

# Research Culture

Strategic Plan  
2023-2028



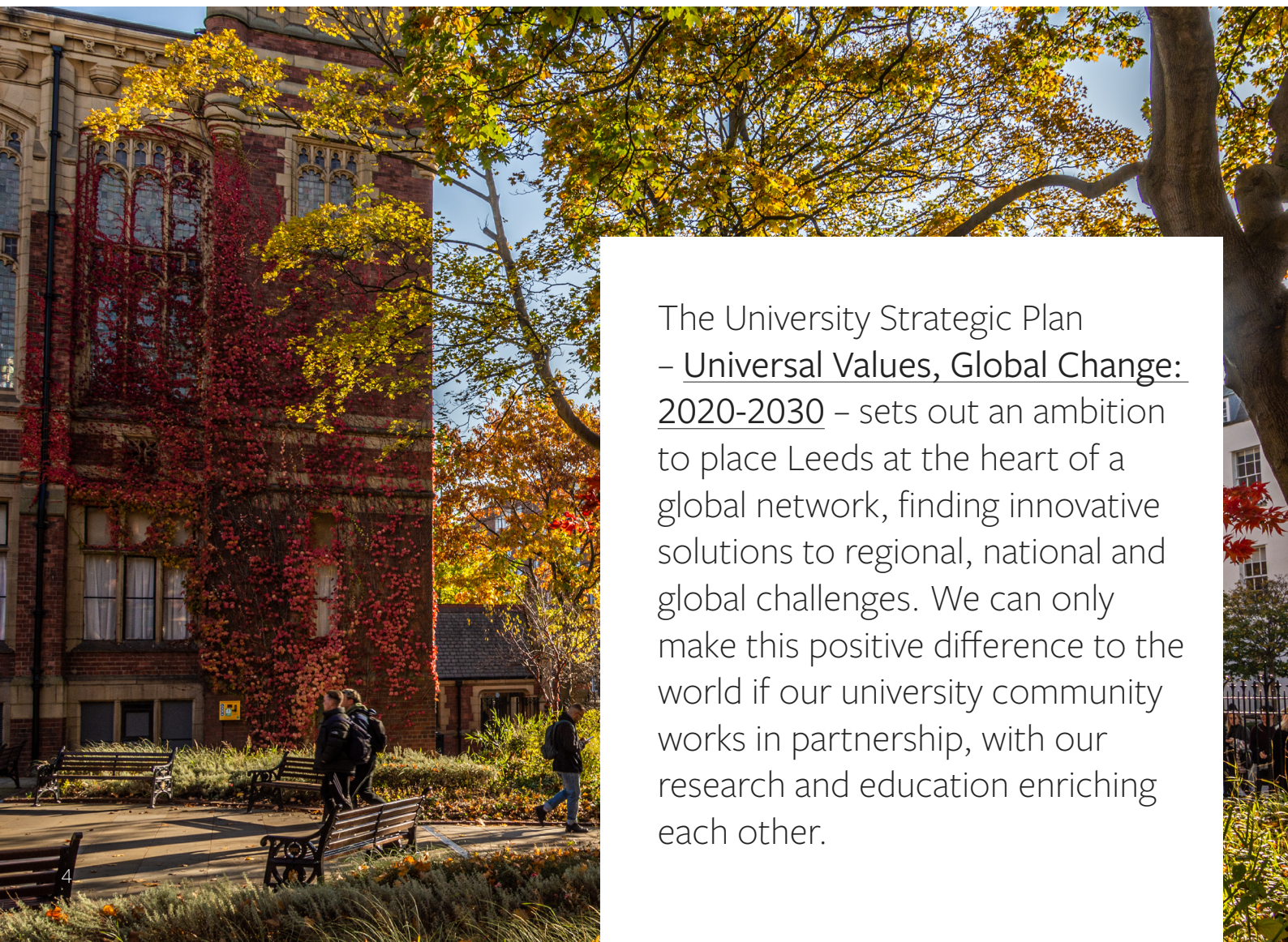
UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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# 1

## Foreword from the Vice-Chancellor and President, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation



The University Strategic Plan – Universal Values, Global Change: 2020-2030 – sets out an ambition to place Leeds at the heart of a global network, finding innovative solutions to regional, national and global challenges. We can only make this positive difference to the world if our university community works in partnership, with our research and education enriching each other.

Key to delivering this vision is an ambitious, inclusive research culture and environment that will support our staff to achieve their full potential, realising our shared goals.

All members of our community have a role to play in developing and promoting a positive and inclusive research culture. In turn, this enhanced research culture will benefit our entire community: our staff, students, partners, and the communities we serve. It will create an environment that encourages innovation and creativity, where our staff and student community feel empowered to explore unconventional ideas that generate societal impact. It will support values and goals based on ethical behaviour, engendering trust and compassion, creating an environment that nurtures collaboration.

At Leeds, we recognise the critical need for culture change and the many benefits that will be realised by moving swiftly. In 2021 we formalised our efforts to improve research culture, placing Leeds at the heart of the systematic reform needed to empower more staff to produce high-quality research in the right way.

Solving the complex problems that face our world requires a concerted community effort. We must collaborate openly across disciplines and sectors, bringing together fundamental and translational researchers with the likes of policy makers, business, and third sector organisations and others to deliver long-lasting change. We must develop, recognise, and reward the many different contributions required to achieve these ambitions.

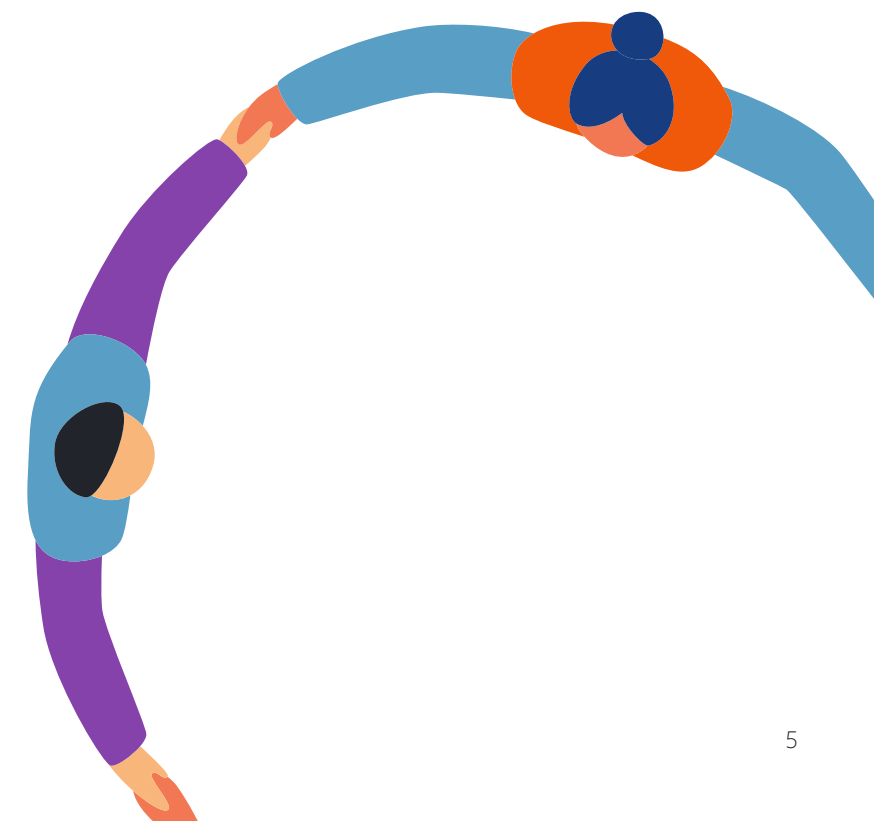
The Research Excellence Framework's (REF) recognition of positive research culture and societal impact as central components of research excellence is now established. Our major research funders are shifting towards positive structural and behavioural improvements. At Leeds we are building on this momentum, creating deep, positive change.

This research culture strategic plan – forming an overarching strategy for research culture with its action plan – provides an essential framework for embedding initiatives across the institution and for integrating practice that will enhance our environment and wellbeing. It signals a commitment to lifting barriers at all research career stages and for all job roles. We will be open about the challenges that persist and will collaborate in our approach to solving them.

It is the responsibility of all our staff whose roles impact upon research – academic, professional, and technical – to have this vision at the forefront of their minds as we embark on the next five years.

**Professor Simone Buitendijk,**  
Vice-Chancellor and President

**Professor Nick Plant,**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation





# 2

## What do we mean by research culture?

Research culture describes the environment in which research and innovation happens, and how that environment impacts all those involved. It includes the ways that we collaborate, communicate, and interact with each other; the behaviours, attitudes, and values that shape how our research is developed, conducted, and used; and the mechanisms that recognise and reward our work.

“We do research which seeks to improve and save lives - medical, engineering, climate science, etc., and we’re imparting knowledge to the next generation to keep that going. All of us make different and important contributions to keep the University running and make this happen. I’m proud to work for an organisation that does all this”.

Staff member, July 2021

**At the University of Leeds, we recognise and value everyone involved in research, across all career stages and paths. Participants in research; our collaborators and external partners; academic, research and technical staff; colleagues in professional services; students, and those in many other roles within the University all make essential contributions. Together we enable, conduct, participate in, and disseminate research.**

Like other research institutions, we face significant challenges to our research culture. As acknowledged in our [research culture statement](#), our environment is not as diverse as it should be, and we often define and reward success too narrowly. Our funding mechanisms can be complex and over competitive, our structures can be rigidly hierarchical, and we need to do better at creating a safe and supportive environment that enables colleagues to flag when things are going wrong.

The University of Leeds is committed to improving its research culture. Our [University Strategy](#) provides a blueprint for a values-driven university that harnesses its expertise in research and research-led education to help shape a better future, working collaboratively to tackle inequalities, achieve societal impact, and drive change. Focusing on three core themes – Community, Culture, and Impact – the overarching strategy sets out our ambition to offer a collaborative, supportive, and safe environment for the entire University community and emphasises the importance of teamwork and diversity. To deliver the 10-year strategy, we must achieve an **inclusive, equitable, open, and supportive research culture**.



## Research culture is changing. This is our strategic vision for the University's part in that change

Through collective responsibility, we will create an environment in which everyone can do their most impactful and satisfying research. Leading research can only emerge from a place where colleagues are recognised for their diverse work, where supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion is the norm, where research can be done confidently and openly, and where there is a culture of mutual support.

A positive, collaborative research culture not only provides an enjoyable and sustainable work life, it is also essential for delivering **high quality research** and **research-led education**. An environment that supports open academic discovery, while protecting and rewarding those involved, is most likely to lead to robust research. For example, ethnic diversity within a collaborator team strongly correlates with research impact<sup>1</sup>.

### An inclusive, open, and supportive research culture will:

- improve the quality, impact, and reach of our research
- inspire researchers to effectively respond to current and future global challenges
- enable researchers to develop their careers in ways that are personally and collectively fulfilling
- deliver research-led education that will train and inspire the next generation of global citizens
- attract and retain the best research teams
- build trust within our organisation
- eliminate harmful research practices, e.g., exclusion, self-interest, wastage.

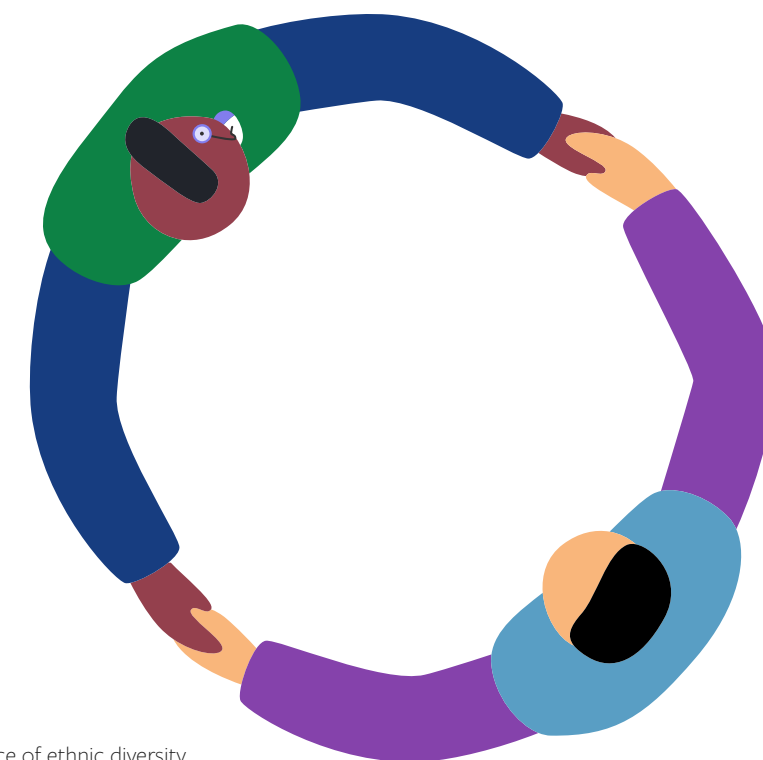
More instrumentally, as funders and other external stakeholders increasingly require researchers to evidence the behaviours that create a positive research culture, we need to incorporate positive practices into our core ways of working. Major funders such as UKRI and Wellcome are now making funding contingent on evidencing the move towards a healthier local culture, and research culture will constitute 25% of our submission to REF2028. Our community is well-placed to help secure these changes.

Our current research culture poses significant risks – materially, intellectually, and interpersonally. Maintaining hypercompetitive, individualistic, outdated cultures will result in significant negative impacts to the institution. These include retention issues, a plateauing of skill, lack of diversity of our research cohort (negatively associated with the development of novel, disruptive research), reduced competitiveness for external grant funding (with the potential for exclusion from certain schemes/funders), and a decrease in REF result quality.

Although our focus is primarily local, we have far-reaching networks allowing us to influence the wider sector to drive a positive, long-lasting change that will become the norm wherever you work. Our Research Culture Strategy and the outcomes it delivers will ensure that we are at the heart of a global higher education community, and that we uphold our values of **inclusion, integrity, collaboration, and compassion**.

“Despite our reputation and credentials, we also need to innovate and move with the times. The University specifies a range of pledges e.g., sustainability and equality but it needs to move faster and prioritise these. Rather than be a follower, we could be a leader”.

Staff member, July 2021



<sup>1</sup>AlShebli, B.K., Rahwan, T. and Woon, W.L., 2018. The preeminence of ethnic diversity in scientific collaboration. *Nature communications*, 9(1), p.5163. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-07634-8>

# 4

## Our strategy is action focused. Here's how we'll deliver it

The overarching aim of our Research Culture Strategy is to **enable more University of Leeds (UoL) colleagues to produce leading research inclusively, equitably, openly, and supportively.**

We will focus our efforts on **four strategic objectives (SO)** that have been determined by consultation across our research community; different disciplines, career stages, backgrounds, and job families, via our inclusive research culture cafes, committee discussions, and an in-depth external analysis of a 2021 University-wide survey.

## Strategic Objectives

### SO1

#### We will value diverse forms of research activity

Our research is delivered by many colleagues from inside and outside the University, working on many kinds of activities. To ensure that everyone is appropriately recognised, rewarded, and valued for their contributions, we must expand our traditional definitions of success to include innovative research methods and outputs while continuing to value established approaches. We must diversify funding sources to ensure sustainability, and measure research impacts responsibly.

### SO2

#### We will embed EDI principles in research practices

By extending the University's current commitments to EDI across our institutional research leadership and embedding it across our research lifecycle - from design to recruitment and delivery - we will enable a more equitable, diverse, inclusive, and highly-skilled workforce to produce more representative and robust research.

### SO3

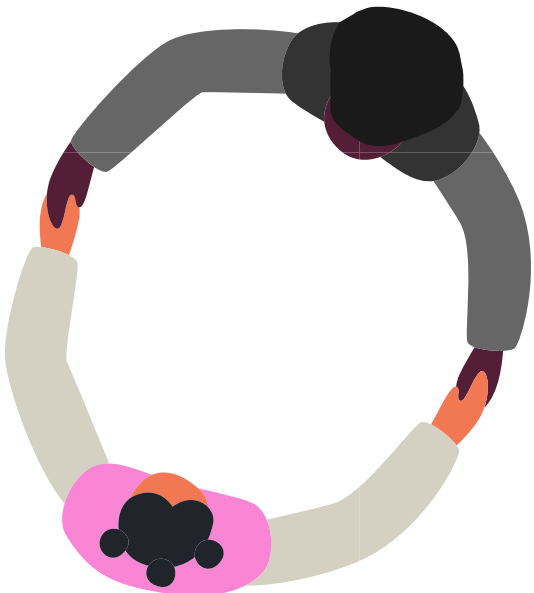
#### We will enable Open Research practices

Expressed in our Open Research Statement and through the Knowledge Equity Network, open research practices strive for collaborative working, sharing, and openness throughout the entire research cycle to enable transparency, reproducibility and the reduction of inequalities whilst maximising the reach of our research. We will ensure that our communities are fully supported, in ways appropriate for their discipline, to work openly and with the highest standards of integrity.

### SO4

#### We will mutually support and develop research teams

To ensure that our research teams (broadly defined to include academic collaborators as well as research enablers, e.g., professional services colleagues, librarians, and other technical staff) can fulfil their potential, we must create environments that support professional development. Through our adherence to initiatives including the Researcher Development Concordat and the Technician Commitment, we will facilitate collaboration over competition, researcher wellbeing, open and fair employment practices, and will enable research staff time to engage with professional and career development tailored to their needs.



# Strategic Objectives

Figure 1. Our four strategic objectives and example centralised projects, leading to our overarching aim.

### SO1 Valuing diverse forms of research activity

e.g., Championing non-standard outputs through research communications, news and marketing

### SO2 Embedding EDI principles in research practices

e.g., Allocating promotion support for researchers with protected characteristics underrepresented at senior grades

### SO3 Enabling Open Research practices

e.g., Developing the Open Research Hub to share good practice and signpost support across disciplines

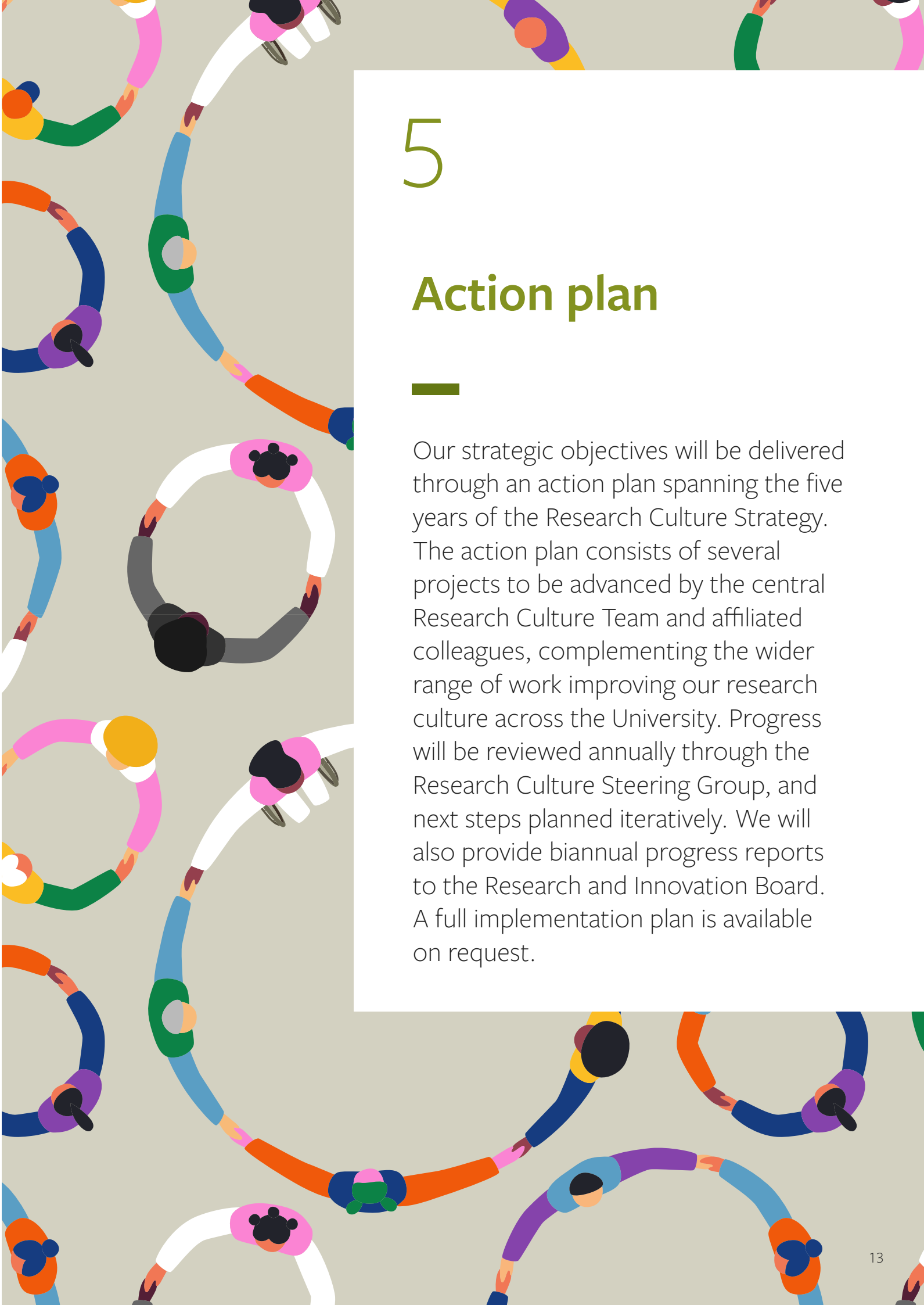
### SO4 Mutually supporting and developing research teams

e.g., Developing and disseminating guidance on the responsible use of redeployment and short-term contracts

To enable more UoL colleagues to produce leading research inclusively, equitably, openly and supportively

Each objective is linked to several centralised projects led and monitored by the Research Culture Team. Our projects include a mix of **quicker wins** for momentum and engagement, some slower-burn, **longer-term ambitions**, and space to respond to **unforeseen opportunities**. They are designed to enable us to evidence (in diverse and inclusive ways) our efforts, progress, and failures as we proceed.

Centralised projects are exemplified in Fig. 1 and detailed in our action plan (section 5). We will facilitate participation in these projects for colleagues across the University, e.g., through data sharing or other forms of engagement.



## 5

### Action plan

Our strategic objectives will be delivered through an action plan spanning the five years of the Research Culture Strategy. The action plan consists of several projects to be advanced by the central Research Culture Team and affiliated colleagues, complementing the wider range of work improving our research culture across the University. Progress will be reviewed annually through the Research Culture Steering Group, and next steps planned iteratively. We will also provide biannual progress reports to the Research and Innovation Board. A full implementation plan is available on request.



Action plan for the Research Culture Strategy 2023-2028

Action number	Years	Action	Aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Success measures	Lead
SO1: Valuing diverse forms of research activity							
1.1	1 - 5	We will analyse and track the range of research activities and staff that are celebrated in UoL communications	To understand and increase the diversity of research activities and staff types celebrated at UoL	Annual report tracking the types of research activities and staff types celebrated at UoL, and highlighting opportunities for diversification	Increased recognition of and confidence in the full range of activities and people involved in research	Increased range of research activities and staff types celebrated in UoL communications	Research Culture Manager
1.2	1 - 5	We will survey and track colleagues' perceptions and attitudes about the research activities and staff that are celebrated at UoL	To understand perceptions and increase awareness of the full range of contributions to our research culture	Annual report tracking colleagues' perceptions of diverse research contributions	Increased community awareness of the full range of research activities and staff contributing to our research culture  Increased confidence and production of nonstandard outputs	Increased number of staff aware of the incidence and value of diverse research contributions	Research Culture Manager
SO2: Embedding EDI principles in research practices							
2.1	1 - 3	We will allocate promotion support for researchers with protected characteristics underrepresented at grades 9 and 10	To increase the proportion of academic research promotions to grades 9 and 10 by colleagues with protected characteristics that have previously been underrepresented	Piloting and evaluation of targeted promotion programme	Underrepresented staff better resourced to apply for research promotion  Increased number of underrepresented academic staff applying for research promotion  Rebalanced of ethnic, gender, and disability profiles of academic staff at grades 9 and 10	Researcher engagement with targeted promotion programme  Increased number of underrepresented academic staff applying for research promotion  Increased diversity of academic staff at grades 9 and 10	Research EDI Lead
2.2	1 - 2	We will use pulse surveys to gauge colleagues' perceptions and experience of EDI aspects of research culture	To determine and better understand EDI-related barriers to research (e.g., funding gaps, career progression)  To identify interventions for overcoming the EDI-related barriers to a positive research culture  To understand perceptions of EDI work and its role within research culture  To measure engagement with EDI initiatives to enhance research culture	Plan for further targeted interventions to promote EDI in research  Report tracking perceptions and engagement with EDI work	A deeper and wider understanding of the barriers that research colleagues experience  Improved communication, value, and recognition of EDI work	Decreased number of staff stating that they face EDI-related barriers to research  Increased recognition and value of EDI work as a mechanism to improve research culture	Research EDI Lead
S03: Enabling open research practices							
3.1	1 - 3	We will create an institutional network of DoRIs to champion open research and direct colleagues to support	To create a network of open research champions at UoL to act as conduits of information and advice on the training, support and opportunities available for open research practices  To determine and better understand the discipline-specific barriers to recording and depositing research outputs	Expansion of DoRI role description to cover open research  University-wide network of open research champions	More effective and bespoke advocacy for discipline-specific open research practices  Increased researcher awareness of OR practices, benefits, and sources of support  Better recognition of diverse research activities  Stronger submission in REF2028  Increased understanding of discipline specific barriers to OR	Development of open research champion network  Open Research Coordinator recruited to support the champions  Appropriate discipline specific advocacy in schools  Increased number of researchers engaging in open research  Increased variety of research outputs deposited in Symplectic	Head of Library Research Services (Open Research)
3.2	1 - 5	We will run an annual audit of Symplectic and UoL repository data to analyse and track the breadth of research activities recorded and deposited by staff type	To gauge the variety of research outputs recorded in University systems (e.g., Symplectic) and deposited in repositories (e.g., White Rose)	Openly available database of UoL research outputs recorded in UoL systems and deposited in repositories by all staff	Increased researcher awareness of the range of research outputs that can be recorded and deposited  Increased number and variety of research outputs recorded and deposited	Increased number of research outputs recorded and deposited annually  Increased variety of research outputs recorded and deposited annually	Head of Library Research Services (Open Research)
3.3	1 - 5	We will use pulse surveys to analyse and track awareness of the types of research outputs that can be recorded and deposited in University systems, and the perceived barriers by discipline	To gauge researchers' awareness of the variety of research outputs that are recorded in University systems (e.g., Symplectic) and deposited in repositories (e.g., White Rose).  To increase researchers' awareness of the range of research activities that can be recorded and deposited.  To identify interventions for overcoming barriers to recording and depositing	Report on researchers' perceptions of suitable research outputs for recording and depositing, and approaches to addressing gaps in understanding	Increased researcher awareness of the range of research outputs that can be recorded and deposited  Increased number and variety of research outputs that are recorded and deposited	Increase in the number of staff and variety of research outputs recorded and deposited across disciplines	Head of Library Research Services (Open Research)
3.4	1 - 3	We will develop the Open Research Hub, a central location signposting researchers to all local support for open research (e.g., Research IT; Public Engagement; RIS; Library)	To further develop a central information and resource hub to provide open research training and support for researchers using a range of methodologies across disciplines  To develop researchers' awareness and use of OR support resources	Rich and accessible central resource to signpost researchers to all support available at UoL for open research	Increased researcher awareness of sources of support for open research	Increased awareness and engagement with the OR Hub  Research leaders advocating for its use	Head of Library Research Services (Open Research)
3.5	1 - 5	We will promote the Open Research Hub as a resource supporting the recording and depositing of the full range of research activities	To use the OR hub to provide open research training and support for researchers to record and deposit more of their research activities.  To increase the number and variety of outputs recorded and deposited by researchers	Rich and accessible central resource to signpost researchers to support available for recording and depositing research activities  Report tracking the number and types of activities recorded and deposited	Increased researcher awareness of what aspects of their research they can/should record and deposit, how to do this, and where to go for support  Increased confidence in making a wider range of research activities open	Increased awareness and engagement with the OR Hub for depositing and recording  Wider range of University of Leeds research is openly recorded and deposited  Increased reach of UoL research	Head of Library Research Services (Open Research)

Action plan for the Research Culture Strategy 2023-2028 (continued)

Action number	Years	Action	Aims	Outputs	Outcomes	Success measures	Lead
SO4: Mutually supporting and developing research teams.							
4.1	1 - 5	We will analyse the distribution of staff roles named as PI or Col on research funding applications (via Kristal)	To increase the diversity of staff roles named as PI or Col on research funding applications	Annual report tracking the distribution of staff roles named as PI and Col on funding applications	Increased recognition of the range of staff in PI or Col roles Better recognition of diverse research contributions Stronger submission in REF2028	Wider variety of staff roles named as PI or Col on research funding applications	Head of Researcher Development and Culture
4.2	1 - 3	We will analyse the number of researchers by career stage attending and benefitting from OD&PL professional development sessions	To increase participation by researchers in beneficial professional development	Annual report tracking uptake and feedback re OD&PL professional development by researchers at each career stage	Increased numbers of researchers benefiting from researcher development programmes Clearer monitoring of uptake and benefit from researcher professional development by career stage	Increased researcher uptake and benefit from UoL professional development opportunities	Head of Researcher Development and Culture
		We will analyse the number of researchers by career stage engaging with self-guided professional development resources and recorded presentations	To increase use of online professional development resources by researchers	Annual report tracking engagement with OD&PL self-guided professional development resources and recorded presentations provided by researchers at each career stage	Increased numbers of researchers engaging with OD&PL self-guided professional development resources and recorded presentations at each career stage Clearer monitoring of uptake and benefit from online professional development by career stage	Increased researcher uptake and benefit from UoL online professional development opportunities	
4.3	1 - 2	We will use pulse surveys to determine: - Numbers of researchers benefitting from professional development - Barriers to researcher engagement in professional development - Line managers’ awareness of professional development provision and expectations	To determine levels of engagement with and benefit of professional development opportunities by researchers across career stages To identify barriers to engagement	Annual report tracking researcher engagement with and benefit from professional development opportunities (live and remote)	Increased recognition of the value of professional development, by researchers and line managers Increased uptake in professional development by researchers	Increase in the number of researchers stating they have engaged with and benefitted from professional development opportunities	Head of Researcher Development and Culture
4.4a	1 - 3	We will analyse the numbers of researchers: research enablers as well as research staff on fixed-term contracts; made redundant; on redeployment; and redeployed	To determine use of fixed-term contracts, redundancy, and redeployment for researchers	Annual report tracking use of fixed-term contracts, redundancy, and redeployment	Increased strategic support of researcher destinations	Accurate data on researcher contract types and destinations	Head of Researcher Development and Culture Research EDI Lead
4.4b	2	We will develop and disseminate guidance on responsible use of the redeployment scheme	To decrease employment precarity and increase researchers, research enablers and research staff retention	Redeployment scheme guidance	Increase in researchers using redeployment to find suitable employment at UoL Stronger submission in REF2028	Increased research enablers and research staff retention	Head of Researcher Development and Culture Research EDI Lead
4.4c	2	We will develop and disseminate guidance for hiring managers on the responsible design and use of short-term contracts	To maximise the mutual benefit of short term contracts	Guidance on the responsible design and use of short-term contracts	Increased awareness of the responsible use of short term contracts Increased satisfaction of researchers on short term contracts	Increased satisfaction of researchers, research enablers and research staff on short term contracts, and their PIs	Head of Researcher Development and Culture Research EDI Lead

Abbreviations:

- Col (Co-Investigator)
- DoRIs (Directors of Research and Innovation)
- EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)
- IT (Information Technology)
- OD&PL (Organisational Development and Professional Learning)
- OR (Open Research)
- PI (Principal Investigator)
- REF2028 (Research Excellence Framework 2028)
- RIS (Research and Innovation Service)
- SO (Strategic Objective)
- UoL (University of Leeds)

# 6

## What does the Research Culture Strategy mean for me?

There are many research culture initiatives already under way in Schools, Faculties, and Services (hereafter ‘Units’) that respond to local priorities. We encourage the sharing of best practice within and between Units, and with the Research Culture Team via our events and [website](#). Supporting this devolved approach, our four strategic objectives are designed to accommodate the breadth of projects across the institution.

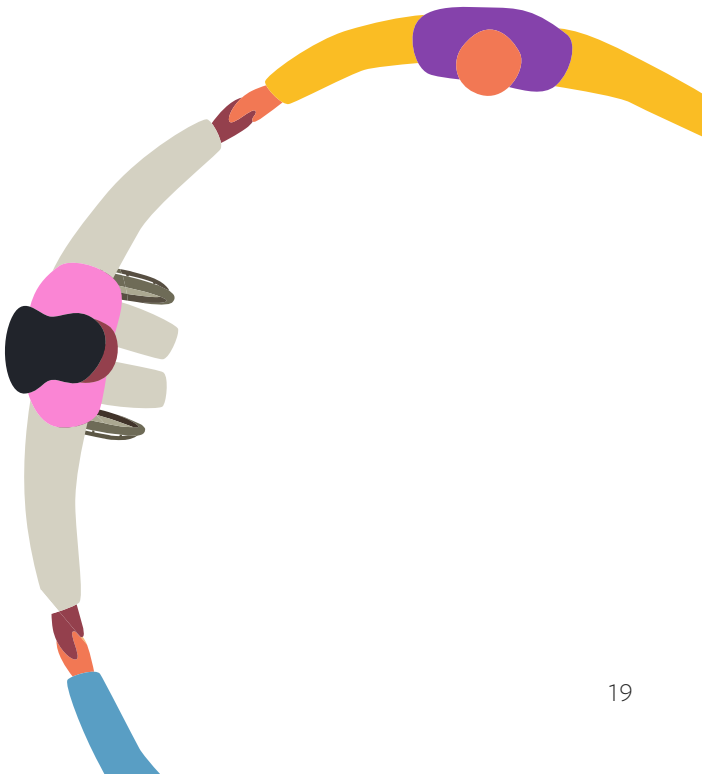
We expect Units to **engage across all four objectives** throughout the five-year span of this strategy, with the freedom to set appropriate means of operationalisation. **We will support Units in implementing and monitoring change initiatives using guidance, toolkits, and proportionate reporting mechanisms, e.g., structured narrative statements or the analysis of longitudinal data.** Although the strategy is designed to embed positive research culture into business as usual by 2028, maintaining this culture will require longer-term community efforts and monitoring.

This Research Culture Strategy both depends on and benefits the collective workforce. While it is not possible to give an exhaustive list of the responsibilities and outcomes for each broad job type, we set out some indicative examples to the right.

Job type	Example responsibility	Likely outcomes
Postgraduate Researchers	Engage with training and development in research culture	Embedding research culture values as business as usual for future generations of researchers
Postdoctoral Research Assistants/Associates	Ensure research activities align with appropriate forms of <u>open research</u>	More accessible, robust, and usable research outcomes
Academic staff with research as part of their contract	Fairly attribute all contributors to research outputs	Better developed and engaged teams
Professional Services staff	Ensure practices adhere to research culture values, e.g., inclusivity in communications	Better user engagement with services
Research Technical Professionals	Champion the <u>Technician Commitment</u>	Better visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technical staff
School and Faculty leads, e.g., School Executive Groups; Executive Deans; ProDeans for Research & Innovation; Directors of research institutes, e.g., LSSI; LAHRI; Directors of Research and Innovation	Integrate a proportionate, local programme of research culture initiatives to facilitate and evidence change  Actively celebrate positive research culture contributions (e.g., effective mentoring, inclusive research) alongside more traditional forms of success, e.g., grant capture	Increased understanding and buy-in to the Research Culture Strategy  Stronger position for the preparation of REF2028  Greater sense of belonging; more effective research teams
Senior Management, e.g., Vice-Chancellor; Principal Deputy Vice Chancellor; DVC Research & Innovation	Ensure institution-level decisions align with research culture strategic objectives  Provide sufficient time and resource to enable meaningful action in research culture	A more integrated community that upholds the University values  Accelerated progress towards a positive research culture

Implicit in the roles exemplified above, a wider range of staff are accountable for successful delivery of this Research Culture Strategy. These include: the Dean for Research Culture, Dean for Research Quality; Dean of the Doctoral College; Director of the Horizons Institute; Heads of Schools (including Faculty Graduate Schools); Heads of HR and other Services, and Directors within OD&PL.

**Abbreviations:**  
LSSI (Leeds Social Sciences Institute)  
LAHRI (Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute)  
OD&PL (Organisational Development and Professional Learning)





# 7

## Measuring our success

Monitoring and evaluating progress towards our strategic objectives will be essential for keeping us on track over the next five years. However, research and researchers are frequently and heavily evaluated, which negatively impacts research culture. So, we use a responsible approach to monitoring and evaluation, via SCOPE Principles<sup>2</sup>:

1. **Evaluate only where necessary**, for example where we need to measure change to justify resource (*Did it work?*), where it supports local monitoring in Units, or where it supports external policy such as the REF People, Culture and Environment statement.
2. **Evaluate with the evaluated**. Evaluations are co-designed and co-interpreted by the communities being evaluated. We will also prioritise monitoring and evaluation of projects rather than researchers themselves.
3. **Draw on evaluation expertise**. We apply the same rigour to our evaluations that we apply to our academic research.

We will also exercise caution towards using metrics to incentivise, and always consider alternative ways to motivate, such as by making a practice easy or normative rather than evaluated.

A suite of qualitative and quantitative indicators has been co-created by the Research Culture Strategy Working Group and integrated into the implementation plan (see examples in the action plan; section 5). These indicators will be contextualised to the Units contributing to the measures. Candidate indicators include:

- An increase in the diversity of research activities that are communicated and celebrated.
- An increase in the proportion of academic promotions to Grades 9 and 10 by researchers with protected characteristics that have previously been under-represented, e.g., women, disabled colleagues, and colleagues from minoritised ethnic groups.
- An increase in researchers engaging with open research practices and training.
- An increase in the range of staff profiles included in grant applications (e.g., involvement of experimental officers or those working in research professional services).

Our metrics will inform the University's **key performance indicators** (KPIs) to measure success in the delivery of its overarching strategy. The Research Culture Strategy is a key component of KPI2 (*Sustaining a strong academic reputation*) and KPI6 (*Providing a healthy, safe and inclusive environment and enriching experience for staff and students*). Staff survey data will be the main data source for measuring this KPI.

Our governance groups have responsibility for the success of the strategy and will annually monitor progress against our targets, following the principles outlined above. Aware of the urgent need for this work, the University and its external partners have invested in our research culture. In turn, the University has openly shared its associated activities. If we fail to deliver on the strategy, the major risks are reputational and financial.

“We are often characterised by performance metrics which do not account for our differences. We all have strengths and weaknesses so why not accept that not everyone will be the best at every part of their job, but instead embrace the strengths of the diverse teams. Let people be good at what they do best and support their weaknesses. This will bring more joy to the workplace.”

Staff member, July 2021

<sup>2</sup>The **SCOPE Framework** is a five-stage model of implementing responsible research evaluation principles to design robust evaluations. It was developed by the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) Research Evaluation Group.

# 8

## A strategy that demonstrates its own values



The Research Culture Strategy is designed to demonstrate the values and behaviours it promotes. This is a living document that can respond to the changing environment and is:

- Consultative**

Our strategy emerges directly from our research community, in multi-level consultation and endorsement at each stage of its development. It sets out a shared institutional vision for what a positive research culture should look and feel like. We use feedback from all sections of the community and equally value guidance from champions, co-operators, passengers, and activists.

- Open, yet bounded**

Creating a positive research culture is a huge undertaking and will take time. To ensure feasibility, our strategic objectives tackle the most pressing problems, and include projects of varying duration, scope, and ambition.

- Universal**

Our strategy depends on collective responsibility. Universal, supported community engagement with the strategy will ensure its objectives are achieved, and will normalise positive research culture behaviours.

- Multi-level**

As an intervention for cultural and behavioural change, the strategy is enacted top-down as well as bottom-up. Grassroots initiatives ensure meaningful and concrete action, while policy frameworks ensure accountability and a formal facilitation of change.

- Monitored in diverse and responsible ways**

Research culture change requires a fresh and responsible approach to measurement and evaluation (see section 5). The success of our objectives will be monitored collaboratively and evaluated rigorously yet proportionately. To ensure continuous action, accountability, and community buy-in this strategy will be embedded in core internal processes such as financial planning exercises, and will be an important anchor for external processes such as funding applications and the REF.

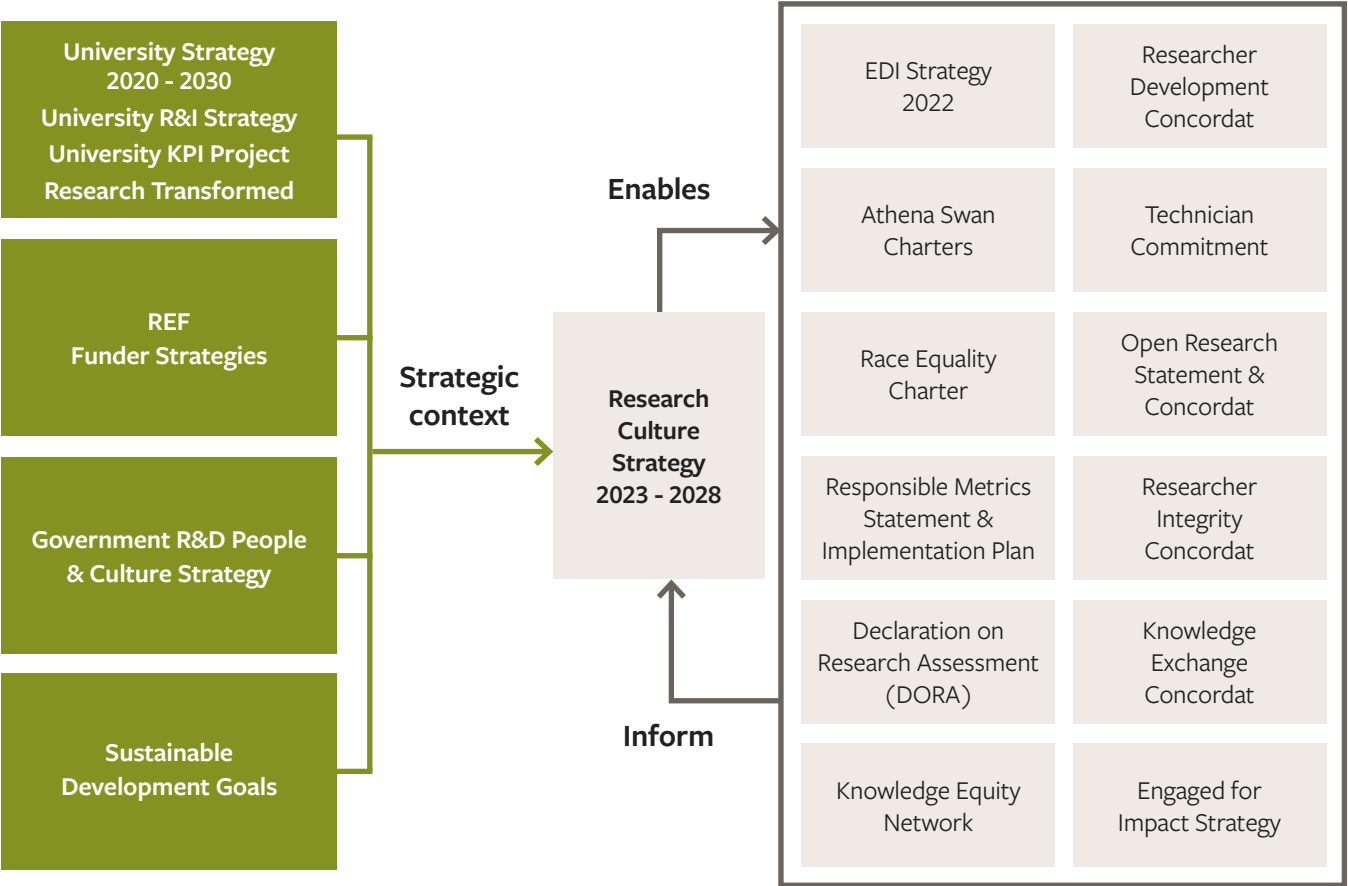
- Integrated with the wider strategic context**

The Research Culture Strategy responds to a powerful mandate for change, gleaned from internal and external stakeholder consultation and higher-level strategies, agreements, concordats, and projects (exemplified in Fig. 2). These intersections provide a platform on which to build, lend helpful infrastructure to facilitate change, and demonstrate that targeted initiatives and resources can have a positive impact.

“We need to foster a culture where we are open to ideas, different perspectives and people. The most productive, empowering and effective work I have been involved with at the University has occurred in open, transparent, and positive environments where we have established shared goals. Due to workload pressure, the pace of change, and silo working there are too many instances where progress can be painful.”

Staff member, July 2021

Figure 2. Internal and external strategic context for research culture.

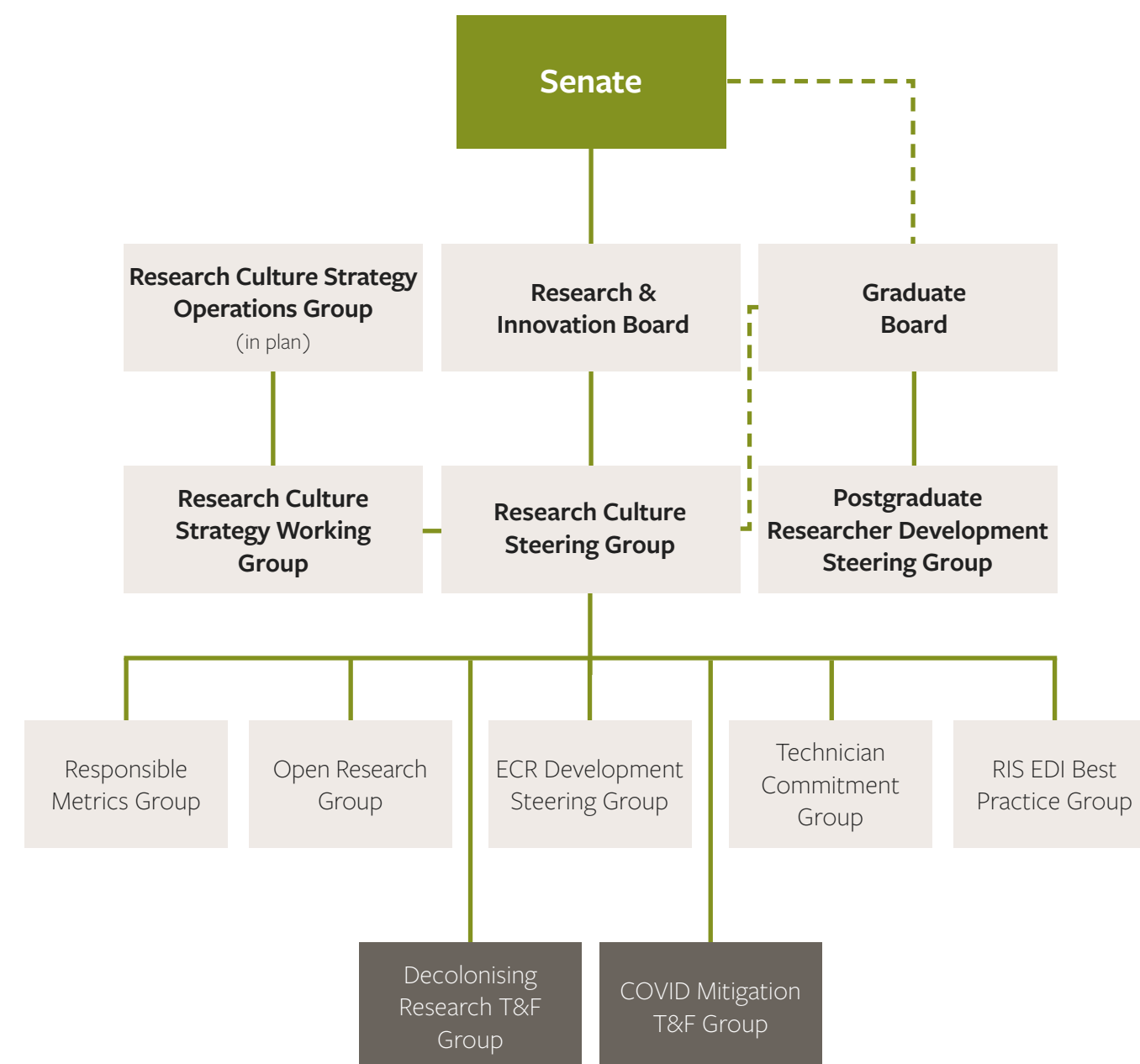


# 9

## Governance structures to support the strategy and keep us on track

Fig. 3 illustrates the internal governance structures supporting the Research Culture Strategy. Membership of the groups (including Chairs) includes staff from a diversity of roles and career stages, reflecting the breadth of engagement required, from senior leadership outwards.

Figure 3. Governance structures supporting research culture.



### Key

- Live group
- Completed in 2022



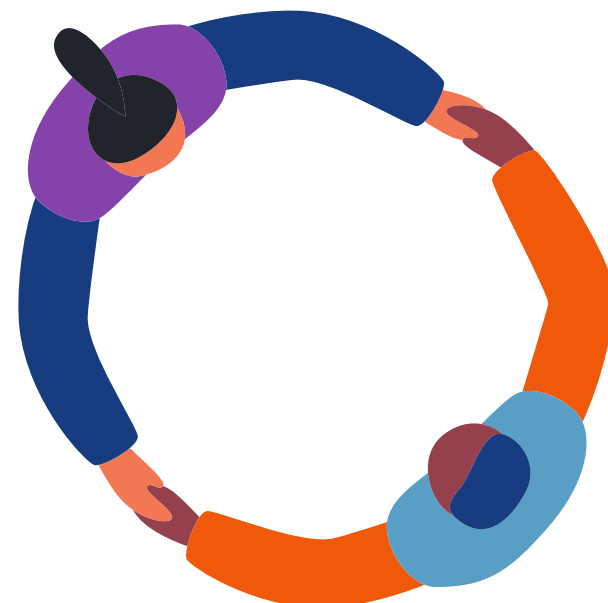
# 10

## Acknowledgements



We would like to thank everyone who worked to co-produce this strategy and action plan. All content was developed in partnership with the research community through multi-level consultation and endorsement. Collectively, colleagues have reviewed and improved this strategy through many meetings and discussions.

Because improving our research culture is an iterative process, our strategy and action plan will evolve in response to our changing environment. We will continue to involve our community stakeholders and reach out to colleagues through our governance structures and affiliated groups.





Further detail on the University's research culture activities, funding, governance, and a range of resources can be found at **[researchculture.leeds.ac.uk](https://researchculture.leeds.ac.uk)**

For further information, please contact the Research Culture Team, Research and Innovation Service, **[researchculture@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:researchculture@leeds.ac.uk)**



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