

Researcher Development Concordat - Annual Report 2022

In November 2020, Kingston University retained its HR Excellence in Research Award after our 4-year review. The award is recognition that we are demonstrating our long-term commitment to the career development of researchers and implementing the principles of Vitae's Researcher Development Concordat.

Activities during 2022

The strategy is overseen by our Research Staff Development Group, which contains Early Career Researcher and Principal Investigator representatives from our Faculties, as well as representatives from HR and the Research & Impact Directorate. The Group is chaired by the Graduate Research School and the Head of Researcher Development, Prof Priscilla Harries, who commenced her role in March 2022. The group meets each term, and reports to Research Governance Committee.

Environment and Culture

We have made significant progress in our aims of improving equality, diversity, inclusion and well-being of all staff at the University. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) continues to become ever more embedded and integrated into the fabric of Kingston's learning, working and research communities with a new Governance structure and Public Sector Equality Duty targets being implemented in /from 2021. New Faculty EDI Action Groups were established to better monitor and implement localised and institutional EDI actions and interventions with the groups focussing on a range of issues from progression, access to post-graduate study, anti-racism, awarding gaps and many others. The new University values further weave EDI into our culture through both "Inclusion" and "Empathy" identified as key Values. In parallel to the continued integration of EDI work and engagement with our communities, a suite of policies and procedures have been revised/devised including: our recruitment and promotion procedures, bullying and harassment policies, reasonable adjustments, gender identity/expression and many more.

Kingston are proud to be one of the few Universities, indeed institutions/companies, who have produced an Equality Pay Gap Report which goes further than the legal requirement to report on the Gender Pay Gap, by also reporting on ethnicity and disability pay gap data. The Report is underpinned with clear commitments to addressing the issues and removing barriers and addressing structural inequalities.

Additionally, new and every-growing resources and development on anti-racism, decolonisation and inclusive learning, teaching, working and research, have continued to be offered to staff and students to support the embedding of our Anti-Racism Pledge (2021) and wider strategic and legislative commitments to diversity and inclusion. Our commitment to training, developing and increasing awareness continues to grow. In addition to our core compulsory modules of "Equality Essentials" and "Unconscious Bias", offer includes both face-to-face sessions and online modules including, Anti-racism, LGBTQ+, Courageous Conversations, Active Bystander and wider-range of pedagogy-based sessions.

Furthermore, an Inclusive Leadership Programme was commissioned in 2021 for the SLT with this programme being rolled out to SLG in 22/23. Alongside these learning opportunities, we remain engaged with external development programmes focussing on women (Aurora) and people from BAME background/PoC (Diversifying Leadership and StellarHE) have been bolstered by dedicated centralised funding and renewed application processes, alongside new digital and physical communities with greater connectivity to internal support being further developed in 2022.

Kingston continues to work hard to attain and implement both the Race Equality Charter (REC) and Athena SWAN, with both the institutional REC and Athena SWAN seeking Bronze renewals in 2022. Since 2021, all Faculties hold Athena SWAN Bronze awards, with many making progress towards Silver. In 2022, our Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was also published in line with EU Horizon funding requirements. Furthermore, new funding and support for people returning to, and entering, research have been launched (21/22) to support those from underrepresented groups to remain/join our research communities. Continued improvements to our recruitment processes such as anonymised shortlisting and revised panel composition guidance aim to continue to diversify our profession and academic staff. We remain members of Business Disability Forum and are a Disability Confident (Level 1) employer. Since 2021, Kingston University has also become a member of Stonewall's Diversity Champions

programme. The support Kingston provides for the well-being of all staff is set out in its Well-being hub. Which has a range of resources to enhance staff health and wellbeing. The resources are based around the Five Ways to Wellbeing, which are tried and tested, evidence-based actions and ideas that people can incorporate into their daily lives. Key activities in 2021 included Well-being Week in November, which had range of events, both online and on campus, planned for our staff and students. A staff pulse survey (How are you managing during the covid pandemic?) was also conducted in March and was the 5th such survey during the pandemic.

Employment

As part of our actions in relation to our Public Sector Equality Duty the University reviewed its approach to recruitment during 2021/22 using a data led approach and considering evidence based practice in ensuring fair and effective recruitment. As part of this review it was agreed to move to anonymous shortlisting and enable this function on our recruitment system. The impact of our recruitment decisions is monitored regularly and the University has continued to: increase the representation of black, asian and ethnic minority staff at all levels. We will monitor the impact of this change and report back in 2023 if further improvements are needed. Our equality statement in our adverts was also updated to be more inclusive.

In 2020 and 2021 the process for senior promotions using the new Academic Domains Career Framework (CF) was reviewed. The outcomes of these process have been monitored for the equality impact and no significant bias found. Our Agresso based HR, Finance and Research Management system (“Unified”) sends reminders to researchers and PIs during the last 6 months of a fixed term contract, and our HR advisors follow up these alerts. Line managers are required to ensure that any extensions to contracts happen in good time, to allow staff security and planning, and where contracts will not be extended to ensure understanding of the consequences and of the resources available. Where possible and appropriate, recruitment advertises internally before opening to external recruitment to give priority to those whose contracts are expiring. All staff have access to “LinkedIn Learning” via personal accounts, which allows them access to a wide range of training and development material related to their specific roles, their research and their personal development needs.

Professional and Career Development

The Research and Impact team provide a portfolio of development opportunities, as part of our commitment to supporting the Concordat aim of research staff undertaking at least 10 development days per year.

• Researcher Training

Fifteen training events for researchers were facilitated by Research and Impact Directorate during the 2021/22 academic year, with a total of 315 attendances (see appendix 1). In addition a Festival of Research is also facilitated each year, which in 2022 features 12 events aimed at Early Career Researchers with 264 attendees. This included training deliver by external organisations like The Open Innovation Team which ran Policy School sessions. Training was also organised on new online research tools such as Epigeum and Impact Tracker. Also a two-day course on Research Leadership Training was very well received. Drawing on our internal expertise we saw sessions on networking, bid writing and journal publication.

We hold at least two training sessions per term that are specifically of interest to Early Career Researchers and are promoted via our Early Career Researcher 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 160 subscribers.

Eleven training events for researchers were facilitated by Research and Impact Directorate during the 2021/22 academic year, with a total of 269 attendances (see appendix 1). A Festival of Research is also facilitated each year, which in 2022 has 16 events with 301 attendees.

• Researcher Mentoring

Work is on-going to understand the range of good practice mentoring programmes across the University. One such programme is The RISE Research Leadership Academy, established between in 2020 and led by the newly appointed Head of Researcher Development and the Graduate School, Professor Cilla Harries. This six month programme was delivered in 2022 for academics across all Faculties within the university. The programme

includes; support to approach and engage a mentor; Action Learning Sets; workshops to develop key research leadership qualities and essential skills; and talks by successful research leaders about their career journeys. Forty academics from across all Faculties have now completed the Academy, following a formal application process.

In Summer 2022, a brief evaluation of the RISE 2020 programme was conducted to capture feedback using an online questionnaire with RISE participants. Generally, evaluation participants were very positive toward the programme.

- **Researcher funding schemes**

In October 2021, KU launched several funding schemes to support researchers at different stages of their career.

- **First KU Grants:** Pump priming funds for external bidding for 3 groups of staff; New academics who have not yet held external funding as PI; New Joiners started at KU since August 2019 and who want a boost to start their research; Any academic who has not yet initiated external bidding as a PI at KU
- **Returning to Research:** Pump priming funds for external bidding for established researchers who have who have not been able to publish/produce research outputs in the public domain for a period of 2 years or more (e.g. additional responsibilities, illness etc.)
- **Research Impact Awards:** Tiered, internal funding, designed to support researchers to create and enhance impacts arising from their research, from early stage to final evaluation. Supporting researchers to enhance collaboration, plan impact activities and evaluate that impact leading to effective research impact case studies.
- **Bidding Champions Academy:** A pilot scheme for academic staff who have started their bidding careers but wish to extend and refine their ability. Provides targeted training to help expand skills and knowledge to facilitate submission of a significant funding bid. Awardees will be requested to champion bidding for external funding within their Faculties.

- **Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS)**

In 2021 KU took part in CEDARS, which replaced the previous biennial CROS & PIRLS surveys, by combining into a single survey. CEDARS more closely matches the revised Researcher Concordat (Sept 2019) and first ran as a pilot in 2020. Whilst our surveys results matched well with many national bench-mark findings, we would like to improve on our response rate of 30% when next participating. Nationally, 15% of respondents said they had engaged in 10 or more development days over the last year (a key aim of the Concordat). For Kingston the figure was 20%. This highlights a key challenge for the sector, in supporting professional development activities and encouraging uptake. This is also highlighted by 30% of KU correspondents not being aware of the Concordat (45% nationally) and 43% not being aware of the Research Integrity Concordat (52% nationally).

At Kingston, all respondents agreed their manager encourages them to engage in personal and career development activities. However, only 29% agreed they were encouraged to consider a wide range of career options both within and beyond academia. And none had discussed their development with a careers specialist. This highlights the relevance of our long-term aims to strengthen our personal development plan protocols for researchers and improve support around a broader range of careers advice.

Research Team Leadership Programme: In 2022 we ran this intensive two-day Advance HE programme in response to CEDARs feedback requesting more training for managing research teams.

- **Equality Diversity and Inclusion**

Kingston is striving to ensure that everyone in our university feels like they belong, can be their authentic selves, and are empowered to reach their full potential as part of our commitment to working in a diverse vibrant learning community. As such, Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter (REC) are important accreditations for the University. As part of the 2021 EDI Governance Review, the Athena

SWAN SAT now clearly sits within the overall governance structure for EDI, this will allow all future submissions to be fully embedded across the University. We are seeking to renew Athena Swan Bronze in 2022, with plans for Silver under the new framework by 2025. The School of Life Sciences, Pharmacy and Chemistry plan to submit for a Silver Award in April 2022. Kingston University was one of the first Universities to attain a REC Bronze in 2015 which was successfully renewed in 2019.

- **Well-being initiatives**

The support Kingston provides for the well-being of all staff is set out in its Well-being hub. Which has a range of resources to enhance staff health and wellbeing. The resources are based around the Five Ways to Wellbeing, which are tried and tested, evidence-based actions and ideas that people can incorporate into their daily lives. The Five Ways to Wellbeing are Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, Give. They are widely used by diverse organisations for promoting wellbeing as a framework. Key activities in 2021 included Well-being Week in November, which had range of events, both online and on campus, planned for our staff and students. A staff pulse survey – How are you managing during the covid pandemic? was also conducted in March and was the 5th such survey during the pandemic. The survey's aim is to help build a better picture of the circumstances of staff, to help provide the most appropriate and useful support for everyone.

- **Looking forward**

As well as continuing the on-going activities of 2021-22, there are a number of areas where further work is needed in 2022-2023 to meet our aims, ensuring we maintain our focus on the needs of contract research staff and academic colleagues with research responsibilities.

- We will develop a 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.
- CEDARS has shown we need stronger engagement with our contract research staff, to better understand their needs, and support work towards ensuring that all researchers engage with 10 development days. We will also aim for improved CEDARS engagement (above national benchmarking averages) and subsequent feedback.
- Researcher mentoring schemes will be supported and reviewed, to encourage best practice and take up, and ensure alignment with the Academic Domains Career Framework.
- Whilst most research staff engage with the appraisal process, better personal development plan protocols are needed. These should take into account the particular requirements of those on fixed term contracts, where career planning and support are needed in the early stages of the role. Matched to this, further exploration is needed on what professional careers advice and resources may be developed, including advise on career options outside of academia.

- Ensuring the consistency of appraisal approach and quality of appraisal conversation, particularly amongst academic staff needs strengthening and the appraisal process will be relaunched in the autumn of 2022 and training in coaching skills, to support the quality of conversations will be piloted.
- Delivery of the institutional plans and higher accreditations in Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter (REC) by the end of 2025.
- We will 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.

At the start of a new strategy cycle, we have ambitious and exciting plans to develop the researcher training offer to embed greater legibility and coherence. We are also moving towards an Institute model, combining research and KE activities. The forthcoming Institutes will drive improvements in research culture and management and provide a framework to embed researcher training and experience.

Appendix 1. R&I training and events

Date	Title	Description	Actual attendance/ (Booked)
July 2022			
18 & 19 July 2022	'Research Team Leadership' training	Advanced HE delivered this two day course. Participants discovered how to build and lead a research team, run effective research team meetings, support individual researchers and develop their role as a team leader; thus enhancing capability as a research leader and developing career potential.	14
June 2022			
20 June- 1 July	Festival of Research	Various	
01/07/22	Faculty of Business and Social Sciences Research Conference	Staff and PhD Students presentations and Round Table discussions.	36
30/06/22	Impact Training: Planning a Website for Public Engagement with Research	Thus workshop covered how to plan a project website to engage the public with your research.	22
30/06/22	Research Grant Budgeting explained	Research Development Managers leading on a workshop on research grants.	16
29/06/22	Open and Inclusive Research Symposium	This event brought together researchers from Kingston University with external scholars who are outstanding in their fields to discuss, debate and interrelate questions around open science and EDI in research. The	39
28/06/22	Lecture series on Artificial Intelligence - KU research	An afternoon highlighting how the topic of AI is pervasive across academic research domains and faculties at Kingston University	28

28/06/22	RISE Research Leadership Academy 2023: Provision and applicant process	An overview of the RISE Academy. Open to Research staff and PGRs.	8
27/06/22	Impact Tracker Tools	Vertigo Ventures	12
09/06/2022	What makes a really strong bid	Research Development Managers leading on a workshop on bid writing.	16
22/06/2022	Researching Autism Spectrum Disorders	The latest research about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will be presented by members of the Developing Minds Lab (Department of Psychology)	42
07/06/2022	How to say more with less	Salma Ibrahim and John Pereira covered how to pitch your research to academic and non-academic audiences through succinct and informative written text.	16
21/06/22	COVID Research Symposium	Chaired by Mark Fielder and Ann Ooms: Professorial research on the many aspects of COVID	15
20/06/22	Diverse Voices in the Academy	An online interdisciplinary journal for research by Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic / People of Colour as well as by other researchers whose work relates to race and EDI issues in academia and beyond	14
May 2022			
18/05/2022	Impact Tracker Tools	Vertigo Ventures	14
06/05/2022	Impact Tracker Tools	Vertigo Ventures introduced their Impact Tracker tools to KU Research staff who will after the training be granted access to use the tools.	16
March 2022			
16/03/2022	Policy School 3	Open Innovation Team	16
09/03/2022	Policy School 2	Open Innovation Team	16
02/03/2022	Policy School 1	Open Innovation Team: Run by experienced Civil Servants, this short 3-part course will give staff a taste of the policymaking process by asking them to tackle a live policy problem. Supported by a civil service mentor, attendees will work in teams to develop policy	15

		options before presenting their proposals at the end of the course	
February 2022			
24/02/22	How to say more with less	Salma Ibrahim and John Pereira covered how to pitch your research to academic and non-academic audiences through succinct and informative written text.	27
2 & 3 February	Facing the Media	Media Players International delivered a two day online workshop.	6
01/02/2022	Networking skills	Azadeh Faterhad lead an interactive session with a rpreseantion and a follow on discussion.	29
November 2021			
29/11/2022	Introduction to Research, Innovation with Business support	Simon Wortham lead this event introductin the RBI Directorate to new staff.	18
22/11/2022	Writing for journal publication of research	Vari Drennanpresented this on-line workshop addressing areas such as: identifying key elements for your research paper, identifying target journals, project planning for writing, authorship, procrastination and hot tips for success in submission	49
10/11/2022	Epigeum training	Nick Broom from Oxford University Press provided intoduction to and training on the newly acquied research tool available to all staff.	26
September 2021			

16 &17 September	Media Training	Media Players International delivered a two day online workshop.	14
09/11/21	Research Ethics training with UKRIO	Information event by David Carpenter (UKRIO)	55