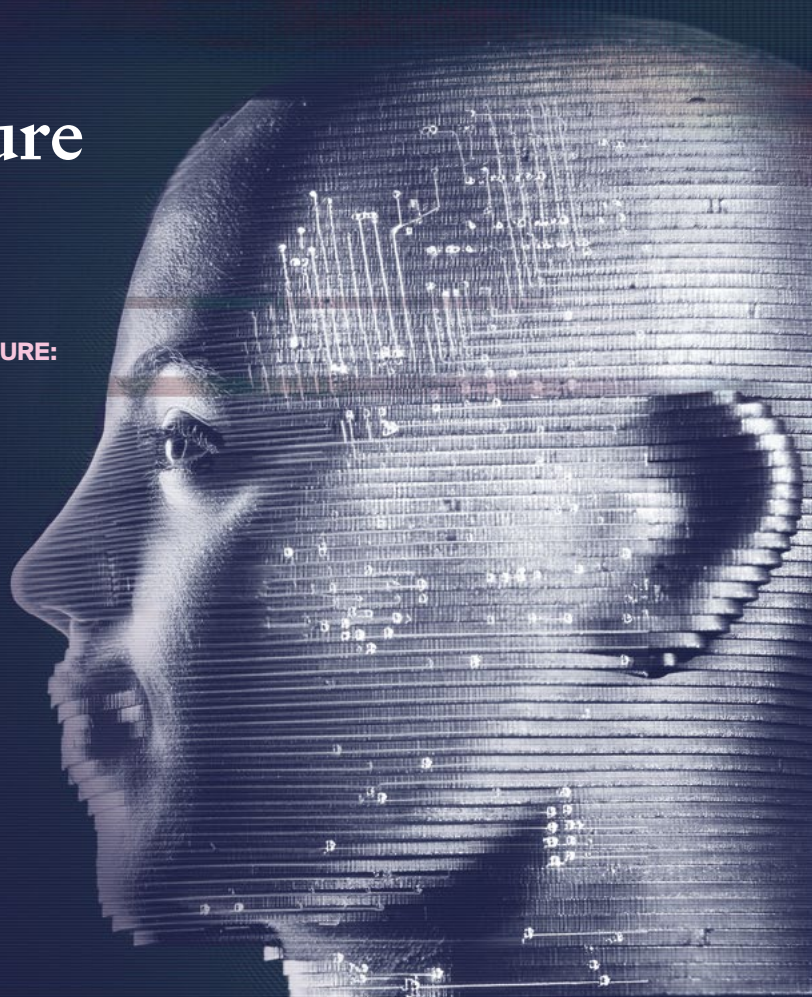


# Research Culture Action Plan

2024-2030

**BUILDING A THRIVING RESEARCH CULTURE:  
INNOVATION, AMBITION, EXCELLENCE.**



# *Foreword*

**Professor Dave Petley,**  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Hull

I am delighted that we have developed a five-year Research Culture Action Plan for the University of Hull. When I took up the role of Vice-Chancellor of the University in September 2022, I inherited an ambitious ten-year strategy for the institution. The mission for the University of Hull as described within this Strategy – to be a research-led, educationally-excellent, internationally engaged, civic university – sets a bold set of ambitions for our institution.

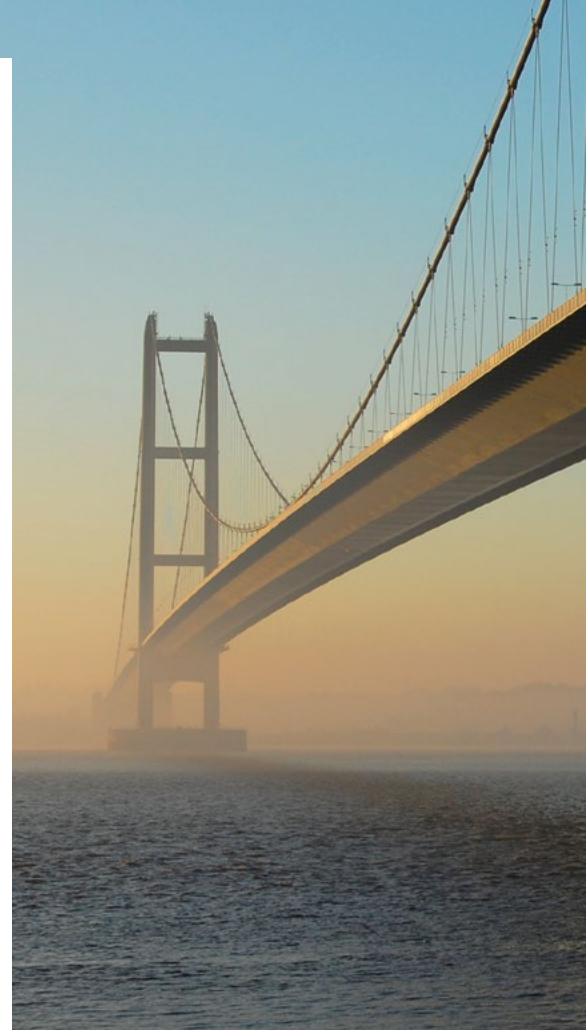


We pursue this vision at a time of considerable challenge for the university sector in the UK. This challenge is multi-faceted and complex, but it places high levels of pressure upon institutions, and on their people. This makes the Research Culture Action Plan a crucial document. It charts a five-year course for building and enhancing a positive, supportive research culture at Hull, which will enable us to thrive as a research-led institution. It recognises that this must be a whole-institution effort. The ways in which we teach; the nature of our policies; the structure of our administrative processes; the ways in which we support our staff, and a myriad of other aspects, all have a bearing on our research culture.

It is not only us as an institution and as a research community that is set to gain. The research, innovation and knowledge exchange produced at the University of Hull drives R&D, innovation, enterprise and high-quality economic growth in our wider region. We attract and retain talent to this part of the UK. The city of

Kingston upon Hull, the wider Humber area and the East Riding of Yorkshire all need a strong, dynamic research-led university that undertakes excellent research collaboratively and equitably. And, of course, the impact of our research, tackling societal challenges, is felt globally. Enhancing our research culture will further extend the reach and transformative impact of our research activity at the regional and international scale.

I am ambitious for the University of Hull. This research culture action plan is a fundamental programme for delivering the growth and transformation in our research environment which we want to see.





# What does a *'Research Culture Action Plan'* mean for the University of Hull?

**Professor Fiona Matthews,**  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research  
& Enterprise), University of Hull

The Hull Research Culture Action Plan marks an exciting time of forward thinking for our university. Its launch is aligned with our broader new five-year research and knowledge exchange strategy. As we embark on this ambitious journey to expand the scale and elevate the quality of research across the University, we recognise the indispensable role of supporting and fostering a conducive research culture.



## *Transparency*



Our aim over the next five years is not merely to bolster research activity but to cultivate an environment where talent thrives and innovation flourishes. Central to this endeavour is the imperative to recruit and retain researchers, ensuring that they are not only attracted to come to Hull but also encouraged to build their careers here, supported in their own development and helping others do the same.

## *Collegiality*



At its core, the Research Culture Action Plan is underpinned by a set of values that reflect our commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and progress. Transparency, collegiality, equity, and engagement serve as guiding principles, shaping our approach to conducting, communicating, and administering research.

## *Equity*



These values, collaboratively identified with our research community, embody our institutional ethos, and extend it to the domain of research. Transparent practices ensure integrity and accountability, fostering trust within our academic community and beyond. Collegiality promotes collaboration and mutual support, transcending disciplinary boundaries and nurturing a spirit of cooperation. Equity ensures that diverse

research achievements are recognized and rewarded, fostering a culture of fairness and inclusivity. Engagement with internal and external stakeholders enriches our research endeavours, driving innovation and societal impact.

By fostering a research culture characterized by transparency, collegiality, equity, and engagement, we empower researchers to navigate and excel in an ever-evolving research landscape. This commitment underscores our dedication to research as both a profession and a catalyst for advancing knowledge and understanding. Creating such a research culture at Hull underscores our commitment to research, both as a profession and as a means to advance knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live.

As we embark on this transformative journey, we invite all members of our community to join us in shaping a research culture that embodies our collective values and aspirations. Together, we will chart a course toward a brighter future, where research thrives and transforms lives.

## *Engagement*

# What is ‘research culture’ and why are we talking about it now?

**Professor Liz Walker,**  
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
(Research Culture)



*“A research culture encompasses 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.”*

This is the Royal Society definition of research culture, published in 2016, as part of the Changing Expectations project. Since that pioneering initiative, funders, sector agencies, research organisations, government departments and, more latterly, the Research Excellence Framework, have ensured that research culture has become a policy priority within the UK HE sector.

There are several interlinked factors that have underpinned these developments. Throughout the 2010s, there was a growing recognition of a lack of openness, infringements on integrity, and limited replicability of research shining a light on questionable practice in research communities. This stems, in part, from the hyper-competitiveness of contemporary research, which combined with cultures of bullying, harassment and discrimination within some research communities, has impacted significantly on the career pathways of early-stage researchers, in particular.

These issues have presented a range of challenges across the HE sector and, at the University of Hull, we now have an opportunity to tackle and transform these challenges by building a research culture rooted in the needs and aspirations of our research community. It is our collective and proactive response to these challenges which has shaped and defined our Research Culture Action Plan.





# Co-production: How have we developed this Research Culture Action Plan?

This Hull Research Culture Action Plan is an institutional document. Its promise to deliver transformative change for the University's research environment requires a whole university effort. It has been produced through dialogue with the academic and research community.

This principle of co-production is fundamental, because it ensures that the Research Culture Action Plan is responsive to the challenges recognised and experienced by researchers at the University of Hull.

- Between November 2023 and January 2024 we coordinated an institutional consultation on research culture. The aim of the consultation was to understand the perspectives and priorities of our research community. We conducted a survey, a series of focus groups, and interviews. A report of this consultation can be viewed [here](#).
- Core findings from this consultation were then reviewed between February and April in multiple forums: by the research culture team, the university leadership team, an appointed Task & Finish Group, and also in public forums.

- Through this review process a forward-looking Research Culture Action Plan was assembled, sitting atop underpinning principles and strategic objectives. This is the plan of action contained in the pages which follow.

Aligned with the co-production approach, and in response to the priorities of our research community, we have made our Research Culture Action Plan action-oriented; tangible, measurable; and manifest through a whole-institutional approach.

The principle of co-production we have used is also crucial because it enables the Research Culture Action Plan to be a live document. While the core strategic direction and spread of actions will guide work of the coming five years, we remain committed to ongoing consultation, through both formal and informal channels, and prioritisation of objectives and projects will adapt to shifting circumstances over time.





PROVING THE  
THE REGION AND

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# Our vision for research culture at Hull

## **This Research Culture Action Plan provides a vision for research culture at Hull.**

This vision is to enable academics to produce excellent research through a research culture which is defined by principles of collegiality, transparency, equity and engagement.

These principles underpin our Research Culture Action Plan. They are the values through which it is conceived and form the basis of the four strategic objectives which will guide the work:

Values of equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental for this research vision. Our approach has been to embed EDI across our four strategic objectives, and to make these objectives action-oriented, so as to realise maximum impact upon our research community.

### **A. To strengthen support for researcher and career development:**

To enable our researchers to achieve their full potential at the University, we must strengthen the frameworks which support them to conduct research, and those which support their professional development. Administrative systems and teams which enable research will be enhanced, and the internal provision of researcher development will be transformed.

### **B. To facilitate time for research:**

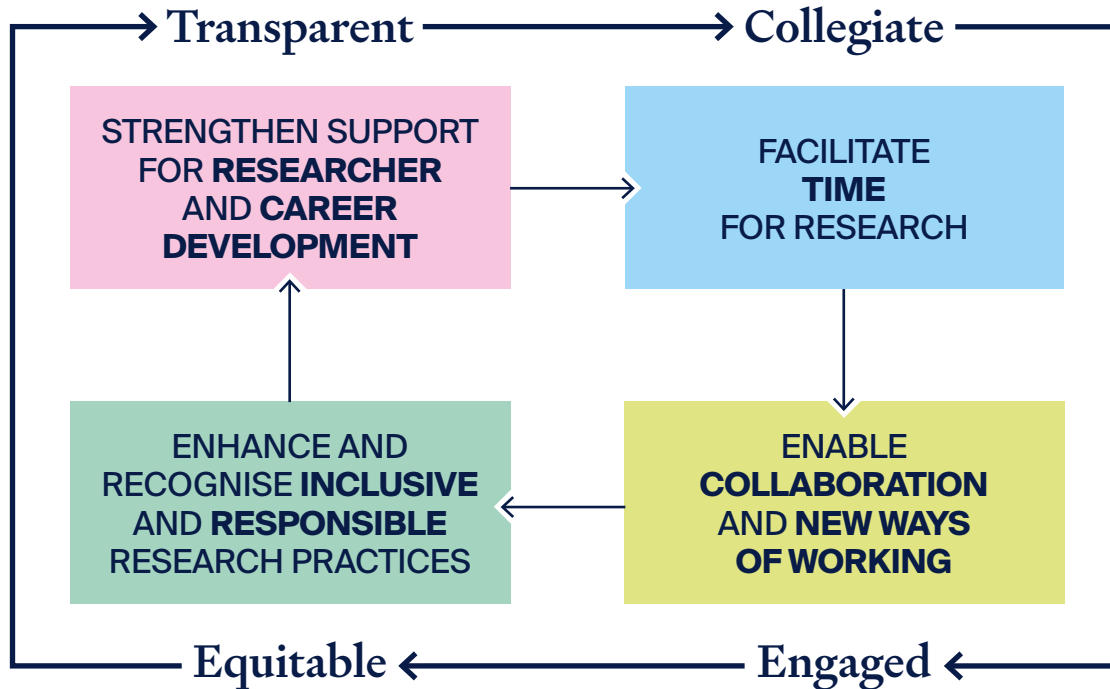
Researchers need quality time to conduct quality research – and institutional structures can sometimes inhibit rather than enable that time. We are committed to understanding time poverty within our research community, and implementing initiatives which mean researchers have more time – and higher quality time – to prioritise their research activity.

### **C. To enable collaboration and new ways of working:**

Building partnerships within and across disciplines, and engaging with non-academic collaborators, are crucial element of success in a changing research landscape. Enabling our researchers to navigate this landscape, and adapt to new ways of working, is fundamental for their personal success, as well as the success of the University.

### **D. To enhance and recognise inclusive and responsible research practices:**

Enhancing our research culture means improving how we do research at the university: ensuring that research teams are inclusive and nurturing, that research data is “as open as possible and as closed as necessary”, and that core values of ethics and integrity are embedded within our research community.





# Implementation

We know that the transformation of our research culture will take time, and will take action by our whole research community. To realise this transformation as an institution-wide process we have built an implementation plan.

Rooted in our four strategic objectives, our implementation plan is structured through seven cross-cutting operational projects. These projects are in turn each broken down into a suite of tangible, measurable actions.

Against each action is an allocated lead delivery team, and timescale – either running across the entire five-year action plan (1-5); or with work commencing in the second (2-5) or third (3-5) years of delivery.

<b>RCRD</b>	Research Culture and Researcher Development
<b>OD</b>	Organisational Development
<b>RKEC</b>	Research, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation
<b>PVC-RE</b>	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise
<b>Comms</b>	Communications
<b>ORL</b>	Open Research Lead

CROSS-CUTTING PROJECTS	ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	LEAD	TIME (YRS)
1. Enhance training and development of researchers and research-enabling staff, through cohort-based development programmes, bespoke sessions, asynchronous training provision, and research-relevant CPD (A, C, D)	1.1. Review and expand cohort-based researcher development programmes. (A) 1.2. Expand delivery of bespoke researcher development workshops at School level. (A) 1.3. Encourage and monitor uptake of ten days' CPD by researchers. (A) 1.4. Embed LinkedIn Learning alongside the curation of asynchronous researcher skills repository. (A) 1.5. Co-design and deliver training suite for 1) technicians and 2) other research-enabling staff. (A, C) 1.6. Enhance cooperation on researcher development and training between Researcher Development team and Doctoral College. (A, C)	1.1. Evaluation of ECR development programme; participation in and evaluation of future programmes; grant applications attributable to programme participation. 1.2. Participation of researchers in bespoke research development workshops; evaluation of workshops. 1.3. % of researchers reporting CPD; % of researchers using 10 days CPD. 1.4. % of researchers accessing CPD via LinkedIn Learning; % of researchers accessing asynchronous researcher skills repository. 1.5. Participation of research-enabling staff in development events; evaluation of research-enabling staff development events. 1.6. No. of collaborative events co-designed by RCRD and DC. Attendance at and evaluation of these.	1.1. RCRD 1.2. RCRD 1.3. OD 1.4. RCRD 1.5. RCRD 1.6. DC	1.1. 1-5 1.2. 1-5 1.3. 1-5 1.4. 2-5 1.5. 3-5 1.6. 1-5

CROSS-CUTTING PROJECTS	ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	LEAD	TIME (YRS)
2. Enhance and expand mentoring provision for academics, research leadership development, and strategic planning of research. (A, D)	2.1. Establish mentoring leads by faculty/School/Institute and coordinate between them. (A, D) 2.2. Streamline central oversight of, and policies and training/ support for, mentoring among academics. (A, D) 2.3. Create bespoke research leadership programmes and events. (A, D) 2.4. Mainstream research planning meetings for academics, to complement formal appraisal. (A)	2.1. Mentor leads in place and coordinating activity in train. 2.2. % academic/research staff engaged in mentoring; evaluation of mentoring; % of mentors receiving training. 2.3. Participation in and evaluation of research leadership block course. 2.4. % researchers using research planning meetings; evaluation of research planning meetings system.	2.1. RCRD 2.2. OD 2.3. RCRD 2.4. PVC-RE	2.1-5 2.2. 2-5 2.3. 3-5 2.4. 2-5
3. Review and address structural barriers inhibiting time for academics to conduct research, including internal policies and processes, workload allocation and timetabling, while creating new spaces which facilitate quality time for research. (B, C)	3.1. Identify internal policies and processes creating time burden inhibiting research, and/or leading to inequity in outcome and opportunity. Address improvements where possible. (B, C) 3.2. Review sabbatical policy and its implementation by Faculty and School, ensuring equity in access by researchers. (B) 3.3. Review timetabling and its application by School to foreground quality time for research and ensure equity in treatment of researchers. (B) 3.4. Review presence of research within workload allocation by School. (B) 3.5. Review implementation of fixed-term contracts and open-ended contracts for teaching and research (T&R) staff, and research staff not attached to external-funding. (B, D) 3.6. Coordinate and facilitate writing/reading retreats, propose designated research-focused days of the week, and drive other initiatives creating quality time for research. (B)	3.1. Response in research culture survey. 3.2. % of staff accessing sabbatical (by School/ Faculty). 3.3. % of T&R staff meeting 40% research time p.w. in research culture survey – subject to changes to policy. 3.4. Response in research culture survey. 3.5. % of research staff on fixed-term/open-ended contracts not funded through external funding. 3.6. Attendance at and evaluation of writing retreats; staff surveys on research culture.	3.1. RCRD 3.2. PVC-RE 3.3. PVC-RE 3.4. PVC-RE 3.5. PVC-RE 3.6. RCRD	3.1. 1-5 3.2. 2-5 3.3. 2-5 3.4. 2-5 3.5. 2-5 3.6. 1-5
4. Raise exposure to, and understanding of, the institutional, regional, national and international research system, including support, funders and policy changes. (C, A)	4.1. Widen internal visibility of and access to Research, Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation services, and associated research- enabling processes and opportunities. (C) 4.2. Design and mainstream researcher-induction for all new research staff (A) 4.3. Coordinate regular research forums spotlighting areas of sector-level strategic priority (A) 4.4. Enhance engagement with and exposure to funders and sector agencies. (C)	4.1. no. of and participation in RKEC visits to Schools. 4.2. % of new researchers receiving designated researcher induction; evaluation of induction process. 4.3. attendance at and engagement in research forums 4.4. no. of funder visits p.a. (and participation by researchers); funder panel participation.	4.1. RKEC 4.2. RKEC 4.3. RCRD 4.4. RKEC	4.1. 1-5 4.2. 2-5 4.3. 1-5 4.4. 2-5

CROSS-CUTTING PROJECTS	ACTIONS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	LEAD	TIME (YRS)
5. Establish and consolidate peer-to-peer researcher networks and feedback loops between the research community, professional services, and management. (A, C, D)	5.1. Formalize ECR network and DoR network. (C, A) 5.2. Establish post-promotion and new hire networks of Professors, Readers, and Senior Lecturers. (C, A) 5.3. Scaffold, support and cross-pollinate between interdisciplinary research networks at School, Faculty and cross-Faculty level. (C) 5.4. Continue consultation with and evaluation of the research community via forums and surveys. (C, D)	5.1. Attendance at semesterly meetings. 5.2. Engagement in network development process; and evaluation of this process. 5.3. Attendance and participation in network events. 5.4. Ongoing engagement in consultative activities.	5.1. RCRD 5.2. RCRD 5.3. RKEC 5.4. RCRD	5.1. 1-5 5.2. 2-5 5.3. 3-5 5.4. 1-5
6. Recognize, reward and celebrate a wide range of contributions to research excellence. (D, A, C)	6.1. Grow the volume and broaden the diversity of research and researchers celebrated and promoted by official external channels. (D) 6.2. Foreground research and researchers in official internal channels, broadening the diversity of research and researchers celebrated, and raising internal awareness of research activities and researcher profiles across the University. (D) 6.3. Foreground research-related activity, including citizenship, mentoring, engagement and collaboration, in appraisal and promotion. (D, A) 6.4. Support the application for promotion from staff from under-represented backgrounds. (A, D) 6.5. Host and embed research and researcher celebrations. (D, C)	6.1. The volume and spread (gender, type, discipline) of research publicized externally per month 6.2. The volume and spread (gender, type, discipline) of research publicized internally per month 6.3. Review of appraisal process; 6.4. Number of academic staff at bands 9 and 10 from under-represented backgrounds. 6.5. Participation and engagement in central research celebration events, including Research Culture Week.	6.1. Comms 6.2. Comms 6.3. OD 6.4. OD 6.5. RCRD	6.1. 3-5 6.2. 3-5 6.3. 2-5 6.4. 2-5 6.5. 1-5
7. Enhance the transparency of the research system, the use of open research practices and the exercise of research with integrity (D, A.)	7.1. Communicate with transparency and render equitable the distribution of internal research funds, including QR. (D) 7.2. Deliver Open Research training brokered by network of Open Research Champions. (D, A) 7.3. Raised awareness and understanding of Trusted Research. (D) 7.4. Heightened awareness and understanding of research integrity and ethics. (D, A)	7.1. Response to questions in research culture survey. 7.2. Participation and evaluation of training; % of Schools with Open Research Champion in place; % of Open Access deposits in worktribe. 7.3. Use of Trusted Research resource; Pulse survey indicating awareness of Trusted Research. 7.4. % of staff, and research staff, completing research integrity training; Survey indicating awareness of Research Integrity.	7.1. PVC-RE 7.2. ORL 7.3. RKEC 7.4. RKEC	7.1. 2-5 7.2. 2-5 7.3. 2-5 7.4. 2-5



# Governance:

## How will we keep on track?

The Research Culture Action Plan is an ambitious programme of work for the University of Hull. To ensure the plan delivers on its objectives, we will put in place various mechanisms of governance, taking an approach which is pragmatic and rigorous.

We will establish a culture of ongoing evaluation, through formal and informal channels. Strengthening dialogue between the research community, professional services and leadership is a central pillar of the action plan. Similarly, creating spaces where colleagues can discuss, reflect, share ideas and listen to one another is fundamental to the approach we have taken.

Alongside a culture of ongoing evaluation will be the establishment of focused, time-bound, operational working groups to review progress of specific projects and actions. Coordination between working groups will be achieved by the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Culture) and Research Culture and Researcher Development Team.

Strategic oversight of the Plan will sit with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Research & Enterprise and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Culture). To maximise efficiencies, and embed the RCAP within university processes, the formal governance route will run through existing channels.

An intermediate review will be undertaken in 2026-27 and a final review in 2029-30, each consisting of a Research Culture survey and series of focus groups.

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The authors of this Hull Research Culture Action Plan would like to acknowledge and thank members of the research community at the University of Hull, with whom it was co-produced, and in dialogue with whom it will be delivered and maintained as a live document.

