Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Action Plan 2021 – 2024 (Appendix)

The following is a detailed version of the University's Concordat Action Plan 2021 – 2024, structured around the three pillars and accompanying obligations of the Concordat. It details the units that will be responsible for each action and target completion dates. Where the success measures state that feedback will be measured for a particular event, this refers to a feedback form to be shared following that specific event, where it refers to broader levels of feedback from researchers, this refers to an annual survey that will be shared with all staff on 'research only' contracts. A simplified version providing context, priorities and list of actions is also available on the Researcher Development Concordat Page.

Year 1	Jul 2021 – Sep 2022
Year 2	Oct 2022 – Sep 2023
Year 3	Oct 2023 – Sep 2024
Ongoing over the period	Jul 2021 – Sep 2024

Environment and Culture (EC)

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
EC1. Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat.	1. New institutional PDC will publish a central website to act as a single point of reference for information for researchers, including the Concordat	New PDC website launched Analytics demonstrate increased engagement with website	PDC, OD	Sep 2022
	2. Processes for new staff (advertisements, new appointment materials, induction) will incorporate an overview of the Concordat, the PDC, and other relevant supports	Increased proportion of new staff attending induction/ welcome Feedback forms for induction events Feedback from researcher surveys	PDC, P&C	Sep 2022
EC2. Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated	1. New institutional PDC will be launched to a) represent the interests of all researchers in the development of new policies and procedures, and b) identify gaps in existing policy or guidance which are relevant to but do not make specific	New institutional PDC launched, with success measured by levels of engagement with resources, events etc. and through surveys of researchers	PDC, R&E	Sep 2022

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
to researchers and their managers.	provisions for research staff (e.g. supervision, teaching)			
	2. Postdoctoral and Research Staff Oversight Group (PROG) will act as a single representative committee to consult on strategies, policies and procedures relevant to researchers and feed into institutional governance structures via representation on R&I Committee	Three meetings of PROG annually, with regular reports to R&I Committee	PROG, PDC, R&E	Ongoing
	3. New PDC website will sign-post to policies and procedures relevant to researchers, including user-friendly and accessible overview	New PDC website launched with discrete section on relevant policies/procedures Improved awareness among researchers and their managers	PDC	Sep 2022
	4. New PDC website will focus on improving the accessibility of new and existing online resources and develop an accessibility checklist for PDC events	Accessibility score for new PDC website	PDC, CMS Team	Sep 2022
EC3. Promote good mental health and wellbeing through, for example, the effective management of workloads and people, and effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues.	1. New workshop will be developed on personal effectiveness and time management, focussing on benefits for research outcomes, personal wellbeing etc.	New workshop launched and positive feedback received post-event	PDC, OD	Sep 2023
	2. Learning and development opportunities around resilience and wellbeing will be provided for researchers as part of core offering	New workshop launched and positive feedback received post-event	OD, PDC	Sep 2022

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
EC4. Ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and mental health.	3. Wider institutional review of bullying and harassment policies will consider issues specific to research staff as part of its remit	New policy recognises specific issues relevant to fixed-term researchers	P&C,PDC	Sep 2023
	4. Consolidated effort to promote relevant policies and approaches to addressing 'cultural' issues, including bullying and harassment, to researchers and their managers, as well as available learning resources (e.g. relevant courses on LinkedIn Learning)	New PDC website launched with discrete section on relevant policies/procedures Improved awareness among researchers and their managers	OD, PDC, Reps Network	Sep 2023
	5. Work with the postdoctoral community and managers to develop best-practice guidelines on work-life balance for researchers	Guidelines agreed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, published on PDC website and communicated via Faculties/Schools Positive experience related to this topic reported on culture surveys	PDC, Reps Network	Sep 2022
	6. Consolidated push to ensure high completion rates of the mandatory diversity and inclusion training module amongst researchers and their managers	Increased completion rate on trajectory to 100%	P&C, PDC	Sep 2024
EC5. Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity.	1. Continued annual implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat across the institution, with researcher engagement encouraged by the PDC	Annual statements of compliance completed and published via Research Governance and Integrity Team	RG, PDC	Ongoing
	2. Promote and facilitate the Epigeum online course on good research practice to researchers	Positive feedback on Epigeum course via staff surveys (not possible to monitor completion rates at present)	RG, PDC, OD	Ongoing

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
	3. Review the learning and development offering in responsible research practices, data management and research integrity as pertains to researchers, and publish new or complementary online guidance, particularly for fellowship applicants	Review completed and reported to PROG for feedback, forward actions subsequently agreed New content developed and published/signposted on PDC website	PDC, RG, Library OA Team	Sep 2022
	4. Encourage academic departments to introduce initiatives to facilitate open discussion and perpetuate good research practice (e.g. journal clubs, lab meetings)	Increase in departments engaging in such initiatives, confirmed via faculty reps network Positive feedback via surveys	Reps Network, PDC	Sep 2023
	5. Establish a peer-network for postdocs to advise and support each other in relation to good practices in research, including experimental design, analysis, ethics application preparation etc.	Network established and positive level of engagement across faculties	Societies, PDC	Sep 2023
	6. Work with academic departments to facilitate opportunities for researchers to present and receive peer feedback on their research, internally and externally	Increase in departments engaging in such initiatives, confirmed via faculty reps network Increased numbers of researchers presenting at conferences etc. (measured via surveys)	Reps Network, PDC	Sep 2024
EC6. Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and use the outcomes to improve institutional practices.	1. Work with Faculties/ Schools to ensure that School Management Board meetings include a standing item on postdoctoral researchers and ideally include a postdoctoral representative	Increased number of schools engaging with this, confirmed via faculty reps network	Reps Network	Sep 2022
	2. Full implementation of Research Culture Action Plan (RCAP) actions that relate to researchers and collect specific feedback on researchers via wider culture surveys	Increasingly positive perception of wider research environment through research culture surveys	RPO	Sep 2024
	3. Establish a representative network, including postdocs and academics from	Network established, with all schools and faculties engaged	PDC, Rep Network	Dec 2021

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
	across Queens, to report issues and challenges, share local examples of best practice, and champion the Concordat	High levels of awareness of the network measured via surveys Examples of best practice shared throughout the network		

Employment (E)

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
E1. Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.	1. Review current practice for costing research staff on grants to ensure sufficient funding is available to offer competitive salaries and attract/retain the best talent	Review completed and report/recommendations put forward via appropriate channels	PDC, Finance Directorate, R&E	Sep 2024
E2. Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	1. Review induction processes for new research staff to provide relevant and up-to-date information, including: • Regularly updated 'welcome booklet' provided to all new starts • Overview of all relevant policies/ procedures, and sign-posting to PDC website	Induction sessions available on a regular basis with high attendance and good feedback provided Welcome booklet updated twice annually Positive feedback on induction processes via staff surveys	PDC, OD	Mar 2022
	2. Extend the availability of buddy/ peer mentoring schemes beyond initial MHLS pilot to encompass all three faculties	Increased proportion of schools running such schemes and high levels of engagement, reported via reps network	Reps Network, Faculties/Schools	Sep 2022
E3. Provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers' contributions,	1. Annual celebration for National Postdoc Appreciation Week, to include annual postdoc awards for each faculty, and continually review the programme based on feedback each year	Level of engagement/attendance at NPAW events Increasing number of nominations prizes, especially coming from managers	PDC, Societies, Faculties/Schools, OD	Ongoing, annual

and the diversity of personal circumstances.				
	2. Continue to offer two dedicated categories as part of institutional Vice-Chancellor's Research Prizes, i.e. Postdoctoral Researcher & Early-Career Researcher	Increased number of nominations, particularly coming from managers	RPO	Ongoing, annual
	3. Review processes for recognising contribution of postdocs to research outputs, grants etc., including via introduction of the CREDIT Taxonomy and Narrative CVs as part of Research Culture Action Plan	CREDIT and Narrative CVs implemented Number of researchers using systems e.g. Pure to record contributions Feedback via researcher surveys	PDC, RPO	Sep 2024
	4. In line with commitments made in Strategy 2030 and RCAP, conduct a systemic review of institutional policies and support for career pathways for those employed on 'research only' contracts with a view to creating a dedicated 'Research' pathway	Review completed, report and recommendations shared with PROG, and implementation plan agreed/actioned	PROG, PDC, OD RPO	Dec 2023
	5. Launch a further recruitment process to the Illuminate Vice-Chancellor's Fellowship scheme	Recruitment process successfully completed with appointment of new fellows	FA, PVC R&E, Schools/Faculties, P&C	Sep 2022
E4. Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent.	1. Consolidated effort to promote the "People Manager Essentials" programme and other resources for managers of fixed-term researchers, modifying/adding new resources as required (e.g. adapted PDR for researchers)	Increased engagement and positive feedback via researcher surveys	PDC, P&C, Reps Network	Sep 2024
	2. Provide leadership and management development opportunities for independent fellows and early-career researchers (e.g. mentoring/coaching) notably via the Fellowship Academy	Increased engagement and positive feedback via researcher surveys	FA, OD, RD	Sep 2022
E5. Ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the	1. Leadership, management and citizenship will continue to be monitored through annual PDR and Academic	Feedback via researcher surveys	Schools/Faculties	Sep 2024

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility	Target Completion Date
organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation.	Progression processes, and ongoing reviews of workload allocation and Academic Progression will take input from the PDC and PROG to ensure researcher needs and concerns are addressed Also see E.4.1			
E6. Seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment	1. Better promote internal career opportunities to fixed-term researchers. PDC will work with P&C and others to help promote better understanding of existing recruitment processes, such as redeployment, internal and externally advertised opportunities Also see E.3.4	Increased awareness of and satisfaction with redeployment processes, measured by reps network and researcher surveys	PDC, P&C	Sep 2024

Professional and Career Development (PCD)

Obligation	Actions	Success Measure(s)	Responsibility (see summary of acronyms etc. below)	Target Completion Date
PCD1. Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.	1. Consolidate effort to promote the commitment to 10 annual career development days to researchers and their managers in all faculties	Increased proportion of researchers are aware of the policy and report positive experiences via surveys	PDC	Sep 2022

PCD2. Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers.	2. Review data on uptake of learning and development opportunities, as well as feedback from faculty societies, to better understand levels of engagement across the institution (including with the 10 days policy)	Feedback via researcher surveys	PDC, OD, Reps Network, Societies	Sep 2023
	3. Conduct a review of existing training opportunities across the institution to a) present comprehensive information on the PDC website and b) identify gaps in current provision	Comprehensive L&D programme published via PDC website with new opportunities included to address gaps	PDC, OD, R&E	Dec 2021
	4. Scope the potential for accredited/ qualifying programmes for researcher cohorts (e.g. project management)	Business case prepared and presented as appropriate, including assessment of level of interest and cost analysis	PDC, OD	Sep 2024
	5. Continue to deliver, and expand where possible, the Postdoctoral Group Mentoring programme	Multiple groups of postdocs enrolled and paired with a mentor (with ~ 40 postdocs participating) Good feedback	OD	Ongoing, annual
	6. Conduct a review of existing training and accreditation opportunities for teaching available to researchers (e.g. AF-HEA) and bring forward recommendations where appropriate Also see E.4.1	All researchers can access teaching training/ accreditation as appropriate and positive feedback measured through researcher surveys	PDC, OD, CED	Sep 2023
PCD3. Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	1. Develop and implement a comprehensive and complementary suite of career development support between the PDC, OD, Graduate School etc.	Comprehensive programme for career development published via PDC website with new opportunities included to address gaps, including workshops, employer engagement, 1:1 advisory meetings etc., and conduct evaluation of participation and satisfaction levels every two years	PDC, OD, Graduate School	Mar 2022
	2. Introduce one-to-one advisory support provided on demand via the PDC for researchers, encompassing informal advice, feedback on applications, interview preparation, and mock	Levels of engagement and feedback via researcher surveys	PDC, R&E	Nov 2021

	interviews etc., and via relevant R&E teams for e.g. research funding, collaborative research, commercialisation			
PCD4. Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	1. Review current leadership development opportunities for researchers and enhance as required	Opportunities published via PDC website with new opportunities included to address gaps and feedback monitored via researcher surveys	PDC, OD	Sep 2022
	2. Fully implement the role of 'Assistant Supervisor' across the institution, building on MHLS pilot, and provide training for postdoctoral researchers taking up the role	Assistant Supervisor role available in all three Faculties Increased proportion of postdocs appointed Assistant Supervisors Training offered with at least one session delivered	PDC, Faculties/ Schools	Dec 2021
	3. Enhance existing support for those applying for individual fellowships, notably by expanding funders showcases and learning and development opportunities	Comprehensive programme of support published via PDC website, with increased levels of engagement and feedback measured through researcher surveys Increasing volume and improved quality of fellowship applications	PDC, RD, OD, Graduate School	Sep 2023
	4. Develop and launch a new mentoring programme via the Fellowship Academy for prospective fellowship applicants to learn from existing independent fellows	Feedback surveys of mentors and mentees	PDC, OD, FA, RD	Sep 2023
	5. Develop and implement a new mentoring scheme for postdoctoral researchers to support postgraduate research students	New mentoring scheme launched and advertised as appropriate Levels of engagement and feedback from mentors and mentees	PDC, Graduate School, Reps Network, Faculties/ Schools	Dec 2022
	6. Develop an 'introduction to mentoring' training workshop for postdoctoral researchers and independent fellows to upskill those serving as mentors	Feedback surveys of workshop attendees	OD, PDC, FA	Sep 2023

	7. Investigate the potential for postdoctoral researchers to propose/supervise research projects for UG/PGT students	Review completed and findings reported to PROG for further action	PDC, Reps Network, PROG	Sep 2022
	8. Launch a pilot seed fund for faculty societies or groups of researchers to bid into for events that benefit the wider researcher community	Seed fund launched and at least one event delivered	PDC, Societies	Sep 2022
PCD5. Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this.	1. Organise career exploration events and interviews with former Queen's postdoctoral researchers and PhD students working in a range of sectors	At least one event delivered per year and feedback surveys of attendees collated	PDC, Reps Network, Societies	Sep 2022
	2. Investigate opportunities for engagement with local employers, including via site visits and shadowing programmes	Agreed programme of employer engagement with relevant stakeholders	PDC, R&E, Graduate School, Career	Sep 2023
	3. Encourage engagement with innovation and commercialisation programmes, especially in which the postdoc/researcher is lead	Feedback from researcher surveys, increased engagement reporting by R&E teams	PDC, BA, RD, R&E innovation team, QUBIS	Sep 2023
	4. Create an "Alumni" group for postdocs on LinkedIn, to promote role models and examples of career progression and destination (potentially by Faculty) as well as investigate more impactful ways of collecting and showcasing career destinations	Engagement with LinkedIn group	PDC, OD, RPO, Alumni	Mar 2022
PCD6. Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews.	1. Conduct regular surveys of researchers via the PDC (or other departments and staff initiatives) to measure the progress against the Concordat, and publish a report on the PDC website identifying examples of best practice and amendments to the Plan See also PCD.1.2 and E.4.1	Annual survey completed, report prepared and published	PDC, OD, PROG, Faculties/ Schools	Ongoing, annual

KEY TERMS/ ACRONYMS*: BA - Business Alliance; CED - Centre for Educational Development; CMS - Content Management System; DASA - Directorate of Academic and Students Affairs; D&I - Diversity and Inclusion; FA - Fellowship Academy; HRBPs - Human Resources Business Partners; IS - Information Services; OD - Organisational Development; PDC - Postdoctoral Development Centre; PROG - Postdoctoral and Research staff Oversight Group; PVC R&E - Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise; RD - Research Development; RPO - Research Policy Office; R&E – Research and Enterprise; Reps Network – Network of Faculty Representatives; Societies – Faculty Postdoctoral/ Research Staff Societies; RG – Research Governance*