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

Universities and Research Institutes

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 University of Bath has supported continual improvements to our research culture for the benefit of researchers (and research enablers) at all stages of their career for over a decade. In December 2024, we launched a [Research Culture Action Plan](#) following a period of intense consultation, which focusses on delivery of aims and actions deemed critical by our research community. The Action Plan is centred on 6 six pillars which articulate our long-term aims for Bath's Research Culture. The most relevant four pillars to The Concordat listed below and these remain unchanged from our [2024 report](#).

The Action Plan was approved at University Executive Board and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) – indicating the highest level of buy-in. Actions are owned across the University e.g. by HR, the library, Research and Innovation Services and supported by approximated 4 FTE Research Culture Team, overseen by an Associate PVC Research, and accountable to the PVC-Research.

Collegiality

Creating an environment in which colleagues support each other to succeed. Our aims are:

- we have a thriving and connected research environment where the exchange of ideas and resources is commonplace
- we adopt a 'culture of care' as a policy and practice (including via workloads, clarity on conduct, mutual respect between managers/supervisors and those they manage, and greater psychological safety for people to share their ideas/ feedback)
- we take radical approaches to inclusion and offer practical and proactive support to minoritized communities
- citizenship and generous leadership are valued
- decision makers, and decision-making processes, are accessible, transparent and visible to research-related staff and research students at all levels
- there is parity of esteem and respect for all job families

Career Development

Supporting colleagues to achieve their chosen career paths. Our aims are:

- everyone with a current research-related post (or who aspires to a research-related post) is supported equitably to identify and pursue their chosen career goals in line with a clear business need or institutional research strategy
- we significantly reduce identified pay gaps across key groups e.g. the gender pay gap, the ethnicity pay gap and the disability pay gap
- we reduce precarity

Research Recognition

Recognising and celebrating the widest range of inputs to our excellent research.

Our aims are:

- recognised and rewarded people
- resilient, 'can do' learning culture
- improved research design contributes heavily to our commitment to Net Zero Carbon by 2040 in Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Open Research

Supporting transparency, rigour, and reproducibility of research and valuing different research output types. Our Aims are:

- all staff and research students are aware of, comfortable with, and using a range of Open Research practices where appropriate for their discipline
- open Research practices improve transparency, integrity and trust in our research, and greater academic and societal impact
- we develop leadership in Open Research, and are perceived as an exemplar of good practice and reward

The detailed aims in relation to the remaining pillars (**Research Ethics and Integrity** and **Research Design**) may be found on the [University of Bath website](#).

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*)

The following section includes the most relevant actions from the Research Culture Action Plan (RCAP) in addition to the HREinR Action Plan (HREinR) 2023-2026. The Research Culture Manager and the Researcher Development Manager,

who lead these action plans, meet and discuss them regularly and share support staff – ensuring streamlined delivery and mutual benefit.

Note that given the 2024 Concordat report included the RCAP actions launched in December 2024, these were delivered January-December 2025 and so the same strategic objectives are included.

Environment and culture

Shared objective – HREinR and RCAP

Update the “#Bethechange” bullying and harassment training. Develop Support and Report tool case studies and enhance communications to improve confidence in reporting and reporting outcomes. Monitor changes. Further promote our #NeverOK campaign and ‘Support and report’ tool. Review the data from Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey 2025 regarding bullying and harassment to assess impact, and review with the Research Staff Working Group (RSWG).

RCAP

Review whether research related governance structures are representative of community they serve (to include early career staff).

Publish new Guidelines for Authorship & Acknowledgement - ensure all colleagues, including early career researchers, technical staff, professional services and doctoral students are appropriately acknowledged.

HREinR

Strengthen the consistency in the Departmental Research Staff Lead role within induction to ensure that each member of Research Staff has access to consistent mentoring support. We will ask an institutional question about mentoring in the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey in 2025.

Ensure Research Staff representation on Departmental Research Committees.

Employment

RCAP

Review and consider our reliance on Hourly Paid workers for research.

Review responsible research assessment (RRA) policies and practices and reward a broader definition of research excellence, and update promotions criteria accordingly.

HREinR

Continue with our innovative approach to anti-casualisation through our pilot programme which sees a selection of Research Staff being transferred to open-ended contracts, breaking the connection between research funding and contract type.

RSWG to participate in the Academic Career Progression Framework Consultation to ensure the promotion criteria for researchers are transparent, inclusive and well communicated.

Professional Development of Researchers

Shared objectives – RCAP and HREinR

Establish new academy for postdoctoral researchers - to bring together the information, support, and professional development for our Research Staff to maximise their potential.

RCAP

Update core processes and development opportunities for progression up and between career pathways – making these transparent and readily accessible (to include annual reviews, CPD days and mentoring).

Develop clear guidance for fixed term and non-‘Education and Research’ staff (including research only staff) to be Co-I/PI/named on grants.

Support high quality line management relationships, career and performance discussions by updating line management structures and reducing number of direct reports.

Continue to develop, promote, deliver and review effectiveness of specific leadership development opportunities for minoritised staff of all job families.

Develop our support for setbacks.

HREinR

Continue to increase engagement in career development reviews by managers of Research Staff through an annual, targeted communications campaign.

Continue to deliver career development support through Careers Retreats and 1-1 Career Development support for those seeking careers beyond academia.

Review and deliver “The LEAD Programme 2025” for 16 research staff/early career researchers.

Launch a “Fellowship Academy” to deliver a more flexible programme, tailored to the varying needs of different researchers.

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]

Environment and Culture (*max 600 words*)

RCAP

“Using Research culture funding, the #Bethechange” bullying and harassment training has been updated and the new and much improved #NeverOK online module deemed mandatory for all staff has reached a completion rate of 75.08% (as of November 11th), up from 28% at the end of September. New videos and materials have been developed to personalise and encourage confidence in submissions.

A review was initiated into whether research related governance structures are representative of community they serve (to include early career staff), but results are pending.

New Guidelines for Authorship & Acknowledgement have been launched to improve inclusion and acknowledgement of historically marginalised contributors. The RSWG were consulted on the guidelines prior to launch, and specific training sessions have been organised for ECRs since their launch. The guidance is novel in that, unlike most organisations, Bath now specifies that if an individual has met the first criteria of authorship (a

	significant or substantial contribution to the research) – they should be explicitly invited to join the authorship team. We intend to monitor the extent to which early career, technical, and MSA staff in particular feature as co-authors in papers. We also launched an early call for staff to ‘reimagine spaces’ in their departments for greater collegiality. Several proposals received and four funded. Two have a specific focus on improving connectivity and collegiality amongst research staff and three included ECRs as CIs. HREinR We have continued to promote the University’s ‘Support and report’ tool to research staff. The RSWG discussed the results of the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey 2025 (12%, 21 respondents said they had witnessed or been subject to incidents of bullying and harassment). In September, the Group invited the Deputy Director of HR to discuss the use of the Support and Report tool and the perceptions and challenges that the use of the tool poses for Research Staff. We discussed the vulnerability felt by research staff, trust in the tool and communication. Action was taken as a result to integrate awareness of the Tool. The Researcher Academy welcome email and the induction 1-1s with the Researcher Development Manager all include a link/explanation for research staff about how to use the tool including anonymous reporting. A combined University effort has seen a significant increase in the mandatory
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	#NeverOK training module, as reported above, with a completion rate of 75% at 11th November. A new advice page has been drafted for The Researcher Academy and an article is planned every quarter in Research Staff News to continue to raise awareness. The Chair of the RSWG has worked with Departments to ensure that there is a Departmental Research Staff Lead to support research staff. Terms of reference have been established, and six-monthly meetings provide the opportunity to share good practice. There is a focus for this role to ensure that each member of Research Staff has access to consistent mentoring support. In order to strengthen the consistency of Departmental Research Staff Lead role and ensure that each researcher has access to consistent mentoring support, an institutional question about mentoring was included in CEDARS. This has created baseline data to explore the needs of Research Staff. 60% (104 respondents) didn't have a formal mentor and of those, 60 researchers (1/3) said that they would like a mentor, and another 73 researchers didn't know or felt it wasn't applicable. The RSWG completed a survey of mentoring opportunities in departments to identify areas of good practice. The provision of mentoring has been adopted by the RSWG as a priority action to address in 2026.
<i>Employment (max 600 words)</i>	RCAP We have invested enormous time and resource in the action to 'review and update our responsible research

	assessment (RRA) policies and practices'. Consultation with RSWG, Research Culture Steering Group (RCSG) and all faculty/ School committees has led to Bath becoming a signatory to DORA, updated principles for responsible research assessment, open access guidance to support practical implementation, campaign page, an online training module open to all which were completed in December 2025, but launched in Jan 2026. We also secured approval to make training on RRA mandatory training for frequent assessors (Deans, Associate Deans for Research, and Heads of Department). This work has happened alongside a university-wide initiative to update promotions criteria – which now rewards a broader definition of research excellence (to include citizenship) and provides clearer pathways for promotion for staff at all levels. The criteria will be announced in February 2026 and is expected to come into use in September 2026. We have begun to review our reliance on hourly paid workers, though data reliability has challenged the effectiveness of this review. More work is required to determine the nature and extent of the reliance, and to offer recommendations. HREinR We have continued our innovative approach to anti-casualisation. At the end of 2025, 17 research staff have been transferred to open-ended contracts, breaking the connection
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	between research funding and contract type. Awareness of the Concordat and the opportunity to take up a minimum of 10 days development time has increased. All research staff job advertisements now state <i>“As a member of Research Staff at the University of Bath, you will be encouraged to take up a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year.”</i> This is again communicated to research staff after they have joined the University. They are made aware of this opportunity and are encouraged to invest in their development in a welcome email and in the induction 1-1s with the Researcher Development Manager. Following these induction 1-1s, of those who respond to the feedback question <i>“Following your discussion, are you aware that you can use 10 days per year to support your own development?”</i> 100% of respondents agree (December 2025). The RSWG initiative to improve the clarity of promotion opportunities for research staff has been included in a wider review of academic promotion. The RSWG participated in the Academic Career Progression Framework Consultation in 2025 to ensure the promotion criteria for researchers are transparent, inclusive and well communicated. New guidance will be published early 2026, for implementation in 2026/27 academic year.
Professional development (<i>max 600 words</i>)	Shared objectives – RCAP and HREinR The Researcher Academy was launched in June 2025. This provides a hub of

	resources, support and advice for our research staff. Engagement with researchers has increased – our CEDARS responses doubled from 72 (27%) in 2023 to 173 (52%) in 2025. The 1-1 induction conversations points to all the resources available and bespoke support for each new member of staff. Four months after its launch, The Researcher Academy had had 292 individual visitors and a total of 7180 visits to the site (our average population of researchers is 330). RCAP A new process was approved to simplify the process for Grade 7 and 8 research-only staff to PI/ CI a research grant. The project now requires implementation and will be a focus for 2026. Following a review of line management ratios, the university has set a target to reduce line management ratios to a maximum of 1:10. Work is now being led through HR to work with departments to transform their managerial structures to ensure ratios are appropriate and conducive to meaningful staff reviews/ appraisals and support. A review of leadership training provision was undertaken in 2025 led by our organisational development team. The outcomes highlight that whilst effective, there may be opportunities to consolidate our core offer, and experiment with new offers where we perceive gaps. The final decisions on resource allocation are pending.
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	A web page has been developed to point people to support when they receive a rejection/ setback. Further work is required to ensure this is utilised, and to normalise rejections within academia so that people feel able to try and fail, and seek support when they need it. HREinR The LEAD Programme 2025 was delivered for 15 research staff. Adjustments had been made to the programme following the 2024 evaluation, to include talks/panels by senior leaders (internal and external to the University) and case studies. Evaluation shows a shift in all participants confidence to lead, the programme rated an average of over 4.5 out of 5 and detailed feedback has enabled further adjustments to the programme for 2026. Learning the lessons from 2024, Careers Retreats are held twice a year (November and March). We continue to be supported by externally based alumni and former postdocs who are now in senior industry positions. They provide interview guidance for those transitioning into a career beyond academia. Our 1-1 Careers Discussion are offered at least twice a month with over 84 individual appointments for 30mins-1 hour depending on the nature of the support required in 2024/25. Evaluation of the career discussions will be prioritised in 2025/26. These three initiatives above are supported through our Research
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	England Enhancing Research Culture Fund. PIs are invited to attend an annual online “How to hold a career development discussion with your researcher”. The Researcher Academy provides resources and advice for PIs, using the resources of Prosper to support both new and experienced PIs. The use of these resources will be piloted in 2026 by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The “Fellowship Academy” was transformed from an exclusive programme, into a new resource via the Research and Impact Service SharePoint hub which all staff can access. The resources include examples of successful proposals, how fellowships are reviewed, how to write an application. Those researchers who indicate that they are seeking a fellowship in their one-to-one inductions through The Researcher Academy are sent a link directly to the resources available to them. There have been 39 unique users on The Researcher Academy site (January 2026) and 596 unique users of the Fellowship Academy (June 2025- February 2026).
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. (<i>max 500 words</i>)	
Overall, our lessons include that the first year of RCAP delivery was front-loaded due to resource uncertainty, and very ambitious. In practice many of the actions will take 18 months rather than 12 to complete. However, we have made very meaningful and rapid progress in against most items deemed ‘critical’ in our RCSP– notably including the launch of The Researcher Academy, responsible research assessment reform, and authorship. We have also contributed heavily to	

the new promotions criteria – established one year earlier than expected and due to launch next year. We have also secured approval on a long-outstanding process for Grade 7 and 8 research staff to PI/ CI a grant.

The Researcher Academy has created a step change in the support and resources for research staff, the communication of opportunities available and of greater engagement by research staff as demonstrated through the response to CEDARS 2025. Feedback from research staff who have attended our programmes as part of The Researcher Academy identified “what they wished they had known or done earlier in their postdoc”. This has resulted in a new pilot half day workshop each month to share some of this wisdom and encourage postdocs to take a more strategic approach to their development earlier on in their employment. The workshop will be evaluated and developed further, including reviewing how to make it accessible to research assistants.

CEDARS 2025 shows the demand for mentoring is high. 60% of respondents did not have a formal mentor, and of those 36% would like to have one. Whilst we have created new resources to support researchers find their own mentor, and continue to implement the actions from our induction review, the RSWG have highlighted that the provision of mentors should be addressed as a priority in 2026.

We also recognise that Research Assistants require more applicable support and wish to avoid them feeling excluded as they frequently are not postdoctoral in their level of academic attainment. The co-creation of new resources will take place in the coming year alongside the integration of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework as a career development tool.

Our established programmes and induction have been evaluated thoroughly drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, and they have been adapted accordingly over the last two years. Recognising the challenge, in terms of time needed to invest in effective evaluation, career development initiatives will be prioritised and evaluated next year: including 1-1 career discussions, retreats and online masterclasses.

There has been significant progress on a number of actions which have been ongoing for 5 years within the HREinR Action Plan e.g. agreeing the criteria for assessing the suitability of research staff to be Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator (CI) on externally funded research projects and updating the Code of Practice for the Employment of Research Staff, both of which will be published in 2026. To a large extent, the areas where guidance and clarity have been the focus of actions – the easy wins – have been achieved. Future activities will require more concerted action.

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

With the application to renew our HREinR award in 2026, the key objectives will be revised in September 2026. Our new priorities will form the basis of our future action plan from 2026-2030. We aim complete all remaining actions from our current HREinR action plan 2023-2026 and the following outstanding priorities.

Environment and culture

RCAP

- Develop a 'one stop shop' to support researchers of all career stages to access advice and support on open research, and develop advice and guidance on where open research outputs are best deposited.
- Adopt a policy to ensure inclusion and diversity in all university events – including considerations of how different characteristics and career stages are consulted and represented in the programme.

HREinR

- Monitor the conversion rates of submitted to successful early career fellowships/funding applications.
- Establish active membership, by researchers at different career stages, on the RCSG.
- Introduce bitesize workshops on research ethics and integrity for Research Staff as part of the Researcher Development Programme 2025 and evaluate the impact.
- Increase Research Staff representation on Departmental Research Committees.

Employment

RCAP

- Complete the review on our reliance on Hourly Paid workers for research.
- Launch the updated promotions criteria and process, including additional work to ensure our conventions of reporting (promotions packs) adhere to the updated RRA principles.
- Embed our new principles and guidance on RRA – specifically launching mandatory training for frequent assessors & monitoring uptake, and establishing responsible research assessment working group as a mechanism to support departments with peer review of their update processes.

HREinR

- Heads of Department review data on SDPR/[Career Conversations](#) processes in their Faculty / School and provide feedback to PIs and Research Staff Managers where they have not engaged their staff actively and positively.

Professional Development of Researchers

Shared objectives – RCAP and HREinR

- Continue the delivery of The Researcher Academy, evaluate the career development support for research staff

HREinR

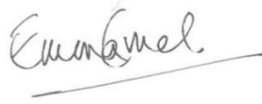
- Promote institutional support for the engagement in a minimum of 10 days professional development for Research Staff by updating the [Code of Practice for Employment of Research Staff](#) to include specific language about expectations for engagement with 10 days professional development.
- Deliver an Alumni project to engage post-doctoral alumni (in careers outside academia) to share experience and provide bitesize mentoring for current postdoctoral researchers. Run postdoctoral specific sessions through the "[Get Connected](#)" Programme.

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*)

The RSWG is comprised of representatives of Research Staff from across our university departments (Research Associates and Research Fellows) who identify priorities for our work on the Concordat and the HR Excellence in Research Action Plan. These priorities and updates on progress are reported to the RSWG every 6 months. The RSWG reports annually to the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and comprised of senior research leaders. Membership of RKEC includes representation of Research Staff, through a Research Associate, who is also the Co-Chair of the RSWG. RKEC reports to the University Executive Board that oversees the implementation of the Concordat.

This report has been written by the Researcher Development Manager and Research Culture Manager, supported by the RSWG Co-chair. It was approved by the RSWG (membership comprised of Research Staff) on 6 July 2026. This is approved by the RSWG 22 May 2026 and the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on 5 May 2026.

Signature on behalf of governing body:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Emma Carmel', with a horizontal line underneath.

Professor Emma Carmel

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research (interim)

Contact for queries: Annali Bamber-Jones (abj30@bath.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