

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

Name of Institution	Lancaster University
Reporting period	2021/22
Date approved by governing body	13 th December 2022
Date published online	14 th December 2022
Web address of annual report	https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/researcher-development/
Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage	https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/researcher-development/
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Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk	14 th December 2022

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*)

Concordat implementation group (CIG). This group meets twice a term to ensure progress against the HR EIR action plan. It is a subcommittee of the Institutional Research Committee and currently chaired by the Director of People and Organisation Effectiveness Division (POED). Other members include: Research Staff Association (RSA) (ideally one member of research only staff from each faculty), Institutional Dean for Research, 4 x Associate Deans for Research, Reward and Performance Manager, (POED) Service delivery manager (POED), Organisational Developer for Academic and Research (POED) Careers service, Library services, Research support office (RSO) AS (Athena Swan) manager. Membership is currently under review to ensure the most appropriate people are involved e.g., those who will take actions and influence policy and practice, underrepresentation of departments. E.g., Department Officers, and Directors for Research.

Athena Swan – The Athena Swan (AS) and the Concordat action plans have similar responsibilities and themes particularly around equality and inclusion. Where there is an overlap the two actions have been drawn together. AS manager is an active CIG member, updating CIG on any actions or reports. Joint actions are clearly highlighted on the action plan. A researcher representative sits on the AS action group.

Race Equality Charter – The Race Equality Charter is a new area of activity for Lancaster, with a small team joining POED this year. Once the REC action plan has been through the usual University procedures, this will follow the same route as Athena swan, allowing for joint reporting on activities through CIG. The researcher community has been involved in the production of the action plan.

Lancaster uses the Vitae CEDARS survey as a benchmarking tool. This year Lancaster ran its own version (as the normal Vitae life cycle is biennial). The data was analysed and by using focus groups, one to one interviews, and information collated by the RSA, gained a deeper insight into Lancaster's research culture resulting in a report and recommendations for CIG to take forward. Issues relating to fixed-term contracts, the new indefinite with an end date contracts, and promotion opportunities for research staff remain. The short-term nature of research contracts is still the biggest hindrance to a positive experience, with researchers not feeling able to step outside of their research field to take part in

broader institutional activities, as they feel under pressure to ensure they complete their research on time.

A report was also commissioned by the library services. This looked through an open research lens. There were several issues highlighted in both reports for further investigation, particularly around lack of information sharing.

People and Culture Plan: Launched in March 2022, the People and Culture Plan outlines the journey that everyone will go on together, to support the achievement of the Strategic Plan. Lancaster celebrates the characteristics that make it distinctive, including a strong tradition of interdisciplinary research founded upon strong subject areas, a commitment to excellence and inclusivity, its status as a pioneer institution and a desire to act as a force for good, committed to creating a better world. The plan uses the three values listed below as the central core with activities attached to each.

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

*In pursuit of its Vision (to be a globally significant university) and in keeping with its Purpose (to advance knowledge, wisdom and understanding through the excellence of its reaching and research), Lancaster works to uphold its **Values**:*

- *We respect each other by being open and fair and promoting diversity*
- *We build strong communities by working effectively together in a supportive way*
- *We create positive change by being ambitious in our learning, expertise and action*

*From the strategic plan, **Priorities for Research**:*

- *Support and increase our inter and multi-disciplinary working*
- *Increase the volume and quality of our research income*
- *Support the Royal Society's Resume for Researchers*
- *Increase the variety and value of our research*

We will sustain our commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and further develop our Doctoral Academy as a key element of our enhancement of the postgraduate research student experience.

Relevant supporting initiatives:

Resume for Researchers – Lancaster is working to introduce the format and terminology of the Resume for Researchers in several areas, including promotions criteria, within PDR and guidance for the use of the researchers 10 development days.

Race Equality Charter - The recently established Race Equality Charter Team are developing a R.E.C. plan to inform and improve the representation, progression and success of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students at Lancaster. To inform this plan, a full institution staff and student REC survey is currently underway.

Measure - Plan in place by 2024

Bullying and Harassment - There is currently an institutional review of the Bullying and Harassment policy, with a roll out planned to highlight the changes and improved processes, due in early 2023.

Measure - Publication of new policy, decrease in researchers reporting dissatisfaction and lack of awareness of processes through CEDARS survey. Introduction of a Bullying and Harassment support network.

Employment

Careers support - Lancaster has been an active participant in the Prosper project, (for Researchers - with Liverpool and Manchester) creating a bespoke portal and development programme for the enhancement of alternative careers for researchers. Lancaster also undertook an internal programme to satisfy the needs of a broader audience, and democratising access across all research staff. This included a series of workshops, diagnostics, and one to one career support, leading to recommendations for taking the project forward and embedding it as business as usual.

Measure – Satisfaction reported through programme review and CEDARS survey data. Implementation of new internal researcher careers support structure.

Recruitment and Selection - A comprehensive review of all recruitment and selection processes, practice, policy, and guidance are being undertaken within POED. Research staff have been active members of the fact-finding groups and will be involved in the full implementation. A secondary review will follow, looking specifically at the redeployment process, which is currently not working for research staff.

Measure - New joiner survey to show a recognition and satisfaction of new processes. Hiring managers to report that systems and processes are easier to use.

These significant projects will have an impact on the researcher communities, and it has been important to include members of this community in the working groups.

Professional Development of Researchers

POED undertakes an annual review of its provision of support, ensuring that researchers across the institution have access to appropriate opportunities. The feedback is assessed, and individual programmes have content refreshed. Where there is notable change needed then new programmes are commissioned.

Our full range of programmes is available [here](#).

Link to [guidance for 10 development days](#).

Measure - Researchers to report satisfaction on completion of programmes and an impact on performance and practice. Increase in reporting of take up of 10 development days.

A new research culture post to be introduced into the Research Support Office (RSO) next year, to consolidate several strands of research culture support.

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 Institution has undertaken several surveys, focus groups and other research into Research Culture during 2022. These reports have informed actions in HR EIR action plan and

other faculty wide considerations. Impact will be measured CEDARS 2023 and follow up focus groups.

A new work allocation model and PDR software have been introduced during summer 2022. Usage and impact monitoring has yet to be established. These should create a fairer workload monitoring process, looking to decrease reports of inequalities across the institution. The new PDR software will allow for improved reporting on take up. It encourages the narrative CV style of reporting activities for researchers and academics, with a reduced emphasis on publications. (Resume for Researchers)

Measure – feedback from CEDARS survey and benchmarking established for future measures.

Code of Practice – The institution re-launched its Code of Practice as an easy to access website. This guides all stakeholder groups to the expectations of the Concordat at Lancaster.

Measure: An understanding of the Code of Practice by all new research staff and research managers, as reported by the new starter survey.

AS action – PARS (Parental, Adoption, Research Support) scheme now open to those on fixed-term and indefinite with an end date contracts (Impact report due September 2023)

New **mental health** online module reporting 80% of all staff completed. Target is 95%.

Academic Managers of Researchers

PIs/CoIs and other research leaders are being actively encouraged to attend central training provision, specifically designed for Lancaster research managers.

This provision will be enhanced for 2023 with a range of new 'induction to grant management' sessions. These will be strongly recommended to all those new to Lancaster or existing Lancaster staff new to research management or

wanting a refresh. This training will also cover integrity and ethics, currently being delivered as an online training resource.

Mentoring: This Autumn all 4 faculties have adopted the mentoring guidance designed and implemented by FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences). This gives guidelines for setting up mentoring schemes and practical considerations. Most departments are now reporting that they have a scheme in place for new starters.

The institution is a partner in the Mid-career mentoring group with Liverpool, Huddersfield, Salford, SOAS, Sheffield Hallam and Bradford. This scheme offers established researchers an opportunity to access a mentor from a partner institution, expanding their network and opportunities. This scheme was show cased at the Vitae conference this year.

Measure: New starter survey and CEDARS data to show all new researchers have been allocated a mentor from outside of their research group.

Researchers

The Researcher Staff Association (through focus groups and feedback sessions) highlighted three areas of particular concern to them for particular attention for this period.

Researcher Identity- Agreed nomenclature – a clearer understanding of how various categories of research staff might describe themselves and consistent use of these across the institution. E.g. Not using the term ECR, Post Doc etc. Replacing with the term research staff.

Updated action: Recruitment team ensuring that adverts for roles are appropriate (there are exceptions due to funding requirements.) Further work is needed to ensure that consistent and accurate use of language is extended to other areas, e.g., research support, access to internal funding opportunities, contracts, probation/performance review. More consistency is needed with respect to whether

	<p>research staff are classed as academic or professional services. This has an impact on promotions, PDR etc.</p> <p>Researcher Voice - ensuring researchers are always integrated into Departmental and Faculty communications and activities and encouraged to take part in decision making committees.</p> <p>Measure: CEDARS 92.2% now report receiving all department comms.</p> <p>Updated action: New researcher representatives have been recruited to a range of committees. There are still gaps and a lack of volunteers. More encouragement and support are still needed by managers of researchers to enable them to take up these opportunities. Consistent monitoring of where committees (at department, faculty and institutional level) have a research staff representative, or a vacancy for such, to be established.</p> <p>Equity and consistency - Consistency in application of policies e.g., funding for conferences and development, across all faculties and departments.</p> <p>Updated action: Associate Deans for Research (from each faculty) working together to look for synergies.</p> <p>Measure: satisfaction increase reported through CEDARS</p>
<p>Employment (<i>max 600 words</i>)</p>	<p><u>Institution</u></p> <p>All existing and new researchers are now employed on indefinite (with funding end date) contracts. The main benefit of this approach is intended to be increased stability for researchers and access to enhanced re-deployment options. There are still some issues, as raised by the RSA and research staff feedback, in relation to the operation of this change and the transparency of any benefits.</p> <p>2022/2023 POED are undertaking a full review of recruitment and selection to ensure transparency, with equitable and inclusive practice. This review includes focus groups from all</p>

	<p>categories of staff. Recommendation for improvements to policy and practice will be published early in 2023.</p> <p><u>Academic Managers of Researchers</u></p> <p>Induction: CEDARS feedback from 2021 showed only 68% of research staff felt included in immediate research group. Follow up focus groups attributed this result in part to the impact of Covid and the importance of good departmental induction.</p> <p>Measure: The new starter induction questionnaire shows a different response, reporting that new researchers have a broad understanding of the University and how their role fits within the local structures. This gives research managers a clear focus for building their teams and will be covered in more depth in the new research grant induction programme.</p> <p><u>Researchers</u></p> <p>Researchers are encouraged to use the new PDR online system to help them understand their role and responsibilities. This is an excellent opportunity for them to explore all options with their line manager.</p> <p>Measure: Monitoring of the usage of the new system will be developed through 2023.</p> <p>Mentoring: Researchers to access the Inter institutional Mid-career mentoring scheme.</p> <p>Measure: Programme satisfaction survey to show an impact on confidence and knowledge.</p>
<p>Professional development (<i>max 600 words</i>)</p>	<p><u>Institution</u></p> <p>Lancaster provides its Research community with a broad range of programmes and development activities to support professional development. A new web page provides guidance on the potential uses of their 10 development days allocation – this has been framed around the ‘Resume for Researchers’.</p>

New programmes are introduced as a response to feedback from researchers, for example, following feedback that existing mentoring workshops were too generic and did not resonate with academic and research staff, last year a new workshop was introduced, looking specifically at mentoring skills for academia. The same process was undertaken with the Project Management programme, a new facilitator designed a bespoke programme for Lancaster’s researchers, to help support them with their research projects.

RSO: A review of induction processes for those new to grant management has been undertaken by RSO resulting in an enhanced package of support for Research Managers being developed for 2023.

Measure: Attendance by researchers at these sessions is high, with most session running at full capacity. Further data on impact will be measured in 2023 CEDARS survey. Exit questionnaires and follow up impact statements will be gathered for the OD programmes review annually.

Library: An area of Lancaster’s library extension has been re-designed, providing a dedicated space where researchers can gather to network and collaborate. It will also host workshops and development opportunities designed for the researcher community. Including: Collecting and managing research data, research skills and open research cafes etc.

Measure: Increase in usage over next 2 years. Reports of increase in collaborations.

Academic Managers of Researchers

All Lancaster’s research managers are encouraged to attend a range of development support sessions such as:

- PI/Col development programme
- Introduction to research grant management
- Manager@Lancaster
- Leader@Lancaster
- HoD induction

- Senior Academic leadership programmes

Work is ongoing to increase the awareness of existing opportunities for Research Managers to improve their skills and to signpost their researchers, to appropriate support and development opportunities. Heads of Departments are kept up to date with a monthly newsletter.

Managers are encouraged to undertake the PDR training to ensure they understand the new online system and give the best support to their researcher's career aspirations, offering advice and guidance and signposting as appropriate.

Research managers to be aware that the perceptions of researchers are not in line with their own view of their own abilities.

Measure: Increase in satisfaction by researchers as reported through CEDARS survey. Currently managers are scoring themselves higher than researchers do for ability and skills, showing a lack of self-awareness. Drawing these two into parallel is a priority.

Researchers

A blended approach to delivery has increased attendance figures since COVID. It is important to maintain this trend.

There are numerous programmes to support the career and skills of our researchers. Here are a few new/refreshed for 2021/22

- Prosper – career development that unlocks researchers' potential to thrive in multiple career pathways.
- Pilot of new career support programme
- Stand-alone careers workshops
- Gaining Academic Promotions (GAP) - Promotions conference, week of practical workshops, stories, and information sessions, open to all those with research, academic and engagement career pathways
- Research Leadership masterclass series

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New library/research skills <p>All researchers are requested to use the new PDR software to capture their development activity requests and career options. The new system will link to Pure records, encouraging this method of recording publications and other research outputs for use in future career planning.</p> <p>Researchers are encouraged to attend all our internal programmes that they feel are relevant. Current listing here.</p> <p>Measure – CEDARS survey to identify that researchers have been able to participate in a full range of development opportunities. Both within and without the University and that departments/research managers have responded positively to all development requests.</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. (max 500 words)</p>	
<p>CEDARS: Very low uptake this year by research-only staff. Improvements to be made to communications showing what a good opportunity the survey is for researchers (and research managers) to influence policy, practice, and culture. New communication plan includes “you said, we did” statements for example. Messaging to come from Faculties and Departments and not just from the centre. Increasing support from Research Directors to ensure communication goes to the right people at the right time.</p> <p>Success measure: 20% increase in survey completions.</p> <p>New indefinite contracts (with funding end date): All research staff were moved to indefinite contracts with a funding end date (unless they requested otherwise). All new research contracts are automatically placed on indefinite contracts (with a funding end date). The intended benefits of this change were not clearly articulated at the time of implementation. Once it was realised that not everyone had understood the implications of this change, POED ran several workshops and briefing sessions to help clarify confusion, with further information being made available. Work is ongoing to clarify the operation of this policy.</p>	

<p>Lesson learned: Clearer communications on impact of proposed policy changes, more involvement with broader research community at an earlier stage.</p> <p>Success measure: Positive feedback on communication from focus groups, RSA and CEDARS</p> <p>Redeployment process: Current process is not fit for purpose, exceptionally low take up, complaints that jobs offered are not appropriate. POED will undertake a full review of this process following the completion of the current Recruitment and Selection Review.</p> <p>Success Measure: Increased number of researchers using and finding appropriate employment through the redeployment scheme.</p>
<p>Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period <i>(max 500 words)</i></p>
<p>As suggested in its 2021 strategy report, CIG has for the past year focussed on understanding the current research culture, undertaking focus groups and other research to ensure it understands the current issues facing its researcher communities, following COVID and the return to business as usual and the added pressures this has brought. Ensuring ethical working practices and safe and welcoming working environments is key to creating this healthy culture.</p> <p>Culture: Introduction of a new People Plan, through the lens of the new institutional values. Enhancement of the support programmes for Research Managers, to help them understand their responsibilities towards their research communities and to enable them to better support their researcher's development needs and career aspirations. Ensuring greater cross-faculty and cross-department harmony for researchers in representation and access to support.</p> <p>Policy and process: A University-wide Recruitment and Selection review will be looking at the overall recruitment experience for all staff, but with a specific lens on researchers and those from other countries and with nonstandard backgrounds. Looking to increase recruitment of Black Asian and Ethnic Minorities. Current process is unwieldy and not easy to navigate for prospective employees or hiring managers.</p>

Further work is ongoing to support the fair and transparent operation of indefinite with funding end date contracts for research staff.

Ongoing pursuit of an appropriate mechanism to record the 10 development days researchers are entitled to. Ensuring that these days are of real value to the individual researcher's professional and career development and that a wide range of opportunities are available.

Equality: CIG is looking for synergies with EDI, REC and AS action plans, giving more weight to the individual action plans. Using the same measures and actions across all three. One activity that is in focus now is the Bullying and Harassment policy review. Communicating the changes to this policy will become part of each action plan once completed.

Engagement: There is still a lack of engagement by the Researcher Community themselves, with vacancies on several committees. Research Directors, and department HoDs need to monitor these vacancies and encourage research managers to articulate the benefits to their research teams and to support participation in the broader Institutional business. CIG will work with Research Managers and Leaders to ensure they are communicating the benefits of these opportunities and actively encouraging participation in decision making processes.

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*)

Report compiled by OD for academic and research, supported by Concordat Implementation Group members, including research staff representatives. Submitted to Concordat Implementation group for agreement/approval. University Research Committee, Chaired by ProVC for Research for final sign off.

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Prof Louise Heathwaite CBE FRSE FRSB
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Enterprise



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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