

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

Universities and Research Institutes

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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 vision of the University of Hull Strategy 2030 is to build a nationally and internationally recognised, educationally excellent, research led, civic university. Its mission is to contribute to tackling society's biggest challenges and in so doing reach its aspiration of shaping a fairer, brighter, carbon-neutral future.

2024 is a year of innovation and ambitious strategic development across the University which will shape and influence the research culture and environment, and the support we are providing to researchers. A new Research and Enterprise Strategy, to be launched in Autumn 2024, will aim to deliver on Strategy 2030. In doing so it will foster an environment and culture of collaboration, innovation and ambition to achieve research excellence. This combines with significant revision of the Academic Careers Framework and associated policies which will foreground researcher career development through supportive leadership and opportunities to thrive.

These strategic projects build upon a recalibration of research support. In 2023 the University restructured its support for researchers, through the streamlining of research & innovation services, leading to enhanced support for the development and delivery of research projects. In the same year the University established a Research Culture and Researcher Development team, led by Professor Liz Walker as Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Culture). Professor Walker also chairs the Concordat Steering Group, the University's governing framework for its concordat submissions. The RCRD team will, in 2024, launch implementation of a five-year Research Culture Action Plan which will underpin the University's commitment to enhancing its research culture and supporting the development of its researchers, aligning with the new Research & Enterprise strategy and institutional objectives of building research capacity and expanding research excellence.

The RCRD delivers a Hull Enhancing Research Culture fund, enabling grassroots initiatives to enhance research culture across the university's faculties and institutes. This approach, in addition to the establishment and strengthening of a range of researcher networks, and the co-production approach used to develop the Research Culture Action Plan, underscores the collaboration between university initiatives and the research community which we seek to reinforce.

Work to enhance research culture and researcher development at the University is consolidated through our commitment to Open Research and research integrity and ethics. In 2023 we appointed an institutional lead for Open Research, Professor Iain Brennan, who directs a programme of work to strengthen awareness and uptake of open research practices across the university, as well as feeding into sector-wide initiatives, such as the UK Reproducibility Network.

Our approach to supporting the development of researchers aligns with our institutional values. Our EDI team and EDI governance board ensure we are equitable, inclusive and accommodating of diversity across the University. We are an active participant in the Advance HE's Athena SWAN programme which requires positive equality and inclusive behaviours. We are a Disability Confident employer and have a number of initiatives to support family-friendly employment practices designed to enable a good work-life balance. We are Stonewall Diversity Champions, signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant, and support a LGBTQ+ staff network.

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)

Environment and culture

1. Raise awareness of the Concordat

We continue work to raise awareness of the concordat and our commitments to supporting the professional development of our research community. This includes embedding links to the Concordat into appointments, appraisals, and professional development processes.

2. R&E Strategy and Research Culture Action Plan

The future direction of our work to support the development of researchers will be set through a new institutional Research & Enterprise strategy, to launch in Autumn 2024. This will incorporate a Research Culture Action Plan, to be launched

in June 2024, reflecting the values contained in the institutional Strategy 2030, and aligned with key documents, such as the People Strategy, launched in 2023.

3. Reviewing, and involving researchers in shaping, the research environment

Measures to enhance our research culture will be co-developed with the research community, and will be reviewed for their effectiveness. Networks of early career researchers and directors of research, as well as researcher engagement in policy development, will act inform our strategic approach.

4. Mental health and wellbeing

Our People Strategy places a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing across the University. We have recently established a new health and wellbeing team, and an associated stream of work, to review and enhance health and wellbeing provision across the University, including of researchers.

6. Research Integrity, Open Research and EDI

Research integrity, openness and EDI are foundational to our research culture. Frameworks of support, guidance and focused training embed all three within our research community.

Employment

1. Revising our Academic Careers Framework

To enhance our support for the development of researchers the University is reforming its Academic Careers Framework (ACF). This addresses promotion, professional career progression, role allocation (research/education) and remuneration. The process and documentation of appraisal and development will be revised accordingly.

2. Adapting policies to support researchers

We review iteratively, in concert with our research community, our policies to enhance recruitment, induction and appraisal. A policy review project, now in its second phase, will extend this process.

3. Career support and employment pathways

We will further review our redeployment policy and assess means to support researchers on fixed term contracts, as well as the career guidance we provide researchers at all stages.

4. Strengthening leadership at all levels.

Leadership at all levels of the organisation is recognised as crucial for delivering a supportive and inclusive research environment. We are investing in a programme to develop leadership skills among academic and professional services staff at more junior level. We will also develop targeted cohort-based support for research leaders.

Professional Development of Researchers

1. Enabling continuing professional development for researchers.

We developed a CPD guide and accompanying video for researchers. This has been circulated to all researchers and their line managers. It outlines the full scope of CPD and raises awareness of minimum requirement 10 days professional development pro rata per year, and will be embedded into HR systems and processes.

2. Enhancing researcher training and development

We will enhance researcher development, streamlining initiatives across Research & Innovation, Knowledge Exchange, HR, Library skills teams, and faculty research offices. This, coupled with enhanced evaluation of the efficacy of training and development, will deliver more targeted support for researchers in Schools, focussed thematic skills training suites, and cohort-based development programmes.

3. Expanding and streamlining mentoring for researchers

We will underscore the importance of mentoring for our research community, and better join up existing mentoring provision, thus creating an enhanced and expanded service for researchers.

4. Integrating research planning into career development meetings

<p>Career development review meetings will complement appraisals, having explicit focus on professional development of researchers, curating research plans and addressing areas for growth.</p>	
<p>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]</p>	
<p>Environment and Culture (<i>max 600 words</i>)</p>	<p>Between Jan 2023 and Jan 2024, we enhanced our research environment and culture by, at the level of:</p> <p>Institution:</p> <p>Coordinating an internal consultation on research culture. This will provide a benchmark against which to judge, and metrics with which to measure progress in enhancing research environment and culture. It will also shape a comprehensive institutional approach to research culture and environment, manifest in the Research Culture Action and Implementation Plan and Research and Enterprise Strategy, both to be launched in later 2024.</p> <p>Reflecting on awareness of concordat and Heir award, which were both marked as low when assessed in 2022 and 2023 respectively (circa 10%). We will assess when we next run CEDARS in 2025, having put in place various mitigating measures.</p> <p>Deploying various mechanisms to capture feedback on the research environment and culture from the research community, including annual Vice-Chancellor meetings with</p>

	<p>Schools; pulse surveys; the comprehensive Research Culture and ED&I survey and associated consultation on research culture; a Stress Survey; a cross-institutional early career researcher network.</p> <p>Consolidating the EDI Governance Board and establishing a suite of subcommittees, including a focused 'EDI in Research Subcommittee' to drive work to enable researchers' development within a supportive research environment. To support researchers, we have implemented a new EDI policy, Workplace Fairness Guidance, Trans Guidance, Religion and Belief Guidance and Reasonable adjustments in the workplace Guidance.</p> <p>Establishing a university lead for Open Research, which has developed an Open Research Working Group and an Open Research Action Plan, appointing Open Research Champions in all schools and institutes across the University.</p> <p>Launching a health and wellbeing team in November 2023, guided by a Health and Wellbeing Board established in late 2022, to establish an effective mechanism for addressing structural challenges around health and wellbeing amongst researchers. Refresher training in mental health awareness was delivered in November 2023 for mental health first-aiders. A stress survey (November 2023) will inform this work.</p> <p>Delivering a dedicated Hull Enhancing Research Culture Fund, enabling academics in faculties and schools to develop projects to address grassroots research culture challenges.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers:</p> <p>Further increasing levels of EDI training across institution (to 96.2% at 20.11.2023, compared with 90.06% at 20.11.20), thus better enabling research managers to support diverse teams.</p>
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	<p>Launching a Directors of Research network to meet semesterly, and consolidated Associate Dean for Research engagement in a range of strategic forums.</p> <p>Researchers:</p> <p>Launching an ECR network to meet semesterly, enabling ECRs to share experiences, best practice and voice their experiences and concerns.</p> <p>Establishing THRIVE (The Hull ECR Integrated Development Programme) to support development and deliver social aspect of early career researchers, including postdoctoral research associates, alongside training. This inaugural ECR development programme will be evaluated and the second cohort will commence in Autumn in 2024.</p> <p>Organising a suite of events celebrating research achievements and discussing strategic challenges for research environments (lectures, book launches, research forums)</p> <p>Designing and Delivering training for Dignity and Respect Advisors (DARA) and EDI Champions across the institution, to support research communities.</p>
Employment (<i>max 600 words</i>)	<p>Between Jan 2023 and Jan 2024, we enhanced our employment support for researchers by, at the level of:</p> <p>Institution:</p> <p>Launching the People Strategy which has provided a strong strategic framework for staff career development and support, talent management, recruitment and recognition.</p> <p>Completing phase 1 of the policy review project, opening a second phase focusing on policies around appraisal, induction, recruitment.</p> <p>Initiating work, in January 2023 to deliver a comprehensive review of the Academic Careers Framework and associated</p>

	<p>academic promotions processes remains ongoing. This will recalibrate policies and processes around promotion, career development and remuneration, as well as role allocation. A review of the appraisal process will flow from this.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>Continuing the Research Leaders Programme, initiated in 2022, which reached 89 staff, and evaluated the effectiveness of the programme, to inform future support for the development of academic managers of researchers, and deliver bespoke research leadership events for researchers.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>Developing an early career researcher support framework, including THRIVE, an ECR network, and an ECR mentoring programme, has strengthened career navigation within that group.</p> <p>Delivering a series of workshops on 'preparing for academic promotion' (61 attended; 21 additional given one-to-one support)</p>
Professional development (<i>max 600 words</i>)	<p>Between Jan 2023 and Jan 2024 we enhanced professional development for researchers by, at the level of:</p> <p>Institution:</p> <p>Establishing a research culture and researcher development team to strategically assess training and development, to identify prioritise, and to synergise work across teams providing opportunities for staff.</p> <p>Developing a CPD guide and accompanying video for researchers. This has been circulated to all researchers and their line managers. It outlines the full scope of CPD and raises awareness of minimum requirement 10 days professional development pro rata per year. Work to embed self-evaluation of CPD into HR digital systems is under way.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p>

	<p>Establishing a senior leader's forum in the University bringing leaders and managers together on a 2 weekly basis to discuss strategic issues of important to the University. This is led by the Vice-Chancellor. It also functions as a CPD forum for senior leaders.</p> <p>Delivering focused support and training for REF leaders at Unit of Assessment level.</p> <p>Delivering project management training designed for PIs and those managing complex teams.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>Establishing THRIVE, within which we delivered training and development activities for ECRs within a cohort environment.</p> <p>Maintaining and adapting bespoke skills training for researchers across the University, including in grant-writing, project development, narrative CVs, with circa 410 attending.</p> <p>Developing a Knowledge Exchange skills framework to enable researchers to better translate knowledge to non-academic partners.</p> <p>See Hull Enhancing Research Culture Fund, above.</p>
<p>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. (<i>max 500 words</i>)</p>	
<p>During this period (Jan 2023-Jan 2024) the University has extended its strategic shift to being more research led. Coordination of work to enhance the University's research culture and researcher development has been led by the Associate Pro Vice Chancellor (Research Culture) via the Research Culture and Researcher Development team, which was established in Spring 2023. This work has progressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a bottom-up Research Culture Action Plan co-produced with the research community. 	

- Long-term planning focused specifically on enhancing research culture and researcher development.
- Short-term delivery of initiatives and projects specifically targeting research culture and researcher development.

This represents a significant shift in approach for the University. Lessons learned from this shift include:

- the necessity of running these three strands alongside and interwoven with one another.
- The operational incorporation of researcher development into research culture has clarified synergies between the two – these synergies were previously not exploited, as activities were not united in a single team.
- The need for tailored support to researchers at specific career stages, and to balance discipline specific support with cross-institution interdisciplinary support frameworks.
- The need for enhanced cross-institutional cooperation between professional services teams – especially between Research & Innovation and HR - to ensure that institutional policies meet researcher needs.
- The need for enhanced data capture and the use of indicators in monitoring progress. The development phase of the RCAP will initiate an institutional plan to this end, which will be reassessed iteratively.

The breadth of activities delivered over this period has also identified areas where further support is required, notably to support career development of mid-career and senior researchers, to supplement our ECR package of work, as well as targeted support for managers of research. This will be a key focus of work going into the next reporting period.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period
(*max 500 words*)

The coming reporting period (Jan. '24 – Feb. '25) will see progress across a range of fronts, as the University enhances its support for the development of researchers. We will:

- Launch, and initiate of the implementation of, a Hull Research Culture Action Plan.
- Further improve data gathering and reporting across research culture, researcher development, and employment. This will be driven by the agreement of key indicators for measuring progress of projects within the

RCAP, as well as the agreement of metrics to assess the people, culture and environment aspects of our research system, in line with the REF29.

- Consolidate feedback loops and networking mechanisms between decision-makers, professional services teams and the research community, as well as between researchers. The consultative development and ongoing evaluation of the RCAP, as well as the creation of an ECR network, and a Director of Research network, are examples of this approach. Similar approaches are being mainstreamed within HR through their policy review project.
- Extend the Academic Careers Framework review, assessing policies and processes around promotions, career development, appraisal and remuneration.
- Extend and consolidate learning from the HR policy review project. This will assess the effectiveness of existing policies and processes around recruitment, induction and onboarding.
- Deliver the Open Research action plan, led by the Institutional Lead for Open Research, feeding into the Concordat Steering Group
- Strengthen leadership development, for all staff and specifically for research leaders. The new 'Brilliant Leaders' programme will be evaluated for its impact on the research community; and will be complemented by bespoke support and development for senior research leaders and managers of researchers.
- Evaluate and adapt the THRIVE ECR cohort-based development programme and roll-out second cohort; continue to deliver bespoke and targeted training provision; and build a repository of digital resources for researchers.
- Review flexible working policy, and a dedicated training session, to support research managers.
- Promote research integrity training, now mandatory for all academic staff and to be completed every three years, rather than every five; as well as 'CPD for researchers guide'.
- Review, consolidate and expand faculty mentoring support, rationalising the various mentoring schemes which exist across the University, and enhancing their effectiveness through internal sharing of best practice and external training.
- Develop career development review meetings, and accompanying personal research plans, to complement appraisals and line management, designed to align with the Research and Enterprise Strategy and Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF).
- Consolidate the work of the health and wellbeing team (established in October 2023), beginning with an institutional review to advise improvement of access to services and mental health support amongst researchers. This work will also

be informed by the review of the internal Stress survey (conducted November 2023), and measures to increase the completion rates of mandatory 'Managing stress' training and non-mandatory 'Managing your own self-care' and 'Mental wellbeing and resilience'.

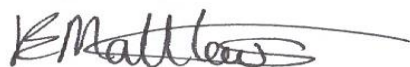
Please provide a brief statement describing your institution's approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body (*max 200 words*)

This report is prepared by the Research Culture and Researcher Development team, with advice and guidance from other teams across the University. 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

- HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) delivery team
- Concordat Steering Group
- PVC Research and Enterprise

Signature on behalf of governing body:



Professor Fiona Matthews, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)

Contact for queries: Professor Liz Walker

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

www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk