RD Concordat Implementation update – January 2023

Our 2022-2024 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researcher (RD Concordat) Action Plan (AP2022 – See Appendix 1) focused on four areas: improving our communications with our researchers and their managers, supporting researchers' career progression and development, fostering a robust and inclusive research culture, and improving the systems that underpin how we support researchers. Since being published in January, the RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) and other stakeholders have made excellent progress on the aims in AP2022, and Queen Mary is well-placed to put forward a strong action plan in 2024, which will be externally reviewed for our HR Excellence in Research award renewal.

In March of 2022, Researcher Development and the RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) hosted an online launch event for AP2022 called **Postdoc Careers, Development & Culture** (**Aim 1: complete**) that attracted over 65 participants across the university. The programme featured a launch of the new Research Staff Code of Practice, presentations from SEMS and BCI's Postdoc groups on their experience in setting those up and keeping them running (Aim 6: on track), and an opportunity to collect input from those in attendance to help inform our Welcome Pack resources for researchers, which will launch with our new Researcher Inductions following the Staff Welcome Events in 2023 (Aim 2: on track).

The summer of 2022 saw the launch of the new Queen Mary Academy website (Aim 3: on track), redesigned using an audience-centred approach. This made it easier for postdocs to navigate directly to information about our Researcher Development Programme, training courses available to them, the new Code of Practice, and our work in implementing the RD Concordat. We created two short weblinks: www.qmul.ac.uk/research-staff-cop and www.qmul.ac.uk/rd-concordat to support future communications around these. Additional resources will be added in this academic year to help guide postdocs on how to use the 70-hours (10-days) of annual continued professional development activity. The Researcher Development team are commissioning research to help inform changes to the programme of support and development for postdocs (Aim 3: on track), including how we support postdocs to consider options beyond academia. The team also have an ongoing strand of work involving training provision for academic staff who manage and supervise researchers. We anticipate new actions resulting from these in our next round of reporting. (Aim 8: on track)

The procurement process for a new Learning Management System (LMS) is ongoing and supplier selection is not yet complete. The requirement to track user (researcher) CPD activity is included in the system specification. (Aim 4: delayed to start of 2023/24).

Researcher Development will be piloting a new Mentoring Scheme for Postdocs in 2022/23 that will be supported by the platform SfGMentorNet. The scheme will match 100 postdocs across all facilities with an academic staff mentor and help to facilitate their meetings and interaction over a 6-month period. This initiative will address some of the issues with past researcher mentoring approaches, which included incompatibilities with mentee-mentor matches and mentoring activity trailing off after initial meetings. (**Aim 5: complete**)

Between January and May 2022 Queen Mary's HR EDI Team welcomed five new starters. These colleagues joined the existing EDI Team (headcount of five) to increase the breadth and depth of the team's capacity and expertise, and ability to deliver and support the university-wide People,

Culture & Inclusion Enabling Plan. Alongside increased resource, the EDI Team's operating model clarified the team's purpose, service offer and interactions with the wider organisation, especially the Faculties and Professional Services. (**Aim 7: complete**)

We set out to better embed RD Concordat implementation across the faculties in this academic year. To this end, the RD Concordat Implementation Group has two postdoc or early-career researcher representatives and one academic staff representative per faculty, all of whom contribute to their faculty's implementation efforts (outlined below), and we anticipate faculty-level actions by our next reporting round (Aim 9: on track). To further support this, the Researcher Development team we commissioned a secondary analysis of the 2021 CEDARS and PRES survey results. Reports will circulate to these faculty structures in October/November 2022.

- The **Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FMD) Research Culture and Environment Committee** provides strategic oversight of actions and oversees implementation and reporting on progress with regard to research culture within the faculty. In addition, the Committee supports the hiring, assessment, and promotion of faculty and researchers based on a broad contribution to the research environment. This committee meets quarterly and reports to the FMD Research Strategy Board (chaired by the FMD Dean for Research) which in turn reports to the FMD Faculty Executive board (Chaired by QMUL VP Health).
- The **Science & Engineering Research Advisory Group (SERAG)** oversees matters of research culture and environment for S&E. This group includes the Dean for Research (chair) and the Deputy Deans for Research Impact and for Postgraduate Research, along with the Directors of Research and Research Managers from each of the Schools within the faculty. The SERAG are joined by the Faculty RD Concordat Implementation Group representatives at specific meetings (typically 3 times per year) to discuss progress in implementing the Concordat in the faculty.
- RD Concordat implementation was added as a standing agenda item at the **HSS Faculty Research Advisory Group (RAG)** meetings from 20 September 2022. This group meets 7-8 times per year and is chaired by the Dean for Research and includes Directors of Research from each of the HSS Schools. RAG is joined by the Faculty's RDCIG representatives at specific (typically alternate) meetings to discuss progress in implementing the Concordat in the faculty.

The Queen Mary Entrepreneur Club (QMEC) membership is open to all postdocs, and invitations to QMEC events go out in the Researcher Development Newsletter and also via the all-staff E-Bulletin. For the next year, we are hoping to support broader engagement by publicising the programme in advance and developing a SharePoint site which includes meeting information and resources. (Aim 10: on-track ahead of schedule).

In addition to the actions included in AP2022, the Executive Officer for Research and Innovation, Hannah Bentley, chairs a group that works on institutional research environment and culture. This group is conducting a cross-university listening exercise to determine organisational priorities. Work is also underway to develop job profiles for a new Research Culture team to lead the delivery of these priorities.

Appendix 1:

Improved Comms	Dev & Career	Research Culture	Better Systems	Action Plan 2022-2024 (AP2022)
★	★			**Aim 1:** Host a Launch Event for the Concordat Action Plan, the new Research Staff Code of Practice and Welcome Packs, and give researchers a chance to network with peers across all faculties. This event will run in February 2022. (Lead: RDCIG)
★		★	★	**Aim 2:** Launch new Researcher Induction events as follow-ons from our Staff Welcome events from by January 2023, and three-times per year thereafter (Leads: RD Team with OPD).
	★		★	**Aim 3:** Reorganise the RD programme and website for research staff in line with their feedback for the 2022/23 academic year (Leads: RD Team).
	★		★	**Aim 4:** Explore functionality of new Learning Management System (LMS) for CPD tracking. It is expected that the new LMS will be in place by Sept 2022 (Leads: RD team with OPD and ITS).
★	★			**Aim 5:** Pause the RD team mentoring scheme for review of how barriers identified in AP2020 can be overcome to increase access to mentoring in 2021/22 (Leads: RD team).
		★		**Aim 6:** Support local research cultures by exploring good practice and barriers for local Research Staff Associations over 2021-22 and sharing the findings over 2022-23 (Leads: RD team with local RSAs).
		★		**Aim 7:** Implement a new operating model for EDI team and update the university-wide EDI strategy by 2023 (Leads: EDI team).
	★			**Aim 8:** Review training available for managers of researchers and undertake a training needs analysis by Sept 2022 (Leads: RD team with OPD and Faculties).
★			★	**Aim 9:** Embed Concordat implementation into Faculties by the next reporting round (Leads: RD team with central teams and Faculties).
	★			**Aim 10:** Create new support for research commercialisation by exploring how Q-Researcher Enterprise and the Queen Mary Entrepreneur Club can be expanded to include postdoctoral researchers by February 2023 (Leads: Enterprise team).

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