



**Northumbria  
University**  
NEWCASTLE

# **NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CULTURE ACTION PLAN**

2024 – 2027

# GROWING A VIBRANT, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE RESEARCH CULTURE

Our Research Culture Action Plan for 2024 – 2027 sets out how we will develop and grow our research culture. It is a living document that has been co-created through workshops, feedback and listening groups from our research community.

## What do we mean by Research Culture?

Across the sector a positive, inclusive and vibrant research culture is recognised as a key factor in delivering high quality research and an increasingly important part of research assessment. Research culture is described by the Royal Society (2018) as encompassing:

*“The behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms of our research communities. It influences researchers’ career paths and determines the way that research is conducted and communicated.”*

## Connecting with our Strategy

Our new strategy places research culture at the heart of achieving our research ambitions. To grow the quality, income and impact of our research, we need to nurture and develop our research culture to ensure it is vibrant, inclusive, open, and fair.

## Our Research Culture Ambition

We aim to challenge inequalities in the research ecosystem to enable all researchers to pursue and produce high quality research in all its forms and ensure that everyone who contributes to research is valued and recognised.



## Northumbria Research Culture Principles

A set of Research Culture Principles underpin our approach to Research Culture. These principles have been devised and socialised through consultative workshops with academic and professional services staff, technicians, postgraduate research students and research group leads from summer 2023 to March 2024.

The Principles guide the Research Culture Action Plan and the Mechanisms and Systems we will use to deliver our ambition of:

***Challenging the inequalities in the research ecosystem to enable all researchers to pursue and produce high quality research in all its forms and ensure that everyone who contributes to research is valued and recognised.***

The Principles and Action Plan are living documents, designed to change and evolve over time.

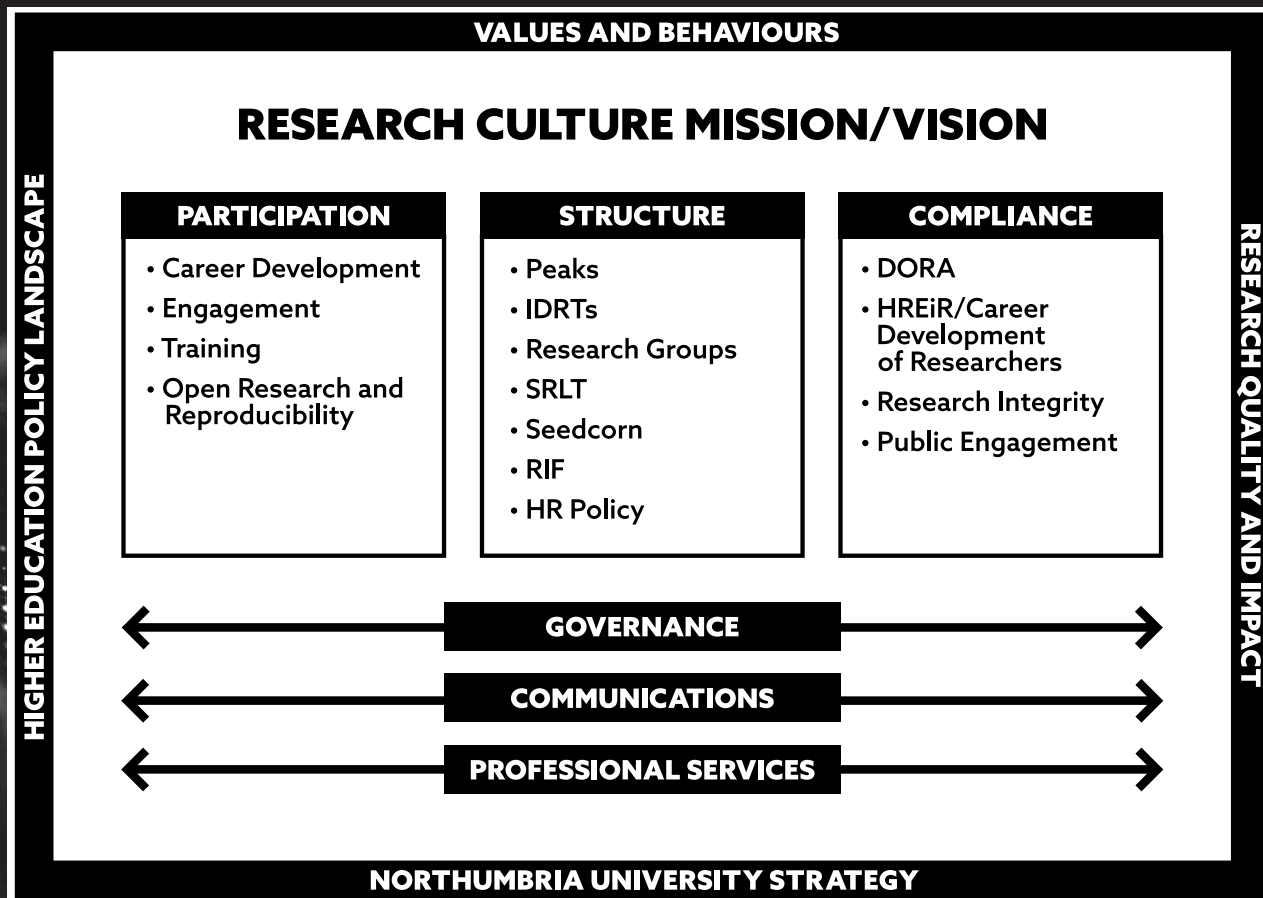
## At Northumbria, we will:

1. Enable a creative, curious, and collaborative research environment that supports ambitious, high quality and impactful research.
2. Conduct, share, and evaluate knowledge and research with integrity, openness, and fairness, promoting trust in research processes, and recognising that research quality is realised in many forms.
3. Support researchers to develop the capacity, and confidence to produce high quality research, and to develop their career pathways.
4. Facilitate inclusive research cultures which respect and value the contribution of all who support, engage in, and enable research.

## Research Culture at Northumbria

Research culture is shaped by and reflects an interplay of external factors (e.g. UK Research and Innovation policies), and internal structures (e.g. Research Groups) and policies (e.g. Human Resources; Values and Behaviours).

Key features of our research environment are critical to our research culture. These include our Peaks of Excellence, Interdisciplinary Research Themes (IDRTS), Research Groups, our Senior Research leadership Team (SRLT), Seedcorn funding for research, Sabbatical scheme, Research Incentivisation Fund (RIF) and commitments like the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).



## Developing a Research Culture that Delivers World Leading Research

Through a set of **principles, mechanisms and systems** together we will grow a more vibrant, fair and inclusive research culture at Northumbria.

Our **mechanisms** include **Initiatives** that will: develop research groups, and research group leadership; promote responsible research assessment; support early career researcher development; enhance visibility and recognition of technical and professional support staff.

Our **systems** include the **Research Culture Committee**, processes for monitoring and influencing research assessment, the development of indicators that evidence and track our research culture, and management of external commitments to charters, frameworks and concordats that are an integral part of our research culture environment.

# Research Culture Action Plan 2024 - 2027

Research Culture Principle	Research Culture Initiative	Timescale
<b>1. We enable a creative, curious, and collaborative research environment that supports ambitious, high quality and impactful research.</b>	I. Establish Research Group leads network, annual conference, and events programme, including Research Leads Toolkit and Theory of Change resources.	2024 - 2026
	II. Review current ECR Forum and revise and evolve existing activities. Launch a new annual programme of ECR support.	2024 - 2025
	III. Develop ECR leadership programme.	2025 - 2026
	IV. Develop cross Faculty networks between IDRTs and Research Groups.	2025 - 2027
<b>2. We conduct, share, and evaluate knowledge and research with integrity, openness, and fairness, promoting trust in research processes, and recognising that research quality is realised in many forms.</b>	I. Working Group for Responsible Research Assessment recommendations finalised, agreed and socialised.	2024 - 2026
	II. Revised Good Research Conduct Policy approved and implemented.	2025 - 2026
	III. Revised Managing Misconduct in Research Policy approved and implemented.	2024 - 2025
	IV. Revised Open Research Policy implemented and socialised.	2024 - 2025
	V. Research Integrity Champions Network established.	2026 - 2027
	VI. Good Research Practice development programme agreed.	2025 - 2027

<p><b>3. We support researchers to develop the capacity, and confidence to produce high quality research, and to develop their career pathways.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Researcher Development RIS/HR project to evolve current training to deliver a more holistic offer for academic and research staff.</li> <li>II. Delivery of Rejection and Resilience programme</li> <li>III. Establish PGR Culture Forums to promote and develop initiatives for PGRs.</li> <li>IV. Amplify the Research Development Concordat including the commitment for researchers to access 10 days professional development.</li> <li>V. Extend capabilities of colleagues in peer review (for grant applications and publications).</li> <li>VI. Development of research career support for mid-career researchers.</li> </ul>	<p>2024 - 2026</p> <p>2024 - 2027</p> <p>2025 - 2027</p> <p>2024 - 2027</p> <p>2025 - 2026</p> <p>2025 - 2027</p>
<p><b>4. We facilitate inclusive research cultures which respect and value the contribution of all who support, engage in, and enable research.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Recognition and Value Group recommendations finalised and agreed.</li> <li>II. Develop institutional understanding of research culture through webpage development and communication strategy.</li> <li>III. Attribution and authorship principles agreed and implemented.</li> <li>IV. Ensure research celebrations (e.g. IDRT conference, IP and Commercialisation Showcase, Annual PGR conference and Annual Faculty Research Events) also recognise and celebrate the contributions of research enabling staff and inclusive research practices.</li> <li>V. Build our evidence base of research culture case studies.</li> </ul>	<p>2024 - 2025</p> <p>2024 - 2027</p> <p>2025 - 2026</p> <p>2026 - 2027</p> <p>2024 - 2027</p>
<p><b>Cross cutting activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued engagement with key stakeholders and other HEIs to influence, understand and monitor REF People, Culture and Environment submission and other developments in Research Culture.</li> <li>2. Development of research culture identity and communication activity.</li> <li>3. Commit to two-year research culture survey, and listening group.</li> <li>4. Maintenance of Concordats and other external compliance and quality indicators.</li> </ul>		