

Researcher Development Concordat Action Plan 2022-2024



1. Environment and Culture

1.1 Wellbeing and mental health: The aims of these obligations are to champion positive wellbeing amongst researchers, both through appropriate training and enabling new ways of working.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
ECI3	Promote good mental health and wellbeing through the effective management of workloads and people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore and implement ways to allocate and award time for research activities within a good work-life balance. I.e. Create and roll out a fair, transparent and consistent workload model for research activity within the academic/researcher role across the university. b. Explore ways to enable people to protect and use their research time effectively within a good work-life balance. Include this exploration as an integral part of the cross university WG exploring workload and work-life balance for all staff arising from the Staff Engagement Survey response. * c. Explore ways to communicate and demonstrate the value and importance of research work as an integral part of the university. * 	<p>Y1</p> <p>Y1</p> <p>Y1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cross-uni WG on workload model b. People Services, Cross-uni WG.* c.PVC Research & Sr research leaders.* 	<p>CEDARS fairness of treatment re q 14.8 contracted workload 2021 48% agree/strongly agree (2020 54%, UK2021 47%); q14.9 allocation of additional work beyond contracted workload 2021 40% (2020 52%, UK2021 37%) q15+q16 value contributions across a range of research-academic activities, mean 2021 48% (2020 34%, UK2021 37%) q41.1 recognised for contributions to institution 2021 48% (2020 60%, UK2021 53%) q41.5 your working environment supports your mental health and wellbeing 2021 52% (2020 60%, UK2021 48%)</p> <p>Deliverable: improved experience of workload management and work-life balance. Research activity is recognised as valued part of the academic role with clear workload allocations consistent across the university. Workload model is rolled out and embedded within university PDAR system.</p>

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ECI4	Ensure managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to wellbeing and mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Further roll out of SAMH mental health awareness training b. Continued Promotion of existing Employee Assistance Programme 	Y1	People Services and Academic Schools	<p>CEDARS q 26 Managerial CPD undertaken: Mental health and Wellbeing 2021 68% (2020 44%)</p> <p>Deliverable: increased uptake of mental health and wellbeing CPD</p>
ECR3	Ensure researchers take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health.	Develop and embed the Emotionally Demanding Research Network to support researchers undertaking challenging research topics. Provide forum and opportunity to share practice and improve wellbeing.	Y1	Graduate School	<p>CEDARS q33 Researcher CPD uptake: Mental health and Wellbeing 2021 49% (2020 34%)</p> <p>Deliverable: well developed, supportive network enabling researchers at all levels to safely undertake challenging research in an environment of mutual support and understanding</p>

1.2 Bullying and harassment: The aims of these obligations are to eliminate bullying and harassment in the research system, tackled through progressive policies and secure mechanisms to address incidents.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
ECI3	Promote a healthy working environment through effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revise Staff Conflict and Complaints Policy and Guidance (in response to experiences learned following the implementation of the Report and Support Reporting Tool) b. Explore and implement solutions that will improve the experience of researchers related to discrimination, bullying and harassment. Include this exploration as an integral part of the cross-uni WG exploring discrimination, bullying and harassment improvements to the staff experience. * c. Raise awareness of GCU's mechanisms for reporting bullying/harassment and provide training and support for people in accessing and using these mechanisms. 	Y1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. People Services b. People Services, Cross-uni WG. * c. People Services 	<p>CEDARS Q38.3 Bullying and harassment: trust HEI to investigate reported incidents fairly 2021 60% (2020 75%)</p> <p>q38 familiar with institution's mechanisms for reporting bullying/harassment; feel comfortable to report incident; trust HEI to take action after incident investigated. Mean of Q38 2021 55% (2020 68%, UK2021 60%)</p> <p>Q37.1 familiar with institution's process for reporting incidents of discrimination 2021 57% (2020 54%, UK2021 63%)</p> <p>Q37.2 feel comfortable reporting an incident of discrimination 2021 51% (2020 56%, UK2021 66%)</p> <p>Q40 personally felt discriminated against at work 2021 22% (2020 27%, UK2021 19%); Q40.3 felt bullied or harassed 2021 26% (2020 25%, UK2021 20%)</p> <p>Deliverable: An Improved experience with little bullying and harassment and when it does arise, an</p>

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					ability to deal with it with trust and support in the university's policies, processes and practice. New (research) staff policy and guidance to improve reporting of complaints and conflict, enabling increase in trust of process.
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1.3 Equality, diversity and inclusion: The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in, aware of and adopt practices enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
ECI4 / ECM1	Ensure managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work.	<p>The following actions are part of the People Services Operational Plan 2022-23 for all staff. Research managers are included within this population.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Embed EDI in staff leadership development programmes. Facilitate staff involvement in training and development. Communicate policies and guidance. Support the design and delivery of awareness days/events/campaigns as part of a wider initiative. Embed Disability Confident commitments. Lead on the tackling racism recruitment recommendations and Research Concordat. Support implementation of tackling racism recommendations and Advance HE Race Equality Charter. Support implementation of institutional and School Athena Swan action plans including continuing to deliver the Advance HE Aurora Leadership Programme, and supporting in-house CPD programme to support the university's Gender Action Plan and maintenance of Athena SWAN Silver Award. 	Y1	People Services	<p>CEDARS q25 Managerial confidence: Use inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment process 2021 92% (2020 94%)</p> <p>CEDARS q 26 Managers undertaken training; EDI 2021 60% (2020 96%)</p> <p>Deliverable: EDI as inherent part of leadership model at GCU, increased uptake of EDI training.</p>

2. Employment

2.1 Recognition, reward and promotion: The aims of these obligations are to ensure the fair and inclusive recognition of researchers as part of their career progression.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
E13	Provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers' contributions and the diversity of personal circumstances.	<p>a. Carry out data analysis to check equity of progression/promotion/regrading across protected and other key characteristics (e.g. mode – pt/ft etc)</p> <p>b. Develop the policy and process for the designation of staff as Sig Res and embed it within GCU's reward and promotion pathways.</p>	<p>Y1</p> <p>Y1</p>	<p>a.People Services</p> <p>b.RIO, PS</p>	<p>CEDARS q17.3 Promotions made on merit: agree/strongly agree 2021 34% (2020 45%, UK2021 43%)</p> <p>Q17.1 promotion pathways are clear 2021 44% (2020 53%, UK2021 52%))</p> <p>Q17.2 equitable opportunities for career progression 2021 42% (2020 49%, UK2021 43%)</p> <p>Q17.4 redundancy processes are clear 2021 20% (2020 25%, UK2021 25%)</p> <p>Q25.2 Managers confident in giving guidance on institutional redeployment processes 2021 49% (2020 54%, UK2021 34%)</p> <p>Deliverable: improved understanding of promotion pathways and perception of promotions as merit based, with data on progression checked for equity on gender and other key characteristics.</p>

2.2 Excellent People Management : The aims of these obligations are to ensure that researchers are well-managed and have effective and timely performance reviews.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
E15	Ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore why only 50% of researchers find appraisals useful and implement solutions for this to be improved. * b. PCDI2 Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers. * c. Recognise and value the importance of regular discussions on activity, outputs, barriers and successes as informal appraisal opportunities informed by the formal PDAR appraisal. 	Y1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.b.People Services. * c.Research groups/ Centres, Research leaders & managers 	<p>CEDARS q21 Usefulness of staff review/appraisal 2021 49% (2020 51%, UK2021 58%)</p> <p>Deliverable: improved perception of staff review as being useful.</p>
EM1	Managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Design and implement line manager training to support any changes to guidance/process to maximise understand/implementation of policy/guidance changes 	Y1	People Services and Graduate School	<p>CEDARS q 33 Managerial CPD undertaken: Managing Others 2021 32% (2020 24%)</p> <p>Deliverable: managers informed and empowered via CPD opportunities, leading to better researcher environment</p>

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3. Professional and Career Development

3.1 Structured Opportunities: The aims of these obligations are to promote the importance of professional development and ensure researchers have the time to engage in it.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
PDCI1	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhance the design and delivery of the DARE to Lead core RD programme for ECRs and mid-career researchers. b. Facilitate engagement of School local ECR networks in developing and communicating their School RD programmes and sharing their best practice cross-university. c. Develop online DARE Hub with relevant RD info and events and hub for staff communities. d. Embed the Academic Writing programme of workshops and writing retreats for research staff. e. Extend the programme to include a range of flexible timetabling and one to one research writing development opportunities for research staff (writing for journal publication) f. Recognise and value the importance of protecting time and encouraging researchers to link with at least one research group/Centre; for research/line managers to participate in research group/centre activities and for research group leads to develop their activities to meet the needs of their members. 	Y1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.b.c.Graduate School, DARE and Academic Schools Research groups/Centres, Research leaders d.e. Graduate School f.Research groups/Centres, Research leaders/Managers 	<p>CEDARS q 33 CPD areas low uptake: Open Research: 22% (2020 28%); Career Management: 17% (2020 15%); Communication and Dissemination 2021 56% (2020 42%)</p> <p>Deliverable: DARE Hub to coordinate and promote opportunities for ECRs. Engagement cross-university in building a network of ECRs. Increased uptake of CPD around publications for research staff and a supportive environment to develop ECRs. A research community that is connected, engaged and supports each other through research groups/Centres and mentorship of research leaders/line managers.</p>
PDCI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The provision of time to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills will be part of the exploration of the response to ECI3. Explore and implement ways to allocate and award time for research activities within a good work-life balance.* 	Y1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.Cross-university WG on the workload model.* 	<p>CEDARS Q30.7 have time to develop research identity 2021 33% (2020 43%, UK2021 43%) Q30.8 have time to develop leadership skills 2021 38% (2020 36%, UK2021 41%)</p>

		b. Provide researcher development opportunities and mentoring in the development of research identity and leadership skills.		b.GS, Sr research leaders	
E12	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	Develop online Welcome/Induction pack for Research Staff to connect with local ECR network and wider GCU opportunities	Y2	Graduate School and DARE	CEDARS q20 Usefulness of Induction: 2021 agree at GCU level 52% (2020 66%, UK2021 51%); at department/school level 59% (2020 69%, UK2021 61%); local level 63% (2020 70%, UK2021 68%). Deliverable: online resource connected to all relevant aspects of GCU provision for ECRs, allowing a better induction experience

3.2 Career development support and planning

The aims of these obligations are to promote researchers' career development planning through tailored support and gathering evidence of professional experience.

Concordat code	Obligation	Action	Timescale Deadline	Lead (s)	Targeted impact of the action (success measure)
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	Explore solutions to providing researchers access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers: research related, as well as more broadly, including opportunities outside Higher Education.	Y1-2	PS, Careers*	CEDARS q 30.3 aware of support institution provides for your career and professional development 2021 45% (2020 50%, UK2021 59%) Q30.4 have discussed career options with a careers specialist 2021 2% (2020 9%, UK2021 14%) Q30.5 have a clear career development plan 2021 35% (2020 45%, UK2021 37%)
PCDM2	Managers support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and secondments.	Provide development opportunities for Managers as mentors within the GS researcher mentor scheme that raise awareness of their role in exploring and preparing researchers for a diversity of careers.	Y1-2	GS	CEDARS q30.2 manager encourages you to consider wide range of future career options within and beyond academia. 2021 38% (2020 22%, UK2021 40%)

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Abbreviations	
WG	Working Group
CEDARS	Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey
SAMH	Scottish Association for Mental Health
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
GS	Graduate School
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
RIO	Research Innovation Office
PS	People Services
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
DARE	Developing Academic Researchers in Excellence
ECR	Early Career Researchers