Research Culture Enablers @Warwick (RCEN@Warwick)

Challenge-driven community network – open to all!

ERCF 2026-27 projects
Community and Connections

Tuesday 10th November
11am – 12pm



Enhancing Research Culture Fund 2026-27

Supporting community-led initiatives that strengthen Warwick's research culture

- 34 applications received
- 17 projects funded (11 T, F &S; 6 CoP)
- £110,000 invested

Communities supported

PGRs | Postdoctoral Researchers | ECRs | Supervisors | Technicians | Research Professionals | Disabled Researchers | Interdisciplinary Communities | Open Research Practitioners

Research Culture Enablers at Warwick: Community and Connections



- Strengthening the Warwick Research Technical Professionals Forum
  Maelle Lorvellec; Joanna Drozd

- Quantum Interactions: Strengthening Community and Collaboration for Warwick Quantum
  Subhash Lakshminarayana; Animesh Datta

- Open Connections: Building Sustainable Research Communities in Computer Science
  Ayten Alibaba

- Institutional Policy Toolkit for Inclusive AI Adoption
  Jason Snow*; **Federica Coluzzi***

- Safe to Speak: Peer Mentoring for PGRs
  Claire Bastie; ***Saran Shantikumar;*** *Areesh Fatmee*

- Worlds in the Making: Embedding Interdisciplinary Research Clusters and Inclusive Governance in Cross-Faculty Studies
  Feng Mao; ***Jane Webb***

Project title: **Strengthening the Warwick RTProf Forum through Knowledge Exchange and Shared Practice**

Co-leads: Maëlle Lorvellec (Warwick Medical School)
Joanna Drozd (Chemistry)

1 Challenge addressed

Specialist technical expertise is often held within individual teams or facilities.

The existing Forum established in 2023 (ERCF) needs renewed engagement and more opportunities for peer learning.

2 Intended beneficiaries

Research Technical Professionals across Gibbet Hill, Central and Innovation (Wellesbourne) campuses; indirect benefits for researchers and students through improved technical practice.

3 Project scope

4 local coordinated networking lunches • peer-led knowledge exchange • shared practical resources in Microsoft Teams • a University-wide networking and knowledge-exchange event.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

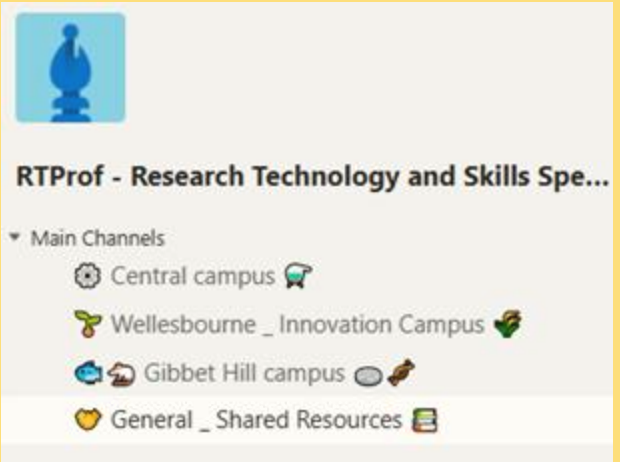
Proposed routes to sustainability

1 Success measures

Increase Participation across the three campuses and in peer-led activities

Feedback on usefulness and examples of good practice

Contributions to and engagement with the shared RTProf Teams resources (since Oct 26 +5,+9,+13, now 62 members…)



2 Pathway to embedding

Build a lasting, accessible collection of practical resources in RTProf Teams.

Encourage current and new local organisers and contributors to sustain the Forum beyond June 2027.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Calls to action

How can colleagues get involved?

- Help spread the word about the RTProf Forum within your departments and networks, across all campuses. https://warwick.ac.uk/research/technicians/rtpforums/

- Suggest a speaker or topic – for example, sustainability, professional development, research governance, procurement, laboratory accessibility, or research data management...

- Explore collaboration opportunities – could your Research Culture project contribute to an RTProf lunch or benefit from engaging with technical professionals?

Get in touch:
Maelle.Lorvellec@warwick.ac.uk
J.Drozd@warwick.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Project title: Quantum Interactions: Strengthening Community and Collaboration for Warwick Quantum

Leads: Subhash Lakshminarayana (Engg), Animesh Datta (Physics)

1. Challenge addressed
    - 6 departments with different research cultures (Phys, Chem, Maths, CS, Engg., WMG)
    - 26 PIs

2. Intended beneficiaries
    - 43 ECRs (PhDs and PDRAs)

3. Project scope
    - Faculty-wide for Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine
    - Aspire to involve Philosophy, Statistics

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Proposed routes to sustainability

1. Success measures
    - Cross-departmental participation numbers in project activities
    - ECR involvement measured in speaker numbers and repeat participation

2. Pathway to embedding
    - “Bottom-up” ECR/PGR-led initiatives (reading groups, social activities,…)
    - Low-stakes opportunity for ECRs/PGRs to practice their presentation skills for broad audiences

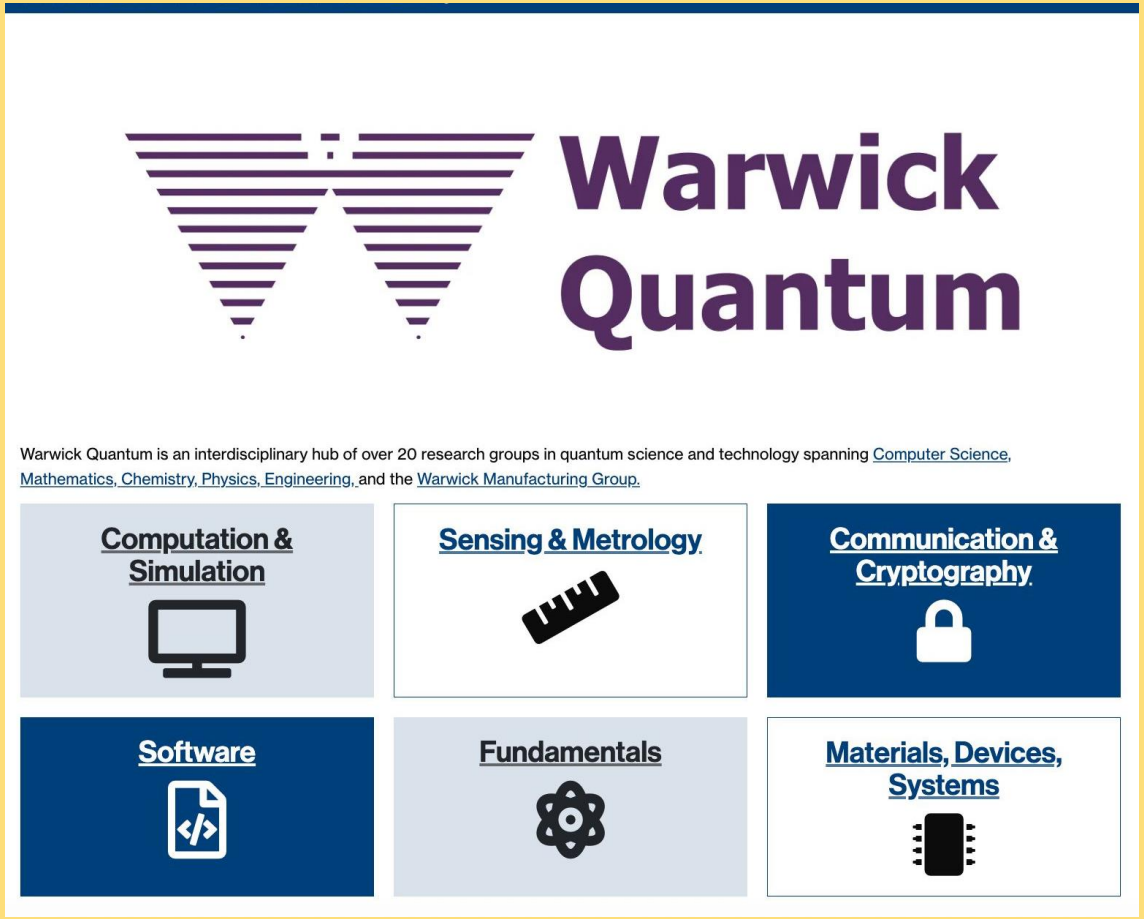
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Calls to action

Reach out to the PIs

- *Subhash Lakshminarayana*
- *Animesh Datta (Physics)*
- *Emails: firstname.lastname@warwick.ac.uk*

- *Join us via our webpage: (Warwick Quantum) https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/warwickquantum/*



UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Project title: Open Connections: Building Sustainable Research Communities in Computer Science - Lead: Dr Ayten Alibaba

1. Challenge addressed

Research group specialisation, limited cross-group interaction and PGR belonging.

- How can we create a stronger sense of belonging and connectedness across the Department, while recognising the diversity of PGR experiences, research interests and working practices?

2. Intended beneficiaries

Primarily PGRs, but also academic, technical and professional services colleagues.

Longer-term benefit: A more connected departmental culture in which relationships, knowledge exchange and peer support contribute to a positive research environment.

3. Project scope

Open Connections will create structured and informal opportunities for PGRs to connect across research groups, disciplines and career stages.

A programme of community-building activities, PGR Community Ambassadors, co-design and evaluation.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Proposed routes to sustainability

Postgraduate Research students will play a central role in encouraging participation, identifying needs, co-designing activities and helping to sustain momentum.

1. **Success measures**

Improved belonging, connectedness and evidence of new relationships.

Belonging: Do PGRs feel more connected to the wider departmental community?

Connectedness: Are doctoral researchers developing relationships beyond their immediate research groups?

Participation: Are PGRs from different groups and stages engaging with activities?

Knowledge exchange: Are new conversations, research discussions and opportunities for collaboration emerging?

Ownership: Do PGRs feel empowered to shape their research community?

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Proposed routes to sustainability

2. Pathway to embedding

Community Toolkit, embedding activities into departmental practice and continued PGR involvement.

- Establish a baseline through surveys and community system mapping.
- Work with PGR Ambassadors to identify priorities and shape activities.
- Test a range of intellectual, developmental and informal activities.
- Identify what works, who benefits and where barriers remain.
- Produce a Community Toolkit and recommendations for future departmental practice.

Legacy: A replicable approach to community-building that can inform future initiatives across and beyond the Department of Computer Science,

Calls to action

The Department's 60th anniversary is an opportunity to invest in the next generation of research community.

Belonging is not simply being part of an institution; it is being able to participate in and shape its community.

Invite colleagues to participate, share expertise, host activities and help build connections.

- **Baseline and follow-up surveys**
- **Community system mapping**
- **Photovoice**
- **Participant feedback**
- **Mid-project review**

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The AI Commons

Project Team

Jason Snow - Research & Impact Services (R&IS)

Dr Federica Coluzzi - Associate Fellow, Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) and R&IS

Dr Yanyan Li - Associate Fellow, IAS



https://warwick.ac.uk/research/research-culture-at-warwick/aicommons/

Research culture thrives when every role is visible, valued, and understood. Yet communication across disciplines, job families, and hierarchies often breaks down.

This project explores the extent to which AI tools might help - or hinder - our attempts to navigate disciplinary, professional, and linguistic gaps to stengthen community and connections across the whole research ecosystem.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The AI Commons: Challenges Addressed

Communication Barriers in a Culturally Diverse Research Ecosystem: Research relies heavily on collaboration, yet researchers, professional services staff, technicians, and stakeholders often operate in distinct linguistic and cultural worlds. Communication styles reflect underlying institutional and cultural values.

The Dual Nature of AI as a Communicative Mediator: While artificial intelligence can bridge communication gaps, support different languages, and widen participation (particularly benefiting English as an Additional Language [EAL] speakers and neurodivergent [ND] individuals), its effects are not neutral. It risks standardizing expression, obscuring context, making certain voices invisible, or disadvantaging those who cannot access it equally.

Organizational Silos and Structural Disconnection: Misunderstandings frequently arise from complex institutional processes, discipline-specific jargon, and siloed working between academic departments and professional services - issues that technology alone cannot resolve.

Stigma and Social Judgment: Staff and students often face anxiety around writing, language proficiency, or differing communication styles, risking unfair assumptions about their competence or professional intelligence.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The AI Commons: Project Scope

core Beneficiaries

The project focuses on researchers, professional services staff, technicians, and postgraduate researchers across the University of Warwick.

Focus on Research Culture (RC)

Rather than evaluating AI purely from a technical or efficiency standpoint, the project examine**s AI through the lens of research culture, specifically investigating what the technology reveals about interpersonal collaboration, knowledge production, and institutional equity.**

Key Areas of Critical Interest

Special emphasis is placed on exploring how AI mediates **communication for EAL and neurodivergent staff** to foster greater accessibility and inclusion.

Methodological Approach

The project combines a university-wide staff survey, **online focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and interactive community-building events** (such as the *Human Teams & Hidden Machines* workshop and the *Common Tongues, Different Voices* creative competition) to capture lived experiences and generate evidence-based recommendations for institutional policy.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

The AI Commons:
Activities and Success Measures

CORE ACTIVITIES

01 | Survey: 121 Responses
Gathered comprehensive feedback across 23 academic departments and 10 professional services teams regarding everyday AI communication tools.

02 | Interviews: Individual & Focus Groups: In-Depth Insights
Explored lived experiences, workplace communication challenges, and daily AI adoption patterns in greater depth across roles.

03 | Creative Competition: 10 Submissions
Engaged professional services teams through innovative and creative submissions addressing our core project themes.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

04 | International Research Culture Conference 2026: Presenting & Workshop
Sharing findings and hosting an interactive workshop at IRCC 2026 focusing on AI and collaborative research culture.

05 | Workshop for Talent Development Team: AI, Authorship and Audiences: Finding Your Voice, or Lost in Translation?
Delivering a specialized professional development workshop exploring voice, authorship, and AI in workplace communication

06 | **Network Building:** Established connections with Warwick AI and Research (Statistics), the AI Technology Adoption team in IDG, and other initiatives focused on widening participation and AI writing ethics.



'Human Teams & Hidden Machines' Workshop

The *Human Teams & Hidden Machines* workshop, delivered during Research Culture Week 2026 at the University of Warwick, explored how people perceive and evaluate AI-generated versus human-written workplace communication. Through practical writing activities, anonymous voting, surveys, live polling, and group discussions, participants examined what makes communication effective, authentic, and trustworthy. The workshop found that AI was valued for producing clear, organised text and supporting editing, while human-written communication was often preferred for its contextual awareness, practical examples, natural tone, and authenticity. The session encouraged a balanced understanding of AI as a supportive communication tool, while emphasising the continuing importance of human judgement and experience.







'Common Tongues, Different Voices' Creative Competition

The AI Commons Creative Competition encouraged participants to creatively explore how generative AI is transforming communication, collaboration, and relationships across the research ecosystem. Moving beyond technical capabilities, the competition invited reflection on broader social, cultural, and organisational themes, including belonging, inclusion, trust, accessibility, institutional voice, and human–technology relationships. Participants proposed creative works through an Expression of Interest process, with five groups selected to develop and present their ideas at a showcase event. The submissions received spanned diverse formats, including a poster, painting, poem, and interactive AI agent. Participants also reflected on their creative processes and the role of AI in their work.

Please find the video for the creative competition below.





Talent and Development

Meet our Team | Frequently Asked Questions | Researcher Development Hub

Development Programmes > AI, Authorship and Audiences: Finding Your Voice, or Lost in...

AI, Authorship and Audiences: Finding Your Voice, or Lost in Translation?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a disruptive and transformative force in research culture. Its widespread use has prompted us to rethink how research is conducted, written, shared, and consumed. Digitally mediated forms of dissemination, changing expectations, and emerging career pathways are expanding the ways researchers can communicate their work beyond traditional academic publications. As researchers are increasingly encouraged to engage diverse audiences, partners and stakeholders, and to work in interdisciplinary ways, AI offers new possibilities for adapting and communicating research across different contexts and communication channels.

Beyond the productivity and efficiency it promises, however, the rise of AI has generated concerns about plagiarism, hallucinations, and the integrity of scholarship. It also raises broader questions about authorship, accountability, authenticity, intellectual ownership, and the nature of scholarly expertise itself. While AI may help researchers communicate more effectively and reach new audiences, its use also raises important questions about accuracy, nuance, and trust.

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

AI Commons: Phase 2 Community of Practice (2026-27)

Developing practical guidance, inclusive policies, and accessible approaches to AI adoption.

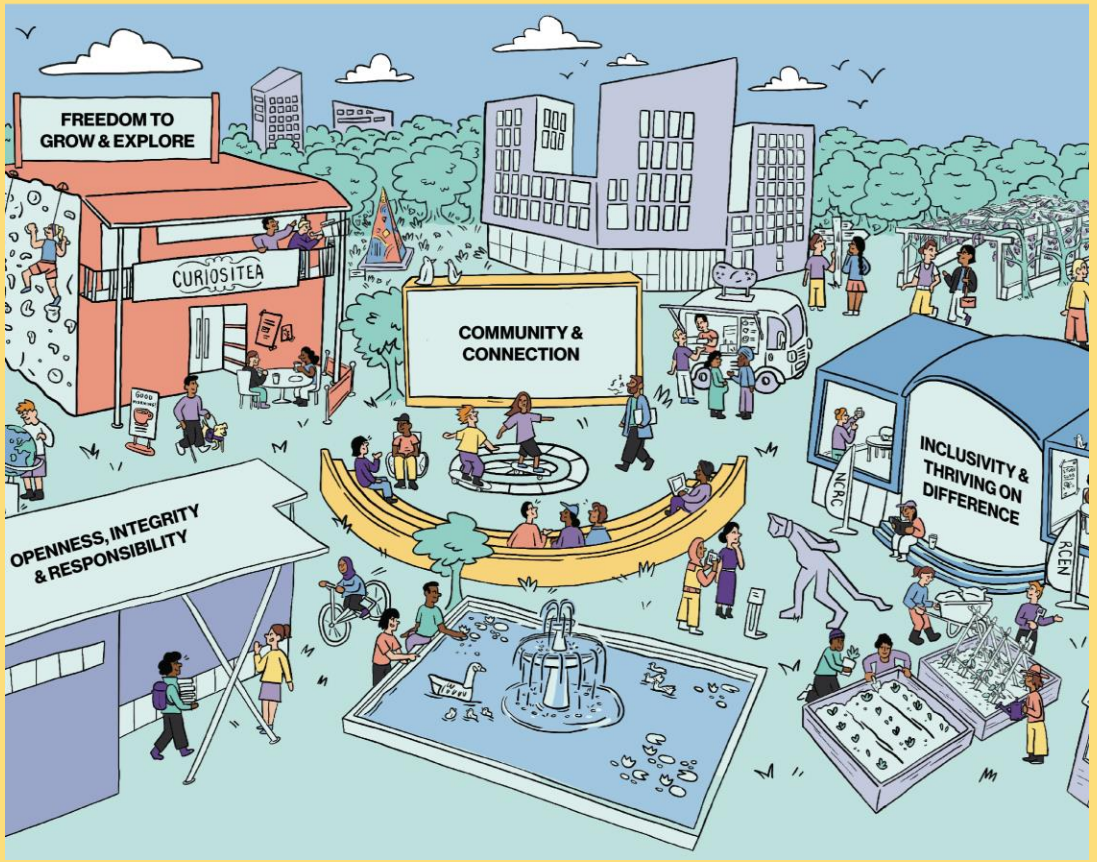


- **Community of Practice:** A peer-supported network connecting researchers, support staff, administrators, technicians and research professionals to build solidarity, share practical knowledge, and explore digital training tools and resources for prompt engineering and policy compliance.
- **Co-Produced Guidance & Toolkits:** Collaborating with participating departments, Disability Services, Learning Enhancement, IDG, and EDI leadership to develop actionable, accessible guidance on AI use for communication support.
- **Institutional Feedback Loop:** Establishing structured connections between lived experiences and institutional policy to ensure technical feasibility, reflect core values, and embed inclusive practices into everyday departmental

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

RCEN@Warwick

Safe to Speak:
Embedding a Sustainable Peer Mentoring Programme for PGRs



Warwick Medical School

Community & Connections
10 November 2026

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Safe to Speak

Claire Bastie (Director of Graduate Studies, WMS)
Areesh Fatmee (Postgraduate Researcher, WMS)

Overview: peer mentoring programme for PGRs, offering trained peer support to discuss challenges, build connections and signpost to appropriate additional support

1. Challenge addressed

PGRs may hesitate to raise difficulties with those assessing their progress

2. Intended beneficiaries

PGRs at Warwick Medical School – as mentees and mentors

Flexible participation for part-time, clinical and off-campus researchers

3. Project scope

- Develop and deploy training for peer mentors
- Develop and deploy a Moodle-based matching system
- Mentors and mentees to meet every two months, with clear boundaries / staff support
- Launch: January 2027. Evaluation and toolkit: June 2027

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Proposed routes to sustainability

1. Success measures

Pre/post questionnaire & post focus group across the participating cohort, following ethical approval

To measure

- Programme uptake - 10 mentors, 10 mentees
- Confidence in speaking openly and confidentially - 75% agreement
- Proportion of scheduled meetings held - 70% held
- Understanding benefits and limitations of the programme

2. Pathway to embedding

Annual recruitment and training within existing WMS roles

Joint ownership by the PGR Student Development Lead and an SSLC representative

Reusable training, Moodle resources and an openly licensed toolkit

Explore links with Doctoral College and future use of Safe to Speak across departments

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Calls to action

Share experiences

What has worked and not worked in your mentoring scheme?

Connect related activities

Help us link with existing peer support and training

Explore adapting the programme

Let us know if you are interested in reviewing or using the toolkit

Contacts

Claire Bastie: C.C.Bastie@warwick.ac.uk

Areesh Fatmee: Areesh.Fatmee@warwick.ac.uk

Saran Shantikumar: saran.shantikumar@warwick.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Project title: **Worlds in the Making: Embedding interdisciplinary research clusters and inclusive governance in the School for Cross-faculty Studies**

Leads: **Dr. Feng Mao and Dr. Jane Webb with Drs. Hita Unnikrishnan and Katherine Travers (Leverhulme Early Career Fellow), also Ilaria Ravazzolo (PGR SSLC Chair)**

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

1. **Challenge Addressed**

a. SCFS is interdisciplinary both in terms of its staff makeup and each member of staff's profiles
b. SCFS is largely a teaching-focused staff
c. Interplay of research, teaching and impact
d. We have a relatively new PhD environment – support for career interdisciplinarity
e. Inclusivity in research leadership

2. **Intended beneficiaries**

80 Staff, post-docs and PhD students within SCFS

3**. Project scope**

(i) establish three inclusive thematic clusters as durable communities of shared purpose; (ii) expand accessible opportunities for collaboration, interdisciplinary experimentation, and career development; (iii) connect research with research-led education, engagement, impact and innovation; and (iv) embed transparent governance that recognises diverse contributions and allocates opportunities equitably.

Proposed routes to sustainability

1. **Success measures**

a. Cluster development and sustainability
b. Leadership and reporting
c. Impact on School culture (frequency of events, attendance etc.)
d. Emergence of shared projects, funding bids etc.
e. Visibility of research themes and scope
f. Impact for PGR community

2. **Pathway to embedding**

a. Formalizing the SCFS Culture Group
b. Formal reporting from group coordinators
c. Interplay of group coordinators with Research Committee

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Calls to action

How should colleagues get involved?

a. SCFS culture focused but aligned to Research Spotlights will be encouraged

b. Projects development and cross-faculty interaction

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Research Culture Enablers at Warwick: Community and Connections



- Strengthening the Warwick Research Technical Professionals Forum
  Maelle Lorvellec; Joanna Drozd

- Quantum Interactions: Strengthening Community and Collaboration for Warwick Quantum
  Subhash Lakshminarayana; Animesh Datta

- Open Connections: Building Sustainable Research Communities in Computer Science
  Ayten Alibaba

- Institutional Policy Toolkit for Inclusive AI Adoption
  Jason Snow*; **Federica Coluzzi***

- Safe to Speak: Peer Mentoring for PGRs
  Claire Bastie; ***Saran Shantikumar;*** *Areesh Fatmee*

- Worlds in the Making: Embedding Interdisciplinary Research Clusters and Inclusive Governance in Cross-Faculty Studies
  Feng Mao; ***Jane Webb***

Enhancing Research Culture Fund 2026-27

🌱 Freedom to Grow & Explore

- Festival of Postdoctoral Research
- Year of the PGR
- Behaviour Is Information, Not a Failing: Embedding Trauma-Informed Supervision as Everyday Practice in PGR
- Strengthening Research Culture Through Supervision: A Coaching Pilot for Warwick
- The RDX: A Cross-University Community for Researcher-Development Practice

Strategic Project:

Understanding researcher's experiences of failure in academia and identifying recommendations to better support research careers in higher education

Tuesday 15th December, hybrid (IAS Seminar room)

Strategic Projects



Women in Academia



Understanding Researcher experiences of failure



Research and Research Professionals Wellbeing



PATHWAY 2



Public, Patient and Community Involvement in Research



AI and Research Culture at Warwick

Knowledge sharing on upcoming opportunities

- Catalogue cards for 26/27 projects
- RCEN@Warwick Resource board
- Future RCEN@Warwick events

Month	Theme	Content
15th December	Freedom to Grow & Explore	Overview of theme 26-27 ERCF projects
February	Inclusivity & Thriving on Difference	Overview of theme 26-27 ERCF projects
April	Openness, Integrity & Responsibility	Overview of theme 26-27 ERCF projects

- Bring along a colleague to the next RCEN@Warwick event to grow this community