

Early Career Researcher Sub-Committee

2024-25

Committee purpose

The Early Career Researcher Sub-Committee (previously the Research Concordat Steering Group) whose explicit purpose is to manage and monitor the University's commitment to the **Researcher Development Concordat** and **HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award** is a sub-committee of the University Research and Innovation Committee. 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. All academic committees operate in accordance with the University's governing documents – Charter, Statutes and Regulations – and the Public Interest Governance Principles.

Membership

- Director for Early Career Researchers (Chair)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research or Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research
- One Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
- Assistant Director of HR
- Director of Research and Innovation
- Early Career Researchers Leads
- Early Career Researchers representative for Media, Arts & Humanities
- Early Career Researchers representative for Science, Engineering and Medicine
- Early Career Researchers representative for Social Sciences (ESW, Global Studies, and LPS)
- Early Career Researchers representative for Business School
- EDI Representative/s
- One Senior Research Manager representing the Four Senior Research Managers
- One academic elected Senator.

In attendance:

- Researcher Development Coordinator.

Terms of Reference

The Early Career Researcher (ECR) Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of the University Research and Innovation Committee. Its scope is to ensure the University's adherence to the Researcher Development Concordat and the maintenance of Sussex's HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award.

The Researcher Development Concordat is a collaborative agreement involving key stakeholders — Institutions, Managers, Researchers, and Funders — with the aim of enhancing employment conditions and fostering the career advancement of researchers across the UK. The HREiR Award is an acknowledgment of an institution's commitment to fostering a conducive and supportive research culture, contributing to the advancement of knowledge and innovation. The University of Sussex has held the HREiR Award since 2013 and formally committed to the Concordat in 2021.

As a successor to the Research Staff Working Group and Researcher Development Concordat Steering Group, the ECR Sub-Committee is entrusted with developing policies, practices, and

initiatives aligned with the HREiR Action Plan. This plan is designed to bolster support for ECRs and align with the University of Sussex Strategic Framework.

- a) To manage, monitor and report on the University's commitment to the Researcher Development Concordat and HR Excellence in Research Award;
- b) To help develop policies, practices and initiatives to support ECRs in line with the agreed HREiR Action Plan and the Sussex 2025 strategic framework, including induction, training and development opportunities, working conditions, and the management of ECRs.
- c) To escalate and resolve issues raised by the ECR community through their ECR Representatives, following the University governance structure.
- d) To oversee the institution's biennial participation in the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS), analysing the feedback, taking appropriate steps where concerns are raised, and monitoring institutional responses.
- e) To advocate for improved conditions and a positive research culture for ECRs at Sussex.
- f) To celebrate ECR successes, championing contributions to the institution's research culture and standing.

Responsibilities

- 1. ECR Sub-Committee members meet each term, following the ECR Representatives meeting and prior to each formal PGRSC meeting.
- 2. Members are asked to actively engage with the HREiR Action Plan and identify opportunities for ECRs to support their career development within their Faculty, Schools or departments.
- 3. Members are asked to support the Sussex Researcher School (SRS) in obtaining data and feedback to monitor and evaluate Action Plan success measures/targets.
- 4. Members are asked to promote SRS Researcher Development events, and the training and development programme for ECRs.
- 5. Members are expected to notify the Chair and Secretary in a timely manner when they are unable to attend a meeting, offering a written update if they have something to share with the Sub-Committee.
- 6. Members are expected to be mindful of the core values of kindness, integrity, inclusion and collaboration, in line with the Dignity and Respect policy and the Inclusive Sussex strategy.