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

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Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage	Researcher Development Concordat Cardiff Metropolitan University
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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 continue to make good progress in developing a strong and sustainable research environment. This is evidenced by the continued investment in our R&I Environment from our Quality Related (QR) funding, which increased by over 80% in REF2021, and our Research Wales Innovation Fund (RWIF) allocation. In 2023, we also received funding from HEFCWs Wales Research Environment and Culture (WREC) funding. This was the first year that any funding has been provided to Welsh Universities to support research environment and culture, which was a positive step forward. However, the very low level of investment received in comparison to Universities in England, was hugely disappointing, with Cardiff Met only receiving circa £13K.

Underpinned by these investments, our research culture continues to grow, with continued structured support being offered via a wide range of initiatives. These include:

- Supporting the 'Women to Reader and Professor' scheme, available to all women academics at any career stage, which has pushed our percentage of women in the Professoriate from well below the HESA benchmark to significantly above it and resulted in a career pipeline of Readers where women outnumber men by more than 2:1. In 2023/24 RIS moved from only offering Action Learning sets to events and workshops focused on Career Stage and CV and Application Clinics.
- Our 'How I became...' lecture series, open to all staff and research students, where research Professors from a range of backgrounds give a recorded 20-minute lunchtime talk followed by 40 minutes of Q&A.
- Our 'Reveal' programme, now in its third year, is a successful targeted, bespoke support package aimed at emerging researchers with the potential to capture significant funding from cherished sources and includes training and mentorship elements.
- Our inaugural Cardiff Met Research & Innovation Week took place between 1st and 5th July 2024. Entitled "Harnessing Research and Innovation for Change", the event included a range of events aimed at both staff and doctoral researchers with the overarching aim of bringing researchers from across the institution together to discuss their research interests and projects, and to foster a greater sense of community centred around R&I.
- In July 2024 we also supported the launch of R:IDEAS a new network designed to cultivate and support researchers at all stages of their career and from all areas of the University. The network is led by academic staff and support by staff from RIS. The network was launched during R&I week and the sessions focused on gathering ideas for future activities, identifying research culture needs and developing aspirations to support our researcher community. In 2024/25 we will continue to support the growth of RIDEAS.
- Cardiff Met has continued to engage with the University Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), publicising all events through our internal events calendar in RIS. We continue to be represented on the Regional and evolved subcommittee for UPEN, ensuring a Welsh post-1992 university voice is part of the ongoing conversation about the research

landscape. Cardiff Met has been invited to take part in a panel to discuss opportunities and challenges of post-92 engagement taking place in the next academic year.

Institutionally we remain committed to our Athena Swan status and in July 2024 Cardiff Met was awarded a prestigious Silver award which only two other Welsh Universities and 37 other Universities hold. We continued to prepare our submission to the Race Equality Charter, which provides a platform to reflect on where we are currently in terms of supporting BAME staff, and areas of improvement. Both initiatives are an important vehicle in our aims of embedding a diverse research culture. We recognise that building an inclusive and supportive Research Culture is a dynamic process. We are committed to embedding good practice as it emerges, to embracing new opportunities, and to continuously reviewing our progress.

We continue to acknowledge that we are on a journey of change to improve our research culture. We recognise that our research environment is still not as diverse as we would like it to be, and that we need to do more to provide a safe and supportive environment that enables individuals or groups within our research community to flourish and feel supported. We use the Concordat as a vehicle to support this change.

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)

Environment and culture

The institution's Strategy 2030 sets out a clear ambition to enable a better Environment and Culture. In our Research & Innovation Thematic Strategy we have committed to increasing research engagement, income, outputs and impact across our entire academic portfolio, and develop an open data culture. In support of our new Strategy, our newly realigned support structures within Research and Innovation Services is ensuring we are better placed to enable these ambitions. The establishment of a new 'Environment' team, specifically aimed at ensuring a more coherent approach to research environment and culture across all of our services to researchers, has enabled some changes to already take place. This team is tasked with measuring and evaluating progress and success against the three pillars of the Concordat.

Employment

As part of our Institutional People Strategy we have committed to using our values of creativity, innovation, inclusivity and trust and our behaviours of leadership, courage, accountability, and agility, to provide the framework to attract, recruit, develop and retain our people to reflect our diverse communities, investing in building the skills and attributes needed to work equitably with individuals and groups of all backgrounds in Wales, the UK and globally. Specifically in relation to Researchers, we aim to achieve this by ensuring recruitment, selection and career progression at all levels are aligned to our EDI values. We achieve this by:

- Proactively using a wide variety of resources, platforms, and networks to promote and advertise our roles across networks and communities.

- We advertise flexible working where the job supports it and use inclusive language in all our literature and communications in both Welsh and English. We encourage applications from candidates and provide information for individuals looking to work in the UK.
- All our selection panels undergo recruitment and selection training and also an unconscious bias e-module. Both the training and this e-module is now mandatory for staff who are on a panel. We ensure panels are diverse in gender, with the aim of having a broad spectrum of characteristics including ethnicity and disability.
- To reduce unconscious bias in the recruitment process, personal demographic information is removed from applications to allow for anonymous shortlisting (otherwise known as blind shortlisting). Where the University does require academic CV, or other form documentary evidence, candidates are notified and encouraged to remove personal information.
- We remain committed to our Disability Confident Accreditation and the Armed Forces Covenant by ensuring that candidates who either declare a disability, or that they are part of the armed forces community and meet the essential criteria for the role are interviewed.

Professional Development of Researchers

We will continue to support the Professional Development of Researchers pillars by delivering the following:

- developing a high-performance research environment where time, space and support is given to research;
- a comprehensive R&I staff development programme to support the 10 days of Professional Development for our Target group;
- a schedule of funding calls to support R&I projects of all sizes, and academics at all career stages.

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.

Environment and Culture

The following is a summary of the actions taken through our 2023/24 Implementation Plan.

- In March 2023 we published and translated our 2023 Annual Report to the Board of Governors on the University website.
- We continue to progress our application to the Race Equality Charter.
- Work has begun on an Introduction to Research 'induction' event that will be offered to all new and existing target staff ensuring researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.
- Approval has been received at Academic Board for a new progression pathway to be developed supporting progression from: Research Assistant > Senior Research Assistant > Research Associate > Research Fellow > Senior Research Fellow. A competency framework to support the roles has been developed to support on-going work in this area into next year.
- Effective line management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent is provided as mandatory training via Manage@Met programme for all line managers which includes modules on wellbeing, equality and

diversity and coaching approach to leadership. As of August 2024 100% of managers were enrolled on the programme with 69% over half-way through.

- In the 2024 staff survey 86% agreed that their line manager is open and approachable a 2% increase since 2022.
- The 2024 staff survey found that 65% of people who responded say that their Health and Wellbeing are supported in the University with 22% giving a neutral response and 14% negative. Almost three quarters of people feel they can access support which will help them positively, and the vast majority of people feel safe whilst carrying out work activities. Overall, the Health and Wellbeing theme is 74% (+7pp) on HEI benchmark and (+5pp) against 2022 survey. Wellbeing is mentioned throughout the free text responses, with the majority of comments mentioning it in a positive way and feeling that their wellbeing is supported at Cardiff Met, not just in terms of personal wellbeing and work life balance but also in terms of training and support networks.

Employment

- The Concordat remains a main feature on internal and external website helping ensure that relevant staff are aware of the it.
- UKRIO Research Integrity Training course offered to all staff. 86 Staff registered to undertake training and 23 completed the course. (staff have 12 months to complete the course).
- The 2024 Performance & Development review period which ran from May to September 2024 had a completion rate of 97% with a number of Schools and Directorates hitting 100%.
- Manage@met covers EDI and wellbeing (2 specific session for managers for both team wellbeing and iACt for managers) plus there is MHFA and iACt training for staff.
- We have an Ethical Research module that is offered to all staff.

Professional development

The 2024 All Staff Survey found that 68% of our staff reported receiving the training and development needed to do their job well, while 75% (+2% since 2022) responded positively to the statement that their line manager supports their career development. In total, 49% (-8% since 2022) responded positively that their career development aspirations are being met. While this is 3% above the external benchmark, its decrease confirms that more work is needed here.

Our 2023/24 Implementation Plan committed us to developing the opportunities we provide to staff to ensure that the institution was supporting the implementation of this pillar in the following ways:

- Our 'Reveal' programme, is a successful targeted, bespoke support package aimed at emerging researchers with the potential to capture significant funding from cherished sources and includes training and mentorship elements. A total of 17 academic staff have now successfully completed Reveal.
- Our inaugural Cardiff Met Research & Innovation Week took place between 1st and 5th July 2024. The week-long event attracted academics, industry professionals, and Doctoral Researchers, boasting over 700 session registrations. The event kicked off with inspiring speeches from the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Rachael Langford, Abi Phillips (Welsh Government Innovation), Heledd Morgan (Office for the Future Generations

Commissioner), and Gareth Berry (Cardiff Capital Region). Prof. Diane Crone and Mark Lester presented the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) report, emphasizing the importance of aligning research publications and keywords with the SDGs. The "Developing Effective Collaborations" event saw a fantastic turnout from internal and external delegates. This session provided an insightful overview of various collaboration types and support mechanisms, with motivating talks from academics and industry representatives. The "Ingenuity: Lightning Talks" session featured 12 academics delivering dynamic, 9-minute TED-style presentations on their research. Attendees were exposed to the diversity of projects happening across the University, many of which showcased significant interdisciplinary overlap. R:IDEAS, a new network for researchers, was launched with enthusiastic participation from over 80 attendees across both campuses, promising exciting future developments for the network. The Doctoral Researchers' Group conference achieved the best attendance yet.

- We participated in the Welsh Universities Research Leadership Programme with staff being provided with Research Leadership training through a series of virtual sessions delivered by senior academics and specialists from across Wales.
- We have launched our Collaboration Kick-Off series. Which provides opportunities for our researchers to explore new pathways and research connections. The talks allow researchers to meet exemplary research active academics and hear about their skills and experience and the collaborations they are keen to set in motion. 5 talks were delivered during the reporting period.
- Career Development support is provided on a coaching basis by the Staff Development Officer and offered as an open opportunity for anyone to engage with.
- Bespoke training sessions were developed in consultation with Schools. Sessions delivered included 'Developing a Research Plan' and 'Being strategic and Productive with your research time'.
- Cardiff Met has continued to engage with the University Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), publicising all events through our internal events calendar in RIS. In October 2023, Cardiff Met co-hosted an online Masterclass with the University Policy Engagement Network (UPEN) titled "Building and Sustaining Relationships with Policymakers". Prof David Lloyd reflected on his experience and provided key insights from his career advising on issues affecting the Welsh Food and Drink sector. Dr Chantelle Haughton provided an overview of the Welsh Government funded Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning (DARPL) project. Both David and Chantelle provided insights and reflections to UPEN members from across the UK. The Research and Innovation Officer – Policy has run 3 training workshops in the last year to help academics and doctoral students learn the fundamentals of policy engagement. The R&I officer had also met with numerous academics to provide bespoke support to those further along their policy engagement journey, this has led to an increase in written responses to the Senedd and Cardiff Met academics being called to give oral evidence at the Senedd/UK Parliament. The R&I officer continues to horizon scan and send out engagement opportunities across the university and they have recently joined the Senedd Knowledge Mobiliser Network, along with the University Impact Development Manager.
- We continue to participate in the Welsh Crucible Programme and actively promote it to our researchers. The Staff Development Officer has also taken over the Institutional Lead for the Welsh Crucible programme ensuring that in addition to the generic marketing of the

programme that staff are targeted individually and also input is provided on the design of the programme taking into account needs Cardiff Met academics.

- We have also built on the success of our series of career talks entitled 'How I became...' which involve members of our professoriate giving an overview of their career path to date, their experiences, the benefits of moving between, and across employment sectors, the role of mentors and training secondments and key career advice they would give researchers. 3 Professors shared their stories during the reporting period and all talks are available to view as You Tube videos for staff to engage with at their pleasure.

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. The CIG and the work carried out to date has allowed us to gauge our progress to date and understand where we are situated. This has provided an annual benchmark from which to build.
- ii. Having re-aligned the planning and reporting phases so that reporting occurs on the anniversary of our membership as per requirements, while planning aligns with academic years has been positive and we will continue to report in this way.
- iii. The on-going appointment of the Staff Development Officer has given us necessary additional resource through which to drive change.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period

The Staff Development Officer will prioritise the progression and promotion route for our target route as a priority. Reflecting the most important issues that were identified in the focus groups.

RIS will further develop the Research and Innovation induction to ensure researchers are aware of the support and training available to them to aid their career development, including internal funding opportunities and staff development activities.

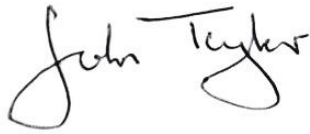
With a strength in activities reported under the Professional Development pillar which will continue in the forthcoming year, focus will be given to activities under the Pillars of "Environment and Culture" and "Employment" in the forthcoming academic year.

Please provide a brief statement describing your institution's approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body

This report was reviewed and approved by:

- i. The Institutional Concordat Implementation Group on 29 November 2024.
- ii. The University Research & Innovation Committee on 04 December 2024.
- iii. Academic Board on 05 March 2025 (to note).
- iv. The Strategic Planning and Performance Committee on 20 March 2025 (a subcommittee of the Board of Governors)
- v. Board of Governors on 03 April 2025

Signature on behalf of governing body:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Taylor'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'John' and the last name 'Taylor' clearly distinguishable.

John Taylor

Chair of the Board of Governors

Contact for queries: Ymorgan@cardiffmet.ac.uk

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