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| **Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via** [**CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk**](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk) | 01 March 2024 |

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

Universities and Research Institutes

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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)***  **Wordcount: 500**  The University became a signatory to the Researcher Development Concordat in April 2020 to foster supportive research culture and has since produced the 2021 Action Plan to uphold its commitments. The 2021-25 Postgraduate Research Strategy was adopted to support postgraduate researchers (PGRs). A Researcher Development Working Group was set-up to coordinate the implementation of the Concordat and the PGR Strategy and to gather feedback on progress and activities. After a short period of staff turnover, the Group was re-instated in late 2023.  In January 2023, the Bradford Researcher Development Framework (BRDF) was launched as operational framework for support to researchers. This was marked by the University’s investment in roles to oversee PGRs development and experience, as well as a PGR administrator role. In July 2023, the BRDF manager was appointed, and another Researcher Developer role is in recruitment.  As a [values-driven](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/planning-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Strategy%20documents/COU088a-19-20-strategy-update-app-a.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=jHGeS0) organisation, the University places its values of trust, inclusion, innovation, and excellence at the core of its research environment. Research staff complete mandatory training on values, unconscious bias, and diversity in the workspace as part of induction/refresher training. Following the recommendations of the REF2021 panels, in August 2023 this training has also been open to PGRs.  University-level induction is standardised, guidance is provided for organising departmental/local inductions. Academic inductions have been continuously delivered. Since February 2023, induction for PGRs has been refreshed to reflect on new progression regulations adopted in 2022. The University also encourages a buddy scheme for new members of research staff to support transition.  All research staff are introduced to University policies and reporting procedures during their induction, staff are informed of any changes to policies and procedures in a timely manner. A number of policies and codes of practice guide research activities – all have timelines for review, including for compliance with the sector. With the appointment of the Head of Research Operations in September 2023, it is anticipated that policies review will be fostered.  BRDF coordinates provision across faculties and departments such as Research and Innovation Services, Library, Careers, and more. Areas of existing support and gaps in provision are identified via consultations with faculties and departments. The essential training offer for researchers is currently being developed to form the core of mandatory training – to be mapped to Vitae’s Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and Bradford Academic. Training and professional development is included in probation and performance development reviews (PDRs) for all research staff and managers. In 2023, the essential training offer for PGRs has been developed and mapped to Vitae’s RDF. PGRs are also required to complete a Development Needs Analysis (DNA) as part of their progression requirements.  A programme of research culture-enriching events and activities to enhance research skills and encourage community-building has been developed for PGRs. PGR Representative elections took place in summer 2023. PGRs are encouraged to set up their own events and activities – these are supported via the Students’ Union and PGR Lounge Committee. Similar work is being planned for building communities of good practice for early-career researchers (ECRs) and supervisors. |
| **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)*** |
| **Wordcount: 600**  **Environment and culture**  As reflected in the Strategic Plan 2020-25, the University’s vision is to become a place where “people want to, and can, make a difference”. Four sub-strategies – [Learning, Teaching and Student Experience](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/planning-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Strategy%20documents/COU089a-19-20-LTSE-app-a.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=YrYiLl), [Research and Innovation](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/planning-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Strategy%20documents/SEN054-1920-RI%20Strategy_v1.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=J6724H), [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/planning-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Strategy%20documents/EDI%20Strategy%202020-2025%20Rev.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=mxYORl) (EDI), and [Business and Community Engagement](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/planning-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Strategy%20documents/COU091a-19-20-BCE-Strategy-App-A.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=dkurAy) – were adopted with clear operational plans to achieve this vision by 2025. The Research and Innovation Strategy explicitly states the University’s commitment to “foster a strong, healthy and inclusive research culture across all levels and within all faculties” to empower staff and students to reach their full research potential. The Research and Innovation Strategy links to Bradford’s Research and Knowledge Transfer Environment paper, which sets out an Action Plan to build a world-class research environment at Bradford.  The indicators of success include improved quality of research outputs and research impact (measured via REF), increased engagement with research and grant funding (recorded in the Research Information System – RIS), as well as PGR engagement, progression and experience (PRES and PGR/staff feedback, progression records). Feedback from researchers and their managers is monitored via Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS), staff surveys, as well as staff meetings. BRDF provides operational support to the Strategy, liaises with other University departments and faculties on the implementation, and reports upon the progress.  BRDF works closely with the Centre for Inclusion and Diversity (CfID), which provides operational support to the EDI Strategy and University’s responsibilities as a signatory of Athena Swan Charter, Race Equality Charter, and Disability Confident Scheme. Success is measured through improvements in staff survey data, intersectional analysis of staff and student experience surveys, pay reviews and pay gap reports, Advance HE charter marks (Athena SWAN, REC), EDI-related pledges and initiatives, and more.  **Employment**  Employment is linked to the University’s [People](https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/planning-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Strategy%20documents/People%20Strategy%202025%20v0.7%20Final.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=tTrJA4) Strategy, which aims to promote a values-driven, high-performance environment by embedding University values and behaviours across all staff groups, developing leaders and managers, and managing for high performance. The Strategy highlights the importance of inclusion and social mobility, space for personal and professional aspirations, and support to career-life journeys. These are reflected in the Strategy’s objectives and associated strategic actions, outlined in a delivery plan.  Key indicators of success are measured against staff survey responses, delivery in support of the EDI, Health and Safety, and Wellbeing Strategies, pay gap analysis, analysis of PDRs, Personal Research and Innovation Plans (PRIPs), provision and attendance of induction and training, implementation of a leadership and management development offer, and more. Successful implementation is linked to incorporation of the Strategy’s elements in business planning activities by departments/faculties, timely and continuous reporting upon the above, and improved feedback.  People Committee oversees and reports upon the implementation of the Strategy under leadership from the Director of People and Campus Services.  **Professional Development of Researchers**  Professional Development is identified as a crucial element for developing research skills in Research and Innovation Strategy. It is underpinned by the People Strategy and engages multiple departments across the University. BRDF provides operational support to professional development. The key objective is to create a continuous pipeline of training support for PGRs and onwards to be aligned with our Bradford Academic pathway. Bradford Academic sets out career prospects across each stage of a research career journey – overseen by the Organisational Development and Culture team. The indicators of success are as per the Research and Innovation Strategy’s KPIs. Additional indicators include availability of internal and externally sourced training that caters for demand of researchers with diverse needs and at various career stages, as well as engagement and attendance of training, and availability of systems for monitoring and recording attendance. |
| **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)***  **Wordcount: 525**  **Institution**  All Associate Deans with responsibility for research are aware of the Researcher Concordat work and the external website Action Plan. They act as invited members in the Researcher Development Working Group. The Researcher Concordat is referred to in the faculties’ ToRs, whereby Faculties’ Research and Innovation Committees help share University’s Researcher Concordat initiatives. Researchers and managers of researchers from different faculties represent interests of researchers across various career stages at the Researcher Development Working Group and in such way shape University Concordat-related initiatives.  In spring-summer 2023, CEDARS was run for the first time at the University. The report was disseminated via the Researcher Development Working Group and Research and Innovation Committee. An Action Plan stemming from the report was incorporated into BRDF activities. The University considers participation in the pilot for revised CEDARS in April 2024. Staff and PGR surveys and focus groups will be run annually to evaluate progress.  Recently appointed Head of Research Operations is planning a review of policies applicable to research staff and to streamline the University’s approach towards research misconduct investigations and quality assurance procedures.  Bradford Scholars policies were developed to provide a research archive for publications resulting from research conducted at Bradford. A Rights Retention project is pending approval by the Senate in January 2024. These take place in consultation with researchers via faculty staff meetings. Internal stakeholders consider developing the guidance on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in research in Bradford.  **Academic Managers of Researchers**  The 2023 CEDARS results have indicated largely positive feedback around work environment and performance of managers as key contributors to research culture at the institution. All newly appointed managers at the University undergo induction and gain access to guidelines for managers as part of their onboarding. This training is mandatory, and participation is monitored centrally by Organisational Development and Culture. Managers also have access to additional training (discussed in more detail Furter in this section).  Managers’ performance is being reviewed via PDRs, and progress and timely completion of those are monitored by HR representatives assigned to individual departments.  Mental Wellbeing Support & Resources are also available to managers. These materials are being continuously updated. A series of events, “Let’s talk about… (mental wellbeing/menopause/carers, etc.)” took place in 2023. An Employee Wellbeing Consultant has been appointed to lead on strategic wellbeing initiatives and projects at the University.  **Researchers**  The 2023 CEDARS results demonstrate that Bradford researchers are generally satisfied with their work and feel supported. Staff demonstrate similar to the sector awareness of wider regulations, such as Concordats for Researcher Development, Knowledge Exchange, etc. Researchers take part in staff assembly meetings and other fora to share their views and inform Concordat-related activities. Faculty of Health Studies has initiated work to launch an ECR Forum, with the plan to launch this as a University-wide platform in 2024.  However, researchers would like to get more detailed information around availability of funding for attending conferences and other research activities as well as the University being more specific around its support to research integrity and reporting on behaviours such as discrimination, harassment, bullying, and research misconduct. These will be included in BRDF activities for the upcoming year. |
| **Employment *(max 600 words)***  **Wordcount: 513**  **Institution**  Gap analysis demonstrates that University policies comply with sector requirements. However, more work may be required around monitoring the implementation of those and reporting on incidents.  According to the 2023 CEDARS results, recruitment and employment are perceived as being fair and inclusive. However, more effort may be needed to make the processes more transparent and explain them to researchers better.  Work with Bradford Academic on Grade Gateway Evidence continues – requirements for Grades 9-11/12 have been completed, requirements for Grade 8 are being drafted. Review of existing grades, assessment models, and career matrix is scheduled for the upcoming year.  The system of annual appraisals and awards is also in place, and celebrations of individual and team achievements run annually. These include Monthly publication award to celebrate a high-quality output accepted for publication in that month, Honorary Degree, or an Outstanding Contribution Award to those who are outstanding in their academic or scholarly endeavour, Annual Rewards via the Performance Recognition Scheme which enables managers to recognise their employee’s contribution, Outstanding Achiever Awards for outstanding contributions in diverse areas, and more.  **Academic Managers of Researchers**  Managers of researchers are being continuously updated of all policy changes at the University and across the wider environment through staff meetings and assemblies and via the University’s SharePoint and communication channels. Training on recruitment is available to all managers and is mandatory for those involved in recruitment.  Training and development opportunities are available to all managers i.e., Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) courses and apprenticeships, external leadership programmes, internal Bradford Manager new manager programme launched in 2023, skills development through internal courses, self-development resources through online learning platform Percipio.  Guidance on having meaningful, of value PDR conversations is available for managers of researchers and researchers through SharePoint resources and bitesize videos, as well as resources on Percipio. Both researchers and managers of researchers are included in the PDR process. There are also opportunities for coaching and mentoring within the University, with the list of internal and external experts available on SharePoint with instructions on how to apply for this support. Monitoring of participation in these opportunities is carried out by Organisational Development and Culture.  **Researchers**  The system of induction for academic staff is in place. However, according to the 2023 CEDARS results, more work is required so that experience with local induction is similar for all researchers across different University departments.  Researchers are generally aware of University policies and requirements as part of their induction process. However, there is appreciation that expectations of researchers, their managers, and institution could be set-out more clearly and reflected in Codes of Practice better (for staff, supervisors, PGRs).  Work continues on tailoring staff questionnaires to collect data for Athena Swan to include questions more relevant to ECRs and other cohorts of researchers.  Work has started on reviewing the CEDARS questionnaire to be more reflective of research culture in the context of PGRs and ECRs experience as well as ensuring that information gathered enables institutions to monitor their progress better. The University will take part in the pilot of revised questionnaire in 2024. |
| **Professional development *(max 600 words)***  **Wordcount: 600**  **Institution**  The University offers a wide range of provision across its departments (Organisational Development and Culture, Research and Innovation Services, Library, Careers, Language Centre, academics with expertise) and external training (White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership, external experts). Training opportunities are included in a SharePoint calendar and available to all researchers. Bradford Fellowships are available to all academic staff.  With the appointment of a new Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing, there is expectation that the People Strategy will drive professional development. Work still needs to be done to ensure researchers engage in ten days of professional development, as per the Concordat.  **Academic Managers of Researchers**  All managers’ training is bookable by staff. Guidance for managers and resources are available through SharePoint, MyView and Percipio – an AI-driven online learning platform supporting personal and professional skills development. Percipio contains a number of courses and reading materials on leadership, management, communication, and more.  In 2023, New Manager Programme has been launched and is being successfully delivered to the first cohort.  Training and guidance on mental health and wellbeing is available on Percipio and SharePoint and delivered by Organisational Development and Culture.  Core mentoring and coaching training is available through Organisational Development and Culture. The team delivers bespoke sessions focusing on academic mentoring upon request – these are run locally through each Faculty with support of developing mentoring skills.  As part of the People Strategy’s workstream on embedding University values and behaviours, a new training module has been developed and delivered in 2023, and a managers’ toolkit of resources and activities to deliver with teams was developed.  First Personal Research & Innovation Plans (PRIPs) have been submitted in 2023 and used by Associate Deans for Research and Innovation for planning.  The PDRs cycle is now established. PDRs embed discussion of the development needs, support required and career development aspirations of the reviewee – to inform managers’ decisions on researchers’ training. PDRs are submitted to HR Service Now upon completion. Completions are monitored and reported upon monthly to Faculties/Directorates. However, more work is required around potentially aligning PDRs with PRIPs.  Following a pilot of the Supervisor Recognition Scheme and the Associate Supervisor Recognition Scheme, completed by few academics, supervisor training has been updated to align with the Good Supervisory Practice Framework. The first updated training was rolled out in November 2023.  **Researchers**  PDRs enable researchers to consider support required for their future career. However, more support is required to enable researchers to spend ten days per year on professional development.  Work continues on developing a Study Leave/Sabbatical Policy – currently under review with HR.  PGR mentoring scheme has been piloted at the Faculty of Life Sciences – pending evaluation.  A SharePoint site with training provision has been launched outlining opportunities available to PGRs and research staff. All provision is mapped to Vitae’s RDF. PGR-focused training provision has been reviewed, and research staff induction training was opened to PGRs. Between January-October 2023, more than 70 workshops and events have been delivered to PGRs.  The PGR DNA, previously hosted on MyRDF, was reviewed and moved to PebblePad. Upon successful pilot (currently ongoing), the platform will be used to host PDRs.  Career and Employability Services training, formerly delivered to PGRs has been opened to members of staff. Work is launched on developing Narrative CV training and incorporating information about a wide range of careers available to researchers in the provision.  The Library has extended training provision to incorporate advanced literature searching and continues work on rights retention policy and subject-specific support.  Percipio offers a wide range of courses to all staff. Percipio Learner of the month is announced monthly to celebrate achievements. |
| **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)*** |
| **Wordcount: 280**  Workload has been the key barrier for engagement across all cohorts of researchers and managers of researchers. Bradford Academic remains a crucial work strand to ensuring clarity around requirements for promotion and informing training provision to enable researchers to progress in their careers.  Most successful in terms of engagement research culture initiatives tend to be those that are co-created with researchers – either stemming from their feedback or being a product of collaboration. The growing focus within the institution is to engage researchers into shaping the opportunities for themselves and their peers. Empowering managers to make a positive change in their work environment is another crucial element of this work, which needs to be operationalised.  While there is remit in identifying core competences required at certain career stages and training provision that can cater for that, transition between roles and/or sectors requires a more tailored support, for example, via mentoring or coaching. Meanwhile, mentoring and coaching are extremely resource-intense, particularly in the context of workload and availability of funding for such schemes.  Researchers’ feedback remains the key measure of success. Work continues on aligning survey cycles and questionnaires to avoid survey fatigue and to ensure continuous monitoring.  PDRs proved to be a helpful instrument to incorporate professional development and career discussions into annual review cycle. Once PDRs are submitted to HR Service Now, an automated evaluation email is sent to the reviewee to evaluate the quality of the conversation and measure if it has been of value and supportive in discussing work priorities/objectives, development needs and career aspirations. Work will continue on elaborating this tool both as a way to identify needs of researchers and their managers and measure their progress. |
| **Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period**  ***(max 500 words)*** |
| **Wordcount: 499**  Policy development and review work will continue to ensure compliance with the wider sector and regulations. Policies will be mapped, with relevant information made available to researchers via SharePoint – to ensure expectations of the University and researchers are clear to all parties.  Bradford Academic work will continue to identify competencies required at different stages of a research career – to clearly articulate requirements for promotion and reward. These will be communicated to researchers to increase transparency around these processes. Similar work will be carried out for PGRs to identify key stages in their research journey and support required. In 2024, a review of existing grade 9-11/12 as well as new 8 Grade Gateways & Evidence, plus assessment model (scoring matrix) and existing career matrix is scheduled. This will include consultation with the University’s researchers. HR Process and Procedure review will take place with an aim to improve on promotion dashboards, professorial assessment process, and more.  A suite of training will be developed for researchers to be mapped to various stages of research journey. This suite will include two key elements: training on essential, or core competences (for example, teaching, research – aligned with selected career pathway), and training on additional, or preferred competences (knowledge exchange, business and community, etc.). All training is to be aligned with Vitae’s RDF and University strategic priorities.  Transition from MyRDF planner to PebblePad planner is to be completed in 2024. Following the pilot of setting-up PGR DNAs and profiles PebblePad, researchers’ PDRs will be moved to PebblePad as well. Discussions to be held on how to align PRIPS, PDRs and workload model better.  A system of monitoring researchers’ and research managers feedback via CEDARS, PRES, other internal surveys and focus groups will be established as part of annual review cycle. A system for monitoring researchers’ engagement in training and development will be revised to ensure cross-university monitoring of the uptake and engagement. PDRs and PRIPs will be reviewed as part of this process to establish merit for using them to identify development needs.  Implementation of Race Equality Charter and Athena Swan Action Plans will continue. Some of planned activities include developing institution-wide methods to capture granular data on staff experiences across all aspects of their employment and career journey, co-ordinating staff experience surveys, establishing an annual cycle of business for self-assessment teams, embedding the key principles of the commitments in recruitment/ progression/ promotion, and more.  Work will continue on creating opportunities to further develop an inclusive research community at the University via communities of practice and researchers’ fora (ECR forum, supervisors’ forum) as well as interdisciplinary events, such as Career Fairs, Science Festivals, and more.  Local induction processes will be reviewed to ensure consistency of experience across the University.  Support to PGRs at the end of their research journey will be reviewed to ensure their successful transition into new roles and jobs.  University mentoring and/or coaching schemes will be piloted (BradATTAIN) and reviewed (mentoring in the Faculty of Life Science) to identify best ways moving forward. |
| **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)***  **Wordcount: 130**  This report is prepared by the Bradford Researcher Development Framework team which oversees the implementation of the Concordat. The report is then reviewed by the Researcher Development Working Group, a collective body which represents various stakeholders involved in researcher development, including researchers across various career stages, their managers, and representatives of various University departments. The report is then reviewed by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. Upon their approval, the report is presented to the Research and Innovation Committee. Upon discussion, amendments and approval, the report is being presented to the Senate and then Council. Upon the final approval by the Council, the report is officially made publicly available on the University’s website and is sent to the secretariat for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. |

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)