

HREiR Action plan template (July 2020 - 2022)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Details		The institutional audience* for this action plan includes (complete or delete, as appropriate):		
Institution name:	Durham University	Audience	#	Comments
Cohort number:	5	Research staff	450	
Date of submission:	Jul-20	Research and teaching staff	1467	includes Principal Investigators
KEY: DCAD (Durham Centre for Academic Development), HR (Human Resources), RIS (Research Innovation Service), C&E (Careers and Enterprise Service), DVPR (Deputy Vice Provost Research), RSA (Research Staff Association)		Technicians	172	
		Professional support staff	90	includes senior management

Column1	Obligation2	Action	Success Measure (SMART)	Deadline	Responsibility	Progress update (to be completed for submission)	Outcome/result
	Obligation	Action	Success measure (SMART)	Deadline	Responsibility	Progress update (to be completed for submission)	Outcome/ result
Environment and Culture							
Institutions must:							
ECI1	Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat	Raise awareness of the concordat via the Newsletter and Research Staff events. Raise awareness with PIs to include concordat in grant applications. Develop a research staff development needs analysis based on the concordat. Ensure that the Concordat is detailed on the induction checklist.	CEDARS 2022 and annual focus groups - increase awareness of concordat to >50%	Jun-22	HR / DCAD		
ECI2	Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers	New processes embedded. Continue to review the success of new policies and feedback any issues or challenges that arise.	80% of research staff aware of policy for promotion and progression. Assessed through annual focus groups.	Jun-21	HR/DCAD		
ECI3	Promote good mental health and wellbeing through, for example, the effective management of workloads and people, and effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues	Health & Wellbeing Strategy is soon to be launched. Monitor via annual focus groups. Report+Support tool, Employee Assistance Programme	Report on research staff trends in annual report to Research Management Committee. 80% of research staff aware of processes and support - assessed through annual focus groups.	Dec-20	HR		
ECI4	Ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and including, wellbeing and mental health	Promote EDI training at Research Staff themed event. Facilitate PI oversight of EDI training online. Staff training on EDI in line with respect commission's recommendations	CEDARS 2022 <10% disagree with statement "Durham is committed to EDI"	Jun-21	HR		
ECI5	Ensure that researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity	CIG terms of reference modified to include research integrity. Work with departments to raise awareness and ensure implementation through Research Integrity Action Plan.	CEDARS 2022 <50% "never heard of the research integrity concordat". Develop Research Integrity Action Plan.	Jun-22	DCAD / HR / RIS	The relaunch of the RI Concordat has provided additional opportunity to raise awareness of expectations, presentations were made to University & Faculty Research & Ethics Committees. Training is provided but is not necessary badged as RI e.g. Research Methods, provision including within induction is being reviewed. Further presentations to FRCs and local committees are scheduled.	

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ECI6	Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and use the outcomes to improve institutional practices	Undertake CEDARS in 2020 and 2022. Establish new ways of gathering data to assess and evidence research culture including consultation with research staff at RSA events and focus groups and data in the uptake of relevant training. The university's Respect commission recommends issuing Exit questionnaires to all staff including Research Staff	CEDARS 2022 increase awareness of RSA to >50%. Investigate research culture using annual focus groups.	July 2020 and 2022	DCAD/HR		
Funders must:							
ECF1	Including requirements which promote equitable, inclusive and positive research cultures and environments in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies	When we run funding calls for researchers (e.g. Addison Wheeler Fellowships) we follow HR policies which are equitable and inclusive. Continue to review practices to ensure support as widely as possible for all relevant research applications open to research staff.	80% of research staff agree that research culture is equitable and inclusive; assessed through annual focus groups.	Jun-21	DCAD		
ECF2	Consider how funding opportunities and policies can facilitate different patterns and ways of working, and promote the wellbeing and mental health of researchers	We initiated a series of workshops to support fellowship applications from researchers. We also established Research Staff Awards to celebrate good practice and recognise the contribution of our researchers to the university. We need to now develop an annual programme of support.	Monitor implementation and engagement via annual focus groups.	Jul-21	DCAD/RIS	The Research Stress Test and related programs of work are looking at COVID impacts on working patterns and wellbeing and as well as identifying issues are also aiming to highlight the positive changes and best practices that can be continued and expanded.	
ECF3	Ensure that funding call requirements and selection processes offer equality of opportunity between different groups of researchers, recognise personal contexts, and promote positive research cultures and working conditions	When we run funding calls for researchers (e.g. Addison Wheeler Fellowships) we follow HR policies which are equitable and inclusive. Ongoing implementation to monitored.	Compliance of all research development support and internal selection procedures.	Jun-21	RIS	Implementation. The University started reviewing application rates by protected characteristics (including for specific funding streams e.g. RIF / GCRF in 2018/19 and Research Committee reviews whether	
Managers of researchers must:							
ECM1	Undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work	Policies and practices are already in place. Training to be provided in line with respect commission's recommendations. Establish a review of current training to evaluate gaps in our offer.	see EC14 (line 20)	Jun-21	HR		
ECM2	Ensure that they and their researchers act in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct	see ECI5 (line 21)	see EC15 (line 21)	see EC15 (line 21)	see EC15 (line 21)		
ECM3	Promote a healthy working environment that supports researchers' wellbeing and mental health, including reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and poor research integrity	see ECI3 (line 19)	see EC13 (line 19)	see EC13 (line 19)	see EC13 (line 19)		
ECM4	Consider fully, in accordance with statutory rights and institutional policies, flexible working requests and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers	Policies and practices are already in place and we are looking to review and monitor requests from research staff. Relevant HR policies and procedures of the nature can be found: https://www.dur.ac.uk/hr/policies/leave/ and https://www.dur.ac.uk/hr/policies/wlbalance/flexible/ . Ensure these are regularly communicated to Research Staff.	Monitor implementation and engagement via annual focus groups.	Jun-21	HR		
ECM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution	Policies and practices are already in place. Publish events and opportunities to engage in groups and activities including membership of Departmental Committees, AUA etc. Future Newsletters will publish such opportunities.	All positions available to be filled by research staff are filled.	Jun-21	RIS	All internal policies are subject to significant consultation, both via committees with a broad membership (inc. of Research Staff and ECRs) which contribute to design and are made available for open consultation to all Faculty for c. six weeks for comment and suggestion prior to approval.	
Researchers must:							
ECR1	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	This will be facilitated through improved induction (see EI2) and cascading policies and practice through PIs (see ECI4) and promoting good practice via the research staff awards.	see ECI4 (line 20) and ECI5 (line 21).	see EC14 (line 20)	see EC14 (line 20)		

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ECR2	Ensure they act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity, and equality, diversity and inclusion	EDI training is mandatory for all staff. Promote EDI training at Research Staff themed event. Facilitate oversight of EDI training online. Staff training on EDI in line with Respect Commissions recommendations. See EC14 (line 20) and EC15 (line 21).	See EC14 (line 20) and EC15 (line 21).	See ECR 14 (line 20) and EC15 (line 21).	See ECR 14 (line 20) and EC15 (line 21).		
ECR3	Take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health	See EC13 (line 19).	See EC13 (line 19).	See EC13 (line 19).	See EC13 (line 19).		
ECR4	Use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour, particularly in relation to discrimination, harassment, bullying, and research misconduct	Policies and practices are already in place. Continued emphasis to maintain and support	No formal complaints or reports of misconduct	Jun-21	RIS	Expected standards of behaviour are clear within policy and are disseminated via training and regular briefings. Alongside the standards the processes and policies for raising concerns are also listed e.g. Misconduct, Grievance, WhistleBlowing. Services work across boundaries to ensure issues are addressed via the most appropriate route. Upheld complaints are recorded and reported to Senate and other senior committees on an annual basis.	
ECR5	Consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution	Promote and disseminate best practice for engagement of Research Staff in departmental structures. Promote awareness with Research Staff of Research Staff Association engagement with University committees. Review number of research staff engaged in formal committees and develop proposals if necessary.	CEDARS 2022 "not participating in decision making" reduce to 10%	Jul-21	HR / DCAD / RSA / DVPR		
Employment							
Institutions must:							
E1	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices	Policies and practices are already in place. Ensure these are regularly communicated to researchers.	No formal complaints or reports of misconduct	Jun-21	HR		
E12	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position	Develop Research Staff focused session of institutional induction. Develop a best practice guide. Include staff induction best practice session in PI leadership training. At departmental level, complete the Induction checklist	CEDARS 2022 >80% attendance at institutional and departmental inductions. CEDARS 2022 reduce departments not offering induction to <20%. Development of best practice guide.	Oct-21	HR / DCAD		
E13	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	Ensure all research staff are familiar with the progression and promotion process. Provision of specific Autumn training event in line with the appraisal cycle. In early 2021 we are introducing non monetary schemes to instantly reward good practice and behaviours in line with University values.	Increase % satisfaction with appraisal process from 61%(CROS2019) to >80% (CEDARS 2022).	Oct-20	HR / DCAD	Due to Covid, PP process and training event postponed.	
E14	Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent	Promote engagement in training opportunities such as the Research Project Leadership Programme. Engage in training in line with respect commission's recommendations.	>15PIs/annum engage with leadership training.	Oct-20			
E15	Ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation	Policies and practices are already in place. Develop an active network of project PIs to share best practice and ensure they comply with policies to support researchers as effectively as possible.	PI network up and running and being used to drive behaviours.	Jun-21	HR	Training provided and expectations of standards of people management are clear. DPPC guidance is in place and has been embedded in the annual assessment criteria.	
E16	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	Dissemination of job opportunities via the N8 partnership has already been agreed. Currently reconsidering extending the window for redeployment to more than 3 days.	Review process and uptake by researchers.	Jan-21	HR		

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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	Policies and practices are already in place. Use our new PI network to ensure opportunities are cascaded to researchers to engage them more directly in developing policy.	PI network up and running and being used to drive behaviours	Jun-21	RIS	See ECM5.	
Funders must:							
EF1	Include requirements which support the improvement of working conditions for researchers, in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies	We continue to lobby UKRI and other funders through the Russell Group and other formal networks with our Research Innovation Services. Ensure that at every opportunity we strive to provide the best possible conditions for researchers employed by grant funding.	Assess conditions via annual focus group	Jun-21	DCAD/HR		
EF2	Review the impact of relevant funding call requirements on researchers' employment, particularly in relation to career progression and lack of job security	We continue to lobby UKRI and other funders through the Russell Group and other formal networks with our Research Innovation Services. Where possible review grant spend and explore the possibility of supporting progression and extensions of funding for researchers.	Assess impact via annual focus group	Jun-21	DCAD/HR		
EF3	Support institutions to develop policies and frameworks to promote sustainable employment arrangements and enhance job security, and provide opportunities for career progression	We work with funders and other institutions to share best practice. Share best practice from research groups about ways to improve job security and enhance opportunities for research staff.	Assess arrangements via annual focus group	Jun-21	DCAD/HR		
EF4	Consider the balance of their relevant funding streams in providing access to research funding and its impact at all career levels	We work with funders and other institutions to share best practice. No further action taken in this plan.	Reports to RMC completed	Jan-22	RIS	Reports made annually to RMC covering take-up of relevant funding streams. EIAs undertaken in advance of roll-out of significant new initiatives.	
Managers of researchers must:							
EM1	Undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care	Promote engagement in training opportunities such as the Research Project Leadership Programme. Engage in training in line with respect commission's recommendations.	>15 PIs/annum complete leadership training. Extend to all new PIs.	Jun-21	DCAD	Due to covid, next cohort to commence RPL programme in Autumn 2021.	
EM2	Familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding	Review how many PIs are undertaking training offered. Establish new process to remind PIs if necessary.	All new PIs undertake training within 6 months of being awarded funding.	Jun-22	DCAD/HR		
EM3	Commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers	Policies and practices are already in place. With the launch of Oracle cloud new e learning and workshops packages are being developed, with a focus on EDI.	100% compliance in mandatory training for unconscious bias	Jun-21	HR		
EM4	Actively engage in regular constructive performance management with their researchers	Policies and practices are already in place. The annual progression round provides feedback. Develop an online reflective career development needs analysis tool (see ER3 (line 62)) Will be holding sessions with Research staff so that they are aware of all relevant HR policies and procedures and how it applies to them, eg Performance Management	see ER3 (line 62)	see ER3 (line 62)	see ER3 (line 62)		
EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution	Policies and practices are already in place. Ensure opportunities are communicated using a range of mechanisms to research staff. Monitor through annual focus groups	30% of research staff contribute to policy development or are aware of opportunities - measured through annual focus groups.				
Researchers must:							
ER1	Ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder	Policies and practices are already in place and kept up to date so that Research Staff can access current and relevant information. Continue to monitor and evaluate policies and practice.	No formal complaints or reports of misconduct	Jan-22	RIS	See ECR4.	
ER2	Understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities	Policies and practices are already in place. continue to monitor and evaluate policies and practice.					
ER3	Positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers	use of Pebblepad Development Needs Analysis (DNA) to inform discussion (see PCDI4)	20% of Research Staff engaging with DNA	Jun-21	DCAD/HR/C&E		

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ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the wider academic community	See ECM5 (line 32), ECR5 (line 38), E12 (line 42) and E14 (line 44).	See ECM5 (line 32), ECR5 (line 38), E12 (line 42) and E14 (line 44).	See ECM5 (line 32), ECR5 (line 38), E12 (line 42) and E14 (line 44).	See ECM5 (line 32), ECR5 (line 38), E12 (line 42) and E14 (line 44).	See ECM5.	
Professional and Career Development							
Institutions must:							
PCD11	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	Promote development opportunities via Microsoft Teams, email newsletter, webpages and regular events. Deliver regular bespoke themed training sessions in response to RS need. Establishment of Research Staff Awards. Build network of senior research administrators to promote development opportunities. Explore potential for 10 days professional development to be included in contracts.	CEDARS 2022 – Reduce “not aware of training provided by DCAD” to <10%. CEDARS 2022 - increase average percentage for training undertaken across all categories to >30% Membership of Research Staff Association Microsoft Team >100	Oct-20	DCAD/HR/C&E/RIS	RIS training is being reviewed, and provision rationalised which is helping to provide more structure and with advertising. Additionally work is taking place regionally and nationally to co-develop materials in key areas including in integrity. It has been a challenge to deliver standard programs recently but innovation has occurred with much provision moving online. The challenge will be in structuring this in such a way that learning aligns to the key development needs. Meeting the ten days goal will remain challenging whilst workload and patterns remain disruptive.	
PCD12	Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers	Policies and practices are already in place. Evaluate and review process and mechanisms. Encourage and publicise researcher engagement in mentoring and training. New PI network will help drive working practices.	PI network functioning as planned	Jun-21	RIS	PI network is being augmented by a PI mailing list that can be used to communicate timely updates. Expectation of career development review and content is et by HR.	
PCD13	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers	Raise awareness of dedicated careers professional to provide individual and collective support to researchers. Provide access to a range of career activities, including appropriate alumni and employer led events highlighting a breadth of career pathways. Promote opportunities via Microsoft Teams, email newsletter, training booking system and webpages, including Careers & Enterprise web and social media platforms.	Registration of >50 researchers on the Careers & Enterprise services portal. Target of 25/annum accessing 1:1 support in response to CEDARS 2022 "discussed your career options within and beyond academia with a careers specialist?" CEDARS 2022 >50% "aware of what is available at your institution to support you in your professional and career development?"	Jul-21	C&E / DCAD / HR / RSA	Communication of the career events, opportunities and support available to research staff has encouraged registration on the Careers & Enterprise Centre portal. 27 staff registered in 2020. Employment of targeted messaging to research staff to facilitate engagement with 1:1 career support.	
PCD14	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	Introduce Development Needs Analysis (DNA) and eportfolio on Pebblepad specific for Researchers. Promote engagement in leadership training opportunities.	20% of Research Staff engaging with DNA.	Jan-21	DCAD / HR / RSA		
PCD15	Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this	See PCD13. Provide access to appropriate employer events and opportunities. Dedicated half-day workshop for research staff on careers beyond research.					
PCD16	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews	Provide range of pd activities and use of training booking system to monitor engagement. Pls starting new grants provided with written reminder of these responsibilities. Launch of Oracle cloud will log all training which managers will be able to monitor.	>250/annum research staff engaging in professional development workshops recorded via the Training booking system	Aug-21	DCAD/HR/RS A/C&E		
Funders must:							
PCDF1	Incorporate specific professional development requirements in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies. This should include researchers' engagement in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata per year, and evidence of effective career development planning	We continue to lobby UKRI and other funders through the Russell Group and other formal networks with our Research Innovation Services. Ensure that our own internal funding explicitly recognises the necessary engagement in training.					

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PCDF2	Embed the Concordat Principles and researcher development into research assessment strategies and processes	Review current practice to ensure that in research development support and internal evaluations for research funding that core principles are embedded.					
PCDF3	Acknowledge that a large proportion of the researchers they fund will move on to careers beyond academia, and consider how they can encourage and support this within their remit	We continue to lobby UKRI and other funders through the Russell Group and other formal networks with our Research Innovation Services.	engagement with Russel Group and other formal networks such as N8	Jan-21	RIS	Discussions on Career futures built into the Leading Research and PG development programmes. DU works with the RG and N8 to look at best practice.	
Managers of researchers must:							
PCDM1	Engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually	Promote and communicate progression and promotion process via research staff events, webpages and email. The online development needs analysis will aim to promote career development discussions.	Increase in satisfaction with appraisal process from 61% (CROS 2019) to 80% (CEDARS 2022)				
PCDM2	Support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and secondments	Raise awareness of mentoring process and policy. Research staff mentoring themed training event. Development and dissemination of best practice case studies.	CEDARS 2022 Reduce those "who have not undertaken mentoring but would like to" to <20%.	Jan-21	HR / DCAD		
PCDM3	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	Explore the possibility of writing the 10 days of training explicitly into every contract for research staff.	Present a recommendation to University Executive Committee with the proposal.	Jan-21	DVPR with HR		
PCDM4	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	See EM2 (line 55).	See EM2 (line 55).	See EM2 (line 55).	See EM2 (line 55).		
PCDM5	Engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development	Promote the research project leadership programme to PIs	>15 PIs/annum complete the leadership training.	2022	DCAD/HR/RIS /RSA/C&E	Training frameworks in place and ad hoc training publicised via various appropriate forums. BoS engaged with initiative.	
Researchers must:							
PCDR1	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	Record development and training undertaken and report in an annual appraisal. Provide an online development needs analysis and portfolio tool based on the RDF to record career development.	20% of Research Staff engaging with DNA. 50% of staff undertaking 10 days professional development per annum (CEDARS 2022)	01/01/2021 and July 2022	DCAD/HR		
PCDR2	Explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments	see PCDM2 (line78)	see PCDM2 (line78)	see PCDM2 (line78)	see PCDM2 (line78)		
PCDR3	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	see PCDR1 (line 83)	CEDARS statement: "You use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to support your continuing professional development activity" Agree increased to 30%. 20% of research staff engage with the E-portfolio.	Oct-20	DCAD		
PCDR4	Positively engage in career development reviews with their managers	see PCDM1 (line77)	see PCDM1 (line77)	see PCDM1 (line77)	see PCDM1 (line77)		
PCDR5	Seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	Development of reverse mentoring opportunities with the research project leadership programme	Recruit 10 RS/year as mentors.	Jan-21	DCAD		
PCDR6	Consider opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system through, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement and commercialisation	Develop potential placement opportunities within the institution	2 staff per annum undertake a placement	Jul-21	HR/C&E/DCA D		

* The 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 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.