

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

Universities and Research Institutes

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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)

The University of Glasgow (UofG) strongly believes that a positive research culture and is vital to the engagement, development and success of Researchers, and has prioritised this since 2019. The Concordat is the primary driver for delivering this vision, and the Researcher Development Team lead on delivery of our **Concordat Action Plan's** (CAP; 2020) priorities: Clarify Career Expectations; Provide CPD Opportunities; Raise Career Awareness; Track Career Destinations; and, Support Principal Investigators.

The CAP has been consciously designed to connect with other high-level strategies which take a people and culture focus:

The UofG Research Strategy (2020) sets out that by working in teams, building on each other's ideas, and making Glasgow the best place to develop a career, our research will transform lives and change the world. This vision is operationalised through three university-wide priorities: *Collaboration, Creativity and Careers*. The actions outlined in our CAP are strategically aligned to these priorities and present mechanisms for the implementation of the Research Strategy. Specifically, the CAP is designed to support researchers to creatively fulfil their career ambitions by working collaboratively with others.

The UofG Research Culture Action Plan (2020) aims to promote a positive research culture within the ways we: evaluate, support and reward quality; recognise diverse contributions to research; enable colleagues to support each other to succeed in their chosen career path; build an environment in which individuals collaborate in an atmosphere of openness and trust. Clear alignment with the CAP is visible in that both aim to increase development provision and supportive processes for Research Staff in pursuit of their chosen career path. Our Research Culture work has received external recognition, including from the Royal Society, the UK Research Integrity Office, the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Guardian University Awards and BEIS R&D People & Culture Strategy. Both the Culture and the Concordat Action Plans, report to The Culture & Careers Group (which supports UofG's ongoing aspirations to strengthen its positive research culture), and to the Research Planning and Strategy Committee (Chaired by the VP Research & Knowledge Exchange).

The UofG People & Organisational Development Strategy (2020) sets out how we nurture an inclusive, dignified and respectful working culture in which everyone is valued, recognised and praised, and success is celebrated. The CAP has been informed and strengthened through alignment to this Strategy which names actions for the university, individuals, and managers. Aligned actions include improving induction, a focus on encouraging uptake of varied development opportunities, and providing support for staff and managers to work in tandem to excel in their roles.

Working together with shared cultural values and supported by other guiding initiatives (Research Integrity Concordat, DORA, Technician Commitment), these strategies are building significant momentum for positive progress.

We prioritise collaborative delivery of these strategies working closely with staff in the four College Research Offices, and key Professional Services teams: The University Library, HR, and Careers. The Postdoctoral Researcher Forum provides continuous opportunities for dialogue, consultation, and information sharing.

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*)

Delivery of the vision set out in the CAP requires a collaborative, resourced, embedded approach. In Year 2, in addition to maintaining established provision (~25 Careers Workshops, 100 Careers Consultations, 12 'Meet the Funder' Workshops), we are committed to building a coherent and visible offer for Research Staff through 15 interlinked deliverables and associated success measures (SM):

Environment and culture

1. Create a clear cohesive framework for Research Staff Development activities, mapping current provision, choosing priorities, and establishing key delivery themes to aid navigation of the offer.
[SM1] Completion of thematic analysis and gap analysis.
[SM2] Positive engagement and feedback on socialisation of the themes.
2. Review and increase resourcing in the Researcher Development Team.
[SM3] Design of a new structure for Research Staff Development and recruitment to: Researcher Development Project Officer (Flourish Programme) and PGR Intern for Research Staff Events.
3. Set expectations for EDI and accessibility that are designed into all researcher development activity.
[SM4] Produce Guidelines for Practice and embed these within team working, and externally delivered initiatives.
[SM5] Design a template event Code of Practice for participants, and embed this in sign up forms. Design processes for non-compliance.
4. Review the role and remit of the Culture & Careers Group, a cross-College steering committee to support the UofG's ongoing aspirations to strengthen its positive research culture.
[SM6] Completion of the review in consultation with Group membership, produce recommendations.

5. A Strategic Review of the resourcing, governance, and processes related to good practice in Research Integrity
[SM7] Completion of the review in consultation with Research Staff, produce recommendations.

Employment

6. Create coherence across UofG by creating closer collaborative partnerships with the College Research Offices.
[SM8] Establish practical responsive communications with key colleagues in the Research Offices
7. Take a sensitive and inclusive approach to return to campus.
[SM9] Work with the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum to plan for the events which will be online/on campus/hybrid.
8. Raise awareness of the concept of Associate Supervision to drive greater recognition for informal/hidden supervision work.
[SM10] Engage 10-15 Research Staff in the delivery of a Thesis Mentoring Programme
[SM11] Recognise and celebrate the contribution of Associate Supervisors.
[SM12] Adjust language in all elements of Supervisor Development programme, to maximise inclusion for Research Staff.
9. Deliver quarterly Inductions bringing together Research Staff across UofG to support: visibility of the Researcher Development Team; engagement with the Concordat and concept of 10 days development, building researcher networks.
[SM13] Positive engagement and evaluation.
10. Create new Welcome and Exit Guides for Research Staff.
[SM14] Work with the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum to create an experience-led starter guide, and exit-guide for Research Staff.
[SM15] Work with HR to identify new starters and those at contract end, for targeted communications.

Professional Development of Researchers

11. Launching People Make Research, which recognises, celebrates, and thanks Managers who have a positive impact on the Researchers they manage.
[SM16] Engage 40+ Research Staff in nominating their manager as a leader who is having a positive impact.
[SM17] Raise the visibility of the accounts of positive practice.
12. Designing 'Flourish' a new cohort-based development programme for newer Research Staff
[SM18] Deliver a co-created design for a new 9-month programme based on structured consultations with Research Staff and Managers.

13. Launch Researcher Coffee Connect, a monthly coffee-match initiative to support informal cross-disciplinary peer connections.
[SM19] Numbers engaging and returning monthly.
14. Designing new user-centric web pages, establishing a Researcher Development blog, and establishing new communications strategy.
[SM20] Positive user feedback to new designs
15. Deliver a 2-day Research Staff Conference on the theme of Power and Privilege in Research
[SM21] Positive engagement and evaluation.

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

We **mapped current provision** for Research Staff and through thematic analysis (consulting the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum), established 6 Delivery Themes for Researcher Development and identified gaps in provision. This enabled clear articulation of vision and remit and has created a delivery framework with defined boundaries, supporting the wellbeing of the Researcher Development Team and their ability to respond positively to requests for support [SM1].

We invested in two new roles:

- Researcher Development Project Officer (July 2022) leading on the piloting of 'Flourish' a cohort-based career and leadership development programme for newer researchers.
- PGR Intern for Research Staff Events (July 2022) to support the Glasgow Crucible and several Researcher consultation activities [SM3].

We completed an analysis of best practice in creating inclusive and accessible events and classrooms for researchers. We published this as an informal guide to 'Inclusion as a Design Principle' on our blog, and enshrined it into our Team Values [SM4].

We created a **template Code of Practice for Researcher Development initiatives**, with explicit inclusion/accessibility standards and behavioural expectations. We also devised and agreed processes for managing non-compliance. We have applied this Code to 100+ initiatives and referred to it in two cases to challenge non-inclusive behaviour, to a satisfactory resolution [SM5].

We undertook a 2-year **review of the Terms of Reference and membership of the UofG Culture & Careers Group**. Through 1:1 meetings with Group members we solicited feedback. Recommendations were to remove the Culture & Careers Group from the governance structure, and instead to convene CAP/Culture Task and Finish Groups as needed. [SM6].

We completed a university-wide **strategic review of our Research Integrity** work. [Read an overview of the Review process](#). The issuing report was a distillation of over 200 conversations, ideas and suggestions and offers a range of recommendations which will be integrated into our future work across the University [SM7].

Academic Managers of Researchers

The 6 Delivery Themes for Researcher Development were established in dialogue with the College Deans of Research, and the College Research Offices. This gave us the opportunity to create greater clarity of the team's remit, and the provision that exists centrally, building channels for communication into the Colleges [SM2].

We communicated the '**Inclusion as a Design Principle**' guide to the Deans of Research, the College Research Offices and the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum and invited them to adopt/adapt it in their events and initiatives and received positive feedback on its usefulness [SM4].

Dialogue with the College Research Office and HR Representatives supported the **review of the Culture & Careers Group** and the recommendations arising [SM6].

Academic Managers (20+) including Deans of Research, Heads of School, College Research Integrity Champions were interviewed as part of the **Research Integrity Review**. They received a copy of the report and recommendations and as key stakeholders will take shared responsibility for next steps [SM7].

Researchers

We communicated the **increase in staffing** to Research Staff (and Deans of Research, College Research Offices) and took the opportunity to refresh the whole Team's online profiles,

	<p>experience, and specialisms. This served to increase both visibility of, and trust building with, the Team [SM3].</p> <p>We communicated the ‘Event Code of Practice’ guide to the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum (and Deans of Research, College Research Offices) and answered questions so that they could champion good practice. We invited them to adopt/adapt it in their events and initiatives and received positive feedback [SM5].</p> <p>We engaged ~90 Research Staff (online events and open survey) in sharing their experiences in the Research Integrity Review. Research Staff are uniquely placed to provide critical insight as staff, and additionally as <u>facilitators of UofG Research Integrity Training</u>, where they are in close contact with PGRs [SM7].</p>
<p>Employment (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>We established a simple and effective MS Teams Chat Channel for maintaining continuous dialogue with the College Research Offices and taking a clearer, coordinated approach [SM8].</p> <p>We designed and piloted a Thesis Mentoring Programme, combining development aims for PGRs (thesis completion) and Research Staff (development of supervisory practice). <u>Full design rationale and outcomes here</u> [SM10].</p> <p>We launched a Supervisor Development Strategy in January 2022, including a <u>Workshop Series</u>, and a <u>Community of Practice</u> with full inclusion for research staff as informal or Associate Supervisors [SM12].</p> <p>We designed and delivered quarterly Research Staff Inductions with the aims of supporting: visibility of the Researcher Development Team and trust building; engagement with the Concordat and the concept of 10 days development, the building of researcher networks. We trialed online (3) and on-campus (1) modes [SM13].</p> <p>We developed a basic ‘all Colleges’ New Staff starter guide <u>web page</u> and welcome email for new Research Staff based on information needs in the first 2 weeks of starting a post. We also developed an exit email, signposting those with 6 months or less, to Careers workshops, and reading [SM14].</p>

We established channels of regular reporting from HR, to identify new starters, and those with 6 months left on their contracts [SM15].

Academic Managers of Researchers

We **increased engagement with colleagues** in the College Research Offices through our shared Chat Channel. This active channel instantly supported collaborative working, information and resource sharing and fact checking [SM8].

Thesis Mentoring programme evaluation documented a clear contribution for Research Staff as Associate Supervisors uniquely placed to support Thesis completion. 70+ PGR mentees reported positive outcomes from mentoring, and 21 Staff were nominated for the Mentor Hall of Fame [SM11].

Feedback on **Research Staff Inductions** noted the absence of College colleagues and called for a joined up approach to welcoming staff [SM13].

We intended to develop the **starter guide and exit guide** as a pack to be tailored and dispensed Academic Managers, but internal communications channels and timing were not facilitative [SM14].

Researchers

We consulted the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum on our plans for **returning to On Campus events and initiatives**. After hearing the pros and cons for different groups, we planned the programme using a case-by-case approach to retain maximum accessibility, whilst building on-campus belonging [SM9].

70+ Research Staff signed up to **be Thesis Mentors** in the pilot, and all who completed the programme (98%) reported multiple positive gains for their mentees, their careers, and on understanding of the challenges and good practice of supervisors [SM10].

We have seen great uptake of the elements of the **Supervisor Development Strategy**, including Research Staff representing 1/3 of participants in the Workshop Series, and 1/4 of our Community of Practice being Research Staff [SM12].

Feedback from **Research Staff on Inductions** reported that the

	<p>aims (awareness, network-building, empowerment) were being fulfilled. On-campus inductions were rated more highly than online, and researchers requested more time to discuss and digest the information shared [SM13].</p> <p>There is a high conversion rate of Research Staff receiving personalised 'starter/exit guide' welcome emails, to engagement with development activities. We will strengthen our approach to these critical stages and develop greater support for career awareness and success [SM14].</p>
<p>Professional development (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>We developed and delivered People Make Research (a non-competitive recognition initiative) in June 2022. It recognised 133 staff as positive leaders. Read the design, outcomes and all the nominations here [SM16/17].</p> <p>Starting with a conceptual framework a series of structured online/on-campus consultations with Researchers and Managers led a guided co-design process for Flourish – a leadership and career development programme for newer Research Staff. Data were themed and a varied programme comprising core and elective elements, coaching, PI Career Conversations, and employer networking, has been designed. Flourish will pilot in 2022/23 [SM18].</p> <p>We launched Coffee Connect a simple coffee match initiative to support informal cross-disciplinary peer connections and over 50 researchers signed in the first month. This has been maintained and grown steadily over the year, and now makes around 90 monthly matches [SM19].</p> <p>In collaboration with the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum we designed new user-centric web pages for Staff Development establishing a Researcher Development blog (43 posts and 10,917 views to Oct 2022), and establishing new communications strategy. All pages branch from this home page [SM20].</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>133 Academic Staff were named in People Make Research as having had a positive influence on the experience and careers of others. They were each thanked by the VP Research & Knowledge Exchange and the Academic Champion for Research Culture. The</p>

short nominations were celebrated publicly as examples of good practice. Nominees reacted very positively to the initiative. Nominations were thematically analysed and will be used to shape the forthcoming PI Development Strategy [SM17].

20+ Managers took part in the **Flourish** co-design process and importantly our final design features Career Conversation training for PIs, and will include them through the programme. As a direct request from Academic Managers we took a quick action to create a growing series of 5min-read articles on managing researchers. We share these in workshops as discussion prompts, and in our responses to direct queries from Managers [SM18].

All Managers (all roles) were contacted to launch **the new web** pages and blog, and over 120 signed up to an online mini-tour of PI and Researcher Development provision and resources [SM20].

Researchers

55 Research Staff engaged with the **People Make Research** initiative providing nominations. Additionally, we offered a way to let us know if they way staff were being managed was not positive, and we support the 5 people who reached out, to find the right support for them [SM16].

75+ Researchers took part in the **Flourish** -design process, providing critical insights. As a direct request from those Researchers we took pre-programme action to create new ways to engage with career conversations and launched a set of two Open Twitter/LinkedIn Chats. These engaged over 60 researchers in the comments, and many more as anonymous readers of the chats, and of this summary of the learning that took place [SM18].

Researchers showed huge enthusiasm (~90 regular monthly signups) for **Coffee Connect**. The objective of this monthly event is to facilitate the building and vitality of researcher communities, as these are critical to both the well-being and academic progress of researchers [SM19].

We welcomed 162 Researchers to the **Power and Privilege in Research Conference**, and all sessions evaluated excellently. However, it was difficult to maintain energy online for 2 days, and only 39% of attendees were present by the conference close. This gave us a clear signal to review and refresh format for the future [SM21].

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)

Researchers and their Academic Managers remain unclear on how Researcher Development, the Concordat, and Research Culture are interrelated, and about who owns and leads on the delivery of these areas. We will continue, as the Research Culture and Researcher Development portfolio embeds, to develop a web presence and to clarify messages and communicate them across all layers of the research ecosystem. In addition, we are not reaching all areas of the university in our efforts to raise awareness of the Concordats principles, nor to support Researchers and Academic Managers to think creatively about how to engage with career conversations, or to plan and utilise their 10 days professional development. Initial conversations on tracking use of the 10 days with the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum and through the Flourish consultations, revealed strong reluctance to engage with a new app or HR system-based tracker. This, as a previously planned activity, will receive further consideration.

The members of the Culture and Careers Group strongly recommended a change to action-orientated support for Culture and Concordat delivery. As we adapt the governance structure related to Research Culture we are presented with an opportunity to ensure greater collaborative working across the university, and to engage a wider pool of staff.

Evaluation data from all 2021-22 initiatives sends a clear message that Research Staff are excited and engaged by: opportunities to meet and work together; initiatives that present them with new people and conversations (Coffee Connect); experiences and opportunities to practice (Thesis Mentoring); and opportunities to help shape programmes (Flourish consultations). They are less engaged by training courses and workshops that do not lead to a defined opportunity or career advantage. We have refreshed or retired some of this older provision to make space for new initiatives.

The numbers of Research Staff engaging with the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum have been steadily declining (from ~40) through and beyond Covid-19, due to the impacts of the pandemic, and the challenges of the transition back to on campus. A change in representation in the Forum is to be expected due to high staff turnover for this group. However, we have struggled to replace members. Additionally, members have fed back to us that as numbers decline, workload increases, and this is clearly an unsustainable model.

The above point is pertinent against a background of general low engagement from Research Staff (around 6% engaged with Flourish consultations, or with Thesis Mentoring). Initial efforts to engage and empower Researchers in taking ownership and control of their development at the point of induction, have not yet gone far enough to encourage

sustained engagement. We are considering ways to maintain meaningful engagement and to develop career agency for Researchers and their Academic Managers.

Our Researchers are urgently seeking greater support for career options, particularly for career pathways beyond academia. Our existing provision, delivered across different Colleges, and Services Departments is good quality and high impact, but needs to be (1) visible and (2) scaled up, to have greater impact and to attract the attention of Researchers, Managers, and employers.

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

The new Research Services Directorate structure will continue to increase visibility, governance and resourcing for Concordat Action Plan delivery, through:

- **Close collaborative working of the** 'Research Culture and Researcher Development' portfolio, the 'Strategic Research Initiatives' portfolio (fellowships, collaboration) and the 'Research Policy, Integrity and Governance' portfolio (Research Integrity, REF).
- **Greater resourcing for implementation** via the establishment of a Research Culture Team (3 full-time posts).
- **A refreshed Concordat governance strategy** reporting directly to the Research Planning and Strategy Committee and creating regular dialogue with College Deans of Research.

To deliver this integrated approach (delivering the Concordat priorities within cultural context), we are prioritising building greater opportunities for collegiality, collaboration and community by considering how to evolve from a 'training-based' model of development, creating more deep learning opportunities for Research Staff ([read more on our blog](#)).

The Research Culture and Researcher Development Team annual review ([more here](#)) identified enhancement themes related to evaluation, engagement, career pathways and sustainability (upskilling our communities and activating peer learning). We will:

1. Create **new networks and communities** that activate the knowledge and expertise held by the researcher community.
2. Pilot **a new cohort-based development programme** designed to accelerate career awareness, agency and ownership for newer research staff.
3. Address low research staff engagement and representation by **reviewing/redesigning the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum**.
4. Address reported poor ability to navigate the organisation, by **re-designing how we foster inclusion, identity, and belonging (Induction to Exit support)**

5. Provide bespoke career/leadership development conversations for researchers through **a tailored Mentoring programme for research staff** which draws on best practice in the sector.
6. Review and bring together areas of existing good practice in researcher Careers guidance, complete a gap analysis of support, and set out **a new comprehensive career pathways strategy** for supporting researcher awareness, planning and transition to range of career destinations.

Additionally, data informs us that our researchers lack clarity about 'what counts' as development time/opportunities. Therefore, we will utilise the model of the 'Hidden Curriculum' to guide how we describe development activity, using the language of a 'learning ecology' ([more here](#)). This will enable us to demonstrate to our researchers the wide range of opportunities, experiences, networks and people who can support their development. Hence, and in consultation with our researchers, we will be moving away from initial ideas of a tracker system, which could limit individual and organisational view of the sites and modes of development, as well as creating bureaucratic burden. Instead, and in dialogue with researchers through an improved communications and engagement plan, **we will champion a 'development everywhere' approach.**

As a key enabler of increased engagement for research staff, we will begin to shape **a robust strategy for supporting the Managers of Researchers** ([read more](#)) as a holistic approach to developing academic staff (recognising/complementing their roles as postgraduate supervisors) and will draw underpinning concepts from The Researcher Development Framework, models of leadership and collegiality, mentoring theory, and the behaviours/practices researchers said positively impacted on their working lives and careers, through the People Make Research campaign.

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)

This report was prepared with input from Staff in Research Services Directorate, the Library, and Careers.

The report received feedback from the Postdoctoral Researcher Forum, before finalising.

The report was approved by Professor Chris Pearce, Vice Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange, on behalf of the University of Glasgow Research Planning and Strategy Committee.

Signature on behalf of governing body:



C.J. PEARCE

Contact for queries: Professor Chris Pearce, Vice Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange. (Chris.Pearce@glasgow.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