

## **2019 – 2021 HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan: For the implementation of the Principles of the UK Researcher Development Concordat\* - April 2020**

\*Formal name: The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, Sept 2019.

### **INTRODUCTION**

New areas for focus in the action plan for AY 2019-20 to AY 2020-21 are outlined below. The forward action plan is newly reshaped around the revised Researcher Development Concordat launched in Sept 2019 and in particular its three themes 1) Environment and Culture 2) Employment and 3) Professional and career development and the institutional requirements expected under each of the themes. This action plan incorporates the relevant actions to be found in the GS plans and other Professional Services Department plans for 2019/20 and 2020/21. The timescales given are subject to change due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The actions have been discussed by a wide range of people (strategic research leaders, research staff and professional services staff) from the GCU ECR group, the DARE steering group, People Services (PS), the REF Management Group, University Research Committee (URC), the Graduate School (GS), the Research Directorate, the Schools, the School Associate Deans of Research (ADRs) and the University executive lead – Pro Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal (Research). They have been shaped with oversight from the DARE steering group – a group whose membership represent ECRs from all Schools and the Yunus Centre, and staff from the Graduate School, People Services and RIO.

GCU is currently undertaking a gap analysis of GCU institutional policies and practice against the remaining institutional requirements of the new UK Researcher Development (RD) Concordat. The forward action plan below will be augmented, as the gaps and actions to fill the gaps are decided.

To provide updates on action status, new ideas or enhancements to the actions, please contact the Graduate School at [graduateschool@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@gcu.ac.uk).

**Format:**

The RD Concordat institutional requirements are listed in bold text as overarching actions and labelled with the theme and institutional requirement number. For example, ECI1 refers to the Environment and Culture theme, Institutional requirement number 1. ie ECI1 Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the concordat. Any further GCU specific actions are given in normal text underneath the RD concordat institutional action.

## Acronyms:

ADR – School Associate Dean of Research DARE – Developing Academic Researcher Excellence Steering Group E&D – The Equality and Diversity Forum GCUL – GCU London School GS – The Graduate School GSBS – Glasgow School for Business and Society PDAR – Performance and Development Annual Review	PGRT – Postgraduate Research Tutor PS – People Services RD – Researcher Development RIO – Research Innovation Office SCEBE – School of Computing, Engineering and Built Environment SHLS – School of Health and Life Sciences URC – University Research Committee
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Actions	Responsibility	Outcomes/measure of success	Timescale
Environment and Culture: Excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture			
<b>ECI1. Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the concordat</b> - Work in partnership with US RDTC to develop Scotland –wide Concordat launch, planned for June 2020 - Work with local ECR groups and institution wide ECR network to raise awareness of Concordat	Graduate School/URC, DARE steering group	Awareness measured by new CEDARS survey to be run May – July 2020.	Dec 2020
<b>ECI2. Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers.</b> - Review relevant policies and procedures for gaps as part of the Concordat gap analysis.	DARE/URC, People Services, Graduate School	Any gaps in the policies and procedures are identified and actions added to the action plan with timeframe for solutions.	March 2021

<p><b>ECI4. Ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and mental health.</b></p>	<p>People Services/RIO, GS</p>	<p>Transformational Leadership Programme to include specific Research Leaders cohort, delivered by June 2021. Elements included that are tailored by RIO &amp; GS for Researchers</p>	<p>June 2021</p>
<p><b>ECI5. Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RIO to ensure the University follows the Research Integrity Concordat at the research grant application stage.</li> <li>- RIO to represent GCU at the Scottish Research Integrity Network</li> </ul>	<p>URC/ RIO &amp; Research Integrity Champion</p>	<p>Research Integrity Champion Lead identified. GCU Research Integrity champion network set up.</p> <p>Annual Report on Research Integrity Concordat completed and reviewed by GCU stakeholders and publicised.</p> <p>Research Integrity action plan developed and reviewed bi-annually.</p>	<p>Oct 2019 Oct 2020</p> <p>Nov 2020, Nov 2021</p>

Employment: Researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions

<p><b>EI1. Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review casual hours process to ensure transparency, equity, fairness and inclusivity in the recruitment and selection of PgR students.</li> </ul>	<p>People Services/RDC</p>	<p>CROS/PIRLS-CEDARS satisfaction with recruitment and selection maintained at 91% in 2020, 2022 surveys. (CROS = 73% 2015, 91% 2017). Results maintained above all three comparative benchmarks (post 92 = 86% 2017, Scottish = 88% 2017 and UK = 88% 2017).</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p>
<p><b>EI2. Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and deliver an online welcome pack for Researcher staff and link and communicate its use with University &amp; Local induction support.</li> </ul>	<p>DARE/Graduate School, People Services</p>	<p>Online Welcome Pack developed to complement University Inductions, supported by face-to-face local network induction support and ongoing orientation</p>	<p>January 2021</p>
<p><b>EI4. Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent.</b></p>	<p>People Services/RIO, GS</p>	<p>Transformational Leadership Programme includes a specific Research Leaders cohort, delivered by June 2021.</p>	<p>June 2021</p>

<p>- Adapt People Service's Transformational Leadership Programme to be relevant for managers of researchers.</p>		<p>Elements on project management and effective line management/research leadership included that are tailored by RIO and GS for Researchers</p>	
<p><b>EI6. Seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress.</b></p> <p>People Services have implemented policies on redeployment and greater use of open-ended contracts. Review their effectiveness for researchers</p>	<p>People Services</p>	<p>Benchmark information from CEDARS 2020</p>	<p>June 2021</p>
<p><b>EI7. Consider researchers and their managers as key stakeholders within the institution and provide them with formal opportunities to engage with relevant organisational policy and decision-making.</b></p> <p>-consult on concordats, DARE, local groups, development and implementation of the actions in this action plan.</p>	<p>DARE</p>	<p>Continued membership on DARE group of relevant ECRs from each of the active local networks in each school</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings of DARE 2019 - 2021</p>

Professional and career development: Professional and career development are integral to enabling researchers to develop their full potential

<p><b>PCI1. Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.</b></p> <p>Specific actions below.</p>	<p>DARE/Graduate School</p>	<p>CROS/PIRLS-CEDARS satisfaction with recognition and value of their contributions increased 65% ave by 2022 surveys. (CROS = 51% 2015, 53% 2017). Results maintained above all three comparative benchmarks (post 92 = 46% 2017, Scottish = 45% 2017 and UK = 44% 2017).</p> <p>Particularly recognition of contributions to supervising research students increased to 45% by 2022. 32% 2017 (post 92 -41% 2017, Scottish -42% 2017 and UK-43% 2017).</p>	<p>June 2020</p>
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<p>Deliver development opportunities for all research staff and research students in the UK/GCU policies and processes and good practices essential to researchers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of Gap Analysis of the new RD concordat, explore current provision for identified research policies and processes and gaps in development provision.</li> <li>- Explore development opportunities needed, identify external provision or create and deliver workshops and online courses and communicate through multi-media.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant Depts. Library, People Services, RIO, Governance, Graduate School</p>	<p>Research policies and processes required for good practice for researchers accessible and communicated. Staff researchers and managers of researchers are aware and using good practice for these policies.</p> <p>Workshops and online courses on research policies and processes embedded and delivered on an as and when required basis, either as a group for new staff/students or 1:1, with refresher sessions delivered as needed.</p>	<p>June 2020</p>
<p><b>PCI4. Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Design and deliver DARE to Lead RD programme framework for ECRs, including opportunities to engage in teaching, leadership programme and DARE group membership.</li> <li>- plan RD programme cross-university with newly established Local Research Staff Groups</li> <li>-develop and embed use of an ECR hub site for communication of RD and events cross-university of ECR group, GS, local ECR group and external activities and news.</li> </ul>	<p>Graduate School/ECR networks</p>	<p>RD programme 2019/20 for staff designed and delivered in a combination of GS central workshops and events with Local Research Staff Group activities.</p> <p>ECR hub site developed, established and user engaged by ECR groups and local ECR groups.</p> <p>CROS-CEDARS maintain 86% of research staff agreeing they are encouraged to engage in personal and career development in 2020 (CROS sector average 76% 2017; GCU CROS = 86% 2017)</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p>
<p><b>PCI5. Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve opportunities for ECRs to undertake supervisor workshops/development opportunities and be part of supervisory teams.</li> </ul>	<p>Graduate School/Schools</p>	<p>% of ECRs undertaking supervisor workshops/development opportunities and becoming part of supervisory teams is benchmarked.</p> <p>% above is increased, if needed, with the interventions put in place.</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- explore the possibility of tracking ECR engagement with supervisor workshop series at booking to measure success.</li> <li>-improve opportunities for staff researchers and PgRs to develop teaching skills and undertake the AHE teaching certificates offered by the Academic Development Dept.</li> <li>-expand opportunities for staff researchers and PgRs to develop social innovation skills, entrepreneurship and commercialisation of research ideas.</li> </ul>	<p>Academic Development</p> <p>UHATCH/RIO</p>	<p>% of ECRs and PgRs undertaking the AHE teaching certificates is benchmarked. % is increased with the interventions put in place.</p> <p>% of ECRs and PgRs undertaking the UHATCH programme or participating in the masters workshops is benchmarked and increased.</p>	
<p><b>PCI6. Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design and implement an automated system for monitoring mandatory provision for experienced supervisors to attend at least 1 refresher supervision training session from the supervision provision (above) every 2 years.</li> </ul>	<p>Graduate School, Registry</p> <p>Graduate School, RDC, URC</p> <p>SIMS team</p>	<p>Annual review of supervisor uptake completed and considered by RDC and URC.</p> <p>Monitoring system automated within the new Research Student and Supervisor information management system (SIMS).</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p> <p>2021</p>
<p>Implementation and Review of the RD Concordat</p>			
<p><b>1. Raise the visibility of the Concordat and champion its Principles within their organisation at all levels.</b></p> <p>Actions in ECI1</p>	<p>Graduate School/URC,DARE steering group</p>	<p>See ECI1.</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p>
<p><b>2. Identify a senior manager champion and associated group with relevant representation from across the organisation with responsibility for annual review and reporting on progress.</b></p>	<p>DARE</p>	<p>Senior Manager champion and DARE group identified.</p>	<p>April 2020</p>
<p><b>3. For organisations employing researchers, ensure that they are formally represented in developing and monitoring</b></p>	<p>DARE</p>	<p>DARE subcommittee of URC tor and membership refreshed to reflect new Concordat language.</p>	<p>June 2020</p>

<b>organisational efforts to implement the Concordat Principles.</b>			
<b>4. Undertake a gap analysis to compare their policies and practice against the Concordat Principles.</b>	DARE	Gap analysis completed, with input/review from GCU stakeholders.	June 2020
<b>5. Draw up and publish an action plan within a year of signing up to the Concordat.</b>	DARE	GCU RD Concordat action plan developed and published	June 2021
<b>6. Set up processes for systematically and regularly gathering the views of the researchers they fund or employ, to inform and improve the organisation's approach to and progress on implementing the Concordat.</b>  <b>ECI6. Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and use the outcomes to improve institutional practices.</b>	Graduate School/People Services	CEDARS organised and run in 2020.  Report on CEDARS results completed and reviewed by GCU stakeholders.  CEDARS action plan developed and included into the GCU RD concordat Action plan and reporting process.	July 2020 Sept 2020  Oct 2020
<b>7. Produce an annual report to their governing body or equivalent authority, which includes their strategic objectives, measures of success, implementation plan and progress, which is subsequently publicly available.</b>	DARE/URC	GCU Report produced annually, considered by URC and published.  GCU RD Concordat action plan reviewed and published annually.	Oct 2020, 2021

<b>Systemic Challenges</b>			
<b>Share examples of emergent practice in implementing various aspects of the Concordat, particularly in tackling difficult and complex issues, such as insecurity of employment.</b>	Graduate School	Examples of emergent practice shared at ScotHERD and USRDTC and at appropriate conferences such as Vitae annual conference Sept.	Sept 2020
Align the Concordat with other concordats and frameworks to minimise reporting requirements and drawing on existing data sources.	URC/Graduate School, Athena Swan steering groups	Work underway to align with Research Integrity concordat and Athena Swan plans.	January 2021