Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

HR Excellence in Research Award

10 Year Review – September 2020

3 Page Report

1. Process for 10 Year Review and Transposition to the new Concordat

QMU's Athena SWAN and Concordat Steering Group (ASCSG), chaired by the Deputy Principal, has monitored progress against the published 2018-20 Action Plan. Our Principal publicly declared QMU's commitment to the new Researcher Development Concordat in October 2019, our enthusiasm and support reflected in our position as one of the first 10 UK institutions to sign up. The ASCSG appointed a subgroup - The Researcher Development Concordat Working Group (RDCWG), led by a nomination from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to oversee the implementation of the 2018-20 Action Plan and its transposition into the new 2019 Concordat template. The ASCSG reports to the SLT (Chaired by the Principal), Research Strategy Committee (RSC) , Equality and Diversity Committee and relevant School / Research Centre boards, ensuring explicit articulation with wider institutional strategies. Membership of the RDCWG includes: Head of Research and KE Development Unit (RKEDU); Head of HR; 2 Senior Professorial level staff (Head of Graduate School and University Academic Lead for REF 2021); University Contract Research (CRS) Staff Mentor; Research Grants and Contracts Advisor; 4 representatives from CRS; Trade Union representative; 3 Post Graduate Researchers (PGRs). QMU was one of only 22 UK HEIs to run the UK CEDARS Survey in July 2020. Given the timings of the Cohort 1 HRiR submission and the close of CEDARS at 31 July 2020 we have not been able to undertake detailed analysis of feedback to inform SMART targets to underpin the 2020-22 Action Plan, however after full consultation with research staff we will develop an effective, visible action-based response to CEDARS feedback incorporating SMART measures for CEDARS items identified in the Action Plan. We are committed to running CEDARS again in July 2021 to monitor progress against July 2020 baseline data with the aim of increasing staff participation in CEDARS 2021 from 31% in 2020 to 40%.

Gap Analysis and Transposition Process

QMU has been a strong advocate of the 2019 Concordat, the spirit and principles of which firmly resonate with our Strategic Plan, SFC Outcome Agreement and REF Strategy. We welcomed its publication and the transposition of our action plan against the new principles was a natural and timely progression in terms of where we were as a small but progressive post-92 institution. In November 2019 the RDCWG undertook a gap analysis, led by CRS. Committed to co-creation and co-ownership, the RDCWG worked collaboratively to identify new/updated actions with each action having a named professional services/researcher lead, split predominantly across the three Concordat principles. Within QMU the Concordat applies to all research staff.

Evaluation informed by:
- Development of Strategic Plan 2020-25 and 2019 University Outcome Agreement to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
- Parallel development of the REF 2021 submission and Institutional Level and UoA Level future 5 year Strategy (Environment).
- Research Centre annual reviews of current and future compliance and feedback from Research Strategy Committee.
- Discussions with professional service providers (HR, Library, Finance, RKEDU, Technical Staff). Input from Trade Unions.
- Inputs from our Professoriate, 2 Schools and 6 Research Centres They in turn consulted with a range of team members.

Feedback from researchers included:
- Opportunity for researchers to input into the Strategic Plan 2020-25 via a World Café led by the Principal and SLT.
- QMU has been an early adopter of CEDARS and is using real time feedback to inform policy/ strategy development.
- Survey of all academic staff in 2019 and series of researcher

focus groups to understand potential barriers to research in protected groups. Data collected informs our approach to ensuring our processes eliminate bias and promote equality.
- Bi annual meetings with the Deputy Principal and CRS, Head of Graduate School held open space/drop-ins with PGRs.
- Collaboration in shared practice with Scottish HEIs via SFC UIF Collaborative Groups and Universities Scotland Sub-Groups.
- Informal External Peer Review by Buddy HEI - Research and Innovation Services – University of Stirling.

Links with existing Quality Assurance and other implementation/monitoring mechanisms:
- Internal monitoring at an institutional level via dedicated operational delivery plan and KPIs reported to the University Court.
- Institutional KPIs for Centres monitored for compliance with the Concordat and supporting CRS - reported to RSC and Court.
- Alignment with REF 2021 metrics/ Environment statements -monitor via the REF 2021 underpinning audit process.
- Compliance integral to SFC monitoring of our Outcome Agreement 2017-20 and 2020-23 and annual UIF statement.

2. Key Achievements 2018-2020, including indicators and actions Principle 1: Recruitment and Selection

(1) Completed review of AWAM and launched revised Academic Workload Allocation Model (AWAM) in 2019.
(2) Further training offered to all staff on Mentoring and Coaching in response to various staff surveys.
(3) CRS local/manager induction checklist in place (to be further developed into specific induction plan for researchers).
(4) "Access-QMU" process in place for Principal Investigators (PI) and Research Managers to maintain continuity of access for out of contract researchers (Legacy Researchers Policy/ Procedure being developed to offer further enhancements).
(5) Highest number of female staff supported to attend Aurora Leadership Development Programme in 2019/20, including 2 CRS. Establishment of QMU Aurora Network with participation from QMU cohorts of Aurora delegates. Network aims to encourage peer to peer support on issues facing QMU female leaders and provide mentorship links in future Aurora cohorts.

Principle 2: Recognition and Value

(1) Appointment of RDCWG with principles of co-creation and co-ownership between institution and CRS central to the remit.
(2) All CRS required to align with a Research Centre as a full/ affiliate/associate member.
(3) Compliance with the Concordat is monitored at local levels by the institutional Research Centre Annual Review process.
(4) CRS continue to have twice yearly meetings with the Deputy Principal, Head of RKEDU, Head of HR and the CRS mentor, to identify CRS concerns that might require senior management intervention in professional service and other areas.
(5) Aug 2019 Revised Performance Appraisal Online System. Included the introduction of an annual PER cycle running alongside the academic year to provide structure and regular check in-discussion points for employees and managers. PER form re-designed to encourage all staff to set SMART job objectives and set development objectives linked to career progression.
(6) Recent PER audit - an 82% uptake rate of PER in the previous 12 months. 30% of researchers are using the RDF planner.
(7) CRS and ECRs are given the same opportunities for development as academic staff. All QMU training and development opportunities are promoted to all staff/on the staff intranet and all staff can book spaces on these via employee self-service. Through PER, all staff can request development opportunities via their line manager and supported by their HR Partner.

Principle 3: Adaptable and Flexible.

(1) Launch of new QMU Innovation Fellowship Scheme in 2019 and increased investment in 2020.

(2) QMU continues to be a long standing EURAXESS Local Contact Point – invited participant to EURAXESS events/groups.

(3) Equality and Diversity monitoring mainstreamed in Research Centre Annual Reviews.

(4) **UKRI Global Challenges Research Funding secured and invested exclusively in CRS Staff and ECRs.**

(5) Additional SFC funding for Universities in responding to the impact of COVID-19 used to support the careers of postdoctoral researchers on fixed term contracts and PGR students whose studies are affected by COVID-19.

(6) **Investment in strategic alliances/institutional memberships of the Scottish Parliament Academic Network (SPAN), and Scottish Institute for Police Research, Scottish Policy and Research Exchange (SPRE) and industry bodies such as Scotland Food and Drink**. e.g. SPRE training with postgraduate researchers and early career researchers. Ongoing investment in Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities and Scottish **Graduate School for Social Sciences**

(7) Launch of **QMU's bi-annual Enterprise Skills Month** to enhance researcher skills in delivering research impact.

(8) Ongoing external investment in the **only Scottish University on-campus Business Gateway service to support SME translational skills and planned careers support on "Becoming an Independent Research Consultant". Collaboration with East Lothian Council to secure a financial enticement package for research start-ups to locate in the region. Partnership with Edinburgh College/Edinburgh Merchant Company with funding for Further Education/researcher collaboration.**

(9) QMU member and campus host to East Lothian Business Improvement District (BID), the first economic sector focused BID in the UK (Food and Drink) and representing 40 SMEs with opportunities for researcher engagement.

(10) **New collaboration manifesto marking 10 years investment in academic partnership as part of the Edinburgh Beltane for Public Engagement with Research** – this has promoted collaboration with a greater and more diverse pool of researchers.

(11) Member of collaborative groups across all Scottish HEIs supporting the Scottish Government National Performance framework supported by the UIF to incentivise universities to work collaboratively to exploit their research for inclusive economic growth.

(12) **2 collaborative/industry researcher enterprise programmes**:THRIVE (Food&Drink) with Scottish Rural Universities and Colleges/Abertay University and SHIFT (Creative Industries) with Glasgow School of Art/Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Principle 4: Support and Career Development

(1) Research Centre Directors and Heads of Division support the development of CRS including mentoring and induction and targeted and interdisciplinary research seminars, talks and workshops run across Research Centres.

(2) Input from Honorary Professors with mentorship and coaching for writing for publication.

(3) Research Centres represented on external bodies and have strong national and international collaborations, which raises the international profile and opportunities of CRS.

(4) A new institutional CRS Mentor appointed, and the role and remit reviewed by the RDCWG in November 2019. QMU Coaching and Mentoring survey launched in April 2020 to identify researcher needs.

(5) Research mentoring delivered through Research Centres and supported by an investment budget to Centres and Schools.

(6) **High level Institutional Research Working Papers Series and Platform launched** -ECR reps on Editorial and Review Panel.

(7) Refreshed and enhanced webpages, a dedicated CRS intranet site and a new Research and Innovation Newsletter promote internal/external events and initiatives and Vitae and RDF opportunities.

(8) Writing retreats provide CRS with ring-fenced writing time and support for writing for publication. Doctoral Candidates Association (DCA) organise monthly writing spaces for PGRs.

(9) Investment in the Research Librarian post provides enhanced support for Open Access, Citation Data and Research Metrics. The Library has a team of Liaison Librarians who provide one-to-one and group support services for researchers.

(10) **New institutional Open Access Policy** launched with support for staff via monthly REF 2021 drop-in sessions and a **Research Data Management Working Group** appointed in support of the Concordat for Open Data (with CRS rep).

(11) Graduate School organises a research supervisor development programme and offers other learning and development within QMU and via Scottish Graduate Schools; plus internships.

(12) All CRS are supported to develop networking and collaborative projects with international partners, through attending conferences and hosting visits from international research partners.

(13) **New QMU Innovation Fellowships scheme** focused on ISCF Grand Challenges and underpinned by external collaboration.

(14) **£30 million secured for research and innovation as part of the Edinburgh and City Region Deal** opening up additional skills opportunities for researchers in AI and Big Data. Embraced AI and accessing ISCF by hosting Scotland's first Virtual Reality Social Enterprise on campus and two external social enterprises.Led to collaboration in Palliative Care and Family Business.

(15) Development and implementation of a **novel Easy IP Policy with commercialisation** support from University of St Andrews, this aims to maximise collaborative partnerships and ultimately, the transfer of university knowledge for public benefit.

Principle 5: Researcher's Responsibilities

(1) Re-calibration of Strategic Planning cycle to ensure workload, PER and promotions aligned with research priorities.

(2) Interdisciplinary audit meetings monitor activity against protected characteristics using enhanced staff management information.

(3) Ongoing work to support **understanding and development of identities of "independence"** in the context of REF 2021. Specifically transitions into independence and how QMU can leverage processes and procedures to support CRS e.g.. Named PI on grants/author representation and understanding identity of clinical researchers.

(4) Rollout of REF 2021 **Research Excellence Quality Evaluation of Output Process to all research staff**, including CRS.

(5) 2019 revised and streamlined QMU Research Ethics process. QMU/NHS Lothian Research Ethics/Governance training days.

(6) Provision of ongoing collaborative training via the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Training Facility.

(7) Input from CRS to strategic Research Impact Day (May 2019) and **ongoing support to building research impact portfolios**.

Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

(1) QMU REF 2021 Code of Practice commended by Advanced HE/Research Equality and EIA module rolled out to all staff.

(2) **EntreprenHER event** with our Chancellor Prue Leith in October 2019 promoting gender and innovation.

(3) Dedicated funding for our female researchers to attend events – Soapbox Sciences and AcceleratHER.

(4) **Strategic collaboration and MoU signed with Women's Enterprise Scotland (WES)** to embed Female Entrepreneurship at the heart of QMU's contribution to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City and Region Deal.

(5) Business Innovation Zone showcased as good practice in female innovation in a Scottish Govt Ministerial Report in Nov 19.

(6) Member of collaborative cluster across Scottish HEIs looking at Equality and Diversity in Research supported by the UIF.

(7) Move towards more blended pedagogical models of researcher development with adoption of technology.

Principle 7: Implementation and Review

(1) Informal communication is facilitated by the small size of QMU with excellent relationships across schools and services.

(2) Improved **visibility of institutional commitment and integration of research governance structures** including becoming a signatory (and providing annual reports to University Court) on the: Concordats for Public Engagement and Research Integrity.

(3) Publication in May 2019 of **Institutional Statement on the Use of Metrics in Research Assessment**, outlining the key role of peer review; support for an inclusive and transparent process for research assessment; respectful of researchers and of the plurality of research. This outlined our commitment to becoming a **signatory to DORA; adopting the principles of the Leiden Manifesto;** and implementing the recommendations of the Forum for Responsible Research Metrics (FFRM).

(4) 2018 QMU signed a **new Edinburgh Beltane Network for Public Engagement Manifesto** after 10 years of collaboration.

(5) 2018 **QMU became a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). UKRIO Research integrity training rolled out to all staff in 2019 and ongoing training programme available under licence from University of Dundee.**

(6) 2019 a total of 2 researchers (7%) responded to CROS and 7 (17%) to PIRLS. **In 2020 QMU signed up to and launched CEDARS** with a response rate of 31%.

(7) 2018 a major overhaul and redevelopment and re launch of new Research and Innovation webpages and intranet.

(8) Monitor implementation of the Action Plan 2020-2022 and submit report to Court via quarterly meetings of the RDCWG with nominated professional services and CRS/researchers appointed as Principle specific champions, responsible for monitoring implementation of each of the 3 Principles and inviting an external representative from another HEI to join the RDCWG.

3. Next Steps and forward-looking strategy section for the next 2 years, including broad success measures.

1. Environment and Culture – Concordat Principle	
• Strategic review by Deputy Principal of institutional structures to support career development of researchers (Jun 2021). • New Research Management System. (Sep 2022). • New Research Integrity policies implemented (Sep 2021) • Delivery of minimum 4 institutional researcher wellbeing workshops per year. (Sep 2021). • Enhance connectivity of our global researcher development community via online platforms for learning practices, communications and exchanges of research ideas (2022-2024)	• Improve REF2021 Environment quality ratings (Apr 2022). • Commitment to run CEDARS biannually. (July 2021). • Develop robust KPIs in response to meaningful analysis of CEDARS 2020 in consultation with research staff (Nov 2020). • Deliver Wellcome Café Research Culture Sessions (Jun2021). • Increase external collaboration in back office support, joint initiatives and shared practice. (Sep 2022). • Increase CEDARS 2021 response from 31% in 2020 to 40%. • Align strategy with the new UKRI R&D Roadmap. (Sep 2022)
2.Employment – Concordat Principle	
• Increase security of employment for researchers including use of SFC Innovation Vouchers by 50%, from 10 to 15 projects, and by developing a QMU Strategic Projects List to support bridging and translational skills. (Jan 2022). • Gather and publish data on the career destinations and career paths of researchers. (Sep 2022). • Increase the number of ECRs securing internally- and externally-funded Fellowships by 50% from 3-6. (Sep 2022). • Legacy Researcher Policy implemented. (Dec 2020).	• Review and improve induction at institutional and local level (Dec 2020). • New Researcher Mentoring Scheme (including peer - peer/external mentors) (Sep 2022). • New Fixed-Term/Open-Ended Contracts Policy. (Dec 2020). • Annual HR policy review includes input from CRS. (Sep 2021). • New EIA training rolled out to key staff involved in research and offer 2 members of CRS EIA training. (Dec 2020)
3.Professional and Career Development – Concordat Principle	
• 10 Days Prof. Dev. Statement launched/clearly signposted to staff and embedded in research culture. (Dec 2020). • Monitor number of staff undertaking 10 days professional development aim for 100% research staff. (Dec 2021). • Implement new institutional pathways to support transitions to "research independence". (Dec 2020). • Research excellence parallel quality evaluation process for outputs rolled out to all research staff. (Dec2020). • Delivery of careers workshop with Business Gateway on "Becoming an Independent Research Consultant" (Dec 2020) • 40% Researchers using RDF (Sep 2022).	• Increase: researcher- industry collaborations by 20%; researcher engagement with our City Deal by 25%; researcher skills in AI/Big Data by 50%; applications to sector commercialisation competitions by 50%; Easy IP disclosures 40%; and start-ups by10%.(Sep 2022) • Introduce the evaluation of PhD and Prof Doc vivas for Candidates, examiners and supervisors by 100% (Dec2020). • Introduce the UKCGE supervisor recognition and accreditation project. (Dec20 20) • Launch Early Career Researcher Engagement Academy in partnership with external collaborators (Sept 2022).