



Posters Presented at the InFrame Final Event

The poster exhibition was one of the highlights of the InFrame Final Event on **27 July 2026**.

Featuring posters from both InFrame and Culture Catalyst Fund (CCF) projects, the exhibition captured two years of collaboration, experimentation and learning across the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews.



Ethical review
processes



Open
research



Collective
leadership



Recognition
initiatives



Technical
careers



Research
integrity



Inclusion and
wellbeing

From ethical review processes and open research to collective leadership, recognition initiatives, technical careers, research integrity, inclusion and wellbeing, the posters showcase the many ways colleagues have worked together to create more positive and inclusive research cultures.



Explore the posters below and discover the people, ideas and projects helping to shape the future of research culture.

InFrame Cross-Institutional Ethics



The Culture Catalyst Fund (CCF) supported 26 cross institutional research culture projects. This required a unified approach to ethical review, leading to the creation of the InFrame Ethics Committee with representatives from three partner universities.

A partnership between three universities brings opportunities but also challenges.

Problems

- How do you decide which ethics committee to go through if we have interdisciplinary and multi-institutional teams?
- Project leads in professional services don't have a dedicated School Ethics Committee to go to.
- Online systems can only be accessed by those in each institution.
- Limited reviewers with high demand can lead to delays in School ethics committees.
- Once approved, ethics would need to be ratified at other collaborating universities, further slowing the process.

Solutions

- Create a short-term subcommittee of St Andrews UTREC solely for the purpose of reviewing CCF projects consisting of representatives from each of the partner universities.
- Create an application form based on the old St Andrews system.
- Ensure sign off at VPR level.

Further Benefits

A cross institutional panel provides a learning opportunity, and we can use this as a pilot to make recommendations for similar cross-institutional projects.



Key Challenges:

Project leads from diverse disciplines and job families (academics, technicians, professional services) who may not be familiar with ethical review; Devolved ethics processes, disparity of service.



Improvements:

Additional guidance and one-to-one support; cross-institutional dialogue sharing understandings and standards; recognition of committee members



Impact:

Fair and consistent review of all projects; enhanced institutional learning on cross-institutional collaboration and ethics; upskilling of project leads.



Conclusion:

A unified, collaborative ethics review model can successfully support complex multi-institutional research while insuring ethical rigour.

Culture Catalyst Fund (CCF)

Powering new ideas.

Supporting new leaders.

Transforming research culture.



The Culture Catalyst Fund (CCF) is a cornerstone of the InFrame programme – designed to support emerging leaders to develop, test, and scale ideas that improve research culture.

With over £1 million in funding, the CCF represents a significant investment in people, ideas, and evidence-led change. To date, 27 projects have been funded from 94 unique applications, reflecting strong demand and sector-wide engagement.

Expanding who leads change

The CCF is intentionally designed to widen access to funding and leadership opportunities. By moving beyond traditional pathways, it helps to democratise research culture leadership, enabling contributions from across roles, disciplines, and career stages.

This inclusive approach challenges narrow definitions of merit and supports a broader, more representative community of research leaders.

What the Fund supports

The CCF enables projects that:

- Analyse and strengthen links between collegial leadership and research culture
- Pilot and evaluate innovative approaches to culture change
- Generate transferable and scalable insights
- Contribute to the development of the Collegial Research Leadership Framework

Projects align with one or more core themes:

- Putting policy into practice – improving engagement with existing systems
- Changing what counts – recognising diverse contributions
- Setting the tone – fostering positive, inclusive cultures

A model for inclusive funding

The design of the CCF places strong emphasis on accessibility, equity, and support. This includes:

- Simple, accessible application processes
- Targeted support before, during, and after application
- Inclusive peer review panels representing diverse perspectives
- Specific focus on supporting underrepresented groups

Applicants are supported to transform ideas into robust, impactful projects, with guidance on evaluation, methodology, and communication.

Beyond funding: developing leaders

CCF awardees join a supported development journey, including:

- A bespoke leadership development programme
- Mentoring and peer learning opportunities
- Workshops on evaluation, communication, and culture change
- Ongoing expert support throughout the project lifecycle

Driving impact and learning

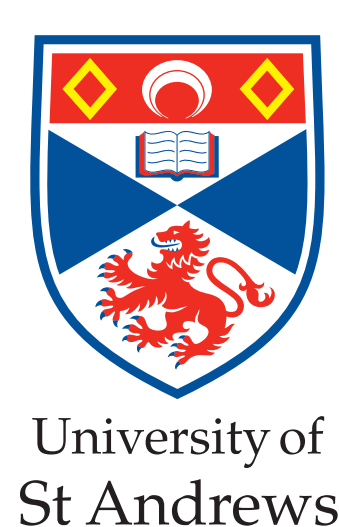
Funded projects are not only delivering local change – they are also generating evidence that feeds back into the wider InFrame programme. This ensures an iterative approach, where learning informs future activity and strengthens the overall framework.

Projects are expected to:

- Demonstrate measurable impact
- Produce shareable outputs and resources
- Contribute to longer-term, sustainable change

Why it matters

The Culture Catalyst Fund is enabling a shift in how research leadership and culture are understood and practiced. By investing in new leaders and new ideas, it is helping to build inclusive, collaborative, and evidence-driven research environments – now and for the future.



Funded by Wellcome



wayfinding for real-world, flexible evaluation of research culture projects



project team

Anne Ploin and Ros Attenborough

the challenge

How do you find your way when research culture evaluation needs to happen now, in a real-world complex project unfolding around you? Evaluating InFrame as a whole-project level is a complex, multi-layered challenge. We have learned that we need to respond with flexibility: curiosity, creative pivots, and joyful practices. Not because this is easy, but because it does something important to genuinely learn, and create evidence that can be received.

We understand this as a wayfinding process that becomes evaluation strategy and methodology.

Ask us about our **creative pivots**! And the challenges that led to them, if you like...

the context

InFrame has three institutions, three work packages and funds 26 Culture Catalyst Fund (CCF) projects. Much of our team of approximately 20 staff work closely with CCF projects, with frequent turnover related to fixed term contracts. We are diverse in backgrounds, expertise, ways of working, and positions in our institutions. Our overarching aims are experiment and involve capacity to respond flexibly to research cultures and support needs.

pivot 1: made evaluation collaborative and participative

pivot 2: created spaces that feel different

pivot 3: committed to qualitative-led evaluation

pivot 4: snowballed

pivot 5: created a qualitative baseline

four principles we've arrived at, some of them specific to research culture:

- **collaboration** is really important at the evaluation strategy stage; and we've developed a **participative** approach that is sensitive to power dynamics.
- we advocate a **qualitative-led**, mixed-methods approach, that is matched to the nuances of understanding culture change and change resistance.
- we maintain a **plural** view of knowledge and expertise, and an awareness that we work within **cultures of research culture** that bring huge and valuable diversity
- we lean into a **joyful, flexible, distributed** approach – starting small and experimental with our methods, scaling up what works, being open about challenges, and approaching it as an ongoing conversation.



InFrame's approach to Open Research



Project team

Andrew Unwin and Emma Wilson
University of Edinburgh

Embedding openness in research culture

Open research aims to make knowledge openly available, accessible, and reuseable, themes incredibly relevant to healthy and collaborative research cultures. Running the InFrame project allowed us to investigate approaches to research culture change. Now that the project is ending, we want to share our findings. By sharing our learning through our **Community Knowledge Hub**, we hope to benefit the wider research community and serve as a starting point for others to lead culture change work.

Sharing as centre of our approach

Through our Community Knowledge Hub, we aim to share different types of findings that emerged from InFrame:

- Direct evidence from our Culture Catalyst Fund projects, including identifying areas where change is needed.
- Tried and tested resources created to help with processes from staff recruitment to forming ethics panels, which others can reuse.
- Learning from running a culture change project, including data analysis and project evaluation.

Thinking critically about what information we are sharing, with whom, and why, is of utmost importance, especially since some evidence comes from participant data. Therefore, our approach is to be as open as possible and as closed as necessary.

Building a public Community Knowledge Hub using OSF

We chose to use Open Science Framework (OSF) to share our findings publicly. OSF projects can be assigned a persistent identifier (DOI), and we can add metadata like grant funder and license type. All our outputs are licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial (CC BY-NC)** license.

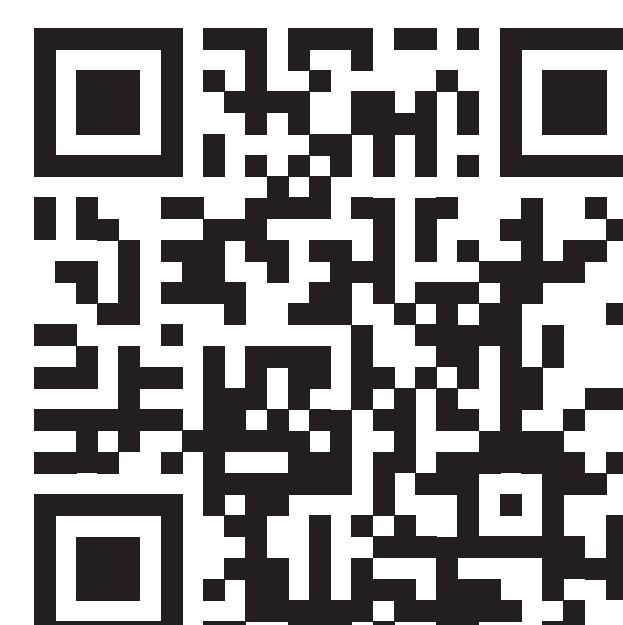
OSF allows us to add wikis that allow us to include overview information, content lists, and contextual information that makes future use easier.

In each of our outputs, we're using **CRedit taxonomy to recognise and acknowledge different contributions**. CRedit helps us be transparent about the amount of work and diversity of skills that have gone into our findings, recognise collegial leadership and break down myths about 'lone heroes', and allows individual team members to provide evidence of their contributions for future job applications and promotions.



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Funded by Wellcome



S RTP Academy

Connecting Technicians.

Building Leaders.

Transforming Research Culture.



The Challenge

Research Technical Professionals (RTPs) are essential to modern research underpinning innovation, infrastructure, and delivery.

Yet across the sector they often experience:

- Limited visibility and recognition
- Fragmented and unclear career pathways
- Isolation within specialist roles
- Uneven access to leadership development and networks

These challenges impact not only individuals, but the strength and sustainability of research environments.

The Solution

The Scottish Research Technical Professionals (S RTP) Academy brought together technicians across:

University of Glasgow | University of Edinburgh | University of St Andrews

Through a structured, cross-institutional programme including:

- Leadership development and coaching
- Job shadowing and mentoring
- Networking and peer-learning events
- Collaborative knowledge exchange

The Academy created new connections, shared opportunities, and a stronger sense of professional identity.

The Impact

- 8.2/10 average participant value rating
- Development of strong cross-institutional networks
- Increased leadership confidence and professional identity
- New collaborations, mentoring, and knowledge exchange
- Reduced isolation and strengthened sense of community

“I feel less lonely and more reassured in my skills and value.”

Why It Matters

The S RTP Academy is more than a development programme; it is:

- A research culture intervention
- A technical workforce development model
- A cost-effective, scalable approach aligned to REF 2029

It demonstrates how targeted investment in technical staff can strengthen collaboration, capability, and institutional resilience.

What's Next

Building on this success, we are developing a sustainable, Scotland-wide Academy to:

- Embed technician career development within research culture strategies
- Strengthen collaboration across institutions
- Support a visible, connected, and future-ready technical workforce

Find out more

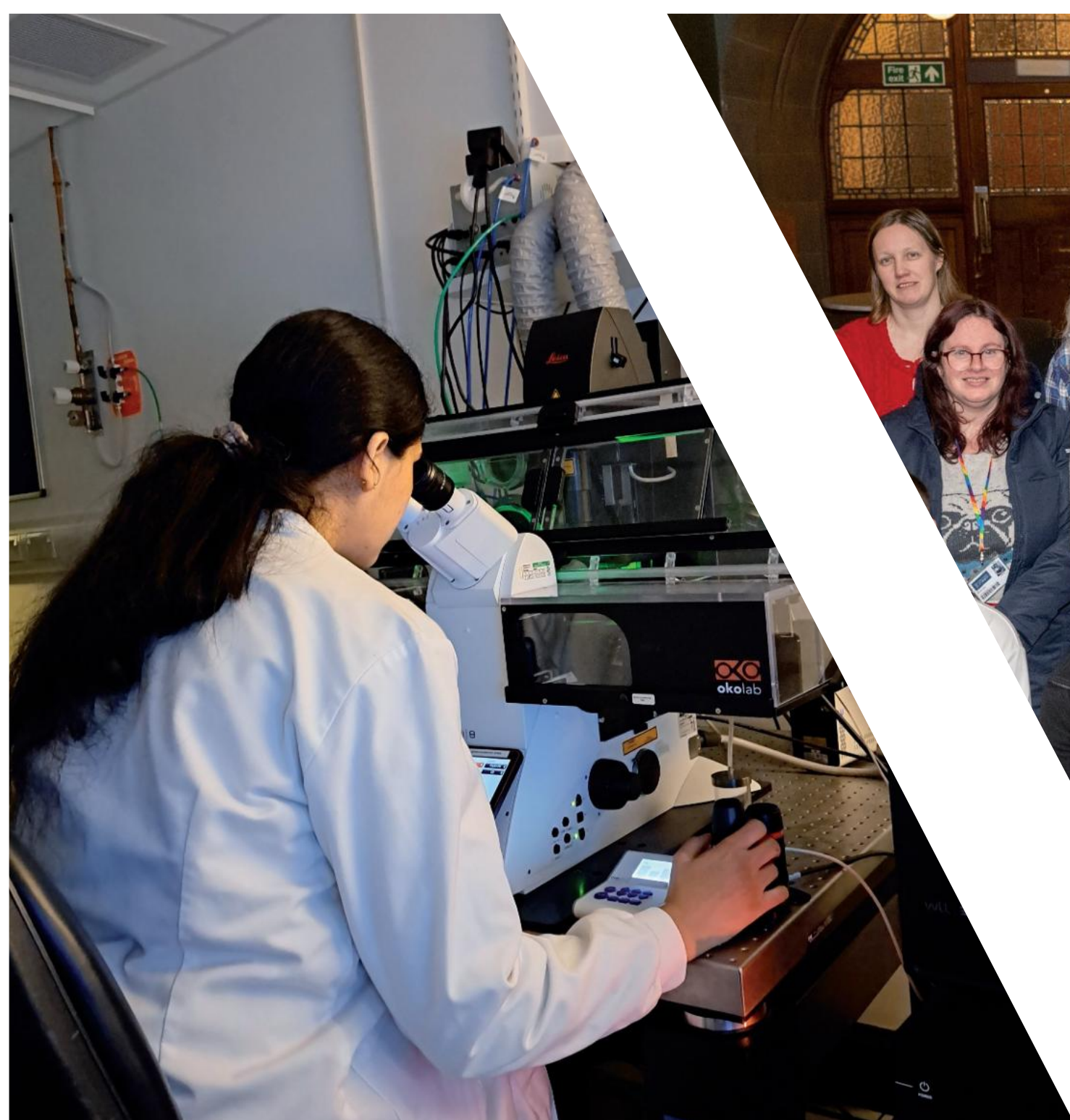
Report / policy paper:



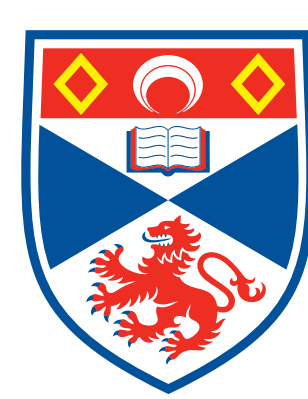
S RTP Academy Sway Page:



Contact details: Mohammad Ali Salik (MohammadAli.Salik@glasgow.ac.uk),
Sally Morgan (Sally.Morgan@ed.ac.uk),
Jamie Smith (jamie.smith@st-andrews.ac.uk)



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH



University of
St Andrews

Funded by Wellcome



Creating the Generative Conditions for Imaginative Research Futures (CoGIF)



How can futures thinking help researchers engage with uncertainty, possibility and change?

Academic research cultures are often shaped by short-term pressures, immediate outputs, career uncertainty and high workloads. While researchers are expected to navigate complex and uncertain futures, there is rarely dedicated space to explore longer-term possibilities for research, careers, collaboration and institutional change. CoGIF explored the potential for futures thinking - the exploration of possible futures – to support researchers and research-enabling staff in this context.

During 2025–26, the project team designed and delivered eight participatory futures workshops. A total of 68 staff members took part, representing diverse disciplines, career stages and professional roles across the University of Edinburgh. Strong demand led to workshops being fully booked or oversubscribed.

Key findings

Structural conditions matter

- Career and contract uncertainty
- High workloads and limited time for reflection
- A focus on immediate outputs over longer-term possibilities
- Transactional and achievement-oriented cultures that constrain imaginative thinking

Relational conditions matter too

- Psychological safety, trust and meaningful dialogue
- Permission to explore uncertainty and possibility
- Opportunities for connection across roles and disciplines
- Skilled facilitation, not simply the transfer of futures tools

Outcomes for participants

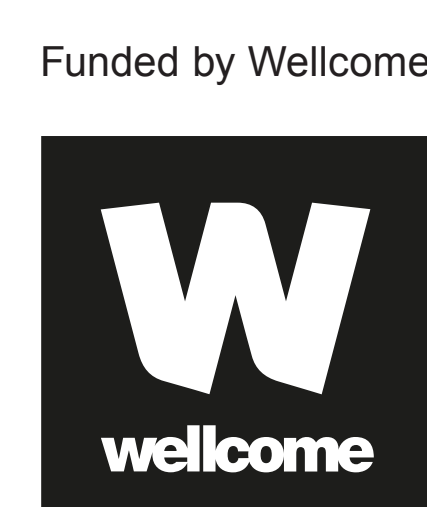
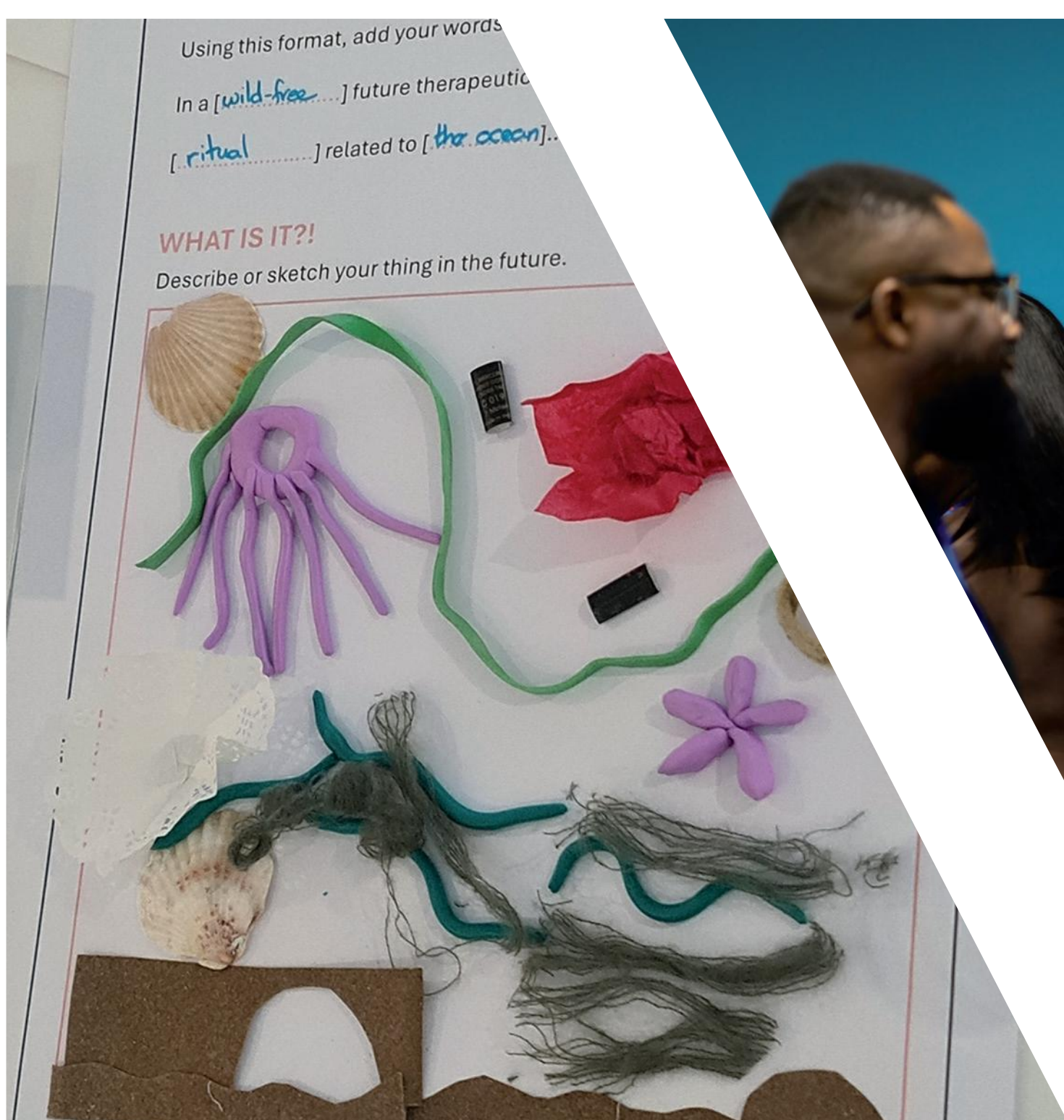
Participants reported:

- **Perspective shifts** on research, careers and future possibilities
- **Connection** with colleagues and experiences beyond disciplinary boundaries
- **Protected space and time** for reflection and sense-making
- Increased agency when engaging with uncertain futures

A key finding was that futures thinking is not simply a transferable toolkit. Participants consistently valued connection, reflexivity and facilitated exploration as much as the methods themselves. Meaningful futures engagement depends on the conditions in which it takes place.

CoGIF findings have been shared at the **REDS Conference**, **UK Creativity Researchers Conference 2026**, and **Anticipation 2026**. The work continues through a third round of workshops commissioned by the University of Edinburgh Research Office for Autumn 2026.

Contact details: Sarah Kettley (Sarah.Kettley@ed.ac.uk), Emily Shipp (Emily.Shipp@ed.ac.uk), Steve Earl (Steve.Earl@ed.ac.uk)



Embedding Collective Leadership

Scaling methods, mindsets, tools and practices for Inclusion, Collegiality, and Engagement



Universities are complex organisations with cultures and ways of working that can become entrenched. Traditional meetings can reinforce power dynamics, limiting diverse voices and collective wisdom, affecting research quality, impact, and staff well-being.

The Embedding Collective Leadership project addresses this by training university staff to design, host and harvest data from workshops using participatory facilitation methods including Open Space, World Café, Liberating Structures, and Lewis Deep Democracy. These skills help amplify quieter voices, hold participants through tensions that arise as they discuss diverse ideas and surface collective intelligence. While they can feel like a stretch, the methods intentionally create space for challenge and reflection, creating powerful team-building dynamics and cultural shifts.

Currently, facilitation expertise remains concentrated in a small number of people. External facilitators need to be budgeted for, and training is costly for our organisations. The UK higher education sector lacks shared infrastructure, common language, and accessible training pathways – leaving the potential of these methods locked away rather than distributed across organizations where it could benefit everyone.

The Project Approach

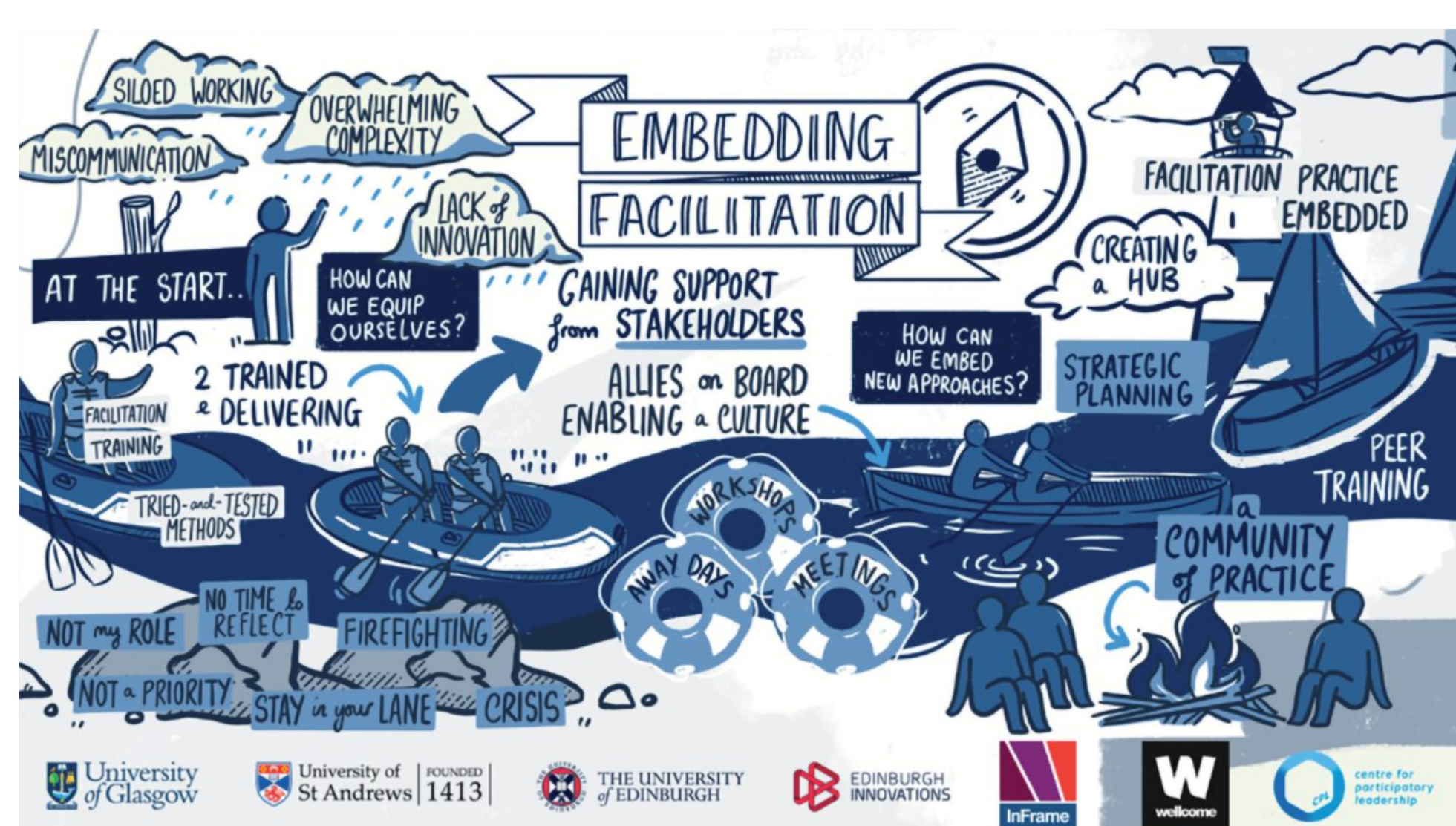
The project takes a two-pronged approach, designed to embed a culture of facilitation over time:

- Develop and deliver training workshops adapted for higher education contexts (delivered via Centre for Participatory Leadership partners) for all staff across research, professional services and technical roles
- Establish a community of practice to cascade skills across institutions, retain knowledge, and provide peer mentorship, similar to alumni leadership programme models

Over 100 staff have been trained across the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews. We have also set up a community of practice, meeting regularly since November 2025, creating an embedded participatory space reflecting the culture change they advocate. The course programs can now be delivered in house.

The project has also produced a 'How to' guide for the wider higher education sector, offering practical guidance to other universities seeking to embed collective leadership practices and establish their own knowledge-sharing communities.

Contact details: Claire Pembleton (Claire.pembleton@ei.ed.ac.uk)



Ethical Leadership Amid Precarity



Project team

Enrico Galvagni, Jen Ross, Yuemiao Ma,
Simon McGrath, Nicola Cuthbert,
Joanna Royle, Cécile Ménard

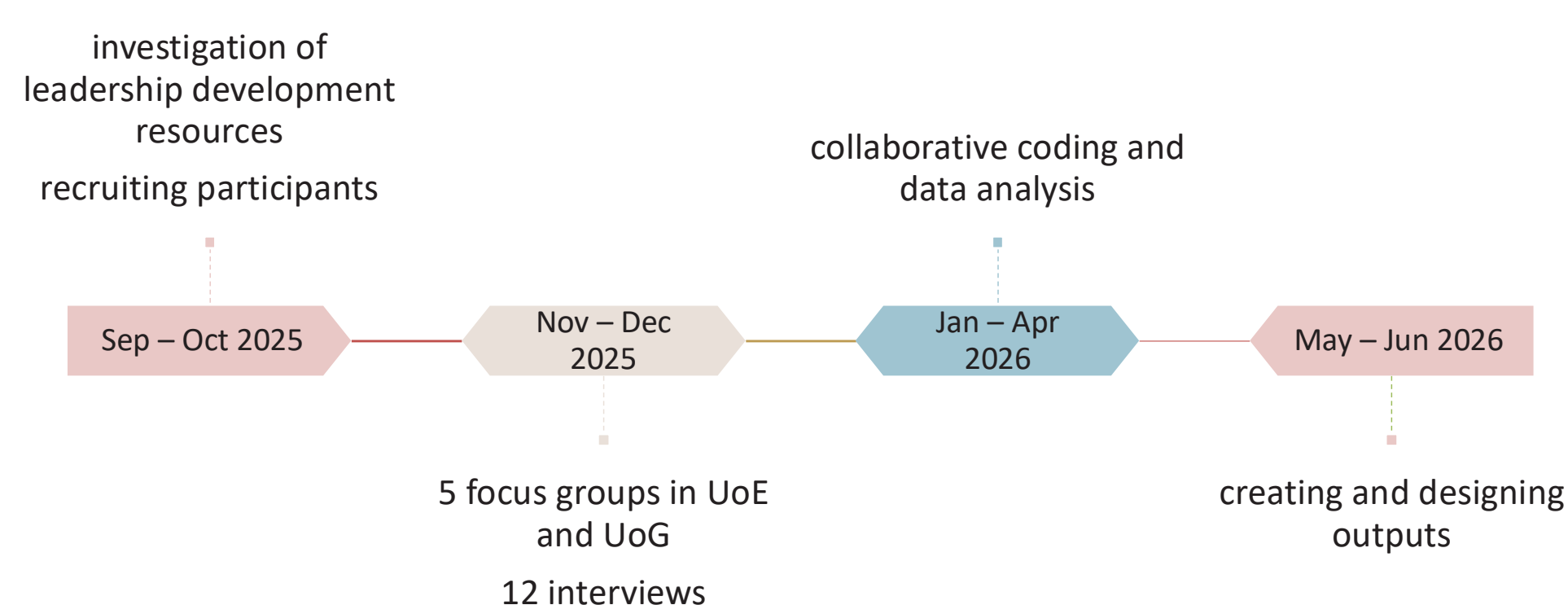
Project summary

How can one lead ethically from a position of professional and existential uncertainty? Precarity poses substantial challenges to ethical leadership, for researchers and for those who support and mentor them. Academics in precarious positions (employed on hourly, fixed-term, sessional, or one-off basis contracts) often find themselves within a competitive environment where resources are scarce and leadership can appear incompatible with solidarity. In addition, leadership activities researchers might be encouraged to undertake for the good of their teams, disciplines or future careers can be at odds with their capacity and the expectations of their roles, risking exploitative and unethical conditions.

Project goals

1. Understand how precarious academics conceptualize and perceive ethical leadership
2. Identify challenges and tensions in practicing leadership
3. Develop resources to support ethical and sustainable leadership

Timeline:



Results

We mapped five attributes of an ethical leader and the way they are embodied within the context of precarity by both academics in precarious positions and managers and PIs or precarious academics.



Our outputs include:

1. A reflective guide for academics in precarious positions: to help precarious academics recognise and articulate the ethical leadership practices already present in their work.
2. An infographic for PIs and research managers: to offer practical guidance on recognising the challenges faced by precarious academics and creating conditions to support their development.

Contact details:

Enrico Galvagni
(enrico.galvagni@ed.ac.uk)
Yuemiao Ma (yuma3@ed.ac.uk)



Games for Research and Interdisciplinary Dialogue (GRID)



Phase 1

- Identify challenges to interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Co-design an open-access board game to support interdisciplinary dialogue.
- Share good practice across institutions and disciplines.
- Develop leadership skills through collaborative teamwork based on trust and open dialogue.

Phase 2

- Gamify interdisciplinary research processes.
- Test the game's effectiveness for team building, communication, and recognising disciplinary contributions.
- Create a safe space for diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Strengthen collaboration between natural and social sciences.
- Promote inclusive, respectful, and effective interdisciplinary teams.
- Improve preparedness to identify and address interdisciplinary challenges.
- Embed the game within Health Data Research UK and UK Dementia Research
- Institute training frameworks.

Key Findings

- Interdisciplinary research is essential for addressing complex problems but requires greater communication and understanding across disciplines.
- Many challenges experienced in interdisciplinary teams are shared regardless of discipline.
- Early identification and resolution of team challenges is critical.
- Recognition of different contributions helps team members feel valued and included.
- Reflection on challenges and failures supports learning and improvement.
- Strong team culture and ongoing team building are important throughout a project.
- Meaningful social interactions beyond work strengthens collaboration and working relationships.
- Team building becomes particularly important during periods of change.

Test-Phase

- 6 teams – 23 participants
- 3 in-person and 3 online test plays
- Most participants were from natural science disciplines

Results (n = 23)

- High satisfaction across all participant groups, regardless of discipline or seniority.
- 100% agreed the game:
 - Prompted meaningful discussions.
 - Encouraged openness between players.
 - Created an inclusive environment where all voices could be heard.
- 75% reported:
 - Increased trust between players.
 - Greater reflection on assumptions about interdisciplinary work.
- Around 50% reported:
 - Increased confidence communicating across disciplines.
 - Better preparedness to address future interdisciplinary challenges.
 - Previously unspoken team dynamics emerging through gameplay.
- 91% (21/23) would consider introducing the game in their workplace.

“The fluid communication of the card game felt more cohesive than I had expected. It reminded me that we were quite close as a team. The discussion points were very interesting and my colleagues brought points that I had not thought about.”

Online version will be available in August 2026.

Contact details: Inna Yaneva-Toraman (i.yaneva-toraman@ed.ac.uk)



Mainstreaming sustainable and effective support for people undertaking emotionally demanding research



The Problem

Emotional demand affects individual wellbeing, team functioning, and project timelines. However, there is little understanding of how institutional policies and guidelines may shape an individual's experience of emotional demand within research.

What we did

Our project brought together expertise from across the three institutions to explore how to address emotional demand within research. We used mapping tools to visualise the complex policies and procedures that currently exist within each institution (links to institution maps), highlighting how they collectively contribute to gaps in research culture that recognise and supports researchers in achieving sustainable careers. Our cross-institution survey provided deeper understanding of experiences of emotional demand and access to support.

What we found

“Without responsible organisational structures and management, everything else is meaningless”

Emotional demand was rarely discussed within institutional documents, reflecting cultures that encourage emotions to be removed from the research process. Our findings highlight the need to reframe emotions in research as valuable rather than problematic, while recognising that unmet emotional demands affect all roles and career stages throughout the research lifecycle from funding applications to dissemination and beyond.

*“The constant need to justify the work in terms of its academic, social and financial worth. This pervades every step of the process, from beginning to end and afterwards – and it is right that we should be able to explain the value of our work, especially when spending public money... I am asked to justify the value and worth of my work far more often than colleagues studying other topics less close to right-wing agendas, very often with the implication that the *people* I work with are the ones whose value and worth I am actually being asked about. It’s exhausting.”*

Emotional demand results from a combination of factors including content, context, personal circumstances and wider cultural, political context both within wider society and academia itself, making it hard to anticipate (fig 1). Motivation and belief in the importance of the work can help to mitigate the effects of emotional demand, it does not remove them (fig 2).

The effects of emotional demand are often construed as individual failure, reinforced by negative interactions and responses from peers or those in leadership roles. These feelings of personal failure can be particularly pronounced among those from marginalised groups.

“The onus to care for myself is always pushed back to me: it’s down to me to ‘speak to someone,’ make sure I’m looking after myself etc. But there is never any resource or any firm plan.”

Emotional demand is further amplified by structural issues such as funding pressures, precarious working, fixed or tight deadlines, unexpected disclosures, leadership hesitancy or denial, redundancies, burnout.

Addressing these issues requires a cultural shift, that legitimises the emotional dimensions of academic work and establishes robust mechanisms that supports individuals proactively rather than reacting to negative effects.

See policy maps attached

Institution 1:



Institution 2:



Institution 3:



Contact details: Jo Edson Ferrie (Jo.Ferrie@glasgow.ac.uk),
Seonaid Cleare (Seonaid.Cleare@glasgow.ac.uk)

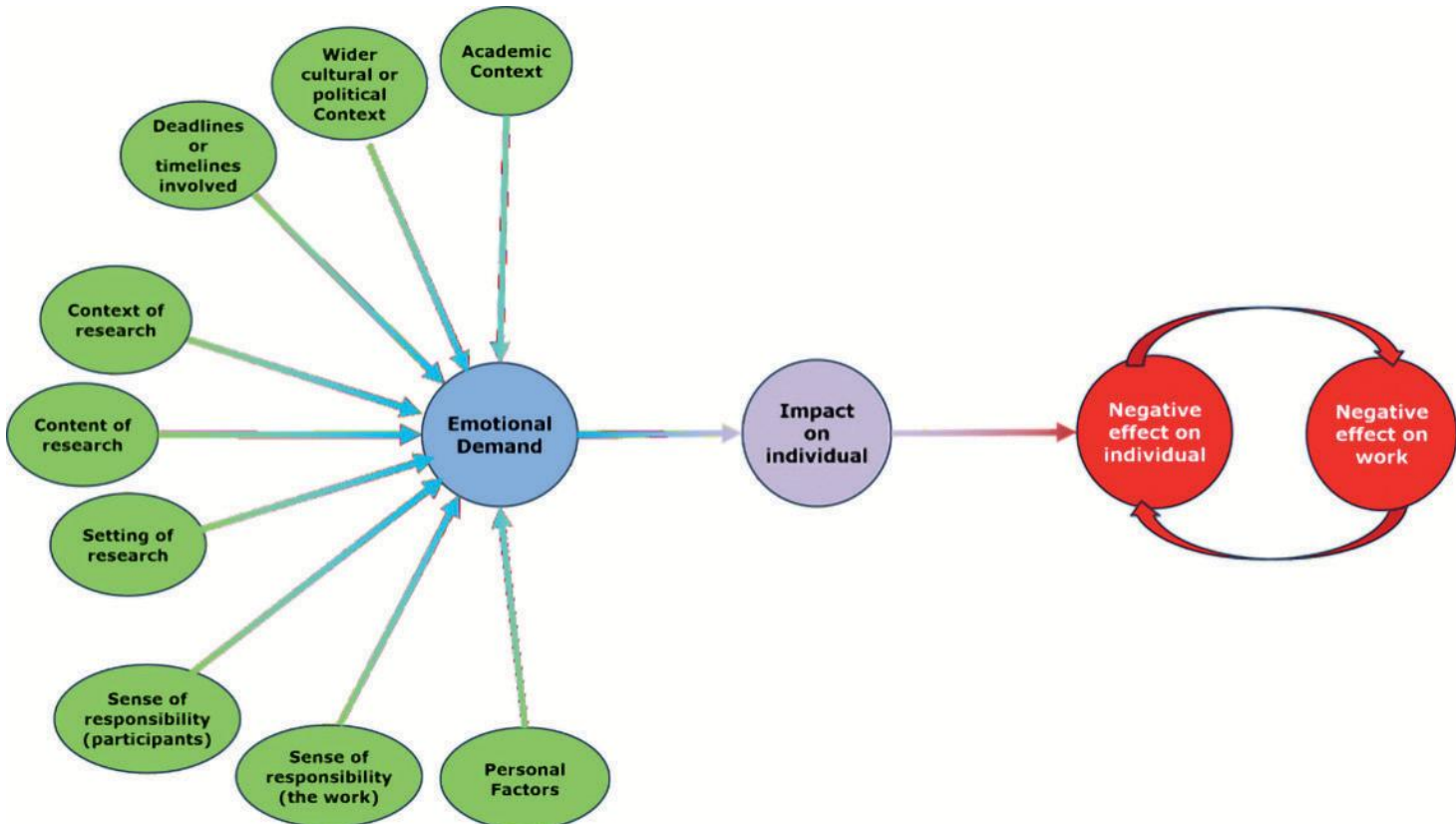


Fig 1 Emotional demand is often the result of a combination of factors that can then have an impact on the individual and the work

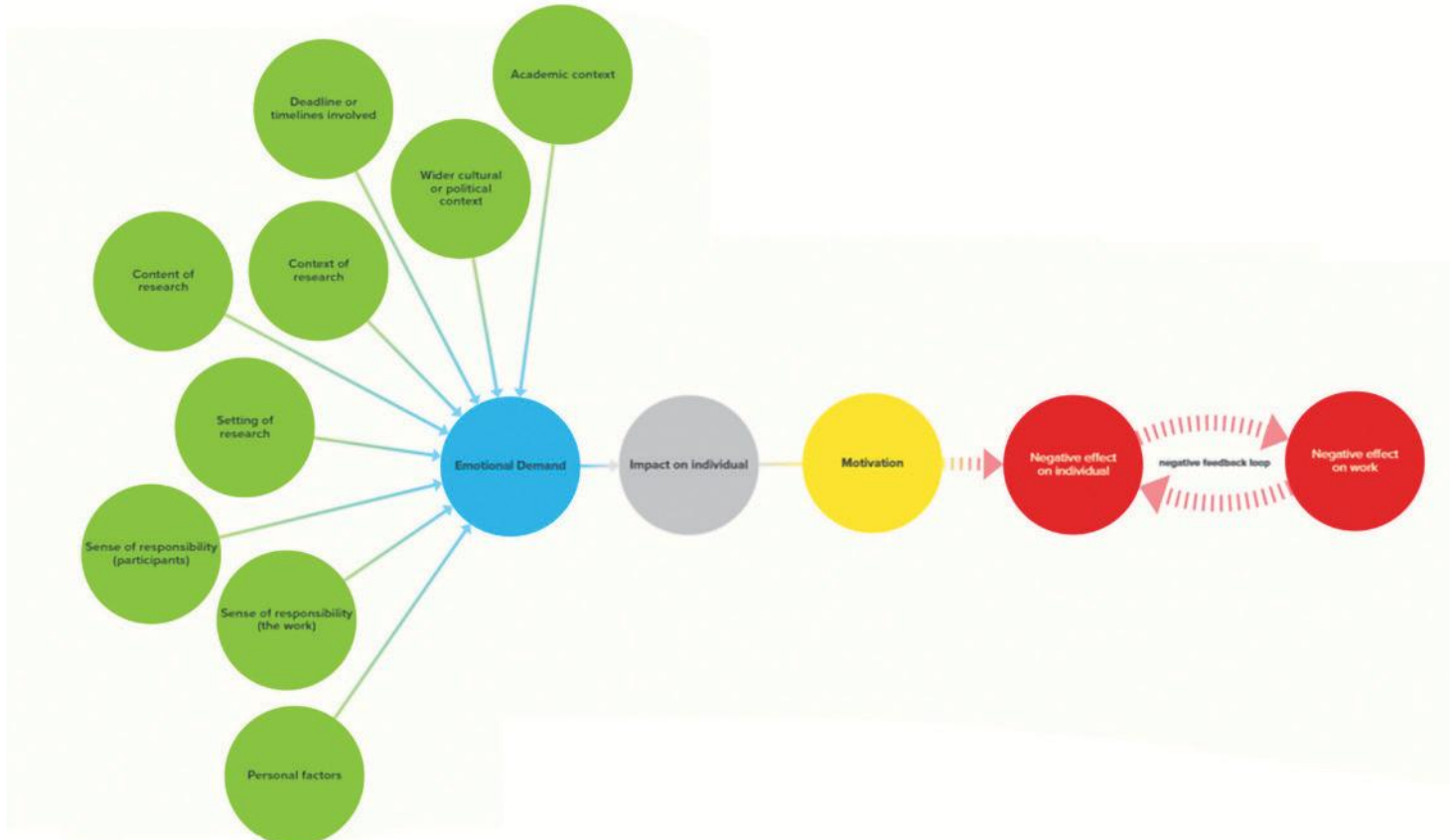
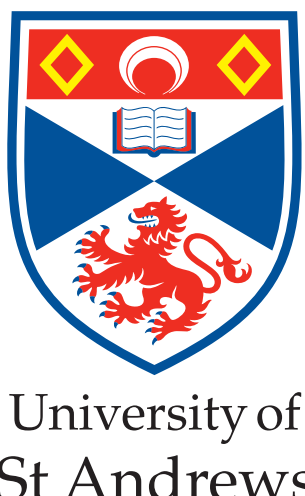
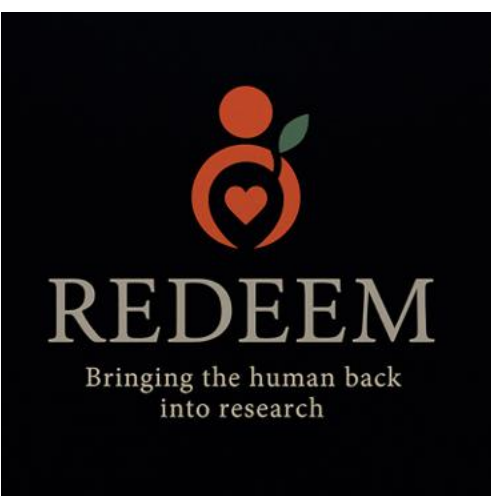


Fig 2 Motivation and recognition of importance of the work can mitigate impact but not remove emotional demand



Re-framing KEI

Fostering a Culture of Care, Critical Thinking, and Change through Decolonial Perspectives



Project Co-leads

Dr Hephzibah Israel, Literatures, Languages & Cultures
Dr Annie Sorbie, Law
Dr Stanislava Dikova, CAHSS Impact Manager

Project RAs

Dr Gaia Duberti (Geography)
Méabh Maclaren (CAHSS)
Georgi Obatnin (LLC)
Hilda Charles Tizeba (Law)

In 'Re-framing KEI' we took a decolonial approach to review the Knowledge Exchange and Impact (KEI) landscape within the University of Edinburgh. Engaging academics, research enabling staff, and museum, gallery, library, and archive professionals, we reviewed the institutional structures framing how KEI is conceptualised, funded, managed, and reported. Our findings raise awareness of challenges and siloes, and we have built a supportive community of practice to share ideas and develop recommendations to break down barriers.

Approach

It was important for us not to focus on the strengths or weaknesses of individual projects but to critically understand KEI within these institutional structures. Approaching impact from a decolonial perspective allowed us to focus on systemic issues and how research and funding structures inherited from the colonial past might perpetuate unequal power structures in higher education.

Methods

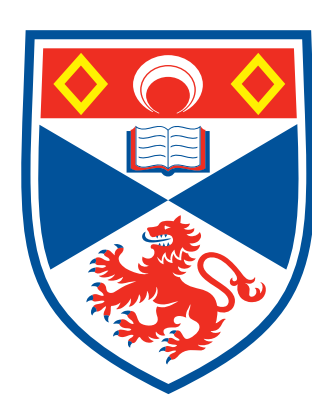
Given the heavy focus on academic researchers in KEI narratives, our decolonial methods prioritized engagement across different university job families, including research enabling staff, museum professionals, and academics across disciplines. We used mixed methods, combining an online survey, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to identify key challenges. These fed into a final World Café event where colleagues collectively considered ways forward.

Outcomes

As a result of our project, colleagues are now:

- aware of a larger, supportive community of practice outside of traditional roles and disciplines
- approaching definitions of impact around benefit and measurements more critically, negotiating differences in definitions
- more aware of difficulties encountered by others around voice, positionality and visibility
- engaging critically with our key concepts to generate new knowledge as a community
- thinking about potential solutions to break down barriers in their areas of expertise.

Contact details: Hephzibah Israel
(H.Israel@ed.ac.uk)



Funded by Wellcome



Research Technical Professionals Recognising Leadership & Expertise (RELAX)



RELAX team

Natalie Homer, Lee Murphy, Susie Cook (UoE); Phil Whitfield, Claire Wilson (UoG); Sally Shirran (UoS)



The RELAX project is designed to elevate the visibility, leadership, and institutional value of Research Technical Professionals (RTPs) who manage core research facilities. The project addresses the 'grey area' where vital technical specialists often find themselves isolated or overlooked. Core facilities drive research excellence, practical student learning, and resource sustainability, yet technical leaders remain underrepresented in strategic decision-making.

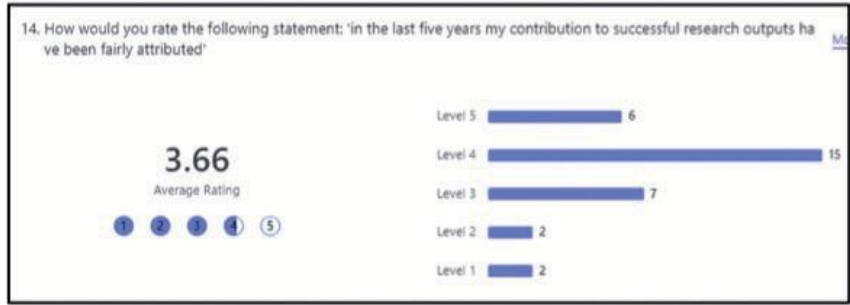
RELAX directly addresses these cultural gaps through four strategic strands:

- RTP Leadership Programme: Commissioned via ITSS, this structured programme selected a cohort of 31 facility leads across three institutions. The initiative empowers participants to expand their sphere of institutional influence, build professional networks, and confidently present business cases for resource innovation.

RTP Leadership course

- develop leadership skills
- build a network of RTPs

- Research and Cohort Surveys: Pre and post programme tracking evaluates the lived experiences of the cohort regarding workload, recognition, and policy influence. Initial metrics reveal that while 78% of participants are named in peer-reviewed publications, many report mixed perceptions regarding the fairness of overall contribution attribution.



Research on RTPs

- comparison of policies & literature review
- cademic output; Scottish context

- Directory of Expertise: Moving beyond simple equipment databases, the project is partnering with GUSS to co-create a dynamic, searchable directory highlighting technical personnel skills to enhance pan-institutional equipment sharing and collaboration.

Directory of expertise

- build a database of equipment & expertise to assist equipment sharing

- Senior Leader Engagement: Qualitative interviews with 7 senior institutional research leaders explore structural models and current barriers to integrating technical specialists into high level committees.

Outputs to date

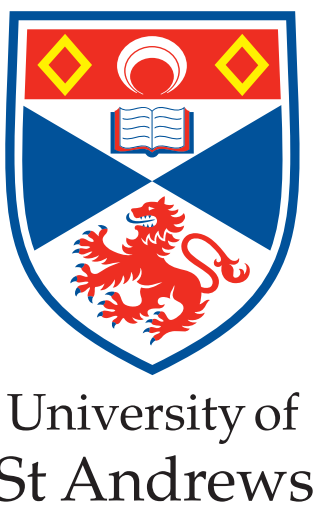
- Research Education and Development Scholarship conference (REDS) blog 'Putting research technical professionals at the heart of research leadership'
- A network of RTPs in Scotland that run core facilities (£4.5k raised by cohort for next meeting)
- A literature review on equipment sharing, institutional policies and RTP roles in decision-making
- Directory of Expertise under development by GUSS**
- Evaluation of interviews with Senior Leaders on core facility leads
- Evaluation of the pre and post survey of core facility leadership RELAX cohort

Ultimately, RELAX aims to establish a self-sustaining, cross-institutional Core Facility Network across Scotland. By integrating technical specialists into strategic committees, the project fosters a fairer, more collaborative, and highly progressive research culture.

Find us on LinkedIn



Contact details: Natalie Homer (n.z.m.homer@ed.ac.uk)



Funded by Wellcome



Reducing the barriers and stress in Research Misconduct process in researchers (RESTORE)



RESTORE responds to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity with a focus on enhancing support for those involved in Research Misconduct Investigation (RMI) processes.

Research misconduct arises in research and, whilst RMI policies have significantly improved in the UK, the development of ‘human-facing’ elements of the RMI process remain limited.

Given the broad and potentially career changing implications of the RMI process, RESTORE aims to evidence these impacts and learn from lived experience to begin to foster a culture of research integrity that prioritises support, and has researcher confidence and well-being at its core.

Methodology

“How can the support provision around research integrity processes be improved?”

To address this overarching question, we engaged staff with direct experience of RMI processes to explore the gaps between how RMI processes are designed and how they’re experienced, and where support could be improved.

Our research unfolded across four phases:

- 1. Mapping existing policy and practice in UK higher education.
- 2. Gathering primary evidence through a survey and in-depth interviews.
- 3. Synthesising participants’ views into actionable recommendations.
- 4. A ‘consensus’ workshop with research integrity staff from across the UK.



Images from the RESTORE Stakeholder Event held in Edinburgh on the 21st May with research integrity practitioners and experts from across the UK in attendance, with representation from UKRI, UKRIO, University of Cambridge, Newcastle University, Queen Mary University, Durham University, and Queen’s University Belfast.

Selected Findings

- 1. Researchers have a range of distinct support needs, including support around accessing and navigating processes, managing impacts on research and careers, and recovery after investigations.
- 2. Research integrity staff face challenges in delivering a supportive process while maintaining impartiality.
- 3. The “right person” to provide support is not straightforward, requiring striking a difficult balance between closeness to individuals and contexts, independence from cases, and trustworthiness.
- 4. Heads of Schools and Directors of Research play crucial roles in fostering local integrity cultures and behaviours – but influence can go either way.

RESTORE & The Sector

In conversation with our participants and stakeholders, we generated informed recommendations and started collaboratively shaping routes to implementation across the sector. RESTORE will shortly be publishing an impact report to communicate our findings and generate action. Watch this space!

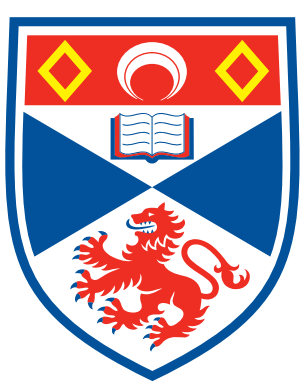
Contact details: Thamarai Schneiders (thamarai.schneiders@ed.ac.uk)



Fig 1 This drawing was drawn live at the RESTORE Stakeholder Event, where research integrity experts from across the UK came together to learn about the RESTORE project and hear about our initial findings.



Fig 2 This drawing was drawn live at the RESTORE Stakeholder Event, where research integrity experts collaboratively starting to think through feasible and practical actions in response to the RESTORE findings.



University of St Andrews

Funded by Wellcome



Who Cares? Reimagining Research Cultures through research with and by disabled and chronically ill academics



Our project focuses on the lived experiences and expertise of disabled and chronically ill academics to improve research and university cultures for them and possibly for many. We are an interdisciplinary team, each with various disability and chronically ill experiences and/or caring responsibilities.

WP 1: Policy implementation gap (led by Claire Graf)

Here we focussed on the difference between what a disability-related policy or process aims to do and what happens under real-world conditions. We analysed where systems break down, identifying structural and cognitive barriers, redesigning processes so they work reliably, and delivering training that helps people apply this in practice. Claire has produced toolkits and guidance for EDI activists as well as blogs and policy maps which can be found on our webpages at whocares.ed.ac.uk

WP 2: Lived experience interviews (led by Paula Jacobs)

Here we conducted interviews with 21 academics University of Edinburgh, from PhD to senior lecturer, self-identifying as disabled, ill and/or neurodivergent. We explored their experiences of research and how these are shaped by different research cultures – within research groups, collaborations with colleagues, school approaches, funder support, and wider university working.

Our current analysis reflects on:

1. Potentials and limitations of reimagining competitive and fast-paced university research cultures through care (Brannelly and Barnes, 2023).

2. Complexities of disclosure, including the (in) visibility of labour disabled academics engage in to stay within the institution, how disabled academics can be made (in)visible through part-time work or sick leave, as well as how (in)visible disability support systems are within the university. All participants described at least one or all of their conditions or disabilities as invisible, and for many identifying as disabled (or being seen as 'not disabled enough') was a barrier to access support.
3. Ways of staying and reasons for leaving – how chronically ill and disabled academics navigate careers in higher education in the UK. Most participants spoke about finding joy in research. Research was experienced by many as a more flexible space and as a reason to stay. Some participants had been able to build their own supportive and collaborative research teams and cultures.

WP 3: Reflection on care within the team

We reflected on our own experiences of care using disability and feminist approaches to care and the social model of disability combined with thinking around an ethics of care (Brannelly and Barnes, 2022), slow scholarship (Mountz et al. 2015) and crip time (Price, 2024)

Find more information, visit our website (whocares.ed.ac.uk) and get in touch (gill.haddow@ed.ac.uk).

Brannelly, T. and Barnes, M. (2022) *Researching with Care: Applying Feminist Care Ethics to Research Practice*. Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781447359791>.

Mountz, A. et al. (2015) "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 14(4), pp. 1235–1259. <https://doi.org/10.14288/acme.v14i4.1058>.

Price, M. (2024) *Crip Spacetime: Access, Failure, and Accountability in Academic Life*. Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.14638157>.



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Funded by Wellcome



Working-class in the class and boardroom: sharing first-generation staff experiences and creating opportunities for mutual learning and support



FirstGen focuses on a hidden aspect of Research Cultures and their improvement: first-generation staff and the intersection between academic work, careers and class. This topic is a neglected element in EDI discussions. Yet, research indicates that educational and social backgrounds fundamentally shape academic trajectories and expectations, although it is seldomly reflected upon.

“I’ve... learnt to project myself a certain way, I just don’t talk about that part of me.”

As we learned how openly talking about experiences can raise insecurities and even shame, leading to concealment, our project uncovered first-generation staff experiences. We moved from individualised accounts towards collective conversations and actions.

“My parents are at best not interested (...) They still don’t understand what I do, don’t ask about what I do.”

Main take-aways from our project:

- First-generation staff experiences intersect with other characteristics including gender and race, but it is not protected, resulting in lack of consideration, data and research.
- Creating spaces for conversation: sharing life stories is key to discover common experiences and create common understandings.
- Using narrative methods and creative writing proofs key in explicating epistemic, social and emotional dimensions and contextualising experiences.
- Historical research shows how Scottish Universities have always included staff from more modest backgrounds, in combination with the right to education.
- To create greater visibility and a sense of belonging, we need inclusive leadership and attention for the role of class and classism in our universities.

“It is classism and it is important to name it (...) and then we can in solidarity address it”

Our work closely connects to ‘Widening Participation’ as staff experiences build on student experiences, including the hidden curriculum which extends into the unspoken or implicit rules and values that guide academic careers.

How to improve policy?

- Sign the University Code on Equal Opportunity for Working Class Students and Academics from the Alliance of Working Class Academics (AWCA).
- Collect institutional data on the socio-economic background of staff.
- Integrate FirstGen/Working-Class in Research Cultures, EDI and HR policies to support career development and institutional change.
- Support events and networking for FirstGen staff.
- Create synergies between Widening Participation and FirstGen staff.
- Develop research on FirstGen together with funding organisations.

“But I think probably something of my background gave me that kind of resilience to be like, actually, when things are hard, you just bounce back up again.”

Ultimately, it is about the democratisation of knowledge – who has access to knowledge and who produces it. Next to epistemic justice, it is key for the societal embedding of universities in society.

Contact details: Niki Vermeulen (niki.vermeulen@ed.ac.uk)



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Funded by Wellcome



InFrame Recognition Projects

People Make Research

– University of Glasgow



People Make Research (PMR) builds on Glasgow's city slogan ('People Make Glasgow'), recognising that positive research culture is created by people, not only outputs. Launched in 2022, the campaign invites staff, yearly, across all career backgrounds and stages to recognise colleagues who help research environments thrive. It promotes inclusive, supportive practices while capturing examples of collegiality and good research leadership. Collegial practices often go unseen and undervalued, PMR makes these contributions visible and valued.

Growing impact

PMR aligns with the University of Glasgow Research Strategy across three areas (% corresponding to data from 2026):



Collaboration,
working together
to address key
challenges (65%)



Creativity,
recognising its
essential role
in academia (10%)



Careers,
supporting skill
development and
progression (25%)

Since 2022, the campaign has expanded significantly, with nominations increasing from 133 to 490, a 268% rise. In 2026, we introduced recognition for teams, broadening the reach of PMR.

What we learned

- Collegiality takes many forms, mentoring, enabling, supporting, connecting
- Contributions extend beyond traditional leadership roles
- Recognition strengthens community and belonging

Into the future

People Make Research continues beyond InFrame, championing a positive and inclusive research culture at UoG. By recognising individuals and teams, it makes good practice visible, encourages reflection, and strengthens how we work together.

Building on this momentum, we will embed recognition in everyday practice, use insights to shape future policy, and sustain a culture where people feel supported to thrive, and research thrives with them.

"I really enjoyed reading the nominations from both this year and previous years. It's so heartening to see the appreciation and gratitude shared across the University. My nomination was a wonderful and truly meaningful surprise."



Funded by Wellcome



InFrame Recognition Projects

Seek, Find, Celebrate

– University of Edinburgh



What is Seek, Find, Celebrate?

Coordinated by the Edinburgh InFrame team, Seek, Find, Celebrate is an informal initiative designed to recognize and thank the people who shape a thriving research culture at the University of Edinburgh (UoE).

Submissions are limited to just 100 words for individuals and 200 words for teams (a category introduced in round two).

Aligning with UoE's Research Cultures Action Plan

The campaign celebrates UoE's 'culture movers and shakers.' Each nominee receives a written nomination mapped to a core value from the University of Edinburgh's Research Cultures Action Plan 2026 to 2028.

The initiative actively brings the plan's core values to life, as each nominee receives a specific value designated by their nominator alongside their nomination text:

- Citizenship
- Wellbeing
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I)
- Ethics & Integrity
- Learning & Reflecting

Rapid Community Growth & Engagement

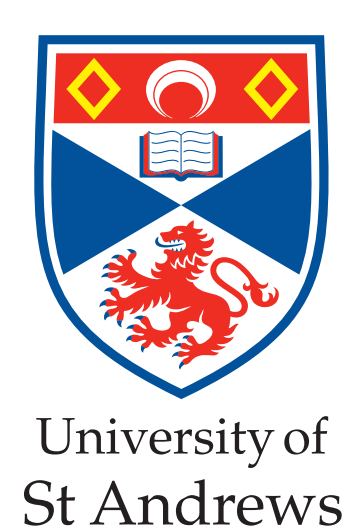
The campaign saw incredible momentum in its latest round, driven by the introduction of the new team-focused category in Round 2.

- Total Nominations: Public submissions grew from 114 in Round 1 to 178 in Round 2 (a 56% growth).
- Team Submissions: Round two introduced team nominations, and 18 teams were celebrated on a new, dedicated team Padlet board.
- Digital Reactions: Round two introduced interactive online boards. As of May 2026, the community left 293 reactions on the individual board (averaging 2.4 per post) and 42 reactions on the team board (averaging 2.8 per post).

Growth Across the Colleges

The enthusiasm for the campaign spread significantly across all corners of the university from Round 1 to Round 2:

- College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS): 25 nominations (Up from 10 | 150% growth)
- College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (CMVM): 46 nominations (Down from 61 | Highest overall contributor in both rounds)
- College of Science and Engineering (CSE): 40 nominations (Up from 23 | 74% growth)
- Professional Services: 36 nominations (Up from 19 | 89% growth)



Funded by Wellcome



InFrame Recognition Projects

Together, Research Excels

– University of St Andrews



What is Together, Research Excels?

The InFrame project initiated the Together, Research Excels initiative in 2024 to encourage recognition and celebration of research and research-adjacent staff at the University of St Andrews (UoStA). We recognise that working together collaboratively, employing inclusive and caring practices, and sharing expertise creates a culture which energises researchers, enlivens the research process and enhances impact in wider contexts.

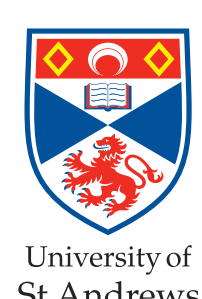
Together, Research Excels invites researchers, research related staff and PGRs to recognise their colleagues through 100-word nominations. It facilitates the informal celebration of positive research culture practices; by naming, recognising and thanking people, we are strengthening these values in our everyday research culture. It also helps us understand what people value in their colleagues, what behaviours increase collegiality, enhance wellbeing and ultimately improve research culture here at UoStA.

The project helps us understand the traits, behaviours and impacts of collegial leadership, both for broadening our ideas of who are leaders, and championing current practitioners of positive leadership behaviours, as well as providing us with rich data to feed into our Framework.

Examples of what our colleagues have said:

"She holds herself and others to her own high standards and supports colleagues to achieve their best. She seems to genuinely have a desire to make processes easier, and St Andrews is a better place with her in it!"

"Her no-nonsense, transparent communication style is so helpful, and she has a winning way of galvanising people that I have not come across before and wish I could bottle up and sell! Her kind, smiling manner and her willingness to always have a laugh makes working with her a real pleasure. She brings professionalism and fun to event organisation!"



Together,
Research Excels



University
of Glasgow



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Funded by Wellcome



InFrame Strategic Objectives



A 2-year project, funded by Wellcomes' Institutional Fund for Research Culture in 2024, working across the Universities of Glasgow, St Andrews and Edinburgh; with the twin aims of:

- Developing a common understanding of 'collegial research leadership', to support in the generation of staff development and reward structures.
- Widening the definition of 'Research Leadership' to include the many roles and job family responsibilities' which have traditionally been less visible or recognised, due to their status in the University hierarchy.

This has been delivered via three workstreams:

1. **Glasgow: Recognising Good Practice.**
Via the development of a **Collegial Research Leadership Framework** which identifies the characteristics of collegial leadership and generating a set of inclusive tools applicable across status boundaries.

2. **St Andrews: Culture Catalyst Fund.**
Broadening funding opportunities for new leaders to emerge from non-traditional routes to test innovative ideas around improving research cultures. Findings fed into our co-created Framework for institutional change.
3. **Edinburgh: Community Knowledge Hub.**
The provision of bespoke support both pre- and post-award, to facilitate skills development, community building, knowledge sharing and interdisciplinary collaborations. This developed into a digital Open Science Framework (OSF) Platform providing resources and guidance for future projects.

In summary, the purpose of InFrame has been to facilitate positive research environments to enable better research and improve research outcomes.

Recognising Good Practice

Co-created inclusive framework for collegial research leadership

Culture Catalyst Fund

Leadership as the key for translating policy into practice

Community Knowledge Hub

Knowledge-led leadership, what works and can be evidenced