

Institute for Research Software: Strengthening research by advancing essential software and empowering the people behind it

The UK's national centre of expertise for research software, working with researchers, engineers, funders and institutions to make research software more reliable, sustainable and properly valued.



Why research software matters

Modern research depends on software. It is used to collect and analyse data, run simulations, train and evaluate AI models, automate workflows and share findings. But research software is often built under pressure, with limited resources, and without the recognition it deserves. When it's poorly maintained or badly documented, research becomes harder to trust, reproduce, and build on.

Who the Institute is

Founded in 2010 as the Software Sustainability Institute, it adopted its new name in 2026 to better reflect the breadth of its work, building on the same purpose, partnerships and community. It works at the centre of an international movement to make research software more effective and sustainable.

The Institute believes research software should be open, well-maintained, and properly recognised.

What the Institute does

It is the only organisation that combines research, community, policy, and practice around research software, connecting the person writing code in a university lab to the committee deciding how research software should be funded nationally. Its current strategy is built around four priorities:

Better-informed policy and guidance: it provides evidence, recommendations and practical guidance to improve decisions about research software at project, institutional, funder, government and international levels.

Stronger research communities: it helps build connected communities that share knowledge, develop skills and create the support needed for effective software practices.

Wider use of effective software practices: it helps research teams adopt more reproducible, open, inclusive and environmentally responsible practices, alongside better software recognition, maintenance and reuse.

Broader access and participation: it works to broaden participation and help more organisations contribute to research software sustainability.



<https://www.software.ac.uk>

Turning shared problems into impact

The term Research Software Engineer was proposed at the 2012 Collaborations Workshop; more than 10,000 RSEs now form a growing professional community that the Institute helped establish and continues to support.

Over 250 Fellows have been supported to turn ideas into lasting change across their disciplines, institutions and communities.

10,000 researchers have been trained since 2012, and with The Carpentries, the Institute has helped train more than 500 instructors since 2015.

The Research Software Maintenance Fund has awarded approximately £5.6 million to 32 projects across two funding rounds.

The Institute's Green DiSC is the first open-access certification scheme for reducing the environmental impact of research computing.

Contact

The Institute for Research Software is a partnership between EPCC at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Manchester, and the University of Southampton.

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Institute for Research Software, EPCC, The University of Edinburgh, The Bayes Centre, 47 Potterrow, Edinburgh, EH8 9BT, UK.

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