Research Culture Steering Group

Terms of Reference

Last updated: February 2026. Proposal to update: February 2027.

Purpose

To drive the delivery of a positive research culture in the University of Bath that fosters high quality research outcomes, and high-quality careers and experiences for all. The Group will focus on six pillars deemed critical to the institution:

- Career Development: Supporting colleagues to achieve their chosen career paths.
- Collegiality: Creating an environment in which colleagues support each other to succeed.
- Open Research: Supporting transparency, rigour, and reproducibility of research and valuing different research output types.
- Research Design: Supporting excellent, flexible and appropriate research design.
- Research Integrity and Ethics: Supporting research that is conducted to the highest standards of academic rigour.
- Research Recognition: Recognising and celebrating the widest range of inputs to our excellent research.

Responsibilities

1. Collaboratively create a vision and objectives for, and a collective understanding of, excellent research culture at the University of Bath.
2. Represent, recognise, include and champion the needs of everyone involved in delivering excellent research (to include academics, research enablers in professional services, technical staff, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students).
3. Use an evidence-based approach to identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the achievement of our vision (for example using surveys, focus groups, or other methods) and propose strategies and forward-looking plans to address them. Plans should draw on the skills and expertise of both RCSG members and the wider community.
4. Oversee the delivery of approved Action Plan projects.
5. Actively listen, act with ambition and openness, and have the courage to constructively challenge and be challenged.
6. Support members to take action and implement recommended strategies or initiatives within their areas of remit. This may include identifying other sources of funding.
7. Escalate opportunities or challenges requiring higher-level attention or sign-off to the Research Advisory Board (RAB). This may include university-wide policy changes, escalation to UEB, or resource allocation.
8. Develop and have oversight of the delivery of a strategic communications plan as well as plans for individual projects around research culture with the intention of engaging

and supporting colleagues across the University in creating a positive culture for research.

9. Be an advocate for a positive research culture internally, helping with promotion and socialising of relevant activities amongst peers.

10. Contribute to establishing the University as an exemplar in this area nationally, and actively shape debate in the sector through thought-leadership.

11. Ensure effective allocation of resources in line with University strategy, seeking to enhance research quality and addressing all the Research Culture pillars.

12. Offer advice and review to ensure effective and responsible evaluation of the activities overseen by the Steering Group for reporting to external evaluators (including funders, and the Research Excellence Framework), and to provide advice/ evidence to inform future plans around developing the research culture at Bath.

The RCSG also plays a significant role in the governance of the HR Excellence in Research (HREinR) award, overseeing the recommended priorities of the Research Staff Working Group (RSWG) and annual progress reporting on the delivery of the action plan and ensuring integration with the RC Action Plan.

Tenure and succession

Steering Group members are selected to ensure representation of different faculties/ departments, career stages, and areas of interest/ expertise. In some cases, members are invited on an 'ex officio' basis – i.e. they are present by virtue of their 'office', role and responsibilities. When such a member ceases to hold the 'office' their membership of the committee terminates automatically. All other members will serve a term of 3 years and may elect to continue membership for a further 3 years with agreement from the Chair.

Succession arrangements will be as follows:

- Ex-officio members will confirm their successor to the Chair, who will issue a formal invitation to join the Steering Group. The ex-officio member is requested to provide a briefing to their successor. Where a direct successor is not appointed, the ex-officio member is asked to advise the Chair of the next most appropriate role to ensure the remit is represented effectively. Decisions will be at the discretion of the Chair.

- For members representing a Department who leave their department, or come to the end of their 3-year term, their successor will be nominated by the Head of Department.

- All other vacancies will be appointed through an open call for applications, which outline clear criteria and request a short narrative statement. Annual checks will be conducted to understand the diversity of roles, career stages, areas of expertise, and characteristics is likely to ensure a diversity of viewpoints inform the Groups work. Calls for new applicants may *encourage* particular groups to apply to redress gaps. Colleagues leaving the Group are encouraged to share the opportunity with their networks. Final decisions and invitations will be made by the Chair.

New members will be offered a briefing by the Chair/ member of the Secretariat to support them to participate fully.

Procedural Rules

Chair	Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Reporting line	Reports to RAB (see Annex 1)
Minutes	Submitted to RAB
Meeting frequency	Bimonthly, or as determined by cycle of business
Confidentiality	All meeting papers are to be available freely within the university, except where confidentiality is essential.
Quorum	One third of membership
Secretary	Hayley Shaw
ToR Review	These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and revised as necessary, but no less than once every two years, to ensure they align with the university's evolving goals and priorities.

Membership

The group will draw its membership from across the University to reflect the range of individuals contributing to, shaping, influencing and supporting the development of a good research culture.

First name	Last name	Post	Ex officio?	Dept	Staff/ student group represented and/or Unit represented	Primary Contributions - Research Culture Pillar	Term start date****
Rachel	Arnold	Associate PVC (Research) & Chair	Yes	H&SS			
Hayley	Shaw	Research Culture Manager	Yes	RIS		Overview of all Pillars.	
Laurel	Sims	Communications Lead – Research Culture	Yes	Communications & Engagement	Comms & Marketing Team	Communications, marketing, behaviour change campaigns, crisis communications	
Lucy	Millington	Research Culture Project Coordinator	Yes	RIS			
Ted	Spilsbury	Research Culture Project Coordinator	Yes	RIS			
Alice	Gartland	Research Culture Project Coordinator	Yes	RIS			
Katy	Butcher	Research Culture and Development Officer	Yes	RIS			
Annali	Bamber-Jones	Researcher Development Manager	Yes	RIS	Research Staff Working Group/ Early Career Researchers		

Oli	Schofield	Head of Doctoral Development & Student Experience	Yes	Doctoral College	Doctoral Researchers		
Susie	Douglas	University CDT Lead	Yes	SaMBA	Research Enabling staff Doctoral Researchers		
Laura	Wisby	Research Development Manager	No	RIS	Research Enabling staff		2025
Marianne	Harkins	Technical Manager	No	Science	Technical staff		2025
David	Ellis	Professor	No	SoM	SoM – Later career	Research ethics and integrity. Open Research, Research Design, Career Development	2025
Poornika	Ananth	Lecturer	No*	SoM	SoM – Earlier career		2025
Michael	Stimmelmayr	Director of Research	No	H&SS	H&SS – Later career	Research Recognition, Collegiality	2025
Omar	Khan	Lecturer	No*	H&SS	H&SS – Earlier career		2025
TBC			No	Science	Science – Later career		
TBC			No*	Science	Science – Earlier career		
Carl	Sangan	Director of Research	No	Engineering	Engineering - Later career		2025
Despina	Moschou	Senior Lecturer	No*	Engineering	Engineering - Earlier career		2025
Representing expertise directly related to the research culture pillars**							
Jason	Harper	Head of Research Services	Yes	Library	Library		
Emma	Gibbard	Research Impact Lead	Yes	RIS	RIS	Collegiality, Research Design, Career Development,	
Helen	Featherstone	Head of Public Engagement	No	RIS	RIS	Research Design, Collegiality, Research Ethics and Integrity, Career Development	2025
Charles	Larkin	Director of Research	No	IPR	Research Institutes		2025

Rachel	Willis	Research Manager	No**	Social & Policy Sciences	Union - Unison		2025
Kate	Ehrig-Page	Research Data Librarian	No**	Library	Union - UCU		2025
Tyrone	Falls	Teaching & Research Laboratory Technician	No**	Engineering & Design Technical Services	Union - Unite		2025
Aiste	Zubiniene	Equality Charters Manager	Yes	HR	HR		
Filipa	Vance	Head of Research Governance and Compliance	Yes	VC's Office	VC's Office	Research ethics and integrity	
Pete	Phelps	Climate Action Project Lead	Yes	VC's Office	VC's Office		
Katherine	Button	Local Lead for UKRN & Senior Lecturer	Yes – UKRN local lead	Psychology	UKRN	Open Research, Research Ethics and Integrity	
Kate	Elliott	Head of the Centre for Coaching and Leadership	No***	HR	HR		Feb 2026
Emma	Baker-Gaunt	Deputy Director (Equity, Inclusion, Culture and Staff Experience	Yes	HR	HR		Feb 2026

* Not considered an ex-officio post, however, if the individual achieved a promotion(s) before the 3-year term we may ask the individual to step down, to ensure a strong earlier career voice is maintained.

** Not considered an ex-officio post, however, if the individual steps down, a new member from the Union they represent would be sought.

*** Not considered an ex-officio post, however, if the individual steps down, a new member from the Department would be nominated by the Head of Department.

**** In some cases, individuals began their term prior to this date. March 2025 start dates reflects the moment when the Groups Terms of Reference were updated to incorporate a start date and term.

Annex 1: Research Governance Structure

Research Governance Structure