

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

Name of Institution	Wrexham Glyndwr University
Reporting period	2022-2023
Date approved by governing body	10.03.23
Date published online	04.04.23
Web address of annual report	<a href="https://glyndwr.ac.uk/research/our-research/researcher-development-concordat/">https://glyndwr.ac.uk/research/our-research/researcher-development-concordat/</a>
Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage	<a href="https://glyndwr.ac.uk/research/our-research/researcher-development-concordat/">https://glyndwr.ac.uk/research/our-research/researcher-development-concordat/</a>
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Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via <a href="mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk">CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk</a>	[insert date sent to secretariat]

**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.**

The University's commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers underpins the engagement with, and the support offered and provided to all researchers: staff and students. By making all academic staff beneficiaries of the Concordat and representing development throughout the career lifecycle, we will further strengthen our commitment to research development.

Since signing the Development Concordat the Board of Governors will have oversight and approval of all annual reports and action plans. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Concordat with formal governance oversight from the Research Committee. The Research Committee's membership includes senior managers, research leaders, contract research staff, and postgraduate research student representation.

Since becoming signatories the University has formed a Research Development Concordat Working Group consisting of 10 academics (2 professors, 1 principal lecturer, 3 senior lecturers, 3 lecturers, 1 Research Assistant) and 8 professional services staff. The Working Group has direct operational responsibility of the Development Concordat which is overseen by the University's Research Office and chaired by the Associate Dean for Research/Postgraduate Development Tutor-Professor Mandy Robbins.

**Institution's strategic objectives and implementation plans for delivering each of the three pillars of the Concordat**

The following strategic objectives have been taken from the University's original strategic plan when signing the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Environment and culture

Wrexham Glyndŵr is committed to creating an inclusive and transparent work environment that effectively promotes a positive research culture, which in turn will sustain our ambitions to increase research capacity and capability. The University will dedicate time to reviewing and actively promoting research integrity and research best practice. Alongside the successful Open House for Research series, the research office will pilot Research Coffee Mornings, Culture

Cafés and a Public Lecture Series over the next two years for all staff and students. The aim is to create a culture where researchers can contribute to the discussion on the challenges they face, review what we are already doing well, and share more widely what a better culture would look like, whilst promoting their own research identity. Furthermore, many of our actions for the next two years include how to effectively communicate to our research community, with a plan to further increase a social media presence, complete several social media campaigns, and relaunch both our external and internal webpages. Engrained in this is a dedication to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our staff and students. As we continue to progress towards the Advance HE's Race Equality Charter, the University will dedicate time and resources to create effective tools and training opportunities for an inclusive working and research environment.

### Employment

The University strives to create an environment where researchers are recruited, employed, and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions. The focus is to continue to develop our induction process to strengthen communication and engagement surrounding research when induction takes place to embed a feeling of a research culture and community at the early stages of recruitment. Furthermore, over the next two years, we plan to further promote our future leaders' programmes and review any possible research management schemes. The University is committed to engaging all researchers, at any stage of their career, in relevant policymaking and decision-making conversations.

### Professional Development of Researchers

Strategically the University's priority is to *Develop research capacity and capability of the university by developing its staff*. Our commitment to the principals of Concordat is to continue to implement and promote specific time and dedication to staff and student development and training needs. The Research Office wants to create a process of defining and recognising what professional development is for researchers and how these activities can be recognised within the university workload allocation model. Communication strategies have been implemented in our most recent action plan, for example, a campaign promoting research development. One of our main priorities over the next two years is to work with researchers and Research Centres/Institutes to build our research visibility, research identity and presence as a University. Furthermore, we hope to increase and promote contract research and consultancy within our local and regional areas.

**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 University's priority and target within the principle of Environment and Culture is to create a space for researcher to discuss research, promote collaboration and create a space where researchers can showcase their achievements and success stories. This year we have launched 'Research Coffee Mornings' which take place once a month in the Research Office. The coffee mornings are open for all staff to come along and informally discuss research with peers and the research office, every third month the research office have a closed coffee morning dedicated to research students, post docs and research assistants. This year the University also launched a public lecture series: [Glyndwr Talks](#) to help grow their research platform and identity whilst creating opportunities to engage with the public and key stakeholders. Three Public Lectures have taken place in 2022-23 with attendance increasing at each- full analysis of attendance and feedback will be completed at the end of the academic year.

Since becoming signatories the University has dedicated time to promoting the principles of the Development Concordat, the institutions [action plan](#) and the workings of the Research Development Concordat Working Group. The working group has produced a [webpage](#) dedicated to the Concordat which includes updates on our actions and an introductory [video](#). A more comprehensive content strategy is currently under review to continue the promotion and the Universities commitment to the Concordat internally and externally.

The University continues to be dedicated to mental health, wellbeing and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. Sixty-six Mental Health First Aid Champions are now in place, this number continues to increase with planned additional cohorts scheduled for the remainder of the academic year. We also have 6 Menopause Champions now in place to support the wellbeing of our staff. Within the last year we have arranged a number of Menopause Cafes providing the

opportunity for staff to meet, chat, and share supportive resources and suggestions to help those going through the menopause. We now have an appointed member of staff who specialises in helping organisations to improve their menopause support – with place for her to deliver a number of training sessions to support staff, these will be aimed at line managers, a separate session providing general information for anyone going through the menopause or anyone who support someone who is going through it and a more intensive training programme aimed at the Menopause Champions, to enable them more in-depth knowledge and understanding to support their role more fully.

The University has committed to the Advance HE’s Race Equality Charter, appointing a dedicated Race Equality Charter Project Lead to steer required actions to support the University’s journey towards becoming an anti-racist university. A programme of development commenced in 2022 – with a number of guest speakers and themed sessions relating to race woven into key development days and conferences. The Race Equality Self-Assessment Team have attended Race Equality Training and member of the Executive Leadership Team are due to attend their training on the 1st Feb, this will be followed by an e-learning race equality module that all staff must complete and tailored sessions delivered to all staff throughout the next 2 years.

<u>Employment</u>	<p>In our first year of being a signatory the University has focussed on the induction process for researchers. A 5-question consultation was circulated to a cross-section of researchers at different levels. The results of the consultation were written up as a report and shared with the Concordat Working Group. A small sub- group was put together to take these actions forward. 50% of respondents felt that the most effective and supportive approach would be a face-to-face induction whilst the other 50% of respondents noted that an online package would be beneficial to supplement the one-to-one session, but that this should be considered as an extra resource, not a replacement. The Working Group are therefore taking forward a three-stage induction process; face-to-face induction with new starters delivered by the Head of Research Services, an online induction package for researchers to complete after the face-to-face presentation and a department line managers checklist for new starters. The consultation process also asked what information researchers would want to know when starting at the University, all of these have been considered and will be included in the induction process.</p> <p>To support managers of researchers to see what further guidance might be required to support the process when discussing research activities and development with researchers a survey went out to all managers of researchers. The survey focussed on the kind of research support they currently provide to staff and what guidance would be valued from the Research Office and HR to further support managers. The responses are currently under review which will be reviewed by the Concordat Working Group.</p>
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<p><u>Professional development</u></p>	<p>The Concordat Working Group considered it was important to provide a definition for 'professional development'. A guidance document 'what is professional development' has been produced by the concordat working group, the research element of this has been mapped against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF). The Concordat working groups next steps are to take this forward with Human Resources, Academic Development, and the Workload Allocation Steering Group.</p> <p>Researcher training events are now open for all research staff and students at the University. A programme of in-house training events was produced at the beginning of the year and circulated to all staff and students. A new communications strategy was implemented to support attendance to these sessions. Compared to the previous year (2021/22) the Research Office has doubled the amount of training sessions for 2022/23. New sessions have been added based on previous feedback forms from the previous year. Research Impact and Research Ethics workshops were added due to the feedback found in individuals Personal Research Plans. A full analysis of feedback and attendance will be completed at the end of the training year.</p> <p>In 2021- 22 the Research Office received and awarded thirteen 'Conference Contribution Awards'. Eleven were received from staff and two from PhD students. A feedback form has been introduced for staff and students to detail their experience of receiving the funding and how this has impacted the development of their research, what potential outcomes have been generated and if there are any potential follow ups and future plans. Individuals who receive the funding are also asked to attend Open House for Research. Feedback from one member of staff this year included.</p> <p>"I think such opportunities are very important to improve our visibility as an emerging research organisation".</p>
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An email consultation went to staff and students about the Development Awards, it was reported that more communications, guidance, and example application forms would be useful. Furthermore, the consultation reported that other types of development awards to encourage research development would be valued. Based on this consultation the Research Committee approved a new Research Development Award process and application form to be introduced, which is currently in progress.

Wrexham Glyndŵr University is a member of *The Wales Research Development Concordat Network* which is made up of representatives from all Wales Universities. To recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, the network is collaborating to a host a series of career stories by researchers who started their careers at Welsh institutions and have since gone on to do other interesting and exciting things. This series will give our researchers the opportunity to hear about the career trajectories of those who started their careers in Welsh HEIs and will showcase the ways in which our HEIs contribute to the development of a highly skilled and talented workforce for Wales, the UK and beyond. The purpose of these events is to give early career researchers an insight into the great variety of career options alongside the “traditional” academic route and are aimed at post-graduate and post-doctoral researchers. Glyndŵr will be hosting the final webinar of the series in May 2023.

**Lessons learned & Challenges**



Many of our success measures are based on survey responses either internally or through the CEDARs survey. As our internal staff survey is circulated every 2 years and the CEDARs 2023 survey has not yet been released, it is challenging to measure the success of our ongoing targets and actions. Moving forward the Concordat Working Group will investigate effective success measures that can be recorded promptly to show the effectiveness of our actions.

A focus for the Concordat Working Group and the Research Office has been based on effective communication of the Concordat and of the research opportunities available for staff and students. The Research Office will continue to work with other University departments including Human Resources and Communications & Marketing to ensure the principles and commitments to the Concordat are taken forward as an institution.

### **Looking Forward**

We have made great progress in the last year with our two-year action plan and our focus is to continue to progress our actions and identify new developments and opportunities as a Concordat Working Group.

In the last year we have run several consultations to ensure our researchers and their managers are considered key stakeholders and give them the opportunity to engage with relevant decision-making initiatives. In the next year we want to ensure the feedback and responses we have received are taken into consideration as we move forward with our action plan. We want to conclude and gather the success measures of the actions we have already taken forward. In year two of becoming signatories we will focus on the remaining actions of our action plan, including.

- Ensuring that all institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are hosted in an accessible platform for all staff and students.
- Complete a review and gap analysis of the Concordat for Research Integrity and establish an online Research Ethics and Research Integrity training course available for all staff and students.
- Create dedicated training for managers of researchers in Equality & Diversity, Mental Health & Wellbeing and Research review meetings.
- Complete a review and introduce a new Personal Research Plan process where researchers can include a development plan for the upcoming year.

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

The annual report is written by the Head of Research Services and Chair of the Concordat Working Group, who is also the Associate Dean for Research and Postgraduate Research Tutor. Updates on the progress of actions being taken forward included in the report are discussed with the Research Office, Human Resources, and the Concordat Working Group. The report is presented to the Research Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research for approval before being passed to the Board of Governors for approval.

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Contact for queries:

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](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk)  
[www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk)