

Our Values

Department of Statistics - Support Team



This document details the values and behaviours framework for the Department of Statistics' Support Team, which has been created from ideas raised and discussed by the team.

Beneath each of the headings are bullet-pointed examples designed to illustrate what doing a great job might look like. They are not designed to be exhaustive.



Excellence

Enabling excellent outcomes through high levels of knowledge and expertise, and by understanding others' requirements and goals

- If someone asks for something they can't have (for example, it's against the T&Cs of grant or university policies) instead of just saying no (though sometimes this is unavoidable!) working out what they want to achieve, and exploring other options to get there, liaising with colleagues in other parts of the university as needed.
- Implementing reviews of initiatives and processes to judge their effectiveness, and altering them according to the findings as far as possible. Approaching the identification and exploration of solutions and improvements in the spirit of curiosity, not blame.
- Setting aside time to deepen and broaden your own knowledge and skills, through a variety of means (such as formal training, informal information-sharing, attending briefings/workshops or reading) and considering how to use what you've learnt.

Contributing to the continuous improvement of processes, skills and culture, and sharing best practice

Development

- Being part of a university or divisional network and feeding back information in a targeted way to invite and facilitate discussion on matters that relate to the department.
- Making incremental improvements to annual processes so that change is manageable, for example keeping a log of issues and ideas as you go along, discussing options with other stakeholders and implementing as appropriate.
- Operating on the basis that proposing a plausible solution that ends up not working is better than not proposing solutions at all, and that sharing what you've learnt from unsuccessful experiments with others is a kind act and a valuable tool, not an admission of failure.

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Inclusivity & Adapting to Needs

Tailoring our work and approach to the needs of the department and the people we support, and using our time and energy effectively to address departmental priorities

- Engaging with people in multiple ways to build relationships and understanding (for example, in formal meetings, routine correspondence or informal conversations). Recognising that people express themselves differently in different scenarios and prefer different forms of communication.
- Engaging with committees and working groups to keep up to date on, and understand, priorities, but also to shape them, where appropriate, with our own expertise.
- Prioritising and reprioritising our work thoughtfully when needed, in consultation with others where appropriate, in order to respond to new priorities, recognising that this may involve saying no or having difficult conversations.

Communicating clearly, promptly and proactively

Communication

- Making parameters clear and managing expectations, for example by sending a holding email if there's a delay, explaining how this communication fits into a broader process, estimating the length of time for a response if possible, signposting people to other resources if you can't help, or to build on your response.
- Communicating information to avoid lots of individual queries where possible, by proactively providing information in response to common questions and dispelling common misconceptions.
- Communicating in a way most clearly suited to the purpose of the interaction and the needs of the recipients, which could include summarising information to brief a senior academic colleague, or collating information into a particular format for ease of use. Judging the most appropriate lines of communication for best effect, for example, a presentation at Departmental Committee, updating the website or writing a piece for the weekly bulletin.

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Responsibility & Flexibility

Taking responsibility for and ownership of work within our remit, while maintaining flexibility

- Setting yourself reminders for actions you are due to complete so your involvement in broader projects, committees etc. goes smoothly. Thinking about the implications of the work you feed in - for example, beyond providing some data, considering possible limitations of the dataset, or explanations for what it shows, and what to do with that information.
- Understanding how our areas of work intersect with others to avoid things falling between the cracks, and helping steer cross-functional work through different points of contact to a successful conclusion.
- Providing cover for others and being available and approachable for unexpected eventualities.

Supporting colleagues, students and visitors within and beyond the team

Teamwork & Relationship Building



- Given that our work is a shared endeavour, spotting opportunities and problems and sharing those with others, with your ideas to capitalise on them or address them if possible. Never knowingly let a colleague fail. For the avoidance of doubt, this is about support, not doing someone else's job!
- Guiding people through processes based on knowledge of their understanding and situation. Equipping them to understand for future, for example by sharing the source of your information, while recognising more handholding is sometimes reasonable, like pointing out the most important bits to people unfamiliar with a process, or providing reassurance if they're stressed, and offering further discussion if needed.
- Contributing to creating and maintaining a psychologically safe environment, for example by offering and accepting help in the spirit of collegiality, rather than considering it remedial or transactional; apologising for mistakes and accepting the apologies of others; offering challenge and disagreement in the spirit of striving to reach common goals, and on the assumption of good faith on the part of others.
- Recognising that the environment we work in is constantly evolving, so being open to new ways of doing things to respond effectively to this, including collaborating to avoid reinventing the wheel.
- Be aware of cognitive bias, both in ourselves and in others, and embed this awareness in what we do, from discussing why we have particular perceptions in a recruitment exercise, to assessing the impact of a committee decision or policy on the range of people it could affect.