

The Changing Research Culture @ Queen's

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Research Culture – Perspectives from Ireland and Abroad
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UK Policy Landscape

- Increasing focus on enhancing the culture in which research takes place, emerging over a number of years
- Significant UK public investment in R&D to achieve ‘**science superpower**’ ambition, with estimated demand for c150k more people in R&D by 2030
- **But** – for several reasons, these careers (particularly in HE), seen as less attractive than in the past, and UK’s goal to attract talent has suffered (Brexit, ODA cuts etc.)
- Broad consensus in the sector that cultural change is required **at all levels**



Notable Developments 2019 → 2021

Wellcome Trust Survey and Report, January 2020

Sector-wide survey of thousands of researchers, further magnifying the scale of the challenge

“Poor research culture is leading to unhealthy competition, bullying and harassment, and mental health issues”

UK Government R&D Roadmap, July 2020

Committed to a dedicated R&D people and culture strategy to be published in 2021

“We must not be afraid to tackle these issues. To ensure we have the talent we need to underpin our ambitions, we need to go further to attract top talent, at all career stages”

New UKRI CEO, August 2020

“...most important is the focus on people and on research culture, because the whole research system critically depends not just on researchers, but on all the people around them...”

“There are lots of bad behaviours, which are arguably driven by the huge stress and we need to think hard about shifting that”

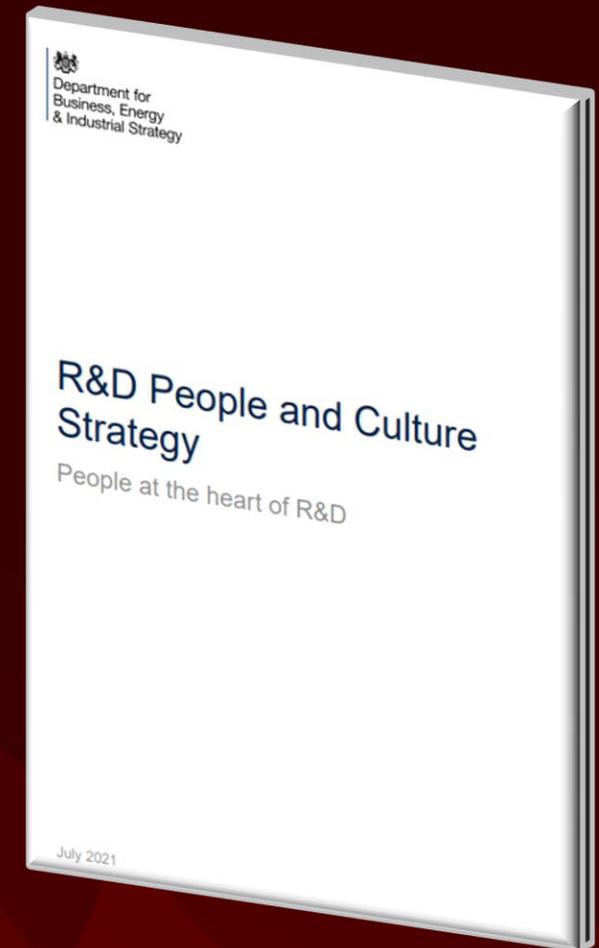
Russell Group, May 2021

Survey of key stakeholders, followed by report and toolkit for members to implement

“Concerns have been raised by researchers at all levels about job security, incidents of bullying and harassment and mental health issues, amongst others”

- The **UK R&D People & Culture Strategy**, published July 2021, is a significant development for the research culture agenda
- Focus is on attracting and developing talent to meet demand for R&D skills and deliver UK’s ambition to become a global science superpower by 2030
- Structured around three pillars, it sets out specific outcomes that it wants to achieve through a range of government commitments and a “whole sector” effort

Pillar	Outcomes	Selected Actions & Commitments
<u>People:</u> Redefining what it means to work in R&D in the 21st Century	Attracting <u>enough people with the right skills</u> , to dynamic, varied and sustainable career paths, driven by great leadership skills at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sector training programmes to encourage mobility in-and-out of academia • More opportunities for ECRs to drive policy • ‘New Deal’ for PGR students • Multiple reviews of e.g. expert peer review, impact of short-term contracts
<u>Culture:</u> Co-creating a vision of the culture we want to see in the sector	A <u>positive, inclusive and respectful culture</u> , with recognition and reward of all contributions; driven by frameworks and incentives that encourage positive behaviours and bring an end to e.g. B+H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Good Practice Exchange’ to be launched as a testbed for new ideas and approaches • Encourage adoption of ‘Resume for Researchers’ (aka ‘narrative CVs’) • Sector-wide definitions and guidelines for B+H • Review complexity of existing concordats and accreditations across the sector
<u>Talent:</u> Renewing the UK’s position as a global leader in R&D by attracting, retaining and developing talent	<u>People from all backgrounds</u> are inspired into careers in research by the UK’s talent offer, and the UK is the most exciting place in the world for top research and innovation talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current talent and funding offer to attract the best researchers to the UK • Online service to attract global talent and make it easier to come to the UK • Reform migration routes for high-skilled individuals, including a new graduate route



Queen's approach to Research Culture

- **Feb 2020** - virtual research culture suggestion box, open to all staff in the University
- **July 2020** – Two online staff engagement events to explore issues in more detail (c160 attendees)
- **Sept 2020** - Draft Research Culture Action Plan subject to consultation via survey, committees, representative groups
- **Nov 2020** – Jointly hosted Wellcome Trust 'Reimagine Research' 'Town Hall' with Ulster University
- **Jan 2021** - Research Culture Action Plan published, and subsequently embedded in the University's new institutional Research & Innovation Strategy as part of 'Strategy 2030'



RESEARCH CULTURE ACTION PLAN

Our commitment as a University community to continuously improving the environment in which research and innovation activities take place

Strategic Priorities

1) Cultivate an **inclusive and compassionate culture** in which all members of the research community, inclusive of all personal circumstances, are supported in delivering their research ambitions to their greatest potential

2) Encourage and facilitate **collegiality and collaboration** amongst the research community in which individuals and groups support each other to deliver disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research ambitions

3) Respect and facilitate the **diverse range of career pathways** that exist within research, both in and out of academia, and provide tailored support to attract and retain talent across the research community

4) Incentivise a culture of **creativity and innovation** in which researchers have the freedom and flexibility required to explore ambitious and novel research ideas in the spirit of openness, transparency and integrity

5) **Reward and recognise** the entire range of contributors and contributions that are made towards research outcomes, regardless of seniority, profile or function

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

ACTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

1) Equality, diversity and inclusion

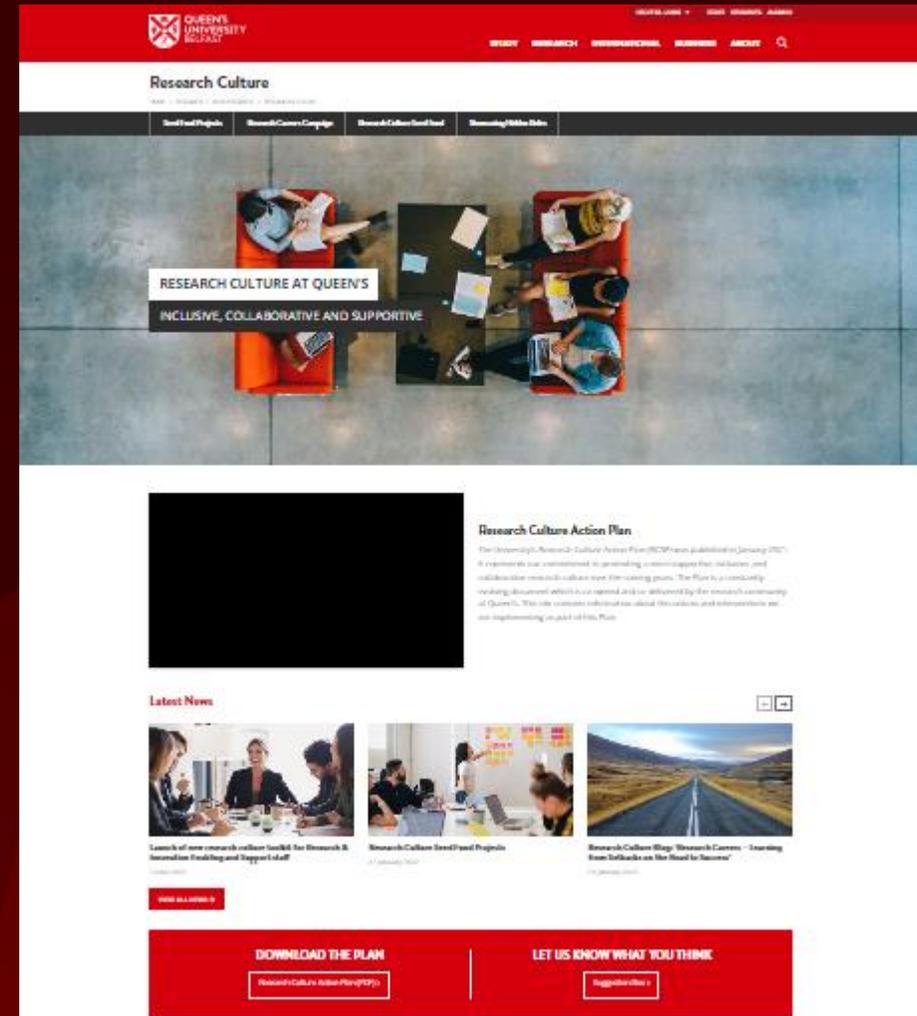
2) Operating in the context of Covid-19

3) Research quality & ambition

Cross-Cutting Themes

PROGRESS TO DATE (21-22)

- Began implementing in September 2021 (delayed by pandemic)
- **Focus for Year One to raise awareness and achieve 'quick wins'**
- Campaigns and Events focussed on removing stigma around 'failure' in academic careers and showcasing 'hidden' support roles
- Launch of a new Institutional Postdoctoral Development Centre, as a one-stop-shop for researchers for advice, guidance and development
- Co-developed new sector toolkit with other UK institutions through ARMA to discuss experiences of non-academic staff in research culture
- Delivered a Research Culture Seed Fund
 - Projects range from showcase day for post-docs in Arts and Humanities, to writing retreat for academics of African heritage, to support for new Open Science guidelines
- Measures to streamline research bureaucracy, including revised committee structure for R&I, consolidated internal pump-priming funds



<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/Our-research/ResearchCulture/>

Technician Showcase May 2022

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TECHNICIANS SHOWCASE

THURSDAY 26 MAY 2022

TECHNICIANS SHOWCASE 26 MAY 2022

The second Queen's Technician Showcase took place on Thursday 26th May 2022. The event showcased the work and diversity of technicians. Over 200 attended the event, including technicians, professional support and academic staff. We also welcomed guests and technical colleagues from the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

The day started with welcome and updates from a number of distinguished guests, **Prof Ian Greer**, President and Vice Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, **Dr Stett**, Technician Commitment Institutional Lead & Dean of Innovation and Impact, MHLS (QUB); **Dr Simon Breeden**, Science Council & URB Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Enterprise (QUB) and **Dr Alice Dubois**, Head of Postdoctoral Development Centre (QUB).

The main showcase took place in the School of Biological Sciences, Chlorine Gardens. The building was filled with activity with a poster gallery, Queen's technicians and exhibitor stands (Suppliers, People & Culture, Athena Swan, QGI, Queen's Public Engagement, Women's Tec, Unite) and also a series of workshops and seminars, tailored directly for the training and development needs and interests of technicians.

This year we held the inaugural Queen's Technicians Awards and we were delighted with the high standard of nominations that were received. The winners are listed below.

Technician Award in Education

This award recognises a technical member of staff who clearly demonstrates an impactful contribution to teaching. This technician provides support to curriculum development and successful delivery, contributing to the effective teaching and learning of students, future students and/or staff.

Winner: Kevin Campbell, School of Nursing & Midwifery

Runner up: Marek Knopik, School of Biological Sciences



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Fellowship Academy

Queen's Fellowship Academy

The Queen's Fellowship Academy, launched in January 2020, provides professional and career development support for Fellows recruited through the Illuminate Scheme, other internal Fellowship Schemes (MHLS Vice-Chancellor/Patrick G. J. Fellowships) and other staff holding specified externally funded Fellowships. Staff in these posts will automatically become members of the Fellowship Academy. The Academy supports members in their development and progression. Member Fellows will be supported through individual guidance from their Schools, leading academics and Professional Services. Networking, mentorship and tailored development will be offered.

Queen's is committed to supporting and developing Fellowship Academy members to become research leaders of the future. Support will be provided across three main themes:

1. Research and Funding

Enhanced support aligned to the research outputs and securing income

2. Leadership Development

Sponsor, mentoring and additional leadership development

3. Networking & Impact

Support to build connections, engage and network



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WHAT IS OPEN RESEARCH?

The core idea of Open Research, also known as Open Science, is that the research process should be as open as possible. This could apply to protocols, data, software and code as well as publications. There are a number of benefits of open research, such as greater transparency of the research process, increased visibility, higher citation rates and greater opportunities for collaboration.



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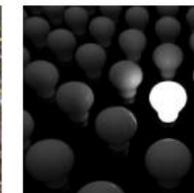
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E-THESIS
QUEEN'S E-THESIS, COPY PUBLISHED

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PRIORITIES FOR YEAR 2

Focus for Year 2 will shift to **delivering tangible institutional change in culture and policy** in a number of priority areas

Careers in research

- Developing and implementing a dedicated 'research career pathway'
- Pilot and roll-out of new 'narrative CV' format

Responsible research

- Evolve institutional principles/ commitment to responsible metrics (building on DORA)
- Supporting work to evolve and embed related agendas e.g. Open Research, Trusted Research

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Build upon accreditations and charter marks
- Identify the issues at Queen's and develop effective interventions
- New professional support function for EDI in research; internal working group established

Reward and recognition

- As part of a wider programme looking at authorship and recognition, implement CREDIT taxonomy
- Pilot year for R&I Professionals Network (RIPN) – c. 80 members already

Research bureaucracy – implementing recommendations in 'Tickell'

Continue to **build awareness and engagement** through research culture events/ seminars (e.g. open science symposium); and foster UK and Ireland networks to exchange best practice (UK – ARMA; RoI – UCD, AIREN)

REFLECTIONS - Lessons from our experience to date

- Commitment from government and funders is critical
- Institutional approaches require buy-in from senior leadership, but delivery must be **genuinely owned** by the research community
- Draw upon best practice within the sector and the institution
- Prioritise the things that will have the greatest impact, and where you are most likely to affect change
- The research community is diverse – engage with everyone, and ensure that plans address all of their concerns
- Post-docs, research students, technicians and support staff must be **co-equal partners** in the research community
- **Cross-institutional collaboration** is critical – approaches to research culture need to work in concert with, and complement, other activities through e.g. people & culture/ human resources

REFLECTIONS - Longer-term challenges, priorities and questions

- How do we measure and monitor our research culture to demonstrate progress?
- Beyond the lifetime of the action plan, how do we sustain and embed lasting cultural change?
- How do we tackle pervasive challenges such as e.g. academic workload; developing, retaining and attracting talent?
- How do we keep up with evolving strategies and priorities, changes to government and funder policy priorities?

Questions?

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