



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

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| Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via  [CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk) | 16 October 2023 |

1

*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)*

Bath Spa University (BSU) has a vibrant, disciplinary and interdisciplinary research culture devoted to developing and sustaining research excellence and is an innovative and resourceful University with roots in the synergies between employers, knowledge and creativity that are the drivers of sustainable economic development. We pride ourselves on our sense of community and our nurturing ethos; our purpose is to challenge our students to realise their talent and our staff to attain their research potential, both for their own benefit and for the wider good.

We are committed to developing researchers at all career stages, and supporting those who wish to be research active by:

* Monitoring sector wide recommendations for best practice in research culture
* Embedding an understanding of the importance of impact and public engagement in research practice
* Supporting our staff and Postgraduate Research Students (PGRs) through our Researcher Development Programme (RDP), the MA in Professional Practice in HE, and our Research and Enterprise Leadership programme
* Recognising the value of professional and creative practice as research
* An annual promotion round for Readers and Professors across our three career pathways of teaching, enterprise and research.

# Researcher Development Concordat

The University was one of the first 50 UK HEIs to achieve the HR Excellence in Research Award (HREiR) in 2010 and has successfully retained this since. Bath Spa is a signatory of the new UUK Concordat, and a new Research and Enterprise Leadership programme was launched in 2020, alongside a range of additional initiatives in response to the new requirements for managers of researchers. We have committed to the requirement of an annual 10 days’ professional development allocation for all staff on research-only contracts and are working towards this for all academic staff.

# Support for Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

Early career researchers are allocated lighter teaching loads and teaching timetables and adjusted to take account of the needs of particular research projects or writing activities.

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| Our Senior Lecturer in Research & Enterprise Development (SL RED) engages regularly with research staff from our ECR, contract researcher and PhD communities, and has worked with them to develop bespoke researcher development programmes and events. For example:   * Seed funds established to build a supportive research environment to fund ECRs in developing their research careers * A bespoke programme of training events for our contract researchers – ‘The Network' – enabling them to select the topics of their development and work regularly as a cohort with an external trainer * MA modules designed specifically to support and accredit professional development in key areas for researchers – 'Supervising Research' and 'Researcher Development'   All ECRs are given the opportunity to be allocated a mentor from across the research leadership community, attend bespoke induction and training inductions, and access a professional external coach to offer one-to-one coaching for the development of their careers, publications and profiles.  All research staff are invited to a Research Induction event with the RSO and Library Services to ensure that they are aware of the support available to them, and the University policies and procedures pertaining to research.  *[497]* |
| *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

The University Research & Enterprise Committee (REC) has elected representatives from across our research and academic communities, and we actively encourage ESRs to take part in working groups and initiatives.

A Research & Enterprise Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group (REEDIWG) and a University Ethics Panel aim to embed good practice across the university - progress in this area is reported to and evaluated though REC.

Staff are introduced to the Concordat at the Research Induction sessions, and details are circulated regularly in the Research newsletter. The RSO engages regularly with research staff across the university, through induction events and participation in school level research meetings, and feedback and good practice informs the review and development of the Concordat Action Plan.

The University has training and development in place to support staff in the areas of mental health & wellbeing, bullying & harassment and equality, diversity & inclusion. The Head of RSO sits on the Equality & Diversity Steering Group and the Workload Planning Steering Group to ensure that issues relating to researchers are addressed and embedded into university policy in these areas.

## Employment

The RSO works with HR on any changes to recruitment processes to ensure that the needs of researchers are embedded within institutional policy and to ensure that all new PIs are included in recruitment training. We have used some of our HEQR culture funding this years to support staff across the university to attend the Advance HE Diversifying leadership programme, and will be using the new REEDIWG to evaluate and develop E&D training across our researcher communities, and to implement, monitor and evaluate Equality Impact Assessments across our research work.

An annual promotions process is in place, with bespoke workshops to support staff with their applications, and there is an annual review of the process which informs future rounds.

The PVCRE chairs termly meetings with our research leadership community and with Heads of School to discuss strategy, research environment and culture. A new annual reporting process is being put in place through which REC will monitor and evaluate the management of research and research outcomes at local level.

The University has a range of policies, workshops and training to support people management. A new Workload Planning tool is being implemented to support academic staff with workload allocation - this is managed and evaluated by a university wide steering group to ensure that issues raised and lessons learnt are embedded into practice.

## Professional Development of Researchers

An annual Researcher Development Programme is in place to support research staff across all areas of their development, and this is monitored and evaluated each year, and tailored to the needs of our researcher community. The University has committed to 10 days of professional training for research contract staff and is moving towards this for all academic staff - the current WLP tariff allocates time for training and development, and all staff have dedicated Research & Scholarly Activity time to support these activities.

All staff have an annual Staff Development Review which identifies training needs, and ESRs are offered mentors from across our research leadership community to support and guide them with their research career development needs.

We have an ESR network and each year a series of themed events are put in place to support them in their development, with opportunities to collaborate across the university and feedback their experiences at our annual research festival. An annual competitive seed fund is in place which offers researchers funding for pilot projects, impact and public engagement activities, and to employ research assistants to support these activities given ESR valuable research management experience.

[594]

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| *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***  A university wide consultation has been undertaken over the last year to identify our core areas of excellent and world leading research, and the PVCRE is working with Senior Leadership to develop and embed new research governance structures, supported by more focussed research support initiatives. |
|  | This has led to a new Research Strategy for 2030, which sets out our aims and objectives for ensuring that research underpins all that we do, and that our research environment and culture supports research excellence. |
|  | An implementation plan is being put in place to develop research management structure at school level, and monitoring and evaluation of school led activities through the University Research & Ethics Committee. |
|  | ***Academic Managers of Researchers*** |
|  | A Research Leaders network is in place which meets on a termly basis, and opportunities are made available and funded centrally for staff to attend sector wide workshops and events related to research policy. |
|  | Funding has been provided for coaching to be put in place for staff nominated by their Head of School, and a Research & Enterprise Leadership Programme was launched in 2019/20. |
|  | At University level, all staff are required to attend a range of equality & diversity training, including unconscious bias. |
|  | One large area of focus for the 2022/23 academic year has been around the development of the Workload Planning tool pilot, and a range of training and development activities has been put in place to support managers with discussions around workload management. |
|  | We hope to relaunch the Research & Enterprise Leadership programme in 2023/24 as part of the launch of the new research strategy, and put in place further development and training for staff |

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|  | that have been identified as having research and KE leadership roles to support the strategy at school level.  **Researchers**  A termly online induction workshop was put in place in the 2022/23 academic year open to all research staff, and a range of materials are in place to support research on the University’s intranet.  A Workload Planning pilot has taken place in the academic year in 2022/23 which has been evaluated and will be launched for the start of the 2023/24 academic year. It aims to ensure that there is a balanced workload in place for academic staff and allows for protected time for staff personal and professional development, scholarship and research, and for academic governance leadership development and active citizenship.  ESR and Researcher Networks are in place to meet training needs identified for these staff communities, and each network has a dedicated budget to support these activities.  An annual seed fund competition takes place providing opportunities for staff to bid for small amounts of money to develop their research management and leadership skills. In 202/23 this was supplemented by our AHRC Impact Accelerator Award to fund projects focussed on developing external collaborations and engaging in participatory co- researched projects.  HEQR seed funding was provided as follows:   * 2021/22 academic year: 28 projects (6 led by ESRs) * 2022/23 academic year: 18 projects (11 ed by ESRs) AHRC IAA funding was provided as follows: * 9 Knowledge Exchange Dialogues (to set up collaborative networks) * 1 postdoctoral research fellow * 1 ESR fellow   In addition to this, additional HEQR uplift to support international activities was used to fund 18 global collaborations and 11 staff to attend international conferences.  We will continue to support the ESR and research networks in 2023/24 and to evaluate the success of the seed funding programme, to inform the use of HEQR in 2024/25. We are building a range of case studies showcasing good practice which we will publish in autumn 2024.  **[600]** |

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| Employment *(max 600 words)* | ***Institution***  There is a general staff induction programme for all staff, introducing them to the University and its policies and processes. The Research Office also offers a research induction workshop for all new academic starters, in collaboration with Library Services and all new ESR staff are offered a research mentor.  The University has an annual round for promotions to Readers and Professors in three routes: Research; Creative Enterprise and Innovation; and Teaching and Learning. All pathways have clear criteria that are circulated to all staff, and promotion workshops are offered to all interested candidates at the start of each annual process. E&D information related to promotion are evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis and any issues referred to E&D Steering Group for action.  There is an annual VC Awards scheme with categories to recognise teams and individuals, and the research office has a regular newsletter that highlights research successes and achievement.  The University has a range of Management training in place and has a Line Managers forum which encourages the sharing of good practice and promotes professional development. The RDP runs training workshops in research leadership and management, and in project management for PIs and Co-Is leading research projects.  This academic year the university introduced three career pathways in: Teaching & Scholarship; Teaching, Scholarship & Research; and Teaching, Scholarship and KE3. This will allow us to tailor training and development across the three pathways and enhance our research and enterprise support through the development of aligned modules in the MA in Professional Practice in HE.  ***Academic Managers of Researchers***  All Line Managers are required to undertake Line Management training and take part in the Line Management forum, which focuses on areas of institutional policy and strategy, and training and development to support the leadership community with implementation.  RSO organises start up meetings with PI, finance and HR to go through terms and conditions of grant prior to the start of funded projects, and project Management training is offered through the RDP for PIs and Co-Is. |

All staff are required to undertake annual reviews with their staff (SDR) and should undertake career development sessions as part of this process - HR provides LM training for all staff linked to these issues. This area is also part of discussions at Research Leaders Meetings, and training in Mentoring and Coaching is available to staff through the MAPPHE Programme.

All staff are given the opportunity to engage with policy development through Town Hall meetings, Research leaders’ meetings and the professoriate. Working Groups are also set up and membership sought for specific policy areas (e.g., open access, KEF, Equality & Diversity).

# Researchers

The RSO works closely with research project teams and research staff to support them in their activities and is working with HR to implement an annual research plan into the SDR process which ESR can discuss with their mentors or research leaders.

Researchers are encouraged to engage in the activities of their academic school, and of the research centre or group that they are affiliated to and are supported through central and devolved HEQR funding to take part in external academic networks and to attend conferences and workshops.

Researchers take part in Town Hall meetings and other events related to discussions on research policy, and there is an ECR/FTC representative on the University's Research and Ethics Committee and the HR Excellence Working Group.

There is an annual research festival at the university that enables staff to showcase their research, and their projects are disseminated through the monthly research newsletter and through the Research Matters initiatives.

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| Professional  development  *(max 600 words)* | ***Institution***  The Researcher Development Programme offers a full range of research-related training opportunities for staff and PhD researchers across the university. This includes centrally run training, externally facilitated online courses (Research Integrity, Research Supervision, impact and collaborative research practice, grant funding, Webinars for all aspects of PhD process and experience), bespoke support and training options for Contract Researchers, as well as a mentoring Scheme for ESRs, and writing retreats for PhDs, and staff. The programme is evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis.  All staff are required to undertake annual reviews with their staff (SDR) and should undertake career development sessions as part of this process.  Enterprise and Innovation is now a pathway in promotions criteria with specific Readers and Professors promoted in this area. The University has a Consultancy Policy and provides support for staff engaged in Consultancy activities and contract research, and details of externally funded commercial research projects are monitored by REC to help inform our business and industry engagement strategies.  We received a KTP Capacity Building Grant in the 2022/23 academic year and have used this funding to engage in some sandpit events to link academics to external networks, and to identify local and regional business to target for collaborative activities, staff and student KE, internships and placements.  **Academic Managers of Researchers**  All PhD Supervisors and Research Leaders are encouraged to engage with training in Research Supervision, in-person, online, and through an MA module in Supervising Research and to act as Mentors on the ESR Mentoring Scheme.  Leadership skills, Research Identity and Research Management are embedded within many of the training sessions across the programme, and leadership is also one of the criteria for promotion.  Training workshops are offered in the Researcher Development Programme around time, project and career management, wellbeing, and many other areas, and Research Managers are encouraged to promote these sessions to their researchers alongside discussing their bespoke training needs. The University has committed to 10 days of professional and personal development training for the contract and research only staff community and is working towards this for all |

academic staff - the Workload Planning pilot will help us with evaluating progress in this area.

HEQR funding supports attendance at the NCCPE Engage Academy and Advance HE Diverse Leadership programmes, and we hope to relaunch our Research & Enterprise Leadership programme in 2023/24.

## Researchers

The Researcher Development Programme offers a full range of research-related training opportunities for staff and PhD researchers across the university, and an ESR and Research staff network provides bespoke training for those staffing communities.

The launch of the three career pathways should ensure that research staff are given the opportunity to have an informed discussion with their Line Managers on an annual basis to determine which route they would like to align themselves to, and to identify time and resources that will support them in their development.

The new SL RED will also work to refresh and develop the research & enterprise development modules in the MA in Professional Practice in HE programme, to support new staff in developing the appropriate skills. We also hope to build on the KTP Capacity building project to promote and support more academic staff to develop collaborative projects and consultancy with business and industry, in order to grow our commercial research capacity.

Regular meetings between the RSO and the research leads in each school should ensure that bespoken training can be put in place to support school-led priorities.

[574]

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| *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)* |
| The 2021/22 and 22/23 academic years have been a period of transition for the University, as we have emerged from the pandemic and reviewed our activities post REF 2021.  As a professional practice and creative-led institution, the University is keen to ensure that teaching, research and knowledge exchange & enterprise are treated equally across the institution. Three new career pathways have been put in place to enable academic staff to focus on their strengths and career aspirations, and link to our existing proportion pathways, creating a parity of esteem for all. This will link to our KEF/TEF/and REF strategies and ensure that research underpins all of our activities, and that staff are allocated time to focus on specific activities, rather than trying to meet the demands of all 3 areas. We hope that this will relieve pressure on academic staff and support our mental health and wellbeing, and equality, diversity and inclusion strategies, by putting in place more transparent and equitable opportunities for all.  A new research strategy was the subject of extensive consultation across the 2021/22 academic year and was approved by the Board of Governors in December 2022. Work is now in place with Heads of School to develop the implementation strategy for the start of the 2023/24 academic year. This has enabled us to discuss how we best manage and support research activities across the university, to support a fully funded research environment and culture.  An annual research plan will be developed by academic schools which will include details of:   * Research and KE Leads; * % of staff across each of the career pathways; * Strategic objectives for research & enterprise; * Areas of research/KE in the schools and their academic leads; * Plans for the use of devolved HEQR; * Research development records for academic staff for mandatory training in ethics and integrity, and research supervision; * Details of outputs, research funding, PhD recruitment and support, impact and KE activities as research centre and group level;   Research support will then be targeted to support these areas of activities, and the RSO will work closely with research and KE leads to ensure that training and development, and support for activities are put in place to best support research staff at the local level. This will include strategic use of institutional HEQR and the use of devolved HEQR to support local initiatives. |

Given the low number of contract research staff, the University has not taken part in the Career in Research Online Survey (CROS) in the past, and has only once undertaken the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS). We are aiming to take part in a local version of the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) for the first time this academic year, which will provide a bench-mark for the evaluation of our activities and the development of quantitative success measures over the next Concordat period. We then plan to take part in the national bench-marked exercise in 2025.

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| Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period *(max 500 words)* |
| The core focus for our 2030 research strategy centres around both UK and global priorities for research, which align both with the strengths of the university, and focus our concentration on our areas of research strength, where we can clearly demonstrate existing world class research, and the potential for growth. Staff will be aligned to each of those themes, with management of research at academic school level focussed around a complementary research and enterprise governance structure. This supports our Concordat Action Plan by developing our researchers around the following key objectives:   * To ensure our curriculum drives, and is driven by, research, professional practice and knowledge exchange activities, so that students are challenged at the forefront of their discipline and that we develop researchers of all career stages, actively encouraging students to engage with research and to contribute to the research environment in which they are taught. * To recognise the role of research in supporting innovative enterprise activity and enable this by building strong partnerships to maximise the societal and economic benefits of our research, leveraging our creative expertise, and supporting staff and student knowledge exchange activities. * To use our expertise across the arts, humanities, education, sciences, and social sciences to build interdisciplinary responses to research questions and to create research that is impactful, addresses the challenges of our time and makes a distinctive contribution. |

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| * To recognise the mutual dependence of new technologies and culture through embedding technological innovation within our research practice. * To extend our expertise in engaged research practices through creative strategies and co-production of research with participants, by embedding an understanding of the importance of impact and public engagement in research practice and ensuring that we build cultural diversity and cultural engagement into our activities. * To build a distinctive and globally excellent research profile by widening our international research links and externally funded international projects, develop our existing connections with countries/regions that might be underrepresented in the broader international research landscape and develop sustainable knowledge ecosystems that are challenge-driven, developmental, transdisciplinary, and politically aware. * To develop the GALA network to provide exchange and networking opportunities for staff and students and to help us secure substantive research income for collaborative projects. * To increase the number of Doctoral students - where strategically appropriate - both nationally and internationally, by attracting able Doctoral students by promoting our research strengths and the interdisciplinarity of our research environment, and integrating our research students fully into the research communities linked to our research priorities. We will aim to retain our best students from Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes by offering early advice about research opportunities and recognise their loyalty with discounted fee offers. * To ensure that our research management and governance structures enhance and support interdisciplinary research and foster a culture of open research. |
| 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)*  The annual plan has been informed by the review of the Concordat Action Plan undertaken by the HR Excellence in Research Working Group.  It was considered and approved by Research & Ethics Committee on 24 May 2023, and by the Academic Board on 11 July 2023.  It was approved by the Board of Governors on 27 September 2023 |

Signature on behalf of governing body:



Contact for queries: Ms Sarah Priston, Head of Research Support

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/)