

RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) – Terms of Reference

Strategic Drivers

Implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (referred hitherto as the RD Concordat) is of strategic importance to QMUL as UKRI and a number of key funders, as [signatories](#) themselves, have identified that the organisations they fund should “sign up to the Concordat and engage with their obligations”¹. Upholding the Concordat is of further strategic importance as the associated actions taken on by universities to improve their research culture can factor into REF Environment narratives.

The role of the RDCIG is

1. To oversee the implementation of the RD Concordat at QMUL.
2. To lead on action planning and reporting for HR Excellence in Research (HREiR)² and Concordat Signatory status³.
3. To gather evidence of good practice in supporting researcher career development (at local and institutional levels) and reporting it appropriately.
4. To champion an inclusive and diverse research culture across QMUL.
5. To raise awareness and share good practice, both locally and externally, in supporting researcher career development across the university.
6. To work effectively with other relevant strategic working groups at QM (e.g. Athena SWAN SATs, Race Equality teams, Research Integrity Concordat Working Group), as appropriate.

Reporting lines

- The RDCIG will report to the Senior Executive Team through the Vice-Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion, Sheila Gupta; referred to as the Concordat Champion(s).
- The RDCIG will report to Vitae biennially to maintain our HREiR Award ([Cohort 3](#): late January of even years). A copy of this report will be circulated amongst VP-Research Advisory Group, Heads of Schools, Human Resources lead team, and the Careers Group.
- The Concordat Champion(s) will report annually to Queen Mary Council once we have begun the process of Signatory Status. A copy of this report will be circulated amongst VP-Research Advisory Group, Heads of Schools, Human Resources lead team, and the Careers Group.
- The Faculty Postdoctoral Researcher and Academic Staff representatives will arrange to consult with the groups they represent, supported by the Researcher Development Team, and report in to the RDCIG.
- Minutes from RDCIG to go to VP-Research Advisory Group and the Faculty Research Managers (for dissemination).

¹ [URKI Action Plan 2020](#), p. 12, Actions 3.1, 3.2

² The [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) (HREiR) is an externally accredited European award for institutions who show positive progress towards implementing the principles of the [European Charter & Code for Researchers](#). The HR Concordat serves as an analogue to the Charter & Code in the UK. To gain the award, which QMUL has held since 2012, (UK) institutions perform an initial gap analysis to see how their culture and practices in supporting researchers align with the Concordat and enter into a **biennial action planning cycle that is reviewed internally every two years and externally every four years**. The action plans detail an organisation’s Concordat implementation progress and a strategy that demonstrates that positive future trajectory. We were most recently assessed in March 2020, and our action plan had to be resubmitted in August to include an additional action of setting up this group. All of QMUL’s HREiR action plans can be found [here](#).

³ Concordat Signatory Status is a new way of demonstrating alignment to the Concordat’s principles that was introduced in 2019 update to the (UK) RD Concordat. Signatory organisations are asked to form a working group to monitor Concordat implementation. Reporting to a member of their senior leadership team (the Concordat Champion), the group conducts an initial gap analysis against the [2019 RD Concordat](#). A year later, the group enters into an annual action planning cycle reporting to their organisation’s governing body (i.e. [Academic Registry and Council Secretariat \(ARCS\)](#) at QMUL), which is published (online). Though we have preliminary approval (from the VP-Research and Innovation) to proceed with signatory status, we have not yet formalised a timeline to proceed. The signatory process is separate and parallel to that of the HREiR. The main differences are that signatory status uses an annual reporting cycle to an organisation’s governing body instead of external reviewers. It is worth noting that other research stakeholders like funding bodies like UKRI, have signed up to be [signatories](#). Their action plan states that they will expect institutions they fund to also implement the Concordat.

- The HR Representatives will report back to Human Resources lead team, as appropriate.
- The RDCIG will be led, managed, and supported by staff from the Queen Mary Academy and the Researcher Development Team.

Organisation of the RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG)



Profile of Representatives and other RDCIG members

Academic Staff Representative should currently be line-managing at least one postdoc and be able to demonstrate experience of Queen Mary and its structures.

Postdoc Representative should ideally be from a different School/Institute than the Academic Rep. In general, the RDCIG should aim to be representative of the diverse QMUL research community, and thus other considerations might include: teaching fellows who are still research-active, the length of service at QMUL, disciplinary area (within each faculty), a mix of caring/parenting responsibilities, other elements of diversity inclusion (including age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation).

The HR Representative should be a Faculty Strategic HR Partner and should be knowledgeable about the HR policies that impact researchers.

Wherever possible, the Faculty Vice-Principal and the Faculty Dean for Research should help to find a replacement from their faculty or directorate.

Meetings and Time commitment

Beginning in October 2020, the core-RDCIG will aim to meet **4-6-times per year, for 1-hour each** time. Some initial meetings may be up to 90-minutes, just to ensure existing actions are appropriately addressed. Even after widespread return to campus, meetings can take place over MS Teams to alleviate commuting between campuses.

In addition to core-RDCIG meetings, the Faculty representatives will consult within their Faculty constituents **at least twice per year** in order to capture their thoughts on future Concordat-related actions, and to gain feedback on our finalised action plans.

All meetings will be supported by the RDCIG manager and RDCIG administrator as to minimise the administrative burden on Faculty Academic Staff representatives.

In addition to time spent in meetings, Faculty and HR representatives will contribute to the RD Concordat action planning (biennially to Vitae) and on reporting to Council (annually, in accordance with our responsibilities as a signatory), and towards the maintenance of QMUL's [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) (biennially).