HREiR Action plan template (2023-2026)

Details

Institution name:	**Keele University**
Cohort number:	**9**
Date of submission:	**24/11/2023**

The institutional audience* for this action plan includes:

Audience (direct beneficiaries of the action plan)	Number of	Comments
Research staff	100	Research-only staff
Postgraduate researchers	522	
Research and teaching staff	415	

								Complete for submission			To be completed only		

Obligation		Action	Carried over from previous action plan?	Deadline	Responsibility	The targeted impact of the action (success measure)	Comments (optional)	Progress update	The actual impact of the action (reporting against the success measure)	Outcome (ongoing/carried forward/no further action)
Environment and Culture										
Awareness and engagement										
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.	All new research staff to be introduced to the Concordat, and their own responsibilities in relation to it via the new Researcher Induction Programme	No	1) April-24 2) April-26	Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) Launch of new programme 2) 90% of new researchers complete Researcher Induction Programme over next 24 months				
ECI2	Ensure institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers.	See ECI1 & ECI6								
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.	1) Development of a new Research Culture App that will explain what research culture means, allow individuals to reflect on their own contributions to our research culture and signpost to further information in areas people are less informed or do not contribute to the level expected for their career stage. This will also provide a report that can be used in annual performance reviews and promotions as evidence of contribution. 2) Launch of a targeted communications campaign to achieve an increase in response rates to CEDARS and PRES surveys to ensure better representation of the views of the research community, in addition to Research Culture Cafes that are already an annual event at Keele. 3) Continue to deliver Research Culture Cafes to support active engagement with researcher community	Yes	1) Sept-24 2) PRES May-24 & CEDARS Jun-25 3) Sept-25 & Sept-26	1) Director of Research Strategy Delivery 2)Researcher Developer 3)Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) Research Culture App developed and piloted amongst research community, with positive feedback from those that have used the app 2) Improved levels of engagement from researchers and PGRs in key research surveys, evidenced by PRES achieving a minimum of 183 responses (up from 144 and equating to 35% of the PGR community). CEDARS achieving a minimum of 150 responses (up from 40 and representing 30% of research staff) 3) Continued engagement of researchers in Research Cafe's, with 5 Research Cafe's delivered annually and attended by up to 150 colleagues from across the research ecosystem.				

		See ECR1								
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.									
Wellbeing and mental health										
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.	See EM1 & ECM3								
ECI4	Ensure managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to wellbeing and mental health.	See EM1 & ECM3								
ECM3	Ensure managers promote a healthy working environment that supports researchers' wellbeing and mental health.	Provide tools to support managers to help researchers to take care of their wellbeing at work and provide services that support researchers who are beginning to experience poor mental health.	No	Trial to begin in Jan 24 with full launch by Oct 24	Chief People Officer, Head of Occupational Health	Introduction of Wellbeing action plans for managers and staff, with the goal of providing practical and realistic guidance to support researchers in their day-to-day experiences. Plus related training/resources for managers. Evaluation activity will be undertaken to assess the impact of wellbeing action plans via responses to pre-post questionnaires and analysis of sickness absence rates.				
ECM4	Ensure managers consider fully flexible working requests and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers.	Already embedded in routine practice								
ECR3	Ensure researchers take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health.	See ECM3								
Bullying and harassment										
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.										
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.	See ECI3 & ECR4								
ECM3	Ensure managers encourage reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment	Deliver a campaign focused on raising awareness around what bullying and harassment can look like in relation to research roles, as feedback indicates that it can be the case that researchers believe that certain behaviours that could constitute bullying and harassment are expected and acceptable, especially when working in high intensity research groups.	No	Sep-24	Director Research Strategy Delivery	Improved awareness of what behaviours could constitute discrimination, bullying and harassment for managers. Evidenced by pulse survey sent to line managers of researchers across campus by March 2024 to capture baseline data around individuals acknowledging that they encourage reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying or harassment and explaining how to report it. Pulse survey to be repeated 6 months after the campaign has launched. Campaign to continue until at least 80% of respondents (managers) agree that they are proactive about encouraging direct reports to report incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination.				

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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.	Clearer signposting for staff to the anonymous reporting tool, with permanent link from Intranet homepage, and promotion of safety (SafeZone) app. The Keele Internal Comms email newsletter periodically reminds staff & students of routes to reporting any issue and #NeverOK campaigns remain prominent.	No	Nov-25	Deputy Director of HR & Director of Research Strategy Delivery	Both are currently on Keele's intranet pages, they will be included in the new Researcher Induction Programme when launched. Improved awareness of what behaviours could constitute discrimination, bullying and harassment and how to report this for research staff. Evidenced by Pulse survey sent to all researchers and research-related colleagues across campus by March 2024 to capture baseline data around individuals feeling confident they can recognise bullying or harassment, know how to report it and feel confident to report it. Repeat pulse survey every 6 months after campaign to raise awareness has launched. Campaign to continue until at least 80% of respondents (researchers and research-related colleagues) agree that they are confident in recognising and reporting inappropriate behaviours.			
Equality, diversity and inclusion										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in-, aware of- and adopt practices enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion.										
ECI4 / ECM1	Ensure managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work.	See ECR2 & EM1							
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to equality, diversity and inclusion.	Monitoring completion of Equality in the Workplace and Bias Awareness mandatory training	No	Jul 25 & Jul 26	Organisational Development Manager	Completion targets for Equality in the Workplace to be maintained above 90% and Bias Awareness completion to increase from 75.8% to over 80%			
Research Integrity										
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.	Completion of actions within 2021-2024 Open Research Action Plan. The plan is centered on 5 themes, each of which have an embedded set of actions: Theme A: Training Researchers Theme B: Developing Researchers Theme C: Infrastructure Theme D: Embedding Open Research in Institutional Practice Theme E: Establishing & Nurturing External Partnerships.	Yes	Jul-25	Academic Lead for Research Integrity	Completion of all targets within the Action Plan to deliver high levels of awareness of research integrity and professional conduct measured through CEDARS Q34, Q40 and Q45 agreement rates of 80% or higher. Also measured through improved research induction programme, signposting colleagues to our online research integrity training module. Evidenced through at least a 50% increase in number of module users.			
ECM3	Ensure managers report and address incidents of poor research integrity.	See ECR4							
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity.	See ECR4							
ECR4	Ensure researchers use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour in relation to research misconduct.	New research misconduct policy to be written, launched and effectiveness reviewed	No	1) Jun-24 2) Jun-25		1) Launch of new policy 2) Evaluation of knowledge/understanding of policy, likely through a pulse survey or Culture Cafés (to be discussed by Research Culture Committee as to likely procedure for this)			

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Policy development										
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.	See EM5 (also opportunities will arise through researcher involvement in new Research Culture Committee)								
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.	See EM5 (also opportunities will arise through researcher involvement in new Research Culture Committee)								
EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution.	Review of Senate Effectiveness carried out by AdvanceHE in 2022-23 indicated opportunities to improve mechanisms for consultation on policy development. In response to this, the following actions have been agreed: * Review of Schedule of Delegation * Review of terms of reference for Education & Research Committees * Further clarification of consultation routes for policy development / revision	No	Jul-25	Academic Registrar	Improved engagement from researchers in policy development, evidenced by CEDARS survey to increase from 62% agreeing that there are "Opportunities to participate in decision-making processes (e.g. committees)" up to 70% agreeing.				
ECR5	Encourage researchers to consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution.	See EM4 & EM5								
ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the wider academic community.	See EM4								
Employment										
Recruitment and induction										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure recruitment of researchers is open and fair and researchers receive effective inductions into the organisation.										
EI1	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.	Researcher job descriptions to include a focus on potential contribution to the research community	No	1) Mar-24 2) Mar-25 & Mar-26	Deputy Director of HR/Researcher Developer	1) New inclusion of wording around 'potential to contribute to Keele and wider research community' to be embedded within job descriptions and/or essential criteria in standardised institutional templates 2) Research Culture Committee to monitor job descriptions for wording around 'contribution to community' and if required, engage with Faculties to encourage increased use of this terminology within job descriptions. Two reviews to be conducted in period.				
EI2	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	All new research staff to be introduced to the Concordat, and their own responsibilities in relation to it via the new Researcher Induction Programme	No	1) April-24 2) April-26	Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) Launch of new programme 2) 90% of new researchers complete Researcher Induction Programme over next 24 months				
Recognition, reward and promotion										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure the fair and inclusive recognition of researchers as part of their career progression.										

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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.	The promotions committee annually reviews the effective operations of the promotion process. This will be enhanced by monitoring application and success data to ensure that the process works to recognise the contribution of researchers. The Pro Vice Chancellor Research, who is a member of the promotions committee, will take guidance from the Research Culture Committee to feed into the review process, including any revisions to criteria.	No	Jul-25	Chief People Officer, Pro Vice Chancellor Research & Innovation	Analysis of data from promotions indicates that the criteria recognises the contribution of researchers evidence through increase in proportion of staff agreeing to the CEDARS question 'the promotions in my institution are made on merit' from 42% currently to over 50%				
EM3	Managers commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers.	See EM1								
Responsibilities and reporting										
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.	Already embedded in routine practice								
ER1	Researchers ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder.	Already embedded in routine practice								
ER2	Researchers understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities.	See EC11								
People management										
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.	See EM1								
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.	See EM1 & EM4								
EM1	Managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care.	1 & 2) Provide effective SPRE (Appraisal) Training to all relevant managers to ensure these processes include high-quality professional development and career conversations. 3) Embedding of improved processes for engagement with role-specific mandatory training for supervisors.	Yes	1) June-24 2) July-25 3) Nov-25	Organisational Development Manager & Researcher Developer	1) Production of new materials and/or workshops to better support managers on how to best deliver appraisals, leading to improved quality of appraisals. 2) CEDARS data to show that a minimum of 60% of respondents find the appraisal system useful/very useful 3) 100% of new supervisors to complete 'Introduction to Research Supervision at Keele', 90% of experienced supervisors to complete 'Advancing Research Supervisory Practice'				

			Yes/No	Timescale	Responsible	Success measure			
EM4	Managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care.	Effective monitoring of appraisals to ensure that all researchers are completing an appraisal and that those delivering them are effectively trained	Yes	1) Reviews Jan-25 & Jan-26 2) July-25 3) Dec-24	Deputy Director of HR & Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) Implementation of a new appraisals monitoring process, with 90% of eligible staff to have had an appraisal 2) CEDARS data to demonstrate that 60% of respondents find the appraisal system useful/very useful 3) Delivery of a Research Culture Cafe, alongside pulse survey, to all research-related colleagues and researchers, to specifically discuss effectiveness of appraisals with researchers and to take action based on feedback to improve the efficacy of appraisals.			
ER3	Researchers positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers.	See EM4							
Job security									
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.	Review of Fixed-Term Working Policy and Procedure to be undertaken including an equality impact assessment. Whilst the University does not make great use of fixed-term contracts, we will make the auditing of fixed-term contracts more systematic and move colleagues to indefinite contracts where appropriate	Yes	Jun-24	Deputy Director of HR	1) EIA produced on fixed-term contract use 2) Consultation on proposals for change/updates undertaken with Trade Unions 3) New documents to be published			
Professional and Career Development									
Championing professional development									
The aims of these obligations are to promote the importance of professional development and ensure researchers have the time to engage in it.									
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.	1) New training materials to be produced to highlight potential for experiential learning and its benefits for professional development 2) Enhance guidance and descriptions of what types of activities can be considered to fit within professional development on SharePoint 3) Ensure records from all training repositories are available to be utlised as part of SPRE (Appraisal) discussions.	Yes	1) Nov-24 2) July-25 3) July-25	Researcher Developer & KDA Manager	1) New training resources available on Sharepoint site, with a minimum of two 'Introduction to Researcher Development' sessions a year organised for staff, also embedded within new induction programme. These sessions guide attendees on how they identify the skills they might need to develop, how to develop these, how to navigate the Research Development Framework, and the benefits of experiential learning. 2) Improved understanding by researchers of what types of activity can be counted as professional development, evidenced by an increase to over 20% of staff reporting a minimum of 10 days CPD in CEDARS 3) SPRE is used as a mechanism for discussion of professional development activities and the support required to participate in those activities. Evidenced by CEDARS agree rate rising to 70% for 'your manager/supervisor encourages you to engage in personal and career development activities?' (up from 62.5%).			

PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities.	1) Identify and implement system(s) to be used as by research staff to record professional development activities 2) Data on professional development to be reported to Research Culture Committee	Yes	1) Nov-24 2) Nov-25 & Nov 26	Researcher Developer, Organisational Development Manager, Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) Systems are established and used by researchers 2) Research Culture Committee to receive annual reports and consider opportunities to improve engagement with professional development opportunities			
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.	Included in other actions (PCDI1), we have opted to encourage and support rather than allocate, recognising that the latter approach can place perceived workload pressure on researchers and may be counter-productive							
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.	Improved engagement with the UKCGE Research Supervision Recognition Programme through: 1) Improved training related to the award 2) Increased number of staff completing the award	Yes	1) Feb-24 2) Jan-26	Researcher Developer	1) New supervisor training to include information on the UKCGE programme, plus an activity around reflective writing to support individuals' starting their reflective portfolio. 2) Minimum of 18 individuals by end of 2025 receiving the full award (up from 3 currently)			
Career development reviews									
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.	See EM1							
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with researcher career development reviews.	See EM4							
PCDM1	Managers engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually.	See EM1							
PCDR4	Researchers positively engage in career development reviews with their managers.	See EM4							
Career development support and planning									
The aims of these obligations are to promote researchers' career development planning through tailored support and gathering evidence of professional experience.									

Ref	Obligation	Action	Completed	Target Date	Responsibility	Success Measure			
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	1) Improved communication to PGRs highlighting specific workshops on breadth of careers, opportunities and the offer of individual careers guidance by trained and experienced Careers Consultants (minimum of 3 workshops per year, taking a student led approach to content and aiming for attendance of 15 PGRs at each session) 2) Develop the collaborative, PGR-led approach we currently employ by communicating our offer of professional, impartial careers advice and guidance more widely. 3) Develop tailored content exploring careers beyond academia using alumni and partners at regular points throughout the year.	No	Jun-25	Director of Student Futures	1) Careers & Employability to deliver minimum 3 PGR-focused sessions per year with an average attendance of 15 for each. Improved response to 40% agreement of PRES question asking PGRs whether they agree that have "received advice on careers options" - was 35% agreement in 2022, with a global average of 28%. 2) PGRs feel more confident about navigating their careers helping secure their first and subsequent posts. It will also enable them to identify and articulate the skills and knowledge they have developed from their research, in particular tailoring applications to roles including roles outside academia. Impact will be measured through self-assessment by those engaging with support. 3) Increase in engagement with external partners measured through increased PRES score for question on have they experienced engagement with non-academic partners. Current PRES score is 26%, with a global average of 28%. Target is to increase this to 35%			
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.	See EM1 & EM4							
Research identity and leadership									
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.	Full implementation of a new Research Leadership Training Programme	No	1) Feb-25 2) Feb-26	Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) 30 participants to complete pilot of leadership programme 2) 150 total participants to complete programme after 24 months - representing around 25% of research staff population. Aim for 50 PGRs to also complete programme in this time period.			
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 endeavors.	See EM1							
PCDM5	Managers engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development.	See PCDI4							
PCDR5	Researchers to seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	See PCDI4							
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.									

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Ref	Description	Action		Responsibility	Success measure			
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.	1) Pilot a scheme to identify potential external secondment opportunities for ECRs 2) Promotion of internal shadowing opportunities for ECRs	No	1 & 2) Jun 25	Director of Research Strategy Delivery	1) Pilot scheme is launched and evaluated for both internal and external secondment/shadowing opportunities. 2) Internal shadowing opportunities are taken up, with uptake monitored and feedback sought from those participating			
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.	1) Launch of research related mentoring scheme, with mentoring to be offered to staff in support of professional and career development 2) Refresh SPRE Training for Managers to highlight social learning opportunities such as mentoring	No	1) Trial launched Mar-24 with review Jun-24, reviewed again Jun-25 2) Jun-25	Organisational Development Manager & Researcher Developer	1) Launch of new mentoring system in early 2024, with collation of data on number of participants in scheme and analysis of feedback. Mentoring scheme to be reviewed after trial with actions put in place to ensure maximum potential success 2) CEDARS agreement rate rising to 70% for 'your manager/supervisor encourages you to engage in personal and career development activities?' (up from 62.5%).			
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.	See PCDM2							
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.	Ensure all researchers are aware of the online training: Research Impact: Creating Meaning and Value, and support engagement with high quality with external training (e.g. NCCPE) Deploy the Sector Specialist Partnership Development Managers to grow the external networks of our four Institutes to support research impact. Develop targeted strategies to grow the impact networks for emerging interdisciplinary centres of excellence such as materials science. Support mentoring and peer learning in key areas of impact (e.g. Policy)	No	1) July-24 2) Oct-25 3) July-26	Partnership Development Team	1) Quarterly Institute external network sessions in place 2) Unified Sector engagement sessions (or equivalent) running at least once a year from 2024 onwards 3) Continued growth in 'entry-level' impact opportunities such as KTPs, doubling income in this area within two years			

* 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