DRAFT RESEARCH CULTURE ACTION PLAN (RCAP)
2020-21 to 2022-23

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PVC-R Introduction

To be drafted

What is 'research culture'?

The culture within which we operate, at each stage of the research lifecycle, influences the potential quality of research outcomes that we can deliver as individuals, groups and, ultimately, a sector.

Discussions of 'research culture' touch upon the ways in which we interact and communicate, our shared values and behaviours, our working norms and practices, how we lead – and are led by - others, how our work is measured, recognised and rewarded.

It affects all members of the research community – not just those who write grants and publish outputs – including students, technicians, researchers and professional support staff.

A poor research culture can be characterised by – amongst other things - low levels of collegiality and collaboration, a highly pressurised environment with unhealthy competition, a lack of support and compassion for individual circumstances, and a lack of diversity and inclusivity amongst those comprising and influencing the culture.

The consequences can be striking for individuals, research groups and organisations, and the wider research ecosystem. A poor working culture for individuals can cause stress, anxiety and mental

health challenges which can detrimentally affect research quality and robustness, leading to unrealised potential and talent across the sector.

In recent years, a succession of reports has highlighted that these issues are prevalent in the UK higher education sector. Policymakers, funders and universities have been reflecting on these challenges and developing plans to bring about genuine and lasting change.

Royal Society, Research Culture: Changing Expectations, 2018

"Concerns exist over many issues, including diversity, research integrity, researcher career structures, publishing and reward structures that raise questions over the culture of research."

Wellcome Trust, Reimagine Research, 2019-20

"We want to help build a better research culture – one that is creative, inclusive and honest. Current practices prioritise outputs at almost any cost. This is damaging people's wellbeing and undermining the quality of research. We can all help to reimagine how research is conducted."

"These results paint a shocking portrait of the research environment – and one we must all help change. A poor research culture ultimately leads to poor research. The pressures of working in research must be recognised and acted upon by all, from funders to leaders of research and to heads of universities and institutions."

UK Government R&D Roadmap, 1 July 2020

"We must not be afraid to tackle these issues. To ensure we have the talent we need to underpin our ambitions, we need to go further to attract top talent, at all career stages, to come to the UK."

"We will work with funders to set clear expectations … in supporting safe and open research cultures that lead to high integrity of research. This includes prevention strategies to tackle bullying and harassment. The current environment can drive these behaviours and we will work with devolved administrations, funders and regulators to coordinate policies that will deliver change"

"**A comprehensive new R&D People and Culture strategy** … will put the UK at the forefront of attracting, retaining and developing diverse, talented people and teams"

What have we been doing at Queen's to address these issues?

Following publication of the Wellcome Trust report in early 2020, Professor Emma Flynn, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) initiated a programme of engagement with the wider 'research community' at Queen's to discern the key issues and challenges as perceived by staff and students, with a view to developing an institutional action plan to channel our efforts to drive positive change in the research culture.

This initially involved publication of a 'Virtual Research Culture Suggestion Box' (February – March 2020). Responses revealed a range of issues - similar to those identified at sector-level, with varying degrees of emphasis – including workload management, collegiality and collaboration, recognition and reward, career progression, and leadership and communication.

Subsequently, two staff engagement events were held during summer 2020 (27 July and 3 August) attracting 160 attendees from across the research community (staff and student, academic or not). Chaired by Professor Flynn, these events allowed for more in-depth discussion of the themes identified through the suggestion box and informed the developing of a first draft Research Culture Action Plan.

This draft was published to all staff on 21 September, accompanied by an online feedback survey. Responses to the survey, coupled with detailed feedback from discussions with key committees and staff representative groups, have driven the thinking and planning that has led to publication of this document.

It is important to stress that we are not beginning from 'square one' in our efforts to improve the research culture at Queen's. Vital work has been taking place through faculties, professional services directorates and staff groups for a number of years. Notably, this includes: significant progress in response to institutional staff surveys in 2016 and 2019 such as an overhaul of the academic career progression model and new guidelines for our approach to workload allocation; Athena SWAN teams in schools surveying the 'local' culture and implementing actions to support researchers and academics; and an institutional Engaged Research Action Plan which aims to support a culture of mutual respect and benefit between research groups and the external communities and partners they engage with.

What is the Research Culture Action Plan and why do we need one?

This **Research Culture Action Plan (RCAP)** represents our commitment, as a University community, to addressing major issues and concerns that have been raised with the environment in which research takes place in the UK, as well as connected – and no less important – areas of focus for the research sector, such as equality, diversity and inclusion, and bullying and harassment. It is RCAP sets out a series of tangible actions – both new and existing - to promote a more supportive, inclusive, and collaborative research culture.

While touching upon issues that are recognised across the institution, RCAP is tailored to the discrete conditions in which research and innovation takes place - not always directly analogous to other aspects of higher education, notably including the significant influence of external funders and the various priorities of those organisations.

RCAP is a joint effort, genuinely co-owned by the entire research community. It is not a panacea for all the problems we have with our shared research culture; it is, instead, part of a wider, joined-up effort involving multiple actors across the University. There is a host of activities already underway which are supporting RCAP's objectives – either directly or indirectly. This Plan won't duplicate existing activities, but instead identify opportunities to showcase and further invigorate them.

Who is affected by the RCAP?

This Plan is aimed at every individual or group who contributes to the delivery of research and innovation activities. That is – the wider research community - academic or not, staff and student. It does not solely concern those who actively write grants or publish outputs. Research is not delivered in a vacuum. It depends on the inputs of a wide range of contributors including professional support staff, technicians, research staff and students.

RCAP recognises that within the research community at Queen's, there are assorted disciplinary groups and professional functions that operate with different norms, measures of success and

operational structures. The aspirations in this document are intended to be adaptable for these different groups and to build understanding and awareness between them.

What does the RCAP aim to achieve?

This Plan aims to deliver **five strategic priorities** for research culture at Queens. These will be the focus of RCAP activity, initially in the period 2020-21 to 2022-23. Each priority and related actions has been developed in the context of three **cross-cutting themes** that apply across the Plan. These priorities and themes have been identified through extensive consultation with the research community at Queen's and informed by wider developments in the sector.

Strategic Priorities

1. Cultivate an inclusive and compassionate culture in which all members of the research community, inclusive of all personal circumstances, are supported in delivering their research ambitions to their greatest potential
2. Encourage and facilitate collegiality and collaboration amongst the research community in which individuals and groups support each other to deliver disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research ambitions
3. Respect and facilitate the diverse range of career pathways that exist within research, both in and out of academia, and provide tailored support to attract and retain talent across the research community
4. Incentivise a culture of creativity and innovation in which researchers have the freedom and flexibility required to explore ambitious and novel research ideas in the spirit of openness, transparency and integrity
5. Reward and recognise the entire range of contributors and contributions that are made towards research outcomes, regardless of seniority, profile or function

Cross Cutting Themes

1. **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – We recognise that ensuring a genuinely inclusive research environment – cognisant of all individual circumstances and backgrounds - is a shared responsibility and should not be packaged as a discrete action in and of itself. Those in underrepresented groups are often more likely to suffer negative consequences from a poor research culture. Therefore, at all stages of its implementation, RCAP will identify and capitalise upon opportunities to further this agenda in ways which complement and further strengthen the University's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as illustrated in its Equality Scheme (2018-2023) and Action Plan.
2. **Operating in the context of Covid-19** – The impact of the events of the past year cannot yet be fully understood. At the point of publication, we are still in the midst of a pandemic and all sectors – including HE – face significant challenges as we attempt to move forward in this context. Therefore, we will ensure that we are realistic, pragmatic and flexible in how we deliver this Plan, and that we consider carefully the potential effects of Covid-19 on individual circumstances and working practices as we endeavour to improve the research culture at Queen's.
3. **Research quality and ambition** – As a research-intensive university, delivering excellent research with real-world benefits for wider society is at the heart of our mission. Every strategic priority and implementation action in RCAP is written with the ultimate objective of improving research quality, integrity and

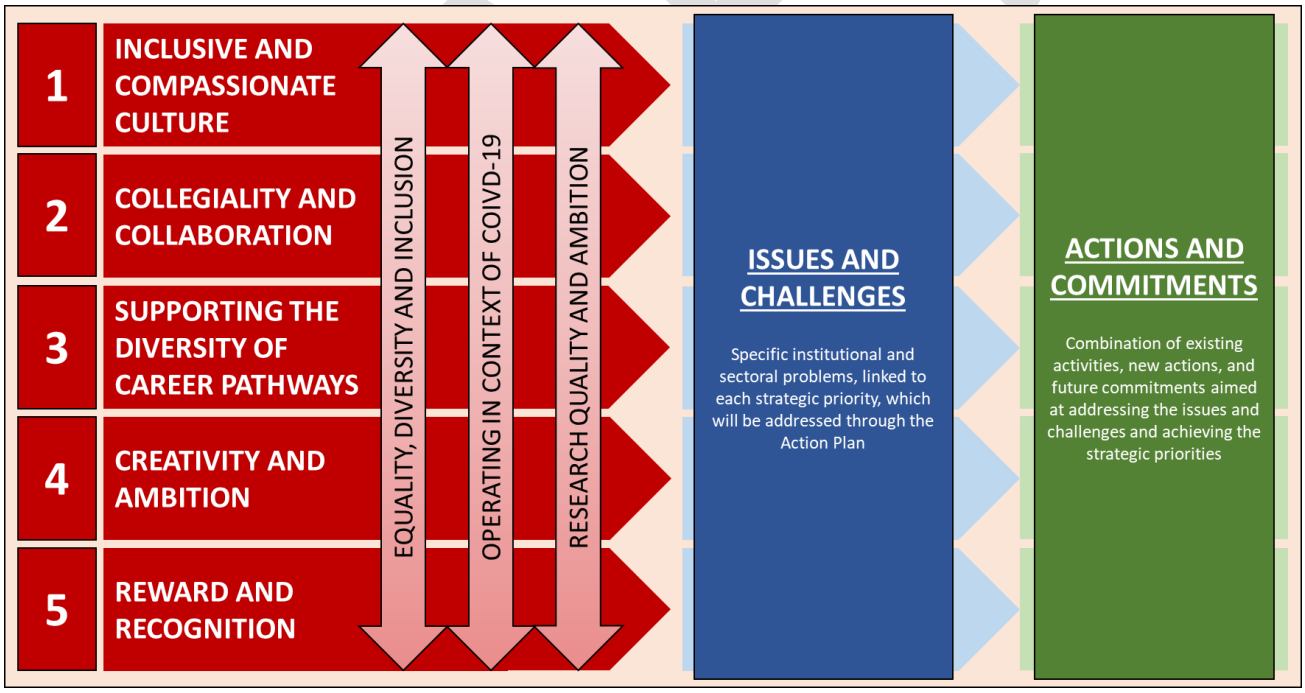
innovation. We know that research excellence is not possible without a collaborative, inclusive and compassionate research culture.

How will we deliver, and measure progress against, RCAP?

Within each strategic priority we have identified specific **issues and challenges** that illuminate the precise nature of the problems we aim to address. We will primarily measure progress through consultation with staff to understand the extent to which these have been mitigated over time.

These issues and challenges have informed an initial list of **actions and commitments** to be implemented over the coming years. These are a combination of **existing initiatives** that are already contributing to a more positive research culture, **new actions** that will begin to be implemented from 2020-21 academic year, and **broader commitments** that do not yet have a precise timescale.

The list of actions and commitments included in this version of RCAP is not final nor definitive. We have not addressed every issue and challenge, as these are not problems that can be solved wholesale in a short period of time. Where we find that certain initiatives are not achieving the desired outcomes, we will pilot alternative approaches to ensure this Plan delivers genuine change.



Implementation driven by our Core Values

RCAP exists within the context of the University's new and existing corporate plans and strategies and therefore shares the same **Core Values**. These express our shared understanding of what we believe, how we aim to behave and what we aspire to be as an international organisation.

This Plan touches upon complex and challenging issues to address deleterious norms and practices that have, over the years, become entrenched within the sector. Therefore, we have placed the Core Values at the heart of this Plan's implementation to ensure this is a truly open, transparent and constructive effort to create a more positive research culture.

CORE VALUES
INTEGRITY - *We act honestly, ethically and transparently in all we do*
CONNECTED - *We are active collaborators, recognising that we can achieve more together*
AMBITION - *We are forward-thinking with a strong desire to be the best*
RESPECT - *We trust, value and empower each other*
EXCELLENCE - *We strive to do our best at all times*

Building on these values, the institutional Staff Forum is currently undertaking a project to articulate the types of behaviours that staff should and should not demonstrate to create a positive work environment. This is due to be published during spring 2021 and closely support the implementation of RCAP.

As a first step in this process, the following sets out how, in practice, we will deliver RCAP's ongoing implementation in the spirit of these Core Values:

- Feedback from the research community at Queen's has consistently emphasised the importance of **leadership by example**. The aspirations of this work will not be achieved unless those at all levels commit to a positive direction of travel. Therefore, we will convene **a network of research culture, integrity and open research advisers** – including representatives from each faculty and other key groups – who will act as points of contact on these matters and provide oversight of RCAP implementation. We will also host an annual research culture 'town hall' event with a panel composed of senior leaders.

- The Plan is 'co-owned' by the entire research community and its success will be measured transparently through consultation with staff and students. Therefore, we will maintain an **online website with regular progress updates, including annual reports** detailing outcomes from RCAP. To ensure that ongoing implementation is informed by feedback from the research community, **we will also conduct twice annual 'pulse' surveys** to receive feedback and monitor new and emerging issues and concerns with the research culture. The first of these surveys will be held in summer 2021, followed by a first annual report and further survey in autumn 2021.

- We must open and honest about the scale and complexity of some of the issues we face. These are multi-faceted challenges that may require a range of mitigating actions. We will not be bound by an inflexible course of action, but instead will adopt an **agile and iterative approach to implementation** of the strategic priorities, with the flexibility to add, remove or amend actions at short notice informed by the above feedback mechanisms.

- Research culture cannot be reformed through top-down implementation alone and we recognise the potential for researchers to catalyse behavioural and attitudinal change and for this to bubble up and form new norms. We are part of a broader sectoral effort and **proactive engagement with external actors** such as funders and policymakers will ensure we play a role in influencing the frameworks that shape UK research policy going forward.

- To ensure that we can learn from our shared experiences and those of sector peers, and that we can highlight our own successes, **we will maintain an online catalogue of best practice in research culture** drawn from successful initiatives at Queen's – whether through RCAP or otherwise - and examples from other research organisations in the UK and beyond.

We recognise that a creative, collaborative and supportive research culture is crucial to delivering research excellence. At its heart, this Plan aims to create the conditions within which our people have the support and freedom to fulfil their potential and contribute to the delivery of world-leading research and impact at Queen's.

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Strategic Priority Area 1 - An inclusive and compassionate culture

Priority Area	Issues and Challenges
Strategic Priority Area 1 - Cultivate an inclusive and compassionate culture in which all members of the research community, inclusive of all personal circumstances, are supported in delivering their research ambitions to their greatest potential	1. The demands of an academic workload are increasingly burdensome, with individuals struggling to balance a varied range of responsibilities. It has become the norm to work long hours, leading to issues of personal wellbeing and inequitable outcomes or success measures. 2. Research requires dedicated 'blocks' of time in academic workload. Workload allocation models exist, but are not always adhered to, with research time increasingly squeezed at the expense of other responsibilities. There is also a perception that research time in the workload is not awarded equitably between individuals. 3. The culture can be unwelcoming and unsupportive for those in underrepresented groups including, but not limited to, female, BAME, LGBTQ and disabled staff. Those with caring responsibilities, predominantly but not exclusively women, struggle to meet the demands of a 'long hours' culture. Discrimination exists - often covert or unconscious - and those in underrepresented groups are often less likely to raise grievances or seek support. 4. Unhealthy power dynamics can exist in the hierarchical structures of research and senior colleagues are often perceived to hold an inordinately decisive influence over the future career prospects of junior staff and students. In a highly pressurised and competitive environment this can lead to an unchallenged culture of bullying, discrimination and patronage, and it is perceived that those with successful research track records are less likely to face consequences. 5. Approaches to people management and supervision can be inconsistent between departments and individuals do not feel they receive the support required to deal with the challenges of building a career in academia. There is a lack of incentives for 'good people management', with the focus on grant outcomes and publications, and uptake of existing learning and development opportunities for academic people managers could be improved.

Strategic Priority 1 – Actions and Commitments	
Existing/ Ongoing Activities	Institutional Staff Survey Actions, including: revised Workload Allocation Guidance and Flexible Working Guiding Principles published in July 2020; institutional Athena SWAN Silver Action Plan 2019; introduction of Staff Forum representing all units

What we're already doing across the institution to address these specific issues and challenges.	and staff groups to co-create solutions to issues that impact all staff; and ongoing reviews of Grievance Procedure, Bullying and Harassment Policy, and 'behaviours' based on core values (2020-21). Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives, including: new institutional Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy launched in 2020; institutional Athena SWAN Silver Action Plan 2019; dedicated staff representative groups for LGBTQ+, BAME and international, female staff; mandatory training on ED&I and unconscious bias (and future programmes such as Active Bystander Training); and institutional commitment to sector frameworks including Athena SWAN, Race Equality Charter and the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. Queen's Gender Initiative (QGI) is leading institutionally on the implementation of action plans impacting structures and culture to advance gender equality. 'Citizenship' added as core tenet in new Academic Progression process in 2019, alongside research, teaching and scholarship. This provides formal recognition, and incentivises development of, e.g. leadership excellence, management skills, collegiality, and contribution to broader subject community. Staff have access to a range of learning and development programmes to enhance leadership and management skills open to all line managers and supervisors, including bespoke courses for female staff and senior leaders. Research students have access to learning and development within their research unit, as well as through the Graduate School.
New Actions and Commitments What we will do through RCAP to address these specific issues and challenges, with actions to be implemented from 2020-21 **marked in bold with an asterisk**.	*** We will publish an institutional concordat/code on research culture in 2021. This will be drafted in consultation with the research community and will be driven by our institutional Core Values and RCAP strategic priorities. The Concordat will set out specific commitments, mutually agreed upon by all members of the research community, to fostering a positive research culture, and will be supplemented by specific best practice guidance.** *** Following publication of new guidelines in 2020, recognising that the guidance is a living document and will be subject to change, reflecting the environment in which we are operating, an annual review process has been incorporated to review implementation and ensure the guidelines are fit for purpose, including consideration of RCAP strategic priorities.** *** During autumn 2020, the QGI will work with colleagues in the School of Psychology and Organisational Development to analyse the findings of a major institutional survey to better understand the effects of Covid-19 on Queen's staff. The outcomes from the survey will inform recommendations to University Executive Board to address issues such as workload, development, `progression and flexible working.**

	*** Following membership of the Race Equality Charter in 2020, the University will be applying for Bronze accreditation to support its work in creating a diverse and inclusive workplace. The QGI and REC project team will work to undertake a self-assessment of the institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students. As a member institution, the University will develop initiatives and solutions for action**. *** In parallel with sector effects to reduce bureaucracy and red tape in research (see UKRI agenda), we will identify areas and implement mitigating actions to streamline processes and find efficiencies. This will include:** • Rationalisation of committee structure for research and innovation to eliminate duplicated conversations, reduce time commitments, and speed up decision-making. • Implement a standardised approach to internal pump-prime funding schemes for research (except where external funder conditions are applicable), including streamlined application process, reducing steps for approval, and simplifying eligibility criteria. • Publish online a clear, searchable/filterable database of research support resources and mechanisms, aimed at minimising the time required to e.g. find the right contact, determine eligibility for a scheme etc. In order to reduce unnecessary administrative burden and inefficiencies in academic/researcher workloads, we will review existing skills, capabilities and support for 'research delivery' (i.e. post-award project management). This may include bespoke project management training resources specifically for research projects, more easily accessible information on the support available and clearer communication routes to relevant individuals, and review current scale and scope of input that can be provided by professional support staff with a view to achieving further efficiencies. Recognising the rapidly changing and sometimes complex regulatory environment for research funding, we will publish a regularly-updated online repository of funder policies, requirements and sanctions relating to research culture and connected issues, such as bullying and harassment, with clear guidance on how to address these matters in research funding applications. We will continue to review mechanisms to promote and reward effective management, building upon the inclusion of 'Citizenship' in Academic Progression, and investigate the feasibility of enhanced feedback mechanisms for research groups, such as '360' appraisals. Further develop the University's approach to Supervisor Development to include development of skills to support research supervision practice and growing a community of practice.

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Strategic Priority Area 2 - Collegiality and collaboration

Priority Area	Issues and Challenges
Strategic Priority Area 2 - Collegiality and collaboration amongst the research community in which individuals and groups support each other to deliver disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research ambitions	1. A highly-individualised approach to research assessment and career progression, with more people competing for fewer resources, has created an unhealthy and 'bunkered' competition culture which can dis-incentivise collaborative and collegiate approaches to research (within and across disciplines). 2. Lack of incentives and support for 'team' science, particularly in an inter-disciplinary context, where funding and support tend to be pitched at projects involving the identification and delivery of a shared research goal, rather than schemes for individuals to come together across disciplines and support each other in the delivery of their separate, discrete research ambitions. 3. There is insufficient engagement with opportunities for established, successful academics to share their experience and expertise with early to mid-career colleagues. 4. Lack of awareness, understanding and respect between different groups within the research community and their separate working norms and priorities. This leads to ineffective collaboration and engagement, and ultimately loss of high quality research outcomes, including: • Between academic staff in different disciplines, particularly between teaching-intensive disciplines and areas where higher levels of research funding means more time for research and less teaching • Between academic and other staff groups (technical, professional support), where there is a perceived lack of respect for those pursuing careers as technicians or professional research support staff • Considering how postgraduate research students can be encouraged and embedded within academic communities

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Strategic Priority 2 – Actions and Commitments	
Existing/ Ongoing Activities What we're already doing across the institution to address these specific issues and challenges.	A range of support has been put in place to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations through the Research Strategy 2015 - 2021, including Global Research Institutes (GRIs), Pioneer Research Programmes (PRPs), Global Challenge Networking Programme (GCNP), and separate pump-priming funds for internal interdisciplinary connections and external engagement with partners. The addition of 'citizenship' as a core tenet of 'Academic Progression' (see SP1) provides formal recognition of the contribution that individuals make to their broader group, school and faculty, through e.g. mentoring junior staff, sitting on committees etc. There are a number of bespoke mentoring programmes in place for specific cohorts including postdoctoral researchers, female staff, probationary academic staff and new international staff. The Graduate School offers training to establish peer support/ mentoring programmes in specific Schools / research areas. Equipping the next generation of academic staff to contribute to positive research culture, the Graduate School provides a range of interdisciplinary opportunities for research students to develop and apply skills for working collaboratively, employ a diverse range of tools to drive innovation and opportunities to show leadership.
New Actions and Commitments What we will do through RCAP to address these specific issues and challenges, with actions to be implemented from 2020-21 **marked in bold with an asterisk**.	*** We will launch a pilot programme of research culture 'café'-style events to facilitate cross-institution and cross-department discussion and networking, including about issues of research culture. Recognising that there is a balance to be struck in facilitating effective events of this nature, we will trial multiple formats varying from informal networking sessions to presentations from guest speakers on relevant themes.** *** Building upon the above programme, and learning from the Wellcome Trust Café Culture programme, we will develop and publish an accessible how-to guide for similar events to take place at local level, at school, research group or otherwise.** *** We will offer seed funding for initiatives which aim to improve collegiality and collaboration amongst the research community and address other strategic priorities in RCAP. This will be open to all staff and students engaged in delivering or supporting research and could include event funding or pump-priming for new networks/collaborations.** Following the first year of RCAP we will arrange for an institutional symposium in 2021-22 on research culture (format tbc) to reflect on progress to date, latest sector developments, examples of best practice, and future plans for Queen's research culture. We will review issues in relationships between academic and other staff groups and consider actions/ recommendations to deliver a more collegiate atmosphere. This will likely be undertaken as part of proposed research manager/administrator network in SP3.

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	Building upon successful existing initiatives, we will review the current provision of mentoring within the research community, both through managed schemes and general best practice guidance for mentoring relationships. We will take particular consideration of a perceived gap in support for post-probation staff in the early- or mid-career groups (as noted in SP3).

Strategic Priority Area 3 – Support for the diversity career pathways

Priority Area	Issues and Challenges
Strategic Priority Area 3 - Respect and facilitate the diverse range of career pathways that exist within research, both in and out of academia, and provide tailored support to attract and retain talent across the research community	1. Narrow focus in traditional academic careers and lack of support for those pursuing 'non-traditional' careers, e.g. highly specialised research-focussed career (with individuals written off as 'serial postdocs') or those spending periods in an applied setting or industry. 2. Lack of proactive support and structured career pathways for alternative careers in research, such as technical and professional support staff, despite the fact that they are playing an increasingly critical role in the research lifecycle e.g. through obtaining funding, developing impact pathways, conducting specialised experimental work, contributing to publications etc. 3. Individuals employed on 'research only' contracts (per HESA terminology), predominantly postdoctoral research staff or research fellows, are not perceived to be treated with institutional support equivalent to those on permanent contracts and the predominance of short-term, unpredictable grants creates instability in the research community. These factors lead to an increasing proportion of talented ECRs desiring to leave the sector with a disproportionate impact on underrepresented groups.

Strategic Priority 3 – Actions and Commitments	
Existing/ Ongoing Activities What we're already doing across the institution to address	We are a committed signatory to notable sector frameworks, each supported by institutional implementation plans, including: Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (revised in 2020), EU HR Excellence in Research Award, and the UK Technician's Commitment.

these specific issues and challenges.	Organisational Development (People & Culture) offer an extensive institution-wide bespoke programme of career and professional development support for research staff, which is delivered in collaboration with other academic and professional service areas. Central to this service is the provision of career development support, including, central induction, programmes, workshops, online learning, mentoring and 1-2-1 career coaching. This is complemented by institutional membership of sector-wide 'Vitae' organisation, providing access to best practice professional and career development resources for researchers. Pilot 'Postdoctoral Development Centre' launched in MHLS (2017 to 2020), Fellowship Academy introduced for holders of independent and institutional fellowship awards (2020), investment in successive institutional fellowship schemes (e.g. Illuminate) and enhanced support package for fellowship applications. Institutional policy adopted in 2019-20 guaranteeing 10 dedicated learning and development days each year for research staff and students (building on existing Postgraduate Development Programme Guidelines). Dedicated Graduate School for postgraduate students, based on five pillars to develop 'Thinkers, Innovators, Leaders, and Communicators who are Future Ready', including career support outside academia and in enterprise and research commercialisation.
New Actions and Commitments What we will do through RCAP to address these specific issues and challenges, with actions to be implemented from 2020-21 **marked in bold with an asterisk**.	*** During 2020-21 we will develop a business case for an institutional Postdoctoral Development Centre (PDC) – building upon the success of the MHLS pilot mentioned above - which will be ear-marked for launch in 2021-22. This will provide a clear, central and consistent source of advice, support and guidance for postdoctoral and research staff, alongside the existing provision of career and professional development support across multiple units.** *** For the 2020-21 academic year we will rationalise multiple working groups to form a central committee for postdoctoral and research staff issues, reporting into institutional governance structures. The Postdoctoral and Research Staff Oversight Group (PROG) will begin meeting in November 2020 with academic, postdoctoral and research staff representatives from each Faculty and relevant professional service directorates.** *** As part of its initial programme of work, PROG will initiate a review of career pathways, job role/contract taxonomy, and job security for those employed on 'research only' contracts (per HESA terminology) at the University, with a view to making appropriate recommendations ahead of the 2021-22 academic year.** Recognising the increasing demand for bespoke career development support for research management/administrator professionals, and the success of networks for discrete groups such as technicians at Queen's, we will facilitate the

	establishment of a network of professional support staff engaged with research and innovation activity, drawing upon best practice from e.g. ARMA and the URMAN network at UCD. Through PROG, the institutional PDC and relevant professional support teams, we will develop enhanced support mechanisms for research staff to include consistent, centralised induction processes, clarity about career expectations, and increased capacity/expertise to support career planning beyond academia. Building on the Concordat's recommendation for ≥10 days professional development for researchers per year, ensure this as a minimum and ideally protect 10% of postdocs' time for professional development (e.g. training, applying for funding, conferences, mentoring, exploring career pathways) In response to feedback that there is a cohort of staff, who are neither early-career or well-established in their career, that struggles to identify and access relevant training, support and guidance, we will review existing support for 'mid-career' academics and identify gaps in current provision.

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Strategic Priority Area 4 - Culture of creativity, innovation and integrity

Priority Area	Issues and Challenges
Strategic Priority Area 4 - Incentivise a culture of creativity and innovation in which researchers have the freedom and flexibility required to explore ambitious and novel research ideas in the spirit of openness, transparency and integrity	1. Approaches to assessment and evaluation of research (including recruitment and progression) can create misaligned incentives through an overt focus on particular metrics, e.g. research income, journal placement. These do not provide a balanced appraisal of researchers, tailored to the conditions of different disciplines and drives a conservative approach to research at the expense of novel, higher-risk ideas. This also acts as a barrier to an open and honest environment in which researchers can learn and develop from constructive feedback. 2. The integrity of research can be compromised by an urgent drive to meet specific funder criteria and rapidly achieve publications in high-impact journals, e.g. through cherry-picking and retro-fitting results, lack of reproducibility, null results going unpublished, leading to repeated studies, retractions etc. 3. In order to compete in a rapidly changing and financially challenging environment, academic leadership can be consumed by short-term strategies and prone to knee-jerk policy changes that create uncertainty and instability. This can include de-prioritisation of research in the face of financial and student related issues and over-engineering of research strategies and structures to meet sector agendas around e.g. impact and interdisciplinarity. 4. There are insufficient opportunities for early-career academic staff to input at senior academic management level (e.g. DR, Head of School), which can mean that important perspectives and new, innovative ideas are not being used to inform ongoing planning.

Strategic Priority 4 – Actions and Commitments	
Existing/ Ongoing Activities	In response to feedback from staff, a reviewed and overhauled 'Academic Progression' process launched in 2019 which integrates key development, progression and reward processes into a flexible and agile annual cycle. Performance

What we're already doing across the institution to address these specific issues and challenges.	assessment is based on a holistic assessment of activities and includes discipline-specific academic profiles for each career stage. Institutional 'Funder Liaison Groups' in place for all key funders to act as conduit for Queen's input on policies, priorities and procedures. Queen's is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) as of 2019-20 and action plan in place to build towards full compliance with the UK Concordat for Research Integrity. Institutional Code of Practice for REF 2021 – developed in consultation with academic staff and researchers – makes clear commitment that individual contributions to REF will not be used as part of any wider career progression or performance management process. Extensive suite of policies and procedures in place relating to research ethics and integrity, with faculty-level research ethics committees (REC) in EPS and MHLS.
New Actions and Commitments What we will do through RCAP to address these specific issues and challenges, with actions to be implemented from 2020-21 **marked in bold with an asterisk**.	*** In line with our commitments as a signatory to DORA we will build upon existing institutional principles on the responsible use of 'metrics' such as citation impact. This will include school-based seminars and workshops with the aim of improving awareness and responsible use of metrics, with a view to developing clear school-level plans and policies on how these metrics are used on individual and group basis.** *** We will undertake a coordinated review of policies in the broader spectrum of 'research integrity' at Queen's. This will examine how existing institutional policies, processes, norms and practices affect the way research is conducted. It will consider integrity in the broadest sense including issues of research reproducibility and open research. The review will make recommendations for changes to policies and procedures and publish clear and accessible best practice information and guidelines online.** *** To support fostering of best practice in research integrity, we will procure and implement Epigeum's Research Integrity Programme to ensure our research community has access to 'best in class' support and guidance.** *** For the 2020-21 academic year, we will move the 'Research Forum' to a 'town hall' based approach to engage a broader, more representative range of voices when developing/reviewing research strategy and policy, and considering opportunities for research student voice. There will also be an annual town hall on the subject of research culture.**

	We will put in place anonymous channels for staff and students to raise concerns or hypothetical queries relating to the responsible use of metrics, amongst other research culture issues. Where appropriate, we will publish anonymised, generalised answers online for the benefit of all staff or students. As part of the review of committee structures outlined in SP1, we will review and, where necessary, amend current levels of representation for discrete staff groups on current research and innovation committees (e.g. postdoctoral, researcher, research student, professional support staff etc.); and we will develop a recommended institutional policy on shared approach to research leadership roles, with requirement for shadow/deputy (preferably ECR) to support succession planning.

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Strategic Priority Area 5 - Reward and recognition

Priority Area	Issues and Challenges
Strategic Priority Area 5 - Reward and recognise the entire range of contributors and contributions that are made towards research outcomes, regardless of seniority, profile or function	1. Insufficient recognition of wider 'team' contribution to research, for example from postdoctoral researchers, junior academics, research students, technicians and professional support staff. This leads to a lack of morale and motivation, and an environment in which promising talent and ideas are missed. 2. There is insufficient recognition of different types of success that can be achieved in reason, with inordinate focus on grant income and publication in high-impact journals. This disincentivises future engagement with activities such as impact secondments, prestigious external appointments etc.

Strategic Priority 5 – Actions and Commitments	
Existing/ Ongoing Activities What we're already doing across the institution to address these specific issues and challenges.	Vice-Chancellor's Research Prizes take place annually and as of 2019 include two new awards to recognise outstanding support for research and positive examples of research culture 'Staff Excellence Awards' held annually alongside a flexible scheme – STAR – which allows line managers to make an annual 'performance award' for individuals and teams (one-off payment to value of a salary increment) or a smaller-value, but immediate, 'recognition award' The addition of 'citizenship' as a core tenet of 'Academic Progression' (see SP1) provides formal recognition of the contribution that individuals make to broader sector-level subject communities through e.g. sitting on peer review panels etc. Creation of the role of Assistant Supervisor to formalise and recognise contribution to the supervision of postgraduate students and review of the Research Application System to record contribution of e.g. research staff to grant applications. Annual institutional 'National Postdoc Awareness Week', 'Postdoctoral Showcase' and 'Technicians Showcase' events held to recognise these cohorts' contribution to research and facilitate peer networking; and annual celebration of postgraduate research culture through the Graduate School.

New Actions and Commitments What we will do through RCAP to address these specific issues and challenges, with actions to be implemented from 2020-21 **marked in bold with an asterisk**.	*** Ahead of 2020 awards, we will revise the Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Research Culture to recognise a broader range of activities, linked to this Plan, open to individuals as well as groups, with multiple prizes awarded each year.** *** During 2020-21 we will develop proposals for a standardised policy on recognising contribution to publications, grant applications and other research outputs based upon CreDIt (Contributor Roles Taxonomy), a high-level taxonomy, including 14 roles, that can be used to represent the roles typically played by contributors to scientific scholarly output. The roles describe each contributor's specific contribution to the scholarly output.** In line with sector trajectory and recommendations, we will incorporate elements of the 'narrative CV' for academics and researchers, based upon the Royal Society's Résumé for Researchers. Narrative CVs recognise a more holistic view of the contributions made by researchers and their outcomes. This will build upon the major progress already made through the new Academic Progression process. We will continue to support 'showcase' type events for postdoctoral, research and technical staff with added emphasis on issues of research culture and SP5. We will additionally investigate mechanisms to more effectively recognise the contribution of the entire range of staff groups to research outcomes.

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