Contents

[Introduction (2 minutes) 2](#_Toc29821121)

[About you | 5 minutes (starts 2 mins into the interview) (KEEP BRIEF) 2](#_Toc29821122)

[Current state of research culture | 25 minutes (starts 7 mins into the interview) 3](#_Toc29821123)

[Improvements for the future | 10 minutes (starts 35 mins into the interview) 8](#_Toc29821124)

[Final thoughts and conclusion (5 minutes) (starts 45 minutes into the interview) 10](#_Toc29821125)

[Thanks and closing details (2 minutes) 10](#_Toc29821126)

[UK Incentives [if applicable] 12](#_Toc29821127)

[Opt In [if applicable] 12](#_Toc29821128)

[Close 14](#_Toc29821129)

[Client contact [If applicable] 14](#_Toc29821130)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Notes for interviewer** | **Notes about questions** |
| Introduction (2 minutes) |
| The Wellcome Trust have commissioned my company, Shift Learning, to undertake some research into the current culture of research. As part of this work we want to understand your opinions and perceptions of the culture of research, your view on the drivers of this culture, and your vision for what great research culture would look like. The results from this research will feed directly into a new ambitious programme from the Wellcome Trust to help improve the working culture within research, in partnership with the research community. The interview will take around 45 minutes and will be recorded. As a small thank you for your time today we are happy to offer you £60 which will be paid directly to you for yourself or for you to donate to a charity of your choosing.**A note on anonymisation**: I understand that we may be talking about some difficult and personal circumstances during this interview. I want to reassure you before we start that we take your confidentiality very seriously and work to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and GDPR guidelines from the ICO. All interviews will be recorded and turned into an anonymised transcript. We try as far as possible to offer anonymity within these transcripts by removing your personal name, institution name and any clear identifiers. If for any reason you feel any information may be particularly sensitive, we are happy to remove these elements from the transcript so they are not associated with any other part of your interview. It is important to us you feel able to be as honest as possible with us, for us to best understand the current state of research.Do you have any questions before we proceed? |
| About you | 5 minutes  |
| 1. Before we start, it would be really valuable for me to hear a little about your career in research so far. If you only had 60 secs to describe your career journey from PHD to where you are now, what would you say?
 | Interviewer to note down level of movement between institutions for future reference and prompt if not mentioned explicitly. Interviewer flex for earlier career researchers.  | A fairly sizable section to warm respondents up and get some useful contextual information about how they are doing within the current system. We’ve give a strict time limit here as otherwise we think respondents could talk for some time…   |
| 1. What, if any, moments would you categorise as a career high?
 | Prompt: Why do you say this? What impact did it have for you/your career? What challenges did you have to overcome to achieve this?  | There does appear to be a significant personal element to these issues – so gaining an understanding of these early might have value.  |
| 1. What, if any, moments in your career have been particularly challenging for you so far?
 | Prompt: What was the impact on this for you? Your career? Your research? |  |
| Current state of research culture | 25 minutes  |
| 1. As you know, this research is being conducted to explore the current state of research culture. Before we start talking about your feelings about this in relation to your own work and working environment I’d like you to think about Research Culture in a wider context. By research culture we mean the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and norms of research communities. It influences researchers’ career paths and determines the way that research is conducted and communicated. This next exercise might feel a little silly, but it can be really useful for us to understand how you understand and experience research culture. It’s called a projective exercise- I’m first going to ask you to discuss your perceptions of Research Culture in an abstract way, and then we’ll discuss your rationale. Let’s say I were to tell you that we are going to travel to another planet – Planet **Research Culture**. Does that sound ok? <interviewer to start up journey – flexed for respondent>

We’re landing on planet research culture…What are your first impressions?\*If respondent is uncooperative\*What does **research ecosystem** look like at the moment? What three words first come to mind? Is it in a good place? What are the threats? To whom? | ***Note to interviewer – Keep this brief*** What are your first impressions? Would there be people there? What are the people doing? What do they look like? What is the environment like? Temperature? Feeling? -What communities, species or groups do you think thrive most on Planet Research? Why do you think this is?*Interviewer to focus on basis for these perceptions, e.g.*Why do you say that?What gives you that impression?What is it about Research culture that might give you this idea? | We’ve used these kind of ‘silly’ exercises with journal editors and academics before and they can work really well in order to cover more emotional elements – as well as help encourage scientists to think outside the logical.  |
| 1. Thinking about planet research culture – do you think it is a healthy planet?
 | What do you think are the biggest threats to Planet Research Culture? Who suffers? |  |
| 1. Thank you – that is really valuable for us. I’m going to now take us back to Planet Earth and <place of work>. Thinking about the research environment you are currently working in, what 3 words do you think would best describe it.
 | Prompt: Why do you say this? Can you talk me through your choices for each of the words you have chosen here? |  |
| 1. To what extent do you think the culture around research in your working environment helps or hinders your ability to do good quality research?
 | Why do you say this?  |  |
| 1. *(If not already given specific examples)*

Thinking about the last 18 months, can you think of any examples of good research culture that you have experienced? | <LADDERING QUESTION> - repeat for each suggested. -What factors drove this good practice?Who drove this good practice?What was the impact for you personally? What was the outcome for the quality of research? | These are significant questions in terms of time – but need a lot of flex to allow interviewers to prompt accordingly. Making this specifically personal – but with options to reflect on others’ treatment later in the interview.  |
| 1. *(If not already given specific examples)*

Conversely, again thinking about the last 18 months, can you think of any examples of bad, or poor research culture that you have experienced? | <LADDERING QUESTION> - repeat for each suggested:What factors drove this poor practice?Who drove this poor practice?What was the impact for you personally? What was the outcome for the quality of research? |  |
| 1. (If not mentioned) To what extent do you feel the culture of your working environment condones research practices that cut corners? For example – those that value speed or getting results that will attract funding over quality?
 | Prompt: Has this type of behaviour increased in the last 18 months?  |  |
| 1. Have you ever failed to replicate other team/department/lab members’ results? / ALT – Have you ever been in a difficult situation in your research group?
 | Prompt: If yes, what did you do when this occurred? What did you feel you could do? |  |
| 1. What practices in your workplace, if any, cause difficulties for your personal wellbeing?
 | Prompt: What is the impact of this for you? |  |
| 1. To what extent do you think your workplace takes positive steps to support your personal wellbeing?
 | Prompt: What steps have been taken to improve wellbeing? Where do these initiatives originate from?  |  |
| 1. How do you think your research environment compares to other environments in terms of research culture?
 | Prompt: Why do you say this?Are you aware of any institutions or environments where the Research Culture is particularly positive? Prompt for more detail on what makes it a positive culture.Are you aware of any institutions or environments where the Research Culture is particularly poor? Prompt for more detail on what makes it a poor culture. |  |
| 1. To what extent would you agree with the following statements;
* If there were an instance of scientific misconduct in my lab/research team, I would know who to speak to
* If there was an instance of **scientific / academic misconduct**, I would feel safe to speak up or report it without fear of reprisal.
* I don’t feel under pressure to work long hours to demonstrate my commitment to the work
* If there was an instance of **bullying** in my lab/department or research team, I would feel safe to speak up or report it without fear of reprisal.
* If there was an instance of **sexual assault** in my lab/department or research team, I would feel safe to report it without fear of reprisal.
* If there was an instance of **sexual harassment** in my lab/department or research team, I would feel safe to speak up or report it without fear of reprisal.
* In my lab/department, I would feel able to discuss issues concerning gender and racial biases pertaining to my work environment.
 | For each – why do you say this? Can you recall a specific incident around this? – this might be experienced by you directly or you may have observed the treatment of others.  | These are quite strong areas of questioning – but useful in case the more open questions are not specifically covering these areas.  |
| Improvements for the future | 10 minutes (starts 35 mins into the interview) |
| 1. We’ve talked a lot about the current state of research culture both generally and in your specific place of work. What could your department head/lab director or institution do to improve research culture for researchers like yourself?
 | Prompt: Why do you say this? What would the value of this be for you- how much difference do you think it would make? Research as a whole? | I think this is potentially worth exploring from a micro – current setting – view – before looking more explicitly at what the Wellcome’s response could be. This is covered briefly here as a lot of the visioning for the future piece will be handled by the co-creation workshops.  |
| 1. What role, if any, do you think the Wellcome Trust should have in improving research culture?
 | Prompt: Why do you say this? |  |
| 1. If the Wellcome Trust could do 3 things to positively change research culture, what would you suggest?
 | Prompt for each: What is the key benefit / impact of this?  |  |
| 1. Is there anything that you think the Wellcome Trust would be uniquely placed to do to improve research culture?
 | Prompt: Why do you say this?-What is/are the key opportunity/ies here? |  |
| 1. (if mentioning multiple areas)

Do any of these areas relating to Research Culture feel more **urgent** to address than others? | If so, which? Why? |  |
| 1. The Wellcome Trust are at the very early stages of developing some goals for an improved Research Culture. These goals are in a very rough working form. I’m going to number them so that you can simply write down or remember the number of the goal that stands out to you.
2. The research community should attracts a diverse range of people and skills
3. Productive competition and innovative thinking drive progress
4. Respect and public engagement help strengthen society’s trust in research
5. High standards of ethical and scientific conduct lead to high-quality research outputs
6. Action is taken when standards and behaviours fall below acceptable norms?
7. Colleagues promote sustainable research practices to each other
8. Excellent leadership and management is celebrated
9. Working practices allow people to sustainably operate at their best
10. The investment needed to build beneficial collaborations is valued

What do you think of this list? Are there any key omissions?  | Are there any goals here that stand out to you?  |  |
| 1. Which of these do you think are most valuable/important for your research community?
 | Why do you say this? |  |
| Final thoughts and conclusion (5 minutes) (starts 45 minutes into the interview) |
| 1. Thank you for your time, in conclusion do you have anything else you’d like to say about the about what we have spoken about today or is there anything you feel I should have asked you today that I haven’t…??
 |  |  |
| Thanks and closing details (2 minutes) |  |  |  |
| Thank you for your time again, you have been very informative. If respondent is good and located in a UK city – particularly London. We are also planning on running a series of co-creation workshops with a selection of respondents to this work. These would last around 2 hours and would take place in central London on the 7th August, and Central Manchester and Glasgow on the 8th August. As a thank you we would pay you £150 to take part. Would you be interested in taking part in one of these?Y/N? Would you be happy for the Wellcome Trust to listen to a recording of this interview? It would be really insightful for them – and obviously you would not **Incentives [if applicable]**Shift Learning will be handling the incentives for this research project. Payments will begin to be processed within 3 weeks of this interview. |  |  |  |
| UK Incentives [if applicable] | **FULL NAME** | **ADDRESS** | **CHARITY** | **NOTES** |
| We are pleased to offer you £60 in the form of a personal cheque**For cheque:** Please could you give me your full name as it appears on your bank statement as well as the address we should send the cheque to?**Interviewer to add to recruitment sheet on completion of interview** |  |  |  |  |
| Opt In [if applicable] | **OPT IN?****Y/N** | **FULL NAME** | **EMAIL** | **PHONE** |
| Would you be happy for my company, Shift Learning, to contact you again for relevant paid research opportunities similar to this?We’ll send you occasional emails, and you can withdraw at any time.  **If yes-** Is the email and phone number we contacted you today on the most appropriate way to reach you?**Interviewer to transfer to template sheet, including project title, date and group fields, along with Google Form responses who have opted in.** |  |  |  |  |
| CloseThank you again for your time today. The Wellcome Trust are keen to gather the thoughts of a diverse cross-section of the research community. With this in mind, it would be very much appreciated if you could forward our original email detailing the research to any of your colleagues (eg: post docs, research technicians/ speciailists, professors etc.) you feel would be interested in taking part. **Obtain consent retention of details for re-contact if applicable**If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this project, I am happy to provide you with the contact details of the Project Director, Helene (phone and email if requested by participant).Client contact [If applicable]If you would like, I can also provide you with a contact from the Wellcome Trust who is overseeing the project (phone/ email details if requested by participant). |  |  |  |  |