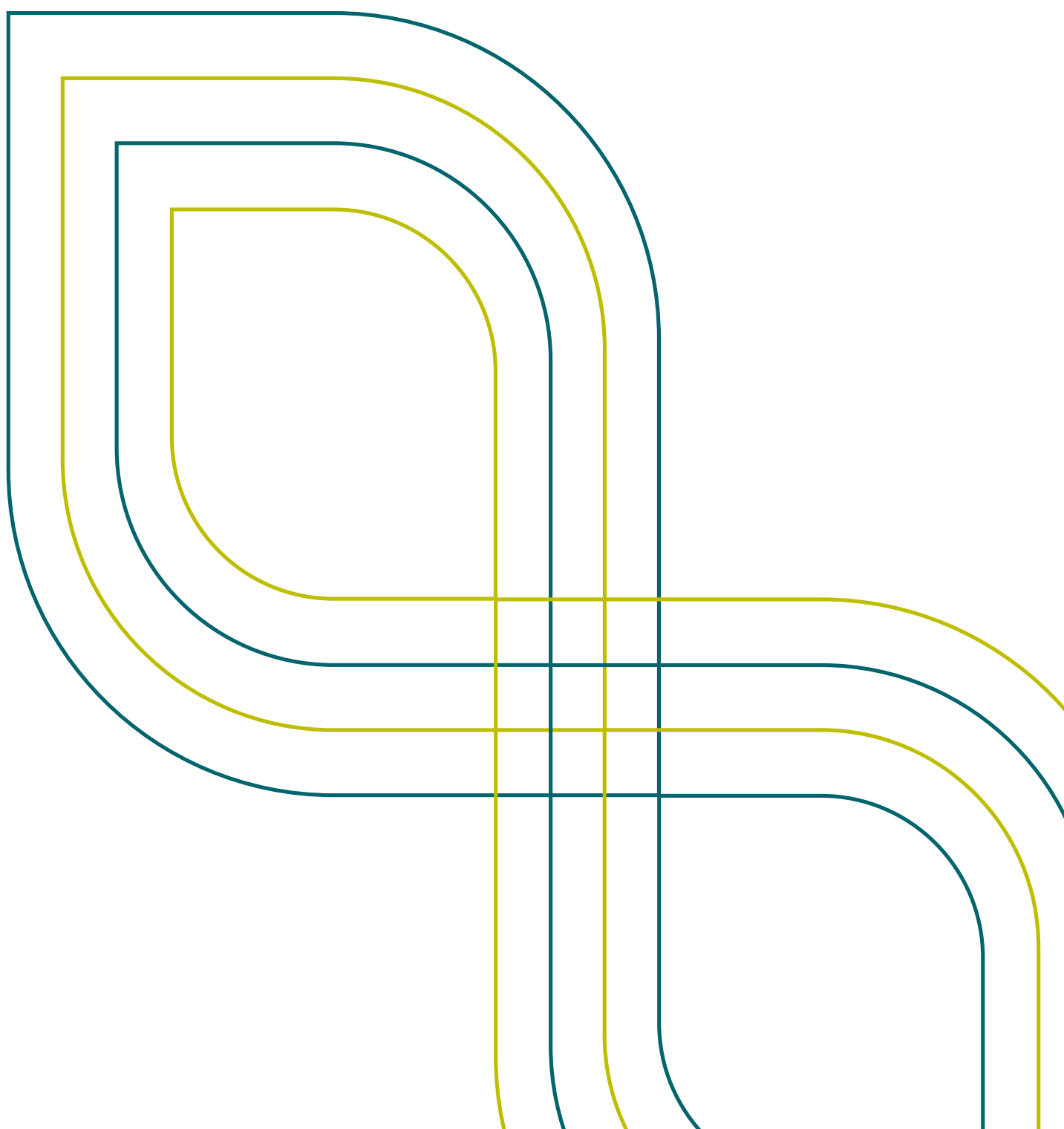




Strategy

2025-2027



Strategy 2025-2027

Sector Context

This strategy has been developed at a time of real challenge for the UK Higher Education and wider R&D sector. Universities face unprecedented financial challenges, which threaten the viability of some institutions, leading to cost cutting measures including redundancy schemes and reduced budgets to support staff development. Institutions are ensuring there is a strong focus on teaching, given the over reliance on the subsidy from international student fees. For some this means research is having to take a back seat or continue as is with reduced resource resulting in increasing pressures on workload. Alongside this we face growing risks associated with international security, which has led to a proliferation of new legislation and regulation. This has increased the burden on institutions and is creating a risk-adverse culture of compliance rather than of collaboration. We also have new requirements being introduced to deliver more environmentally sustainable research. While this is crucial for our sector it also brings additional burden to the institutions. These are just some examples of the changes happening at rapid pace in our research landscape, which are driving demand for new skills and expertise.



Member perspective

Of course, an increased institutional burden invariably leads to an increase in expectation on the staff involved, and for research this is the ARMA community. We know that you are struggling under an ever-increasing workload and finding the time, let alone the budget, for personal development is getting harder and harder.

For many of you, we know that each new piece of legislation or regulation has you looking beyond your institution for knowledge and support to help you create processes and policies that are effective and efficient from the very start. You are increasingly looking for sector-wide guidance to be available and for help understanding what good practice in the sector is nationally and globally. It is increasingly difficult to have the time to follow all the policy developments but know that it is important to stay abreast of everything that is going on.



Future trends

Despite these challenges, we cannot help but be optimistic about the future. A change in government has ceased the “war on universities”, and discussions are ongoing about the vital role R&D plays in the economic, social and environmental vitality of the UK. This includes exploring how longer-term funding settlements for bodies like UKRI could bring significant stability for the sector.

The government remains committed to reducing research bureaucracy, working collaboratively with funders, universities and other organisations to explore where we can streamline processes and take more pragmatic approaches to challenges.

We have seen a huge change in how research culture is prioritised, and how it continues to shape our sector, with changes to REF 2029 to include “People, Culture and Environment”, valuing not just the outputs of our research but “how” such research is being developed and delivered.

AI is increasingly being discussed within our sector. Not just on how it might change the skills we need to be successful in the future, but also how it might shape the role of research professionals within institutions.

With such a dynamic landscape, both in terms of challenge and opportunity, research management professionals have never been more important, and ARMA plays a vital role in supporting our community and ensuring that we can all thrive professionally and personally, in the diverse array of roles that we hold across our different institutions.



ARMA's Sector voice

Over recent years ARMA as an organisation has gone from strength to strength. Emerging from the global pandemic we saw our membership increase year on year. We have also seen an increase take up of our member events, training courses, qualification programmes and our annual conference. Our Special Interest Groups have become increasingly active, grown in membership, and we have added new ones to support emerging sector-wide areas.

As ARMA's reputation has grown, we are increasingly approached to contribute to sector-wide discussions and projects aligned to the research sector, but we want to do more. We want to ensure ARMA is “the” partner of choice when it comes to delivering work which impacts not just our community but research more broadly.

The growing importance of metascience and practitioner-led meta-research is an area where ARMA is ensuring that the research management community's expertise is being fully utilised in identifying the areas ripe for experimentation.

We want recognition of the expertise, and the leadership, delivered through our community, and we must see this come to fruition in order to fully realise the potential of research management professionals across the UK.

This new strategy seeks to ensure that ARMA is strategically positioned to best deliver value to our members, be that through delivery of professional development activities, lobbying and driving policy change, or simply offering the opportunity for like-minded colleagues to network and share best practice. With so many opportunities out there, we must ensure we are prioritising what aligns most with member-need and investing in ARMA as an organisation to ensure we can sustainably deliver positive change for our members and research in the UK.

We are excited by what lies ahead. Without our thriving community, the UK cannot deliver its' ambitions to be a global leader in research. So let's ensure our community is recognised, and celebrated, for our contribution to this endeavour and our broader sector.



Creating a strategy with our members

In developing this new strategy we've been careful to ensure that our members have been able to input and help shape it and the organisation's future direction. We surveyed our members and governance groups, reviewing the suggestions at various Board sessions. We also updated members at our most recent AGM. Reviewing our most recent governance review reminded us of its recommendation for ARMA to be bolder in its future aspirations.



Vision

A community of research management professionals operating in a thriving research landscape who are recognised for their expertise and integral role in ensuring the vitality of UK research.

Mission

ARMA is the UK's national association serving research managers and administrators. We are experts, operating locally and impacting across a global context. We train, support and advocate nationally for the needs of research management professionals through our vibrant and inclusive community.



Values

Member-Led

- We act in the best interests of our members, engaging and involving them in everything we do.

Bold

- We are proud of the expertise our community offers and seek to ensure this is recognised, amplifying the voice of our members in sector wide debates and policy change.

Inclusive

- We are building an open and accessible community, identifying and removing barriers, and contributing to a more equitable, diverse and inclusive sector.

Collaborative

- We grow networks and cultivate partnerships that enhance our impact and align with our values.

Professional

- We enable our members to work to the highest professional standard, driving innovation for our profession and working across our diverse and significant community to share best practice and drive continuous improvement for all.

Strategic Priorities

Professionalising Research Management

- **We will** strive to see our community and profession acknowledged for our contribution to the broader research system, where our role in ensuring a sustainable and resilient sector is recognised and celebrated for the value that we deliver as both generalists and specialists.
- **We will** deliver “lifelong learning” for research management professionals, across the span of their careers and different career stages, with a world-leading professional development framework and related training and development, and qualifications programmes.
- **We will** ensure clarity for our members on ARMA’s role in sector wide projects, including those we lead and partner on, offering opportunities for members to engage and leveraging our breadth of expertise, maximising member benefit and impact.
- **We will** increase recognition of our volunteers and the role they play not just in ARMA’s success, but in the sector more broadly.

Connecting for Impact

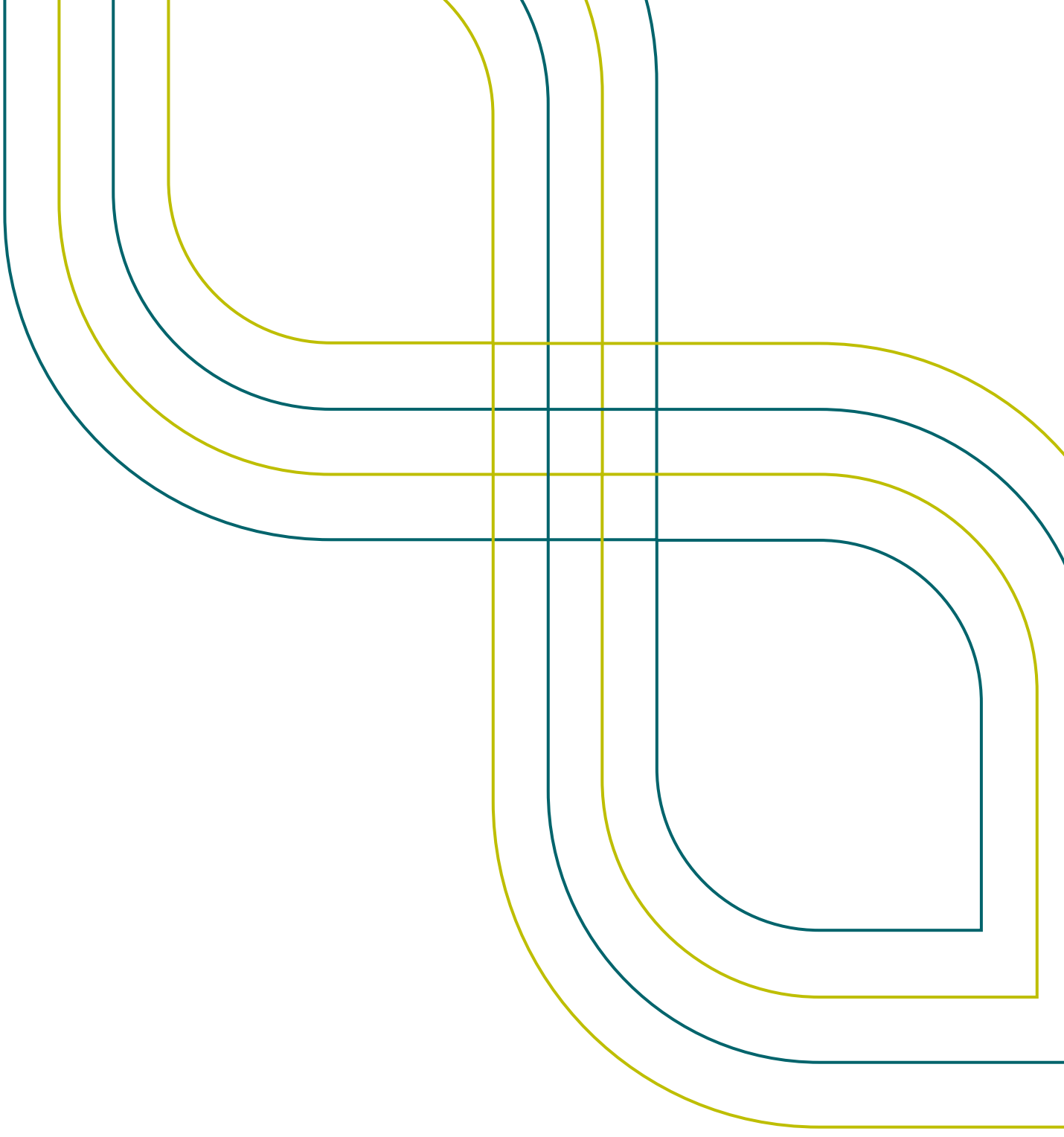
- **We will** map ARMA’s position in the broader sector so we can establish ARMA’s role as a partner of choice, ensuring connectivity to a global network of peers and partners, with greater opportunities for impact.
- **We will** cultivate a number of critical partnerships, leveraging more benefit for our members, including with national organisations as well as with sister associations around the world.
- **We will** connect our members, as individuals and as institutions, locally and nationally, to help them in recognising upcoming challenges to our profession and the broader sector, supporting adaptability, resilience and transition.

Leading our Sector

- **We will** be at the forefront of change for our sector, leading for our profession with a unified voice which leverages the breadth of our expertise and represents the diversity of our members.
- **We will** be proactive in horizon scanning, responding to upcoming challenges and opportunities, influencing and shaping policy, and leading change for member benefit.
- **We will** articulate ARMA's distinct offer to the sector, ensuring that we are asked to lead on discussions and projects that impact our members and community.

Enabling our Ambition

- **We will** ensure that ARMA has the digital infrastructure in place to deliver our ambitions, supporting and developing our outstanding volunteer network.
- **We will** deliver a robust and inclusive governance structure with improved transparency and communication at all levels.
- **We will** safeguard our financial sustainability by focussing on long-term planning and assessing opportunities to ensure they deliver income and impact, for the benefit of our members.
- **We will** ensure ARMA has the necessary evidence and expertise to support effective decision making.



Further information

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