



**University of South Wales | Prifysgol De Cymru**

**Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers |  
Concordat i Gefnogi Datblygiad Gyrfa Ymchwilwyr**

**Annual Report 2022 | Adroddiad Blynyddol 2022**

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## Introduction

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (known as the Research Concordat or Concordat) is an agreement between stakeholders to improve the employment and support for researchers and researcher careers in higher education in the UK. The University of South Wales became a signatory in October 2022, this first annual report provides a summary of activities for October 2021 - 2022. The approach taken at USW is to apply the principles contained within the Concordat to all staff rather than confined to 'research only' groups. It was agreed that oversight of progress would also be reported to the Culture, People and Values Group, chaired by Professor Michael Gunn.

## Background

In 2021, the University Executive established its Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) to oversee the progress and delivery of the 2030 strategy. Led by the PVC-Research, the Research 2030 SIGs have five workstreams designed to support our talented staff to continuously develop and to recognise them for their work in innovation and impactful research (Research and Innovation Strategy; Quality-related (QR) allocation formula; Development of Early/Mid-career Researchers and the principles for allocating Significant Responsibility for Research; a review of all the current Research Centres; and a group focused on the Concordat). The Research Concordat SIG was created to meet the University's obligations as a signatory of the Research Concordat, and formally reports progress (and risk mitigation) to: Research Committee; Academic Board; and the Culture, People and Values Committee. The SIG will also be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award.

### Compilation of the Research Concordat Strategy Implementation Group (2021/22)

**Co-chairs**                      Martin Steggall                      Louise Bright

#### Members

Anne-Marie Coll	Gina Dolan	Jodie Rees	Nicholas Roberts	Sarah Theobald
Bhagya Ranathunge	Harriet Pierpoint	Jonathan Sinfield	Nildo Costa	Sarah Wallace
Duncan Pirrie	Helen Davies	Joselyn Sellen	Owain Kerton	Stephanie Perkins
Elaine Huntley	Helena Gaunt	Lauren Thomas	Paul Roach	Steve Walden
Emma Kwaya-James	James Bennett	Michelle Evans	Richard Hurford	Teresa Filipponi

## Strategic objectives

The Research Concordat has three defining principles:

1. **Environment and Culture:** Excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture.
2. **Employment:** Researchers are recruited, employed, and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions.
3. **Professional and career development:** Professional and career development are integral to enabling researchers to develop their full potential

The new HREiR Award action plan template provided by Vitae maps directly to the principles of the new Concordat. Following advice from the Researcher Development Concordat: Wales Network, to reduce the duplication of effort we developed the action plan whilst simultaneously conducting the gap analysis. To update our action plan, we have drawn information from several sources including the biennial surveys run by Vitae that cover Principal Investigators (PIRLS) and Research Staff (CROS), which were combined in 2021 to become the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS). We also draw on the results of the research student annual monitoring process, and the 2020, 2021 and 2022 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) as well as

workshops and surveys exploring Development and Performance Review (DPR) and career progression. Priorities have been identified via the SIG and other researcher-led strategic groups such as the Faculty Research Committees and the Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team. Priorities were considered against the QAA indicators, Researcher Development Framework (RDF) subdomains, Concordat Principles and the UK Research and Development (UKRI) statement of expectations.

As a signatory of the Research Concordat, the key objectives for the first year were to:

- Raise the visibility and promote the benefits of the Concordat across the University.
- Undertake the institutional gap analysis alongside the development of the HREiR Award action plan; the reporting template was updated in 2020 to reflect Principles of the new Concordat.
- Submit the USW HREiR Award eight-year review and strategy alongside the revised action plans and develop mechanisms for monitoring the progress of the 2022-2025 action plan.
- Establish an Early Career Researcher (ECR) network.
- Produce and publish the annual report to the Board of Governors.

## Progress 2021-2022

The first meeting of the Research Concordat SIG took place in February 2022, with the following activity completed to date:

- Terms of reference and membership for working group (SIG) agreed.
- SIG meetings were held on the 23rd of March, 4th of May and the 2nd of August.
- The work packages for SIG agreed and leads and subgroups identified.
- Raised the profile of the Concordat by updating the research webpages and developing SIG pages on Connect that are available to all.
- Provided details on the Concordat via the USW Town Halls.
- The institutional gap analysis was accomplished in parallel with the development of the HREiR Award action plan.
- Submitted the HREiR Award documentation on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2022.
- The HREiR Award formal peer review interview took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August 2022. There is a detailed action plan that formed part of the submission and whilst we await the outcome, we will continue to monitor its progress.
- A library of relevant documents was created and made available to SIG members.
- The USW Early Career Researcher Network was launched in July 2022.

## Measures of success

In the next twelve months, working closely with the Chairs of all Research 2030 SIG the Research Concordat SIG will have:

- Raised awareness and shared best practice internally through online news and stories on 'Connect', attending faculty meetings, holding workshops and externally as a member of the pan Wales network for supporting the career development of researchers.
- Published and regularly updated activities in relation to the HREiR Award Action Plan via the internal and external webpages and regular reporting to its overarching committees.
- Made recommendations to Research Committee and Research Degrees Committee on University strategy and policy for career development and skills training for researchers.
- Worked to ensure that the Concordat is embedded in all areas of the business, with carefully planned and targeted online news stories (via Connect and USW staff newsletter) and through the SIG members acting as 'concordat champions' to promote to their faculties and professional services departments.
- Been incorporated into the new Research and Innovation Strategy, with specific objectives linked with the principles contained in the concordat 'visible' in the strategic objectives.

## Proposals for improvement

The purpose of the gap analysis was to review the current provision USW has in place to support the career development of its Researchers. The analysis found that there are areas of strength and some areas for improvement, for example we found that there is a need to raise the awareness of the Concordat and its obligations to all stakeholders. The gap analysis is in its first stage and will continue to be updated and reported on as work progresses. The work around the Concordat has not been in isolation, for example, Research Centres SIG identified and proposed that alongside the training offered by Research and Business Engagement, the faculty Heads of Research/Associate Deans for Research and Innovation would provide a mentoring role to support managers of researchers so that they are not only aware of the Concordat obligations but can also confidently include R&I discussions in the annual appraisals/DPR. Furthermore, the planned introduction of Research Academies makes mentorship within each research grouping a specific requirement.

The summarised action plan (Appendix 1) outlines the planned actions over the next twelve months and the areas that have been identified as requiring further work can be found in Appendix 2.

## Forward look to actions for the following year

A summarised version of the action plan can be found in Appendix 1, with the full update on progress towards implementing each of the actions listed in the institutional HR Excellence in Research Award action plan, which is published online [HR Excellence in Research Award | University of South Wales](#).

### Institutional priorities for 2022-23






- Launch of the revised Research and Innovation Strategy.
- Host a launch event for the Concordat Action Plan.
- Refresh the USW Research Centre membership criteria and ECR definitions.
- Launch the research Mentoring Scheme.
- Launch the USW Researcher Development Survey.
- Run the 2023 Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS).





## Conclusion

Our commitment to the Concordat is a significant undertaking which requires focused and coordinated action, along with dedicated support and resources to ensure its successful implementation. It is our mission to ensure that our staff have a deep sense of belonging and feel empowered to engage in their own career development. We proudly hold the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award, acknowledging the support we provide to our researchers. In addition to this during 2022 we have worked with key stakeholders to meet the aims and objectives of the Research 2030 SIGs, which on completion will have a positive impact on our research environment. With the support of the Core SIG, we will strive to embed the principles of the Concordat across the University, working together to develop a culture that is enabling, supportive, and inclusive, which addresses our core priorities and ambitions that will make a difference to the researcher employment experience at USW.

## Appendix 1


## Actions to be completed for the academic year 2022-23






Key	ADRI	Associate Deans Research and Innovation	HRIS	Head of Research and Innovation Services	
	CPIO	Chief People and Inclusion Officer	PVCR	Pro-Vice Chancellor Research	
	DRBE	Director of RBE	REM	Research Excellence Manager	
	EDIM	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager	RGM	Research Governance Manager	
	HOS	Head of Subject	RDM	Researcher Development Manager	
Action					
Action		Owner		Progress September 2022	Timescale
ECI6	Develop mechanisms for monitoring implementation and progress on the Concordat action plan via surveys such as CEDARS and all staff survey alongside specific surveys on research culture.	PVCR RDM		A Researcher Development survey has been developed and will be circulated Autumn 2022.	Oct-23
ECI3	Raise awareness of the resources available to support mental health and wellbeing. Such as promoting boundaries and managing expectations around workload via compulsory training for employees and managers.	CPIO RDM ADRI		Connect has a comprehensive Health and Wellbeing website available to all staff. Health and wellbeing training specifically for managers is currently available.	Jul-23
ECI4	Develop and deliver training for managers of researchers in relation to promoting a good research culture.	CPIO EDIM		There are several wellbeing courses for employees and managers available.	Jul-23
ECM3	Ensure managers share any events (e.g., programme of wellbeing workshops) and resources (e.g., Care First, Health and Wellbeing website, Flu voucher, etc) related to wellbeing and actively encourage their teams to take time to attend wellbeing events.	Deans HRIS		Research and Innovation Services regularly promote workshops and training through targeted email, in future this will include wellbeing events.	Jul-23
ECM1 /ECR2	Convene a working group, that includes the EDI manager, appropriate colleagues from Research and Business Engagement and Subject Managers to address this requirement.	EDIM RGM		This will be addressed as an action of the HR Excellence in Research Award.	Jul-23

	Review current uptake of leadership and management training by managers of researchers and undertake a training needs analysis.			Research and Innovation Services regularly monitor and analyse post course feedback.	
EC15/ ECM2	Introduce a Research Integrity policy that will apply to all members of USW, bring together the existing resources and will include explicit acknowledgement of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (CSRI).	RGM		The Research Governance Manager will draft and seek appropriate committee approval for the USW Research Integrity policy.	Sep-23
E17	Ensure that researchers are represented on the People Plan Implementation Group.	CPIO		The Concordat is a standing item on the Research Committee agenda, members will be encouraged to volunteer to participate in the People Plan Implementation Group.	Jul-23
E12	Develop an online toolkit based on research and development and distribute to all new starters via the online induction programme.	CPIO		Research and Innovation Services send a welcome email to all new academic starters.	Jul-23
E14	The Heads of School programme will be expanded to include Subject Managers. The programme upskills managers to better understand the research environment and the challenges facing researchers, equipping them to have more meaningful conversations with researchers on a day-to-day basis and during DPRs.	DRBE ADRI		The DRBE will review and update the Heads of School programme to ensure it meets the requirements of the new Subject Managers.	Sep-23

## Appendix 2

Further work to be conducted in academic year 2022-23

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
EM2	Managers familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding.	ADRI HOS		Develop a programme of communication (which includes email /workshops /training etc.) that raises the awareness of	Jul-23

ER1	Researchers ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures, and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder.			the obligations and encourages colleagues to engage appropriately.	
ER2	Researchers understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities.				
PCDM3	Managers 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.	HOS		Work with HR and the Faculty Heads of Research/Associate Deans for Research and Innovation to develop guidance for researchers and their managers.	Jul-23
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	ADRI HOS		Research Academy Leaders to act as role models for all members of the academy, supporting directly or signposting colleagues to the appropriate advice/guidance. The Research Mentoring Scheme will be launched in early 2023.	Sept-23
PCDI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	ADRI HOS		Working in conjunction with other Research SIG and in line with the principles laid out in the People Plan the ECR/MCR Development SIG are working to develop a programme of support that enables research career development to be visible and supported.	TBC
PCDM4	Managers 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.	PVCR HRIS		Academy leaders will work with the Dean and Faculty Head of Research/ADRI to enable members of the Academy to raise their training needs with their manager.	TBC
PCDR5	Researchers to seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	HOS		HOS to work with and encourage researchers to develop a research identity.	TBC