



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

Name of Institution Kingston University

Reporting period 2022-2023

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Web address of annual report: [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers - Research policies and guides - Research - Kingston University London](#)

Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage:
[Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers - Research policies and guides - Research - Kingston University London](#)

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Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk

30 November 2023

Universities and Research Institutes

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)

Equality, diversity and inclusion underpin our approach to researcher career development and the promotion of an inclusive research culture, driving institutional strategies to support staff and students. We currently hold the Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter Bronze awards and a number of diversity awards in recognition of work with staff and students.

Inclusivity is one of the four key values of the university. Kingston's future plans are based on our commitment to developing an inclusive research culture, built on mechanisms such as our REF 2021 Code of Practice and the delivery of targets and outcomes deriving from our access and participation commitments, charter mark activity and PSED equality objectives.

Our commitment to inclusive learning (as evidenced through our triple Gold TEF outcome) informs our research activity. We have a strong track record in inclusive and participatory research design leading to impact; and foster a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy leading to numerous third sector partnerships as demonstrated through our recent KEF outcomes.

Career Development

Kingston's Domains Framework provides the criteria and standards to support career development, increase performance and reward achievement. It recognises the diversity and interconnectivity of career activities and roles undertaken by academic staff. The framework comprises 5 'domains':

1. Learning & Teaching 2. Research 3. Business & International Partnerships (Knowledge transfer) 4. Professional Practice, Impact and Public Engagement (Knowledge Exchange) 5. Leadership & Management. Each has clearly articulated standards, expectations and quality thresholds for every career stage. The framework is underpinned by a comprehensive programme of training and support (online and in person) and supports career personalisation by encouraging a 'mixed economy' of skills. It also assists workforce planning to allow agility and responsiveness to business needs. The framework was deployed to identify 'significant responsibility for research' (SRR) as determined by Kingston's REF 2021 Code of Practice. Staff with evidence of a minimum 30% research domain are identified as having SRR. A research

domain below this threshold is intended to support career development and may also recognise research as part of a larger programme of enterprise or leadership activity.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) is fundamental to our research culture, supporting our mission to foster knowledge through positive engagement and partnership and informing the goal of societal impact of our research. Our sector-leading work includes the Inclusive Curriculum Framework, addressing the BAME degree awarding gap. Our Network of Equality Champions deliver projects to help shape an inclusive learning and research environment. EDI strategy is driven by our equality objectives and includes a coordinated series of actions to: enhance staff and student achievement and progression; ensure good governance and accountability; promote representation, engagement and inclusion; and deliver resources, training and development. Members of the Senior leadership team sponsor different strands of equalities work. We have a network for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff and LGBTQ+ staff respectively. The University joined the Stonewall Diversity Champion network to access best practice resources to support staff.

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)

To contribute to the realisation of our university Townhouse Strategy, there are two relevant themes driving our activity:

- Research and Knowledge Exchange: Have impact in research, knowledge exchange and professional practice by concentrating our efforts where we can be credible and authoritative.
- People: Provide a collaborative, innovative, and high-performing working environment for our staff so that we are an effective and attractive place to work.

Kingston University will:

- Create Knowledge Exchange and Research Institutes (KERIs) around areas of excellence with ambitious targets for both.
- Encourage KERIs to be crossdisciplinary in order better to address complex problems.
- Work with employers to respond to rapidly changing industry and individual needs by developing their employees' future skills

At the start of this university new strategy cycle, we have ambitious and exciting plans to develop our researcher training offer to embed greater legibility and coherence. The forthcoming Institutes will drive improvements in research culture and management and provide a framework to embed researcher training and experience.

We have developed our Research Staff Development Strategy and continue to review our training portfolio to ensure it best supports the Academic Domains Career Framework, has an appropriate balance of online and in-person events, and will work towards ensuring all researchers engage with 10 development days by 2025.

This Research Staff Development Strategy will support the development of a bespoke programme of specialist knowledge and skills needed by staff to progress successfully in a research career.

The Research Staff Development Group (RSDG), representing key stakeholders from across the university, together with HR representatives will lead on the design and delivery of this easily accessible, high-quality range of staff research development opportunities.

Environment and culture

- We are launching our Knowledge Exchange and Research Institutes (KERIs) to improve the visibility, quality, reach and impact of our work.
- Launching the KERIs will expand our Knowledge Exchange and Research mission, creating four focal points for activity, investment, internal and external collaborations, and career development.

There are three prototypes related to this project:

1. Single Employer-Focused Offer will develop a collaborative suite of skills and professional development for one large employer and will explore new ways of providing packages of training and employee development
2. Large Collaborative Bids will be increased by focus on improving our support and incentivization for academics to identify, develop, secure and manage large research and KE projects
3. The Digital and Cyber Innovation Hub will be launched at Seething Wells, offering a number of educational, KE and research opportunities

Employment

- We are transforming our People Plan to support our staff through reward, recognition, performance, attraction and engagement.
- We are working to foster the career development and ambitions of our staff by using academic domains and developing career pathways for professional and technical staff.

Professional Development of Researchers

- We are transforming through our People Plan to support our staff through reward, recognition, performance, attraction and engagement.
- We are working to provide a collaborative, innovative and high-performing working environment for our staff so that we are an effective and attractive place to work.

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)

Environment and Culture

Institution

- New Research staff strategy agreed by RSDG and approved by Research Governance Committee.
- Two induction events were held for new staff, including coverage of the Concordat.
- Speaker from HR OD provided a two-hour workshop on work life balance during the Summer Festival of Research FoR; attendees reported feeling better prepared to use work life balance strategies in the evaluation feedback.

Academic Managers of Researchers

- Expanded membership and key stakeholders are now actively contributing to RSDG and supporting action delivery.

Researchers

In terms of supporting researchers

- Our first contract Research staff Forum meeting was held in March 2023 and managers of these researchers were also brought together to ensure they were aware of the topics discussed; contract research staff reported feeling better informed about the 10 development days and support/resources/training on offer.
- All academics, researchers and PGRs were invited to our Summer Festival of Research including a social lunch

Employment (max 600 words)

Institution

- Our Academic Domains Career Development Framework has been fully implemented and will form the basis of membership in the new Knowledge Exchange and Research Institutes (KERIs); it underpins promotion/ career development stages.

Academic Managers of Researchers

- 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; Recommend recruitment managers to remove any such non-specific metrics provided or to brief the panel to disregard. Applicants now aware and compliant no significant breaches notified from recruitment panels to date.

- Workshops for experienced supervisors of research students have been expanded to encompass broader principles of researcher management.

Researchers

- Job interview training for PGRs was offered on June 5th with the external trainers GRADCORE/Helen Liddle I and Ali Orr (Head of KU Careers) and Graduate Research School staff. PGR students reported feeling better prepared for job interviews following the training. See our youtube clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMETI18A11E>

Professional development (max 600 words)

Institution

- A programme of Management Development seminars was delivered by HR including: Interview skills workshop; Coaching Individual Performance; Harnessing Diversity; Core Management Skills; Making Difficult Conversations More Valuable; Personal Development; and Develop, Engage, Retain Team Performance. We also have online training module on Unconscious Bias and Equality Essentials.
- We held a joint event with other London HEIs for our part-time researchers at Woburn House focussing on supporting them with their needs as part -time researchers. (Permission to share photo given by attendees.)



Managers of Researchers

- All staff with research management responsibilities (primarily PI's) have been provided with full access to Epigeum's online researcher courses including "Research Integrity", and "Research Career - Strategies for Research Leadership" and associated workshops.

Researchers

- Twenty-five training events for researchers were facilitated by Research and Impact Directorate during the 2022/23 academic year, with a total of 531 attendances.
- In addition, a Festival of Research with a focus on sustainability, which in 2023 features 44 events aimed at Early Career Researchers was held, attracting 969 attendees. This included training delivered by a post-doctoral alumni who gave a lecture on his post-doctoral journey.
- We held two training sessions per term that were specifically of interest to Early Career Researchers; these were promoted via our Early Career Researcher email Network. This is an informal network, where anyone who considers themselves in the early stages of their research career subscribes to the network mailing list, which is used for circulating details of training events and any items of interest. It currently has xxx subscribers.
- Research mentorship is available through the university Beyond Barriers scheme and the Graduate Research School peer mentorship scheme. The Kingston University Rise Research Leadership Academy runs annually from January to June and is held by the Head of Researcher Development and the Graduate School, Professor Cilla Harries. This has been published as a case study on the Vitae website. This six-month Academy was delivered in 2023 for researchers across all Faculties within the university. Sixty academics from across all Faculties have now completed the Academy, following a formal application process. Health and Social care researchers from Kingston University also participated in the NIHR Research Leadership Academy also led by Professor Harries. An end of Academy event brought the two groups together to reflect on their learning (permission to share photo given by attendees):



• 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)

Research Leadership Academies: Vitae case study published

Our Research Leadership Academies have been well received and are growing in membership year on year. The Kingston University Rise Academy has been published by Vitae as a case study. The NIHR ARC Research Leadership Academy we lead opens nationally to applicants in 23/24.

CEDARs

We had expected to utilise the CEDARs survey this year, but three key reasons led us to delay its implementation. The Institute launch is planned for next year and so surveying in the transition period is less useful, than after the implementation has been realised. The university needed a key focus on the staff survey in 22/23 so that took priority. The CEDARs data will be need in the next cycle, to allow us to prepare our action plan effectively for our next submission.

Knowledge Exchange and Research Institutes

Our newly planned Institutes will be undertaking a soft launch 23/24 and a full launch in 24/25.

Website developments

Our external website is being prepared for relaunch and we have prepared to include additional information on our researcher training provision, aligned with the Vitae Domains and sub domains.

Researcher management

Workshops for experienced supervisors of research students have been expanded to encompass broader principles of researcher management in accordance with Concordat principles.

Development of a bespoke programme of specialist knowledge and skills

Our new initiatives such as the development of the Research Staff Forum have been well received. A Vitae-mapped, gap analysis of our current research training has been completed. An expanded training provision has been prioritised for implementation; additional resource and a suitable Learning Management System (LMS) platform are needed to support growth and accessibility of the training programme (advertising, booking, delivery, evaluation and reporting). At this time the 'People Plan' university team are looking to scope and identify a suitable LMS platform that could be implemented for all university training delivery. Once that task has been completed, the optimal LMS may be implemented and the growth opportunity resourced appropriately. Until that is possible some additional signposting to training will be offered through the intranet and a modest increase in delivery of training opportunities will be promoted.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period

(max 500 words)

By July 2024


- Deliver a modestly enhanced portfolio of researcher development programme e.g training on contentious research, GDPR for researchers, Epigeum Impact module
- Deliver our Research staff forum three times a year
- Identify the key focus for the Festival of Knowledge Exchange and Research event and deliver an inclusive, interactive programme
- Research staff to prepare and discuss their Personal Development Plan (PDP) with their line manager at the start of their contract and to engage in 6-monthly reviews of PDP
- Research managers to ensure researchers in their area of management (Centre, Group, School, or as a mentee) are engaged in relevant networks, attending relevant conferences and taking part in local activities (KERI, Centre events; institutional events; seminars; awaydays).

- Researcher Development Programme for PGRs: sessions on impact, KE, policy, and entrepreneurship workshops to be made available to wider staff base.
- Development of new internal and external web pages for Researcher Development, to enhance visibility of provision.

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 draft report is reviewed and informed by the Research Staff Development Group and formal approval for submission is given by the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

Signature on behalf of governing body:



Contact for queries: Prof Priscilla Harries p.harries@kingston.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

www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk