

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

Name of Institution	University of Nottingham
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Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development	Victoria Sedman, Researcher Academy Victoria.sedman@nottingham.ac.uk
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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*)

Following extensive consultation with the university community, and launched in August 2022, the university's Research Strategic Delivery Plan 2022-27 sets out the ambitions for our research-intensive university. A key priority in the strategy is the people, culture and ambition theme seeking 'to develop a research environment and culture that is inclusive, supportive and enables high quality and high performing research' (Research SDP Theme 1). Key activities within this theme include a Research Culture project with initiatives that champion and widen the use of best practice established through local trials, such as improving managerial development conversations, or establishing bridging funds for fixed term staff, development of research leadership training for mid-career researchers and reviewing the career track for non-academic research staff. Feedback to maintain and improve the various supportive measures is constantly sought from the research and research-support community, including running a university-wide and a short-form culture survey, an annual culture conference, an Advisory and Advocacy Group to steer the overarching change project.

Launched in 2020, the University's Researcher Academy (RA) is a network for researchers across all career stages and the staff who support them. The Academy is key to culture at Nottingham connecting researchers with training and development opportunities, drawing researchers together to inform university policy and strategies, and supporting creative and collaborative partnerships across the university, broader academic community, industry, business and policy sectors. In support of the Culture and Researcher Academy work key roles were created at faculty and school level. These include eight Faculty Researcher Academy Leads and school-appointed Research Staff Champions for research-only staff. These new roles are in addition to the long-standing PGR Directors and DTP Directors who support our doctoral community and doctoral supervisors. Collectively these roles provide support, share practice and knowledge with, and advocate for, their researcher communities.

In support of the supervisors and line managers of our research community the Researcher Academy provides supervisory training to all supervisors as part of their ongoing continuing professional development. Tailored provision for our researchers at different career stages is provided through hosting Doctoral Training Partnerships, Fellowship schemes, and augmented by the Researcher Academy's Leadership Programmes; Nottingham Research Leaders Programme for high-performing researchers and the Early Career Researchers Programme for researchers in the early stages of their research career who have aspirations and potential to lead in their field.

The university recognises the importance of technical and specialist skills to the success of a vibrant research environment and is a signatory to the Technician Commitment. In recognition of the university's commitment to an equitable and inclusive environment, the University holds a silver Athena SWAN award and Race Equality Charter bronze award. Notable developments at the institutional level to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion remains at the core of all activities, includes changes to recruitment to improve opportunities for those with protected characteristics, and the AccessAble app project that facilitates easier access to university buildings for researchers with mobility needs. The University consults with researchers in the equality, diversity and inclusion space when developing HR training, and seeks advice from mental health researchers when developing new Health and Safety policies.

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)

- The identification and implementation of a **university-wide process for reporting and monitoring** the 'minimum of 10 days of CPD for research-only staff'. Currently a single system does not exist that would enable the breadth of activities to be recorded and viewable by researchers, their managers and the university administration.
Success indicator: A single system for use by researchers, managers of researchers to record training and development activities, and which is accessible by Faculty and Professional Service colleagues for monitoring and reporting.
- Improvement in **communication pathways** for researchers and their managers for the sharing of policies, practices and initiatives across the University. To better utilise the existing channels for raising concerns by researchers to the faculty/university. To create a well-defined Research-only Staff communication plan, which includes a communication campaign on the obligations of the Concordat for researchers, research leaders, managers and the University.
Success indicator: Researchers, managers of researchers and Professional Service staff report an increased awareness of the Concordat and university policies relevant to the staff group.
- To develop a comprehensive **evaluation process** that will enable the capture of a richness of data both quantitative and qualitative on the measurable impact of the Concordat. To include use surveys (internal/external sector), focus groups, Town Halls and other identified mechanisms for capturing engagement and impact

information. These evaluation mechanisms will also benefit reporting and for other initiatives such as Athena SWAN, REC and Technician’s Commitment.
Success indicator: Implementation of a process that enables the gathering and analysing of information on research-only staff engagement, which will inform the Concordat and other EDI reporting mechanisms and improve current provision.

- To ensure that research-only staff matters are **championed** across the University to support the development of an inclusive and supportive research culture through consideration of research-only staff as key stakeholders at the University.
Success indicator: Create an inclusive and diverse research environment, and set clear expectations for research culture, individual performance and support systems (Research SDP, 22-27, Theme 1).
- Work with the funders, other universities and national bodies (i.e. Russell Group, Vitae, R14) to **advocate** for research-only staff and to engage in discussions with the sector on the impact of how research is funded on the research environment and research career/researcher job security.
Success indicator: To lead conversations that enables a more equitable, transparent, inclusive and supportive research culture in the UK, particularly with reference to researcher job security.
- The Concordat action plan remains a **dynamic** document with a regular process for updating or inclusion of actions on new policy and practices, especially those arising from the refresh of the institutional Research Strategy and Research Culture projects.
Success indicator: A Concordat implementation action plan that is regularly updated and reflects current policy, strategy and practices in a timely manner.

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*)

Institution

Awareness initiative on the Concordat. This has taken place via several routes during 2022, including at Faculty-level through RAFL and school-level Research Champion led talks direct to researchers, Directors of Research, Heads of Research Groups, school-meetings (academic line managers), through institutional e-newsletters and Researcher Academy SharePoint page creation. Evaluation of campaign success to take place via 2023 surveys. (Action EC1 AP22-24, initial campaign completed with ongoing campaign)

Processes are now in place to ensure that Research Staff Champions are appointed within all schools that have >5 members of research-only staff (threshold criteria) and applies to schools within three of the five academic Faculties (Science, Social Sciences, M&HS). The remaining faculties meet either the <5 researchers per school criteria with (Arts) or have an appropriate long-standing functional representation system in place -Engineering Research Futures (Engineering). (Action EC2, AP 22-24)

There are currently six Researcher Academy Faculty Leads (RAFL) in post, three of whom are dedicated research-only staff roles and are supported by the 20 Research Staff Champions. Faculty Concordat action plans have been co-created by RAFLs, Researcher Champions and research staff representatives. (Action EC2 and E11, AP22-24, complete)

The University's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics was updated to note "All new research students and staff are expected to undertake training in Research Integrity" it also notes "URIEC requires all staff involved in research to undertake Research Integrity Training on regular bases to refresh their knowledge of developments in their field and the wider research integrity landscape." Research Integrity Advisors and Research Integrity and Ethics Champions based within Faculties and Schools will play an important role in promoting and monitoring this for new staff. (Action EC6, AP22-24, complete).

Research Culture survey and Athena SWAN 2021 survey both have a question filter to identify staff group responses. The surveys are currently under analysis. The Research Staff Group are to request reports on key questions from relevant surveys (CEDARS, Athena SWAN, Pulse Surveys). We ensure that surveys include question of job family and level to allow disaggregation of data. (Action EC10, AP 22-24)

New exit survey was launched in January 2022. It is anticipated that we will be able to report results for the first year of data from January 2023. (Action EC12, AP22-24, review March 2023)

Academic Managers of Researchers

	<p>In line with the Wellbeing Delivery Plan a Wellbeing Gap analysis survey was undertaken and results reported to People & HR and EDI committees. A Wellbeing Steering Sub-Group has been set up and are currently focusing on the need to better signpost and communicate provisions available. This is a direct action from the results of the gap analysis which indicates that staff are happy with the level of provision available but weren't necessarily aware of them. Communication and promotion is therefore the current focus. (Action EC14, AP22-24)</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>The inaugural research culture conference took place at the University in July 2022. The conference was open to all with a role in research or research related activities. Of the 257 registrants, 19% were research-only staff and 23% were line managers of researchers, with the remaining attendees comprising doctoral students, technical and professional service colleagues. The programme included roundtable discussions in which attendees were asked to co-create a response to their faculty to the issues raised in the Research Culture survey. These co-created responses were fed into faculty action plans and ongoing Research Culture discussions at the institutional and faculty-level.</p>
<p>Employment (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>Scoping project undertaken to assess the local school-level inductions for research staff across the university. Data collection completed in November. This augments current provision of HR's new starter induction materials (SharePoint) and research-staff specific induction delivered by the Researcher Academy and Careers Employability Service in both online and in person format (46 new starters attended in 2022). The induction includes information on the Researcher Development Concordat. (Action E1, AP22-24).</p> <p>Faculty of Engineering report a faculty-level induction is available for all staff irrespective of job family. A project is currently underway to develop a 'welcome' SWAY for all new starters to receive before they commence role. (Action E2, AO 22-24)</p> <p>The new training course on 'Researcher Profiles: managing your online identity' was attended by over 150 researchers from all</p>

	<p>faculties and levels, with positive feedback received. (Action E3, AP 22-24)</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers Actively engage in regular constructive performance management with their researchers: in the Faculty of Science enhancing ADC for researchers is an element of the Concordat Faculty Action Plan. A new balanced framework for researchers is to be approved by Faculty Executive shortly (late Autumn 2022). (E13, AP 22-24)</p> <p>Researchers The Institutional Research Staff Group Terms of Reference require 2 members of research staff representation on the membership per faculty. The faculty representatives are listed on the Research Academy SharePoint site and kept up to date. A role profile for the role of Faculty Research Staff rep has been created in Social Sciences and will be piloted for the recruitment of a new representative in early 2023. (Action E14, AP22-24)</p> <p>Survey data (Athena SWAN survey 2021) shows that completion and satisfaction response rates to questions about the Annual Development Conversations (ADC) still remains high with 80% of research-only staff respondents indicating they have undertaken an ADC in the last 12 months (11% indicating they have not been in post for 12 months and not had an ADC). Monitoring of completion rates takes place, the data for 2022 cycle was not available for this report. Of the respondents to the Athena SWAN survey who identified as research-only staff, 70% indicated that they strongly agreed/agreed that they had useful discussions about their career progression and career aspirations during their ADC and 62% responded strongly agree/agree that their training and development needs and how to achieve them were actively discussed during the appraisal. (E13, AP 22-24)</p>
<p>Professional development (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution The Business Case for investment in a new HR, Finance and Procurement system was approved in May 2022 and the Digital Core project has been initiated. The project is currently in design phase with a due to go-live date for the new system circa March 2024. The system enables functionality for recording and</p>

monitoring of training activity, which will enable recording of researchers 10 days of cpd and line management training. (Action PCD1, AP 22-24)

Faculty best practice for 'What does 10 days cpd look like for faculty researchers?' (Action PCD2, AP 22-24):

- Science: In response to increased information, the co-creation of a Guide to Career Enrichment for research-only staff within the faculty (disseminated June 2022).
- Social Sciences and Medicine and Health Sciences: co-creation of a 'What does 10 days of cpd look like?' document for use by schools to assist with dissemination of obligation to line managers and researchers.

A new dedicated training and development manager in Knowledge Exchange for academic and research-only staff training has been created and post holder in place. In 2022, a new series of training programmes on Knowledge Exchange was launched (monitoring of attendance and feedback ongoing). This is supported by a Knowledge Exchange SharePoint providing signposting and access to recordings of events and training and a dedicated page on EDI in Knowledge Exchange. (Action PCD5, AP 22-24)

Academic Managers of Researchers

Successful launch of the revised Nottingham Research Leaders Programme following extensive review. Twenty academic colleagues from across all five faculties successfully completed the programme in 2022. (Action PCD4, AP22-24)

Information drives throughout 2022, have taken place within Faculty of Science and Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences on the obligations of the Concordat, which includes discussion of 10 days of cpd for researchers. The Faculty of Science '[Career Enrichment' guidance document](#) for researchers and line managers is available on the Faculty Research and Knowledge Exchange Hub. Faculty of Engineering will hold a Town Hall on the Concordat in early 2023. (Action PCD8, AP22-24)

Researchers

	<p>Development and launch of new training programmes by the Researcher Academy on key themes that support researchers in their current role and future career development. Themes include Public Engagement, Knowledge Exchange and Policy Engagement. Five programmes have been launched in October/November 2022, attendance numbers and an evaluation of the programmes will take place in July 2023. (Action PCD10, AP 22-24)</p> <p>Successful launch in May 2022 of the revised ECR Leadership Programme following extensive review. Twenty research-only colleagues from 4 of the 5 faculties (open to all) successfully completed the programme in 2022. The programme comprised workshop settings and group coaching. (Action PCD4, AP22-24)</p>
<p>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. (<i>max 500 words</i>)</p>	
<p>New action: New Successful implementation of Faculty action plans for all faculties. Following creation, governance sign off, these plans are starting to be implemented and will need a period to enable actions and evaluation of progress. These action plans once agreed will support the implementation of the institutional action plan and will inform future actions. A coordinated evaluation of progress in the faculty action plans will take place in Summer 2023. Review plan implementation: July 2023. Success measure: All faculties to have an action plan or set of recommendations to support implementation of the Concordat. To monitor implementation with actions recommendations met according to timeframes.</p> <p>Pilot of Pilot MHS 'You said, we did' campaign with focus groups/pulse survey (Action EC4, AP 22-24)- project delayed to incorporate Research Culture survey analysis and results. Action incorporated into Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Concordat action plan with adjusted dates. Focus groups/pulse surveys to take place in March 2023 with campaign in Autumn 2023. No change to success indicators.</p> <p>Evaluation project (Action EC9, AP 22-24). started with initial scoping of recent surveys and whether data disaggregated to RS/academic. Still underway and timeline will be extended. Both Athena SWAN 2021 and Research Culture survey 2022 were large scale institutional surveys, both surveys included questions to allow disaggregation of results to research-only staff, academics, APM, technical and doctoral students respondents. These are large datasets and analysis on the surveys is still ongoing. Deadline to be extended to August 2023 to ensure incorporation for</p>	

Research Culture project timelines and timelines for evaluation process of institutional Athena SWAN award. This will ensure a cohesive approach to initiatives and reporting. Deadline: no change. Success Measures: no change required.

Monitor ADC completions (Action E7, AP 22-24). The original date for this action was set to September 2022. However, within the current system for returning ADC completion data, which is initially collated locally within schools the institutional level data collected by HR was not available in time for this reporting. ADC monitoring will be integrated within the new HR system through the Digital Core project which will enable better monitoring and reporting against ADC returns. The new system is anticipated to come on-line in 2024/5. However, ADC 2022 data will be available under current system before 2023 reporting. Deadline for this action to be delayed to March 2023 for processing of data. No change to success measure.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period
(max 500 words)

Key objective 1: To ensure that research-only staff matters are championed across the University to support the development of an inclusive and supportive research culture through consideration of research-only staff as key stakeholders at the University.

Success indicator: Create an inclusive and diverse research environment, and set clear expectations for research culture, individual performance and support systems (Research SDP, 22-27, Theme 1).

Key objective 2: Continued improvements in communication pathways for researchers and their managers for the sharing of policies, practices and initiatives across the University. To better utilise the existing channels for raising concerns by researchers to the faculty/university. To create a well-defined Research-only Staff communication plan, which includes a communication campaign on the obligations of the Concordat for researchers, research leaders, managers and the University.

Success indicator: Researchers, managers of researchers and Professional Service staff report an increased awareness of the Concordat and university policies relevant to the staff group.

Key objective 3: To develop a comprehensive evaluation process that will enable the capture of a richness of data both quantitative and qualitative on the measurable impact of the Concordat. To include use surveys (internal/external sector), focus groups, Town Halls and other identified mechanisms for capturing engagement and

impact information. These evaluation mechanisms will also benefit reporting for other initiatives such as Athena SWAN, REC and Technician's Commitment.

Success indicator: Implementation of a process that enables the gathering and analysing of information on research-only staff engagement, which will inform the Concordat and other EDI reporting mechanisms and improve current 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 review and evaluation of the University of Nottingham's Concordat action plans and annual reports are conducted by the institutional Research Staff Group (RSG), on behalf of the University's Research Committee. The interim chair of the RSG is the Associate-PVC for the Researcher Academy and Researcher Career Development. Due to role holder changes in summer 2022, a new Chair will be appointed from the current Researcher Academy Faculty Lead group shortly.

The RSG comprises research staff representatives (one early career stage and one senior research-only staff member per Faculty), and representatives of the Careers and Employability Service, the Researcher Academy, Researcher Academy Faculty Leads (RAFLs) for each Faculty, Human Resources and internal marketing specialists. The group also receives input from academic schools and professional services, which has fed into this evaluation.

Following approval by Research Committee in January each year the action plan and annual progress reports will be circulated to Council (February).

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Keith O'Donoghue

Keith

Contact for queries: Victoria Sedman, Researcher Academy
(victoria.sedman@nottingham.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