

Heriot-Watt University: Concordat Progress 2023-24

- **Stakeholder:** **In** = Institution; **AM** = Academic Managers of Researchers; **R** = Researchers
- **HWU Enterprising Research Culture Strategic Objectives:** **SO1**=Research Integrity; **SO2**= Collegiality; **SO3** =Research Recognition; **SO4** = Research Careers; **SO5** = Open Research.

HW Concordat Implementation Plan	Actions Taken	Stakeholders			HW Research Culture Strategic Objective
		In	AM	R	
Environment and Culture					
1. Improve communication and awareness of Concordat principles	Concordat principles embedded within the Enterprising Research Culture Action Plan, launched in June 2024, and disseminated widely through Executive Deans, Directors of Research, RC Working Group, RC Champions, and the new Research Engagement Directorate (RED) SharePoint. A communication strategy was designed in collaboration with the Communications Team to effectively deliver this objective. Awareness was further enhanced through information sessions in Research Culture Activities and PGR and University staff inductions.	•	•	•	SO2
2. Excellence in people/team management through transparency of responsibilities, relevant training, monitoring of practices	The 2024 PDR process introduced a simplified 3-step workflow in the ERP system, enhancing accessibility and engagement in career development. Supported by staff feedback, it streamlines goal preparation, reflective discussions, and final reviews, improving communication. Integration with systems like Worktribe and Fusion has been identified as a need. 'Role of People Manager' resources and PDR Reviewer Roadshows were promoted across Schools to improve practices.	•	•	•	SO2/SO4

3. Ensure researchers at all careers stages, are represented	Wider representation on the Research Culture Working Group (RC WG) and Task and Finish Groups, enabling ECRs to co-create the RC Action Plan and contribute to its implementation. The action plan was shared at the Research Staff Forum, which met until January 2024. Consultations with Research Staff are ongoing to define updated Terms of Reference for the Research Staff Forum and explore additional mechanisms for representation via the Research Futures Hub.	•			SO2
4. Foster a supportive research community by enhancing networking opportunities, promoting EDI best practices and ensuring clear access to HR policies on bullying, harassment, and workload management	27 Culture Café sessions were held for all career stages during 2024, covering Narrative CVs, Research Integrity, ethics, Open Research, peer-reviewing, dedicated writing sessions and FIKA coffee for networking. The Global Enterprising Research Culture Action Plan launched showcasing EDI case studies, while active networks (LGBTQ+, Disability, Parents & Carers, STEM Inclusivity) hosted peer support events. A STEM Inclusivity survey informed future initiatives, and Associate Executive Deans for EDI are being appointed. Consideration of RC actions has been taken in development of actions for recent/upcoming MACS and SoSS Athena Swan submissions. Collaboration with HR through the RC WG to strengthen policies and mechanisms that address toxic behaviours, fostering inclusion and support across the research community, and making these policies and procedures visible to all.	•		•	SO2
5. Develop better understanding of research staff population from improved data	The ERP system is enhancing employee databases for improved reporting on research staff, aiding monitoring, planning, and support. Detailed Worktribe analyses provide insights into research activity and diversity. The RC WG recommends transparent research metrics, regular reviews, and live dashboards for clarity, ensuring adaptive, resource-efficient methodologies across disciplines, career stages, and employment contexts.	•			SO1/SO3

6. Establish an Open Research framework	Discussions on establishing an Open Research framework have progressed within the Research Culture Working Group (RC WG). The RC WG recommended elevating the initiative to the University Committee for Research and Innovation (UCRI) and proposed forming an Open Research subgroup under UCRI to foster inclusivity, build a community of practice, and align Open Research efforts across the institution.	•			SO2/SO5
Employment					
7. Develop a common understanding of the promotion process and career pathways at the University	The first phase of HWU's academic career pathways modernisation was presented via RC WG, covering rationale behind the changes, recommendations, level descriptors, and progression/promotion criteria. Final consultation on academic pathways is underway with UCU, alongside Professorial Zoning workgroups on Teaching, Research, and Leadership. Reward Team sessions further supported promotion and reward transparency. Three promotion workshops and School-specific sessions were held to clarify promotions and pathways. Progress will be tracked through PDRs and case studies, supporting applicant development and a clearer, structured promotion process across the University.	•		•	SO3/SO4
8. Enhance the induction process across the University	A quarterly "Belong" welcome session led by University Executive members has increased participation by 50%, engaging new colleagues. Monthly POD workshops now support impactful manager-led inductions, alongside new hiring guidance. An updated SharePoint Hub reflects colleague feedback, and automated ERP reminders ensure compliance training on diversity, governance, and safety.	•	•		SO2/SO4
9. Embed culture of valuing recognising and celebrating a range of different	The inaugural Heriot-Watt Research in Action Week celebrated research excellence and fostered collaboration through workshops, networking, and showcases from CDTs, PDRAs, and Global Research Institutes (GRIs). This event highlighted support from the Research Engagement Directorate (RED) and built capacity via training, lab visits, tours, demonstration, presentations and masterclasses.			•	SO2/SO3

types of research success	Plans are underway for the second Research Integrity & Culture Week (March 2025) in partnership with other universities to strengthen collegiality and promote collaboration.				
10. Ensure that time for research and collaboration is created and applied consistently across the university following workload model principles	It has been agreed that resources will be allocated to appoint Research Culture Coordinators within Schools, ensuring alignment between the school's strategies and the Research Culture Action Plan and the establishment of supportive structures. The Research Culture Café Series was launched, offering panels and discussions, workshops, Narrative CV sessions, Nature Masterclasses conversations and dedicated virtual writing sessions. A network of RC champions has been created to foster collaboration and embed Research Culture initiatives across all campuses.	•			SO4
11. Provide training workshops to support researchers	A dedicated Research Engagement Directorate (RED) SharePoint site has been established, offering extensive resources and guidance for researchers. It provides a pathway approach, guiding users through funding proposals, applications, and post-award processes. The site includes sections on skills development, stakeholder engagement, research culture and achieving research impact, with tools for planning, collaboration, and evaluation. For senior researchers, it features information on fostering a healthy research environment, promoting high-quality outputs, and supporting ethical practices through new ethics and integrity training opportunities. The platform also highlights events, activities, and development opportunities to support researchers at all career stages. A comprehensive service catalogue also has been developed on RED SharePoint site, offering a centralised and accurate source of information on services supporting the theme of <i>Excelling in Research and Enterprise</i>. This catalogue integrates resources from the Research Engagement Directorate, Research Grants Finance, and the Business and Enterprise Directorate. It serves as a knowledge management tool, enabling researchers to easily navigate categories or use the search function to access services and guidance. Users	•			SO2/SO4

	can connect with subject matter experts for tailored support, streamlining requests related to research services and fostering efficient collaboration.				
Professional Development of Researchers					
12. Establish a Research Futures Hub to enhance career development, support the PGR lifecycle, and provide networking opportunities for ECRs	The new Research Futures Hub has adopted the ' <i>PROSPER</i> ' model to support career development for postdoctoral researchers. A dedicated career development series has been established for PGRs and research staff, utilising ' <i>PROSPER</i> ' resources to address diverse career pathways and skill enhancement. These initiatives, outlined in a detailed case study, form part of the Research Futures Hub's mission to foster professional growth and networking opportunities for Early Career Researchers.	•	•	•	SO2/SO3/SO4
13. Establish a Mid-senior career development program	A proposal for a new mid-senior career development program was developed and consulted on with Directors of Research, with rollout planned for 2025. Targeted training sessions for mid-senior academic leaders covered Impact, Public Engagement, Research Integrity, and Narrative CVs to enhance leadership in these areas. A Researcher Development Consultant will be recruited to deliver the program, with a full rollout in 2025.	•	•	•	SO2/SO4
14. Improve Research Futures Academy (RFA) training provision	In 2024, the new Professional Researcher Training Framework was successfully launched, providing a pathway-based approach to enhance researchers' skills in research, business, and policy. The framework features the 'Researcher Accelerator' pathway for newcomers and four optional pathways: 'Investigate,' 'Communicate,' 'Apply,' and 'Lead.' It encourages researchers to take ownership of their development, with flexible access to online resources. The framework integrates guided pathways, self-driven learning, networking opportunities, and live sessions through Research Culture Conversations, fostering	•	•	•	SO2/SO4

	community building and peer-led initiatives. Increased engagement and positive feedback have been demonstrated.				
15. Enhance online information demonstrating range of career paths	To enhance online information demonstrating a range of career paths, a project to update the HWU webpage is currently underway. The webpage will provide clear, accessible resources to support both researchers and managers. This update will further facilitate access to development opportunities and support career progression across all stages of research careers.	•			SO2/SO4
16. Redesign the Research Staff Forum to integrate PGR and ECR perspectives, ensuring their roles in championing research culture are recognised and supported	The redesign of the Research Staff Forum to integrate PGR and ECR perspectives is currently in the scoping phase. This initiative aims to ensure that the roles of PGRs and ECRs in championing research culture are both recognised and supported. As part of this, a Research Futures Hub reference working group is being established with active participation from PGRs and ECRs. The focus of the group will be on leadership development that is culture-aware and aligned with the Concordat, ensuring that their needs and contributions are central to the development of the Hub.	•		•	SO2/SO3/SO4
17. Deliver a pilot in Open Research (OR)	In 2024, a pilot of Open Research (OR) was delivered through three series of good practice exchange as part of the Culture Café initiative. These sessions provided ECRs with insights into open-access resources, data management, and publication platforms. The pilot had strong representation from all career stages, schools, and campuses, with excellent engagement and positive feedback from participants. The Research Culture Working Group (RC WG) has recommended that UCRI guide future actions to further support the integration of Open Research practices across the institution.	•		•	SO2/SO4/SO5