

Research Catalyst Cohort Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Programme

What is the Research Catalyst Cohort Programme?

The Research Catalyst Cohort Programme is a training and development initiative designed to support colleagues in academic libraries. It equips participants with the skills and confidence needed to engage in research-related activities, including applying for academic funding, collaborating with researchers, and contributing to institutional research agendas. The programme fosters stronger relationships between the academic library and research management communities.

How is the programme structured?

The programme is delivered through a series of **interactive workshops, development sprints, and seminars**, primarily online. Sessions take place every **3–4 weeks**, with recordings available for those who cannot attend live. The programme follows a **train-the-trainer** approach, meaning participants are encouraged to share their learning with their colleagues and the wider academic library community.

What are the key dates for the 2025–2026 programme?

The programme runs from **September 2025 to June 2026**.

- Thursday, 3rd April 2025 - **Online Open Meeting from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm** via Zoom
- Friday, 13 June 2025 - **Closing date for applications** at 5:00pm
- Early August, **notification of acceptance**
- Thursday, 25th September 2025 - **In-Person Programme Meeting** at Senate House, London
- June 2026, **Programme Ends**

Eligibility and Application

Who can apply?

The programme is open to individuals working in research or academic libraries at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Independent Research Organisations (IROs), as well as institutions that are members of Research Libraries UK (RLUK). Applications are welcome from colleagues at all career stages, but it will be particularly valuable to those new to research.

Do I need prior research experience?

No, the programme is designed for those looking to develop their research skills, whether they are new to the field or seeking to strengthen their existing knowledge.

What if someone from my institution has joined an earlier cohort?

If someone from your own institution has already joined an earlier cohort you are still eligible to apply, and you may find it useful to talk with them about their experience and the application process. The Research Catalyst Cohort Programme is seeking to build capacity, capability and confidence amongst the broadest base of staff to develop their research skills.

What is the application process?

The application process consists of **four key stages**:

1. **Application Form** – Applicants must complete an online form detailing their motivations for applying, their current role, and how they hope to use the programme's learning.
2. **Statement of Support from Employer** – A written statement from your employer confirming they will provide you with the time and institutional backing required to fully engage with the programme.
3. **Selection and Review Process** – Applications will be reviewed by the programme team, who will assess suitability based on potential impact, career development needs, and institutional support.
4. **Offer and Confirmation** – Successful applicants will receive an offer to join the programme and must confirm their acceptance.

What are the key selection criteria?

Applicants should demonstrate:

- A commitment to engaging with research as part of their professional practice.
- A clear understanding of how the programme aligns with their personal and professional development.
- Support from their employer to attend and participate fully.

What about my Training Needs?

As part of the application process RLUK, AHRC and ARMA wish to establish the experience and confidence of colleagues applying to join the Catalyst Cohort Programme in undertaking research. This will help ensure that the programme meets the needs of the successful cohort from the outset.

Please note: this section will not be assessed as part of the application process.

Programme Commitment and Support

How much time will I need to commit?

The programme requires a total commitment of approximately **45–50 hours** over nine months. This includes:

- **Live Online Sessions (3–4 weeks apart):** Interactive workshops and discussions.
- **In-Person Kick-off Meeting:** A full-day session in London to launch the programme.
- **Self-Directed Learning and Reflection:** Participants are expected to engage with additional reading, peer discussions, and practical exercises.
- **Dissemination Activities:** Applying and sharing the knowledge gained, such as running training sessions or presenting within your institution.

Is there a cost to participate?

No, the programme is fully funded by the **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** and **RLUK**, making it free for participants. However, places are **competitive**, and applicants must demonstrate a commitment to full engagement and attend the in person meeting in London.

What support is expected from my employer and Line Manager?

Employers are expected to:

- **Allow time for participation** in live sessions and dissemination activities.
- **Encourage the application of learning** within their institution.
- **Provide a statement of support** confirming their commitment to these expectations.
- **Travel and any** accommodation to attend the in person meeting in London in September will be supported by the applicants institution

Programme Outcomes

What will I gain from the programme?

Participants will develop:

- A stronger understanding of the research funding landscape and the role of academic libraries in research.
- Skills in formulating research questions and developing competitive funding applications.
- Project management techniques relevant to research support and grant applications.
- Confidence in engaging with research as a library professional and advocating for the role of libraries in academic research.
- A network of like-minded peers to share ideas and challenges with, from a wide range of institutions

How will the programme benefit my institution?

The programme is designed to build research capability within academic libraries, enabling participants to **lead research initiatives, support funding applications, and strengthen collaborations** with researchers. Participants will be encouraged to **share their learning with colleagues** and contribute to research-related activities at their institutions.

Further Information

Who can I contact for more details?

For any enquiries regarding the programme or the application process, please email **programmes@rluk.ac.uk** with the subject line **Research Catalyst Cohort Query**.

Where can I find the latest updates?

Visit the RLUK website at **www.rluk.ac.uk/research-catalyst-cohort** for the most up-to-date information.