

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

### Universities and Research Institutes

Name of Institution	University of Wolverhampton
Reporting period	2022/23 (1/Aug/22 – 31/July/23)
Date approved by governing body	Academic Board approval: 14/June/23
Date published online	09/08/23
Web address of annual report	<a href="https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/researcher-development/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/">https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/researcher-development/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/</a>
Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage	<a href="https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/researcher-development/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/">https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/researcher-development/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/</a>
Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development	Prof Prashant Pillai <P.Pillai@wlv.ac.uk>
Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via <a href="mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk">CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk</a>	09/08/23

**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*)**

The University of Wolverhampton's Strategic Plan Vision 2030 seeks to transform the leadership and workforce of our place through inclusive student success and world-class research. The Research and Innovation (R&I) sub-strategy is one of four sub-strategies that underpin Vision 2030 and builds on the success of our previous Research Strategy 2019-2021. We recognise that the ability to deliver excellent research is significantly dependent on our research culture and environment.

Our overarching Research Vision for 2030 is to address societal challenges and improve lives through world class research. One of the 3 main ambitions of this vision statement are as follows: We have vibrant research communities that produce excellent research in an inclusive, supportive, collaborative and sustainable manner. To achieve these, the following commitments are put in place:

- We have inclusive research assessment submissions and promotions, and a collaborative research culture.
- We collaboratively develop our research and innovation capacity and share success with our stakeholders.
- We commit to increase the capacity for and quality of our research and innovation across our portfolio of subjects, organised in research centres and institutes. This includes developing a workforce strategy addressing requirements of Researcher Development Concordat, including training and development for research leaders, a review of the Doctoral College functions and research student plan.
- We have a nationally recognised Research and Innovation Directorate that provides outstanding support to researchers.

The University of Wolverhampton (UoW) held the HREiR award from 2012 to 2021. We became signatories to the Researcher Development Concordat (RDC) in June 2020. In July 2021, we were unsuccessful in our re-accreditation to HREiR, in large parts due to issues with reporting progress against an action plan from 2016 as the substantive review had been delayed. We are currently considering a formal submission for reaccreditation of the HREiR award, which will be made either for the March 2024 deadline, or a subsequent deadline (October 2024 or March 2025). This work is in alignment with UoW's current focus on reviewing and determining institutional priorities to ensure a continuous and high level of support for all researchers. The context for this ongoing consideration is a review and

determination of organisational priorities, as aligned to the overall vision for UoW and research.

The Researcher Development Concordat Sub-committee (RDCSC) has formal responsibility for developing and monitoring the implementation of the RDC at the University of Wolverhampton. The RDSC is a formal sub-committee of the University Research Committee and includes representation of researchers from all subject areas, different contracts and different career stages.

**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*)**

The following actions were derived from the HREiR Action Plan July 2021 to July 2023.

#### **Environment and culture**

1. Raise Awareness of the Concordat
  - a. The Researcher Development Concordat (RDC) will be published on the Research Web Pages and announced within university newsletters.
  - b. Information to be cascaded through different committees within the university.
  - c. Information regarding the RDC to be provided to all research staff during the central Induction programme - including information about the CEDARS questionnaire and the importance of their involvement.
  - d. Doctoral College to make the link between the training programmes run for researchers and the Research Concordat obligations at the beginning of each session.
  - e. Report twice per annum on progress with this action plan to the University Research Committee (URC).
2. Mental Health and Wellbeing
  - a. Establish a permanent section regarding the University 'Staff Wellbeing Hub' and the associated core offering around Access to Work Mental Health Support Services, EAP Counselling Service, etc. and other wellbeing resources within the 'Research Matters Newsletter'.

- b. Monitor the introduction of the new incident reporting system for trends within incidents reported by research staff.
- 3. Highest Standards
  - a. The University's "Handbook for Ethical Review and Approval" is updated annually.
  - b. At an institutional level, the Ethics Sub-Committee (ESC) deals with policy and procedure and reports to Academic Board through the URC.
  - c. Ensure that all managers of research are aware of the pages on Research Integrity and ethics.
  - d. Embed research integrity in university researcher development programmes.

### **Employment**

- 1. Staff Recruitment
  - a. Anonymous shortlisting and a mix of gender and ethnicity withing recruitment panels.
- 2. Induction
  - a. A clear detailed bespoke induction for researchers
  - b. Mandatory courses on research supervision, regulations and examining as part of induction.
- 3. Promotion and Performance review
  - a. Anonymous shortlisting and a mix of gender and ethnicity withing recruitment panels.
  - b. Build talent pipelines to support and address any under-representation within the Conferment process for researchers using our clearly laid out 'mitigating circumstances' within this process.
  - c. For Research Only staff, review what can be provided through appraisal and mentoring processes to support their career / promotion pathways.

### **Professional Development of Researchers**

- 1. 10 days professional development
  - a. Training provided on bid writing, EDI, project management, CARE framework, wellbeing, leadership, etc.
  - b. Improve communications systems regarding development opportunities.
- 2. Diversity of career advice
  - a. Senior Managers from within the Careers Service attend the Researcher Development Concordat Committee meetings.

- b. The Doctoral College will monitor the uptake of development and the work achieved within the Lord Paul Fellowship scheme which supports Early Career Researchers to enhance their research leadership skills.
- 3. Leadership skills
  - a. Establish a mentoring system.
  - b. Launch, promote and monitor uptake of the Lord Paul Fellowship programme.
  - c. Develop a secondment opportunity for researchers.
- 4. 10 days professional development
  - a. Training provided on bid writing, EDI, project management, CARE framework, wellbeing, leadership, etc.

**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]**

<p><b>Environment and Culture (max 600 words)</b></p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>We have presented updates on the RDC to the Corporate Management Board (CMB) and University Research Committee. We raised the visibility of the RDC through communications in Research Matters, our internal research newsletter, and in terms of dissemination of the results from the Research Excellent Framework assessment (REF), from May 2023 onwards.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>Drawing on a range of sources including internal and external survey, documents and focus groups, we completed a gap analysis in 2021-22. This showed good progress against some areas of the RDC (EDI, research integrity) and the need for further work on other areas.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>In response to ECRs' requests, through the RDC, the Doctoral College agreed to provide online learning resources for all</p>
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	<p>key workshops, which are offered synchronously to ECRs. To this end, there are now over 50 research-focused online learning opportunities available to staff researchers. These are complemented by a symposium series and networking events that continue to be offered synchronously.</p>
<p><b>Employment (<i>max 600 words</i>)</b></p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>Promotion processes restarted in the year under review; they had not run in the year prior.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>Drawing on a range of sources including internal and external survey, documents and focus groups, we completed a gap analysis in 2021-22. Areas of concern included bullying and harassment and mental health &amp; wellbeing. A wider institutional initiative was launched – the CARE Framework – to address these concerns. Our anticipation is that the next gap analysis will occur before the formal submission to HREiR.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>We have historically used the biennial CROS/PIRLS and their replacement CEDARS to systematically gather the view of researchers, and managers of researchers to inform and improve our implementation of the RDC. Since 2021, we included researcher-related identifiers (research-only staff, staff with significant responsibility for research) in internal staff surveys. This has allowed us to identify, for example, differences in employee engagement between different staff groups, which in turn feeds into our action plan. Further to guidance from the University Executive Board, Wlv did not enter CEDARS for the current academic year.</p>
<p><b>Professional development (<i>max 600 words</i>)</b></p>	<p>Institution</p>

	<p>A series of post-REF open fora chaired by the Executive Research Lead to scope staff responses to the research environment and develop a new research strategy occurred.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>In March 2023, the Wolverhampton Ethical Review Manager (WERM) system was operationalised to oversee ethics compliance processes.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>Updated and extended guidance on research ethics and research integrity was achieved, and research integrity sessions incorporated into Essentials of the Classroom training sessions.</p> <p>The Women of Wolves (WOW) Leadership Programme began.</p> <p>A full programme of development sessions remains available, delivered through Research Services:  <a href="https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/the-doctoral-college/staff-development">https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/the-doctoral-college/staff-development</a></p>
<p><b>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)</b></p>	
<p>This year, the university underwent a major organisational transformation process. This resulted in several changes on how research was structured within the University. 2022/23 also saw a lot of change in the senior leadership in-charge of Research. The incumbent Dean of Research resigned and left the University to take on a PVC Research role at another institution. An Interim arrangement was put in place, whereby the Dean of FEHW was given the responsibility to lead research at the University level. In order to bring stability and emphasise the importance of Research and KE in the University strategy and operations going forward, a new role of Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and KE was created and appointed to in</p>	

<p>July 2023. Due to these restructuring and changes, many of the key action plans were put on hold. These will be restarted under the guidance of the newly appointed Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and KE.</p> <p>In general, the uptake of the abovementioned networking events has remained low; going forward, it may be necessary to invite specific research centres to co-convene such events, and bring their members with them.</p>
<p><b>Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period (max 500 words)</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Setup a Concordat Implementation working group that would aim to review the deficiencies in our current offering and help develop a resubmission for the HREiR award.</li><li>2. Develop a Research Culture Action Plan (RCAP) which will cover a number of action items.</li><li>3. To carry out a detailed review of all mandatory and optional training provided for researchers and their managers to ensure all training related to the concordat is included.</li><li>4. Ensure all training and development opportunities are widely disseminated through different channels.</li><li>5. Improve engagement with the programme of support.</li><li>6. Improve data gathering and reporting to measure effectiveness of action plan items.</li><li>7. Develop a clear progression and career development pathway for research-only members of staff.</li><li>8. Develop and evaluate the impact of the Research Leaders' Programme.</li></ol>
<p><b>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)</b></p> <p>The report is presented for approval to: University Research Committee, Academic Board, the Student Affairs &amp; Academic Affairs Committee</p>

Signature on behalf of governing body: *P. Pillai*

Contact for queries: Professor Prashant Pillai, PVC Research & Knowledge Exchange



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)