

Research culture: Funder perspective and initiatives

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What is research culture?

The Royal Society

- Research culture encompasses the research communities' behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms.

Not just about researchers!

- The **complete system** of shared values concerning the research process is embedded in the concept of research culture.*

Why do funders care?

- The culture of research is central to **research excellence**; it affects who does research, what research is done, how it is done and how it is disseminated.

*Canti et al. (2021) *Research culture: science from bench to society*. The Company of Biologists. doi: 10.1242/bio.058919

Evolution of research culture themes



Lisbon 2007 – Houston, we have a problem!



Singapore 2010 – Principles, “Global CoC”



Montreal 2013 - Collaboration



Rio de Janeiro 2015 – Promoting RI



Amsterdam 2017 – Behaviour



Hong Kong 2019 – Research Assessment, RRI



Cape Town 2022– Equity, diversity, inclusion

2020 reports on research culture: Attempting to understand the elements



The research culture gap

Where we are:



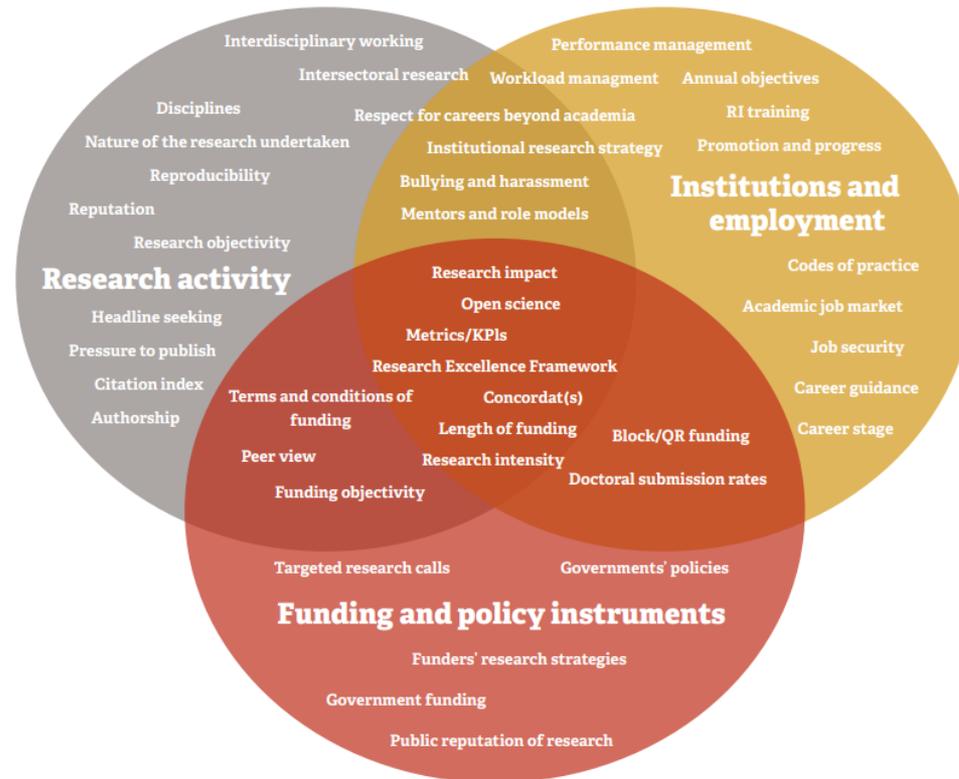
Where we want to be:



*Wellcome Trust (2020) *What researchers think about the culture they work in.*

<https://cms.wellcome.org/sites/default/files/what-researchers-think-about-the-culture-they-work-in.pdf>

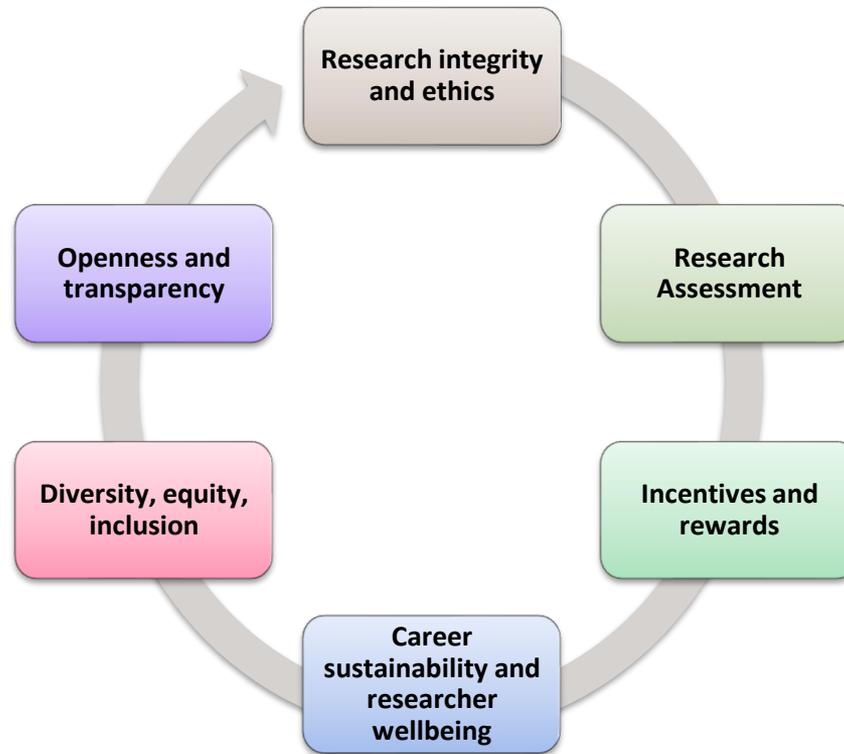
A complex web of influences



Methcalfe J, Wheat K, Munafo M, Parry J (2020) *Research Integrity: A landscape study*.

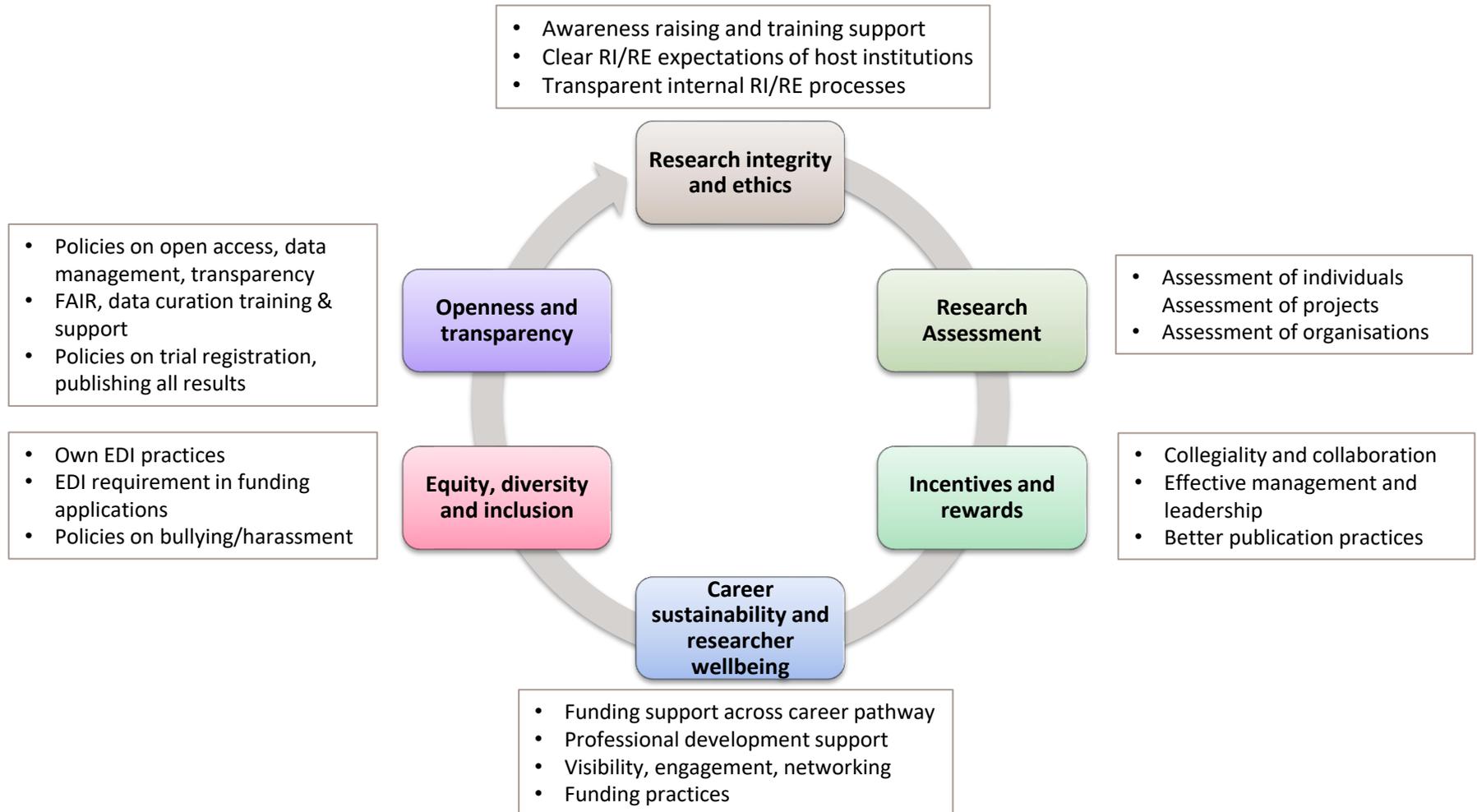
<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-020920-ResearchIntegrityLandscapeStudy.pdf>

Elements of research culture



A healthy research culture **recognises and rewards** the **full range** of activities that characterize **high-quality** research. It **empowers** researchers to do **rigorous, honest, reliable, open and valuable** research, at the same time **fostering** professional as well as personal well-being.

Where can funders have influence?



Research Integrity and ethics

Irish Funder initiatives

- Changes to General T&C to mandate research integrity policies and processes in host institutions
- Mandatory training of PIs and their teams
- Participation in international policy groups (Science Europe, Global Research Council, ALLEA etc.)

National initiatives

- National RI Forum
- National RI Policy Statements
- Framework for Collaborative Research
- EPIGEUM Training



International Funder initiatives

- EU: requirement for compliance with the European Code of Conduct
- UKRI: Good research resource hub
- Wellcome Trust: Reimagining Research Culture initiative
- Science Europe Working groups
- Global Research Council Statement

EU SwafS projects

- Field-specific codes of conduct
- RIPP Guidelines for RFOs and RPOs
- Ethical frameworks in emerging areas
- Platforms (Embassy of Good Science)
- Training at all levels
- Collaboration and Networks

Research assessment

Assessment criteria define the thing we value in the research system, so the criteria must support all the things that we would like the system to deliver.

Challenge

Different **projects**, different **people**, different **outputs**, and different **contributions** often need to be assessed in the same competition.

AGREEMENT ON REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

20 July 2022



- Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research appropriate to its nature
- Base assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators
- Abandon inappropriate uses of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index
- Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations
- Review and develop new research assessment criteria, tools and processes for individual researchers, research projects, research teams, units and institutions

Examples of other initiatives happening or in gestation:

- Use of Narrative CVs to capture broader contributions (e.g. Science Europe, Royal Society, HRB)
- Innovative peer review and value-based assessment models (SCOPE Framework)
- Use quantitative indicators for quantitative things (Leiden Manifesto)
- Diversify indicators (e.g. Publons, ORCID, open peer review, CRediT, EQUATOR Network, Altmetrics, pre-print servers etc.) (UKRI)

Incentives and rewards

How can we incentivise positive behaviours and reward 'evidenced' good practice?



The San Francisco Declaration (DORA) advocates for evaluation questions that aim to increase the value of the research and reduce waste (EViR)



SE WG on Recognition Systems of Research to improve the framework conditions for performing and funding research in Europe.



- Focus on relevance in the application process
- HRB Impact Award to recognise overall contributions
- Build collegiality and team science into many schemes
- Support leadership training for Emerging Investigators
- Promoting better publication practices



- Assess responsible research practices
- Value complete reporting
- Reward the practice of open science
- Acknowledge a broad range of research activities
- Recognise other essential tasks like peer review and mentoring.

Career sustainability and wellbeing



- Funding across the career pathway from PhD to Leaders
- Support for mobility (Dorothy Post-docs, part of funding)
- Seek to assess applicants using broad criteria
- Provide flexibility and financial support for career breaks (maternity leave, carer leave etc.)
- Promote visibility of early career researchers (HRB Ones to Watch)



Changes to funding practices

- Anonymous grant submissions, minimum-duration contracts, specific funding to underrepresented groups, greater availability of smaller funding awards

More support for early-career researchers

- Specific ECR funding (including training and mentoring)
- Rewards for those who don't publish

Rethinking funding criteria and incentives

- Reward good research practices and rigorous ethics
- Look more broadly at the culture of host institutions

Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion

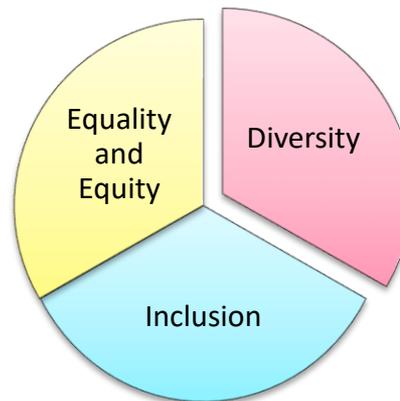


I believe in a research culture that recognises a diversity of contributions to science and society; that celebrates high quality and impactful research; and that values sharing, collaboration, integrity and engagement with society, transmitting knowledge from generation to generation.



— **Mariya Gabriel**, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

- EDI requirements in funding applications
- International push to recognise contributions (CRediT)
- Including equity considerations in partner choice and roles



- HRB Monitor the gender mix and disciplinary of review panels
- All else being equal HRB will award equally ranked projects to the less-represented gender
- Unconscious bias training for review panels
- Athena Swann accreditation required



Diversity and inclusion: helping more ideas thrive

- Wellcome Trust: Research Enrichment Funding and change to design of new funding schemes
- EDIS Collaboration to advance equality diversity and inclusion

Openness and transparency

Open access to publications

- Open Research Platforms such as HRB Open Research, Open Research Europe
- Mandatory OA policy (HRB, SFI, IRC)
- cOAlition S and Plan S (SFI a member and HRB to join)
- National Open Research Forum (many funders and Government departments are members)

Open access to data

- Requirement for DMPs in applications
- FAIR Data Training (EU and HRB)
- HRB Training of Data Stewards
- HRB engagement in FAIRsFAIR EU policy programme
- HRB collaboration with CSO for data linkage and sharing
- OECD, EU and SE Working Groups on data sharing and supporting infrastructures

Open access to research processes

- Observers on assessment panels
- Public reviewers
- PPI Ignite and PPI in awards
- Funder engagement with the public to prioritize investment (James Lind Alliance and SFI National Survey)
- Transparency about assessment processes (e.g. HRB website)
- Transparency about research design and conduct (trial registration, protocol publications etc.)

Is it really possible to change the culture?



Science and Engineering Ethics
September 2013, Volume 19, Issue 3, pp 835–850 | [Cite as](#)



Relationships Between the Survey of Organizational Research Climate (SORC) and Self-Reported Research Practices

Authors [Authors and affiliations](#)

A. Lauren Crain, Brian C. Martinson , Carol R. Thrush

- The more positive the organisational research climate, the higher the likelihood of good research practices and the lower the likelihood of unacceptable research practices
- The findings are clear that misconduct is not about dealing with a few "bad apples" but about changing organisational and structural research climate issues and that will require strong policy implementation

Final thoughts

Funding agencies, research institutions and researchers have different perspectives

- **Funding agencies** think about their actions in the context of their **strategic mission** and the **policy and evidence needs** of their paymasters
- Will often approach their activities from the perspective of their responsibilities to protect **public investment** in research and derive **value for money** from that investment.
- **Research institutions** may be thinking about **resources and reputation** (e.g. world ranking),
- **Researchers** may be thinking about knowledge production and career progression.

But ultimately we all want the same thing – high-quality, relevant research conducted in an environment that values the individual, the power of collaboration and multi-disciplinarity, and the ultimate benefits that the research outputs can have for society at large.

Thank-you for listening!

Wednesday March 03, 1993



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