Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
Universities and Research Institutes

Name of Institution	University of Bristol
Reporting period	January 2023 – March 2024
Date approved by governing body	27th June 2024
Date published online	2nd July 2024
Web address of annual report	http://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/academic/our-work/bristol-clear/bristols-commitment-to-research-staff-development/
Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage	http://www.bristol.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/academic/our-work/bristol-clear/bristols-commitment-to-research-staff-development/
Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development	Lydia Klimecki Email: Bristol-clear@bristol.ac.uk
Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk	2nd July 2024

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 research staff population at University of Bristol makes up nearly 50% of all academic staff: Bristol employs approximately 1,400 staff on roles 'focused mainly on research related activity' (Pathway 2) contracts. The Concordat action plan is focused on supporting the career development of this staff group as most of these research staff are employed through externally funded projects and have open-ended contracts "with fixed-term funding".

Bristol Clear

In 2018 Bristol Clear, the University's Research Staff Hub, was established in recognition of the specific needs of research staff. Its remit is to provide skills and career support for academic staff with a research focus at the University. The team sits within the Human Resources / Organisational Development Division, in the People Development team. It works closely with the Research Staff Working Party (RSWP) to strategically advance researcher development at the University.

Research Staff Working Party (RSWP)

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 Research Culture Committee.

Concordat Governance Group (CGG)

The Concordat Governance Group 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 draws on data from surveys such as the University's All Staff survey, as well as data from regular internal monitoring processes and data collected through Research Staff Reps.

Research Staff Reps 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 RSWP meetings.

Research Culture

The University appointed an Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research Culture in spring 2022 who chairs the RSWP, the CCG 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 to ensure a positive research culture and a cycle of continuous improvement.

Career Development Programme (CDP)

The Concordat action plan also links to the Career Development Programme, which aims to create a career path at the University of Bristol that is challenging, rewarding and inclusive, and enables all 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)*

Environment and culture
Objectives:
- Increase awareness of the Concordat
- Continue advocacy of research staff issues at University-wide and School level committees
- 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 have 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
- Appointing and supporting Mental Health Champions
- Achieving / keeping the Athena Swan Silver Award
- Continuously reviewing University data against representation, progression and success to inform future initiatives.

We will measure success by:
- 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 inductions
- Enhance transparent and merit-based recognition
- Implement effective line management
- Improve job security for researchers

We will achieve these objectives by:
- Updated recruitment panel training
- Regular Bristol Clear induction workshops
- Liaising with Concordat Champions and School Managers to review School-specific inductions
- 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 (Research in Practice)
- 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 talks, workshops and other initiatives to promote active career development.
- Supporting PIs with Staff Review conversations: tracking engagement with the Staff Review and Development system, with a focus on supporting academics to undertake meaningful staff review conversations which support researchers with developing their careers.
- Using our Learning Management System "Develop" to track engagement with our development offer.
- Continue to develop our offer to ensure quality and breadth of opportunities.
- Annual delivery of an Academic writing programme for all academic staff.
- Continual offer of and possible 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 (BILT).

We will measure success by:
- Conducting regular surveys
- Monitoring engagement in workshop and talks
- Monitoring completion of development reviews
- Collecting participant feedback
- Analysis of University data, both centrally available and collected by individual School

---

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]

This update builds on our previous update covering 2022[1].

Environment and Culture *(max 600 words)*	**Increase awareness of the Concordat** Regular communications are distributed to ensure awareness across the University e.g. information about the Concordat is included in the information sent to new research staff and Concordat is introduced at all Bristol Clear induction sessions. An online e-module is also available for staff to familiarise themselves with the Concordat. Each School continues to have a Concordat Champion who focusses on key challenges in their school. **Continue advocacy of research staff issues at University-wide and School level committees** Research staff continue to be represented at School level committees, as well as University-wide through the RSWP. In September 2023, Concordat Champions and Research Staff Reps organised a meeting with the University of Bristol Vice-Chancellor, Prof Evelyn Welsh to discuss challenges that research staff face and explore solutions for constructive changes towards a better Research Career Pathway. Research Culture Blog. The VC's responses and commitment to addressing concerns were met with optimism and solutions for issues raised e.g. better nursery provision for researchers are currently being explored.

---

[1] https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/staffdevelopment/documents/rs-hub/UoB%20Concordat%20update%20report%20March%202023%20PT.pdf

	Heighten awareness of wellbeing support The Wellbeing offer is communicated to researchers through bulletins e.g. the All Staff bulletin and Bristol Clear bulletin. In addition, all Schools have a trained Mental Health Champion. There are several initiatives throughout the year e.g. Staff Wellbeing Week. Staff also have access to the University Counselling Service and Mental Health Crisis Team. **Improve inclusion and equality for all staff** The University was granted an institutional Athena Swan Silver award in 2023 recognising the progress that has been made over the previous 5 years to address key areas where gender gaps existed. The recently published EDI report celebrates the achievements and progress made in relation to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) during 2022/23. Amongst these is the Returning Carers' Scheme, a funding award open to academic staff to help re-establish their research careers on their return to work following extended leave due to parental or caring responsibilities. Over the last academic year, the scheme supported 9 colleagues. The total amount of funds allocated was £74,785.79 (mean amount per applicant, £8,309.53). **Develop our understanding of destinations of our research staff** Survey - To better understand the needs of the researcher community, we will be reviewing the All Staff Survey data once it is ready to review in May 2024. To minimise bureaucracy, we no longer undertake CEDARS. Exit questionnaires - When staff leave the University, they are asked to complete an exit questionnaire. This is voluntary. In 2023, 381 researchers left the University, 181 (48%) completed the questionnaire. Reasons for leaving were broadly the same as all other staff groups with the most popular reasons being opportunity for promotion (16%), higher earnings (15%) and improved career development (13%). Most respondents left the University to work in a higher education institution (27%), in the private sector (18%) and Working in a public research institute (13%). Notably, 13% selected "Not Known" for leaving activity, indicating that one in 10 researchers leave the University not knowing what they will do next. Promotions - From April 2024, the Academic Promotions Framework includes researchers at all levels. We will be monitoring and analysing the new promotion process is being over subsequent promotion rounds.
Employment *(max 600 words)*	**Ensure transparent and merit-based recruitment** Recruitment training - All staff included in recruitment are required to undergo training offered by the Resourcing team. In addition, focused support is offered

through the "Recruiting Research Staff" workshop (part of the Research in Practice programme (RiP)). The session reflects Bristol's recruitment handbook and promotes transparent and fair recruitment practices.

Resourcing at Bristol - From 2023, all open-ended and fixed-term vacancies have been advertised internally and externally, concurrently to ensure maximising diversity at the application stage and to consistently test our internal capability against the external labour pool.

Provide effective inductions

In addition to School-led inductions which provide researchers with an overview of their workplace and School-specific requirements and support, Bristol Clear offers a central induction workshop "Discovering Career Opportunities at Bristol", where researchers can find out more about career development, funding and data management support available to them.

Enhance transparent and merit-based recognition

Academic Promotions Framework - Ensuring transparent, equitable and rewarding careers from the beginning of their careers: This work resulted in Principles and Guidance for how to cost, appoint and develop researchers on research projects, and in the expansion of the Academic Promotions Framework (APF) to all academic staff, including researchers. The Principles and Guidance set out the University's expectations on creating research roles with scope for development and promotion, if appropriate. To transition to the new promotions process in line with the APF from April 2024 onwards, all managers of researchers were invited to review their current Research Associates' roles and responsibilities and to make a case for promotion to Senior Research Associate, if appropriate. As a result, 170 cases were submitted, of which 143 (84%) were approved, a significant impact on over 10% of all of our research staff, and 20% of RAs (143 out of 726).

Gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting is one of the key metrics that allow us to track how effective our actions are in reducing any imbalance in gender or ethnicity within the institution. The University undertakes gender and ethnicity impact assessment on all processes including Grade M movement and promotion. The proportion of female professors at the end of 2023 was 34.2%. We continue to make progress in reducing our gender pay gap and have seen a reduction in both the median and mean pay gaps 2023 Gender Pay Gap and Ethnicity Pay Gap report.

Implement effective line management

Building on the endorsed recommendations and key principles proposed by the

Academic Leadership and Management Working Group in July 2023, the intention is to implement a more formal, yet flexible academic line management structure with agreed practices and development support across the University. We are currently working with six pilot schools who are ready to review their line management structures and have already started to make changes. They are identifying evaluation criteria to measure the impact. We are reviewing how the relevant categories within the Academic Promotions Framework can further reflect the importance of demonstrating effective leadership and management practices. By July 2024, draft guidelines will be developed for schools on structures that would enable effective academic management. Plans for implementation across the remaining schools will be agreed.

Principal Investigator Practice Network
This network was successfully piloted in 2023. It is targeted at PIs and Fellows who are new to the role and new to managing research teams. In 2024, we will run a second pilot focusing on one faculty only to test the cohort building aspect of the initiative.

Improve job security for researchers
Redeployment pool - Our researcher population represent a significant proportion of those in the redeployment pool at any given time. In January 2024, a job board was introduced specifically for redeployment as well as on the ground support for at-risk staff from dedicated people within the Resourcing Team. These changes are focused on humanising the redeployment experience and empowering those at risk to be in more control of their redeployment journey. The impact on the redeployment experience will be closely monitored and feedback will be captured via a survey.

Academic Career Development fund - In 2022, the University made available internal funding for researchers whose career has been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. 25 participants received up to £30,000 for up to 6 months. At the end of the scheme, all participants were invited to share their experience in a showcase event attended by University leadership. All participants were able to show tangible results and shared how helpful the fund had been to support their career. One year on, 19 participants are still academics at Bristol, 5 are in academic positions at other institutions and 1 is no longer in academia.

Core funded roles - Work by People Development and the Research Culture Team to explore core funded roles will be continued in 2024.

Professional development *(max 600 words)*	**Provide opportunities, structured support and encouragement for researchers to engage in professional development**
	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, Schools and Institutes. Most are not listed in detail here but form a substantial contribution to researcher development opportunities and support.
	Teaching Policy - After the approval of the new <u>Policy on Teaching Activities for Research Staff</u>, Schools are now working towards full implementation of the policy, which describes a transparent, school-led process for allocation and recording of teaching activities and focuses on providing opportunities for career development. Whilst the changes have been welcomed overall, larger schools have found the central recording and allocation challenging. We will continue to monitor the data going forward.
	Research in practice (Rip) & Academic Writing Programme (AWP) - These are open to all academic staff (and research professional staff for Rip), which also promotes building networks and peer learning. We ran 48 RiP workshops in 2023, 1,048 staff attended (46% researchers). The AWP 2023 programme ran over 12 weeks. It had 41 participants, 23 of which were researchers.
	Bristol Clear – Bristol Clear regularly communicates with researchers to promote the development & career support offer and encourages Research Staff Reps to get in touch with new starters in their School. Bristol Clear offers a suite of workshops that focus on career development. In 2023, Bristol Clear ran 70 workshops and had 1,583 bookings. Bristol Clear also gets invited to School events on a regular basis to provide researchers with career development support offer.
	Elizabeth Blackwell Institute - Activities to support researcher development offered by the institute include: - Individualised support and advice to ECRs for grant and fellowship applications, including narrative CVs and panelists for mock interviews. - Careers advice including at <u>GW4 crucible event</u>. - Participation in funding panels internal and external, including peer review. - <u>Health Research Networks</u> hold events specifically aimed at ECRs - Open and Transparent Research

Effectively support managers with career development reviews
41% of research staff completed the Development Review form on Develop (our learning management system) with their managers. That is below our target and lower than last year (50%). This conversation is a key part in establishing a practice of regular career conversations between Academic Managers and Research Staff. The Academic Line Manager work plays a big part in achieving this but there are other things we will need to put in place to ensure that all researchers are given the opportunity to talk about their career aims.

Provide access to careers advice
1:1s - The Bristol Clear 1:1s continue to be popular – around 70 research staff booked and attended a 30min coaching style conversation. Participants rate our 1:1s 9/10 on average.
Coaching - Our professional Coaching Team prioritise career coaching for researchers and also offer maternity/paternity (MAPP) coaching. Over the last year 56 researchers (Pathway 2 staff) accessed career coaching and 10 researchers accessed MAPP coaching.

Provide opportunities to develop leadership skills and research identity
Leadership programmes - Bristol annually runs/offers leadership programmes that are open for all staff to apply to. In 2023, 14 Researchers attended as follows: Bristol Senior Leaders Programme (1/20 places), Leading Collaborative Teams (4/20 places), Female Leadership Initiative (7/60 places), Elevate (2/20 places). We will continue to promote these programmes to researchers and monitor update.

Research Development Fund - Every year, we make available financial support for Research Career Development activities, offering up to £400 per request. This scheme is advertised to all research staff on levels a-c at the University. At the February 2023 round, we were able to meet all 40 eligible requests. The fund supports requests for development activities which benefit more than just one individual, and activities focused on building networks and opportunities to raise research profiles.

Supporting diverse careers, which may span beyond academia
Enterprise Masterclasses are open to all staff and provide attendees with insights for all staff at the University into industry and to provide skills development to support better communication and collaboration with external partners. Speakers in 2023 included Anike Te, CSO of Lucideon, Prof Rowena Innocent, Senior Vice President, Engineering at Ultraleap.

Research Team Culture Toolkit – A tool to support teams to develop agency and take action to create a positive research culture. A team climate survey tool is currently being adapted to align with the University's research culture strategy indicators. This tool, together with a 5-stage process toolkit, will be made available to all teams and groups across the University enabling them to act, continuously reflect and improve their local culture.

Career Journey events – lunchtime sessions aimed at researchers featuring researchers who have moved from academia to non-academic roles. Presenters talk about their career journey and give insight into career opportunities outside of academia.

Report on engagement of researchers with career and personal development
Mentoring – 45 pairs were matched for the 2022-23 round of the Bristol Clear Mentoring Scheme. The number of mentor matches has remained almost the same to the previous year (47).

Tracking engagement - Through our Learning Management System, Develop, we can track engagement with our development offer: Over the last 12 months, researchers made a total of 11,925 bookings. This is up slightly to last year (11,449 bookings).

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)*
In 2023, we focussed on key strategic objectives as set out in the 2023 report.
Academic Line Management was primary focus. A lot of work is being undertaken to establish better line management in schools. This is a work in progress and will continue to be an objective for 2024. We recognise that this is a key piece for ensuring this equity of experience across the University, in particular for researchers and their career development support.
We worked to ensuring transparent, equitable and rewarding careers for researchers from the beginning of their career. Bringing promotion from Research Associate to Senior Research Associate into the Academic Promotions Framework was an important and necessary step to ensure that researchers are employed at the right level and can apply for promotion. We will be monitoring the promotion data closely in 2024 to see how this new process is going.
Similarly, the transition exercise from "Movement to Research Associate" towards inclusion in the Academic Promotions Process in October 2023 was a great opportunity for the roles of Research Associates to be reviewed and for managers to make a case for promotion to Senior Research Associate where appropriate. We are currently awaiting the full set of data from this exercise and will review the results.

To ensure transparent and rewarding careers, we are planning to include the data we receive from exit questionnaires. According to the central figures, 1 in 10 researchers leaves the University not knowing what they will do next. We need to investigate this further.

Another focus for 2024 will be the annual development reviews. According to our data, completion fell to 41%. Work will need to go into understanding why fewer annual reviews have been recorded and whether this means that the conversations don't take place. To understand this better, we will look at further data and work to identify what is needed to improve this.

Throughout 2023, we have been working closely with Concordat Champions & Research Staff Reps. These two groups have done a lot of work locally in their Schools to support Research Staff. Furthermore, Institutes (especially Elizabeth Blackwell and Cabot) have also done a lot of work to support researcher development. A lot of work is also continuing to happen in parallel through wider Research Culture initiatives supported by Research England Enhancing Research Culture Funding and led by the Associate PVC Research Culture.

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

Key Objectives

Annual Development Review	- It is expected that every researcher has an annual review where they discuss their development. But we are falling short of this target. - Target: 75% of annual reviews are completed on Develop by the end of 2024 - To ensure we can reach this target, we need to raise awareness with line managers, ensure annual review is mentioned as part of the new staff induction, CCs to raise awareness at School level, RRs to raise awareness within their communities, People Development/Bristol Clear talk about it as part of their outreach events.

Line Management	• Implement a more formal, yet flexible academic line management structure with agreed practices and development support across the University • 6 pilot schools are currently reviewing their line management structures and are making changes • The project is also reviewing relevant categories within the Academic Promotions Framework to see how these reflect the importance of demonstrating effective leadership and management practices • By July 2024: draft guidelines for schools on structures that would enable the development of effective academic management and agree plans for implementation across schools.
Teaching policy	• Ensure that the teaching policy is being used in all Schools and collect numbers from each School to show how the teaching policy is being used • Find ways of lessening the bureaucratic element of the policy
Career Development awareness and support	• Being a signatory of the Researcher Concordat provides us with the leverage to support career development. Our aim is to create an environment in which researchers can thrive. • We will draw on career support data from our staff survey (results available in May 2024) to raise awareness and set targets. • Researcher Reps will run a survey to monitor researcher moral. We will also use data from the All Staff Survey e.g. the net promoter score to better understand the lived experience of research staff. • Remind senior management of the institutional obligations set by Researcher Concordat. • Run "Precarity events" to outline challenges and constraints and to stimulate discussion and encourage solution focussed thinking. Work with Concordat Champions and Researcher Reps to understand what the key message is we need to communicate. • Use resources which emphasise the importance of engaging with career development & track their engagement e.g. Bristol Clear film (release date May 24)
Concordat Champions network & Researcher Reps committee	• Continue to work in partnership and supporting both groups by organising regular meetings and networking events.

> **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 Associate Pro Vice Chancellor of Research Culture. 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[2]. It also draws on data from surveys such as our All 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). The RSWP's remit is to promote and support the careers and working environment of externally-funded and early career research staff. It reports to the Research Culture Committee.
>
> The CGG's membership comprises of: Associate Pro Vice Chancellor of Research Culture (CGG Chair), Chair of the Research Staff Working Party, Director of People and Organisational Development, Co-Chairs of Research Staff Rep Committee, PIs and Senior People Development Partner (Research), People Development Partner (Concordat Implementation Lead).

Signature on behalf of governing body: *P. Taylor*

Contact for queries: Lydia Klimecki, Email: 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

_____

[2] 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. It reports to the Research Staff Working Party and meets six times a year, either side of the three yearly RSWP meetings.