Research culture and environment
at The University of Manchester

Building better research cultures together

Good research culture is an integral part of how we work together here at Manchester.

It is the way 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 by which we support research and recognise and reward that work.

Associate Vice-President for Research, Professor Melissa Westwood:

"From PGR to Post-doc, Royal Society Fellow and tenured academic, I've benefitted from the very best of positive research culture. I want us to improve it even further and ensure everyone has that experience. Working together like this will not only make us proud of the impactful research we can do within the great facilities we enjoy in Manchester, but also, and just as importantly, of how we did it."

Vice-President for Research, Professor Colette Fagan:

"We all have an essential role to play in fostering a positive culture here at Manchester. You as individuals, through your commitment to a conscientious, considerate way of working, and the University, faculties, and schools through support and development provision."

Our Research Culture and Environment Framework, and Hub brings together information, support and resources for researchers and research-enabling staff at all levels and across all disciplines.

Our Research Culture and Environment Framework

Supporting diverse and rewarding careers

Upholding the highest levels of responsible and ethical research

Building collaboration and interdisciplinarity

Enabling open and impactful research

The images used to highlight our Research Culture themes were submitted by UoM Postgraduate Researchers as part of the 'Images of Research' competition, which forms part of our annual PGR Showcase. These images authentically demonstrate the real-world outcomes of our university's research culture. You can find more at Research culture and environment themes – Images of Research.

Supporting diverse and rewarding careers

An integral aspect of good research culture is supporting diverse and rewarding careers for all involved in research across the University, from PGRs to senior researchers and professors, as well as all those whose contributions are vital to the research process, such as research methodologists, technical professionals, and research enabling staff.

The development of our researchers is at the heart of all we do. Development opportunities and needs vary depending on an individual's career stage, goals and preferences in engaging with development. Researcher development includes a broad range of support and activities; it's not just workshops to help you develop specific skills for your research and it's not just for the start of your career.

See how your colleagues have used the framework to help them in their research practices:

Career development case studies

Opportunities and initiatives include:

- High-quality training and support for all career stages from PGR, research staff, new academics, research fellows, mid-career academics, and established and leading researchers.

- Prosper programmes giving research staff an opportunity to pause and reflect on their career development and opportunities inside and beyond academia, supporting them to unlock their potential.

- Our action plan to meet the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat, with new activities such as a leadership course for research fellows and a pilot scheme to provide enhanced research staff job security.

- Our Technical Commitment ensures greater visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians across all disciplines.

- Academic promotions criteria that have been reviewed and updated, bringing additional clarity on expectations with support through faculties and the researcher development team.

- Recognition through awards such as the MDC Excellence Awards, the Research Staff Excellence Awards and the 'Making a Difference Awards' to celebrate your achievements, collegiality and research impact.

- Our PI toolkit , helping those who manage researchers to further support and develop their staff, and the PGR supervisors toolkit to help support the next generation of researchers.

- Dedicated funding streams for research staff to build research independence, allowing staff to develop collaborations and disseminate their research to help their own career and professional development.

Image by Haya E'layan

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Building collaboration and interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary research plays a pivotal role in our research culture. The major societal and scientific challenges we currently face often demand large-scale multi or interdisciplinary responses, grounded in meaningful collaboration and co-production with internal and external partners. However, we recognise that the development of productive relationships and innovative ideas may require additional support across all stages of the research lifecycle.

We provide structural and financial support to catalyse the development of new interdisciplinary research programmes and increase the inter and multi-disciplinary capabilities of our researcher community. This enables our professional services and academic colleagues to convene diverse and dynamic teams that mobilise their respective strengths to search for creative solutions to the world's thorniest problems – together.

We offer support through:

- Our four research platforms – Creative Manchester, Digital Futures, Healthier Futures, and Sustainable Futures – which provide focus and resource to connect, drive and amplify interdisciplinary collaborations between academics, faculties and institutes.

- Our 21 interdisciplinary research institutes which facilitate leading-edge research and meet the external demands of government, business and communities.

- The University of Manchester Research Institute (UMRI) which provides funding for pump priming activities to increase interdisciplinary research across the University and support new partnerships across disciplines through short 'discipline hopping' and research placement schemes.

- The Interdisciplinary Research Professional Services Network which brings colleagues who support interdisciplinary research across the University together to share intelligence and build collaborations.

- Faculty Research and Innovation teams who work closely together to support interdisciplinary collaboration: Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health; Faculty of Humanities; and Faculty of Science and Engineering.

> **See how your colleagues have used the framework to help them in their research practices:**
>
> Collaboration and interdisciplinarity spotlights

Image by Shahd Benafif

Upholding the highest levels of responsible and ethical research

Upholding responsible and ethical research is vital for a thriving research culture. Good practices enable researchers to produce high-quality work with rigour, integrity, sustainability and creativity. Our responsible research principles guide researchers to work with respect and accountability: crucial for research excellence and public trust.

The University's Responsible Research and Innovation Framework outlines how our values, culture and practices foster an environment where ethical research thrives and positively impacts society. It ensures research is sustainable, minimising environmental, social and economic impacts.

See how your colleagues have used the framework to help them in their research practices:

Responsible and ethical research case studies and spotlights

Some of the ways we support you to carry out responsible and ethical research are listed below:

- The Responsible Research and Innovation Framework supports researchers preparing funding applications and starting new projects, offering materials to assist them in designing responsible research.
- The University's expectations of research integrity are set out in our Code of Good Research Conduct and we provide research integrity training for staff and PGRs.
- We provide comprehensive guidance on the ethical conduct of research involving human participants, enable research involving human tissue through our policies and procedures, and support the sponsorship of clinical trials and other health and social care research.
- Our Research Governance Pack provides guidance on conducting research in the NHS.

- Our Research Security Hub helps academics and research-enabling PS staff to keep themselves and their work safe.
- Our Policy on Responsible International Research Collaborations ensures that the University's approach to collaboration aligns with its commitment to open and responsible research while protecting staff, students, research participants and collaborators from risk.
- We are a signatory to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation, and work with the sector to reduce negative environmental impacts and transition to environmentally sustainable practices.

Image by Stuart Angiolini

Enabling open and impactful research

A culture of open and impactful research seeks to ensure that our researchers' findings and data are accessible to, and reusable by, others, and that the research has meaningful benefits outside of academia. It plays an essential role in helping us to achieve the University's core purpose 'to advance education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society.'

The Office for Open Research provides an umbrella for open research activity here at Manchester with a support programme that covers everything from the responsible use of metrics and open access publishing requirements to training and skills development opportunities.

Open and engaged practices, grounded in mutually beneficial relationships with those we research with, are also central to the University's approach to research impact. We recognise that impact is rarely serendipitous and so we provide support across the research lifecycle, from embedding impact in research design to extending its reach and significance.

Our provision includes:

- The Library's My Research Essentials programme – training and resources to develop the skills and knowledge to make your research more open.
- The Open Research skills and training offer, including the Open Research Skills Framework – support on embedding key principles into your research.
- Guidance on managing your research data effectively, from planning to publishing and preservation.
- The Open Research Digest – latest news, insights and events.
- Our Open Research Systems, including an interactive guide to sharing outputs throughout the research process.
- Research impact training and resources, including our five training modules.

- Advice and guidance from our dedicated research impact teams, plus further services offered by wider teams across the University who support impact.
- Our Engaged Research Hub, providing resources, case studies and details of ongoing work to support participatory research.

> **See how your colleagues have used the framework to help them in their research practices:**
>
> Open and impactful research case studies

Image by Mengyao Li