

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

Universities and Research Institutes

Name of Institution	University of Strathclyde
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Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat (refer to Researcher Development Concordat Reporting Guidance)	tbd

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)

We believe that creating and embedding a positive research culture is essential for fostering high-quality research and researchers. Research culture forms a key element within our Strathclyde 2030 Strategy recognising and prioritising our rich, inclusive and distinctive culture. It commits to “actively nurture [researchers and others involved in leading, conducting and enabling research] at all stages of their careers through support, development and collaborative opportunities in which they can grow their research and build their careers”. Significant focus on Research Culture planning over the last year includes connecting initiatives and development of a new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) which will measure key dimensions of research culture for Strathclyde.

Research culture at Strathclyde is underpinned and implemented through a range of drivers and practical initiatives that allow us as an institution to put our staff first:

- Strathclyde's **Values** are People-Orientated, Collaborative, Innovative, Bold and Ambitious – these shape work at Strathclyde both at an institutional and individual level to enable staff to develop a positive and inclusive environment.
- A range of strategic initiatives underpin our approach such as the **People Strategy, Safe360** and the newly launched **Culture of Care**. These demonstrate our strong commitment to stable contracts, fair and equal pay and a safe and secure working environment.
- A strong and inclusive **governance structure** supports all work around research culture and researcher development. The University's Researcher Development & Culture Sub-Committee (RDCSC) is a key decision-making body and offers a place for important, rigorous discussion involving a wide range of units and groups with interests and remits around culture. Linked with other committees and faculty bodies, this structure ensures that research culture activities are integrated with wider research strategies and well embedded within research work.
- Strathclyde has been a member of the **Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)** since 2022 as one of the first UK universities. Through our institutional action plan (2025-28), the University aims to review our research assessment practices and ensure that diverse research outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research are recognised and rewarded.
- A new institutional Wellcome-funded project on '**Cultures of Collaborative Research in a Socially Progressive Technological University**', started in May 2024 allowing Strathclyde to explore how collaborative research and innovation is accessed, rewarded and recognised in greater depth.

- A grassroots stream of positive culture activities is driven by Faculties and Departments within the University. These range from events, workshops and seminars to mentoring schemes, wellbeing initiatives and testing of new systems and practices – thus supporting staff in their day-to-day of conducting research. Good research practice and culture within Departments is further underpinned through an annual **Research Quality Review** process that supports units to develop responsible processes to assess their culture and research activities.

The University's **commitment to the Researcher Development Concordat and other concordats and agreements** supports our research culture in a range of practical ways. Work on these initiatives is carried out in a collaborative and connected manner, ensuring that staff are supported across different dimensions of their research environment.

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)

During Strathclyde's first signatory year of the revised Concordat (2020/2021), a comprehensive Gap Analysis against the Researcher Development Concordat obligations was undertaken consulting all stakeholders. This demonstrated that provision to support the development and employment of Researchers at the University was well established, and in line with the requirements of the original 2008 Concordat. Additional opportunities for new and enhanced activities were identified within areas of expanded scope and strengthened expectations of the revised Concordat.

Implementation of the Concordat focused on five **Key Themes** with aligned **Strategic Objectives**. The implementation of these objectives is underpinned by a multi-year **Action Plan** that is overseen by a robust governance structure, evaluated regularly and revised in line with the EU HR Excellence in Research Award which Strathclyde has held for the past 13 years.

Key Themes and Strategic Objectives

I) Implementation and Governance: *Embed the Concordat implementation and progress across the Institution through effective governance, communication, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.*

II) Research Culture: *Champion and embed a positive Research Culture across the Institution through bold, innovative, ambitious and collaborative approaches.*

III) Researcher Career Development and Progression: *Embed time and recognition for Professional and Career Development activities as integral to the Strathclyde Researcher experience to support Researcher progression into successful, fulfilling careers across a range of employment sectors.*

IV) Managers of Researchers Training and Development: *Support Managers of Researchers to be excellent, effective Leaders and Managers.*

V) Engagement in Policy and Decision-Making: Effectively engage Researchers and their Managers with Policy and Decision-Making to develop a thriving and inclusive research environment.

Cross-cutting all three stakeholder groups of Institution, Researchers and Managers of Researchers at Strathclyde, these objectives touch on the three Concordat pillars through a wide range of activities, including:

Environment and culture:

- Monitoring of data including through piloting new approaches for gathering evidence including development of the Research Culture KPI
- Raising awareness, understanding and engagement of Researchers and Managers of Researchers with research culture concepts
- Providing robust support mechanisms for staff experiencing misconduct and inappropriate behaviours
- Expanding support for wellbeing and mental health for Researchers and their Managers
- Enhancing training & development for Managers of Researchers
- Enhancing engagement opportunities with institutional policy and decision-making

Employment:

- Raising awareness and understanding of rights, responsibilities and expectations for Researchers
- Recognition of contributions beyond research delivery
- Increasing job security for Researchers

Professional development of researchers:

- Embedding development time into research roles through policy and support
- Creating access to professional careers advice and career conversations for Researchers
- Enhancing training & development resources to support roles inside and outside academia
- Expanding networking opportunities for Researchers

Success Measures

Success continues to be measured and monitored in terms of timely achievement of the Action Plan. For each Strategic Objective, this is captured through:

- a. operation of appropriate governance structures and opportunities for stakeholder inputs as well as continued Concordat and Researcher representation within aligned committees and initiatives;
- b. implementation of new provision and supporting resources, including structures to maintain and update new online resources, mechanisms to regularly monitor and report on continuing activities through the RDCSC and RKEC as well as the identification of follow-up actions where needed; and

<p>c. evidence of progress/improvement regarding views and perceptions of staff, collected through a range of quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures, including among others the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS).</p>	
<p>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]</p>	
Environment and Culture (max 600 words)	<p>Institution <i>Including actions supporting Researchers and their Managers</i></p> <p>During the past year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strathclyde 2030 introduced <i>Strategic aim 2.1: Research Culture & Integrity</i> with a commitment to develop an aligned KPI (7: Research Culture). Activity has taken place over the last year to collaboratively develop Research Culture plans that connect and add value to current initiatives which focus on enhancing the experience of our staff as well as to develop this new KPI. • The Researcher Development Concordat Steering Group (RDCSG), which – until August 2024 – strategically oversaw the Concordat implementation, was integrated into the Researcher Development & Culture Sub-Committee (RDCSC; Chaired by Prof Churnjeet Mahn, Deputy Associate Principal (Research and KE)). RDCSC is now responsible for oversight and advice on the Concordat strategy which will enable better connections between the institutional Concordat work and wider culture and development activities. • Strathclyde's third Research Integrity & Culture Week ran in March 2025 and offered 14 events (9 in-person and 5 online). 146 staff members – the majority Researchers and Managers of Researchers – attended

	<p>these events. In addition, several events were co-organised with Heriot-Watt University, the University of Dundee and Queen Margaret University, enabling external research professionals to participate. The Week received positive feedback, with 100% of internal respondents saying they would recommend it to a colleague. The opportunity to network, deepening understanding of Research Culture and Innovation, and the practical knowledge gained were highlighted as key benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strathclyde's ~£1M Wellcome-funded 'Cultures of Collaborative Research in a Socially Progressive Technological University' (Collaborative Cultures) programme started in May 2024. Researchers and Managers of Researchers can engage with the project through: a community of practice that informs the project design; a set of internal funding calls targeting less experienced and under-represented staff to develop research project leadership skills; interventions to recognise and value collaborative activities. • A new Research Cultures Network is being established, led by the Collaborative Cultures team. This Network will be accessible to all staff, including Researchers and Managers of researchers, and will focus on enabling and advancing a positive research culture across the University. <p>Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support monitoring of the Researcher Development Time Policy a Pulse Survey was distributed to Researchers in July 2025, inviting them to report how many of their allocated 10 days dedicated to Researcher Development they had used. 45% of Researchers had used five or more days compared to 39% in 2024 (results taken from Strathclyde's CEDARS Lite 2024 survey). • The Researchers' Group, Strathclyde's dedicated research staff network, continues to provide Researcher representation across central and Faculty-based Research Committees. <p>Managers of Researchers</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strathclyde's new People Hub includes a dedicated section for Managers and Leaders providing easy access to the policies, guidance and support relating to all aspects of their leadership and managerial roles. • Development opportunities to support Managers of Researchers develop positive and inclusive cultures within their teams are embedded within our Development Programmes. In 2024/25, new opportunities were added relating to Research Integrity and Health and Wellbeing for Managers.
Employment (max 600 words)	<p>Institution <i>Including actions supporting Researchers and their Managers</i> Activities to support the recruitment, employment and management of Researchers are well embedded through long-term implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and wider Strategic commitments such as the People Strategy and the Strathclyde Pledge. During the past year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the University's annual staff appraisal process started in 2023/24, development of a new online appraisal system is underway and scheduled to go live in 2026. Researchers and their Managers have been explicitly consulted and considered within this process. • Effective from 2024, all Departments are required to implement the new departmental diversity recruitment action plans for all vacancies at Grade 6 and above. This has been introduced as a support mechanism to ensure staff apply best practice when recruiting Researchers. In 2025, a video resource will be disseminated, highlighting the importance of these action plans and how to effectively use them. • Strathclyde is a co-lead organisation for the UK CoARA National Chapter through which we are driving forward responsible practices for research assessment for our Researchers and Managers of Researchers. In 2024, an internal working group was established to develop a Responsible Research Assessment Framework and action plan, informed by a Gap Analysis identifying institutional challenges and opportunities. Awareness for research assessment reform has been raised </p>

	<p>through internal communications, including a dedicated internal page, and a hybrid panel discussion exploring future priorities for responsible research assessment (91 attendees).</p> <p>Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of the Concordat and other researcher-specific benefits have been embedded more deeply in recruitment materials and are explicitly mentioned within research staff job advertisements. This will give prospective Strathclyde Researchers a clearer idea of how they will be supported but also raise awareness among Managers recruiting new staff. Communication of the Concordat is now part of the new research staff induction and signposts to the Researcher Development Time Policy internal web page. Researchers are represented in the institutional HR Policy Forum which reviews new and existing HR policies. This ensures that Researcher needs and contexts are appropriately considered as institutional policies and processes are developed. <p>Managers of Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New appraisal online guidance hub has been created with a dedicated section for Managers of Researchers to provide support in managing performance, development and career conversations. The People Hub has been developed and launched and features enhanced materials for Managers to navigate their role in the employment of Researchers.
Professional development (max 600 words)	<p>Institution <i>Including actions supporting Researchers and their Managers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities to support the professional development of Researchers and their Managers are well embedded through long-term implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. In 2024/25 around 300 Researchers (~40% of the total population) engaged with centrally delivered development opportunities. Professional development activities are provided within SPIRAL (Strathclyde Programme in Research and Leadership) and the Strathclyde Supervisor

	<p>Development Programme, which support Researchers and their Managers in their development on topics ranging from people management, leadership and career development to personal effectiveness, publishing research, research funding and research culture. These programmes are delivered in collaboration with units across the university and are continually reviewed and updated. In 2024/25, 39 new events and development opportunities were added to Strathclyde's SPIRAL programme (Strathclyde Programme in Research and Leadership), the University's key professional development programme for Researchers and their Managers, including new events on research integrity and culture, and the new Transitioning Beyond Academia series.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In June 2025 applications opened for the new Strathclyde Chancellor's Associate Programme which will provide bespoke support for Researchers to develop their professional profiles and strategic approaches to position themselves competitively for academic roles. 82 applications were received for 20 places. • A mechanism to monitor uptake of the Researcher Development Time Policy was introduced in July 2025 in line with development of KPI7: Research Culture. In autumn 2023, Strathclyde's Researcher Development Time Policy was launched to support Researchers in taking at least 10 days professional development time per year, plus additional time for their research identity and leadership development. A Pulse Survey was distributed to Researchers, inviting them to report how many of their allocated 10 days dedicated to Researcher Development they had used. 45% of Researchers had used five or more days compared to 39% in 2024 (results taken from Strathclyde's CEDARS Lite 2024 survey), and 19% had taken 10 or more days in 2025 compared to 17% in 2024. • A dedicated Researcher Career Development Advisor joined Strathclyde in August 2023 and has implemented a portfolio of career development initiatives for Researchers, most prominently one-to-one career coaching sessions. Feedback from this
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	<p>initiative has highlighted increased clarity on career direction, confidence building, tailored strategies, improved leadership, accountability and momentum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new series of workshops has been developed by the Career Development Advisor focusing on Transitioning Beyond Academia. The two in-person workshops and three online workshops attracted 32 attendees in total and feedback for this series has been very positive. • A key focus of the Collaborative Cultures programme is supporting development of research project leadership skills for less experienced and under-represented groups. This involves providing opportunities to lead funded projects with explicit development mechanisms built into projects. <p>Managers of Researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the launch of Strathclyde's Researcher Development Time Policy, guidance was developed and communicated for Managers of Researchers in how to support their Researchers around their development time. This has also included a guide on embedding researcher development time into funding proposals to allow appropriate resource for Researchers on externally funded projects. • New Directors of Research and Directors of Knowledge Exchange Networks were launched in 2024. Meeting quarterly, these act as network-building and practice sharing platforms for Managers of Researchers involved in leadership positions relating to research or knowledge exchange. Following consultation with Network members, role descriptions are being developed to ensure consistency, clarification of responsibilities, and to better understand expectations of a Director of Research or Knowledge Exchange.
<p>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)</p>	
	<p>Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the Researcher Development Concordat at Strathclyde during the past year. A focus of activities has been on communication, initiation of new systems and programmes, and strategic Research Culture initiatives including development of a Research Culture KPI – this approach has allowed us to continue to encourage researcher engagement and work</p>

towards higher levels of awareness of available support, while also tackling some of the more complex areas of the institutional Concordat Action Plan.

Over the reporting period, several key lessons have been learned from undertaking Concordat-related activities which have informed modifications of our Action Plan. We have learned the importance of targeted communication in engagement of our Concordat-related activities. Diverse, audience-specific messaging is essential to sustain engagement with these activities and moving forward we plan to place greater emphasis on tailoring communications to different stages of research careers. By measuring engagement levels across stages or areas of research, we can target specific communities and niches that do not engage with our provisions, rather than improve general awareness alone.

We have also seen the strong impact that bespoke, tailored career support has on researchers. The engagement and positive feedback for the career coaching and the "Transitioning Beyond Academia" series highlights the importance of this support. This will be further developed through the new Strathclyde Chancellor's Associate Programme offering support to post-doctoral researchers looking to develop their professional profiles and strategic approaches to position themselves competitively for academic roles.

Streamlining governance structures has been found to be useful to better bring together complex conversations across the University. Research culture activities are distributed in many different units and this approach allows us to align and coordinate among them; our strategy to work closely with initiatives related to this Concordat and to link action plans across relevant areas (such as with Athena Swan) has been particularly effective. We will continue to strive towards a collaborative, connected approach to ensure Researchers and research culture are central in our institutional work.

Overall, Strathclyde has followed an ambitious, multi-year strategy for the Concordat implementation that recognises the need for longer-term thinking to drive culture change.

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

We will continue to drive forward the five Strategic Objectives for our Concordat implementation strategy, as outlined above. Focus over the next year will be placed in this context on a set of core activities aimed at improving support for Researchers and Managers of Researchers and enhancing the research environment across the University of Strathclyde:

- Following its success in 2024 and 2025, we will further embed the Research Integrity & Culture Week into Strathclyde's annual activities. We will also continue to embed our Researcher Development Time Policy into common practice to ensure longer-term benefits to Researchers and Managers of Researchers.
- Implementing the new Strathclyde Chancellor's Associate Programme aimed at supporting Researchers aspiring to academic careers.

- We will collaboratively lead the coordination of university-wide Research Culture work with Professional Services units and Faculties, supporting the integration of research culture practices into policy and practice. This includes through the development of a Research Culture based KPI, and through the Wellcome-funded Collaborative Cultures Programmes investigating pathways to more collaborative, connected, and sustainable research communities.
- Enhancing resources and support available to Researchers and Managers in a small number of strategic areas, such as equality, diversity & inclusion, policy & decision-making and professional development.

We will also remain actively involved in University-wide initiatives such as the Wellbeing Strategy and the ongoing development of the People Hub and the potential Researcher Online Hub.

Across all of these areas, activity will continue to take place through close engagement with stakeholders, colleagues working in related initiatives and groups, the Concordat governance structure as well as national networks to build well designed activities based on best practice and our stakeholders' needs.

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)

Governance

A strong governance structure ensures input from diverse perspectives and alignment of activities across departments. This includes Professor Tim Bedford (Associate Principal Research and Innovation) as Strathclyde's Senior Academic Concordat Champion supported by Dr Emma Compton-Daw (Researcher Development Manager, OSDU) as the Institutional Concordat Champion and Dr Hollie Jackson Ireland (Researcher Development Officer, OSDU). Strategic oversight and advice on the implementation of the Concordat is provided by the Research Development & Culture Sub-Committee (RDCSC; Chaired by Prof Churnjeet Mahn, Deputy Associate Principal (Research and KE)). The committee meets four times a year with two meetings focused specifically on considering Concordat progress. It reports to the University's Strategic Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) and has representation from all Faculties and Professional Services units currently supporting Researchers, as well as Researchers and Managers of Researchers themselves. Strategic recommendations to guide the University's direction is made by the [Executive Team](#).

This report has been approved through RDCSC, RKEC, the Executive Team and Senate before University Court, our governing body.

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Contact for queries:

This annual report will be analysed by the 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 via the email address listed on the RDC website: www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk.