The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

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

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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 Bristol employs approximately 1,400 staff on roles 'focused mainly on research related activity' (Pathway 2) contracts, and the Concordat action plan is focused on supporting the career development of this staff group in particular. The reason for this is that the majority of these research staff are employed through externally funded projects, and are employed on open-ended contracts with fixed-term funding. The research staff population makes up nearly 50% of all academic staff at the University.. Research staff at the University of Bristol are supported through Bristol Clear which was established in 2018 as the University's Research Staff Hub. Research staff have always been supported through the Academic Staff Development team, however in 2018 Bristol Clear was established in recognition of the specific needs of research staff, who are in the majority employed through external project funding. The remit of the Bristol Clear team is to provide skills and career support for academic staff with a research focus at the University. The team sits within the HR division in the Academic Staff Development (ASD) Team, which is part of a bigger Organisational Development Team, and it works closely with the Research Staff Working Party (RSWP) to strategically advance researcher development at the University.

The Concordat Governance Group (CGG) oversees the implementation of the action plan and our internal assessment processes, which includes consultation with key stakeholders such as our Research Staff Reps Committee, and it draws on data from surveys such as CEDARS and our whole staff survey, as well as data from regular internal monitoring processes and data collected through Research Staff Reps. The CGG reports to the RSWP, whose remit is to promote and support the careers and working environment of externally funded and early career research staff, and it reports to the University Research Committee. The Research Staff Reps Committee represents research staff from across the institution with at least one Rep per school and facilitates engagement within the University. The committee meets six times a year, either side of the Working Party meetings.

The University appointed an Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research Culture in spring 2022 who chairs the RSWP and the Research Culture Committee (RCC). The RCC was set up to lead on research culture activity across the University. It includes oversight and delivery of Research England Enhancing Research Culture funding, and advising on strategy in order to ensure a positive research culture and a cycle of continuous improvement.

The Concordat action plan also links to the Academic Career Development Programme, which aims to create an academic career path at the University of Bristol that is challenging, rewarding and inclusive, and which enables all academic staff to have the opportunity to reach their full potential. It is governed by a Programme
Board, including representatives from all levels and across the University, and encompasses three core priority areas: Learning and Development, Behaviours and Practices, and Reward and Recognition.

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 University's action plan was published in 2019 and the individual objectives are shown below. It is aligned to the U niversity's Vision and Strategy 2020 - 2030, which includes specific strategic objectives mirroring the three pillars of the Concordat.

Environment and culture

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of the Concordat
- Continue advocacy of research staff issues at committees University-wide and at school level
- Heighten awareness of wellbeing support
- Improve inclusion and equality for all staff
- Develop our understanding of destinations of our research staff.

We will achieve these objectives by:

- Providing information and training about the Concordat
- Appointing Concordat Champions at each school
- Ensuring Reps access to School committees (or equivalent for Research Staff Reps)
- Continuing the work of the Research Staff Working Party (RSWP)
- Wellbeing initiatives across the University
- Achieving Athena Swan Silver Award
- Continuously reviewing university data against representation, progression and success to inform future initiatives
- Appointing and supporting Mental Health Champions

We will measure success by:

- CEDARS or staff survey
- Concordat Champions active at each school
- Researcher representation at committees
- Analysis of University data

Employment

Objectives

- Ensure transparent and merit-based recruitment
- Provide effective induction
- Enhance transparent and merit-based recognition
- Implement effective line management
- Improve jobs security for researchers

We will achieve these objectives by:

- Updated recruitment panel training
- Rollout of Bristol Clear induction/ orientation days
- Liaising with Concordat Champions to review School-specific induction
- Continuing to work towards the elimination of the gender pay gap
- Implementing of the Academic Promotions Framework for all academic staff
- Pilot of a support programme for managers of researchers
- Supporting PIs with Staff Review conversations
- Continuing to monitor the percentage of research staff employed on open-ended contracts
- Exploring bridging funding for researchers and a process for transferring to core funding
- Reviewing the costing, recruitment and promotion processes for research staff at early stages of their career

We will measure success by:

- Reviewing engagement in training
- Analysing recruitment, staff and promotion data
- Survey data

Professional Development of Researchers

Objectives:

- Provide opportunities, structured support and encouragement for researchers to engage in professional development
- Effectively support managers with career development reviews
- Provide access to careers advice
- Provide opportunities to develop leadership skills and research identity
- Supporting diverse careers, which may span beyond academia
- Report on engagement of researchers with career and personal development

We will achieve this by:

- Offering a "Career choices" initiative to promote activities and discussions around active career development, supported by workshops and talks.
- Supporting PIs with Staff Review conversations: The University will implement a new Staff Review and Development system, with a focus on supporting academics to undertake meaningful staff review conversations which support researchers with developing their careers.
- Implementation of a Learning Management System
- Continue to develop our opportunities to ensure quality and breadth of opportunities. This may also include a development programme for senior research associates, which includes themes such as research governance, management and introduction to leadership.
- Development of a Research Staff Writing Centre
- Extension of the Bristol Clear Mentoring programme: Bristol Clear will extend the Mentoring programme to include non-academic mentors recruited as volunteers through the University's Development and Alumni Relations' Office
- Supporting research staff who teach: ensuring fair and consistent access to teaching opportunities for research staff
- Support supervision activities by research staff through training and formally recognise contributions and workload.

We will measure success by:

- surveys
- engagement in workshop and talks
- completion of development reviews
- participant feedback
- analysis of University data, both centrally available and collected by individual Schools.

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)*	This update builds on our previous update covering 2021 (http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/staffdevelopment/documents/rs-hub/Concordat%20update%20report%20spring%202022.pdf) and only shows key new or further actions undertaken since then. ➢ Reviewing university data showing representation, progression and success and strategically improve these. Following the launch of a new promotion process in May 2022 for all those on academic profile levels b and c (Senior Research Associate and Research Fellow for our Pathway 2 researchers), we will be monitoring and analysing how the process is being used over subsequent promotion rounds. Institution The University holds the institutional Athena Swan Silver Award .which demonstrates our commitment, and progress made across the University. After appointing Concordat Champions at each school, we have developed an active network across the University. Champions have been focusing on key challenges in their schools, which include improving induction processes, developing research staff networks (especially after the pandemic), ensuring research staff representation at committee level, and organising specific workshops and seminars for research staff. The CEDARS 2021 survey showed an increased awareness about the Concordat (from 29% in 2019 to 60% in 2021) and we will continue to measure this in our survey in 2023. Regular communications are distributed to ensure awareness across the University. Wellbeing support is offered to all staff. The University is taking part in the Mind pilot to train Mental Health Champions who raise awareness of mental health across the University. Additionally, there are several initiatives throughout the year, for example Mental Health Awareness Week, Staff Wellbeing Week, etc. If needed, staff have access to the University Counselling Service and the Mental Health Crisis Team.

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	research projects. It is particularly relevant to new Principal Investigators as it supports across the whole research project life cycle. We are currently reviewing academic line management structures and practice across the University through a University working group. Researchers Research Staff Reps have access to all School Research Committee meetings (or equivalent), and are also represented at the Research Staff Working Party and the Research Culture Committee.
Employment *(max 600 words)*	This update builds on our previous update covering 2021 http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/staffdevelopment/documents/rs-hub/Concordat%20update%20report%20spring%202022.pdf, and only shows key new or further actions undertaken since then. Institution We are now implementing the Academic Promotions Framework to all academic staff from the start of their career. This is of particular relevance to researchers at the early stages of their career, as this is bringing the process of movement from Research Associate to Senior Research Associate into the framework of promotion. The framework offers 15 clearly articulated criteria across Research, Education, Engagement and Impact, and Leadership and Citizenship. Depending on career stage and focus, different criteria are required, however by working against the same framework from the beginning of the career it supports strategic planning of career development. Locally, Concordat Champions have been reviewing school- specific induction processes. Another strong focus has been to (re-)develop social networks for research staff. Gender pay gap (GPG) update One of the main drivers for the ACDP is to meet the two University targets for the % of female professors and professorial GPG. By the end of 2023 (calendar year), this is 33% female professors and a GPG of 3%. At the end of 2022,

	these figures were 32.9% (from 22.3% in 2016) and 4.2% (from 7.6% in 2016) respectively. The GPG figure is an increase from 3.1% in 2021 and is due to factors other than promotion into the professoriate. the University aims to increase the overall proportion of female professors to 50% by 2030. It is important to note, that while there are only a few research- only (Pathway 2) professors, our Pathway 2 researchers are a significant source of future talent. Therefore, the work of the ACDP is to address the potential inequities in all the academic promotion and movement processes. For example, creating the Academic Promotions Framework to ensure that all contributions are recognised and rewarded. It also includes changing the way that early career researchers are funded, appointed and developed, and creating core-funded roles for more established researchers. Academic Managers of Researchers Focused support has been offered as part of Research in practice through the session: Recruiting research staff. The session is built around the updated recruitment handbook and promotes transparent and fair recruitment practices. Alongside training sessions on Managing a research team, we are currently reviewing Academic Line Management through a working group. Researchers Bristol Clear contacts all new researchers and makes them aware of our development offer, including a focus on career support. This is complimented by the Bristol Clear Orientation days, which are in addition to School-led inductions and are an opportunity for new research staff to explore what available career and development support they would like make use of. Continuously reviewing our workshop offer, we developed specific sessions for research staff about promotion and end of contract/ funding. These sessions are proving very popular and are ensuring researchers can make informed choices about their career. We also piloted bridging funding and transfer to core funding on Pathway 1 in one of our Faculties, and are currently

	reviewing if this could be extended further across the University. The pilot only transferred five people, but this work will very much inform what we may implement in the future. The University also made available internal funding for researchers (Research Associates or Senior Research Associates) whose career has been affected by the Pandemic: This Academic Career Development funding is available to support those who have encountered barriers due to their individual circumstances that have negatively impacted their research career, including any ongoing impact due to Covid-19. It will give successful applicants the time to work up research ideas and apply for fellowships or grants, publish key work, and fill any development gaps to support their next career step. In recognition of sector-wide systemic barriers, we are particularly keen to ensure that this fund will serve to strengthen the future pipeline of researchers from Black African, Black Caribbean and other Black heritage backgrounds. Applicants can apply for up to £30,000 per application to cover their salary, this can be full or part time, and any essential non-salary funds needed. This scheme provides funding until July 2023. The number of grants awarded will depend on length of support requested, but would be equivalent to 16 6-months full time fellowships. Impact will be measured over the next 12 months.
Professional development *(max 600 words)*	This update builds on our previous update covering 2021 http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/staffdevelopment/documents/rs-hub/Concordat%20update%20report%20spring%202022.pdf, and will only show key new or further actions undertaken since then. Institution In summer 2022 the University approved an updated policy for research staff who teach. The policy is opportunity-led and focuses on teaching as career development opportunities for researchers. To ensure fair and transparent access to these opportunities, Schools expected to develop centralised allocation of opportunities. The University will monitor the implementation of the policy through analysis of school data

	and staff survey twice yearly. Supervision activities also fall under the remit of this policy, and both teaching and supervision activities are expected to be recorded under a School's workload allocation model. Teaching and supervision practice development is supported through the Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching, and Research Staff who teach can work towards a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, or join the CREATE HEA Fellowship scheme. We continuously develop our Mentoring Offer for Researchers. With the Bristol Clear Mentoring Scheme now established, we now also offer a reciprocal mentoring scheme for researchers with University senior management. Over the last year, we matched 47 mentoring pairs through the Bristol Clear scheme, and over 20 reciprocal pairs through the Reciprocal Mentoring scheme. It's also worth noting that building on the success of the University-wide schemes, many Schools have built up school-specific mentoring schemes. In our next staff survey/ consultation we will collate data on researchers' experiences of Mentoring schemes. Researchers This section provides a summary of key University-wide initiatives supporting researcher development. In addition the University has an extensive offer of discipline and area specific training in Faculties and Schools. These are not listed in detail here but form a substantial contribution to researcher development opportunities and support. The Concordat Champion network contributes to sharing practice and information across the University to enhance existing practices and offers, and to ensure researchers are aware of specific offers across the University. After successful pilots in spring 2022, we are now offering the Research in practice programme and the Academic Writing Programme as business as usual. These are open to all academic staff (and for Research in practice also research professional staff), which also promotes building networks and peer learning. Through the implementation of our Learning Management System Develop we are now able to track engagement with our development offer: Over the last 12 months, 1,371 (which is close to 100% of) research staff booked onto one of our offers, and made a total of 11,449 bookings. The Bristol Clear 1:1s continue to be popular, with nearly 100 1:1s

	attended by research staff. Evaluations continue to be extremely positive. These 1:1s are complemented by Coaching appointments with our professional Coaching team, focused on either career coaching, or paternity/ maternity coaching. Over the last year 23 Academics completed a series of coaching appointments. 50% of research staff completed their Development Review form on Develop with their Managers. This conversation is a key part in establishing a practice of regular career conversations between Academic Managers and Research Staff, and we will continue this work in the next year. Whilst 50% completion is below our target, it is an improvement in engagement. We will aim for all staff to engage in this process, and will support managers in having effective staff development conversations. This will form part of the Academic Line Management work, which is one of our priorities for the next year. We also made available financial support for Researchers Career Development activities, offering up to £400 per request. This scheme has been advertised to all research staff on levels a-c at the University, and the most recent round advertised in November 2022 was able to meet all eligible requests. The fund supports 8 requests for development activities which are benefiting more than just one individual, and the other activities are in the majority focused on building networks and opportunities to raise their research profiles.

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)*
We started the implementation of our action plan by appointing Research Staff Concordat Champions for each School. Taking this approach allowed us to address University wide challenges, whilst taking into consideration local differences and circumstances. Champions are also there to link with Research Staff Reps, and we facilitated networking events to support the building of local networks. This has contributed to more constructive and robust conversations taking place, which then also inform local and University-wide decision making. The network has also contributed to good practice exchange, and we continue to build the resource for Champions and Reps to draw on. Some of the work is happening in parallel through wider Research Culture Initiatives supported by Research England Enhancing Research Culture Funding and led by the Associate PVC Research Culture. We see work around the Concordat as one of the fundamental elements of Research Culture, and working together and at scale has allowed us to work differently. Combined with the already existing link to the Academic Career Development programme, which the University has supported over the last 2.5 years, we are focusing on key challenges around researcher careers: creating sustainable and rewarding career paths and creating an environment and culture in which all researchers can thrive. Whilst we have pursued all of the actions set out in our action plan, this emerging work allows us to address fundamental challenges in a more joined up way. Going forward, we will therefore focus on the key strategic objectives set out below which will work towards fundamental systemic changes to build on.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period *(max 500 words)*
In addition to continuing our work to date, we will focus on these keys objectives which we see as fundamental for ensuring an environment in which all researchers can thrive: - Academic Line Management: Review the existing academic line management practice across the University and inform effective practice. We strive towards academic line management which empowers, inspires and is accountable. Academic line management supports individual development. We will explore which behaviours are most effective and which organisational structures are most conducive, and will also link this work to the Leadership Ethos currently under development. By July 2023 the review will be completed and we will have made key recommendations for implementation across the University. - Ensuring transparent, equitable and rewarding careers for researchers from the beginning of their career: This work focuses on the two entry level grades for researchers. We will review how researchers are costed, recruited and appointed, and we will apply the new Academic Promotions Framework to all academic staff. We will review development opportunities for researchers at the early stages of the career and we will identify how to embed development opportunities for rich and rewarding careers within and beyond Academia. By July 2023 we will have completed the review and will have made key recommendations for implementation, and the Academic Promotions Framework will be available to all researchers and different stages in their career. - Developing more stable researcher careers: We will review how medium and long-term researchers are employed and will explore alternatives to external-grant dependent contracts. We will build on our transfer to core and bridge funding pilots, and will explore opportunities for creating more core funded roles, for examples staff scientist and technical specialist roles. - Research Team Culture Toolkit: We will identify what behaviours and approaches are most conducive for a positive research team culture, and we will develop a toolkit which will then be available across the University. By July 2023 we will have engaged with groups from each Faculty, applying an action research approach, and we will have identified the key components for the Team Culture Toolkit. - Continue to build on the Concordat Champions network and raise awareness and access to school-based activities in support of the implementation of the Concordat across the University.

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)*

Work to progress our actions is overseen by the Concordat Governance Group (CGG) which is chaired by the Head of Academic Staff Development. The CGG oversees the implementation of the action plan and our internal assessment processes, which includes consultation with key stakeholders such as our Research Staff Reps Committee It also draws on data from surveys such as CROS and our whole staff survey, as well as data from regular internal monitoring processes and data collected through Research Staff Reps. The CGG reports to the Research Staff Working Party (RSWP), whose remit is to promote and support the careers and working environment of externally-funded and early career research staff. It reports to the University Research Committee. The Research Staff Reps Committee represents research staff from across the institution with at least one Rep per school and facilitates engagement within the University. The committee meets six times a year, either side of the Working Party meetings. The CGG's membership comprises of: Chair of the Research Staff Working Party, Director of People and Organisational Development, Co-Chairs of Research Staff Rep Committee, PIs and Head of Academic Staff Development (CGG Chair).

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Contact for queries: Bristol-clear@bristol.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