

# HREiR Action plan template July 2022 - March 2026



Details	
<b>Institution name:</b>	Ulster University
<b>Cohort number:</b>	10
<b>Date of submission:</b>	7th July 2022 (re-submitted 25th January 2023)
<b>Institutional context:</b>	Our target audience consists of 579 'teaching and research' staff and 180 'research-only' staff. These figures represent those staff members who have significant responsibility for research, 174 of whom are Contract Research Staff. Actions set out on a white background represent our current areas of focus in this reporting period.

The institutional audience\* for this action plan includes (only include direct beneficiaries; complete or delete, as appropriate):

Audience (direct beneficiaries of the action plan)	Number of	Comments
Research staff	180	
Postgraduate researchers		
Research and teaching staff	579	
Teaching-only staff		
Technicians		
Clinicians		
Professional support staff		
Other (please provide numbers and details):		

Complete for submission							To be completed only when reporting on action plan		
Obligation	Action	Carried over from previous action plan?	Deadline	Responsibility	The targeted impact of the action (success measure)	Progress update	The actual impact of the action (reporting against the success measure)	Outcome (ongoing/carried forward/no further action)	
<b>Environment and Culture</b>									
<b>Awareness and engagement</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to work towards an open and inclusive research culture, and to ensure broad understanding and awareness of this amongst researchers.									
ECI1	Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat.	Develop a new website called the Research Staff Hub to include an engaging section dedicated to the Concordat.	Yes	Jan-23	Research Staff Development Officer	New Research Staff Hub developed, launched, and widely promoted to research staff via 'Insight' news article, Twitter, direct email, and researcher networking forum. Concordat awareness increased from 42.6% (Research Staff Survey March 2022) to at least 50% evidenced in March 2023 CEDARS survey.	By January 2023, the Research Staff Hub was launched as a central online resource for research staff and promoted via all-staff emails, the ENGAGE platform and an Insight news article, reaching around 3,000 staff. The Hub includes a dedicated Concordat section highlighting development, training and networking opportunities.  Since August 2024, the Concordat has also been embedded within institutional communications through the Researcher Development Weekly Bulletin and as a standing agenda item on key committees and networks.  In 2025, a new Research Culture & Community website was launched linking to the Research Staff Hub and further increasing the visibility of Concordat-related resources.	The success measure for this action was to increase awareness of the Concordat among research staff from a baseline of 42.6% (Research Staff Survey 2022) to at least 50%.  Although CEDARS was not run in 2023 due to the institutional Valuing Voices survey, CEDARS 2025 results show that 72% of respondents reported awareness of the Concordat, representing a 29.4 percentage point increase from the 2022 baseline and exceeding the original success measure.  This demonstrates substantial progress in improving awareness of the Concordat across the research community, supported by the introduction of the Research Staff Hub and ongoing institutional communications.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
ECI2	Ensure institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers.								

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ECI6	Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and using the outcomes to improve institutional practices.	Increase researcher survey participation by promoting CEDARS at researcher networking events and on the new Research Staff Hub. Benchmark CEDARS results with other Universities. Introduce a researcher forum to encourage discussion and feedback on the research culture and environment.	Yes	Jun-23	Research Staff Experience Officer	Increased participation in CEDARS from 19% in March 2022 to at least 30% in March 2023. Survey results benchmarked against other Universities to identify areas that require further attention and action. Researcher Roundtable Committee established and regularly providing feedback directly to RIC. Quarterly researcher networking events organised and rolled out to include discussions on key researcher issues to inform improvements to the research environment and culture.	In 2023/24, institutional focus shifted to the Valuing Voices Survey, achieving a 63% overall response rate and 71% participation from Contract Research Staff, providing a broad evidence base on researcher experience. CEDARS was next run in 2025, promoted through researcher networking events and the Research Staff Hub, achieving a 20% response rate (up from the 19% baseline). Alongside survey activity, researcher feedback mechanisms have expanded through Coffee & Conversation events, research culture focus groups, Town Halls, the establishment of the Research Culture Steering Committee (2024) and the Researcher Network (2025). Early Career and Contract Research Staff representation on the Research & Innovation Committee has further embedded researcher voice within institutional decision-making.	The success measure was to increase CEDARS participation from a 19% baseline (2022) to at least 30% while strengthening the use of researcher feedback in institutional decision-making. CEDARS 2025 participation increased slightly to 20% (+1 percentage point) and did not reach the target. However, wider engagement improved through the Valuing Voices Survey (63% overall response; 71% Contract Research Staff) and the introduction of complementary feedback mechanisms, including focus groups, Town Halls, Coffee & Conversation events, the Research Culture Steering Committee (2024) and the Researcher Network (2025). Together, these developments demonstrate progress in strengthening mechanisms for gathering and using researcher feedback to improve the research environment and culture.	Action partially achieved. Mechanisms for gathering and using researcher feedback have been strengthened through surveys and new engagement structures. The Concordat commitment remains ongoing, and actions will be refreshed in the next HREiR Action Plan to further increase researcher participation in CEDARS and strengthen researcher voice in institutional decision-making.
ECR1	Encourage researchers to actively contribute to the development and maintenance of a supportive, fair and inclusive research culture and be a supportive colleague, particularly to newer researchers and students.	Promote and deliver a new series of quarterly research staff networking events open to all research staff. Deliver induction networking events specifically for new starts from across the University. Promote use of 'Induction Colleagues' to help and support new starts settle into their role as easily as possible.	No	Mar-24	Research Staff Experience Officer	Quarterly research staff events promoted to all research colleagues including new starts at induction, and via Insight articles, Twitter, direct email, and at researcher events. Attendance and feedback recorded to inform future improvements. Induction networking events established and promoted directly to all new starts. Research Staff attendance monitored and recorded. Support and guidance for new research staff and their managers including information about the 'Induction Colleague' initiative published on Research Staff Hub.	Since this action was introduced, the University has strengthened induction for research staff through Corporate Welcome Events delivered every four months across all campuses and led by the Senior Leadership Team. These events enable new researchers to connect with peers, engage with Researcher and EDI Staff Networks and access institutional support. Induction is further supported through regular Introduction to Research Support Services online sessions (6-8 per reporting period; averaging 15 attendees per session), introducing research support systems, services and training opportunities for new staff.	The success measure for this action was to strengthen opportunities for early connection and engagement among research staff, particularly new starters. Induction and early engagement have been strengthened through Corporate Welcome Events delivered every four months across all campuses, alongside regular Introduction to Research Support Services sessions (6-8 per reporting period; 15-20 attendees per session). Over the reporting period, around 60% of research staff attended Corporate Welcome Events, supporting early peer connection, improved awareness of Research and Innovation services, and integration into the research environment. These developments demonstrate measurable progress in strengthening early engagement and fostering a supportive and inclusive research culture for new research staff.	No further action; activity sustained through core operations
<b>Wellbeing and mental health</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to champion positive wellbeing amongst researchers, both through appropriate training and enabling new ways of working.									
ECI3	Promote good mental health and wellbeing through the effective management of workloads and people.								

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ECI4	Ensure managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to wellbeing and mental health.	Design an Employee Wellbeing Training Plan for managers of research staff which is to be informed by outcomes of a researcher wellbeing survey and focus group.	No	Mar-24	Section Lead Employee Wellbeing and Employee Wellbeing Campus Advisors	Employee Wellbeing Training Plan published and promoted to all research managers. At least 50% of managers of researchers to have participated in training on mental health and wellbeing by March 2024 compared with current rate of 31%.	A standalone Employee Wellbeing Training Plan for managers of research staff has not yet been implemented. However, institutional wellbeing provision has expanded through an annual programme of over 100 campus-based and online wellbeing events covering mental, financial, physical and social wellbeing. These initiatives have been promoted via the Research Staff Hub and Research Staff Weekly Bulletin, increasing awareness of available support. Insights from these activities, alongside researcher wellbeing survey and focus group feedback, are being used to inform the development of a targeted wellbeing training offer for managers of researchers.	The original success measure was publication of a dedicated wellbeing training plan and an increase in participation in mental health and wellbeing training for managers of researchers from a baseline of 31% to at least 50% by March 2024. While the standalone training plan has not yet been implemented and the participation target has therefore not been met, expanded institutional wellbeing provision has increased the visibility and accessibility of wellbeing support for researchers and their managers. Evidence gathered through institutional wellbeing activities and researcher feedback mechanisms has provided a clearer evidence base to inform the design of a targeted wellbeing training offer for managers in the next action plan period.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan, with development of a targeted wellbeing training offer for managers of researchers informed by evidence gathered during this cycle.
ECM3	Ensure managers promote a healthy working environment that supports researchers' wellbeing and mental health.								
ECM4	Ensure managers consider fully flexible working requests and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers.								
ECR3	Ensure researchers take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health.	Organise 'Personal Resilience' training and mental health and wellbeing awareness courses for researchers. Improve signposting to the various mental health and wellbeing support mechanisms available to research staff via new Research Staff Hub.	No	Mar-24	Section Lead Employee Wellbeing, Employee Wellbeing Campus Advisors and Research Staff Experience Officer	Personal Resilience and mental health and wellbeing initiatives delivered. Feedback on training and support monitored to ensure quality of delivery. Training and support for mental health and wellbeing promoted on Research Staff Hub. Feedback on next CEDARS Survey to demonstrate that at least 65% of researchers feel that UU promotes the importance of mental health and wellbeing.	While a discrete programme of Personal Resilience training for research staff was not delivered as originally planned, the University expanded institution-wide wellbeing provision. Over 100 campus-based and online wellbeing events are delivered annually, supported by a strengthened Employee Wellbeing Team, including a dedicated Employee Wellbeing Advisor in each faculty and a Wellbeing Campus Advisor. Resources and signposting to mental health and wellbeing support have been promoted through the Research Staff Hub and weekly research staff bulletins, improving visibility of available support for researchers.	The success measure for this action was to demonstrate through CEDARS that at least 65% of researchers feel the University promotes the importance of mental health and wellbeing. While visibility and signposting of wellbeing support have improved, CEDARS 2025 results show that 53% of respondents agreed that the University promotes the importance of mental health and wellbeing, below the 65% target. This result highlights the need to further embed communication and engagement around wellbeing support. The expanded wellbeing programme, strengthened advisory provision and improved communication channels established during this cycle provide a foundation for targeted actions in the next action plan to increase researcher awareness and engagement with wellbeing support.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
<b>Bullying and harassment</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to eliminate bullying and harassment in the research system, tackled through progressive policies and secure mechanisms to address incidents.									

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ECI3	Promote a healthy working environment through effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues.	Introduce a new Informal Conflict Resolution Framework which clearly sets out steps that can be taken to report and resolve such matters quickly and effectively as an alternative option to formal processes.	No	Dec-22	Employee Relations Section Lead	New Informal Conflict Resolution Framework developed (and includes clear guidance on reporting and dealing with incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment). Framework launched and communicated to all staff on 'Insight' and published on UU website.	<p>The University launched the Informal Conflict Resolution Framework – Resolving Issues at Work – in 2022, providing step-by-step guidance for raising and addressing workplace concerns as an alternative to formal procedures.</p> <p>The Framework has been published on the University website, communicated to staff through Insight, and incorporated into line management development to encourage early, informal resolution of issues such as interpersonal conflict, discrimination, bullying and harassment. It complements wider guidance and mediation support available through People and Culture.</p>	<p>The success measure for this action was the introduction and institutional adoption of a clear framework enabling early, informal resolution of workplace concerns.</p> <p>The Informal Conflict Resolution Framework has strengthened the University's approach to managing workplace issues by providing staff and managers with a recognised informal route for raising and resolving concerns before escalation to formal procedures. This supports earlier resolution of conflict and contributes to a more supportive working environment.</p>	No further action; activity sustained through core operations
ECM3	Ensure managers encourage reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment.	Informal Conflict Resolution Framework to set out that all line managers must encourage reporting of all incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment.	No	Dec-22	Employee Relations Section Lead	Informal Conflict Resolution Framework launched and included in ENGAGE line management training programme. Recent feedback revealed that 49.5% of research managers would feel confident dealing with concerns raised in relation to bullying and/or harassment. We aim to see an improvement of at least 10% on this score following the roll out of the Framework (evidenced in CEDARS 2023).	<p>The University launched the Informal Conflict Resolution Framework – Resolving Issues at Work – in 2022, setting out clear expectations for line managers to encourage early reporting of concerns, including incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and to support informal resolution where appropriate.</p> <p>The Framework provides guidance on how concerns can be raised, discussed and escalated, and signposts staff and managers to People and Culture support and mediation options. It has been communicated through global staff email, published on the University website, and embedded within manager development and people management guidance.</p>	<p>The success measure for this action was to improve manager confidence in responding to concerns relating to bullying and harassment, building on a baseline of 49.5% of research managers reporting confidence in dealing with such issues.</p> <p>While the intended improvement could not be evidenced through CEDARS as originally planned, the Informal Conflict Resolution Framework introduced under ECI3 has strengthened clarity around manager responsibilities and embedded a consistent institutional approach to encouraging early reporting and informal resolution of concerns. This supports a more open and supportive working culture.</p>	No further action; activity sustained through core operations
ECR4	Ensure researchers use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour in relation to discrimination, harassment and bullying.	Communicate the responsibility that all employees have in reporting incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying.	No	Dec-22	Employee Relations Section Lead	New framework communicated to staff by Dec 2022. Increased researcher awareness of reporting mechanisms for bullying and harassment (up from 59.9% to at least 65% following the promotion and implementation of the Conflict Resolution Framework).	<p>The responsibility of all employees to report incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying has been reinforced through the introduction of the Informal Conflict Resolution Framework (Resolving Issues at Work) and related people management guidance.</p> <p>The Framework clearly communicates expected behaviours, routes for raising concerns and the importance of early reporting, and has been published on the University website and embedded within wider communications, policies and guidance relating to dignity, respect and appropriate workplace behaviour.</p>	<p>Research staff now have clearer information on their responsibility to report concerns relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying, alongside greater visibility of the routes available to do so. This supports earlier reporting of concerns and reinforces shared responsibility for maintaining a respectful and inclusive working environment.</p> <p>Direct impact could not be evidenced through CEDARS 2025, as relevant questions were not included in the survey; however, the Framework establishes a consistent institutional approach and provides a basis for future monitoring through staff feedback and survey mechanisms.</p>	No further action; activity sustained through core operations
<p><b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b></p> <p>The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in-, aware of- and adopt practices enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>									

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ECI4 / ECM1	Ensure managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work.								
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to equality, diversity and inclusion.								
<b>Research Integrity</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in-, aware of- and maintain high standards of research integrity, and are able to report infringements or misconduct.									
ECI5 / ECM2	Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct.								
ECM3	Ensure managers report and address incidents of poor research integrity.								
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity.								
ECR4	Ensure researchers use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour in relation to research misconduct.								
<b>Policy development</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to encourage all researchers to actively contribute to the development of policies driving positive change at their institution.									
EI7	Consider researchers and their managers as key stakeholders within the institution and provide them with formal opportunities to engage with relevant organisational policy and decision-making.								
ECM5	Encourage managers to engage with opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution.								
EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution.								
ECR5	Encourage researchers to consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution.								
ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the wider academic community.								
<b>Employment</b>									
<b>Recruitment and induction</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure recruitment of researchers is open and fair and researchers receive effective inductions into the organisation.									
E11	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.								

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EI2	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	Enhance the existing managers' induction toolkit to improve local induction and introduce a quarterly staff induction networking event for all new starts at the University. Promote the new Induction process on the Research Staff Hub. Include signposting to online supporting materials, policies and practices.	Yes	Oct-22	Section Lead Organisation Design and Change & Section Lead People Development	New Induction Toolkit launched and promoted on Research Staff Hub. Quarterly induction networking events for new starts up and running. The Research Staff Survey 2022 revealed that only 50.4% respondents felt that their local induction was "very useful". New starts will be surveyed in CEDARS 2023 when we aim to see an improvement in scoring by at least 10% to reflect the early-stage success of this action.	The Induction Toolkit, including the Staff Induction Guide, Line Manager Induction Toolkit and Induction Colleague Guide, was launched and promoted via the Research Staff Hub by October 2022 and continues to be highlighted through the Researcher Development Weekly Staff Bulletin. Induction for research staff has also been strengthened through Corporate Welcome Events delivered quarterly across all campuses, providing opportunities for new starters to connect with peers, Researcher and EDI Staff Networks and support services. These events are complemented by regular Introduction to Research Support Services sessions (6–8 per reporting period; 15–20 attendees per session), supporting engagement with research systems, services and training opportunities.	The success measure for this action was to improve perceptions of induction usefulness, building on a baseline of 50.4% of respondents reporting their local induction as "very useful" in the Research Staff Survey 2022, with a target of at least a 10% improvement. CEDARS 2025 results show that 62% of respondents rated local induction as useful or very useful and 56% rated institutional induction positively, indicating an improvement in perceptions of induction and supporting the success measure. Some recent enhancements to the corporate induction programme are not yet fully reflected in these findings, as some respondents were inducted prior to the revised arrangements.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
<b>Recognition, reward and promotion</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure the fair and inclusive recognition of researchers as part of their career progression.									
EI3	Provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers' contributions and the diversity of personal circumstances.	Review the Academic Promotions Scheme and the CRS Promotions Scheme to establish an improved promotions process with clear criteria, assessment and outcomes ensuring equality of opportunity for all prospective applicants.	Yes	Mar-24	Deputy Director People and Culture – Partnerships and Services	Reviews carried out and implemented in consultation with Trade Union (UCU). Increased number of applications in next round of promotions compared with 2022 figures. Positive qualitative researcher feedback on improvements made in the promotions process compared with feedback recorded in 2022 Research Staff Survey.	Since its launch in 2020, the current Academic Promotions Scheme has completed five cycles. A review of both the Academic and Contract Research Staff (CRS) Promotions Schemes is nearing completion to enhance clarity of criteria, assessment and equality of opportunity. In the context of ongoing and significant financial pressures across the Higher Education sector, including the unsustainable government funding model in Northern Ireland, the Senior Leadership Team took the very difficult decision that it could not run a promotion round in the current year (2025) for either academic or contract research staff. This decision was taken following careful consideration of institutional financial sustainability and communicated transparently to staff at Town Hall events delivered by the Vice-Chancellor in November 2025 and in all staff email communications in January 2026.	Implementation of the Scheme has resulted in a significant improvement in overall success rates, with particularly positive outcomes for female applicants, whose success rates now exceed those of male applicants in most promotion categories. Completion of five promotion cycles has provided a robust evidence base to inform ongoing review and future enhancement of promotion criteria, assessment processes and outcomes. While the current pause in promotion rounds has delayed implementation of revised arrangements, the review process has strengthened institutional understanding of how promotions processes can be further improved to ensure fairness, transparency and equality of opportunity, including consideration of a new promotions scheme for Contract Research Staff, when financial conditions allow future rounds to proceed.	No further action; activity sustained through core operations
EM3	Managers commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers.								
<b>Responsibilities and reporting</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure that researchers and their managers understand and act on their obligations and responsibilities.									
EM2	Managers familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding.								

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ER1	Researchers ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder.								
ER2	Researchers understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities.								
<b>People management</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure that researchers are well-managed and have effective and timely performance reviews.									
EI4	Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent.	Promote the ENGAGE management training programme to research managers. Develop new line manager toolkit.	Yes	May-24	Section Leader – People Development	ENGAGE management training promoted on Insight, on Researcher Staff Hub and at Researcher Networking events. Uptake of ENGAGE training by researcher managers monitored. Roll out new line manager toolkit and promote to researcher managers.	The ENGAGE management training programme, launched in 2022, has expanded to include an ENGAGE Bootcamp, ENGAGE Series and a New Management Experience Programme, with 17 research managers completing training to date. The programme is promoted through annual all-staff communications and the Insight staff news channel.  A new line manager induction toolkit has been launched (see EI2), and additional resources supporting researcher supervision have been enhanced through Doctoral College guidance, the Supervisor SharePoint site and Vitae supervisory development resources.  Feedback from participants has informed ongoing refinement of management development provision.	The success measure for this action was to increase access to management development opportunities and strengthen management capability among those supervising researchers.  The expansion of the ENGAGE programme and associated toolkit resources has improved access to people management training and guidance for research managers. Participation in ENGAGE training and feedback from participants indicate improved awareness of effective people management practices and highlight the need for more tailored support for managers of researchers.  This evidence will help inform the development of bespoke Principal Investigator (PI) development provision, which will be progressed in the next action plan.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan to further strengthen management development for those supervising researchers.
EI5	Ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation.								
EM1	Managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care.	Promote participation in the ENGAGE management training programme. Develop and introduce new UU ECR Manager Toolkit (based on Vitae model) to all Research Managers.	Yes	May-24	People Development Partner and Research Staff Experience Officer	Research managers successfully sign up and secure a place on the ENGAGE programme. Positive feedback on value of programme received by course providers. New ECR Manager Toolkit launched and promoted to managers of ECRs.	Participation in the ENGAGE management training programme has been actively promoted to Research Managers [See EI4].  While a standalone UU ECR Manager Toolkit (aligned to the Vitae model) was not developed during the reporting period, this will be considered as part of discussions during the development of the new People Development Framework. In the interim, Research Managers have been supported through the introduction of line manager toolkits, as referenced in earlier updates [ECR1 and EI2]	Promotion of the ENGAGE management training programme has supported the development of management capability among Research Managers.  While a dedicated ECR Manager Toolkit has not yet been introduced, the availability of line manager toolkits and related guidance has provided practical resources to support more consistent management practice. Feedback gathered during the reporting period has also informed priorities for future development of tailored support for managers of Early Career Researchers.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan, with further development of support for managers of researchers aligned to the emerging People Development Framework.

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EM4	Managers actively engage in regular constructive performance management with their researchers.	Promote the Development and Appraisal Review (DAR) process to all Researcher Managers. All research staff to be encouraged to complete appraiser/appraisee training.	Yes	May-24	Director of Research and Impact and Research Staff Experience Officer	Information and supporting materials on the DAR process including appraiser/appraisee training made readily available to research staff via the Research Staff Hub. Researcher uptake of DAR and/or regular 1-1 informal development and appraisal conversations increased to at least 60% by March 2024. (Current feedback shows that 50% of researchers have had an appraisal and/or have regular 'one to one' meetings with their line manager and 57.4% agree that they receive constructive feedback on their performance.)	The DAR process has been promoted to Research Managers through updated guidance on the Research Staff Hub and targeted communications. Appraiser and appraisee training has been refreshed and made available to support effective participation in development-focused appraisal conversations. Research staff have been encouraged to complete the relevant training, although uptake remains variable across teams.	The success measure for this action was to increase participation in DAR or regular development discussions to at least 60%.  Current feedback indicates that 50% of researchers report having had an appraisal or regular one-to-one meetings with their line manager, and 57.4% agree they receive constructive feedback on their performance. CEDARS 2025 findings also show that the perceived usefulness of appraisal is higher than the sector average, suggesting improvements in the quality of appraisal conversations for those who engage.  While the participation target has not yet been reached, the promotion of DAR and associated training has contributed to improved appraisal experience and highlights the need for continued focus on increasing engagement across teams.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
ER3	Researchers positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers.								
<b>Job security</b>									
The aim of this obligation is to improve the job security of researchers.									
EI6	Seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress.	Negotiate and deliver a Workplace Agreement to offer a permanent open-ended employment contract to research staff with 6 years' service, on two or more contracts (with the exception being where the University has good reason to believe that the post is at imminent risk of redundancy).	No	May-24	Director People and Culture (Partnerships and Services)	Workplace Agreement launched and implemented. Whilst recognising that it will not be possible to move all CRS to permanent contracts, UU is committed to making permanent as many as possible. The number of CRS who have accepted the offer to move to permanent contracts during this reporting period as a result of this new agreement will demonstrate the extent of its success.	The University implemented its Pathway to Permanency initiative in October 2022, introducing two sector-leading workplace agreements designed to reduce reliance on successive fixed-term contracts while maintaining necessary workforce agility. These agreements recognise the challenges fixed-term arrangements pose for staff wellbeing and engagement, while acknowledging their role in workforce planning.  Separate agreements were developed for contract research staff and other staff groups, reflecting the specific funding context of externally funded research posts. Key features include clear consultation processes, defined timeframes for transitioning to permanency, bridging arrangements when funding lapses, and redundancy provisions where further funding cannot be secured.	Since implementation, 42 Contract Research Staff have transitioned from fixed-term to permanent contracts, demonstrating progress toward improving job security for researchers.  The initiative has also been recognised by the University and College Union as a positive example of institutional action to address precarity in research employment.	No further action; activity sustained through core operations
<b>Professional and Career Development</b>									
<b>Championing professional development</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to promote the importance of professional development and ensure researchers have the time to engage in it.									

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PCDI1	Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.	Use the Research Staff Network and Research Staff Hub to encourage researchers to engage in 10 days' CPD (or equivalent) by showcasing and signposting to a wide range of CPD opportunities. Form a new 'Research Staff Development Working Group' to identify and promote a broad range of CPD opportunities and ensure that CPD opportunities meet the needs of research staff. Agree and implement protected time for CPD.	No	Dec-22	Research Staff Experience Officer and Director of R&I	Research Staff Development Working Group established. Uptake of full range of CPD initiatives captured and uptake monitored more accurately using LMS. CPD opportunities promoted on Research Staff Hub and at networking events. Formal agreement on allowing protected time for researchers to engage in CPD reached at RIC.	The Researcher Network and Staff Hub have been used to promote engagement in CPD, including signposting to a wide range of internal and external opportunities aligned to the 10-day CPD Concordat expectation.  CPD is now captured and monitored more accurately following the launch of a new Learning Management System (LMS) in October 2025, enabling improved reporting by Unit of Assessment and contract type.  Due to resourcing constraints, the proposed Research Staff Development Working Group was not established during the reporting period; however, this remains a priority for the next action plan.  The workload allocation model is under review, with potential scope to enhance protected time for CPD, although this had not concluded by the end of the reporting period.	Researchers have increased visibility and access to a broad range of CPD opportunities, supported by clearer signposting through the Research Staff Hub and networking activity. Improved data capture through the new LMS has strengthened institutional oversight of CPD engagement, enabling more accurate monitoring by discipline and contract type to inform future provision.  While formal protected time for CPD and the Research Staff Development Working Group are not yet in place, the systems and structures introduced during this cycle provide a stronger foundation for supporting researchers to engage in the 10-day CPD expectation.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities.	Integrate the new learning management system (LMS) into UU's process for monitoring and reporting on researcher engagement in CPD.	No	May-24	Section Lead - Professional Development and Research Staff Experience Officer.	This action will result in more accurate monitoring of researchers' participation in CPD opportunities. LMS to be embedded by May 2024.	A new and enhanced Learning Management System (LMS), EVOLVE, was launched in October 2025, replacing the former LEARN LMS. The new system has been integrated into the University's processes for monitoring and reporting researcher engagement in CPD. The system provides enhanced functionality to support the capture and reporting of CPD activity.  Implementation has been supported through a programme of guidance and engagement, including a scheduled session with the Researcher Network to help researchers understand how to record CPD activity within the LMS. This includes capturing CPD associated with conferences, external courses and University-based activities, supporting more consistent and accurate recording of CPD engagement.	The introduction of the EVOLVE LMS has improved the visibility and consistency of CPD data, strengthening the University's ability to monitor and report on researcher engagement.  Early baseline data, including CEDARS 2025 results indicating that 12% of respondents report undertaking 10 or more days of CPD per year, has provided valuable insight into current patterns of engagement and recording. This has highlighted the need for greater clarity and shared understanding of what constitutes CPD, informing priorities for further guidance and actions within the next action plan.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan to further strengthen monitoring and support engagement in CPD.

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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

PCDM3	Managers allocate a minimum of 10 days pro rata per year, for their researchers to engage with professional development, supporting researchers to balance the delivery of their research and their own professional development.	Ensure that line managers and their teams are fully aware of UU's commitment to allocate a minimum of 10 days' CPD (pro rata) per year for research staff.	No	May-24	Director R&I	Formal agreement on allowing protected time for researchers to engage in CPD reached at RIC and communicated to managers and research staff.	Awareness of the University's commitment to a minimum of 10 days' CPD (pro rata) for research staff has been promoted through existing communication channels, including the Research Staff Hub and Research Staff Network. Guidance on CPD expectations has also been reinforced through engagement with line managers via management development activity and related resources.  While a formal mechanism to ensure consistent application of the 10-day CPD commitment is not yet in place, work during the reporting period has focused on increasing visibility and understanding of the expectation, informing priorities for further action in the next action plan.	Awareness of the 10-day CPD commitment has increased among line managers and research staff, supporting more informed conversations about development needs. While consistent implementation is still developing, this activity has helped establish a shared expectation around CPD entitlement and highlighted areas for further clarification and action in future planning.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
PCDR1	Researchers take ownership of their career, identifying opportunities to work towards career goals, including engaging in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year.								
<b>Career development reviews</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure researchers and their managers are engaging in productive career development reviews.									
PCDI2	Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers.	Promote the DAR process and updated guidance materials to all research managers on the Research Staff Hub	No	May-23	Research Staff Experience Officer.	Increased usage of DAR and regular 1-1 development conversations to at least 60% by March 2024. (Current feedback shows that 50% of researchers have regular 'one to one' meetings with their line manager.)	The DAR process and associated guidance materials have been reviewed, revised and made more accessible via the Research Staff Hub, supported by significant investment in updated resources and enhanced training. The revised guidance places greater emphasis on a narrative, developmental approach to appraisal, encouraging meaningful conversations focused on development rather than compliance.  Work has also been undertaken to better enable Contract Research Staff (CRS) to participate in the DAR process, recognising that their contract arrangements do not always align with the University's standard appraisal cycle. While progress has been made in promoting the process and improving accessibility, further work is required to embed consistent engagement across all research managers and teams.	Improvements to the DAR process and guidance have enhanced the experience for those who participate. CEDARS 2025 results indicate that, although appraisal participation among research staff remains below sector levels (66% compared to 84%), those who do engage report higher perceived usefulness (69% compared to a sector benchmark of 60%).  These findings highlight the positive impact of a more developmental approach, while also reinforcing the need for continued work to increase participation and consistency. Emerging conversations linked to early-stage thinking around a People Development Framework provide an opportunity to further strengthen the role of DAR in supporting researcher development over time.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with researcher career development reviews.								
PCDM1	Managers engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually.								
PCDR4	Researchers positively engage in career development reviews with their managers.								
<b>Career development support and planning</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to promote researchers' career development planning through tailored support and gathering evidence of professional experience.									
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.								

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PCDR3	Researchers maintain an up-to-date professional career development plan and build a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their experience, that can be used to support job applications.								
<b>Research identity and leadership</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to provide researchers with opportunity to progress in their careers by developing their research identity and leadership capabilities.									
PCDI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	Provide an easily accessible online training package on research leadership. Promote engagement in 'The Connected Programme to Promote Research Collaboration across the Education Sector'. (This programme funds opportunities for some research staff to participate in international conferences and other knowledge exchange opportunities with other organisations to enhance their research identity.)	No	Jul-23	Research Staff Experience Officer and Faculty Impact Officer, Innovation and Impact	Launch the new 'Advancing your Research Career' 10 module training package. Promote training package to all research staff by direct email. Record participation and feedback on training package via the new LMS. Successful promotion of the Connected Programme will be measured by the number of research staff who are able to access and benefit from this scheme up until July 2023.	The University invested in Advancing your Research Career – Strategies for Research Leadership, a self-led, CPD-accredited e-learning programme supporting research leadership development. Relaunched in 2025, 70 researchers completed the training, with promotion via the Research Staff Hub. To strengthen core research skills, the University launched Statistical Research Methods in 2025, a free, discipline-inclusive online resource co-developed with Ulster University and supported by a diagnostic tool. Engagement data was limited during the reporting period due to migration from the LEARN Learning Management System to the EVOLVE LMS.  The Connected Programme progressed, delivering 44 Knowledge Acquisition and Foresight Activity (KAFA) awards supporting conference participation and 22 research showcasing activities to enhance collaboration and visibility.	The introduction and relaunch of Advancing your Research Career has strengthened access to flexible leadership development for researchers, with early uptake (70 participants) demonstrating engagement with the training offer.  The Connected Programme has supported opportunities for researchers to engage in conference participation and collaborative activity across the education sector, contributing to the development of research identity and leadership capability.  Expanded online methodological training has also strengthened researchers' capacity in core statistical and data analysis skills.	Ongoing (embedded in institutional processes)
PCDM4	Managers identify opportunities, and allow time (in addition to the 10 days professional development allowance), for their researchers to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills, and provide appropriate credit and recognition for their endeavours.								
PCDM5	Managers engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development.	Promote participation in the ENGAGE line management training programme which is designed to support managers to realise their potential and develop essential people management skills. Promote 2023 Leadership Masterclass Series to research managers. Develop line manager toolkits to support research manager training.	Yes	May-24	Section Lead - People Development and People Development Partner	Participation in ENGAGE line management training promoted to Research Managers at networking events, on the Research Staff Hub and on Insight. 2023 Leadership Masterclass Series launched on Insight and promoted to all leaders at UU. Uptake by research managers monitored. Manager How To's and Manager Toolkits developed, launched and made accessible to all managers of researchers. Page views/visits monitored to assess usage.	Participation in the ENGAGE line management training programme and wider leadership development activity has been promoted to research managers, supported by the development and dissemination of manager toolkits and guidance resources (see E12 and E14).  During the reporting period, the Leadership Masterclass Series was refreshed as Lead Self: Bringing BRAVE to Life, with 20 researchers completing the programme, supporting the embedding of the BRAVE leadership attributes across the University.  A Heads of School Community of Practice was also established, bringing together senior academic leaders from all four faculties to support peer learning, strategic alignment and dialogue on institutional priorities. Average attendance has been around 80%.	Leadership development opportunities and management resources have strengthened management capability and consistency in supporting research staff. Access to ENGAGE training and manager toolkits has improved practical support for research managers, while the BRAVE leadership framework has reinforced shared leadership behaviours.  The Heads of School Community of Practice has strengthened peer learning and strategic alignment among academic leaders, supporting more effective leadership across faculties.	Concordat commitment ongoing; action will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
PCDR5	Researchers to seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills								

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Diverse careers									
The aims of these obligations are to recognise, value and prepare researchers for the wide range of career options available to them within and beyond research.									
PCDI5	Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this.	UU to procure and implement a new mentoring system (SUMAC) to widen access to mentoring opportunities to a broader range of participants and better manage data collection related to mentoring activity. Offer mentor training to encourage experienced researchers and other colleagues to participate in scheme and support ECRs in exploring options on ways to progress career. Include presentations at networking events delivered by experienced research professionals on their personal career journey and range of experience.	No	Aug-23	People Development Partner and Research Engagement Officer. Research Staff Engagement Officer	New mentoring system launched and promoted to research community. Uptake and feedback monitored. New mentor training developed and delivered. Quality of training monitored. New supporting materials published on SharePoint. Uptake of mentor training monitored and subsequent participation in mentoring scheme evaluated through mentee feedback. Organise and roll out a series of presentations to research staff at Research Round Table Network events.	The development and launch of the Research Mentoring Scheme was delayed until 2025 due to resourcing constraints. Consultation and co-development with the research community began in February 2025, and the revised scheme launched in November 2025 via the SUMAC coaching and mentoring platform, alongside a refreshed website and updated resources.  During the interim period, faculty-level mentoring activity continued to provide support. In parallel, the University's People Development team launched complementary mentoring streams through SUMAC in Spring 2025, focused on management and leadership, skills development, and career guidance.  The programme was promoted through all-staff communications and targeted messaging to research managers, with updated resources and training also launched in November 2025 via EVOLVE.	During the reporting period, 167 mentoring partnerships were recorded across the four faculties through the existing Research Mentoring process, demonstrating continued engagement with mentoring support.  The launch of the revised mentoring scheme through SUMAC has established an institutional platform to widen participation and improve monitoring of mentoring activity. As the scheme was launched late in the reporting period, comprehensive evaluation of impact is not yet possible; however, initial engagement has been positive and feedback mechanisms are now in place to support ongoing monitoring.	Concordat commitment ongoing; actions will be refreshed and carried forward into the next HREiR Action Plan.
PCDM2	Managers support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and secondments.								
PCDR2	Researchers explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments.								
PCDR6	Researchers consider opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system through, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement and commercialisation.								

\* The Researcher Development Concordat defines researchers as individuals whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who are employed specifically for this purpose by a higher education institution or research institute. The primary audience is research staff, e.g. postdoctoral researchers, research fellows, research assistants. The Researcher Development Concordat encourages institutions to include other groups who actively engage in research as beneficiaries of their Concordat action plan. These could be postgraduate researchers; staff on teaching and research, or teaching contracts; clinicians; professional support staff; technicians.

Further hyperlinks and supplementary information (more rows can be added)	
1	<a href="https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/hub">https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/hub</a>
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Abbreviations and glossary (more rows can be added)	
HREiR	HR Excellence in Research Award
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
UU	Ulster University
CRS	Contract Research Staff
R&I	Research and Innovation
ECR	Early Career Researcher
ER	Employee Relations
LMS	Learning Management System
DAR	Development and Appraisal Review
UCU	University and College Union
RIC	Research and Impact Committee