Research Culture Survey 2021
Comparators between the 2019 and 2021 Research Culture Surveys

Background

The Research Culture Survey was developed internally with the aim of monitoring awareness of different dimensions of research culture and tracking progress with these, as well as seeking out good practice and suggestions for action. Survey themes included research integrity and good practice, open research, and career development.

The survey was developed in 2019 in collaboration with Human Resources (including each College Head of HR and the University-level HR teams for Recruitment; Equality & Diversity; Policy; Performance, Pay and Reward and the Director of HR), the Library, the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Teams, the University Engagement Leads (including both Academic and Professional Services staff), and the Technician Commitment Steering Group.

The survey complements other activities to support research culture such as the revised academic promotion criteria, the research culture awards, our responsible metrics statement, and open research and research integrity initiatives.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, it was intended that the University of Glasgow Research Culture Survey would be run on a yearly basis. However, due to COVID-19, a decision was taken to delay the next survey until late 2021. It was agreed at there would be no change to the 2019 survey questions or survey sample audience.

2019 and 2021 Research Culture Surveys

The 2019 Research Culture Survey ran from on the JISC Online Survey platform. The targeted audience for the survey was Research and Teaching, Research Only and Technicians.

The 2021 Research Culture Survey ran from 1 November to 21 November 2021 on the JISC Online Survey platform. The targeted audience for the survey was Research and Teaching, Research Only and Technicians.

What can the comparator data be used for?
The data can be used for comparative and trend reporting at institutional and local level, for example in future Research Exercise Framework institutional and Unit of Assessment Environment statements, Athena Swan applications, Annual Research Culture Statements, Technician Commitments, and other equalities charters,as well as in our annual reporting on research integrity.

The data will also be used develop actions designed to advance our culture. Actions will be developed at Unit and institutional level, in consultation with College Research Committees, members of College

Management Group, and relevant members of professional staff in College and central services.

Participants
The survey was intended to be short and focused, and designed to maximise the usability of results.

The intended population included research active staff: academic (R&T) staff, research staff (Research-only; mainly postdoctoral researchers), and Research Technicians. Neither the first nor second iterations of the survey were intended for research-enabling professionals or Teaching-track R&T staff; this is because some of the questions were felt not to be directly relevant or answerable and because of differences in career structures and roles. A separate exercise to gauge issues relating to research-enabling professionals called the Research Professional Café Culture Workshops ran from March-May 2022.

The biennial Postgraduate Research (PGR) Experience survey (PRES), which also ran in 2021, included questions relating to research integrity and data management. It was therefore felt that there would be no benefit in also including PGRs in this survey.

2019 Response rates

2021 Response rates
The 2021 survey had a response rate as follows:
- Total survey population 586 (22% of target population)
- 72% from R&T staff (n=422; 52% of target population)
- 22% from R-only staff (n=126; 48% of target population)
- 5% from Technical staff (n=31; see below*)
- 1% of survey respondents did not specify their staff group.

*It is difficult to ascertain the expected population of 'research' technicians as the overall population of technical staff (as data from HR CORE does not specifically note those in Technician roles). As such, the response rate for Technical staff is self-identified.

There was decline in response rates for the 2019 and 2021 Research Culture surveys. It should be noted that the 2021 survey only ran for 21 days whist the 2019 survey ran for over two months. Further to this, post-Covid we have seen a decrease in the uptake of surveys administered across the board.

Research Culture Survey Successes (2019-2021)

- 5% increase in staff surveyed who believed that the research culture at the University of Glasgow has improved over the past five years between 2019 and 2021.

- Increase in the perception of respondents that School/Institute is fostering a research culture for:
  - Open Research - up 3% to 70% between 2019-2021
  - Personal and professional development -up 5% to 62% between 2019-2021
  - Research integrity – up 2% to 76% between 2019-2021

- Collegiality - up 3% to 62% between 2019-2021

- Understanding of and knowledge of where to go for support for all the following areas have increased from 2019-2021:
  - Good research-data management – up 2% to 60%
  - Research integrity – up 4% to 65%
  - Making outputs open access – up 2% to 72%
  - Open research (making research widely available as early as possible) – up 5% to 51%
  - How to write a good publication/output – up 4% to 49%
  - Research identifiers (e.g., ORCID) – up 3% to 66%
  - Improving my online research profile – up 4% to 41%

- More staff have research management plans for their research projects – up 8% to 60% from 2019-2021.

- Increase in the percentage of respondents from the Colleges of Arts and Social Sciences.

Research Culture Survey Challenges (2019-2021)

- From 2019 to 2021 - there has been a decrease in the perception of respondents that School/Institute is fostering a research culture for:
  - Open access publishing – down 3% to 68% between 2019-2021
  - Collaboration – down 2% to 53% between 2019-2021
  - Valuing quality of publication (or output) over quantity – down 4% to 56% between 2019-2021

- 2% decrease in understanding impact in discipline from 2019-2021

- 3% decrease in ability for staff to engage in CPD activities from 2019-2021

- Researcher understanding as to where to get support for publication quality and visibility has slightly improved from 2019-2021 but only averages 43%.

- Fewer respondents believe that Schools/Institutes prefer quality over quantity of outputs in this period - 4% decrease

Room for Improvement

Each of the surveys captured free-text comments asking respondents what University of Glasgow could do to promote a positive research culture. Grouping themes across both surveys we found that: time (e.g., need for more and protection of current allocation of research time), fairer evaluation of staff, improvements in collaboration, better research support and more defined leadership were the top issues raised.

Next steps

1.   Agree the future value and governance of University of Glasgow Research Culture Surveys.
2.   Consider the survey data in parallel with existing data (e.g. PRES or Athena Swan) or other culture change initiatives in their areas and agree a small number of key actions and success measures which can be tracked between now and the next time the survey will run.