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

Universities and Research Institutes

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Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development	Kirstie Skelton Clarke Kirstie.skeltonclarke@dmu.ac.uk
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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)*

Diversity of staff

DMU is a hugely diverse institution, which we believe is a significant strength. Out of a total of 1771 academic staff, 53% are female, 34.7% have told us they are minority ethnic, 80.6% are on permanent contracts, 48.3% work part-time and 34.8% are below the age of 40. We also have a high number of ECR colleagues, with 231 currently employed at DMU.

DMU as the Empowering University

Clearly it is not sufficient to simply know our staff profile better, we need to actively look for ways in which we can use the data to inform positive interventions and support structures to enable our staff to reach their full potential.

With this in mind, the central theme of the University strategy is of DMU as the empowering University, co-created with our stakeholders, involving more than 1,000 participants, including staff, students, governing body and key partners.

Our strategy is delivered through four key pillars: Learning for Life, Knowledge Creation, Empowering People and Partnerships with Purpose. Within Knowledge Creation, there is a clear emphasis on and commitment to research excellence and researcher development and leadership and within the Empowering People pillar, championing diversity and enabling staff development are key elements. Collaboration through campus collectives is also a key deliverable in the Empowering People Pillar

REC – Silver Award

In 2023 DMU became the university in the UK to receive a silver award in the Race Equality Charter (REC), a programme run by Advance HE, which aims to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education. This award was in recognition of our work to improve equality and diversity.

Athena Swan

We are holders of the Athena Swan Bronze award. Some of the work we have undertaken which advances gender equality includes:

- Reviewing policies, in particular those promoting work-life balance and flexible working.
- Introduction of a women's network.
- Introduction of programmes such as 100 Black Female Professors Now, and the Vice Chancellor's Promoting Women scheme for aspiring female Professors.
- Actively encouraging colleagues to take part in the Aurora Women's Leadership and the Senior Women's Leadership development programmes.
- Our shared parental leave policy allows fathers (or partners, including same sex partners) access to the same level of enhanced pay during shared parental leave
- Women are actively encouraged to apply for internal pay progression and promotional opportunities.

Stonewall

DMU is one of Stonewall's Top 100 employers due to our inclusive policies, practices and culture.

Disability Confident

DMU has been recognised as a 'Level 2 Disability Confident Employer' following work we have undertaken such as:

- Guaranteed interviews to disabled people who meet the minimum job criteria
- Ensuring flexibility in our assessments
- Running internal development opportunities
- Promoting a culture of being Disability Confident, for example, through our staff network and events

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

Our objectives are as follows:

• Increase awareness of the Concordat.

• Continue to raise awareness of institutional policies and practices and ensure these policies are transparent, equitable and inclusive.

• Further our understanding of research culture and the research environment.

• Promotion of a healthy working environment.

• Improve inclusion and equality for all staff.

• Ensure our researchers act in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct.

• Encourage staff to get involved in policy development.

• Develop our understanding of destinations of our research staff.

Actions to deliver on objectives

• Providing information about the Concordat.

• Further embed the Concordat into the Researcher Training Working Group.

• Wellbeing initiatives across the University.

• Heighten awareness of wellbeing support and ensure people managers know how to support colleagues.

• Support and development for people managers at DMU, under the new Leadership and Management framework.

• Maintaining the Athena Swan Bronze Award and working towards Silver.

• Maintaining the REC Silver Charter, Disability Confident Employer status and remaining as a Stonewall top 100 employer.

• Review University data to assess representation, progression and inclusion to shape future initiatives.

How we will measure success:

• Staff Engagement survey.

• Results of Athena Swan and other external awards and audits.

• Analysis of University data.

Employment

Our objectives are as follows:

• Provide effective inductions.

• Ensure transparent recruitment and recognition processes.

• Support and ensure effective line management.

Actions to deliver on objectives:

• Continue to deliver hiring manager and recruitment panel member training.

• Continuing to work towards the elimination of the gender pay gap.

• Delivery of the Academic Promotions Framework for all academic staff.

• Supporting line managers to hold goal focussed My Progress conversations.

• Support and development for leaders and managers at DMU, aligned to the Leadership and Management Standards and Behaviours framework.

How we will measure success:

• Monitor and report on engagement in training.

• Analysing recruitment, staff, and promotion data.

• Survey data.

Professional Development of Researchers

Our objectives are as follows:

• Ensure our ECR colleagues have tailored support and interventions to make the next step in their research careers.

• Provide targeted support for researchers to maximise grant success.

• Provide clear training and development pathways, delivered flexibly, all year round, for researchers at all levels.

Actions / initiatives to deliver on objectives

- C-SMART (Cross-School Mentoring and Research Training)

The overarching aim for this programme is to harness our researchers' potential and further their reputation in research, business, innovation and KE. Delivered through a combination of mentoring opportunities, external agency training and in-house support sessions, DMU will support academic researchers to make a step-change in their research or commercial / KE ventures and help them develop strategies for success to guide them through their research careers.

To support this, we are creating a one-stop shop platform to find supporting digital resources, following sessions. We will also track attendance and outcomes data as well as qualitative feedback.

- UKRI accelerator programmes (DMU internally funded and delivered provision)

DMU provides in-depth support to academics to develop and submit grants for specific funding councils. The aim is to give colleagues greater understanding of what is required, support them to hone bid writing skills, provide support and ultimately increase their grant income.

- Researcher Development programme

We have a free of charge, year-round flexible researcher development programme offered centrally.

We also have a drive to enhance all colleagues' digital, skills and also leadership and management skills and competencies (based on the DMU Leadership and Management framework).

- Future Research Leadership programme has been approved as a successor to ARC (Advancing Research Careers) and will run in early 2025.

- Supervisor recognition

We will for the first time this year recognise and reward excellence in supervision, recognising this vital role that many of our researchers undertake.

How we will measure success:

- Attendance at training and development events, qualitative feedback.
- Grant income.
- Staff surveys.
- Sector benchmarking.

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)*	Institution • We have broadened the remit of the PGR Training Group to include academic staff with the Concordat as its central theme. • We delivered a Research and Innovation festival for the first time in November 2024 and are now planning a follow-up event in September / October 2025. • We have delivered a number of internally funded and internally delivered Accelerator programmes and have more to deliver over the coming months designed specifically to support colleagues with UKRI bid writing to maximise their chances of success. • A new Leadership Programme for all RII Directors, ADRI's and supporting senior research leaders was launched in May 2024 with 17 attendees. This will continue throughout 2025. Additionally, we supported 6 research leaders to attend the Advance HE Research Leadership Programme in May 2024.

- Central training and development programme will be refined into cohort-based training and development pathways.

Academic Managers of Researchers

We have a vast range of support for Academic Managers of Researchers. An illustration of this is the work we are doing in the area of research integrity and professional conduct:

- We have a suite of online training which supervisors and students must complete as part of their induction prior to engaging in research activity. Modules cover research ethics and integrity, with the recent addition of the UKRI online integrity training module.

- There are training resources to support engagement with the ethics review process including online / face to face sessions, and online recordings and quick guides.

- A research systems drop in session has been established to enable ease of contact for people who have queries relating to engagement with research systems.

- Research in partnership with the NHS is a potential area of growth. An in-house training session has been set up to support colleagues who require external REC and HRA approval.

- A campus collective has been set up to evaluate and advise on the emerging ethical issues that are associated with generative AI. Gaps in existing policy have been identified and are being addressed either by the update of existing policy or the implementation of new policy and associated guidance.

- The University wide AI Guidance for Research has just been agreed.

And in other areas:

	• A suite of development opportunities aligned to DMU's Leadership and Management Standards and Behaviours framework including in person workshops, self directed learning materials and self assessment tools. • In addition, RII Director leadership training will continue. • We have recently introduced Anti-racist training for all staff to complete and we will continue to monitor engagement. **Researchers** We delivered our Advancing Research Careers (ARC) programme during the reporting period, which offered opportunities for ECRs and MCRs to develop their research skills and networks to help them move on to the next stage of their career. The 18-month programme, encompassed the following themes were "Building a successful research career", "Engagement and impact" and "Research funding". The follow up to this is the launch of our Future Research Leaders (FRL) programme, whereby delegates who attended the ARC programme will apply via an EOI to move onto the FRL. We have launched the C-SMART programme and will monitor and evaluate its success ahead of any future roll-out, taking on board researchers' feedback and experiences. The DMU UKRI Accelerator programmes which we delivered during this reporting period are hugely well received by colleagues at DMU. As such, here are discussions taking place to assess whether these can be replicated for KE and also doctoral training grant development. We will continue to ensure researchers at all levels are represented on committees and working groups and we will continue to see researchers' input into policy developments.
Employment *(max 600 words)*	Institution

Recruitment

DMU has both a resourcing and safeguarding team and a Talent Development service to provide specialist sourcing support for niche and hard to fill roles at DMU. Completion of In person recruitment and selection training is required for all panel members outlining DMU process, assessment methods and the importance bias free recruitment activity. A panel member pool is available for hiring managers to draw on to ensure panels are diverse and representative.

Talent Development

In 2023/24, a revised approach to appraisal was launched. The MyProgress approach and supporting technology was built on feedback from staff and from exploring modern appraisal approaches in place in other organisations, both within and outside of the higher education sector. MyProgress moves away from three static appraisal review points a year to an approach with the following key features:

- Clear, agile goals that can be changed and added to during the year and which focus on job, development and career goals
- Regular, developmental feedback that focuses on our strengths and areas for development
- Quality conversations that happen during the course of the year, rather than at fixed points in the calendar

Aligned to the MyProgress approach, throughout the year, staff can attend personal development planning workshops which include the completion if a psychometric insights tool and self assessment activities.

In 2023, the Vice Chancellors promoting women programme was launched for female Associate Professes aspiring to be in a Professor role within the next 5 years. The programme includes workshops delivered by the Vice Chancellor supported by the Talent and Organisational Development Team. As part of the programmes, individuals complete a mock promotion application which is sent to external

evaluators for feedback which is subsequently shared back and can be discussed in a 1-1 conversation with the VC. research and innovation pathway is explored as part of the programme. To date 34 Associate Professors have attended the programme with another cohort due to start in March 2025.

Promotions Process

In the 2022/23 academic year, a new academic promotion was launched for both Associate Professor and Professor career pathways aligned to either teaching and learning, knowledge exchange/professional practice or research and innovation. An evaluation and feedback process was undertaken of the new process which informed changes to the 2023/24 process. The 2024/25 is process is currently live. Guidance, application forms and CV templates are available to staff. Staff have the opportunity to attend workshops aligned to each of the career pathways prior to making an application.

In February 2024, DMU partnered with EA Inclusion to support the work of an internal taskforce set up to address gender and ethnicity pay gaps. Staff were invited to attend focus groups or to submit their feedback via email. As results of the feedback, a gender and ethnicity pay gaps plan has been scoped with the following areas of focus:

- Promotion and Pay
- Recruitment and Selection
- Inclusive Leadership
- Development Opportunities
- Feedback and Employee Voice
- Work and life events

Academic Managers of Researchers

We are due to follow up on the success of our ARC programme with the launch of our FRL series.

Researchers

	The majority of our academic staff are on permanent contracts: 80.6%; 51.7% work full-time. What we need to understand better is the proportion of those who work part-time who wish and are able to work full-time, so effectively are "under-employed". Fixed-term contracts similarly warrant further investigation as they may allow flexibility for some but be a cause of anxiety to others, due to the precarity of employment and the impact on for example mortgage eligibility.
Professional development *(max 600 words)*	**Institution** As an institution we are investing significantly in our researchers and gaining a clearer focus on what the actions we need to take and the support we need to provide in order to foster a positive research culture. Examples include the significant investment in the UKRI Accelerator and the C-SMART programmes, as well as the Future Research Leaders programmes. The reframing of PGR Training Group to the Researcher Training Group to strategically assess researcher training and development, is a starting point in addressing some of the infrastructure deficits at DMU. **Academic Managers of Researchers** We will continue our in-depth programme of support for Managers and Leaders across the institution (as detailed earlier in the document) including our RII Directors, who will have a significant bearing on the research culture and environment at DMU. **Researchers** We will continue to monitor attendance at training events to ensure researchers are benefiting from their CPD allocation. We shall continue to ask colleagues to suggest new training and development opportunities they would benefit from.

	Alongside this, the Researcher Training Group is tasked with identifying and harmonising provision across all areas within DMU (centrally via the Doctoral College and Researcher Development team, the library and locally within faculties and RIIs) to remove duplication and identify gaps. We are also a member of the British Academy Early Career network and promote relevant opportunities to our ECRs across relevant disciplines.

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)*

This report is set against a backdrop of unprecedented financial challenges currently facing universities across the UK, and DMU is no exception.
We know that bold and decisive action will be called for in order to deliver against changing expectations of higher education, not only amongst our students but amongst our research staff who are embracing opportunities to work more widely with the community and industry.

DMU is embracing the five challenges outlined by Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson, namely to improve access for disadvantaged backgrounds; play a greater civic role; improve teaching standards; re-examine business models and make a better, stronger contribution to economic growth.

The creation of seven new Research and Innovation Institutes (RIIs) at DMU will position us as an agile organisation with a strong civic ethos, and one which delivers the innovative solutions which will grow the economy locally, regionally and nationally, collaborating with other research institutions and industry partners. The current reporting period has therefore been a challenging time for HEIs across the sector. At DMU, significant institutional energy and focus has been centred on the implementation of block teaching, undergraduate recruitment and the expansion of DMU overseas. However, there have been great strides forward for research at this institution creating a strong research infrastructure through our RIIs. This exciting innovation has been implemented with overwhelming support from colleagues across all career stages.

A new initiative we are exploring is the launch of a new research culture survey which would inform a research culture action plan in the longer term. We are also

working with HR and ED&I colleagues to better understand our research staff and address any barriers that may exist for them in the workplace.

A key area is to further embed ED&I into all our policies and practices and raise awareness more generally of the policies that we have in place.

The biggest lesson with regards to the Concordat Action Plan is to not attempt to solve everything all at once, but to concentrate on the most pressing initiatives that will deliver the most impactful change and tangible benefits for our researcher community.

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

Over the coming reporting period, we will focus on the following:

- Official launch of the newly created RIIs (March 2025)
- Capacity building within RIIs, through current ongoing membership application process, but also through key RII appointments and alignment of PGRs to RIIs
- Launch of new RII webpages providing a new platform to showcase RII staff and PGRs.
- Creating a positive research culture within the RIIs through peer support, training, development and enrichment activities and events
- Embedding support structures within RIIs to ensure staff reach their potential
- Continued support for the RII Directors through the dedicated leadership programme and continuing to work with the DMU Leadership & Management Standards & Behaviours Framework
- Delivery of the academic promotions initiative – launched in November 2024, with the deadline for applications in February 2025.
- Delivery of the C-SMART programme
- Delivery of the Future Research Leaders programme aimed at ECRs and MCRs
- Revise and reframe the central overarching Researcher Development programme, adopting a cohort pathways approach
- Continuing to encourage attendance at Advance HE events for learning, knowledge sharing and networking

- Further work to fully embed our organisational values at all levels of the organisation and especially within the new RII Institutes.
- Research focussed goals as key elements of My Progress conversations
- Encourage continued mentoring for researchers with the launch of a new mentoring platform in 2025.
- Research and Innovation Festival 2025to celebrate and showcase research
- Better web presence for our researchers at all levels
- Improve Doctoral College SharePoint site providing information, support and guidance to academics who are also PGR supervisors
- Introduce an "Excellence in Supervision" award to recognise the importance of the supervisory role
- Proposal to create a Research Culture Steering group and a Concordat Steering group
- Continue to use the Concordat framework to inform the work of the Researcher Training Working Group
- Consider expansion of the UKRI Accelerator programmes to include a KE strand
- Gain a better understanding of our research staff profiles such as caring responsibilities, socio-economic background.
- Ensure effective inductions taking place centrally and at RII / faculty level
- Closer working between Doctoral College & Researcher Development team with HR, Organisation Development and ED&I teams

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)*

This report is written by the Doctoral College incorporating advice and guidance from across the Universities, but in particular in collaboration with colleagues in HR, ED&I, ADRIs within faculties and RIIs. There has been significant senior leadership oversight, including the RII Directors, ADRIs, and the Director of Research, Business and Innovation. It is presented for review and approval by the University Research Business and Innovation Committee (URBIC).

Signature on behalf of governing body:

Contact for queries: Kirstie Skelton Clarke. Kirstie.skeltonclarke@dmu.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