

Café Culture Workshops for Research Enabling Professionals

Guidance Notes for Hosts

Pre-event

- Determine if the event will be conducted online or in person. Hybrid can be challenging so we advise one or another. It will determine how you approach the set-up of the café and the tools you use.
- Consider the day it is undertaken (Mondays and Fridays are usually taken off by those working part time/compressed hours) and the time of day it is undertaken so not to disadvantage those on particular grades/roles/responsibilities.
- Using the matrix of quotes and sources, identify 3-5 key pieces which can be used to start the conversation. Pick ones which may resonate with the group/community who will be part of the café culture.
- Consider that some attendees may be unfamiliar with the concept of 'research culture' and/or may not see themselves as part of the broader research community (e.g. clerical staff in a school). The extent of contextual information presented at the start should be commensurate with the demographics of the group attending. Clearly setting the parameters for discussion will ensure that all colleagues are comfortable engaging with the workshop.
- Determine the suitable size of the community for the café – we recommend you have max 6 people per breakout room/table, including a scribe/facilitator for each breakout discussion. You can run the event with smaller numbers, and just not use breakout discussions.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the discussions and the stories which may be shared, consider the ground rules which are most appropriate – these could be determined by the group on the day if it is small enough.
- Arrange a pre-meeting with co-hosts and scribes/breakout discussion facilitators to discuss the event schedule, tools, timings and ground rules. This could take the form of a rehearsal to help redirect attention from the event running to the event content on the day.
- Prepare materials (virtual or hard copy as applicable) ahead of the event and, if possible, consider undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on the event to ensure it's inclusive and not creating any unintended barriers.

On the day

This guidance will vary depending on in person or virtual set up.

In person	Virtual
Arrive early to ensure the venue is free and set up as necessary (e.g. breakout tables, AV facilities)	Join 10 mins early – check can screen share/virtual background and set up breakout rooms
Ask co-hosts and scribe/facilitator for each breakout discussion to also arrive early	Have waiting room set up
Ensure that there is a 5-minute grace period to allow everyone to arrive from other meetings	Ensure that there is a 5-minute grace period to allow everyone to join from other calls
Introduce host and co-hosts, outline aims/structure of event, outline/establish ground rules for session, signpost support available, and how information/insights will be used	Introduce host and co-hosts, outline aims/structure of event, outline/establish ground rules for session, signpost support available, and how information/insights will be used

Workshop Structure

- **What is Research Culture?** – Provide attendees with background on the broader research culture agenda, including an overview of any institutional action plans, strategies or planned developments.
- **Who are Research Enabling Professionals?** – Provide attendees with background to the concept of ‘research enabling’ professionals, particularly highlighting the breadth and depth of this cohort. Make clear that R&I enabling staff exist in all departments, across all job functions, and at all grade levels. This is an inclusive group and you don’t need to be 100% focussed on R&I activities to be included, it could just be part of a broader remit.
- **Research culture issues highlighted by Research Enabling Professionals** – Using the information provided in the matrix of quotes and the template slide deck, provide some context on the issues faced by research enabling professionals. This will help to define the parameters of the discussion and encourage individuals to begin thinking about their contribution to discussions.
- **What is a research culture café?** – Provide context on the background to the research culture café format. This was developed by Wellcome Trust as part of their ‘reimagine research’ campaign, and we have tailored it to examine the experiences of R&I enabling staff.
- **House Rules** – Stress that this is a ‘safe space’ for discussion, and that Chatham House rules apply. Individuals should avoid naming individuals in their discussions and focus on constructive ideas. We suggest that senior management and academic leadership are not actively involved in these sessions, however you may wish to run a separate session for senior research enabling leadership.
- **Polls** – Using an appropriate interactive tool (we used Mentimeter), poll attendees on the three questions in slide 9. These will provide further context to the scope of discussions for the workshop, and provide some initial insights into areas of common interest for the breakout groups.
- **Break-out sessions** – In breakout groups, use the three questions on slides 11 – 13 to examine the issues in more detail. You may wish to pre-assign the breakout groups, or assign these randomly. We recommend that you have a scribe and facilitator for each group, but this won’t always be possible. Ensure there is 5 minutes for introductions, with individuals encouraged to provide an overview of the research enabling aspect of their role. If in-person, use flipcharts to gather notes for each group or, if online, use an appropriate interactive tool (we used Padlet).
- **Discussion** – Returning from breakout groups, facilitate a plenary discussion with feedback from each breakout group. Time will be limited, so we suggest that you focus on Topic 3, i.e. specific ideas for how the challenges with research culture for research enabling staff can be addressed.
- **What will happen to my contribution today? / What next?** – Clarify how the information from the event will be used. This will vary between organisations, e.g. you might use the feedback to develop future plans, and/or prepare a summary blog/report to share with colleagues to raise awareness of the issues. Consider using a feedback form to inform future events.
- Finally, ensure that participants have access to information on support mechanisms should they be affected by the issues discussed at the event, and ensure there is a final opportunity for any questions either in the group or privately to one of the organisers.