

Kingston University Researcher Development Concordat Action Plan

September 2025 to August 2028

The Concordat action plan is intrinsically linked to a range of existing initiatives and structures across the institution. Significant progress has been made over the last three years with sustainable impact as outlined in our UUK/Vitae Annual reports. Our Research Staff Development Strategy is overseen by our Research Staff Development Group (RSDG). Our RSDG has representatives from our Early Career Researchers, School Directors of Research, KERI Directors, contract researchers, Principal Investigator (PIs), HR and the Research & Impact Directorate. RSDG is chaired by the Graduate Research School and the Head of Researcher Development, Prof Priscilla Harries. The group meets three times annually, and reports to the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. Our 2025-28 action plan builds on our progress and we are committed to its successful implementation.

Abbreviations

- RSDG: Research Staff Development Group
- KERI: Knowledge Exchange & Research Institute
- PI: Principal Investigator
- SDR&KE: School Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange
- PGR: Post-graduate Researcher
- GRS: Graduate Research School
- HR: Human Resources

1. Environment and Culture

Ref.	Action	Tasks and Deliverables	Owners	Timescale
1.1.	Ensure Concordat principles are embedded in the Environment & culture of new KERIs	Explore opportunities for PGRs and contract research staff to engage in KERI activity.	KERI Directors / SDRKES / Dep Deans / PGR directors/GRS	Sept 25 – August 26
1.2	Communicate concordat and /action plans and Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to researchers	Inclusion in new staff induction pack to be reviewed	RSDG/HR	Sept 25 – August 26
1.3	Strengthen mentoring	Offer mentorship training to research staff and facilitate	RSDG/HR	Sept 26 – August 27

	provision for researchers	<p>their resources to mentorship.</p> <p>HR to ensure researchers are included in communication on university schemes</p> <p>Explore opportunities to implement a 'Reverse mentoring scheme' to support for Senior Leadership Group academics to be supported by post-doctoral researchers to understand emerging areas.</p>		
1.4	Develop best practice for supporting visiting researchers.	Develop a visiting researcher and visiting research student policy & process	RSDG / HR	Sept 26 – August 27
1.5	Build understanding of technicians' contribution to the research environment	<p>Facilitate best-practice collaborative working between technician staff and researchers.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to join the 'Technician Commitment'.</p>	RSDG	Sept 26 – August 27
1.6	Develop understanding of the diversity of contract research staff.	Undertake analysis of research staff EDI characteristics to benchmark diversity data and identify areas for action as appropriate.	HR	Sept 25 – August 28

2. Employment

Ref.	Action	Tasks and Deliverables	Owners	Timescale
2.1	Concordat institutional commitment is clear to those considering	Candidate recruitment packs and advertising contains details of actions and support. HR researcher advertisement updated to include commitment to the 10 pro rata	HR/RSDG	Sept 25 – August 26

	working at the university	development days for research staff		
2.2	Share best practice for supporting research staff appraisals	Facilitate best practice discussion for managers of researchers and researchers.	HR/RSDG	Sept 27 – August 28
2.3	Consider appropriate use of open contracts.	HR report to RSDG on contract status of research staff. RSDG to discuss best practice on contract conversions and bridging funding. KERIs/Faculty/Employer explore expansion of the use of open ended permanent contracts.	HR/RSDG	Sept 26 – August 27

3. Professional and Career Development

Ref.	Action	Tasks and Deliverables	Owners	Timescale
3.1	Support PIs to build capability	Create a PI resource pack to support understanding of PIs responsibilities and best practice for supporting researchers.	RSDG	Sept 25 – August 26
3.2	Develop guidance on the use of 10 career development days	Survey research staff to scope development activity examples and add to new-starter pack.	RSDG	Sept 26 – August 27
3.3	Further development of collaborative training and networking opportunities with partner institutions	Signpost opportunities to apply to join collaborative ventures e.g. British Academy ECR South East and London Cluster Network Rise Research Leadership Academy	RSDG	Sept 25 – August 26
3.4	Update training mapping to the revised 2025	Re-map training provision to updated framework domains, identifying any gaps.	RSDG	Aug 25 – Sept 26

	Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)	<p>Communicate new RDF to research staff.</p> <p>Ensure professional development is visible and easily accessible to all researchers.</p> <p>Ensure research staff have access to training in relation to IP and commercialisation.</p>		
3.5	Introduce a mechanism for KERIs and SDR&KEs to celebrate individuals and teams who contribute effectively to research	Researcher recognition awards: Research Awards to be implemented.	KERIs / SDR&KE	Sept 26 – August 28

Institutional progress (2022-25):

Environment and Culture

- Implemented our Research staff strategy, (approved by RSDG and the Research Governance Committee);
- Expanded membership of our RSDG to 39 members: key stakeholders are now actively contributing to RSDG and supporting action delivery
- Held two annual induction events for new staff, including coverage of the Concordat;

Employment

- Kingston University embarked on a radical transformation programme, driven by our Town House Strategy, that aims to make the University sought after by students and staff as a place to further their ambitions and to have an impact on our communities. Our new **Values Framework**, launched in 2023/4 is a physical expression of our vision to become ever more **ambitious, inclusive, innovative and enterprising**. These values are embedded in our advertisements for new positions and current staff now align their appraisal objectives with these values. We are continuing to embed our values in all processes and procedures.

- Our Academic Domains Career Development Framework has been fully implemented; it will underpin promotion/ career development stages. Research and KE informs the basis of KERI membership.
- HR Recruitment now follows the principles of the KU policy on the use of research metrics: if a candidate provides metrics (e.g. journal impact factors) as part of their application, these will not be used to assess the candidate's research performance; peer review will be paramount. A statement has been added to the job application form to guide applicants in the responsible use of research metrics. HR updated their guidance to recruiting managers to add these bullet points: to discourage the use of non-specific metrics such as impact factors in job applications and to recommend recruitment managers to remove any such non-specific metrics provided or to brief the panel to disregard. Applicants are now aware and compliant; no significant breaches have been notified from recruitment panels to date.

Professional and Career Development

We have been successful in securing a number of collaborative training opportunities with partner institutions. Kingston University, together with colleagues from Sheffield and Glasgow successfully lobbied and supported the UKSA in their efforts of obtaining £4.9M from DSITS to support the wider R2T2 program (i.e. 30 PhDs in Space propulsion and launch activities over the next 5 years, split into three cohorts of 10 starting in 2024/5, 2025/6 and 2026/7). [Space for Our Future: UK aims to join Atlantic Constellation with funding for new Earth observation satellite - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/space-for-our-future-uk-aims-to-join-atlantic-constellation-with-funding-for-new-earth-observation-satellite). In addition to our AHRC funded DTP 'TECHNE', our 'SEDarc' ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) bid led by Royal Holloway, University of London, was successful. This was a partnership bid with Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Reading universities. We were invited into the partnership bid following our strong university reputation in EDI, alongside our excellent REF 2021 outcomes in UoA3 (3+), specifically related to the research and impact undertaken by staff submitted from the Centre for Applied Health and Social Care Research. Access to SEDarc [Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) was secured, as part of the ESRC-funded SEDarc Doctoral Training Partnership. These collaborative awards will enrich the breadth of the doctoral and post-doctoral researcher provision at Kingston.

- Training events for researchers are facilitated by Research and Impact Directorate during the academic year. Our researcher training provision has been expanded. Following a vitae gap analysis and prioritisation of training with the research staff development group a revised and expanded programme, which had been mapped to the vitae domains and subdomains were delivered for staff and doctoral researchers. The Vitae RDF was updated in 2025 and the new action plan will include mapping to the new framework. The expanded training was listed on newly developed, intranet sites and made available for booking through the new university events facility. Additional sessions included 'navigating academic careers', 'developing yourself as a researcher', 'how to get published in a journal', and 'the KU research leadership academy- what it covers and how to apply'. We also developed and launched a module in contentious research, national security and export control. In 25/26 KERIs have implemented workshops to support bidding activity.