

## Kingston University Researcher Development Concordat - Annual Report 2024-25

Date approved by governing body: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Date published online: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Web address of Annual Report: [www.kingston.ac.uk/research/policies](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/research/policies)

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Date sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### Governance

Our Research Staff Development Strategy is overseen by our Research Staff Development Group (RSDG). It has been refreshed for the next three-year period (2025-2028). Our RSDG has representatives from our Research Institute Directors, Early Career Researchers, School Directors of Research, 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 each term, and reports to Research Governance Committee (named Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee since October 2023).

### Environment and Culture

In terms of institutional progress, we have

- Implemented our Research staff strategy, (approved by RSDG and the Research Governance Committee);
- Expanded membership of our RSDG to 30 members in 2024/5 we included the Directors of the Knowledge Exchange and Research Institutes (KERIs) and have planned a further expansion to 40 members in 2025/26: key stakeholders are now actively contributing to RSDG and supporting action delivery.
- Held two induction events to 52 new staff, including coverage of the Concordat;

In terms of supporting researchers

- We held a RSDG away day (full day) in June 2025. RSDG gave updates on progress against the Research staff strategy. We held a panel for contracts research staff to share views on key issues which they co-produced as themes for the discussion.



A key focus of our away day was to develop our Concordat Action Plan for 2025-28. Here you see groups of academics and contract research staff examining the Concordat requirements and planning actions they would like to see implemented in the Kingston University 25-28 Concordat Action Plan.

- We held an away day for our PGR community. This included updates on developments at the university, sharing and action planning from our student satisfaction survey and opportunities to share examples of best practice and innovation across the university (mapped to the OfS B standards).

- The Research Staff Forum meeting was held termly in 24/25; attendees reported feeling better informed about the 10 development days and support/resources/training on offer.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

At Kingston we see diversity as a strength and value the rich variety of backgrounds, identities and experiences our staff and students bring to the University. We are a diverse university with an established commitment to embedding equality and diversity in everything that we do. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, we refresh and renew our equality objectives every four years, with our current objectives covering 2021 to 2025. Our latest Public Sector Equality Duty report was published in March 2025.

To enable us to foster an inclusive environment, Kingston University has secured several Charter Marks, Pledges and Accreditations. Kingston continues to work hard to reattain and implement both the Race Equality Charter (REC – renewed in 2024) and Athena SWAN (renewed in 2023) Since 2021, two Faculties hold Athena SWAN Bronze awards, with others holding at least one silver award. In 2022, our Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was also published in line with EU Horizon funding requirements.

In 2025 we became a Disability Confident (level 2) employer, committed to enabling and supporting all staff to work and fulfil their potential. This includes adjustments and adaptations to working arrangements, equipment and software to ensure equal opportunity to work and access the workplace.

Kingston's adoption of the Anti-Racism Pledge, which was originally developed by the Scottish Funding Council for HEIs and FE Colleges, highlights our university's commitment to calling out racism and creating a better working and social environment that embraces equality, diversity and inclusion. Working closely with, and at the recommendation of our staff and students through the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff network, the pledge already underpins some of the objectives within the Public Sector Equality Duty that was set last year and will strengthen our future policy and practice, not least in our commitments to improving on our current race equality charter mark.

Our commitment to EDI awareness raising and education continues to grow. Our focused training, 'Diversity in the Workplace' is a compliance training established in 2024, and it is at 95% completion. Our offer also includes both face-to-face sessions and online modules on such topics as, Anti-racism, LGBTQ+, Courageous Conversations, Active Bystander and wider-range of pedagogy-based sessions.

## **Employment**

### **Institution**

- Kingston University has 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. Directors were appointed in spring 2025 to lead our Research and Knowledge Exchange Institutes, which are a key workstream within the Strategy.
- Our Academic Domains Career Development Framework has been fully implemented; it will underpin promotion/ career development stages. Research and KE has formed the basis of KERI membership.
- Workshops for experienced supervisors of research students have been expanded to encompass broader principles of researcher management. We also delivered an online training course for people with an intellectual disability to become researchers; we have a number of trainees who are Co-PIs who are staff.

## Professional and Career Development

### Researcher Training

49 training events for researchers were facilitated by Research and Impact Directorate during the 2024/25 academic year, with a total of 1535 attendances. Capacity building events have also taken place within our KERIs, as their researcher membership became established in 2025.



We held a two-day Research Leaders intensive training programme which supported academics, research staff and visiting research fellow to focus on building their research leadership capability.



We held a Part-Time Researcher Day at Woburn House with colleagues from four universities: London South Bank University, Westminster University and Brunel University London.



The WISH (Women in STEM hub) group organised seminars, for example Professor Heba ElSharkawy shared insights on her academic journey. Attendees posted on LinkedIn about the value of this session - noting the "powerful reminder of the dedication and resilience required to succeed in academia."



Kingston led both the NIHR nationally open Research Leadership Academy as well as the RISE Kingston University Research Leadership Academy.



Here you see Kingston academics meeting at the Academies summer celebration event hosted by Kings College London.

(Permission to share photo given by attendees.)

## Researcher funding schemes

In 2024/5, we launched several funding schemes to support researchers at different stages of their career.

- 1. First KU Grants:** Open to academic staff who are within six years of the start of their academic career and who are contractually eligible to apply for independent funding. Awards are intended to provide pump-priming grants to initiate work on research projects which must, in turn, result in a high-quality application for external research funding. Grants of between £5-10k were awarded to 8 academics.
- 2. Kickstarter Scheme:** Open to academic staff requiring additional support before bidding externally for grants. This included need to demonstrate initial capability or scaling up and need to build a consortium. Grants of between £5-10k were awarded to 3 academics.
- 3. KERI Research and KE Fund:** Our KERIs provide targeted support for research and KE these funds are permanently open for application on a first-come, first-assessed basis.
- 4. 'Reward for Award' Scheme:** extension of Research Sustainability Scheme: all awards with overheads (both Knowledge Exchange & Research, incl. KTP); up to £5k per project; retroactive to awards won from 1st February 2024

## Looking forward (2025-26)

Through our Research Staff Development Strategy, we will 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 are offered the opportunity to engage with 10 development days a year pro rata. We will:

- Update training mapping to the revised 2025 Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF), ensuring it is communicated to research staff.
- Create a PI resource pack to support understanding of PIs responsibilities and best practice for supporting researchers.
- Continue working towards higher accreditations in Athena Swan and Disability Confident (Level 2) by the end of 2025.
- Undertake analysis of research staff EDI characteristics to benchmark diversity data and develop our understanding of the diversity of contract research staff.
- Ensure Concordat principles are embedded in the Environment & culture of new KERIs
- Ensure Concordat institutional commitment is clear to those considering working at the university, with recruitment packs and advertising containing details of actions and support.
- Ensure clear signposting of opportunities for researcher to apply to join collaborative ventures e.g. British Academy ECR South East and London Cluster Network; Rise Research Leadership Academy.
- Continue to monitor the contractual status of our contract research staff, to ensure open contracts are in place where appropriate, as recommended by the Concordat and build our knowledge of career pathways.