|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Institution** | University of Leeds |
| **Reporting period** | March 2022 – March 2023 |
| **Date approved by governing body** | 14th March 2023 |
| **Date published online** | 31st March 2023 |
| **Web address of annual report** | https://researchersupport.leeds.ac.uk/the-concordat/concordat-annual-reports/ |
| **Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage** | https://researchersupport.leeds.ac.uk/the-concordat/ |
| **Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development** | Dr Emma Spary, Head of Researcher Development and Culture: [e.j.spary@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:e.j.spary@leeds.ac.uk) or researcherdevelopment@leeds.ac.uk |
| **Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via** [**CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk**](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk) | Monday 3rd April 2023 |

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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)***  At the University of Leeds, we believe all members of our research community have a role to play in developing and promoting a positive and inclusive research culture that benefits everyone involved in the research endeavour and has a positive impact on our research. Over the last two years, we have made good progress with our research culture aims. To understand our existing research culture, we ran a series of Culture Cafés, gathering views from across our research community to determine what we were doing well, the challenges we face, and proposals for improving our research culture. The cafés are supported by a Research Culture Community of Practice of nearly 500 members.  We recruited our inaugural Dean for Research Culture, Professor Catherine Davies and published our [**research culture statement**](https://sway.office.com/34Cy6nshbNsWwHl2?ref=Link&loc=mysways) outlining our five research culture themes, derived from the findings of the Culture Cafés:   * personal development, reward and recognition * open research and impact * equality, diversity and inclusion in research * responsible research and innovation * a collegiate and supportive environment   We convened a Research Culture Steering Group pulling together all aspects of work under the research culture umbrella. This includes strategic subgroups covering Responsible Metrics, Open Research, and the ECR Development Steering Group responsible for implementing the Researcher Development Concordat. Work by the research culture subgroups has led to the publication of our [**responsible research metrics statement**](https://sway.office.com/eoaz5y0gPuNaGma4?ref=Link&loc=mysways) and our [**open research statement**](https://sway.office.com/eTmCGvyk1wl0yWGj?ref=Link).  We acknowledge this is just the start. In the next 12 months, we will be releasing our Research Culture Strategy and Implementation Plan, with our four priority areas:   * Valuing diverse forms of research activity * Embedding EDI principles in research practices * Enabling open research practices * Mutually supporting and developing research teams   Elements of the Researcher Development Concordat run throughout each theme and are supported by other key Concordats and initiatives including, but not limited to, the Research Integrity Concordat, DORA, Athena Swan and the Technician Commitment.  Building on our belief that cultural change only comes when people are engaged and committed, we want to ensure they are at the centre of our initiatives. Some notable examples:   * Wherever possible, we are extending the professional and career development opportunities in our Concordat implementation plan to all those involved in delivering research, and we are seeing engagement from research supporting staff and mid-career researchers. * We used our Enhancing Research Culture funding from Research England to hold our first [**Research Culture awards**](https://researchersupport.leeds.ac.uk/research-culture/research-culture-awards/), recognising the efforts and contributions our staff make to support research culture at a local and institutional level. * We also ran a [**Research Culture Crucible**](https://researchersupport.leeds.ac.uk/research-culture/research-culture-crucible/), bringing together staff from research and research support to come up with ideas and projects to improve our culture. We funded 7 pilot projects and will run further programmes.   Evaluating cultural change can be difficult, so we plan to implement regular pulse surveys on each of our research culture themes. To increase engagement, we undertook a scoping project in partnership with our Research Culture Community of Practice members to help determine frequency, length, style and barriers to survey completion. | |
| **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**  Successful implementation of the Concordat requires a collaborative effort across all stakeholder groups. We will focus on building engagement, and increasing opportunities for our researchers and managers to influence the environment they work in and co-create an improved workplace culture:   * Recruiting members of research staff to help build engagement at an institutional level, our Concordat Champions. The role includes committee representation, helping to establish our Research Staff Action Group, and supporting local Concordat awareness sessions and events. Researchers will be recognised for their contributions with an honorarium to spend on their research or professional development. *Success criterion: Recruiting between four and six champions for our initial 12-month pilot.* * Support to establish active research staff groups, with £1000 start-up funding and working with school and faculty leaders to ensure essential continuity. These groups provide essential links between Researchers, Faculties and Steering Groups, whilst also providing peer-to-peer support. *Success criterion: Establishing 4 groups with growing membership and engagement quarterly over the first 12 months.* * Continue to offer open discussions, research Culture Cafés, Concordat themed focus groups, and research staff action group meetings to enable staff to tell us what's working, what isn't, and propose ideas for cultural change. Findings feed back to the Research Culture Steering Group for action. *Success criterion: Increasing numbers engaging with the opportunities, and qualitative data showing positive evidence of impact.*   **Employment**  Feedback from our research staff community tells us that finding key information and opportunities at the right time is difficult. Our work on this principle seeks to create a one-stop repository for researchers as part of our community of practice. This will include:   * Development of a new induction package ‘Supporting you as a researcher at Leeds’ with a 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. *Success criteria: Increasing numbers engaging with the opportunities measured through analytics and qualitative data. Increased numbers of researchers being retained in the institutions via redeployment. Greater uptake of the 10 days for development assessed by recording and survey data.*   To complement our Fairer Futures initiative, to reduce the number of fixed term contracts in use and retain researcher expertise, we will focus on:   * Identifying researchers with 12 months left on their contract to provide effective career development support through our existing programmes (Career Architect, Career Accelerator or Career Catalyst) to help them secure their next role. *Success criteria: Decreased numbers of staff on fixed-term contracts. Increased numbers of researchers being retained in the institution via redeployment. Greater engagement with our career development programmes and successful securement of their next role.*   **Professional Development of Researchers**  At Leeds we champion all careers with research, placing equal value on the many different career roles and paths our researchers take. Underpinning this value is the need to create a culture where career development and career discussions are seen as a fundamental part of research leadership and the research project. After already achieving one of our biggest actions, to convert the recommended 10 days into an entitlement, written into our research staff contracts, we will:   * 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, and help researchers prepare and drive the conversations. Both will be supported by the creation of self-guided materials; * Continue to offer our extensive range of career development including:   + Career Architect and Career Accelerator, our two cohort-based programmes   + Career Catalyst, our self-guided LinkedIn programme   + Boost, our 12 month pick and mix package   + Careers with Peers monthly discussion topics for peer-to-peer learning   + “In Career Conversation with …” recorded conversations with researchers from the UoLeeds 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. *Success criteria: Increased numbers of researchers being retained in the institutions via redeployment. Greater engagement with our career development programmes and successful securement of their next role. Positive feedback in our research staff survey.* | |
| **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**  **Concordat awareness month** ran in Jan 2023 with sessions covering what the Concordat is, how to use the 10 days, understanding contracts at Leeds, how to get involved and a panel Q&A with managers of researchers sharing best practice. We had 139 attendees and the resources including recorded presentations have been viewed 368 times. Attendees included researchers, academics, research support and professional service staff, and almost 65% were within their first 3 years at Leeds. 70% of respondents to our evaluation questionnaire said they had knowledge of the Concordat, even if they didn’t know the detail.  Our action to implement a R**esearch Integrity Steering Group** has progressed slower than anticipated, however Research and Innovation Board have just approved the formation of a task and finish group to take the work forward and make recommendations for longer-term oversight. In addition, the researcher development and culture team have recruited a new member to lead the implementation of this work.  **Research Culture Cafés** have run 6 times in the last 12 months and findings have fed into the research culture statement, which has been viewed 3837 times. The cafés are supported by a community of practice that has seen its membership grow to nearly 500  An addition to our previous implementation plan has been the launch of the [**research culture uncovered podcast**](https://research-culture.captivate.fm/), a weekly series of discussions covering all aspects of research culture. We discuss what works well, challenges, ideas and projects within Leeds and across the sector. Since its launch in November 2022, we have had over 1400 downloads across 17 countries.  **Academic Managers of Researchers**  A new **development package for research leaders** was launched in April 2022, with peer learning groups currently being piloted.  We created an online resource to help research leaders consider their role in setting a positive research culture. This resource has been viewed 3108 times. Our resource to help managers include the Concordat in their research applications has been viewed 708 times. These are also used to support funding development workshops and we are already seeing the information translate into applications.  We ran a **Culture Café for Heads of School** at the request of our Deputy VC for Research and Innovation to understand the barriers they face trying to improve research culture. The recommendations are informing the design of a programme of support to enable senior leaders to support managers of researchers.  **Researchers**  We have seen an active level of engagement from our researchers in our Culture Cafés, open meetings and focus groups. We also now have representation of research staff on all our faculty research and innovation committees, and our research culture steering and subgroups.  We have held **open meetings** with our interim Deputy VC for Student Education on ways for researchers to engage in teaching. This meeting was written up as a resource that has been viewed 434 times. Subsequent meetings were held with our new Dean for Research Culture in May 2022 and most recently with colleagues from HR in January 2023.  We have struggled to get our **Research Staff Action Group** established. Originally, we hoped to hold quarterly meetings and opened these up to all research staff and those managing them. We have taken the opportunity to update this action and combine it with the ones to introduce focus groups and our new Concordat Champions. |
| **Employment *(max 600 words)*** | Actions against this principle for the three stakeholder groups often overlap, so have been combined in this update.  **Institution**  Several of our actions under this principle have been superseded by our new Fairer Futures initiative. We are aiming to reduce the number of fixed term contracts we use by at least half and to limit the number of new fixed term contracts we issue. This work is due to be completed by the summer of 2023.  One of our big actions was to **update our guidance on the employment of research staff**. This is a publication that brings together all the information that researchers and their managers need to support recruitment and employment. An interim version was updated to meet the format of the new Concordat and published in April 2022, whilst Fairer Futures is underway.  Whilst recruiting for positions in research culture and researcher development, we undertook a pilot to look at improving the interview process, aiming to create a level playing field between candidates by **sharing interview questions in advance**. The findings were incredibly positive, with benefits we had not even considered. We wrote them up as a [case study](https://sway.office.com/pifa6hjQnkBUoG5g) available to the sector and this has been read 2520 times. We are now seeking ways to roll this out more widely across the institution.  Evaluation of our actions has been impacted by lower than anticipated survey response rates, meaning several of our actions have been carried over into this new action plan for 2023- 2024.  **Academic Managers of Researchers and Researchers**  We have continued to promote the **use of named researcher** or researcher co-investigator on research grants, in-line with our university policy. This enables managers of researchers to recognise the contributions their research staff make to funding applications, but also creates a mechanism to retain that researcher.  Work to promote a new reward and recognition portal to all line managers and staff was paused during the pandemic. In the interim, we have been looking at ways to encourage managers to recognise the full range of contributions their researchers make. We have seen an increase in the number of researchers getting recognition for their teaching and supervisory practice via our Professional Recognition in Student Education (PRiSE) scheme (37 research staff in the last 12-month period).  In May and June 2022, we held two complementary sessions entitled ‘**how to hold effective career conversations’**, one supporting managers to have the conversations and the other to support researchers to prepare for and drive them. Feedback from these sessions was positive and they will run again in 2023, as well as providing material for the creation of self-guided resources. |
| **Professional development *(max 600 words)*** | **Institution**  The University has made a commitment to research staff development by formalising the recommended 10 days into contracts. This has been supported through synchronous sessions and an online guide to using the [**10 days development time**](https://sway.office.com/jB9MXIKkqiVaN0Qa)**.** The latter has been viewed 809 times. We are keen to show that development comes in many forms, and we advocate a 70:20:10 model, encouraging researchers and managers to identify development opportunities within their existing role.  In addition, we continue to invest in the Researcher Development and Culture team in OD&PL, including funding for 2 new appointments in the past year and allocating funds (£65,000) from the Enhancing Research Culture allocation to support delivery of priority activities, and have a post secured to support the implementation and delivery of our pulse surveys. The Concordat commitments and action plan provide a key reference point for the team’s activities.  **Academic Managers of Researchers**  We have introduced a range of comms to advertise our development activities. This includes updates to Heads of School, Heads of Services, HR, and various community-based MS Teams. We continue to promote through the website, social media and email distribution lists.  Managers are encouraged to recognise the contributions their researchers make beyond their research project. This can include teaching and supervision, or committee membership. We promote our PRiSE scheme to enable research staff to apply for accreditation for their teaching practice (see previous section).  As part of Concordat month 2023, we invited a panel of research leaders to talk about their experiences supporting researchers, what they have found most challenging, and sharing their ideas to support the career development of their researchers. This also included a Q&A; the findings of this session are being written up as case-studies to share.  **Researchers**  We are proud of our career development offering at Leeds but that does not mean we stop challenging ourselves. To support researchers and managers, we have several options to meet the varying needs of researchers and the methods of delivery and participation they prefer.  In 2021, we expanded our Careers week to a Careers Summer, in 2022 we extended further to create BOOST. This is a yearlong programme of pick and mix sessions on a range of topics, supported by self-guided resources and recordings. BOOST is now open all researchers and research enablers.  For those wanting a more in-depth career programme we offer Career Architect. This 6-month cohort-based programme is designed to help people transition out of a fixed-term research role into another career with research. We offered 2 cohorts last year, supporting 24 people and are looking at ways to extend this programme to accommodate more participants.  For those who know what role they want but aren’t sure how to get it we offer Career Accelerator, a shorter 3-month programme. This includes support for participants applying for lectureships. We ran a pilot cohort in the last 12 months, supporting 11 ECRs.  We also piloted a self-guided programme with peer learning groups for those who wanted them. This programme utilised LinkedIn as a career tool.  We host monthly ‘Careers with Peers’ discussions where small groups can talk about a specific careers topic or problem with our careers consultant. |
| **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)*** | |
| Over the last 12 months we have started our return to campus-based activity, in-line with our new hybrid working style. This has presented both opportunities and challenges.  Initially we had a lot of requests for in person development, however our on campus-based events have seen lower than anticipated engagement whilst our online events remain well attended. Our current approach focuses on development being available at the point of need rather than at static points throughout the year. To achieve this, we use a blend of self-guided resources, recorded presentations and short video clips, interspersed with online peer development sessions or discussion groups. We haven't achieved the perfect balance, so over the next 12 months we will continue to test various modes of delivery to determine which elements are better delivered in person and which suit an online or asynchronous approach, and which benefit from a hybrid model. Feedback from our researchers tells us that one of the benefits to our current approach is the availability and accessibility of development.  One of the challenges with online and asynchronous development to date has been the ability to gather timely participant feedback to measure the impact. We’ve also experienced very low response rates to CEDARS. We now have access to an institutional survey platform and plan to introduce an annual research staff survey, targeted to the Concordat and our research culture aims. This will be supported by smaller, more frequent pulse surveys on a particular project or topic. It is important to acknowledge that work to implement the Concordat and improve research culture has been impacted by factors both within and outside our institution. Staff have been faced with new institutional strategies, competing priorities, periods of industrial action, and ongoing challenges from the pandemic. One of the most frequent statements we hear is that whilst this is important work, our staff are struggling to find the time to engage with it. The emphasis for us as we create our new action plan and move forward, is to simplify and support wherever we can, so that the Concordat becomes embedded rather than an additional responsibility for our staff to undertake. | |
| **Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period**  ***(max 500 words)*** | |
| Over the next 12-24 months we have identified 5 key projects to take forward, in addition to our ongoing actions:   * **Introduction of a research staff survey supported by smaller, more frequent pulse surveys.**   Trying to evaluate progress has been difficult as our response rate to CEDARs was low. Feedback has suggested the survey is too long and did not have a strong connection to Leeds. Our new approach is to use our new survey platform CultureAmp, tailored to our Concordat and Research Culture actions. We are also updating our evaluation measures to ensure we are not so reliant on survey data.   * **Raising awareness**   Effective engagement and implementation of our Concordat work is dependent on the input from our research staff community. This group is often hard to engage and recent calls for representatives have been unsuccessful. In addition, current active representatives undertake the role voluntarily. If we want to reflect the importance of these roles, we need to make them more attractive, visible, and valued. The creation of **Concordat Champions to act at institutional level** will provide an important link between research staff, the central support teams and the ECRD steering group. The roles will be recognised by an honorarium, to be spent on non-staff costs, with up to 6 Champion roles available. The minimum term will be one year extended to 2 years by mutual agreement. Development and support to undertake the role will also be offered.   * **Supporting the end of contracts**   One of the challenges we face with our career development programmes is the late engagement from research staff, for a multitude of reasons. Often with less than 3 months on their current contract, they start looking for support. Whilst this is possible and we have had successes, if we could identify these researchers earlier, we could help determine which programme best fits their needs and timescales. Working with HR, we will identify researchers with 12 months left on their contract and promote our existing Career Development programmes (Career Architect, Career Accelerator or Career Catalyst) to help them secure their next role.   * **Research Staff ‘One-Stop’**   To ensure our researchers and managers have access to all the information and materials they need we will develop a new induction package ‘Supporting you as a researcher at Leeds’ with a short introduction to Leeds and a repository pulling together all relevant information including HR policies, guidance and development opportunities. All new research staff will continue to be added to our community of practice, with over 1100 members.  Continued support will be provided with guides or pathways to support researchers in the first 3 years of their employment, highlighting information at appropriate points, for example probation guides, SRDS information and redeployment.   * **Responsible research**   One of the areas we have identified for growth is Responsible Research and Open Research. With a new researcher development consultant in post, we will be offering a new programme of development supporting responsible research and research integrity in line with our responsible metrics and open research statements. We will also focus on the implementation of the Research Integrity Concordat, with a newly created oversight group. Alongside the new provision we will undertake a project to update our code of conduct and policies in line with the RI Concordat. | |
| **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 ECR Development Steering Group, chaired by the Head of Researcher Development and Culture, leads our implementation of the Concordat and has the responsibility for creating and evaluating our Concordat Implementation Plan and preparing the associated governance. Membership of this committee includes the Dean for Research Culture, Pro-Deans for Research and Innovation, Director of Academic Practice and researcher developers from OD&PL, Deputy Director of HR, an ECR academic champion, Head of Interdisciplinary Research Development and ECR representatives. This group reports the Concordat Implementation plan and progress to the Research Culture steering group, chaired by the Dean for Research Culture Professor Catherine Davies, and finally to Research and Innovation Board, chaired by our Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Professor Nick Plant, for final sign-off. | |

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Professor Catherine Davies, Dean for Research Culture

Dr Emma Spary, Head of Researcher Development and Culture

Contact for queries: Dr Emma Spary, Head of Researcher Development and Culture, researcherdevelopment@leeds.ac.uk

This annual report will be analysed by Universities UK, secretariat for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, to identify good practices, themes for development and information to improve national research culture policy and practice.

If you have any questions, or suggestions on how the reporting process could be improved, please contact the secretariat at [CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

[www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk)