

Terms of Reference

Researcher Development Concordat (RDC) Steering Group

Background:

The Researcher Development Concordat (RDC) Steering Group is a formal University committee which proceeds the former Research Staff Working Group (RSWG), whose explicit purpose is to manage and monitor the University's commitment to the **Researcher Development Concordat** and **HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award**. The focus of the steering group is to help develop policies, practices and initiatives in line with the agreed HREiR Action Plan and the University of Sussex 2025 Strategic Framework.

The [Researcher Development Concordat](#) is an agreement between four main stakeholders (Institutions, Managers, Researchers and Funders) to support the career development and improve employment opportunities of researchers in the UK, set out under the three principles of **environment and culture, employment, and professional and career development**. The University of Sussex has committed to the Concordat and the RDC Steering Groups' main function is ensure that we *'create an empowered community of researchers, with the skills and competencies to maximise the influence and impact of their work, embedding an ethos of sustainability and equality, diversity and inclusion across disciplines and continuing to nurture and develop research excellence through individual and collaborative projects'* and *'agree to work collectively and engage with initiatives to address systemic challenges in progressing towards a UK research system where researchers work in healthy and supportive environments'* (please see [Letter of Commitment](#), signed by VC Prof. David Maguire 11 Nov 2021).

Responsibilities:

1. The RDC Steering Group members meet each term, following the Research Staff Representatives meeting and prior to the Research and Knowledge Exchange (RaKE) meeting. This will allow:
 - a. for escalation and resolution of issues raised by the Research Staff Community through their Research Staff representatives, following the University governance structure
 - b. monitoring the progress of the obligations of the HREiR Action Plan
 - c. reporting any issues or concerns regarding HREiR Action Plan activities
 - d. identifying potential delays and impacts on progress that will affect the delivery of activities/initiatives (risk register)
 - e. celebrating successes and sharing 'good news' stories.
2. Members are asked to actively engage with the HREiR Action Plan and identify opportunities for Research Staff to support their career development within their schools or departments.
3. Members are asked to support the RSO attain data and feedback in order to monitor and evaluate success measures/targets.
4. Members of the Steering Group are asked to promote RSO events, the training and development programme,
5. Members will be expected to notify the Chair and Secretary in a timely manner when they are not able to attend the meeting, offering either a substitute or written update if they have something to share with the committee.

6. Members will be expected to work closely, being mindful of the core values of kindness, integrity, inclusion and collaboration, in line with the Dignity and Respect policy and the Inclusive Sussex strategy.

RDC Steering Group Structure:

Researcher Development Concordat Steering Group (RDC Steering Group)
Director of Research Staff Development (Chair)
Research Staff Officer (Secretary)
Pro VC Research and/or Pro VC CEI
Director of Research and Enterprise
Assistant Director of HR
Head of School
Head of Professional Services
Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange
ECR Leads
Research Staff Reps x 4 (Acting Chair and Proceeding, with two permanent RS Reps representing both AHSS and STEMM)
EDI Representative/s
Research Manager/s
Researcher Development Coordinator

Research Staff Definition:

Our definition of Research Staff is an inclusive definition of ‘Early Career Researcher’ which encompasses a wide range of individuals, we recognise that ‘Research Staff’ refers to a wide range of staff including those with:

- Those at an early stage of their research career
- Different disciplinary backgrounds
- Varying levels of training
- A wide variety of different experiences and responsibility types
- Different types of contract (fixed or open ended, full or part time)
- Diverse career expectations