Leading and Working Collaboratively at the University

The 3Rs - Resourceful, Responsible, Respectful

Why do we need the 3Rs?

Almost all of us, whether or not we have a formal leadership or management role within the University, collaborate and work with colleagues to make things happen. The 3Rs is a set of guiding principles for all staff on how to successfully achieve our goals in way that is supportive of people.

The need for a set of guiding principles when leading and collaborating with colleagues was highlighted by the results of the 2017 staff survey. Staff reported that there was a lack of clarity as to what was expected of those in more managerial roles, both among managers and colleagues.

How were the 3Rs developed?

The 3Rs were developed directly in response to this feedback. A series of focus groups and interviews were held exploring views on leadership and management at the University. Together with comments made in the staff survey, the feedback was used as the basis for a new framework – the 3Rs. Early drafts were refined with the input from a group of volunteers who expressed an interest in this project. As a result, the content, format and design of the 3Rs is applicable across the University and sets out how we can all work together when leading or influencing others, regardless of the specific role we might hold, and respecting each other's expertise and professional input.

What do the 3Rs represent?

The 3Rs refers to three central principles that we need to follow when leading, influencing or collaborating with colleagues: **Resourceful – Responsible – Respectful**. Each principle has two dimensions associated with it and examples of the types of behaviours and actions needed to put the principle into practice.

1. Resourceful

'Create'
Develops possibilities and new ideas

Resourceful
Strategic Planner

'Stabilise'
Deals with facts and feasibilities

- Explores wider options and scans horizons
- Discovers new approaches
- Generates original ideas and creates new options

Constructs coherent strategies

Joins up programmes and projects

Creates sustainable solutions

- Analyses and monitors data and information
- Assesses, tests and evaluates ideas
- Costs realistic solutions and develops plans

2. Responsible

'Nurture'
Leads people

Responsible
People and Process Developer

'Rationalise'
Manages processes

- Actively listens and empathises
- Understands and appreciates others' needs
- Supports, encourages and develops people

Develops self and others

Delegates work and empowers people

Confronts and resolves problems

- Develops consistent logical processes
- Honestly challenges, questions and gives clear feedback
- Accountable for delivering objectives

3. Respectful

'Global Perspective'
Understands and communicates the wider perspective

Respectful
Community Builder

'Local Focus'
Understands and communicates local perspectives

- Understands external drivers and global issues
- Advocates and represents broader University perspective
- Mobilises and aligns University-wide activity

Unites different groups

Creates a shared understanding

Facilitates communication at all levels

- Collaborates and shares information and resources
- Advocates and represents local issues and concerns
- Mobilises teams to get results

While the 3Rs always apply to our work, how much emphasis we place on each of the associated dimensions will depend on the context of our work?

For example, **Create** may be particularly relevant when developing ideas for a new course module while Stabilise then becomes more relevant as we move into making a new course part of a School's regular operation. The 3Rs is therefore not a prescriptive model, more of a framework that invites us to reflect on what is most important for us to focus on now.

Using the 3Rs

The 3Rs can be used to support conversations between individuals, as well as wider discussions in schools and functions. People Development are available to support this and have facilitated successful sessions for the School of Biological Sciences, School of Law, ISLI, Department of Mathematics and Technical Services. Examples of the conversations that have taken place during these sessions include:

- ideas to increase the impact of outreach activities,

- ideas to improve student retention,

- exploration of the culture within a team and identifying adjustments to improve working relationships.

Karen Henderson, Director of Technical Services, explains how the 3Rs supported a strategic aim within Technical Services:

> *"As a Function, we talked about the 3Rs and whilst we were, of course, fully supportive and engaged with the central principles, the dimensions felt rather nebulous and we identified that we needed more of an understanding of how these apply to colleagues at all levels and in our day to day activities. Everyone in Technical Services was invited to an open session where we focused on one particular strategic aim that we had identified as part of our Strategy Consultation exercise earlier in 2019. People Development facilitated our 3Rs session.*
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> *The use of the framework encouraged everyone to share their ideas, no matter, at first, how blue sky they appeared. We were able to distil down clear actions and as a result of considering the dimensions, many attendees, felt empowered to volunteer and take accountability for activities that came out of the session. This was an extremely valuable exercise and we feel far more familiar with how we can apply the dimensions of the 3Rs."*

For further information or support with applying the 3Rs, please contact People Development at peopledevelopment@reading.ac.uk.