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

Universities and Research Institutes

Name of Institution	University of Salford
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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)*

Our Innovation Strategy (2021-26) continues our commitment to provide a vibrant, inclusive and supportive research environment where we nurture talent at all career stages. Two of our five Strategy priorities focus on our people: '*Developing Creative Research and Enterprise Leaders*' and '*Transforming our Culture*', which together will ensure we provide clear routes for success, and a connected system of training, resourcing, reward and recognition linked to the Salford Academic Career Pathways for Research-focused and for Enterprise-focused staff.

We are committed to building a diverse community of researchers that is welcoming and inclusive to all. Our aim, as set out in our inclusion and diversity policy is:

"To create an inspirational, inclusive learning and working environment, celebrating the diversity of our University community in our everyday conversations".

The University currently holds an Athena SWAN bronze institutional award, recognising the successful work we have done to embed effective governance for monitoring and evaluating our policies and practices around gender equality. We are a member of the Race Equality Charter, a long-standing member of Stonewall and a Stonewall Diversity Champion, and have been accredited as a 'Disability Confident' employer for our actions around the recruitment and retention of disabled job seekers.

Since March 2021 a Report and Support service is in place for staff where any colleague (or student) can report an experience they have had or witnessed that is unacceptable and provides a safe and confidential way of highlighting where the university needs to take action. A Mental Health First Aid Network, with over 65 members of staff trained across the university as Wellbeing Champions is also available to researchers to provide an understanding ear for others and signpost to relevant support. As a signatory to DORA, the university prioritises both responsible researcher assessment and responsible use of metrics during the development and implementation of assessment processes.

In support of the supervisors and line managers of our research community the researcher development team in partnership with the Doctoral School provides supervisory training to all supervisors as part of their ongoing continuing professional development. Alongside this, tailored sessions have been created for

those new to PGR supervision or new to PGR supervision at Salford to provide information on the responsibilities of supervisors, key processes and progression points and the support available for both supervisors and PGR's.

A research staff network for colleagues on fixed term research only contracts has also been created to connect researchers and to communicate relevant University policies and initiatives and to advertise and promote development opportunities and training.

An induction programme for new researchers has also been developed and runs twice a year which provides information about resources available via the Research and Knowledge Exchange Directorate and also includes personalised support to enable researchers to plan future research activities and identify areas where they may require training.

Our commitment to research staff is also reflected in the renewal of our HR in Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award in April 2023, which we've held since 2010.

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

Our Research and Knowledge Exchange Directorate aims to build on its successful and innovative postgraduate development programme to support all researchers that work at the University. Our 2022 research culture review identified some key aspects of the researcher experience where we can make improvements and we have incorporated these into our action plan, for example, around induction and leadership development. We aim to sustain and grow our research staff network so that researchers feel supported and have access to resources and training as required.

A measure of success will be ECR's directly contributing to initiatives, engaging in activities and shaping future development opportunities **(ECR1).**

Employment

Our People Plan 2020+ has enabled us to deliver a number of initiatives aligned to the Environment and Culture and Employment areas, therefore, with our new Innovation Strategy in place and a restructured central research support directorate we are focussing on the Environment and Culture and Professional and Career Development priorities.

However, through building a community for managers of researchers, good practice will be shared and resources generated that are tailored in particular for those that manage researchers on fixed term contracts (**EM2**).

Professional Development of Researchers

Our vision for successful researcher development, aligned to our Innovation Strategy 2021-26 is 'Cohorts, Connections and Communities'. Through community building, we will encourage peer to peer learning and support. Regular targeted opportunities for ECR's are being communicated via the new research staff network and all fixed term contract researchers are offered group and 1:1 meetings with the Researcher Development Manager to support their professional development.

A measure of success will be increased engagement of ECRs across the development programme and all providing positive feedback of their experiences (**PCDI6**).

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]	
Environment and Culture *(max 600 words)*	**Institution** The HREiR Award was achieved in April 2023 for the 12th year running. The Action Plan for 2022-2025 reflects our ambitions for researcher development at Salford paying particular focus on building communities and tailoring development opportunities for researchers at difference career stages. **Academic Managers of Researchers** Associate Deans of Research and Innovation across all Schools have been consulted and updated on the revised

| | researcher development programme and given the opportunity to provide input on the provision needed.

Training is being developed to enhance the leadership skills of those that manage researchers, particularly those on fixed term contracts. All new managers of researchers are also invited to attend the new Research and Knowledge Exchange induction programme (**EM2**)

Researchers

A high priority for the 2022-25 action plan was to establish the research staff network and to better connect ECR's and researchers on fixed term contracts. This was achieved in March 2023 and is running well. A central hub has been created that provides information on training opportunities and links to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and our action plan (**ECI1, ECI2, ECI6**)

A monthly "coffee and catch up" has been introduced and has been well attended with positive feedback (**ECR3**). |
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| **Employment** *(max 600 words)* | As part of the 2020-2022 action plan, employment was a major focus, and many processes were put in place with regards to recruitment, promotion and appraisal. In our action plan for 2022-2025 whilst maintaining (and enhancing) the areas we have delivered on for Employment we have turned out attention to support the Environment and Culture and Professional Development pillars.

Institution

Our new Fellowships and First grant academy has been launched which included the recruitment of a researcher developer to support researchers early in their career that have little or no experience of applying for research funding.

Research Staff are often on short term contracts, turnover is relatively rapid and many appointees tend to join the University at ad hoc timings. Each month, new starters within this role are invited to join our research staff network to |

	connect with other researchers and to have access to information about University policies and training and development opportunities as soon as possible after joining the University (**ECI1**, **ECI2 EI2**). **Academic Managers of Researchers** Actions within this area will be implemented during 2023-25. Managers of researchers have been identified and a leadership programme is being developed. **Researchers** A career conversations network has been established between the University of Salford, the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. Monthly online sessions with speakers from all employment sectors are available to all researchers with a particular focus on ECR's and postdocs to facilitate the array of career opportunities both within and outside of academia for researchers **(PCDI3).**
Professional development *(max 600 words)*	**Institution** Significant effort has been put into extending links and making more visible key recourses available to researchers around the University, such as library services. The Researcher Development team meet regularly and have increased communication with representatives from each of the Schools to ensure that training opportunities are promoted and thoughtfully planned to avoid duplication and delivery of material that is not relevant or needed (**PCDI1**). **Academic Managers of Researchers** Alongside our established Supervisor development programme, tailored sessions have been created for those new to PGR supervision or new to PGR supervision at Salford to provide information on the responsibilities of Supervisors, key processes and progression points and the support available for both Supervisors and PGR's **(EM2).**

	Researchers
	The recruitment of a Researcher Development Manager in early 2023, with a revised focus on the creation and delivery of training and development opportunities centred around early career researchers, has led to the establishment of a research staff network for all fixed term researchers **(ECI1).**
	CEDARS (Careers, Employment and Development in Academic Research) biennial survey was carried out in June 2023, and 25% of those that completed the survey were ECR's. The results of the survey will help feed into the training programme offered (**ECI6**).
	Training and development opportunities are now being offered that focused on the needs of ECR's which include, writing resources, knowledge exchange and impact, research integrity, communication and teaching. Specific ECR and new starter hubs have been created and are updated regularly to provide colleagues with relevant information and links to development activities **(ECI2, PCDI1)**
	Researchers are also invited to attend a Research and Knowledge Exchange induction programme within the first six months of them joining the University. The programme involves the opportunity to connect with colleagues from Business innovation services, Funding development, Commercialisation, Ethics and Governance, the Doctoral school and Researcher Development. As well as workshops to plan future research activities and identify areas where they may require training **(PCDR6).**
	A group coaching session on career progression tailored specifically for ECR's was delivered in July 2023 to provide attendees with the tools to help them take responsibility for their own career development (**ECR3**). Attendance was high and feedback was very positive, therefore, other similar sessions will be delivered in the near future.
	Our recently revamped Pathways to Teaching and Learning programme provides a structured overview of pedagogic

| | theory and support to complete an application for Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA). This has been opened out for the first time to ECR's alongside postgraduate researchers and 2 ECR's are participating in the current cohort **(ECI2).** |

| 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)* |

We have found great benefit and success in delivering training programmes that are tailored for specific career stages, that are delivered centrally and therefore encourages across School interactions. Delivering sessions in a hybrid format has also increased accessibility and engagement.

Although still in its infancy our research staff network has been well received and provides those on fixed term contracts with access to relevant resources and peer support.

We want to build on the rich and valuable information we receive from regularly and directly interacting with our research staff network and to involve them more in informal consultations to identify any areas of concern /gaps in our development programmes.

Measures of success will be increased engagement in our training and development programme and positive feedback.

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

During 2023/2024 academic year we plan to build on and enhance the interactions we have nurtured with our research staff particularly our ECR's. We want to ensure that the voices of research only staff are championed and heard across the University by encouraging and supporting ECR's to be represented on all relevant working groups and committees.

Continue to improve communications pathways for researchers and their managers around wellbeing and the report and support processes as well as policies, practices and initiatives across the University.

To create, follow and disseminate a code of conduct and guidelines to ensure we deliver training and development activities that are inclusive and accessible.

Ensure that all ECR's have access to training workshops around completing a tailored 3 year plan to identify and support their research goals and career progression.

To promote ECR's to engage and develop resources for public and community engagement events as well attending impact and knowledge exchange workshops.

Deliver leadership training for both managers of researchers and research staff.

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)*

Our action plan is overseen by the Research, Enterprise, and Innovation Committee (REIC), which is a subcommittee of University Senate and chaired by the PVC Research and Enterprise. This report has been shared with the committee.

Signature on behalf of governing body:

PROF. KARL DAYSON

Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research and Innovation

Contact for queries: Dr Angela Midgley, Researcher Development Manager (a.midgley1@salford.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

www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk