

Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange: Researcher Development

A guide to the Researcher Development Concordat

Context: what are concordats?

Concordats are part of the landscape of frameworks and good practices that contribute to shaping a positive research culture and environment for UK research.

This guide focuses specifically on the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**.

Other concordats and initiatives also play an important role in shaping research culture and environment and supporting the ongoing development of researchers. These include:

- The [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)
- The [Concordat on Open Research Data](#)
- The [Knowledge Exchange Concordat](#)
- The [Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research](#)
- Advance HE's [Athena Swan Charter](#) (gender equality) and [Race Equality Charter](#)

Periodic review of the various concordats and agreements is undertaken to help inform their ongoing use and development.

Commitment to and progress with actions to support the research concordats also contributes to assessment for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) - and there will be an increased emphasis on activity related to people, culture and environment for REF 2029.

About the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

- The [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#), commonly known as the Researcher Development Concordat, was established in 2008 and revised in 2019.
- Its aim is to improve employment and support for researchers and increase the appeal and sustainability of researcher careers in the UK.
- The Concordat is a **shared responsibility** between researchers, their managers, their employers (institutions) and research funders.
- It sets out the conditions required to create the best **culture for researchers to thrive**, identifying **good working practices** and highlighting the different **responsibilities** of institutions, funders, researchers and managers of researchers.
- It is supported by Vitae's [Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\)](#), which describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers at different phases of their development.

Defining principles

The Researcher Development Concordat has **three defining principles**:

- **Environment and culture** - *excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture.*
- **Employment** - *researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions.*
- **Professional career development** - *professional and career development are integral to enabling researchers to develop their full potential.*

Environment and culture

Healthy **working environments** attract and develop a more diverse workforce, impact positively on individual and institutional performance, and enhance staff engagement. This principle recognises that

a proactive and collaborative approach is required between all stakeholders, to create and develop positive environments and cultures in which **all researchers** can flourish and achieve their full potential.

Please see p2-3 of the Concordat for more details about the specific 'environment and culture' responsibilities of funders, institutions, managers of researchers and researchers. These include awareness and understanding of the Researcher Development Concordat and responsibilities around health and wellbeing, research integrity and equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Employment

The provision of **good employment conditions** for researchers has positive impacts on researcher wellbeing, the attractiveness of research careers, and research excellence. This principle recognises the importance of fair, transparent and merit-based recruitment, progression and promotion, effective performance management, and a good work-life balance. All stakeholders need to address long-standing challenges around insecurity of employment and career progression, ensuring equality of experience and opportunity for all, irrespective of background, contract type, and personal circumstances.

Please see p4-5 of the Concordat for more details about the specific 'employment' responsibilities of funders, institutions, managers of researchers and researchers. These include recruitment and selection, induction, and performance management.

Professional career development

Researchers must be **equipped and supported** to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse global research environment and employment market. This principle recognises the importance of continuous professional and career development, particularly as researchers pursue a wide range of careers.

Please see p6-7 of the Concordat for more details about the specific 'professional and career development' responsibilities of funders, institutions, managers of researchers and researchers. These include career development discussions and planning, leadership development and engagement in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year.

Our commitment to the Researcher Development Concordat

- The University of Huddersfield is signed up to the Researcher Development Concordat, demonstrating our commitment to the three principles.
- The University's HR Excellence in Research Award recognises our institutional actions plans and progress reports on how we are delivering against these principles.
- Our University Research Careers and Oversight Group (URCOG) is responsible for the action plan.
- Read more about our action plans and how we are [supporting the career development of researchers](#).

Researcher development at the University of Huddersfield

- Development support for academic staff researchers (postdocs and above) is coordinated centrally through the Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE).
- We encourage our researchers to use Vitae's [Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\)](#) as a tool to help recognise areas of strength, identify skills gaps and prioritise areas for development.
- A range of opportunities are available to support [researcher development](#), linked to the RDF and our Huddersfield development themes.