

Research Excellence, Integrity and Rigour Action Plan

Our focus on academic excellence in research remains undiminished. Our pursuit of research excellence and the fulfilment of our responsibilities to participants in research and the wider community, require the maintenance of the highest standards of integrity and ethics.

Project	Actions	Measure of Success	Time Frame	Lead
We are committed to providing an environment that ensures research is conducted to the highest quality standard	Research Integrity: We will continue to promote good research practice, fostering trust and confidence in our research processes in line with the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity's five core areas and provide Research Integrity training.	Completion rates for Research Integrity training	Ongoing	R&I
	We will continue to provide a framework to support good research practice, standards and accountability in the conduct of our research.	Implementation of research governance policies and procedures	2025/26	R&I
	We will review our Procedures for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct in line with UK Research Integrity Office's Guidance.		2025/26	R&I
	We will review our Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the Conduct of Research to ensure that it continues to promote and support good research practice and reflects changes and new challenges, which may have an impact on the principles of research integrity as outlined in the UKRIO Concordat.		2025/26	R&I
	We will continue to review all our research integrity activities including formal reporting through university	Publication of Annual	Annually	R&I

	<p>structures and will publish our annual statement of research integrity</p> <p>We will engage with and contribute to UKRIO working groups and participate in UKRIO events and training</p> <p>Research Ethics We will provide and support processes of quality assurance and timely ethical review for research, including monitoring, throughout a project's lifetime, in line with all legislative and good practice requirements, including research involving human participants, their samples and/or data and research involving animals.</p> <p>We will provide a forum for sharing of best practice in the delivery of our research ethics review and support service</p>	<p>Statement of Research Integrity</p> <p>Tracking of ethics applications through to approval</p> <p>Biannual meetings of Research Ethic Forum</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>R&I</p> <p>R&I</p>
To develop research excellence via a sharing of internal and external expertise	<p>We will support the development of excellence through sharing experiences, training and support and through shared best practice and case studies.</p> <p>A series of initiatives and sharing of good practice and success in large grants and writing high quality of research publications will be developed. This will include a repository of information that seeks to improve quality of research grant applications. Some examples include information on research culture initiatives; top tips for grant applications; data research management plans.</p>	<p>Implementation of initiatives and uptake</p>	<p>2025/26</p>	<p>R&I</p>

	We will develop a series of both subject specific and targeted workshops to develop quality of research publications, to map existing expertise via a list of institutional editors with expertise and experience.	Implementation of events and uptake	2025/26	R&I
Developing and supporting our Research Excellence Framework (REF 2029)	We will provide a full service of support for our professional services and academic staff in the development of the REF2029 submission.	Improved performance in REF2029	Ongoing	R&I
	We will provide a robust and pro-active professional service to support Research Directors in the preparation of all elements of their submission.			
	We will draft a Code of Practice outlining all our REF processes.	Publication of Code of Practice	2025	R&I
	We will draft a REF Operational Plan outlining everyone's responsibilities for the successful delivery of the REF Submission.	Publication of REF Operational Plan	2025	R&I
	We will develop the REF 2029 website, timeline guides, submission guides as well as training, events and workshops throughout the various stages of the process.	Development of website and support material	2025/26	R&I
Ulster University is a committed to upholding and maintaining our research standards	We will continue to monitor and maintain the highest standards of research excellence, and ensure we meet the requirements of professional standards of excellence bodies.			
	HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award The HREiR Award is an important mechanism for implementing the principles of the Concordat to	Achievement of 2025 award	Dec 2025	R&I/P&C

	<p>Support the Career Development of Researchers. Ongoing work to implement current action plan and to retain the award, which will include a peer review in December 2025, while developing a new forward-looking action plan for the period 2025-2028.</p> <p>Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers: a framework aimed at promoting a positive research environment and culture at the University. The Concordat outlines three defining principles – environment and culture; employment; and professional and career development - to ensure researchers are recognised, valued, supported in their professional and career development, and equipped to succeed in their chosen careers</p> <p>Athena SWAN Charter The Athena SWAN charter is a framework that is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality in higher education and research. The university has been awarded Silver Award in Athena Swan. We will continue to commit to achieving our Institutional and School Level Athena SWAN awards. We will aim to support specific research initiatives that support gender equality in research.</p> <p>Race Equality Charter The university is currently applying for Bronze Award in Race Equality Charter. The Race Equality Charter (REC) is a national scheme that provides a framework for higher education institutions to recognise, investigate and challenge barriers to recruitment,</p>	<p>Achievement of Awards</p> <p>Application submitted</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Autumn 2025</p>	<p>EDI</p> <p>EDI</p>
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	progression and retention of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students.			
Measuring change and success /monitoring and evaluating	<p>We will continue to monitor progress, outcomes and change.</p> <p>Research Culture Survey A dedicated Research Culture Survey will be launched to capture staff insights and establish a baseline for our future activities.</p> <p>Postgraduate PRES We will ensure bi-annual participation in Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and seek to maintain engagement and outcomes for Postgraduate Research Survey</p> <p>CEDARS Survey We will undertake a Vitae's Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) in 2025. CEDEARS is a survey that gathers anonymous data about working conditions, research culture, and the professional and career development of researchers and research-enabling staff across UK higher education.</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.</p>	<p>Survey completed</p> <p>Survey Submission</p> <p>Survey completed Target increase of 15% in participation</p> <p>Survey issued/ engagement</p>	<p>2025/26</p> <p>2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>R&I</p> <p>Doctoral College</p> <p>R&I/P&C</p> <p>P&C</p>

PhD Supervisor Development Programme	<p>This PhD Supervisor Development Programme is designed to equip both new and experienced supervisors with the essential skills, knowledge, and best practices to effectively guide PhD Researchers through their research journey. The Supervisor Development Programme consists of workshops, videos and online resources and is aligned to the UK Council for Graduate Education Good Supervisory Practice Framework.</p> <p>A Monthly Update for PhD Researchers is circulated to complement the Supervisor Development Programme signposting to resources, new workshops added and so on. A Sharepoint site with resources has been established and continues to be developed.</p> <p>This work will be enhanced and informed by UU's participation in the national RSVP project where we are the lead partner in a Consortium with UCD, QUB, Karolinska Institute and Orpheus.</p>	Programme engagement	Ongoing	Doctoral College
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