

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

*aka. The Researcher Development (RD) Concordat*

## University and Research institutes

<b>Name of Institution</b>	Queen Mary University of London
<b>Reporting period</b>	2024-2027 Action Plan Year2 (Aug 2024 – July 2025)
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<b>Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage</b>	<a href="http://www.qmul.ac.uk/rd-concordat">www.qmul.ac.uk/rd-concordat</a>
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<b>Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat (refer to <u>Researcher Development Concordat Reporting Guidance</u>)</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2026

We have defined acronyms in the text, but for a list, refer to the final page of our [Concordat Action Plan](#).

## Creating and Maintaining a Positive and Inclusive Research Culture (526/500 words)

Queen Mary's Mission is to create a truly inclusive environment, building on our cherished cultural diversity, where students and staff flourish, reach their full potential, and are proud to be part of

the University. It is home to 674 postdocs and fellows (the primary beneficiaries of the Concordat), 1,453 academics, and 1,367 postgraduate researchers (PGRs) across three Faculties: Medicine and Dentistry (FMD), Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and Science and Engineering (S&E), sub-divided into 16 Schools/ Institutes, plus two interdisciplinary institutes.

At the heart of Queen Mary's strategy is a supportive research culture, currently underpinned by our five core themes: entrepreneurialism, inclusion, productivity, curiosity, and integrity. These themes will evolve as the University refreshes its priorities. We are recognised for our distinctive, world-leading curiosity-driven and applied research. Our ambition is to attract the finest researchers globally and nurture our staff and students into leaders in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and innovation. Ensuring the quality in terms of ethics and integrity and fostering diversity and inclusion are central to how we support, review, and undertake research. Implementing the Researcher Development (RD) Concordat is key to delivering our strategy.

Institutional teams supporting research culture include those based within Research and Innovation Services that support research and innovation funding and collaboration including the Doctoral College, Strategy Impact and Research Culture (SIC) team, Responsible Research and Innovation Team (RRI) and Entrepreneurship teams, alongside the Queen Mary Academy (QMA), Careers and Enterprise (C&E), The Centre for Public Engagement (CPE), and teams in HR, including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team. Focused support for disciplines is provided at faculty and school levels.

Queen Mary's Research Culture Strategy aims to foster and celebrate excellent research *cultures* across the university, recognising differences in approach across disciplines and in different areas, but linked through our five core principles. The RRI team supports researchers in upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity by cultivating and sharing best practice, leading and shaping conversations that advance RRI, and reviewing our processes to foster a culture of excellence and sustainability.

The QMA supports the development of researchers and educators. Their Researcher Development Team (RD/QMA) oversees the RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) and runs and analyses CEDARS. RD/QMA delivers a professional development programme for postdocs, runs Postdoc Appreciation Week activities, and co-creates the Postdoc Congress with our postdocs. The CPE supports our commitment to being an institution connected to communities where our work has impact, with Queen Mary being the first Platinum Engage Watermark holder from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. The EDI Team leads on work in Gender, Race, LGBTQIA+ and Disabled Equality. The EDI team run Staff Networks providing peer support and social interaction supporting a positive and inclusive working environment. We renewed our Athena Swan Silver award in 2023 and will submit for Gold in 2027, and were awarded a Bronze Race Equality Charter mark this year.

Faculty level research culture discussions led to 10 faculty-owned actions being contributed to Action Plan for 2024-2027 (AP2024). Researchers are supported locally by managers, mentors and colleagues. There are research meetings, journal clubs, workshops, and five Schools/ Institutes have postdoc-led groups (representing 70% of postdocs). Postdocs participate in local decision-making committees and recruitment panels, with actions 8 and 9 of AP2024 extending this.

## Strategic Objectives and Implementations Plans for 2024-2027 (627/600 words)

Our AP2024 actions (listed as superscript) to implement the Concordat build upon our past successes and apply a postdoc lens to the Research and Innovation Enabling plan, part of the University Strategy 2030, and our institutional values:

- Attract the best researchers from all over the world<sup>1,2,7,11-13, 15, 19, 20, 23</sup> and support our researchers to develop<sup>1,2,5-7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18</sup> and to work collaboratively<sup>1,5,7,8,14,17,19</sup> and across boundaries<sup>1,2,5,7,10-15,19</sup>.
- Significantly increase external research funding, including our number of externally-funded Research Fellows and postdocs<sup>15,19</sup>, and provide them with a core training of essential skills and competencies<sup>5,6,15-21</sup>, including in knowledge exchange<sup>19</sup> and leadership<sup>1,2,15</sup>, and allowing space for researchers to boost their skills in line with their aspirations for the next stages of their careers, either within or outside of academia<sup>1,2,8,10,12,13,15-22</sup>.
- Produce world-leading research outputs, with a focus on global and local economic and societal impact. We will ensure that our research is accessible<sup>1,10,11,18-20</sup>.
- Nurture a world-class research culture<sup>all</sup>, including capturing the researcher voice more efficiently<sup>1,7,12,13</sup> recognising and celebrating successes<sup>1,11</sup>, researching ethically and with integrity<sup>6,10</sup>, and fostering diversity and inclusion<sup>1,3,7,9,16</sup>.
- The five themes of our RC Strategy are reflected in the action plan: entrepreneurialism<sup>19</sup>, inclusion<sup>1,3,7,9,12,13,16</sup>, productivity<sup>1,2,4,5,7,16,17,19,20,21</sup>, curiosity<sup>1,7,16,18</sup>, and integrity<sup>6,10</sup>.

### Implementation Plan: Environment and culture

#### *Completed 2025-26*

The Postdoc Congress ran its third successful annual event in June 2025, and we will begin work planning the 2026 event soon (Action 1). Our Peer Support approach has been successfully embedded throughout the Researcher Development programme (Action 2). The research culture team continues to work with School and Institute level research culture leads (Action 3). The second round of Enhancing Research Culture Funding distributed £146K to 16 projects in 2025 (Action 5). A research integrity training platform is being integrated in our university systems (Action 6), and new approaches to ensure HSS postdocs are well informed with HR policy were launched (Action 8).

#### *Coming in 2026-27*

The Postdoc Congress is a flagship event for our research community (Action 1) and will remain an embedded tradition to amplify postdoc voice, foster community and inspire future leaders. The Research culture team will continue to improve ways to capture and assess research-staff data (Action 4). Work will continue to better embed research integrity training and new procedures (Actions 6 and 10), introduce new opportunities for postdocs to network and socialise (Action 7), and introduce new approaches to handling bullying and harassment and discrimination (Action 9).

9).Implementation Plan: Employment

### Completed in 2025-26

The Research and Innovation Awards debuted a new category that celebrated postdoc contributions (Action11). The Faculty of HSS produced guidance to ensure better ECR representation across Faculty and School committees (Action 12), and has embedded new ECR induction practices (Action 14).

### Coming in 2026-27

Faculties of HSS and S&E will ensure that their ECRs have representation on relevant committees by 2027 (Actions 12 and 13). Following reports that the new contracts policy was not being appropriately applied (Action 23), the FMD is rolling out a new operational model to ensure better implantation.

## Implementation Plan: Professional Development

### Completed in 2025-26

The redeveloped Researcher Development Programme for Postdocs and PIs ran its first complete year in 2024/25 (Action 15), including a revision of provision for BAME postdocs (Action 16), new tools to help track and plan CPD Activity (Action 17), and a scaled-up version of the Postdoc Mentoring Programme (Action 19). A review of the current KE and Entrepreneurial training provision available at Queen Mary is being finalised (Action 18), alongside a new strategy for better career planning support for HSS postdocs (Actions 20 and 21).

### Coming in 2026-27

New KE and Entrepreneurial provision will be planned and launched (Action 18) alongside better career progression planning for S&E Postdocs (Action 22). HSS will report on the success of their new career planning support in our final report (Actions 20 and 21)

## Summary of Progress from Year 2 of our Current Action Plan (1518/1800 words)

Action Colour Key		Environment and Culture	Employment	Professional Development	Total for AP2024
<b>Action Completed</b>		4/10	1/5	4/8	9/23
<b>Action Partially Complete</b> Some success measures complete and on-track to fully complete as planned		4/10	3/5	3/8	9/23
<b>Action In Progress</b> Action is progressing, but some replanning was required		2/10	1/5	1/8	5/23

Stakeholders: **I** – Institution, **M** – Academic Staff Managers of Researchers, **R** – Researchers

### Environment and Culture:

Actions are ordered numerically, grouped by UUK form heading

**I** **Action 1 – Run a yearly Postdoc Congress at Queen Mary organised by Postdocs, for Postdocs.** A diverse team helped organise the 2025 Postdoc Congress (renamed from Postdoc Conference) whose theme was postdoc identity. The event successfully engaged over 80 postdocs who contributed to a conference paper that will be presented to the Research and Innovation Board (chaired by the VP Research and Innovation) . Success Measure (SM) 1: 75% think there should be an annual event for postdocs (CEDARS25); SM2: 4.81 rating with high levels of engagement and discussion throughout the day.

**R** **Action 2 – Launch more cohorts of the Postdoc Peer Support Programme.** Peer support was added to the Funding Support, Academic Career Development, and Planning Beyond

Academia, and Researchers Inductions Programmes; enabling postdocs to support each other in numerous productivity and development support contexts.

- I** **Action 3 – The RC Team will Create a Research Culture Steering Group.** Research Culture Leads organically emerged at school level in HSS and S&E and a strengthened faculty-wide Research Culture & Environment Committee in FMD serve the same function to the proposed steering group. As such, this new structure will not be required.
- I** **Action 4 – Improved capturing and assessing of data to inform decision making.** A data analyst was recruited to post in September 2024 and progress has been made, but further refinement is needed to underlying data before dashboards can be shared more broadly for consultation.
- R** **Action 5 – Use the Enhancing Research Culture Funding from Research England to directly benefit researchers and support delivery of the Research Culture strategic priorities.** The second round of the Enhancing Research & Innovation Cultures funding scheme awarded around £146k to 16 projects across the university’s faculties and professional service departments. Several awards were made to initiatives led by postdocs or aimed at supporting postdocs, including the Queen Mary Postdoc Congress, the Whitechapel postdoc forum: Careers Advice Series, Empowering Postdoctoral Researchers in SBBS and Enhancing ECR environment in S&E.
- I**  
**M** **Action 6 – Better embed RI Training through the Epigeum platform across The University.** Procurement of the Epigeum platform has been completed, and online courses are in testing phase. The courses went live in September 2025. Further courses, with more advanced and disciplinary-relevant content, will be created subsequently, and we will update to this end in our final report.
- R** **Action 7 – Create opportunities for S&E postdocs to organise events to enable them to network & socialise.** School level networking and social events took place to support postdoc community and enable networking across Research Centre boundaries. The Faculty will organise a postdoctoral lunch in 2025/26 and encourage the research Centre/Schools to organise local networking events for PDRAs.
- I** **Action 8 – HSS to work with HR to improve communications.** Strategy with HR and solutions finalised and to be embedded within 2025/26 induction sessions. New practices will be signposted to in HSS research events and informal meetings. 50% of ECRs report being clear on promotions procedures (CEDARS).
- I** **Action 9 - Develop and roll out a new approach to handling bullying, harassment and discrimination throughout FMD.** New Bullying and Harassment initiatives and training piloted in the Blizzard institute during 2024/25 academic year and presented at FMD Faculty Research Integrity and Research Culture and Environment Away day in July 2025. Senior FMD Leaders to develop new resources for faculty with EDI team.
- I**  
**M** **Action 10 – Development of a New Faculty Research Integrity (RI) Procedure with input from the FMD RI Committee.** New RI Procedure approved by Faculty is being implemented to harmonise with University procedures. 3/6 FMD Institutes now above the 85% compliance threshold with Epigeum training and continuing to improve.

## Employment

- I** **Action 11 – Consider how Research & Innovation Awards can be more inclusive in celebrating postdoc contributions beyond those to research outputs.** Surpassing the original milestones of this action, the annual R&I Awards debuted a new category dedicated to celebrating postdoc contributions in June 2025, featuring 6 shortlisted candidates from across Queen Mary.
- I** **Action 12 - HSS to circulate guidance to Schools around inclusion of ECRs in decision making committees** Initial survey in Faculty/School committees revealed that roughly half

included a Postdoc or ECR within their membership. New guidance produced and circulated to Directors of Research that highlights examples of good practice from within QMUL. The EDI Lead in S&E has given a presentation at the Faculty Research Away day about how to construct a diverse and inclusive leadership team in the S&E Research Centre. In particular, Centres have been encouraged to have an ECR representative in their leadership teams.

- I Action 13 - Improve PDRAs inclusion in decision making at S&E group/ School/ Institute level.** Each School's research committee and Faculty EDI each have postdoc representation. Faculty to identify gaps in representation and recruit in 2025-26.
- I Action 14 – Design and deliver a HSS Faculty Research Induction for newly joined ECRs.** Two induction events will be organised in 2025/26 based on the successful pilot, further informed by a recent surveys of ECRs and informal session with ECR reps.
- I Action 23 – FMD postdocs to have indefinite contracts with a funding clause.** Following reports from the FMD Postdoc forums that new contracts policy was not being followed, the new FMD Operational Model currently being rolled out will allow for greater implementation of agreed policy in order to ensure blanket coverage of all new FMD Postdoctoral Researchers.

## Professional Development

- I Action 15 – Build the new postdoc RD programme, introducing a cohort approach and built-in impact measures.** Our revised programme features over 30 different sessions (standalone or in programmes, e.g., Funding support), a mentoring programme, an induction programme, and annual Postdoc Congress. We saw a 14% increase in in postdocs reporting awareness of our programme (CEDARS). On average, 97% saw how they could use what they learned on our programme, and 98% were likely to recommend the programme to a colleague.
- I Action 16 – To develop and deliver a development programme in support of BAME postdocs.** Focus groups revealed that a BAME solution was not favoured by our postdocs. Asian postdocs indicated satisfaction with current provision. The Black Postdocs were supported to launch the Black Postdoc Society, which ran two events in in this last year. RD will continue to support the Black Postdoc Society and revisit the need for further provision as standard practice with programme review.
- I Actions 17 – Support postdocs to proactively engage with, plan and document their 10 days CPD Activity.** The recommendation for postdocs to engage in 10-days (70 hours) of annual CPD activity is embedded in the Postdoc Conference, QMA/RD provision, and Careers and Enterprise provision for postdocs. LMS update will follow early in the new calendar year.
- I Action 18 – New development programme to support research commercialisation and entrepreneurship for postdocs.** Alongside bespoke support to researchers considering entrepreneurship or commercialisation avenues available from the Research Services and Queen Mary Innovations Ltd, the Associate Director for Entrepreneurship is finalising a review of the Knowledge Exchange, Impact, and Entrepreneurship training that is currently available across the University. Gap analysis and planning of future provision will follow in 2026-27.
- I Action 19 – Roll out a scalable, annual mentoring cohort that Schools/ Institutes can opt-in to.** 24/25 mentoring cohort was double the size of the pilot and involved 14 Schools and Institutes and a support programme was piloted with this cohort which focused on making the most of mentoring, networking, managing hierarchical relationships, and time/task prioritisation. 25/26 mentoring cohort will open for registration in September.
- I Action 20 – To develop and deliver an HSS-specific programme of careers workshops.** Strategizing and design of programme complete in collaboration with Careers Service and

ECR input. Programme to pilot in 2025/26 featuring sessions on a range of topics (e.g., career planning, applying for jobs, grant application support, and non-academic careers), along with informal lunches to give ECRs a forum to network and discuss opportunities.

**I Action 21 - To better promote engagement with their own career development, and the support available through the QMUL careers service to postdoctoral researchers.** New engagement strategy with careers launched. HSS to continue raising awareness about career support for ECRs, and provide a best-practice guidance document for research supervisors/managers to help them advise ECRs and signpost support.

**I Action 22 - Promote greater engagement with career progression planning for S&E PDRAs** Each S&E School organised an annual careers progression events featuring former S&E researchers, enabling their early-career researchers to network with these “alumni” alongside their colleagues in other Centres and Research Groups. Faculty to examine postdoc engagement with Careers services and career planning more broadly in remaining year to inform actions for 2027-30 planning cycle.

### Lessons Learned from Implementation of AP2024 in Year 1 (141 of 500 words)

Regular RDCIG meetings throughout the year facilitate collection of action updates and offer RDCIG members an opportunity to network and share practice across Faculty and School/Institute boundaries. Adding a second postdoc/ECR representative from each Faculty has helped keep at least one representative’s position filled on RDCIG.

This action plan represents the first cycle where planning was embedded down to the Faculty level. However, our Faculties are made up of Schools and Institutes that organise as Departments and Centres; whose cultures and activity is diverse. Some of our action milestones and success measures were planned at faculty level, which is not always easy to do when activity occurs in a more granular way. We will report back against our milestones and success measures for AP2024 accordingly, however we take on board that AP2027-30 may require a more nuanced approach at recording progress.

### Key Objectives in Delivering our Plan in the Next Period (148 of 500 words)

For reference, the full text our [2024-2027 Implementation Report](#) and [Appendix 2](#), can be [accessed online](#). This report includes progress up until 31 July 2025.

In common with other universities, the financial challenges across the sector have encouraged Queen Mary to consider how best to support different staff groups moving forward on a sustainable footing into 2026 and beyond. This is likely to lead to changes in team responsibilities but providing support for postdocs will remain an institutional priority.

As any changes work through, we will continue to use RDCIG meetings to track progress and replan actions as necessary, whilst increasing efforts to ensure all representative posts stay filled.

Key objectives to enable the delivery of AP2024 will include the continued analysis of CEDARS 2025, which surveyed approximately 25% of the community (postdocs, fellows, and academic staff), as well as and the research community’s response (62%) to the Queen Mary Staff Survey. Feedback collected from these surveys will help inform progress on AP2024 actions, whilst also providing an evidence base for future action plans.

With only 1 year left to AP2024, we will begin to engage with senior leadership and the (April) 2026 Postdoc Congress to consider ideas for the next action planning cycle (2027-2030).

### Queen Mary's Institutional Approval Process (177/200 words)

Meeting bimonthly, the RDCIG oversees implementation, reporting and action planning. It is chaired and managed by the RD/QMA and has wide stakeholder representation. Each faculty has two postdocs, one academic, and a faculty research officer reporting into their faculty leadership. Institutional representatives are the head of the Research Culture team (within SIC), a Senior Strategic HR partner, and an EDI Manager.

Data informing action planning included CEDARS (biennial, odd years), The Queen Mary Staff Survey (annual), QM systems data (e.g., HR, training booking), and input from the Postdoc Conference. The annual Congress (Action 1) is an important conduit for postdoc voice, bringing postdocs together to discuss their experiences, summarised in a postdoc-authored paper to the Vice Principal for Research and Innovation's (VP-R&I) Research and Innovation Board (RIB), alongside other papers and working groups with other relevant stakeholders (e.g., HR).

The RDCIG Manager compiled progress reports and actions from across Queen Mary in this Report and Action Plan, which was approved by Research Innovation Board (which includes the faculty Deans for Research) and the VP Research and Innovation.

### Signature on behalf of governing body:



Andrew Livingston, VP Research and Innovation, Queen Mary University of London

*Rui Pires Martins*

(as RD Concordat Implementation Group Manager)

### Contact for queries:

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This annual report will be analysed by the 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 via the email address listed on the RDC website:

[www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk).