

Collegiality & Collaboration Action Plan

Creating a supportive, open, respectful environment where colleagues can interact, communicate and collaborate. We are committed to developing and promoting a supportive research culture, fostering cooperation and collaboration between researchers and our partners and nurturing interdisciplinarity between research groups.

Project	Actions	Measure of Success	Time Frame	Lead
Creating a supportive environment that nurtures collaboration, collegiality and inclusivity	<p>To create opportunities through a series of networks and spaces for engagement where colleagues can share ideas, discuss and listen to one another. These research support networks include:</p> <p>Researcher Network: The new Researcher Network connects members of the research community, from early-career researchers to established academics and research professionals - to network, collaborate, and share experiences. It offers regular networking events, workshops, training sessions, and a weekly news bulletin.</p> <p>PhD Supervisor Network: a community of practice of PhD Supervisors at Ulster providing a space to share best practice and get support from peers.</p> <p>PhD Social Spaces: The Docs – space for monthly coffee catch ups, informal workshops and social space.</p>	Attendance/engagement	Ongoing	R&I

	<p>Café Style events: We aim to launch a pilot programme of research culture ‘cafe’ style events to facilitate cross institutional and cross departmental discussion and networking</p> <p>All-Ireland Technical Staff Network: a collaborative network for technical staff in higher education and research on the island of Ireland.</p> <p>In addition to the above, there are several key networks which continue to support our research community. These include,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wo/men’s Network • BAME+ Network • LGBT+ Network • Staff disAbility Network • Neuro Network 	Attendance and engagement	Ongoing	P&C/EDI
Shared Experience Programme	We will develop a programme of shared experience events. At these series of events, experienced staff will share their insights and experiences in areas such as developing outputs, pathways to impact, grant writing and research career development.	Attendance and engagement	Launching Autumn 2025	R&I
Creating a supportive and collaborative environment for Research Professionals	We will create opportunities through a series of networks and spaces for engagement where research professionals can share ideas, gain new insights, discuss and listen to one another. These networks include:	Membership, event attendance and engagement	Ongoing	R&I

both internally and across UK/ROI	<p>NI Research Professionals Network: A joint network between Ulster University and Queen's University, the Research Professionals Network, set up in 2021, aims to connect Research Professionals to share experiences, discuss common challenges, share best practice and develop stronger working relationships. The network aims to grow its membership over the next year and hold 4 key network events.</p> <p>A LinkedIn NIRPN platform is being developed for members to connect and share insights.</p> <p>A new Organisational Insight Exchange Programme is also being piloted to enable research and innovation professionals to interact with colleagues from different organisations and sectors.</p>	Membership, event attendance and engagement	Ongoing	R&I
		Membership and engagement Launch Pilot programme	Summer 2025 Autumn 2025	R&I R&I
	<p>All-Island Research Excellence Network: The All-Island Research Excellence Network, set up in 2021, led by University College Dublin, Queen's University and Ulster University, is a network dedicated to supporting research managers and administrators across the island of Ireland. The network aims to deliver 4 key events each year and an annual conference.</p>	Membership, event attendance and engagement	Ongoing	R&I
	<p>Irish Research Managers Association (IRMAA)</p> <p>Establishment of Ireland's first Association for Research Managers and Administrators to</p>	Membership, event attendance and engagement	Ongoing	R&I

	replicate ARMA and EARMA with a focus on supporting Irish research professionals in the unique Irish context. This initiative is being developed in association with AiREN.			
Fostering and facilitating collaborative research opportunities	<p>To provide direction, focus, and a supportive environment to engage in collaborative research projects:</p> <p>Strategic themes: To focus our contribution to global challenges our university research strategy has identified five strategic research themes: Challenging Inequality and Division; Building a Sustainable World; Accelerating Data Futures; Transforming Health; and Inspiring Creativity and Innovation. To help drive these forward and facilitate collaboration several actions/initiatives will be put in place, these include:</p> <p>Call specific events will be held throughout the year highlighting examples of good practices; collaborative opportunities and collaborative research calls. There will be the provision of an annual research development strategy fund to support early-stage activities leading to the submission of an external research grant application to support activities such as consortia building, visits to a partner institution and/or collaborative meetings to prepare a grant application.</p>	<p>Attendance and Engagement</p> <p>Application and uptake of seed funding</p>	<p>2025/26</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>R&I</p> <p>R&I</p>

	<p>Sustainability research cluster: in the field of sustainability research, a research cluster has been developed to focus on an interdisciplinarity approach to tackling environmental and sustainability issues.</p> <p>City and Growth Deals The development of the City & Growth Deal projects below, will create significant opportunities for future collaborative growth and development. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio Ulster – Studio Ulster’s integrated Research Development and Innovation Centre of Excellence, specialising in large-scale virtual production and world-class innovation will help to attract more big budget films and television productions. • Centre for Food & Drug Discovery: due for completion in 2027 this centre will create a unique ‘one stop shop’ facility for all aspects of the food/drug discovery innovation pipeline. • Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology: due for completion in 2027, this centre will focus on design, development and launching of innovative medical devices and diagnostics. 	Development of action plan	2025/26	R&I / Sustainability
		Centre launched	Opening Spring 2025	R&I/AHSS
		Centre launched	2027	R&I/LHS
		Centre launched	2027	R&I/CEBE/LHS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive analytics & digital robotics innovation centre: due for completion in 2027, this research-led, industry-facing project will drive the multi-disciplinary innovation necessary to translate the benefits of Ulster's leading-edge research in data driven disciplines. 	Centre launched	2027	R&I/CEBE
Facilitating and supporting public engagement and impact development	<p>To support and create opportunities for knowledge sharing and public engagement</p> <p>Public Engagement events: To continue to support our research community and provide opportunities and training for public facing events and showcasing through annual events such as ESRC Festival of Social Sciences and NI Science Festival.</p>	Engagement and public participation	Annual events calls	R&I
	<p>Developing Impact: To continue to support and further develop pathways and strategies for impact and engagement across the institution through training, guidance, case studies and shared experiences.</p>	Attendance and engagement	Ongoing	R&I
	<p>Research Impact Seed Funding We will continue to support impact development with seed funding to take your research outputs to the next stage of their impact journey.</p>	Project funding uptake.	Ongoing	R&I

	<p>Connected Programme Through the Connected programme we will continue to foster closer partnerships between our region's businesses, and the university/college departments who are keen to work with you.</p> <p>Raising the Profile of Our Research Community: To continue to support research community to improve their externally facing PURE profile; to provide training and support to develop communication skills and media training; and support research community with profile raising PR, Research Hour activities and profiling; and good news stories.</p>	<p>Level of industry/further education college engagement</p> <p>Increase in PURE profiles and social media activity</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>R&I</p> <p>R&I/Marketing and Communications</p>
Supporting Practice-as-Research	<p>To support the practice-as-research community in the creative/arts disciplines and provide a framework of best practice to ensure Practice-as-Research is supported, integrated and nurtured, enabling collaboration and broader economic and societal impact</p> <p>Exploratory Exercise To review the current Practice-as-Research environment and practices and identify key challenges and opportunities for Practice-as-Research. Develop a series of workshops to explore the key challenges.</p>	<p>Surveys/focus groups/workshops completed</p>	<p>Autumn 2025</p>	<p>R&I</p>

	<p>To analyse and review data and feedback and develop Practice-as-Research framework and recommendations for the way forward.</p> <p>Supporting PhD Supervisors Supporting PhD Supervisors through the Supervisor Development Programme workshop on 'Supervising Practice Based PhD Research'.</p> <p>Supporting PhD Researchers Supporting Practice Based PhD Researchers in their PhD through specific workshops on methodologies in the Researcher Development Programme.</p>	<p>Framework developed</p> <p>Workshop developed and delivered</p> <p>Workshop developed and delivered</p>	<p>2025/2026</p> <p>2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>R&I</p> <p>Doctoral College</p> <p>Doctoral College</p>
Listening, engaging with and collaborating with staff on policies, operations and strategic direction	<p>To provide an environment that gives a voice for all our research community and a platform for engaging and providing input into the development of our research culture</p> <p>Research Culture Virtual Suggestion Box: We will create a platform where staff can provide their feedback, ideas, suggestions and comments on Ulster's Research Culture and future direction. We are committed to ensuring that Research Culture is high on the agenda at Ulster with a dedicated Research Culture Manager; as well as the ongoing governance and support from the university wide representative committee - the Research Culture Steering Committee.</p>	<p>Response and engagement</p>	<p>Launch Autumn 2025</p>	<p>R&I</p>

	<p>Valuing Voices We will continue to provide an active employee listening programme via the Valuing Voices programme - comprising surveys, focus groups, panels and action plans. Included in this approach, we will look for opportunities to seek perspective and feedback in respect research and engagement.</p>	Response and engagement	Ongoing	P&C
	<p>Employee Wellbeing The Employee Wellbeing team will continue to engage with staff and gather feedback in the Work Well Assessment Programme and will develop a range of support initiatives which contribute to the six pillars of Employee Wellbeing.</p>	Response and engagement Wellbeing support initiatives developed and engaged with	Ongoing	P&C
	<p>Town Hall Events We will engage with and move more towards a 'town hall' based approach to engage a broader, more representative range of voices when reviewing research strategy, policy and priorities.</p>	Response and engagement	Ongoing	R&I / P&C
	<p>Existing Committee Structures We will review existing committee structures and amend levels of representation for discrete staff for current R&I committees</p>	Representation on Committee	Ongoing	R&I