ERA Values & Culture

Welcome to ERA! We are very excited to have you here. This document (one of the *many* you will read…) defines who we are and how we operate: we want you to read it, and challenge it once (not if!) you see how we can be even better. We deeply value constructive feedback at ERA, and we would like for you to be agentic in communicating with us!

What Makes ERA Different?

We are not trying to be the best talent organisation in AI safety. We are trying to build the best people – you <u>are</u> what makes ERA. The stakes couldn't be higher, the timeline couldn't be shorter, and the path couldn't be less certain. But we are certain that you are a key part of making this go well.

At ERA, we forge leaders who are capable of making some of the hardest decisions in human history, and working on some of the hardest problems humanity faces this century. Our bar for impact is extraordinarily high, and we believe very strongly in building coalitions of all levels & forms. Welcome home!

1. Integrity

Doing the right thing, <u>especially</u> when no one is watching.

Transparency: We encourage you to write fast decision memos, share your uncertainties, and document mistakes (which can happen!). If you're ever uncertain on how transparent to be with the team or your Research Manager, the answer is always 2x more than you might be by default. We believe in **radical transparency.**

Reliability: If you commit to a task, you should go above and beyond in delivering it; you should practice **managing upward**: proactively keep any stakeholders (including your mentors!) in the loop so that they never need to chase you for status updates.

Mission-first: We are all here because we deeply care about mitigating risks from frontier AI. This means that we are very cooperative (than competitive!) with our partners who are also working hard on these goals. We expect you to support your peers similarly! Being mission-first also means sometimes sitting with some uncomfortable ambiguity & uncertainty.

2. Intimacy

Building genuine, psychologically safe relationships so we can tackle the hard problems together.

Small-team intimacy: We care deeply about building real connections, where we celebrate personal wins and support each other through the challenges. ERA fellows typically stay in touch as both friends and colleagues long after the programme finishes!

Assume good intent: When someone drops the ball or pushes back on your idea, your default assumption should be that they're trying their best with the information that they have. We admit errors without fear because we trust each other's motives. This means that saying "I messed up" in Slack gets you help, not judgement.

Respectful disagreements: We will (and encourage you to!) have respectful debates about strategy, even (especially!) when you disagree with each other. Even within the ERA team, we disagree on many things! But all these conversations will 100% end with us all grabbing coffee together. Respect your peers, and tease out the nuances of why and how you disagree.

3. Intensity

Operating with focused urgency: because the stakes are high and the time is limited.

Operate with extreme urgency. Don't wait for things to be perfect. A good plan scrappily executed now is better than a perfect plan later. Proceed under uncertainty. We practice "decision velocity": make reversible decisions in hours, not weeks, document them publicly, and course-correct fast. When you feel the urge to "sleep on it", ask yourself: what would I need to know to decide right now? Then go find out! This also applies to research.

Bias for 10x solutions: When reviewing any work, ask "What would make this world-class?" not just "Is this good enough?". This applies whether you're writing a research paper, organising a conference, or designing an internal process. We would rather attempt something ambitious and learn from partial success than settle for incremental improvements. Push yourself and others to think bigger.

Sustainable sprinting: Burnout kills both creativity and good judgment: the two things that we need most. We celebrate people who say "I need to recharge" as much as those who say "I'll handle it". But we are also very mission-driven here, which means that we all occasionally need a reminder to take things slow after intense sprints – we collectively look after each other!