University of Leeds Concordat Implementation Plan (March 2023-March 2025)

Dated: March 2023

**Context:** For the purposes of the Concordat, we define early career researchers as those who do research and are employed on a fixed term basis. Typically, this will be postdocs working on research projects. In some cases, these will be people on teaching focused contracts who continue to do discipline-based research with a view to gaining an academic position which combines discipline-based research and teaching. This would include approximately 1300 research staff and 150 teaching focused staff. Activities to develop early career academics who focus on teaching and scholarship (scholarship of teaching and learning and pedagogic research) are covered through a different action plan.
Our primary audience does not include postgraduate researchers or academic staff on open-ended contracts. However, we seek to expand the broad principles of the Concordat as they provide a helpful reference point for any work we undertake to develop, promote and sustain an effective and inclusive research culture and environment.
We recognise that successful implementation of the Concordat is a collaborative effort. It requires support from the institution and an equal partnership between researchers and their managers. This implementation plan is not designed to be static; it will be updated every six months to reflect changes across our institution, in response to changing priorities, and in line with new university strategies and initiatives.

This implementation plan has been agreed by the Research Staff Development Steering Group, the Research Culture Steering Group, and Research and Innovation Board.

# Environment and Culture

## Awareness and Engagement

* **Leeds will ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat (ECI1)**
	+ Implement a Concordat communication plan led from OD&PL, including the website with resources, the Research Staff Development community of practice MS Team, Twitter, LinkedIn and Podcasting. Update on progress every 3-4 months
	+ Run an annual Concordat Awareness Month with quarterly Q&A sessions and briefings to Schools and Faculties as required
	+ Create a series of one-page resources and/or infographics for each stakeholder group ‘What you need to know about the Concordat’
	+ Maintain a Research Staff Development Steering Group, reporting to our Research Culture Steering Group, and Research and Innovation Board
	+ Expand the remit of the ECR development Steering Group to include manager representation
* **Leeds will ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers (ECI2)**
	+ Create a new version of our UoL Guidance on the Employability of Research Staff based on the Concordat and our [Fairer Futures](https://forstaff.leeds.ac.uk/homepage/433/fairer_future_for_all) Initiative
* **Leeds will 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 (ECI6)**
* **Both Managers and Researchers will engage with opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution (ECM5 & ECR5)**
	+ Hold 2 open discussions a year with senior leaders including the DVCs, Dean of Research Culture, Chair of the Research Staff Development Steering group and HR
	+ Introduce an annual UoL research staff survey to gather more detailed responses and increase response rates, in addition to pulse surveys and University wide surveys. Surveys will be aligned to avoid excessive repetition
	+ Undertake a pilot project to create Concordat Champions, institutional level postdoctoral representatives with a formal job role, rewarded by an honorarium
	+ Facilitate quarterly action group meetings bringing together research staff and representatives with ideas feeding into the Research Staff Development Steering Group
	+ Host Concordat themed focus groups to ensure Research Staff have an opportunity to co-create our Concordat Implementation plan
	+ Participate in the Research Culture Cafes to share best practice, raise issues and propose solutions for change

## Positive working environments

* **Leeds will promote a healthy working environment that supports researchers’ wellbeing and mental health 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 (ECI3). Managers and Researchers will take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health (ECR3), including reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and poor research integrity (ECM3 & ECR4)**
	+ Curate content and support covering wellbeing and mental health offered from the Leadership Team, Staff Counselling Service and Equality Inclusion Unit within the MS Team community and on the website
	+ Review our policies on research misconduct and whistleblowing with a focus on supporting those who report an issue
	+ Promote our Research Culture ‘tell us more’ anonymous feedback
	+ Create a repository of HR policies, procedures and reporting processes in the MS Team community and website
	+ Undertake a scoping project in partnership with HR to establish the awareness of managers of their responsibilities for supporting their researchers and the benefits of a positive research culture. Also, to understand motivations they have for doing their jobs and for supporting their teams. Make recommendations and actions for improvements to the way managers are motivated, incentivised and managed themselves. This will be done in alignment across academics’ responsibilities for managing and leading people, supervising PGRs and personal tutoring.
* **Leeds will promote/develop/implement resources and logging mechanisms to ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and mental health (ECI4)**
* **Managers must undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work (ECM1)**
	+ All staff to complete our mandatory ‘An introduction to Equality and Inclusion Training’
	+ Signpost the range of materials and support offered through our Equality and Inclusion Unit
	+ Ensure Concordat actions are aligned with the University’s strategies and policies from the Equality and Inclusion Unit
* **Managers must consider fully, in accordance with statutory rights and institutional policies, flexible working requests and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers (ECM4)**
	+ Promote our flexible working policy through updates to relevant meetings and forums, and add to the repository of HR policies in the MS Team space
	+ Highlight the ‘Supporting our ways of working’ development package to support remote/hybrid working offered through OD&PL
* **Researchers must actively contribute to the development and maintenance of a supportive, fair and inclusive research culture and be a supportive colleague, particularly to newer researchers and students (ECR1)**
	+ Encourage Research Staff to participate in the Research Culture Cafes and ECR Action Group to share best practice, raise issues and propose solutions for change
	+ Provide funding and support to help create local school or faculty research staff groups or build and expand existing ones.
	+ Research Staff to join the UoL mentoring scheme, promoting the benefits of being both mentor and mentee
	+ Develop an introductory workshop on ‘What Research Culture is’ and how individuals/teams play a key role in setting the culture of their research area

## Research Integrity

* **Leeds will ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity (ECI5).**
* **Managers and researchers must act in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct (ECM2), and with employer and funder policies related to research integrity, and equality, diversity and inclusion (ECR2)**
* **Researchers will use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour, particularly in relation to research misconduct (ECR4)**
	+ New programme of development supporting responsible research and research integrity in line with our responsible metrics and open research statements, supported by a dedicated role in the Researcher Development and Culture Team, OD&PL
	+ Implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat with action plan and annual reporting
	+ Proposal for the creation of a Research Integrity Steering Group reporting into the Research Culture Steering Group with responsibility for the RI Concordat
	+ Creation of webpages and resources to support the new Research Integrity provision
	+ Project to create a code of conduct and policies in line with the RI Concordat, overseen by the Research Integrity Steering Group

# Employment

## Recruitment and Induction

* **Leeds will ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices (EI1)**
	+ Continue to develop recruitment guidance, processes and materials including the language we use and the person specification to attract a more diverse applicant pool.
	+ Continue to work across the sector to influence and implement initiatives like Narrative CVs and Resume for Research and Innovation
	+ Where possible, build on our best practice of [sharing interview questions in advance](https://sway.office.com/pifa6hjQnkBUoG5g?ref=Link) to create a more level playing field for candidates
	+ Work with HR to create an updated job specification for Research Staff that recognises the wider contributions they make and values more diverse forms of research outputs
* **Leeds will provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position (EI2)**
	+ Development of a new induction package ‘Supporting you as a researcher at Leeds’ hosted in our research staff community of practice. To include:
		- All new researchers will be added on a monthly basis and signposted to materials and information
		- Creation of a ‘one-stop’ repository pulling together all relevant information including HR policies, guidance and development opportunities
		- Guides to support researchers in the first 3 years of their employment, highlighting information at appropriate points, for example probation guides, SRDS information and redeployment
* **Managers and Researchers will familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of their grant funders (EM2 and ER1), and understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities (ER2)**
	+ Following completion of our Fairer Futures initiative a new version of our ‘UoL Guidance on the Employability of Research Staff’ will be created in line with our new policies on recruitment and retention of staff

## Reward and Recognition

* **Leeds will provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers’ contributions, and the diversity of personal circumstances (EI3) to enable managers to commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion, and reward of researchers (EM3)**
	+ Work with HR to produce a Research Staff guide to promotion, including recognition of the wider contributions they make, for example HEA accreditation and UKCGE Associate Research Supervisor
	+ Review relevant HR policies, training and guidance to ensure that they are in-line with our requirements as a signatory to DORA and our institutional Responsible Metrics implementation plan. Update training and guidance where required.
	+ Support the retention of our research staff through our redeployment process by providing clear guidance to outline the scheme and increase engagement
	+ Continue to promote the guidance on Named Researcher and Researcher Co-I status for recognition on funding proposals

## People Management

* **Leeds will provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent (EI4) and managers will undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care (EM1)**
	+ Undertake a scoping project to determine the development priorities of the managers, how best to engage with them and make recommendations for a new initiative to best support them.
	+ Promote LinkedIn Learning as a resource for researchers with curated collections including project management, mentoring and coaching.
* **Leeds will ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation (EI5).**
* **Managers and researchers will actively engage in regular constructive performance management discussions and reviews (EM4 and ER3)**
	+ Work with HR to ensure all guidance around appraisal, promotion and workloads are developed in line with our institutional behaviours, and other institutional policies including the Concordat, Research Integrity, ED&I and Research Metrics
	+ Create guidance to support SRDS reviews to assist both researchers and reviewers

## Employment Prospects

* **Leeds will seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress (EI6)**
	+ Our new Fairer Futures initiative will reduce the number of fixed term contracts in use, with researchers moving onto ongoing contracts after 3 years employment where appropriate, and we will simplify the number of contracts in use across our institution.
	+ Project to identify researchers with 12 months left on their contract to provide effective career development support through our existing Career Development programmes (Career Architect, Career Accelerator or Career Catalyst) to help them secure their next role.
	+ Continue to participate and work as part of Researchers14 and N8PDRA groups to share best practice and engage with funders
* **Leeds will consider researchers and their managers as key stakeholders within the institution and provide them with formal opportunities to engage with relevant organisational policy and decision-making (EI7). Managers and researchers must contribute to relevant policy development within their institution (EM5 and ER4)**
	+ Continue to ensure research staff have representation at committee level.
	+ Undertake a pilot project to create Concordat Champions, institutional level postdoctoral representatives with a formal job role, rewarded by an honorarium
	+ Facilitate quarterly action group meetings bringing together research staff and representatives with ideas feeding into the Research Staff Development Steering Group
	+ Host Concordat themed focus groups to ensure research staff have an opportunity to co-create our Concordat Implementation plan
	+ Participate in the Research Culture Cafes to share best practice, raise issues and propose solutions for change

# Professional and Career Development

## Creating a Development Culture

* **Leeds will continue to provide opportunities and structured support for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days’ professional development pro rata, per year, whilst recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors (PCDI1)**
* **Managers must allocate a minimum of 10 days pro rata, per year, for their researchers to engage with professional development, supporting researchers to balance the delivery of their research and their own professional development (PCDM3) and Researchers must take ownership of their career, be pro-active and identify opportunities to work towards their career goal and engage in a minimum of 10 days’ professional development pro rata, per year (PCDR1)**
	+ Ongoing career development from the researcher development team in OD&PL, to ensure that researchers maintain the currency of their skills and are also well equipped for future career progression
	+ Expand existing capacity within the researcher development and culture team with the recruitment of a new Researcher Development Advisor to support career development
	+ Creation of a policy to support the 10 days development time per year in research staff contracts
	+ Investigate ways to govern the 10 days, in line with a new policy including recommendations for a reporting and monitoring procedure
	+ Implement a new Career Planning tool to enable researchers and managers to discuss, plan, record and review the researchers’ 10 days’ activities.
	+ Convene 2 roundtables a year with researchers and research leaders to discuss career development topics and create a dialogue about researcher careers, thereby normalising career conversations in academia.
* **Leeds will monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews (PCDI6)**
	+ Continue to collect data on registrations, access to guidance materials, data analytics, feedback and survey responses. Create an annual report including recommendations for Research and Innovation Board, Concordat governance reporting. Update our action plan in response to the recommendations
	+ Introduce an annual UoL research staff survey to gather more detailed responses and increase response rates, in addition to pulse surveys and University wide surveys.
* **Leeds will recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this (PCDI5)**
	+ Continue to build a culture around Careers with Research through the dedicated Researcher Development and Culture team in OD&PL
	+ Run our BOOST programme, a 12 month pick and mix development package to equip researchers with a range of career management skills and experience
	+ Undertake a project to look at implementing secondments or shadowing opportunities to showcase the range of roles our researchers move into
	+ Build a bank of case-studies and/or podcast interviews with former researchers at Leeds to show the breadth of career paths open to them.
* **Managers must engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development (PCDM5)**
	+ Develop new cohort-based programmes and self-guided resources for managers to support research culture and research leadership, with an emphasis on career development

## Career Discussions and Planning

* **Leeds will provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers (PCDI2)**
* **Managers and Researchers must prepare for and positively engage in regular career development discussions with each other, including holding a career development review at least annually (PCDM1) and Researchers must engage in development opportunities to maximise their career conversations with their managers (PCDR4).**
	+ Create guidance to support SRDS reviews to assist both researchers and reviewers
	+ Promote Management Essentials training for new probation reviewers, similar to our current SRDS training
	+ Run our two complementary 'How to Hold Effective Career Conversations with Managers or Researchers' workshops to equip managers to have effective, honest careers conversations with their Research Staff, supported by the creation of self-guided materials; as well as offering resource for researchers.
* **Researchers must maintain an up-to-date professional career development plan and build a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their experience, that can be used to support job applications (PCDR3)**
	+ Implement a new Career Planning tool to enable researchers and managers to discuss, plan, record and review the researchers’ 10 days career development activities.

## Development Opportunities

* **Leeds will ensure that researchers have access to professional career management support, across a breadth of careers (PCDI3) and enable them to explore and position themselves for all career directions online and in person. (PCDM2)**
* **Researchers will explore and consider a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments (PCDR2)**
	+ Continue to build a culture around Careers with Research through a dedicated team in OD&PL with funding for a Careers with Research Consultant
	+ Create a repository of resources on the Research Staff community MS Team including a range of career guides to support writing CVs, applications and preparing for interviews
	+ Transform our successful 'Career Architect' cohort programme into a more accessible blended learning format and offer elements of it more widely covering all careers research
	+ Project to identify researchers with 12 months left on their contract to provide effective career development support through our existing Career Development programmes (Career Architect, Career Accelerator or Career Catalyst) to help them secure their next role.
	+ Continue to offer our ‘Career Accelerator’ programme
	+ Roll out our Career Catalyst programme from a pilot stage across our researcher community, retaining the hybrid learning offer (self-guided and optional peer-to-peer interaction).
	+ Run our BOOST programme, a 12 month pick and mix development package to equip researchers with a range of skills and experience
	+ Engage with the ECR Action Group meetings and Professional and Career Development focus groups to ensure career development opportunities meet needs
	+ Introduce monthly “Careers with Peers” discussion topics for peer-to-peer learning
	+ Host “In Career Conversation with …” recorded conversations with researchers from the University of Leeds who have moved into a wide variety of career paths, using their research background as a steppingstone via our Research Culture Uncovered podcast and case-studies
* **Researchers must consider opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system through, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement and commercialisation (PCDR6)**
	+ Encourage researchers to join, and be active members of, our community of practice: Engaged Research MS Team.
	+ Extend our responsible research and innovation workshops to research staff cohorts
	+ Promote our resources for engaging with policy, Parliament and the UK government and other impact pathways that we have developed with an international development group of universities and Epigeum.
	+ Promote engagement with our Michael Beverley Innovation Fellowship Programme with access to an inspiring network of trusted business experts, senior academics and University of Leeds alumni, through our Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) based mentoring programme and any future iterations of the programme.

## Research Identity

* **Leeds will provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills (PCDI4).**
* **Managers will identify opportunities and allow time (in addition to the 10 days’ professional development allowance), for their researchers to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills and provide appropriate credit and recognition for their endeavours (PCDM4); whilst researchers will seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills (PCDR5)**
	+ Pilot an opportunity for research staff to engage with leadership development with a new cohort-based programme
	+ Research Staff to join the UoL mentoring scheme, promoting the benefits of being both mentor and mentee
	+ Encourage researchers to engage with our Research Supervision development through our MS Team and Epigeum course
	+ Fund a pilot for the UKCGE Associate Supervisor programme to encourage research staff to get recognition for their supervisory practice
	+ Continue to support fellowship applicants in collaboration with Research and Innovation Service and provide realistic information on opportunities
	+ Produce a new funding and fellowship pathway to support researchers wanting to explore funding and an independent research identity
	+ Continue to promote participation in PRiSE to encourage research staff to get HEA accreditation for their teaching or research supervision practice
	+ Promote Researcher@library resources alongside our responsible research development to support academic outputs, open access and data management