

# Strategies for Fostering a Sustainable Research Culture and Environment

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# Outline

- Research Environment preparations for REF 2021
  - UoA level environment statements and data
  - Institutional environment statement
  - Research Environment Results
- People, Culture and Environment for REF 2029
  - What we know so far
- What are we doing to foster an inclusive research culture
  - EDI action plans, charter marks and accreditations
  - Strategy: priority areas and investments
  - Interdisciplinary research

# REF 2021: UoA level environment statements

Provided information about the environment for research and enabling impact in the UoA, for the period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2020.

Represented **15% of the overall quality profile.**

- Narrative statements on four areas:
  - a) **Unit context, research and impact strategy.**
  - b) **People, including**
    - staffing strategy and staff development
    - research students
    - equality and diversity
  - c) **Income, infrastructure and facilities**
  - d) **Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society**



# REF 2021: UoA level environment data

For each UoA submission, also required to provide data on:

- Research doctoral degrees awarded per year
- Research income
- Research income-in-kind



# REF 2021: Institutional level environment statement

Narrative statements in four areas:

- **Context and mission**
- **Strategy**
  - the institution's strategy for research and enabling impact (including ethics & integrity, open research, and structures to support interdisciplinary research)
- **People**
  - the institution's staffing strategy, support and training of research students and Early Career Researchers (ECRs) , how EDI in research careers is supported and promoted.
- **Income, infrastructure and facilities**
  - the institutional-level resources and facilities available to support research and its impact

**Institutional statement not scored – appended to each UoA level statement submitted for panel review.**



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## Submission data:

4<sup>th</sup>

Highest doctoral  
completions

6<sup>th</sup>

Highest  
research income

6<sup>th</sup>

Highest research  
income-in-kind

## Environment

### Results show:

*“One of the best  
places in the country  
to build a research  
career”*

99%

Environment ranked  
4\* or 3\*

81.7%

Environment ranked  
4\*

8

UoAs scored  
100% 4\*

21

UoAs scored >75% 4\*

5<sup>th</sup>\*

Overall for  
research environment  
GPA

\*Excluding  
specialist  
institutions

# REF 2021 Environment Lessons Learned

## **Early, iterative drafting of Environment Statements (ES) allows constructive feedback**

- Implement consistency in planning, drafting and sharing of Environment Statements.
- Prepare generic text for UoAs to draw on (eg Library resources)
- Share best practice from PS colleagues involved in writing REF 2021 statements across UoAs
- Share ES across UoAs to inform re-drafting and improvement

## **Early preparation of Institutional Environment Statement so available to UoAs prior to ES drafting commences**

- Enables better alignment between the Institutional and UOA statements and reduces burden of drafting and redrafting.

## **Improved access to core datasets used in Institutional and UoA Environment Statements**

- Timely access to accurate data was a key challenge .
- Review available datasets - what is available, what needs to be collected, data quality checks

# People, Culture and Environment (PCE) in REF 2029

## What we know so far:

- PCE (proposed 25% weighting) replaces the environment element (15% in REF 2021).
- Will be expanded to include research culture.
- Will move towards a more tightly defined, questionnaire-style template.
- Will create greater consistency across submissions and focus on demonstrable outcomes.
- Data and evidence requirements to ensure a focus on demonstrable outcomes.



- Collect evidence at both **institution-level (IL)** and at the **level of disciplinary (DL)** submissions.
- The IL statement score will constitute at least 20% of the People, Culture and Environment sub profile for each UoA submission.



# Next steps for PCE

- January 2024 REF announcement:
  - Commissioned project to develop the ‘indicators’ to be used to assess PCE submissions.
  - Pilot PCE assessment to be launched March/ April 2024. Submissions October/ November 2024; 30 universities will make submissions across 8 UoAs.
- Potential indicators may include:
  - EDI data (that are already collected staff record),
  - quantitative or qualitative information on the career progression and paths of current and former research staff,
  - outcomes of staff surveys? (lobbying against this),
  - data on Research Integrity and Open Research practices,
  - qualitative information on approaches to improve research robustness and reproducibility.



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**What are we doing to  
foster an inclusive  
research culture?**



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy
- Holistic approach that celebrates individuals and their many identities.
- Three key priorities:
  - Inclusive environment and culture,
  - Diversity and equity across our community,
  - Inclusive practice.



## Research specific areas of focus:

- Culture of team collaboration and recognition.
- Career progression: regular EDI assessments of key internal data (funding applications and awards, REF submission data etc) and supportive actions.
- Career development: Monitor access to professional development, including by demographic groups.

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## THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Position Statement on Open Research

Find out more about the University's commitment to Open Research and the principles behind it.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

**What are we  
doing to foster  
an inclusive  
research culture?**



**time to change**

let's end mental health discrimination



# Our Futures Strategic Plan

## Our purpose

To advance education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society.

## Our vision

We will be recognised globally for the excellence of our people, research, learning and innovation, and for the benefits we bring to society and the environment.



# Research and Discovery Strategy

**Research and Discovery:** Produce research of the highest quality and impact and attract and develop the best people.

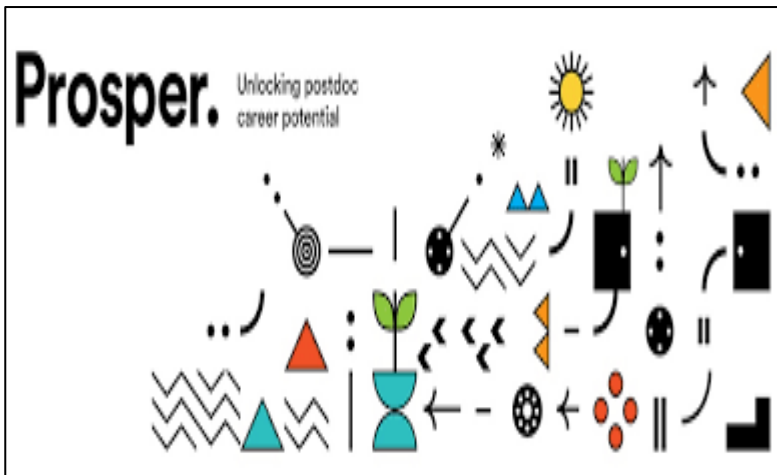
## Priorities:

- Developing research leadership and creativity.
- An open and responsible research environment.
- Accelerating interdisciplinary research.
- Inspiring student learning with our research-intensive environment.



# Developing research leadership and creativity at all career stages

- Research leadership essential for a supportive research culture. Priority for investment for cultural and behavioural change.
- Leaders **lead by example**, and model good practice that others will follow and emulate.



## Example projects:

- ‘Leading Researchers’ Programme
- Innovative training building capabilities between academic and industrial career paths
- PGR Researcher Development internships
- PGR incentive for timely submission

# Open and Responsible Research

- How we organise, conduct and share our research to meet the highest standards of conduct and integrity; environmental sustainability; EDI; and positive economic and social impact.
- Strategic investment in transforming our research environment to support open research and a modernised responsible research framework.

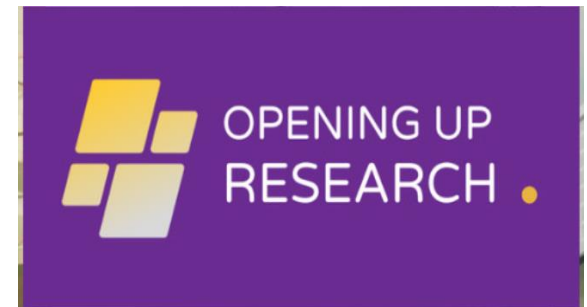
## Example projects

### Open Research

- Open Research Fellowships
- Open Research Accelerator Fund
- Open Research Skills Training, and Seminar Series

### Responsible Research framework

- To align and connect the different policies that support responsible research and innovation within the university
- To develop effective support mechanisms to assist academic staff to conduct their research responsibly





# Accelerating interdisciplinary research, and collaboration

- Build on our interdisciplinary strengths to address major challenges, investing in areas of strength and scale.
- Foster and nurture interdisciplinary research through strategic investments, pump-priming and networking.
- Equip future leaders to manage large-scale, complex, interdisciplinary projects.

## Example projects:

- Research Staff collaboration and dissemination funds
- IDR Pump priming funds
- Discipline hopping funds
- Team research projects



# Our interdisciplinary research

Advanced  
materials

Biotechnology

Cancer

Energy

Global  
inequalities

22 interdisciplinary research institutes

Creative  
Manchester

Digital  
Futures

Sustainable  
Futures

Policy@  
Manchester

Health  
Inequalities

## Beacons:

Showcase our pioneering discoveries, interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-sector partnerships that are tackling some of the biggest questions facing the planet.

## Institutes:

Where we have achieved, or aspire to, world-leading status in interdisciplinary research.

## Platforms:

Provide forums, focus and resources to connect, drive and amplify interdisciplinary collaborations across our institutes, research centres and individual academics. They support research, external engagement, impact and inform teaching. Healthy Inequalities is an emergent platform.