

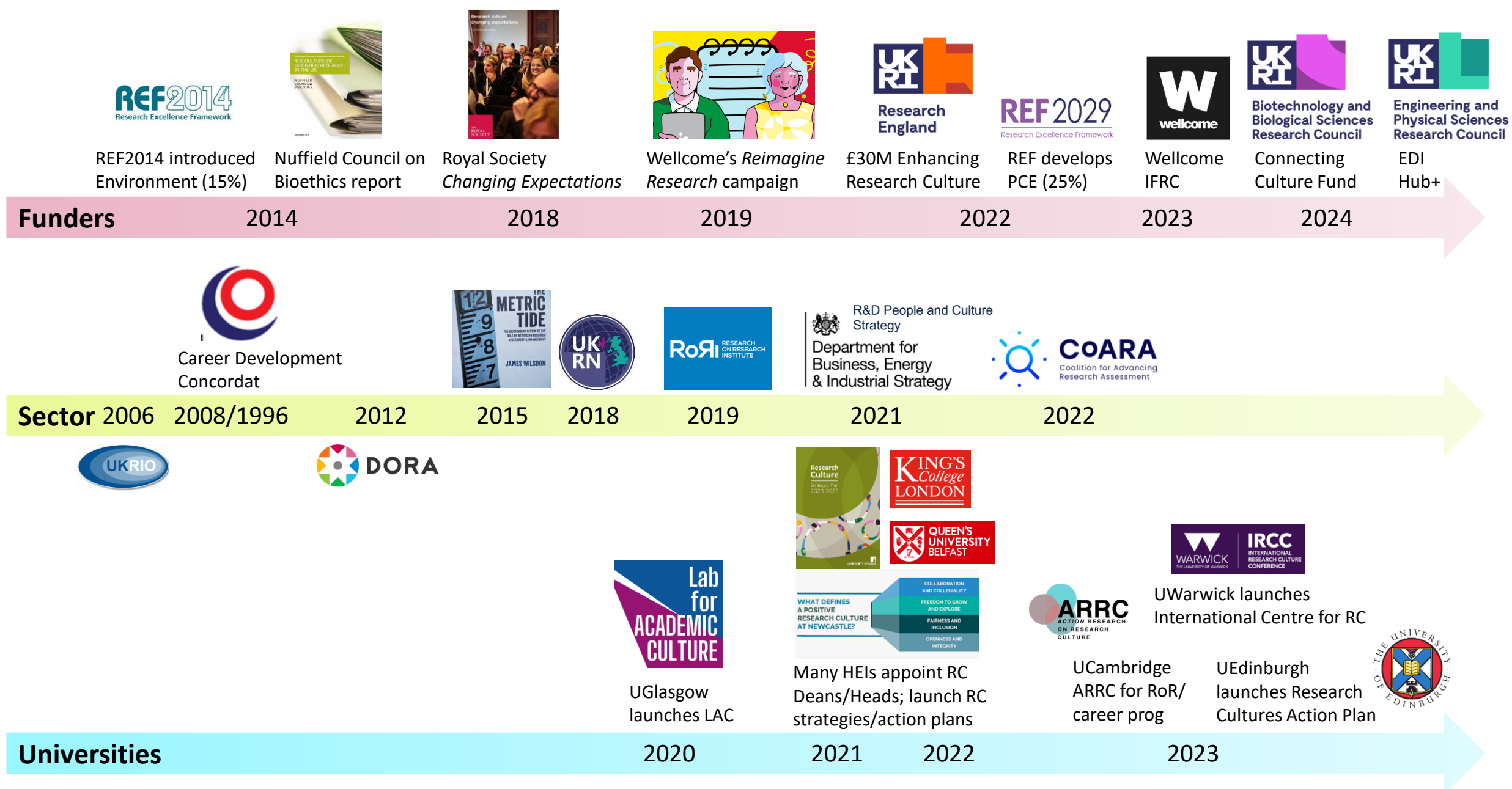
UKRIO webinar
25 June 2025

Improving Research Cultures: What works?

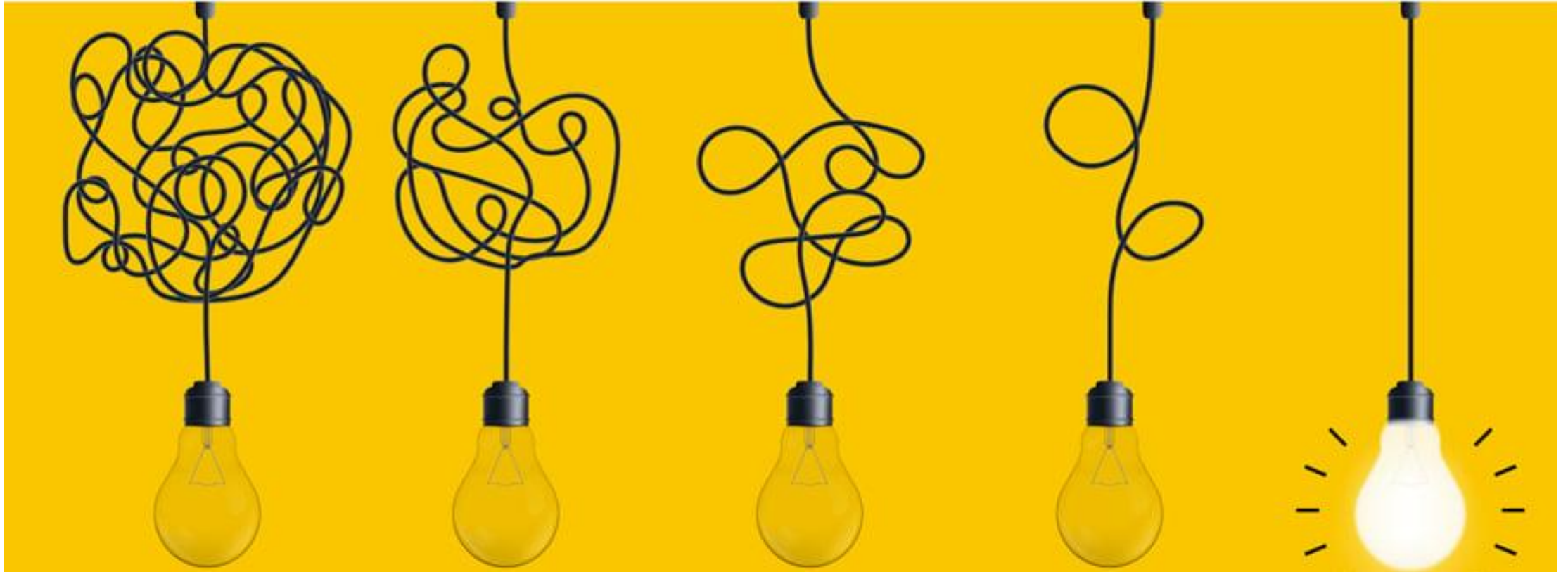
Prof Cat Davies, Dean for Research Culture



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What's worked?



What does ‘*worked*’ mean?

1. Raised awareness and understanding?

*We're not really sure what research culture means.
It's kind of a fuzzy, what-does-that-mean word.*

2. Raising everyone to the basic standards of good RC?
3. Palpable improvements in inclusive, equitable, open research practices?
4. Strong REF2029 PCE submission?



How do we know what's worked?

- Word on the street / vibe?
 - Adoption / adaptation?
 - KPIs?
 - ... soon you arrive at the TYRANNY OF METRICS
-
- Simpler view
 - What makes people feel more engaged in their work?
 - What's going to sustain the movement?



Our vision at Leeds (and elsewhere)



What's helped?

Essential

- Institution that takes RC seriously
 - Consulting the community early, continuously, **judiciously**
 - Grassroots engagement
 - Honest conversations
 - Senior buy-in
- Responsive, evolving approach
- Dedicated, diverse central team (cf. distributed experts) with dual leadership and a clear offer
- Providing time and £££ for RC work
- Action focus via funded projects
- Comms and transparency
- Alignment with other strategies



Desirable / *what's helped* **for us**

- Having a guiding strategy
- Metascientific approach
- Systems thinking; Recognition of shared responsibility
- Working groups
- Grit
- External networks and a decent external website!

What's helped **elsewhere**

- Laser focus on hiring right
- Incentivising within grants



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

Evolving approach

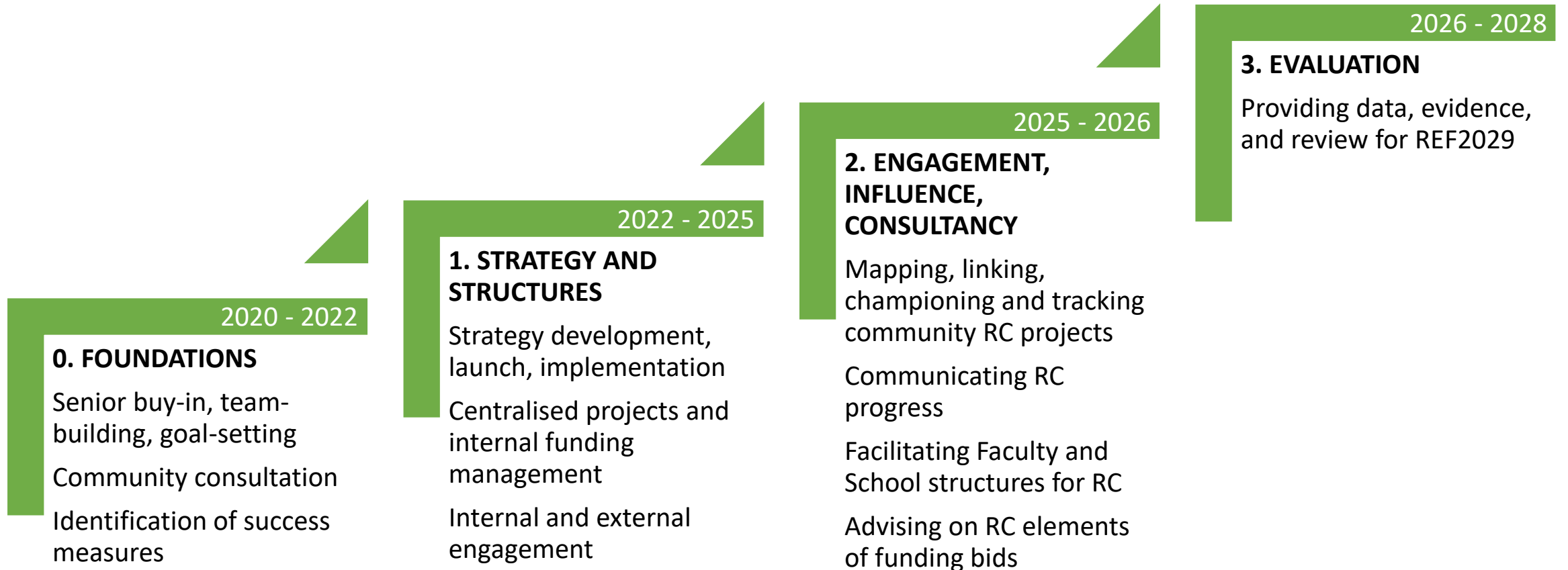
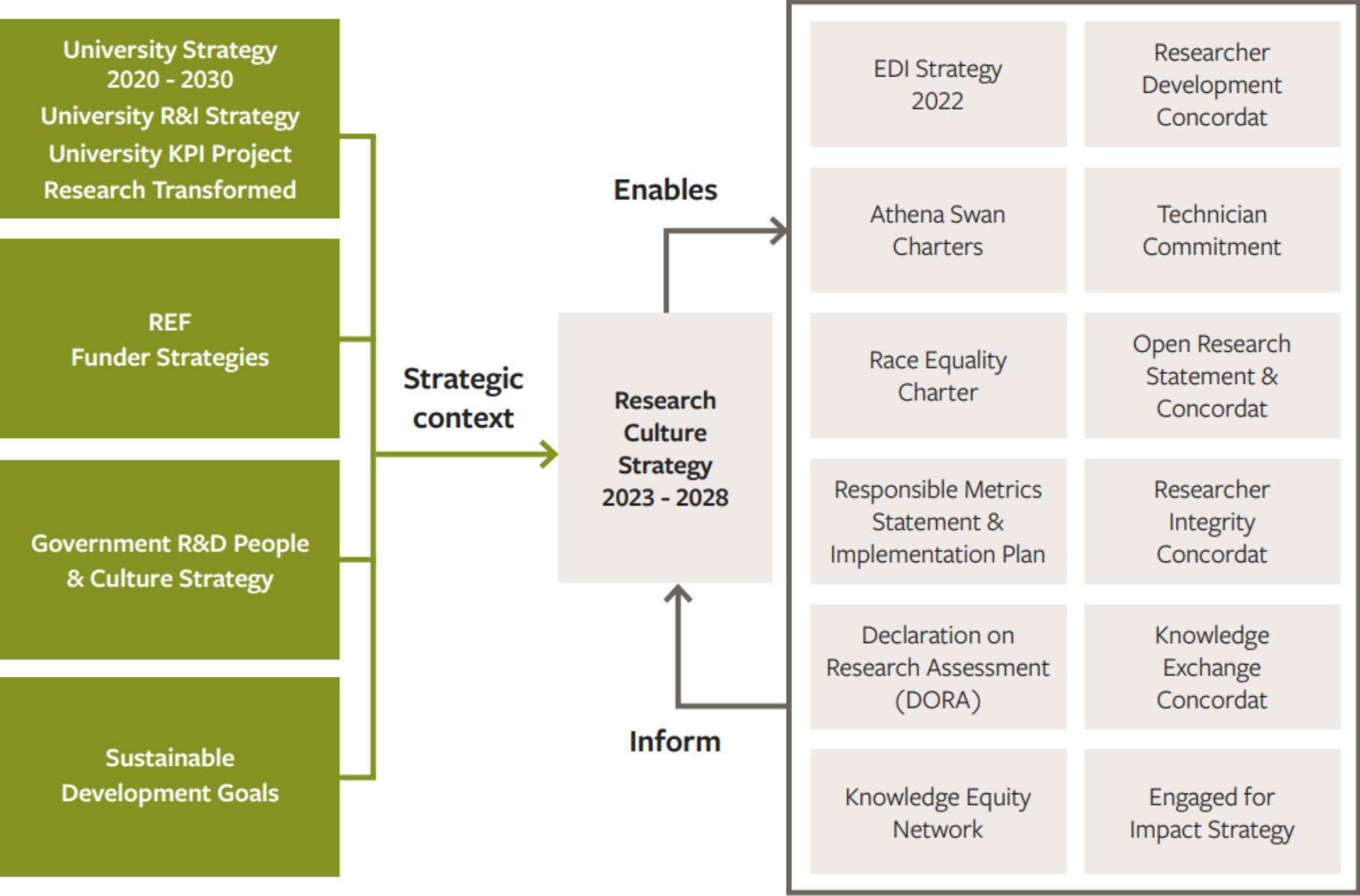
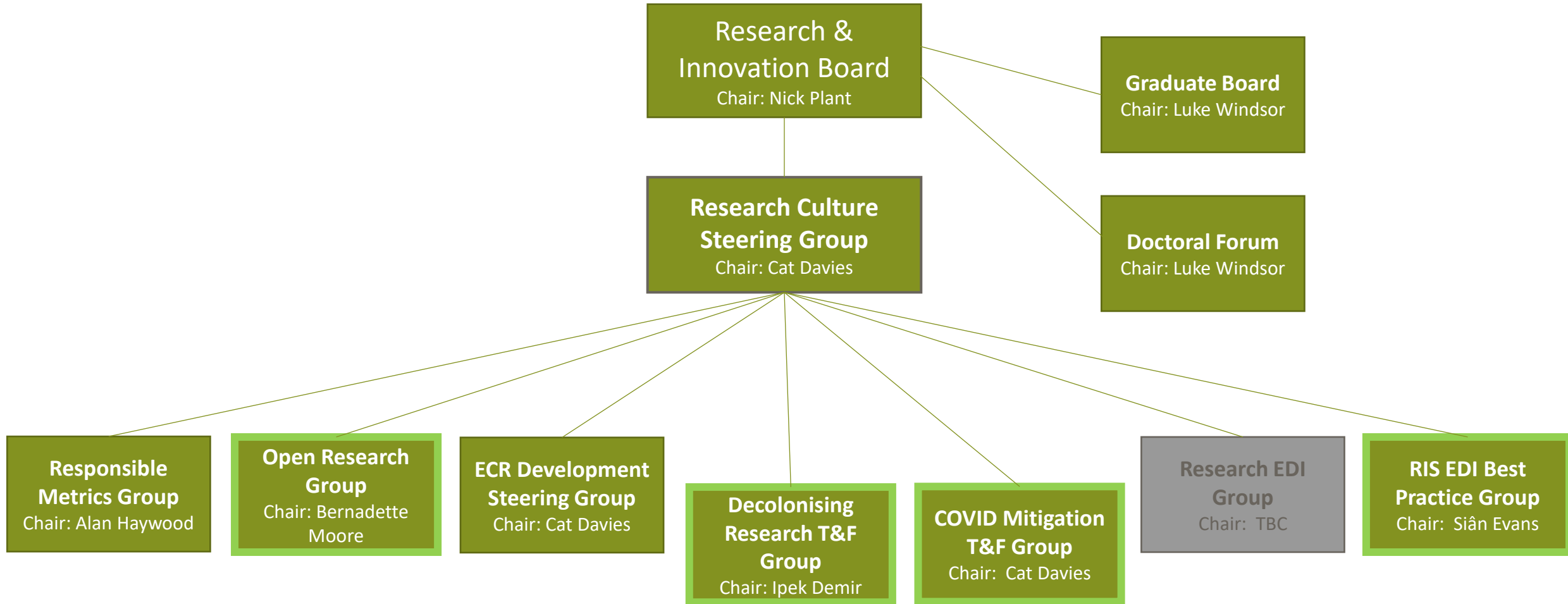


Figure 2. Internal and external strategic context for research culture.



Capacity building: Convening strategic groups



Enhancing Research Culture: Open Call 2024-25

The Research England Enhancing Research Culture Fund 2024-25 is open for applications from Friday 17 May 2024. Applications close on Friday 28 June at 17.00.

[MORE ON OUR FUNDED PROJECTS](#) >



[HOME](#) / [OPPORTUNITIES](#) / [ENHANCING RESEARCH CULTURE: OPEN CALL 2024-25](#)

Enhancing Research Culture: Open Call 2024-25

We are seeking proposals for projects that address research culture challenges or enhance existing practice. Projects can be undertaken by researchers, academic, technical, or professional services colleagues, or teams comprised of diverse profiles. By investing in innovative solutions to shared challenges, we will inspire genuine, lasting organisational change.

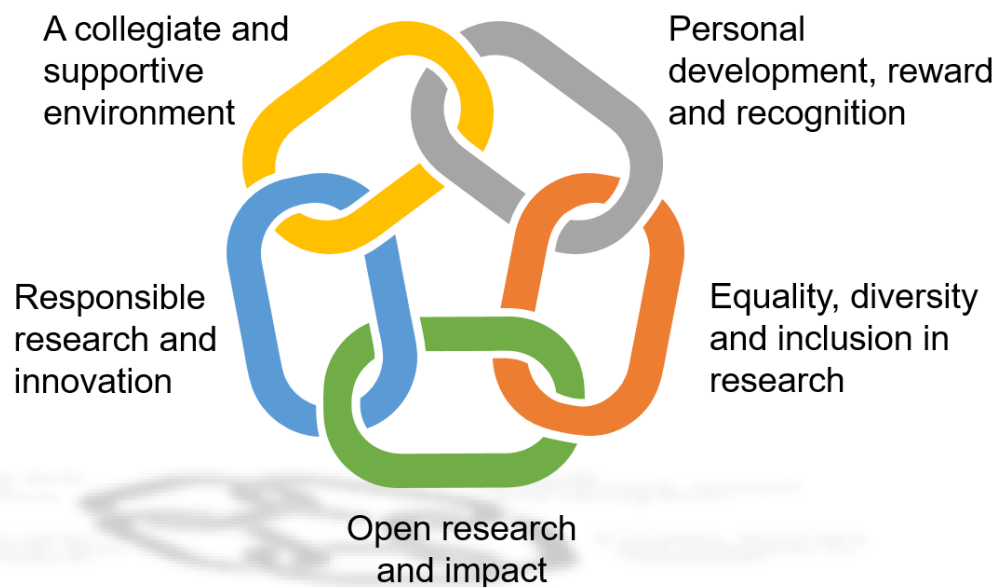
Proposals are invited for projects in the region of £10k - £30k (including directly incurred costs). Funds must be spent and goods receipted by 31 July 2025.

The deadline for applications is Friday 28 June 2024 at 17:00. The application form can be found at the bottom of this web page.

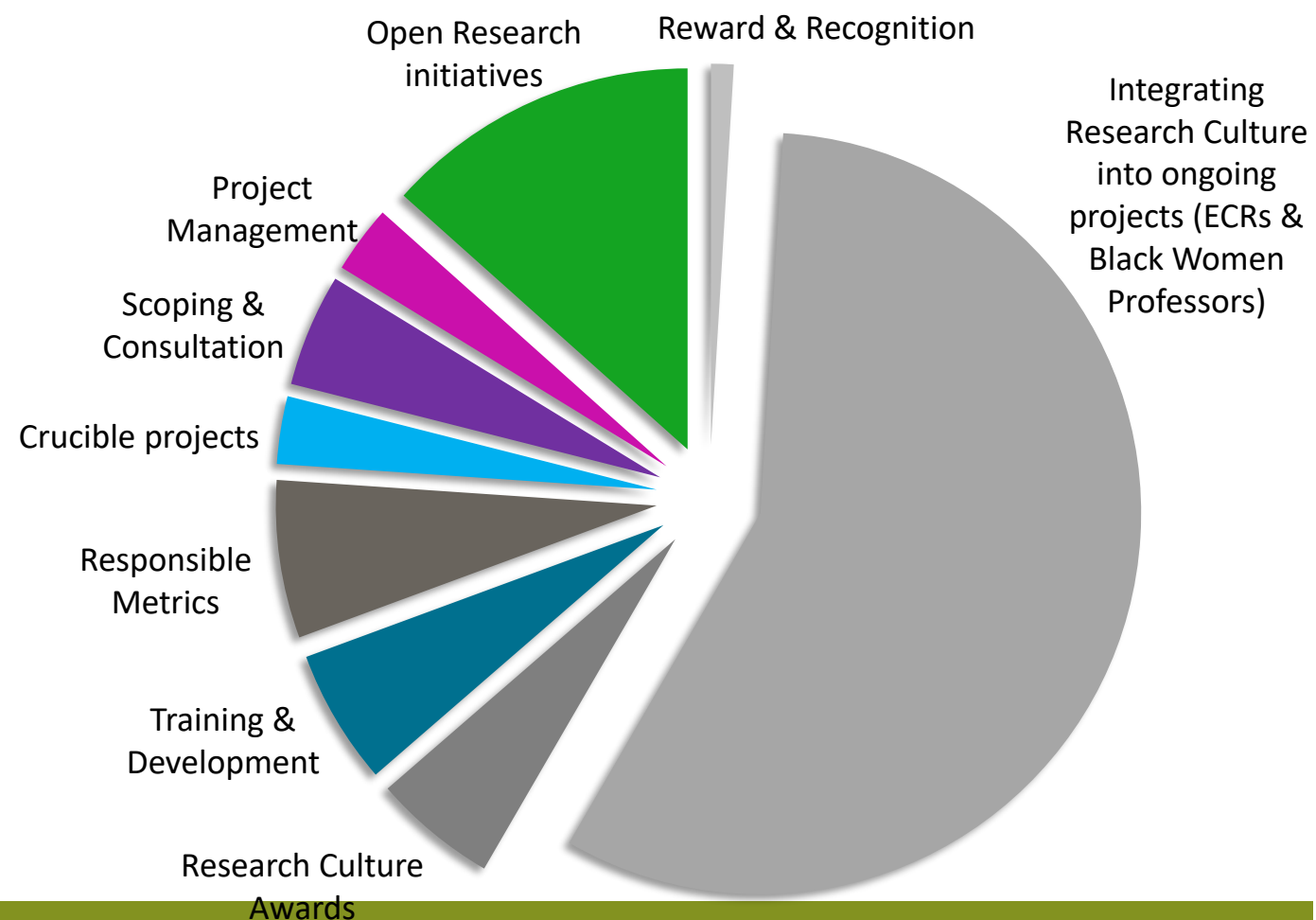
Enhancing Research Culture Programme

Jan-July 2022

UoL Research Culture themes



Enhancing RC funded strands



Research England Enhancing Research Culture funding impact



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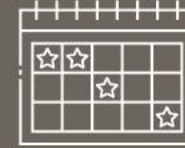
7 scaled-up pilot
ERC projects



5 role changes
or promotions



31 events



2 new products
or processes



20 new
resources



e.g., a guidebook on
developing PGR communities
(FMH),



a roadmap for developing a
research funding proposal
(LUBS),



and an ongoing library of
schools' data outreach event
resources (LIDA).

24 new partnerships /
partners engaged
with

e.g., other Universities,
external researchers,
local schools and
Councils, charities and
arts organisations.



7 publications

e.g., case studies,
reports, journal
articles and planned
book chapters.



4 policy or practice
changes initiated

e.g., enhanced
support for
community building
provided for PGRs
(LIHS).



Research
Culture



Research
England

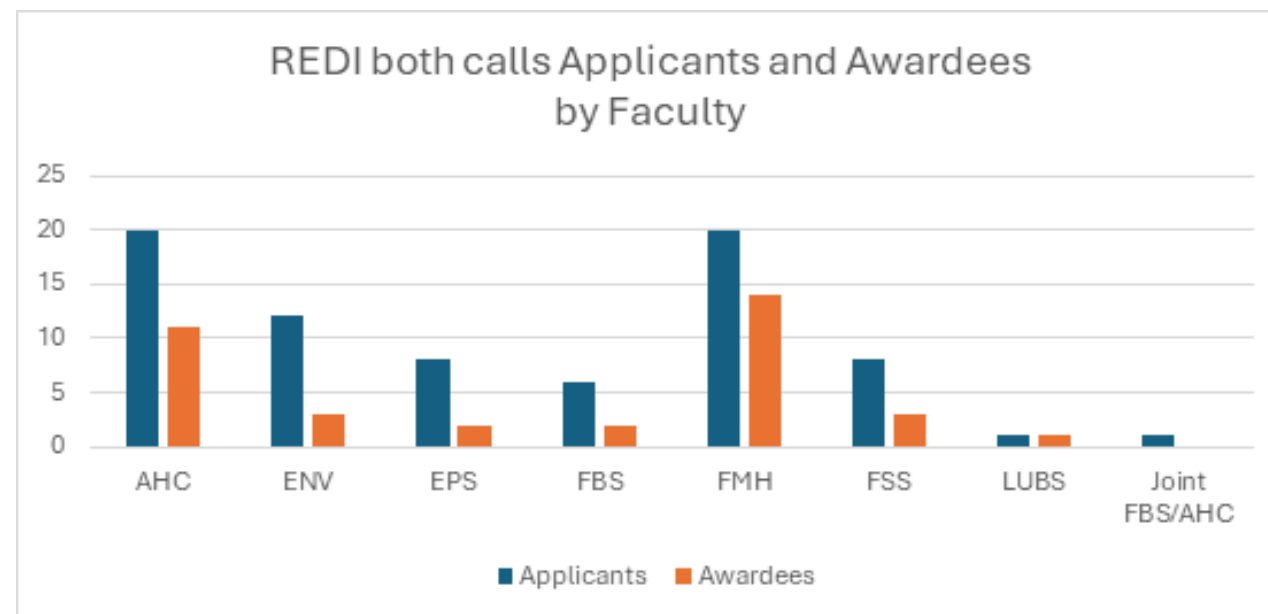


SO2. Research EDI fund (REDI)

- Targeted career development intervention focusing on disability, ethnicity, and gender (+ EDI work) for academic staff at G8 & G9
- Intersectionality. 39% of applicants and 40% of awardees identified as having more than one of the eligible demographic criteria.
- All applicants undertaking EDI work also disclosed at least one eligible demographic criterion.

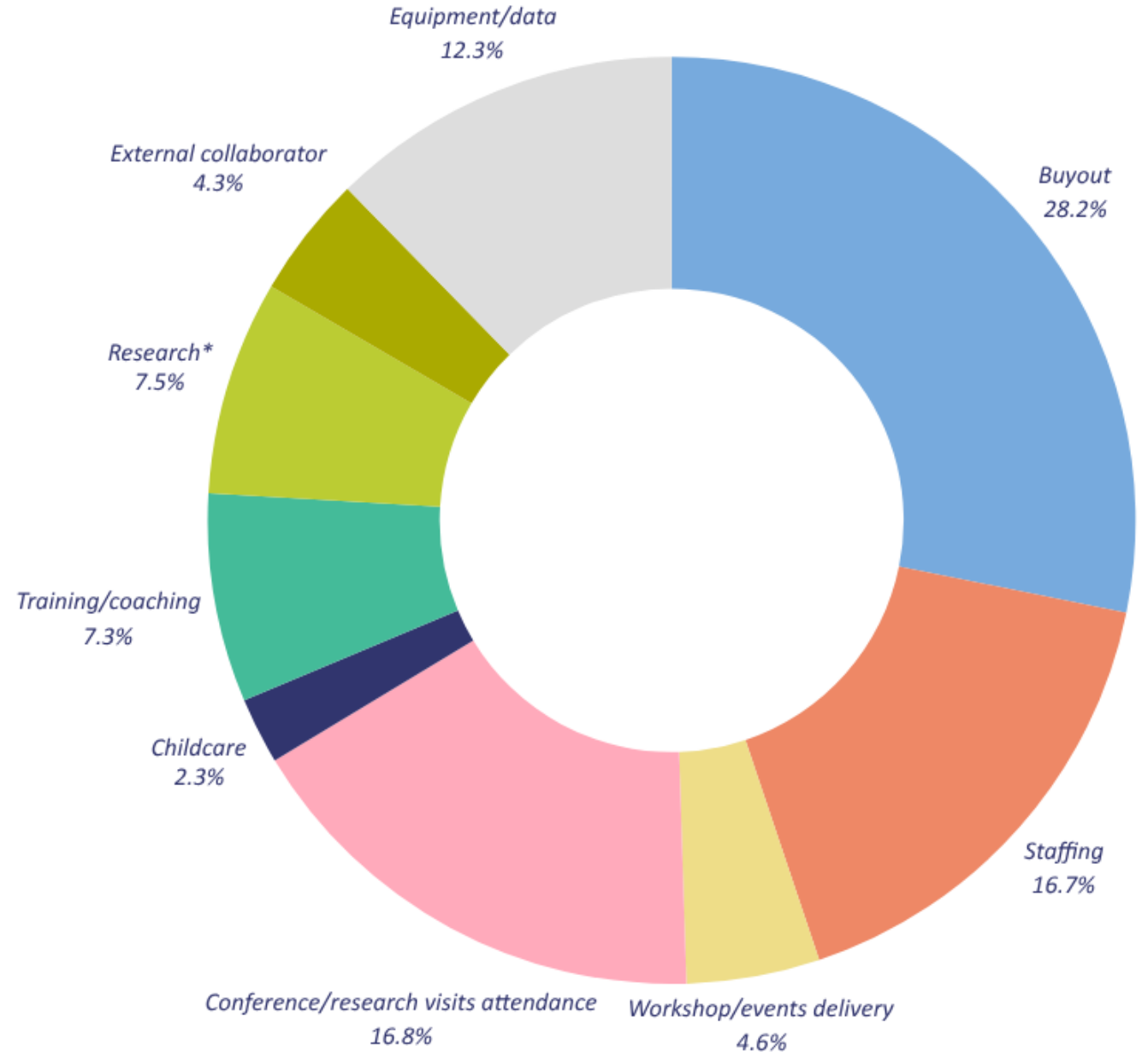
Call	Total funds applied for	N. applicants	Total funds awarded	N. awardees
REDI pilot (24/25)	£440K	36	£231K	20
REDI 2.0* (25/26)	£284.5K	32	£165K	16
TOTAL	£724.5K	68	£396K	36

*Overall budget was lower in call 2

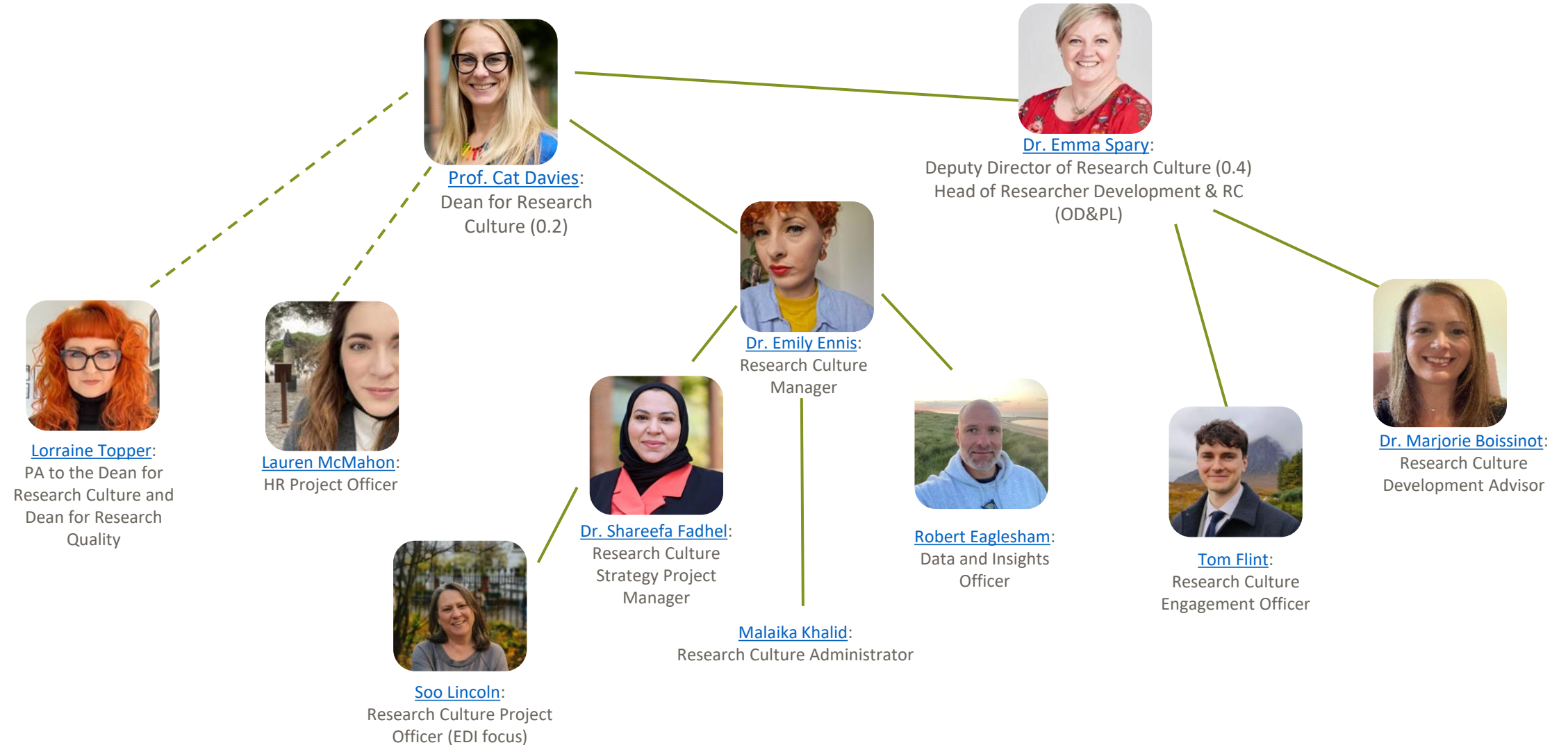


REDI 1.0 spend breakdown

*"I have time to engage in career
development opportunities"*
(Research Culture Pulse Surveys)



Research Culture Team



Research culture team services

Strategy and Operations

1. **Delivery of the Research Culture Strategic Plan** 2023 - 2028, including project management, implementation, and evaluation
2. Embedding RC strategic plan in research operations
3. **Delivering data insights** to **guide, implement, and evaluate** research culture initiatives
4. Providing **expertise for PCE** element of REF2029
5. Reporting of KPI 6c (increased staff experience of a positive research culture)
6. **Liaison** between related units on research culture matters, e.g. HR, OD&PL, Library, EIU, Doctoral College
7. Working across University functions to ensure operational support is provided at School and Faculty level
8. Scoping and support for **researcher development**
9. **Advising on research in EDI** at School, Faculty, and University levels

Advocacy

1. Internal and external engagement of RC stakeholders, **representing UoL in national and international forums**
2. Advising Faculties, Schools, Services on **research culture best practice**
3. **Role modelling** of best practice, e.g. inclusive recruitment, open resources, equitable funding policy
4. **Oversight of surveys** for gauging research culture perspectives and behaviours
5. Coordination of **central RC comms**
6. **RC event** planning and delivery

Funding

1. Funding, support, and evaluation of **Enhancing RC projects**
2. Producing **external funding applications and publications** relating to research culture / metaresearch
3. **Horizon scanning** through engagement with funders and networks
4. Building collaborations for future **cross-institutional bids**
5. Advising on research culture aspects of grant applications.

Find out more



Research Culture Statement

Details of our original Research Culture Statement



Opportunities

How you can get involved: Open funding calls, Awards, Prizes, Projects



Research Culture Pulse Surveys

Help us measure and evaluate our progress by completing our pulse surveys, ensure your feedback makes a difference.



How to....

Examples of case studies, initiatives, projects and best practice for enhancing Research Culture. Access reports, guides and resources supporting our work.



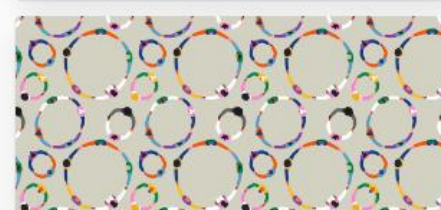
Open Research Hub

Supporting open research practice for collaborative working, sharing and openness throughout the entire research cycle, ensuring research is "as open as possible, as closed as necessary".



Responsible Metrics

Learn about the supporting role that quantitative metrics can play in research assessment.





Case Study: A new approach to interviews, can we improve the experience?

The Challenge:

Interviews are stressful no matter what side you are sitting on. Candidates will spend a lot of time and emotional energy on preparing their application and interview and

Sharing and celebrating our practice



Research Culture Uncovered podcast team with award at Vitae conference



Research Culture team at Warwick University's International Research Culture Conference 2024



Award winners at Research Culture Awards 2024



Using SCOPE to select metrics to track improvements in Research Culture



Fiona McClement and Cat Davies presenting at the Warwick International Research Culture Conference 2024

Research Culture Awards 2022

Recognising and
celebrating research
culture and impact in 2022





Uni Leeds Staff @UniLeedsStaff · Jul 20

🏆 Winners of our inaugural Research Culture and Engaged for Impact Awards have been announced.

🌍 Find out who won, and discover how we're showcasing the achievements of those helping transform lives and make a real difference across the globe. 📺

forstaff.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/7...



BRAGG CENTRE

The Bragg Centre at
Not to #BraggAbout!
Research Culture Aw

We're nominated for



Mathew Tata
@maj_tata

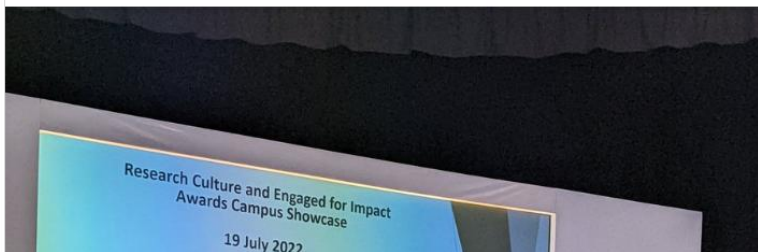
Everything is right about this:

Rewarding efforts to enhance #researchculture with the same pomp and acclaim expected for research outputs and accolades. And opened by the Chancellor too!

Kudos @ResCultureLeeds @UniversityLeeds

ResearchCulture@Leeds @ResCultureLeeds · Jul 19

Getting excited for the start of our Research Culture and Impact Awards



Alistair Quaile @aliquaile · Jul 20

Humbled to be recognised in the inaugural @UniversityLeeds #ResearchCulture awards. Massive thank you to Mark Mon-Williams for his mentorship, and to @amk762 and @thompa101 for the nomination and trust in supporting our impact vision

ResearcherDevelopment@Leeds @ResDevLeeds · Jul 19



Paul Taylor @PaulfrYorkshire · Jul 19

Proud to collect a runner up certificate Culture Awards 2022 with @Asante (couldn't come) on behalf of all in the Research Group



Sally Dalton @SallyDalton18 · Jul 19

Our responsible metrics group won an award! @cgknowles @BarbaraLancho 🥰

ResearcherDevelopment@Leeds @ResDevLeeds · Jul 19

First prize in the category Responsible Research and Innovation: Project: Leading change in the responsible use of research metrics. Team members: Claire Knowles, Liz Neilly, Alistair Knock, Simon Ball, Sally Dalton, Rebecca Fleming, Barbara Lancho-Barrantes...



RESEARCH CULTURE
AWARD
2022

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

RESEARCH CULTURE
AWARD
2022

MO1 · Jul 19

Water Woman Award with my e it recognised like this is a Women that make it possible

@SRILeeds @SEELeeds @UniLeedsCulture @YorkshireiCASP

@leeds @wateratleeds · Jul 19

g to @ResDevLeeds

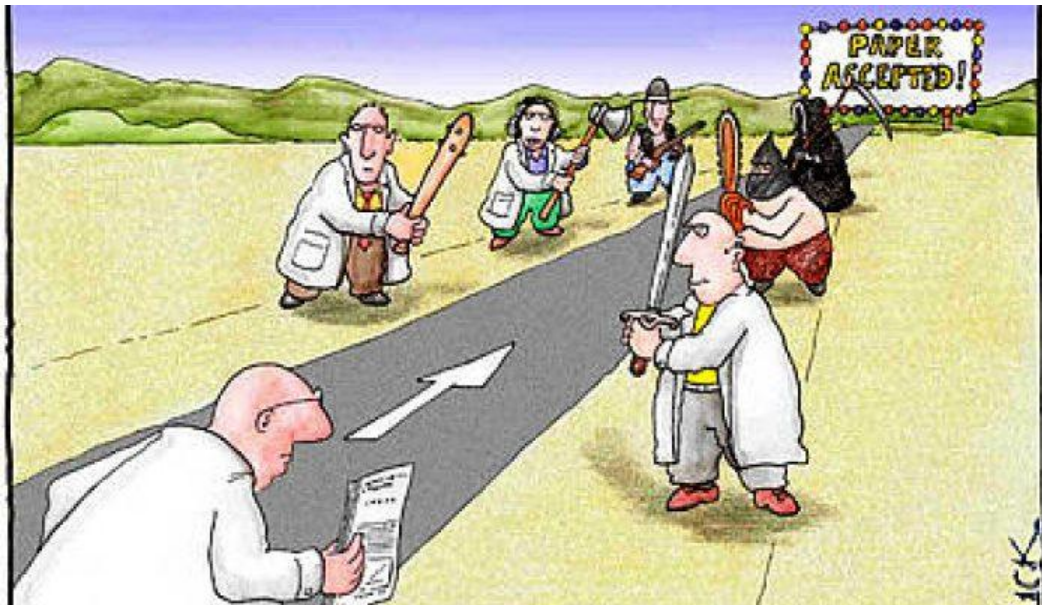
Water Woman initiative won the First Prize in the category Personal ment, Reward, and Recognition @ the Research and Culture UoL Congratulations to the team @ProfJuliaMO1 Belicosa @annieartpower @clarewoulds @Hopson1S



RESEARCH CU
AWAR
202

UNIVERSITY

What's been *challenging*?



- Being seen as the rich uncle
- Opposition in the sector re research quality
- Perceptions of additional burden
- Scope of RC



Not “Culture”

Car parking

Catering

Sustainability?

Etc...

University Culture

Collaboration

Compassion

Inclusivity

Integrity

Research Culture @ Leeds

**Recognising
diverse forms
of research
activity**

**Embedding EDI
principles in
research
practices**

**Enabling Open
Research
practices**

**Mutually
supporting and
developing
research teams**

What's not worked as we'd hoped

- **Research Culture Cafes:**

- 6 each year, with 2 in-person
- Every three cafes, a report compiling the key discussions points is produced in Sway.
- [RC Café October 2024 report](#)
- In 2025, cafes will be themed by staff category: PGRs in February, Technicians in April, Professional Services in June.

- **Pulse Surveys**

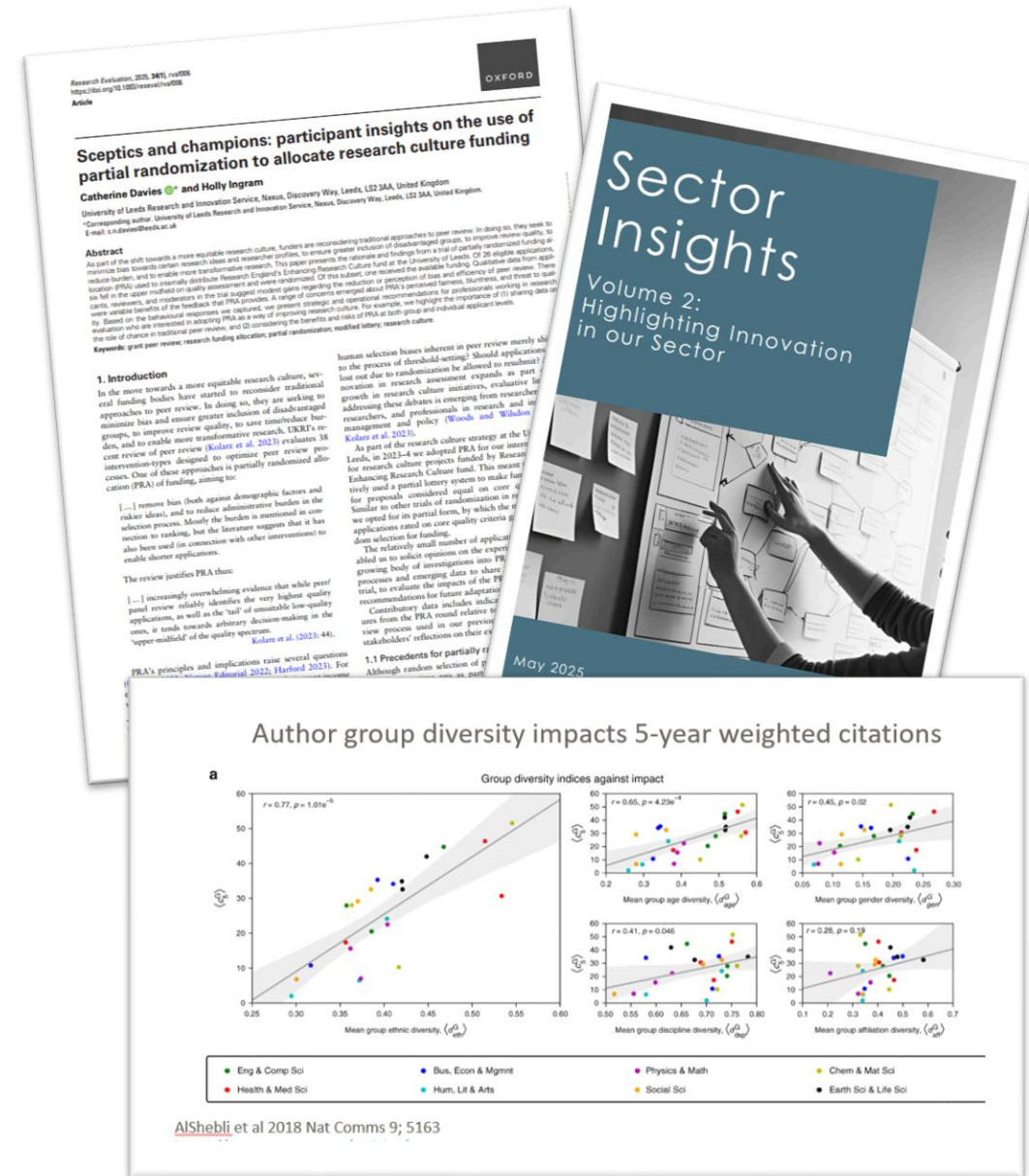
Cf. Research Culture Best Practice Carousels webinar series

- 7 events since November 2022, with 14 contributors including Women @ Leeds Network, The White Rose Consortium and Impact expert Prof Mark Reed.
- 1 successful project for Enhancing Research Culture open call developed from Carousel
- [Recordings from all Carousel webinars are available in Sway](#)



Successful approaches

- Grassroots
- Integrated
- Metascientific
 - Inclusive recruitment
 - Innovation in funding processes
 - Professional incivility work
- Externally engaged



Thank you

Further detail on our research culture activities, funding, governance, and a range of resources can be found at researchculture.leeds.ac.uk



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Supplementary slides

Research Culture | Strategic Plan 2023–2028

2404 pulse survey responses analysed

our surveys have helped us navigate our current research culture and given a platform to our community. Your responses have helped shape the efforts to realise the positive and inclusive culture we're striving for.



102 individuals recognised in our research culture awards

in 22/23 we had 9 awards recognising 50 people who shared £19K. In 24/25 we celebrated 52 people across 10 awards sharing £20K.



£16,040 our Crucible programme provided funding to kickstart ideas to improve local cultures

we funded 7 projects with 21 team members. One project provided grant writing support for applicants with English as a second language: now expanded to support those writing narrative CVs. It has been recognised by the EPSRC.



Open Research Hub Launch

designed to help our researchers learn more about open research, support and share best practices, and promote training opportunities. These resources will foster collaboration and innovation; help tackle complex global challenges; and further the cause of ensuring that the benefits of knowledge production are accessible to everyone, regardless of background or resources.



£2,592,770

worth of research culture projects processed

there is huge demand for culture change, research culture work, and our services. Over the last three years we have processed 91 applications involving 506 colleagues. With the resources available to us we have funded 37 projects involving 222 colleagues totalling £921,930.



£165,000

the research culture team is proud to support the *100 Black Women Professors Now* initiative. Over the past three years we have provided £165K to support the career development of 22 individuals at various career stages.

100 BLACK WOMEN PROFESSORS NOW.



£14,000 PGR & ECR network building

we supported two rounds of PGR/ECR network building. In 22/23 we allocated £7K to seven groups. In 23/24, 16 groups shared £7K: some as follow-on funding from cohort one.



UKRN UK Reproducibility Network

in 2022 we joined the UK Reproducibility Network - a peer-led consortium that aims to ensure the UK retains its place as a centre for world-leading research by supporting open research practices. Without our funding to buy out staff time, we risk losing access to this network.



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Research Culture | Strategic Plan 2023–2028

91 episodes and counting of our award-winning research culture uncovered podcast

our Research Culture Uncovered Podcast recently won a national Vitae Impact, Culture and Engagement Award. The podcast covers various topics of research culture. With over 10,000 downloads across 89 countries, it has established Leeds and our hosts as leaders in this work.



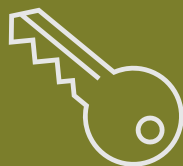
20 champions of your success celebrated

our career development recognition scheme celebrates and rewards those who have made a significant positive impact on others' professional journeys, e.g. as mentors, supportive peers, or managers.



70 open research case studies

we helped create 70 open research case studies covering all disciplines and all 7 faculties as well as most services. These case studies seek to inspire researchers to do more open research. There are now available on our open research hub.



we've undertaken a new career development programme for professional service staff with two further cohorts planned.

£230,375

Research Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI) Fund

the research culture team is proud to support the research careers of groups institutionally under-represented in senior academic research positions. REDI provides grants of up to £15k to support academic staff who are women, from minoritised ethnic groups, or disabled, as well as staff who undertake formal EDI work within the University as a mechanism for recognising their contribution.



25% of REF 2029 will be the People, Culture & Environment element

our team has developed expertise in, and helped shape, the PCE element of REF 2029. We will be on hand to help every unit of assessment, faculty, and the institution navigate the requirements of this audit.

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework



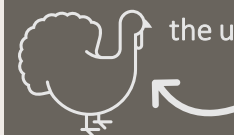
co-created a decolonising research framework

we helped create a decolonising research framework with key principles, values, and broad actions for the community. These resources will promote inclusivity and equity, challenge existing power structures, and further the cause of ensuring that research practices and outcomes reflect, include, and benefit all communities, especially those historically minoritised or marginalized.

£3,500

Funding for responsible research and innovation

we ran an open call to provide funding to encourage responsible and innovative research practices. Five teams shared £3,500.



the unnamed research culture event (TURCE)*

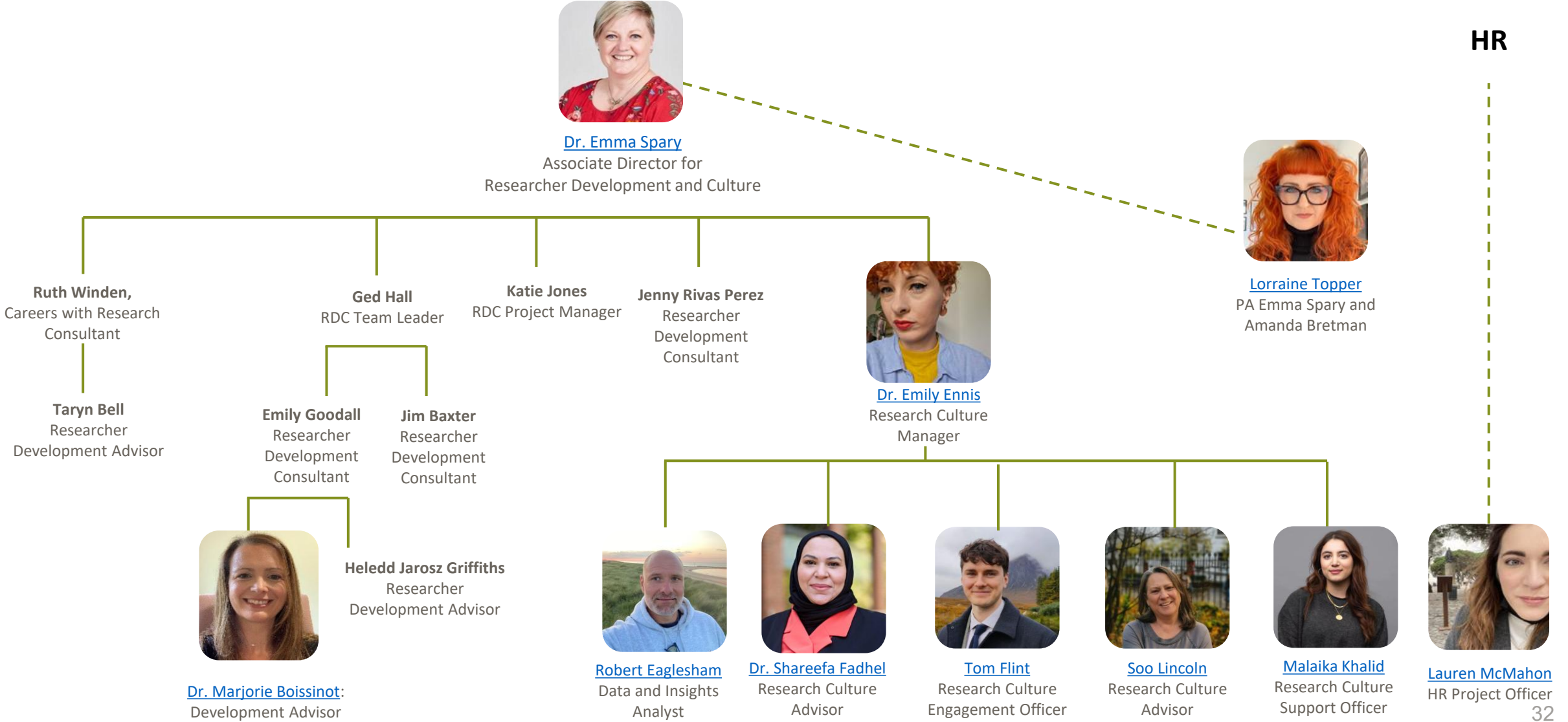
*affectionally referred to as 'turkey'

we hosted a trailblazing sector-wide workshop with 77 participants asking if a manifesto, similar to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), could be helpful in tackling poor behaviour in research culture.



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Researcher Development and Research Culture team



Faculty data packs

Includes data on:

- Median grant award per gender by discipline
- Ratio of number of funding applications to awards by gender
- REDI data, including
 - Some underpinning EDI data
 - Application information (values and resources requested)
 - Success ratios by Faculty
- Values and success data on Research Culture award nominations and Enhancing Research Culture open call
- Pulse survey data (quant. and qual.)
- Representation by Faculties in RC Governance
- Other suggestions?

Additional information provided:

- Guidance on:
 - how to read the data
 - what additional data slices might be possible
 - why other characteristics might be more interesting but not yet provided, e.g. caring responsibilities, promotions data
- Contextual information on faculties ratings/scores
- Directions on where to locate other, useful datasets (e.g. EIU, Library)
- Recommendations for best practices
- An overview of support provided by the RDC&RC team to help fill in “gaps”
- Multiple points of engagement to enhance quality assurance of information (e.g. via EDI leads, Faculty Research Ops, FRIOs, etc)

Research Culture CoP Event 2025

- **Monday 14th July 10am - 4pm, Nexus.**
- Opportunity for peer-to-peer learning, sharing practical insights on what makes a difference to research culture at UoL
- Open to Leeds staff, students, and their collaborators
- Designed to strengthen our community of learning and practice, spotlight effective approaches, and highlight activity relevant to REF2029 People, Culture, and Environment
- Keynote from a leading voice in the sector, with inspiring examples of best practice from UK HEIs
- Currently seeking Expressions of Interest from colleagues who would like to share examples of effective RC practices, e.g.
 - **Presentations** (around 20 minutes)
 - **Lightning talks** (under 15 minutes)
 - **Panel discussions or fireside chats**
 - **Interactive workshops**
 - **Posters** (digital and/or in-person)
 - **Short videos**

These can be drawn from activity within the University or from our networks, such as the White Rose University Consortium, Leeds City Council, or other partners.

Read more and submit your EoI [here](#). **Deadline for submissions: Friday 30 May, 5pm.**

<https://researchculture.leeds.ac.uk/opportunities/research-culture-community-of-practice-event-2025/>

Building up a definition of RC

Slide from Karen Stroobants
and Ben Bleasdale
@<https://culturebase-consulting.co.uk/>



NCOB
**The culture of
scientific research**
2014



2018/19

Wellcome
Reimagine
Research
2019-20



Funding:

- **Enhancing RC**
- **Institutional Funding
for Research Culture**



Royal Society
Changing
Expectations
2017



2019



2020



2021


Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

**R&D People and Culture
Strategy**

REF2029
Research Excellence Framework