

## Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

<b>Name of Institution</b>	The University of Hull
<b>Reporting period</b>	January 2022 – January 2023
<b>Date approved by governing body</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
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<b>Web address of annual report</b>	<a href="https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/governance">https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/governance</a>
<b>Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage</b>	<a href="https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/governance">https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/governance</a>
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<b>Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via CDRsecretariat@universitiek.ac.uk</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2023

**Statement on how the organisation creates, maintains and embeds a research culture that upholds a positive and inclusive environment for researchers at all stages of their careers (max 500 words)**

The University vision and ambitions for equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the **University Strategic Plan 2030** 'A fairer, brighter and carbon neutral future'. **The Social Justice and Inclusion Strategy (SJI) 2025** goes beyond what is required under the Equality Act, 2010 and sets out the University's vision to shape a society that is built on equity, integrity and respect. Systemic and cultural change requires meaningful and ambitious goals, with delivery progressed at pace. Three anchors, articulated in the SJI strategy, provide the framework by which these ambitions will be delivered.

1. Collegiate Leadership: The University starts from the position that all colleagues are leaders and that each person has a responsibility to prioritise a positive work-based culture. To signal their commitment as leaders, the University Leadership Team (ULT) members individually sponsor our seven new inclusion work strands: Disability; Gender; Culture; Life-stage; Relationships; Socio-economic inclusion and Social responsibility.

2. Empowering Environment: The University seeks to create a safe space to ask questions, to listen and learn, allowing the University to move forward as an organisation by creating an environment where we feel safe to speak and are respected for doing so.

3. Bold Action: The University of Hull encourages meaningful, continuous dialogue with colleagues and our communities.

Our Research Strategy further supports these ambitions through a commitment to (1) nurture excellent researchers through fostering a research environment that is inspiring, intellectually challenging, inclusive, collegiate and collaborative and (2) enhancing research infrastructure and research support services.

The University of Hull promotes and embeds a positive research culture throughout the career journey of all members of the academic community. A key focus in this endeavour is the engagement of all staff members in building, facilitating and benefiting from a research culture which has, at its heart, both institutional success and personal development, achievement and satisfaction.

To this end, the University facilitates career planning and progression with a particular focus on recognising and building upon the colleagues' strengths and the institution wide values of fairness inclusion and success. We do this in the knowledge, and expectation, that colleagues have aspirations that extend beyond the University – our focus on mental health and maintaining a positive work life balance is a particularly important strand of our developing research culture, in this context.

Coaching, mentoring and the sharing of experience across the academic community exemplifies our collaborative and person centred approach. We seek, of course, to reward success, but also to collectively recognise and celebrate the significant achievements that constitute an academic career whether or not they are externally, and publicly, rewarded.

A positive research culture underpins the success of the University's Research Strategy which aspires to nurture talent, support diverse career aspirations, stimulate creativity and collaboratively, build success. The University is committed to supporting the professional development of all researchers, enabling them to maximise their, and the University's, potential.

**Provide a short summary of the institution's strategic objectives and implementation plans for delivering each of the three pillars of the Concordat (environment and culture, employment, and professional development of researchers) for your key stakeholder groups together with your measures for evaluating progress and success (max 600 words)**

The following actions represent those items carried forwards from the 2020-24 HREiR plan after the biannual review of that plan submitted January 2022.

#### **Environment and culture**

1. Raise awareness of the Concordat
  1. develop a research charter with involvement from all stakeholders
  2. embed charter into induction and appraisal processes
  3. awareness measured through CEDARS survey >90% 'I have understanding' or 'know this exists')
2. Promote good mental health and wellbeing
  1. engage with researchers to identify why they feel that their working environment does not support their mental health, as reported in the last CEDARS survey, and take appropriate action
  2. to achieve the University Mental Health Charter Award

3. include mental health and wellbeing discussions in appraisal conversations
  4. include mental health and wellbeing, bullying and harassment information within the Researchers' Charter
  5. as part of our commitment to the Mental Health Charter we will appoint a University Wellbeing Advisor whose role will be to source, promote and deliver a holistic range of wellbeing activity for all staff, establishing the building blocks of a culture in which wellbeing and mental health are actively encouraged and supported
  6. measured through focus groups and CEDARS Q41.4a, target 60% agree or strongly agree that their working environment supports their mental health
  7. monitoring training compliance of researchers and managers around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Mental Health mandatory training and taking appropriate action
3. The Social Justice and Inclusion Life Stage work strand will consider the establishment of a Parents and Carers Network following consultation (Athena Swan) with staff on the benefit and function of such a network
  4. Developing the Researchers' Charter will include discussion relating to developing a supportive, fair and inclusive research culture.

### **Employment**

1. review and standardise job titles for researchers in line with Job roles. Assessing attitudes towards recruitment processes through CEDARS Q25.1a (inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment processes) with target of 90% fully confident or confident.
2. review promotion procedures for researchers and make them more transparent and accessible/available. As part of the new Strategy and the associate People Strategy, the HR department have initiated a project to develop a 'Performance management and talent development framework'. This has a number of drivers including our Athena Swan plan.
  - I. this project will look at a range of rewards available to staff including promotion providing clarity and the recognition of merit based promotion.
  - II. monitoring and reporting on researcher promotions for action via the Concordat Steering Group
  - III. seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress
  - IV. ensure fixed-term contracts (FTCs) are only included where justified - all contract type justified at application for funding (target <65% FTCs)
  - V. achieve target score (>60%) in CEDARS Q21a, Q28.2a for appraisal being useful, constructive and timely.

### **Professional Development of Researchers**

1. We will provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.
2. We will create a set of materials and development events identifying potential career pathways for our researchers and CPD opportunities relating to those opportunities
3. We will explore options to provide professional career advice to our researchers
4. We will measure satisfaction in our CPD offer through CEDARS Q14.1a)

5. Our mentoring schemes will be strengthened through sharing good practice and standardising approaches across the University where appropriate (engagement measured through appraisal process).

**Summary of actions taken, and evaluation of progress made, in the current reporting period to implement your plan to support the three pillars in respect of each of your key stakeholder groups [Institution; Academic Managers of Researchers (Deans, Heads of Schools/Departments/PIs); Researchers]**

During our previous planning period we had difficulty in accessing appropriate data reports to support our actions and outcomes due to shortcomings in our reporting capabilities. A significant amount of effort has been invested in developing a short-term systems workaround which will allow better progress moving forwards. A longer-term solution is being developed using PowerBI which will enable regular monitoring reports for the Concordat Steering Group.

**Environment and Culture (max 600 words)**

Institution

- Mental Health and wellbeing prompts have been added to Appraisal and Development Review document and guidance provided
- Mindful Employer accreditation application was awarded to the University in December 2022
- the University Mental Health Charter is in its final draft and will be submitted in January
- recently the University has raised the status and importance of the Career Development of Researchers by creating a position of Associate PVC Research Culture (0.5 FTE) and appointed Professor Liz Walker to that position. Prof. Walker will lead on Research Culture and researcher development in addition to chairing the Concordat Steering Group. The Research Culture and Researcher Development Team is being established within the Research and Innovation Directorate and two new posts (currently out for recruitment) have been created to support the development and delivery of this programme of work.
- engagement with training by researchers and their managers is being reported to CSG quarterly

Academic Managers of Researchers

- our recent Research Leaders Programme, facilitated by Advance HE, welcomed four cohorts of staff during Summer/Autumn 2022. 89 staff from all areas of the University attended. The course included, amongst other topics, equality, diversity, inclusion, health and wellbeing, bullying and harassment; styles and models of leadership and having challenging conversations with colleagues. It also provided a useful opportunity for colleagues from different Schools to share best practice.

Researchers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The University Leadership team, Human Resources and the Research and Innovation office have provided a wide range of events incorporating town hall meetings, world café style, and research festivals which have provided multiple opportunities for researchers and their managers to explore and celebrate our strengths and to link with new the Strategy. This includes engaging with our values and extending our culture journey.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment (max 600 words)</b>	<p>Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>progression for researchers has recently been embedded within the broader Academic Careers Framework and associated Academic Promotion processes. Further work is required across Faculties to raise awareness and encourage applications.</li> </ul> <p>Academic managers and researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The People Strategy project, led by HR working with stakeholders, addresses this area of our plan. Progress has been made around talent management and development of individuals, but we still need to do more work around area requirements such as researchers' perceptions relating to open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, recognition, reward and promotion pathways in addition to improving job security.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional development (max 600 words)</b>	<p>Institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all mentoring opportunities within and outwith the University have been identified and are now listed with contact details on the University intranet</li> <li>the appraisal and development review process now includes prompts and guidance for discussions around career development, coaching and mentoring</li> </ul> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Researcher Managers participated in 310 CPD events between January 2022 and January 2023. Awareness of mentoring, its value and how to get involved has been increased via the research leaders programme and through specific Faculty fora.</li> <li>we have commissioned Coaching and Mentoring training from an external agency - an ILM level 3 accredited and also a non-accredited (online) course. There are 12 places on the ILM course and 13 on the online course. Take up is mixed between academic and professional staff with the majority being academic. We also have a healthy waiting list for the ILM course. The accredited course commenced December 2022 and the non-accredited course started January 2023</li> <li>guidance for career conversations within the appraisal and development review process is available within the documentation and via an online course</li> </ul>

	<p>Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a matrix of research development opportunities has been developed and is available via the University's intranet. This includes training events on grant writing, research project management, open research and open access, understanding intellectual property</li> <li>• career development discussion is now a requirement at appraisal</li> <li>• the ability to monitor the provision of a mentor through the appraisal process is now in place</li> <li>• our current researchers participated in 641 CPD events between January 2022 and January 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Comment on any lessons learned from the activities undertaken over this period and any modifications you propose to make to your action plan and measures of success as a result. (max 500 words)</b></p> <p>During this period of the plan the University has shifted its focus to being more research led. The Research Charter will develop into a more wide-ranging Research Culture Action Plan (RCAP). The development of the RCAP will comprise similar conversations with those identified for researchers within the scope of the concordat in addition to all other stakeholders in research at the University. This work will be led by the new Associate PVC Research Culture. The RCAP will be built from below, reflecting the priorities and needs of researchers and the institution in further developing a research culture which is aspirational, inclusive and ambitious. It will reflect the core values of the University, such as a commitment to fairness and openness. It will also develop key programmes of work to provide bespoke skills training, research leadership training and career development for researchers across all career stages.</p>	
<p><b>Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period (max 500 words)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop a Research Culture Action Plan which will underpin a number of our actions</li> <li>2. improve data gathering and reporting. This will partly be addressed through the work on the RCAP. We recognise that work is required on our systems to produce the reports required moving forwards</li> <li>3. mandatory training for researchers and their managers will be reviewed to ensure all training related to the concordat is included</li> <li>4. improve attitudes toward the quality and culture of the research environment and the development of feedback processes. The conversations around RCAP can be used to begin this work</li> <li>5. identify strategies to improve the work environment to best support the mental health of researchers .</li> <li>6. achieve 60% effective appraisal participation</li> <li>7. recruitment, contracts (continuing), promotion and career development will be reviewed including the provision of 10 days minimum annual professional and career development</li> <li>8. evaluate the impact of the Research Leaders' Programme.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Please provide a brief statement describing your institution's approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body (max 200 words)</b></p>	

This report is prepared by the Learning and Development (HREiR/HR) and Researcher Development Team. It is presented for review and approval to the University Concordat Steering Group and the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise)

**This report has been reviewed and approved by the:**

- HREiR Team
- Concordat Steering Group
- PVC Research and Enterprise

Signature on behalf of governing body:



**Dr David Richards, Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Enterprise – 30 January 2023**

Contact for queries: Professor Liz Walker [e.walker@hull.ac.uk](mailto:e.walker@hull.ac.uk) / Patrick Lynch [P.Lynch@hull.ac.uk](mailto:P.Lynch@hull.ac.uk)

This annual report will be analysed by Universities UK, secretariat for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, to identify good practices, themes for development and information to improve national research culture policy and practice.

If you have any questions, or suggestions on how the reporting process could be improved, please contact the secretariat at [CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

[www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk)