open Research. The project will provide institutions with freely available practical tools they can use to integrate Open Research into responsible research assessment practices. The two essential pillars of the project are a toolkit for institutions (maturity framework, self-assessment tool and implementation guide), and the community of practice which currently includes nearly 50 UK HEIs.

The maturity framework and supporting materials will enable institutions to assess their level of maturity in recognition and reward for Open Research and to design action plans for reforming their policies and processes. The community of practice serves as a forum for institutions to share good practice and support each other on the way to reforming their research assessment processes.

The OR4 project is currently piloting the first versions of the resources with the community of practice and plans to publish them at the end of September. Institutions are welcome to join the community of practice at any time to start or continue to develop their research assessment reform.

Keywords: open research, responsible research assessment, community of practice, reward and recognition

Reproducibility, Replicability, and Transparency in Research: What 452 Professors Think in Universities across the USA and India

Dr Tatiana Chakravorti; Sai Koneru; Dr Sarah Rajtmajer
Pennsylvania State University

In the past decade, open science and science of science communities have initiated innovative efforts to address concerns about the reproducibility and replicability of published scientific research. In some respects, these efforts have been successful, yet there are still many pockets of researchers with little to no familiarity with these concerns, subsequent responses, or best practices for engaging in reproducible, replicable, and reliable scholarship. In this study, we surveyed 452 professors from universities across the USA and India to understand perspectives on scientific processes, aiming for a comparative analysis between a Western country and a country from the Global South. The primary motivation behind this study is to explore the differences and similarities in attitudes towards reproducibility and open science practices among social science and engineering researchers in these culturally distinct countries. This analysis facilitates the identification of key intervention points and provides recommendations necessary for the global implementation of open science practices. Our findings reveal both national and disciplinary gaps in attention to reproducibility and replicability, aggravated by incentive misalignment and resource constraints. We suggest that solutions addressing scientific integrity should be culturally-centered, where definitions of culture should include both regional and domain-specific elements. Taken together, these findings are very useful for the Indian research community and the educational stakeholders to understand and overcome the critical challenges.

Theme 5: Changing Research Leadership

Research Group Leadership: Mobilising research leads for culture change

Laura Hutchinson; Samantha King; Ellen Cole
Northumbria University

Background:
This paper will explore a fundamental research culture initiative at Northumbria University which explores how we enable Research Group Leadership to be advocates and enablers of change within their communities. Research leadership is acknowledged as a driving engine in the research ecosystem, and our new University Strategy makes clear that our research ambitions are underpinned by embedding a distributed and empowered network of research leaders. However, we face several obstacles, including complex matrix leadership and management structures, and the size of the cohort to engage with. Over autumn 2023 a series of Faculty workshops were held with Research Group Leads to identify barriers and enablers to research activity, co-create a model of research leadership, and to share good practice as the incubators of positive research cultures.

Findings:
We found that Research Groups Leads lacked clarity about their role, and group expectations. There was inconsistency in how groups operated within Faculties, a desire to work collaboratively, and create spaces of co-production and practice sharing that stretched across university structures. From this evidence-base a plan was developed to hold regular institutional level Research Group Leads days that would examine the roles of research leadership, how to embed inclusive cultures, and secure senior buy-in. In parallel we have been working with the Human Resources to understand how we can support our research leaders and develop future research leads.

Discussion and Next Steps:
Our next steps are to conceptualise the role and responsibilities of research leaders, and co-create a Research Group Manifesto, setting out expectations of how research groups should operate. This will enable a decentralised model for the delivery of the research culture action plan. Challenges remain, including consistency of experience across the university, the scope of some research groups, and empowering Research Group Leads to set their agenda.

Keywords: Research Leadership, Peer Support, Co-production

References:

Wellcome: Research culture: let's reimagine how we work together.
https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/what-researchers-think-about-the-culture-they-work-in.pdf

Royal Society Research Culture: changing expectations https://royalsociety.org/news-resources/projects/research-culture/

UKRI: Research and innovation culture https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-and-innovation-culture/

BEIS R&D People and Culture Strategy: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-and-development-rd-people-and-culture-strategy

Advance HE: developing an inclusive and supportive research culture https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/consultancy-and-enhancement/research-culture

UCL Women and Large Grant Leadership training programme
Dr Laura Fenner
University College London

At UCL, we have developed the 'Women and Large Grant Leadership training programme'. This is a supportive, structured programme for mid to senior-career female academics, developed in response to evidence of gender disparity in research funding across many STEM disciplines, with data from funders including Wellcome and EPSRC showing that women apply for fewer large grants than men, often with lower success rates. The programme aims to help equip female academics at UCL with the skills, knowledge, support, and networks to successfully lead large grant applications.

The training programme consists of informative presentations, discussions, and a masterclass on how to apply for large grants; a facilitated discussion on the barriers, or challenges, that women face; networking and panel discussion sessions; and an opportunity to pitch a large grant vision to 'and receive feedback from' a senior academic panel. Fifty women have taken part in the programme so far, across the two years that it has been running. There is a strong sense of community amongst participants, with peer-to-peer support a key feature, as well as support from research facilitators and senior academic leaders.

The programme has received very positive feedback, both from participants and from senior leaders at UCL. Participants have told us that they are more confident, have a much clearer idea of the areas they need to focus on, have improved their skills and understanding, and that the programme has been inspiring and eye-opening. We are now assessing further impact of the programme on participants and thinking about how to develop and improve it for future cohorts.

Keywords: gender disparity, women, large grants, research funding, training

The Use of Shadow Committees to Reimagine Governance for a Flourishing Research Culture

Sophie Daniels; Johanna Thren
Durham University

Durham University is one of 24 institutions to receive Wellcome Trust Institutional Funding for Research Culture; an opportunity supporting projects which seek to develop innovative approaches to enhance research culture in their institutions. Our project asks new questions about how research governance (RG) impacts research culture and will trial interventions which aim to break down silos, encourage engagement, and build a community of trust, inclusivity, and belonging.

Our focus on research governance responds to multiple reports highlighting hierarchical and divisive research governance as a barrier to a positive research culture. At Durham, reflections indicated our RG structures can be rigid and hierarchical, inhibiting inclusive involvement and autonomy in decision-making.

Findings, Discussion and Next Steps

This presentation will showcase our use of innovative and experimental Shadow Committees. These are designed to offer staff from research, professional, and technical environments opportunities to influence strategic decision-making. As part of this, we will share our approach to concurrent impact and process evaluation.

To generate recommendations for lasting positive change beyond the life of the project, it is critical for us to understand the impact of the Shadow Committees: how they have a) improved inclusivity, diversity and professional development for those engaged in RG, and b) understanding, agency in decision-making, and trust in leadership resulting from participation. To ensure the intervention is successful and effective, a concurrent process evaluation is being run throughout the project. Findings from the process evaluation will shed light on the obstacles and opportunities relating to Shadow Committees. Highlights from the set-up phase will be shared to help peers negotiate similar challenges and grasp comparable opportunities.

References:

1. Wellcome (2020), What Researchers Think About the Culture They Work In. https://wellcome.org/reports/what-researchers-think-about-research-culture

2. Association of Research Managers and Administrators (2020). The ARMA Survey on Research Culture 2020. https://arma.ac.uk/arma-research-culture-survey-report/

3. Russell Group (2021). Realising Our Potential: backing talent and strengthening UK research culture and environment. https://russellgroup.ac.uk/media/5925/realising-our-potential-report_4-compressed.pdf

Keywords: Governance, Methodology, Evaluation, Shadow Committees

Precision Mentorship for Research Leadership: A Pilot Programme in Arts and Humanities at Kingston University

Dr Elizabeth Morrow; Prof Meg Jensen; Prof Cilla Harries; Dr Jackie McRae
Kingston University

The Precision Mentorship Programme was developed in 2023 to support the newly established Design Arts and Creative Practice Knowledge Exchange and Research Institute at Kingston University. The aim was to develop research leadership capacity through focused mentorship experiences tailored to researchers at all career levels.

Approach:
A person-centred approach was developed from the research literature and mentorship experience from the delivery of two research leadership academies: Kingston University's RISE Research Leadership Academy and NIHR Applied Research Centre Research Leadership Academy [1]. Twelve participants were offered four online one-to-one sessions and wrap around support from an experienced independent research consultant.

Key findings:
a) Participants highly valued the confidential individualised support to discuss their research goals and challenges b) Flexibility of the programme helped to address a diverse range of individual needs, including developing a research identity, career coaching, and technical support for proposals or outputs c) Due to busy work schedules some participants opted for written feedback/comments rather than discussions. d) Generalised feedback provides senior managers with insights into how best to enhance research culture.

Discussion and Next Steps:
The successful outcomes of the pilot underscore the individualised flexibility of a precision mentorship programme in fostering a supportive research environment. The findings will inform best practice guidance.

Keywords: Precision mentorship, Research leadership, Researcher development

References:

1. NIHR ARC Research Leadership Academy https://arc-sl.nihr.ac.uk/events-training/what-we-offer/nihr-arc-south-london-research-leadership-academy

Theme 6: How do we Cultivate Thriving Research Communities?

Research Culture Toolkit: University of Oxford's initiative to map and support local research cultures
Jenny Winsland
University of Oxford

Background:

The Research Culture Toolkit is a collaborative, university-wide initiative, to map the research culture landscape across the University of Oxford and develop a consistent approach to supporting departments to strengthen their research cultures. It is a large-scale project encompassing over 60 departments, in which over 8,000 staff and 7,000 students are involved in conducting and/or supporting research. Using a structured framework, it aims to clarify the scope of research culture activities, communicate existing policies and activities, and capture information related to research culture initiatives. Its primary objectives include identifying existing good practice in planning and evaluation, and highlighting sector (including funder) expectations and trajectories for research culture and environment. The project is also intended to aid readiness for the People, Culture and Environment component of REF 2029.

The project involves two-way conversations about research culture between Research Culture Facilitators and departments. Its design has been developed in consultation with university-level and local teams, utilising university-wide expertise and up-to-date sector knowledge. The Toolkit includes a list of topics covering aspects of research culture, aligned with the University's priority areas: rigorous research practice, valuing diverse contributions, and supporting career development. It also offers a SharePoint resource with information, policies, and guidelines structured by topic, and an Inspiration Bank providing examples of activities aimed at improving research culture.

Expected findings:

The Toolkit is being piloted in 8 departments in Summer 2024. Findings of the pilot and feedback from departments will be summarised in the presentation.

Discussion and next steps:

The project team will use the feedback to adjust the process as required, before the Toolkit is rolled out University-wide in Autumn 2024. This exercise will be repeated twice before REF submission in 2029. Summary-level data will be used to identify trends within the broader university context, informing strategic planning and resource allocation.

Keywords (up to 5):

Good practice; Collaborative change project; research practice; diverse contributions; career development

Mental Health and Wellbeing in a Research Community: Preliminary Findings on the Role of Research Culture

Hugh Fulham-McQuillan, Gillian Boyle, Hugh Campbell, Maura Hiney, Grace Mulcahy, Ivar McGrath, Adrian Ottewill, Colleen Thomas, Sonya Deschenes
University College Dublin

Background

There is an increasing recognition of the importance of the mental health and wellbeing of the research community when considering what makes a good research culture. As part of the University College Dublin (UCD) Research Culture Initiative, this project aims to examine the mental health and wellbeing of the research community in UCD and explore associations between elements of research culture and mental health/wellbeing in the research community.

Methods

An online survey was conducted in 2023 to collect data on research culture and mental health and wellbeing from faculty and postdoctoral researchers, postgraduate student researchers, and professional research staff in UCD using quantitative and qualitative methods. As part of the larger mixed methods survey, quantitative measures included the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD=7), the World Health Organisation-5 (WHO-5), the Patient Health Questionnaire-8 (PHQ-8) scales and work stress. Additional questions assessed respondents' perceptions of the values that the institution places on aspects of research culture including research integrity, collegiality and collaboration, support, continuing professional development, and mental health and wellbeing using Likert-type quantitative scales. Descriptive and frequency statistics will be presented to examine the overall mental health and wellbeing of the research community. Bivariate correlations will be used to examine the associations between elements of research culture and depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and wellbeing.

Findings

Preliminary findings demonstrate a moderate level of depression, anxiety, and work stress in the research community, with varying degrees depending on role. Furthermore, several elements of research culture such as positive perceptions of research integrity, valuing the quality of publications over quantity, and collegiality were associated with positive mental health and wellbeing.

Discussion and next steps

The mental health and wellbeing of the research community has until recently been under recognised as an integral component of research culture. These findings will provide an evidence base to inform policy, develop and improve supports for the mental health of the research community, and enhance the research community's wellbeing both in UCD and across the research culture network.

Keywords: researcher, mental health, wellbeing, research culture,

"If you were designing a system to encourage bullying and incivility, it would look like a modern University." Using behavioural science to investigate drivers of unacceptable behaviour in research culture

Catherine Davies1, Fiona McClement1, Marije Davidson1, Paul Chadwick2
1: University of Leeds, 2: University College London

Background

Influences on research culture are complex, involving factors at the level of the sector (e.g. funding structures), the organisation (e.g. HR policy), and the individual (e.g. values and behaviours).

Data drawn from staff surveys and academic literature shows that problematic behaviours such as incivility, bullying, and harassment are unacceptably high in research organisations (Tight, 2023; Witze, 2023). There is a growing recognition of the negative impact on staff wellbeing and development, on research quality, and on organisational effectiveness.

This research uses Behavioural Systems Mapping (e.g. Hale et al., 2022) to identify influences on unacceptable behaviours within the research culture of a UK University. The methodology analyses in-depth qualitative data from institutional colleagues to develop a causal loop diagram of the actors (e.g. roles), behaviours (e.g. bullying), and influences (e.g. organisational policy, social norms, management approaches) related to the expression of unacceptable behaviours. An emerging visual representation helps stakeholders develop a shared understanding of the complex problem, and to co-design effective interventions.

Findings

Qualitative interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of colleagues with lived experience of or responsibility for managing unacceptable behaviours. The interviewer elicited data on participants' role, their experience of such behaviours, their perceptions of the influences on those behaviours, and their views on strategies to prevent or deal effectively with them. Thematic analysis was then used to develop a map revealing the interaction of systemic influences, individual behaviours, and organisational actions.

Data revealed key influences relating to values and behaviour, policy and procedure, feedback culture and process, academic identity, and organisational power structures.

Discussion

We discuss the power of a behavioural science approach to: a) identify local and sectoral drivers of poor research cultures, b) ensure targeted, meaningful action to reduce and manage unacceptable behaviours in research systems, and c) improve research culture as an urgent sector-wide issue.

Keywords (up to five): Unacceptable behaviours, metaresearch, behavioural systems mapping.

References
Hale, J. Jofeh, C. and Chadwick, P. (2022). Decarbonising existing homes in Wales: a participatory behavioural systems mapping approach. UCL Open Eviron. Vol. 4.
https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444/ucloe.000047
Tight, M. (2023) Bullying in higher education: an endemic problem?. Tert Educ Manag 29, 123-137
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11233-023-09124-z
Witze, A. (2023). The fight to end bullying in academia: UK researchers launch nationwide campaign. Nature. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-03418-3

Concordat Consolidation at Loughborough University: Mapping our efforts to improve research and innovation cultures

Stuart King, Elizabeth Gadd, Megan English
Loughborough University

Academic institutions, professional organisations and advocacy groups' efforts to improve aspects of research cultures led to a proliferation of concordats, charters and declarations in recent decades. Examples include the Research Integrity Concordat, Declaration on Research Assessment, Race Equality Charter and Technicians Commitment. Such initiatives represent important milestones in raising awareness of key issues and provide direction and accountability to address them.

Loughborough University has long been committed to improving academic and research cultures. Like other higher education institutions, we have signed up to many initiatives to uphold responsible practices. Now, in line with the Review of Research Bureaucracy-inspired[1] 2023 Concordat and Agreements Review's[2] recommendation to reduce the associated bureaucracy, we have launched a new project to map and consolidate the University's commitments and activities resulting from our multiple signatory statuses.

This work aims to align existing agreements and action plans with institutional values and research culture ambitions, which have been identified following a recent review of messages from Staff Experience, CEDARS and PRES surveys, and from running a series of Town Hall meetings with our research communities. The project also hopes to identify any gaps in our activity and to map ownership, reporting lines and delivery timescales. The initiative should create a high-level mapping of commitments and evaluation measures, allowing each agreement to remain owner-managed while providing oversight to our R&I Culture Working Group.

This presentation will explore initial findings and proposed strategies from the consolidation project's first phase. We will share practical insights and approaches, highlighting the synergies identified and how Loughborough University hopes to leverage them to increase the effectiveness of our actions. By doing so, we aim to provide a blueprint for other institutions interested in running a similar process, contributing to the broader discourse on enhancing research cultures.

Keywords (up to five): research culture, responsible practices, bureaucracy reduction, institutional commitments, framework consolidation

References
1. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-research-bureaucracy
2. https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2023-05/concordats-and-agreements-review-phase-2-final-report.pdf

Theme 7: Research Culture beyond UK HEIs

Enabling equitable partnerships through support to research management and communication
Lorelei Silvester
Liverpool Tropical School of Medicine

Research management and communication are critical elements of the research process. However, capacity strengthening efforts and career development support are usually focused on researchers rather than enablers. Additionally, key research enabler roles, such as programme managers and research communicators, are often project funded, resulting in insecure working contracts and increasing the risk of institutions losing these skills. In the context of global health partnerships, differences in capacity in research enablement contribute to inequalities and perpetuate power imbalances between high- and low-income countries.

LSTM is working with four African partners to seek ways to strengthen research management and knowledge exchange mechanisms to address these challenges. With funding from the Wellcome Trust, we are implementing a project to empower research enablers, with a focus on project managers and research communicators, maximising their impact on the research process and seeking to reduce contract precarity.

To address gaps in research management systems (RMS) across all partners, we are collaborating with LSTM's Centre for Capacity Research, global leaders in strengthening institutional research systems. Capacity assessments will identify priorities leading to a prioritised action plan to address RMS gaps. The project will also deliver a mentorship programme and a programme of training in Research Administration and Management, using an interactive workshop format developed by LSTM; previous iterations of this course have been very well received. We are collating best practice, tools and resources in programme management, developing a toolkit for research programme management to be shared across the partnership.

We are also establishing a cross-partner team of expertise to create a community of practice for research communication. This will distil and share learnings, providing advice and guidance, filling training gaps and developing and evaluating sustainable financial models to retain this expertise.

Two Research Cultures? Coproduction as insurgence

Dr Nicholas Mithen
University of Hull

Conventional approaches to research ethics, integrity, rigour and openness - and by extension research culture - have assumed that research is produced within an academic context. In these approaches, research activity is academic-led and takes place within a well-regulated environment. It is, in part, from these circumstances that research outputs acquire credibility.

Increasingly, however - and increasingly as encouraged by funders - researchers are co-producing research with non-academic stakeholders and doing so using participatory methodologies. Such approaches are commonly predicated upon a reallocation of power away from academics and towards non-academic stakeholders, and a relocating of research activity in 'the real world' rather that in an academic environment. Often, practitioners of such approaches frame their work in direct opposition to conventional academic-led research: they present it as an act of insurgence.

Can current categories of research ethics, integrity, rigour and openness accommodate co-produced and participatory approaches to research? Are there two research cultures at play within the wider research ecosystem, with different and divergent sets of norms, behaviours and values? If so, how can institutions respond to this scenario?

This paper considers these questions through the lens of a range of participatory and co-produced research projects hosted by the University of Hull. Its findings are informed through discussions with a range of academic and non-academic stakeholders attached to these projects. It argues that, while administrative adaptations may address some minor challenges arising from such projects, there is a fundamental tension between participatory approaches to research and institutional approaches to research governance - and that this tension needs to be better understood.

Keywords: Research culture; research integrity; coproduction; participatory research; non-academic stakeholders.

The Responsible Knowledge Exchange, Engagement and Impact framework and principles
Wanlin Cai; Prof Alis Oancea; Alieen Marshall-Brown
University of Oxford

Background:
Across the UK and internationally, research is subject to careful monitoring and increasingly principled evaluation. While standards exist for responsible research and innovation (RRI), equivalent evidence-informed expectations have not been articulated for KEEI activities. This presentation will introduce the Responsible Knowledge Exchange, Engagement and Impact 2021-24 (RKEEI) framework that has been co-created to conceptualise RKEEI and support responsible KEEI practices through literature reviews, documentary analysis, interviews and workshops bringing together KEEI professionals, senior leadership and researchers at all career stages.

Findings:
The presentation will discuss how participants conceptualised RKEEI in relation to the framework's six dimensions, including 1) Ethics and Integrity: appropriate scrutiny of procedures, normative values and principles that support reflective ethical practices, outcomes and responsible data management; 2) Equity, inclusion and diversity: inclusive practices that foster diverse representations of voices and values, participation, and ownership and ensure fairness in outcomes and the distribution of benefits; 3) Sustainability and reciprocity: building trusted, mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders to create meaningful and lasting benefits to those involved or impacted while cultivating sustainable capacities in minimising the risk of harm to people, places and the environment; 4) Contextual sensitivity and cultural respect: non-hierarchical, respectful engagement that attentively considers the shifting accessibility and acceptability of actions, behaviours and language and prioritisation of interests and worldviews across different contexts, and aims to enhance capability for local conduct; 5) Sharing and openness: a culture of sharing and openness that acknowledges and negotiates issues of confidentiality, trust, ownerships, and differing timeframes and agenda of KEEI stakeholders; 6) Support and recognition: recognition of KEEI as a crucial component of research, with acknowledgement of the time, skills and resources required, and the diverse array of contributions required by KEEI's collaborative nature.

Discussion and Next Steps:
The presentation will then discuss the enabling factors and challenges of RKEEI across the domains of finance, strategy, operation, HR policies, capacity-building, evaluation, external relationship management and other individual attributes based on analyses of participants' accounts, before offering recommendations for an expanded conceptualisation of RRI to include KEEI and for embedding RKEEI into organisational strategies and professional development programs. In the final part of the session, we will invite the audience to reflect on and discuss two practical scenarios and to try out some of the tools developed in the project.

Keywords: Responsible KEEI, responsible research and innovation (RRI)

The Balance of Power in Co-Production (Patient and Public Involvement)
Emily Ahmed
University of Warwick

An interactive workshop, facilitating the exploration of experiences of power, power-sharing and addressing power inequalities in co-production. Power can be a tricky concept to engage with, but it is a defining aspect of co-production and forms the focus of my PhD. Using creative dissemination methods, we will present and build on emerging themes from my research exploring 'how power and power-sharing (or lack of) is experienced in the co-production of UK health research'.

Within this workshop we will facilitate conversations through play, enabling people to engage in a physical and tactile way. Using a giant (1.6m long) wooden weighing scale and 100 beanbags labelled with things public contributors have told me impacted on their experiences of power. Conference delegates will be invited to choose the beanbags/themes, to 'hold', 'discuss' and 'place' on the scales. Working in small groups, participants will discuss action points for how they can rebalance power and public involvement within their research/projects/organisations. We will encourage people to write 'action tag' commitments that they can make toward rebalancing power within co-production. The session has been designed by and will be delivered by people with lived experience of disability and neurodiversity, providing a trauma-informed and interactive experience that enables people to engage through action (such as choosing and placing the 'bean bag-weights' of power), verbal conversation or writing and drawing. Creating a space where people are encouraged to communicate in a way that suits their preferences and or energy levels.

For those new to public involvement, this will facilitate an opportunity to learn about a defining principle of co-production: power and power-sharing. For established professionals / academics they will be encouraged to reflect on their experiences. Members of the team facilitating the activity have lived experience of being public contributors, ensuring that public contributors are central to this conversation.

Keywords: co-production ; public involvement; power; health research; PPIE

References:

This workshop is part of the creative dissemination methods of Emily Ahmed's PhD at Warwick University, in which we aim to support shifts in research culture and promote balanced power dynamics within Patient and Public Involvement. Further information on the PHD research is available on this website link:
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/hscience/coproductionphd/

We recently facilitated an open interaction drop-in format of this activity at the NCCPE (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement) Engage Conference. This workshop will develop the activity further and enable participants to learn about the data and findings from my PhD research, whilst also creating actions to apply within their work. A short video documenting this
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrIK2GIwqMs&t=20s

Theme 8: Valuing Diverse Contributions

Breaking Bad Barriers to Pursuing Research: A Concordat to Research Equity
Sarah Wilson; Dr Mel Loveridge; Dr Connie Qian; Dr Giulia Lorenzi; Dr Ali Zaidi
WMG, University of Warwick

It is commonly understood that there is a 'leaky pipeline' within the career paths of STEM researchers. Many face a host of challenges on their journey to pursuing a role in research, and it has been posited that some of these barriers adversely affect particular groups more than others. This leads to negative outcomes, not only for individuals, but the STEM sector at large.
Our project sought to explore the range of real, potential and perceived barriers that exist to leading or taking part in research in our own academic department's context. On the back of this we will build and implement an action plan to support researchers and academics across our community in their pursuit of a fruitful research career.

Barriers could be grouped into 4 categories: Belonging and Community; Time and Timing; Access to Resources; Communication and Information. These were explored through a survey and focus groups to elicit rich and meaningful data, examining the nuances around issues and collecting examples of lived experience. This will complement the numerical opinion scales, aiding an enhanced understanding of the types, levels and features of the barriers encountered.

Further, we explored individual and community identity, also considering those groups of people displaying identity traits traditionally underrepresented in academia in STEM, and particularly Engineering. This research looked to cast light on intersectional issues by considering barriers faced and connecting the difficulties encountered in pursuing a research career with participation in various identities.

We will present the findings from our research on our greater understanding of the problems. Additionally, we will share details of our positive action plan with considered solutions to improve the culture, working environment and career opportunities for researchers at WMG. Ultimately the aim is to engage to inform practices more widely across the University sector.

Keywords: Equity, Barriers, Action, Identity, Careers

Professional services researchers - invisible researchers in the academy?
Dr Charlotte Verney; Helen Curtis
University of Bristol

Background:
The contributions that technical and professional service staff make to the research process within universities are increasingly recognised (de Jong and del Junco, 2023; The Hidden REF, 2023), yet there remains little visibility of university professional services staff who are actively researching. The presenters are professional services staff at a research-intensive university, who experienced challenges within their university when conducting their own research into areas related to their professional practice.

They initiated a small-scale project, funded through the Enhancing Research Cultures call, with the goal of making recommendations to their institution that would support a more inclusive research culture and environment for professional services researchers. The project comprised three elements; 11 semi-structured interviews with key informants (Macfarlan, 2022) to understand the support and resources available to researchers at the University, an online survey for professional services staff conducting research, and a symposium event for professional services staff to share their research experiences.

Findings:
We found that the concept of professional services researchers was not widely understood within the university. We share insights into the following areas: Who are professional services researchers? What are they researching? What impact are they having? What challenges are they facing?

Discussion and Next Steps:
We discuss the implications of our findings in three broad areas: the cultural and structural issues within research-intensive universities, including assumptions about what counts as research; recommendations to make research practices, support and resources more inclusive for professional services staff; and longer-term opportunities and benefits of enabling professional services staff to conduct research.

Keywords: Professional services, research culture, professsional practice, research support

References:

De Jong, S. and Del Junco, S. (2023) How do professional staff influence academic knowledge development? A literature review and research agenda. Studies in Higher Education, 1-24.

Macfarlan, A. (2022) Key informant interviews, BetterEvaluation, Accessed 20 June 2024 Key informant interviews | Better Evaluation

The hidden REF (2023) The hidden REF: celebrating all research outputs, Accessed 20 June 2024 https://hidden-ref.org

PRISMs: Agents and Beneficiaries of Positive Research Culture
Fleur Hughes
University of York

Professional Research Investment Strategy Managers (PRISMs) are research enablers working in universities across the UK to deliver large-scale, complex research projects such as major grants, networks, centres and Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs). PRISMs add significant experience and expertise to the project team, driving vision, strategy and operation. They sit at the interface between research and research support, meaning that they often 'fall between the cracks'.

These roles have the power to influence the research culture of that team, through relationship and partnership building and driving project policies and procedures. PRISMs also face challenges within the confines of existing research culture, often lacking recognition or career progression pathways in their roles, being isolated from other PRISMs and facing uncertainty due to fixed term contracts.

The PRISM network was set up in 2020, and provides peer support, training and advocacy for these roles to institutions and funders in the UK. This session will explore the impact and ambition of the network, both in improving research culture for PRISMs and empowering PRISMs to be agents of positive research culture within specific research investments.

Keywords: Research enablers; PRISM; Career development; EDI; Research Leadership

References:

About PRISMs Report, 2022

Review of the involvement of PRISMs in the 2023 UKRI/EPSRC CDT call report, 2024

(Re)crafting Research Culture

Mariam Yacoub (1); Mollie Etheridge (2); Susie Bass (1)
1. *University of Kent; 2. University of Cambridge*

The number of voices in academia calling for radical cultural change has increased over the last 20 years (Gew et al. 2022; King G. 2023; Bender and Schorske Carl E. 1998). As part of this, concerns have been raised around the prevalence of competitive frameworks, which, through incentivizing rapid publication and the selection of 'safe', fundable methods (Laing et al, 2018; Olssen, 2016; Torrance, 2020), limit the exploration of experimental approaches and impede diversity across researchers and participant groups (Troiani & Dutson, 2021). Despite being revered for their 'objectivity', the positivist underpinnings of traditional research instruments have historically excluded the voices and contributions of marginalised groups: the 'truth' promised by 'objectivity' is not a neutral one, but one predicated on the fallacies of western liberalism. In pursuit of a radical recrafting of research culture, we assert the power of boldly creative and inclusive research methodologies, as well the role of co-creation between scholars, disciplines and participants.

We invite researchers to reimagine the possibilities of knowledge creating and research cultures through an interactive session demonstrating a range of creative methods in a range of disciplines.

To dissolve and discuss the non-association between marginalised people and scientific research in higher education, Mariam prompts scholars of chemistry to present a hierarchy of their personal and academic identities using crafting materials (Sandrone, 2022). Susie uses the dismissed and underestimated medium of textile craft as an elicitation tool to support people to tell and process difficult stories about adversity, discrimination and exclusion.
Through body mapping activities, Mollie challenges the legacy left by Kantian and Cartesian ideals, which continue to hold 'valuable' academic work as that which is separable from the embodied and the emotional.

In this workshop we will share tools and design elements from our respective research to inspire radical and creative knowledge creation that is more inclusive, pushes boundaries and reveals untold stories.

Keywords: Research Culture, EDI, Sociology, Creative methods, Art

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Creative dilemmas: Balancing access and integrity
Samantha Broadhead; Henry Gonnet
Leeds Arts University

Title: Creative dilemmas: Balancing access and integrity
Samantha Broadhead, Henry Gonnet
Leeds Arts University

Background:
This paper reflects on two research enabling professionals' (the research team) experiences related to making creative research outputs open. The research team operates within a small specialist institution that focuses on the creative arts. Many of the institution's academics are practice-based researchers who produce creative outputs such as artefacts, exhibitions, and videos. The institution has an Open Research Policy that addresses both outputs and research data and supports the Concordat on Open Research Data (Concordat Working Group, 2016).

Findings:
Due to the nature of the institution and its researchers 52.55% of the items on the Institutional repository are practice-based creative outputs and 93.5% of these are openly accessible. 100% of the 86 exhibition outputs have been made open. The licences used when depositing the outputs are currently, 47% CC-BY, 30% CC-BY-NC, 23% CC-BY-NC-ND.

However, despite having open research as an embedded part of the institution's research culture, there are some tensions when making creative outputs open (Bulley & Sahin, 2021). These include issues surrounding authorship, intellectual property and the commercialisation of the research. These tensions are illustrated by examining three examples of creative outputs where issues have arisen. The inter-relationships of open research and research integrity are explored through these cases.

Discussion and Next Steps:
Following on from this reflection the research team have designed a research project that investigates the ways in which creative outputs have been represented on a range of repositories from similar institutions. Metadata related to the identified creative outputs has been collated in a spread sheet so that an analysis of the fields can be undertaken. The next steps will be to design a quality appraisal tool suitable for creative outputs so a systematic review can be undertaken.

Keywords: Creative outputs, practice-based research, small specialist, open access, research integrity

References:

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Academic Libraries as Trailblazers: Research Culture and Open Access Monographs
Tom Morley
Lancaster University

With the introduction of UKRIs new Open Access policy on the 1st of January 2024 and the possibility of Open Access Monographs being mandated by REF2029, there is an increasing focus within the Higher Education sector on Open Access Book publishing. Whilst the introduction of these polices will mean in scope researchers must publish their monograph outputs Open Access to be compliant, this focus represents an opportunity to facilitate a culture change in which Open Access Monograph publishing is the norm, rather than enacted to comply with funder mandates. However, there are several barriers preventing this culture change, including financial barriers, concerns and misconceptions relating to the prestige and academic quality of Open Access Book publishers, and a lack of awareness of open access book publishing routes within the researcher community.

This session will explore how Lancaster University Library has moved beyond just being a service provider to work in partnership with our communities to facilitate a culture in which engaging with open research is part of normal, everyday practice rather than a mandate to comply with, with a particular focus on Open Access Monographs. The talk will provide an overview of how the library has facilitated this vision, including working in partnership with academic colleagues and external organisations to make Open Research possible and easy, as well as sharing concrete steps to facilitating a culture shift.

Sharing research early and openly with Octopus.ac
Emily Wild; Tim Fellows
Jisc

Background:
Octopus.ac is a UKRI funded open publishing platform that aims to address existing challenges in research publishing by creating a more equitable, quality-focused publishing platform. The research process is broken down into eight publication types: research problem, rationale/hypothesis, method, results, analysis, interpretation, real world application, and open peer review, allowing researchers to share their work in detail.

Findings:
In 2023, the University of Bristol published a report examining the existing shape of research culture to help understand the problems Octopus is trying to solve. We'll examine the problems highlighted in the report and how Octopus aims to solve these.

Discussion and Next Steps:
Sharing research
Problem: Sharing research quickly is often delayed when publishing a traditional research article. Often researchers don't share the full research process, inhibiting reproducibility.
Solution: In Octopus, publication is immediate. You can choose the layout and length of your work and link it to other relevant publications. By sharing work early on, removing cost barriers, and sharing the full research process, Octopus is set to improve the dissemination, whilst supporting reproducibility.

Bias
Problem: Journals often require "positive" findings, rather than "negative" results.
Solution: Octopus removes the need for an exciting narrative, placing emphasis on high-quality outputs at every stage of the research process. By sharing "negative" results and focusing on the intrinsic quality of the research, Octopus incentivises honest and transparent sharing of work for fellow researchers to learn from.

Research quality
Problem: Typically, traditional publications carry out peer review once the entire research process is complete, meaning any faults within the research are not discovered until very late on.

Solution: Octopus allows for open peer review at any stage of the research process. By enabling early peer review, there is increased opportunity for researchers to reflect on their processes.

Keywords: Open publishing; Collaboration; Transparency; Reproducibility

References:

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Theme 10: Challenges in Research Career Development

What do early career researchers value in their jobs? A mixed methods study to inform discrete choice experiments on academic job preferences

Noam Tal-Perry; Lara Abel; Kate Murray; Mollie Etheridge; Becky Ioppolo; Katherine Dawson; Marie Collier; Debbie Birkett; Liz Simmonds; Steven Wooding
University of Cambridge

Background:
Early research careers are often characterised by a lack of employment security and narrow career paths (BEIS, 2021). Several research organisations have suggested problems associated with precarity could be mitigated by redeploying researchers between posts within the organization (Russell Group, 2021; UCU, 2023; UKRI, 2023), which might involve sacrificing academic freedom and other factors in favour of increased job security. Our study assesses the appeal of redeployment for early career researchers (ECRs), using a Discrete Choice Experiment (DCE) to understand better whether, and for whom, redeployment might be a suitable option. Here we report results from our exploratory work which informs the design of the DCE.

Findings:
We performed a systematic literature review, covering 106 DCE studies on job preference, from which we extracted 21 factors that inform job choices. This was supplemented by focus groups and interviews with 10 postdocs to solicit job attributes ECRs deem important. We categorised these attributes deductively based on this 21-factor framework and inductively created new factors where needed. Results were validated in four interviews with researcher careers consultants experts. This informed an online structured prioritisation exercise (SPE) where we collected responses from a wider sample of postdocs tested. Our results confirmed the importance ECRs give to job security, location, and research topic, but also showed the importance of the latter lessens with academic seniority and family considerations.

Discussion and Next Steps:
Our findings will help design a large-scale DCE, where we ask ECRs to choose between job profiles compiled based on the factors solicited in the exploratory work. We aim to quantify the subjective preferences ECRs have for each factor, as well as the trade-off they make between them, allowing us to infer the appeal for redeployment schemes for different groups of ECRs.

Keywords: Precarity; Postdocs; Employment; Redeployment; Employee retention

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Mid-Career Researcher Development: Navigating the Landscape
Connie Wan; Amanda Chukwudozie
University of Nottingham

Background:
The Researcher Academy (RA) at the University of Nottingham launched the pilot Research Leadership Accelerator Programme (RLAP) earlier this year, providing dedicated leadership and development support for the university's Mid-Career Researchers (MCRs). RLAP aims to empower mid-career researchers to excel in their current roles and prepare them for leadership as part of the Researcher Academy's commitment to developing a talent pipeline of research leaders for the future. The RLAP curriculum covers leadership, negotiation and influence, funding strategies, leading diverse teams and a cohort-led research culture project. It also provides 1:1 coaching, mentorship and an alumni/peer network beyond the programme itself.

Findings:
MCRs often emerge from their ECR journey without a plan for transiting into the balancing act of research, teaching and management (in addition to a life stage characterised by more family responsibilities). Consequently, it can be challenging to navigate this landscape with clarity of purpose.

We have found MCRs to be willing and highly capable of research leadership, but they can be hamstrung by a lack of attention from institutions and workloads that impede their research vision. Our first year of delivering an MCR Researcher Leadership programme at UoN has shown us the necessity for deliberate pedagogy and resources to harness their position as highly skilled and multifaceted researchers.

Discussion and Next Steps:
1. Understand approaches to MCR CPD nationally through a dialogue around MCR development in different contexts.
2. Create a resource bank and/or CoP around MCR leadership provision across HEIs.

Keywords: Researcher Leadership; Researcher Development; Mid-Career Researchers; Community of Practice; Research Culture

Driving Culture Change: The Power of Narrative CVs
Catalina Bastidas; Prof Jemina Napier
Heriot-Watt University

Engaging active researchers in Research Culture activities amidst evolving funding landscapes presents both challenges and opportunities. The introduction of the Narrative CV emerges as a pivotal tool for driving culture change, fostering inclusive engagement across career stages.

Since June 2023, we have conducted a series of interactive, in-person Narrative CV workshops tailored to a multidisciplinary audience. These workshops, developed in collaboration with the Research Engagement Directorate, aim to equip researchers with practical skills to navigate the Narrative CV effectively.

The workshop comprises three essential presentations:

1. Transitioning to the UKRI Funding Service (TFS) Update: Providing insights into the shifting landscape of research funding to ensure researchers stay informed.

2. Introduction to the Narrative CV: Delving into the structure and nuances of Narrative CV, empowering participants to articulate their research impact compellingly.

3, Introduction to the Teams Narrative CV: Exploring collaborative CV formats, emphasizing challenges and opportunities in team-based research narratives.

Beyond presentations, the workshop offers an immersive experience where participants engage in lively discussions and breakout sessions. Facilitators guide participants through the intricacies of crafting their Narrative CVs, fostering authentic and impactful storytelling.

Preparation begins a month prior, with participants paired to draft their Narrative CVs using resources such as University of Glasgow's informative video and templates from Oxford University and the University of Surrey. Guidance from esteemed mentors like Jemina and Prof Suzanne Fitzpatrick enriches the process, providing practical tips and frameworks for narrative design.

Our initiative aims not only to enhance individual and Team CVs but also to build a vibrant community of practice across the UK research landscape. By bridging gaps between resources and practical application, these workshops empower researchers to contribute meaningfully to Research Culture activities and drive impactful change.

Building support for reviewing and writing Narrative CVs

Dr Marie Collier (1); Katherine Dawson (1); Katie Murray (1); Justyna Bandola-Gill (2)
1. University of Cambridge; 2. University of Birmingham

In this workshop, members of the Action Research on Research Culture project (ARRC), working with Dr Justyna Bandola-Gill from University of Birmingham, seek to help those who are reviewing and writing Narrative CVs.

The session will include an introduction to available resources, including those produced by the ARRC team as part of our Narrative CV study; a video 'talk along' with a funding application panel member walking through the process of reviewing a Narrative CV and a discussion in which participants can input into co-designing a resource to make both reviewing and writing the Narrative CV easier.

The session will be led by ARRC careers consultant Kate Murray.

Posters

A community of practice for open research trainers
Joseph Angus Corneli, Neil Jacobs
Oxford Brookes University

Addressing social mobility issues in STEM: Expanding a departmental approach to work experience through a cross-faculty research culture partnership
Craig Carnegie, Helena Verrill, Rebecca Nealon
University of Warwick

Becoming a Mature Postgraduate Researcher: Challenges and Rewards
Marianne Talbot, Ruth Winden
University of Leeds

Best Practice in the chemical characterisation of extracts used in pharmacological and toxicological research: 'The ConPhyMP' Guidelines and Open Access Tool
Banaz Jalil
University College London

Bridging the Skills Gap in People in Data
Clementina Ramirez Marengo, Vera Matser, Emma Karoune, Matthew Forshaw, Luis Santos and Ann-Marie Mallon
The Alan Turing Institute

Celebrating what we already have: new cross-disciplinary initiatives at York
Alex Payne-Dwyer, Victoria Noble, Amber Yeoman, Ryan Pound, Tim Passchier, Fleur Hughes, James Sherwood, Alex Pike, Andrew Holding, Cobus Smit, Jamieson Howard, Lianne Lansink, Liz Rylott, Vanessa Keller, Michael Plevin, Stephanie Ellis and Ines Hahn
University of York

Co-production of a Training Programme to improve research culture and EDI across multiple institutions
Kerry Broom, Dimitris Evangelopoulous, Angela Lewis, Ruthie Parsons, Kirsti Hornigold, Anastasia Ioakeimidou, Ami Bhavsar, Matthew D Wright, Liz Ainsbury, Frédéric B. Piel.
UK Health Security Agency

Countering silos and hierarchies through peer-to-peer research-in-progress conversations
Richard Smith, Ayten Alibaba, Joana Almeida, Kieran File, Elyanora Menglieva, Miriam Schwiening, Lila Tennent, Yvette Wang and Emma Williams
University of Warwick

Diverse contributions to research: Understanding and recognising the allocation of credit in educational research
Xin Xu, Alis Oancea, Jess Pilgrim-Brown, Chang Shen, Farzana Chowdhury, Farzana Begum
University of Oxford, University College London, Manchester Metropolitan University

Enhancing Public Engagement: Inclusive Communication Strategies for Academic Research
Yanyan Li, Xinran Gao
University of Warwick

Exploring Culture, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (CEDI) and career development practices, gaps, and solutions at a London university
Aneita Pringle, Louise Pacelli, Zoe Kennedy, Robert Patterson
King's College London

From research to policy to practice: Minimising Exclusionary Structural Barriers for Research Environments
Carola Boehm, Josie Beech, Ravinder Kaur
Staffordshire University

Hidden in Plain Sight: Research Culture and the Researcher Experience
Dr Harriet Richmond; Charlotte Marshall
University of Warwick, University of Northampton

Impact through interdisciplinarity at the Enterprise Research Centre
Vicki Belt
University of Warwick

ORACLE: an early intervention to embed Open Research practice in research projects
Steven Vidovic
University of Southampton

Outlining the development of an EDI Research Centre at the University of York
Karisha Kimone George, Silvia Mantilla-Wright; Trish Chinzara
University of York

Reflections on 'Pathways in Research: Building Resilience and Collaborations': a professional development & community-building event in the Department of Philosophy
Clarissa Muller, Giulia Lorenzi
University of Warwick

Reforming research assessment to incentivize Open Research practices - where have we been and where are we going?
Anna Korzeniowska
University of Surrey

Responding to visa and passport inequities for equitable research partnerships with Global South: A case study of the University of Bristol
Dapo Awobeku, Anthony Muchai Manyara
University of Bristol

Rethinking research leadership at the University of Birmingham
Natasha Kriznik, Dr Ipshita Ghose, Professor Chris Millward, Dr Zania Stamataki and Professor Ed Wilding

Sceptics and champions: Participant insights on the use of partial randomisation to allocate research culture funding
Catherine Davies, Holly Ingram
University of Leeds

The collective experience of developing and presenting our paper at the BERA ECR Annual Conference in June 2024: "Navigating Collective Academic Development: A Case Study of the Activity of the Editorial Board of a Community Academic Journal"
Marianne Talbot
University of Leeds

The Research Integrity / Research Culture Interface - Experience from a large, research-intensive University
Grace Mulcahy, Gilian Boyle, Adrian Ottewill
University College Dublin

The role of Warwick's Social Mobility Student Research Hub in fostering inclusion in the research space
Ellis Ryan
University of Warwick

The Supervisor and Postgraduate (PGR) Partnership Agreement
Lina al Jabbar, Roz Stanton, Chris Howls, Heather Mackenzie, Tracey Newman, Lilian Odaro, Nandini Das
University of Southampton

The vision for the National Centre for Research Culture at the University of Warwick
Sotaro Kita, Marie Sams, Victoria Strudwick
University of Warwick

To be, or not to be, in the ivory tower: An ethnographic inquiry of being and becoming in higher education in the physical sciences
Mariam Yacoub
University of Kent

Toolkit to promote equitable budget allocations for Global South research projects
Anthony Muchai Manyara
University of Bristol

Valuing Voices: A Toolkit for Equitable and Responsible Research
Zaynab Seedat
University of York

Warwick PATHWAY Programme: a positive action programme to facilitate Black researchers' career
Sotaro Kita, Vicky Strudwick
University of Warwick