Appendix 1: Progress against our HREiR 2020-2022 Action Plan (AP2020)

Queen Mary University of London

hr EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Key		
■	**Action was completed or with a strong upward trajectory**	
■	**Success measures only partially met, or progress slowed. Follow-on Aims proposed.**	
■	**Progress made, but success measure altered. Follow-on Aims proposed.**	
■	**Progress against action was stalled or paused.**	

Aim and Current Status	Concordat (2019) Obligation	Action(s), Deadlines, Action Leads, and Success Measures	Progress Update, Outcomes, and Next Steps
Aim 1 – Review appraisal systems for researchers **Aim 1a: Developing new appraisal guidance and training for Managers of researchers**	EI5: Ensure that excellent people management is championed through annual appraisals EM1: undertake effective training to manage researchers effectively EM4 + ER3: Actively engage in constructive performance management Equivalent Concordat 2008 Clause (for reference) 2.3 – Research Managers participation in performance management and associated development 3.5 – Researchers benefit from clear systems that help plan their careers and development 5.6 - Researchers should ensure that their career development requirements and activities are regularly discussed, monitored and evaluated	**Aim 1** - A review of appraisal mechanisms (including online forms and guidance for managers) including completion rates focused in Schools/Institutes where 2018/19 completion fell below the institution average will be carried out. Review inputs will include: • feedback from CROS2019 (possibly CEDARS 2020 data as well) NB: CEDARS (Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey), which replaced the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS), was piloted in 2020. QMUL first ran CEDARS in 2021. • HR Systems engagement data from 2020 • feedback from focus groups AP2020 – Aim 3 The results from this review will feed through to the appropriate stakeholders, e.g. RD, HR and OPD, as well as Heads of School/Institute Directors. **Deadline**: Sept-Dec 2020, with findings and guidance reported in time for 2021 Appraisal period. **Lead**: RD, with consultations with HR/ Organisational and Professional Development, researchers, managers of researchers.	**Progress Update:** OPD carried out a general review of staff appraisal mechanisms that included revision of the forms used on the E-appraisal platform, and provided new guidance for academic and professional services staff managers. RD fed researchers' experience fed back through CROS and focus groups in 2019 that appraisals did not focus enough on longer term career and development planning. From 2021, the appraisal period was extended and will run from May to the end of January instead of May to August. Thus, at present, it is not possible to comment on equalised engagement across the faculties. **Outcome:** New e-appraisal forms and guidance for appraisers (i.e., managers) were released for the 2020/21 Appraisal Period. The new forms enable a greater amount of appraisee reflection and separate out the sections dedicated to work-based objectives, CPD/ training objectives, and career objectives. The new guidance for appraisers is intended to support the new appraisal forms and to help managers structure their main appraisal discussions, as well as to give managers cues on how to make career development discussions a regular part of 1-to-1 discussions (i.e., not just restricted to appraisal). This was also developed with input from researchers (and other staff types). From CEDARS, 35% more researchers find these reviews useful in 2021 compared to 2019: Of those who did engage in development reviews, 91% found them useful (10% higher than national BM). This represents 35% more respondents compared to CROS 2019 (**25% higher than the success measure**).

		Success Measure: Appraisal completion rates in academic units with lower completion rates to be brought in line with institutional averages Aim 1a - This review will also inform a facet of training and guidance to be made available to managers of researchers to be piloted during the 2021 Appraisal period. Deadline: opening of appraisal period (May 2021). Lead: Researcher Development (RD) team OPD team. Success Measures: 10% increase in overall usefulness as reported in CEDARS.	The aims to review appraisal mechanisms, provide new appraisal guidance, and increased usefulness measure from postdocs are fulfilled. Next Steps: At present we cannot make any firm conclusions about equalised engagement rates across faculties with the appraisal window having changed from when AP2020 was written. The RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) and OPD will continue to monitor and report engagement with appraisal to research leadership.
Aim 2 – Launch New Induction Events and Resources for New Hire Researchers	EI2: provide an effective induction to help integrate researchers into the community also ECI1 – Ensure that relevant staff are aware of the Concordat Equivalent Concordat 2008 Clauses (for reference) 3.6 – Induction programmes for researchers and effective and supportive research environments	Action: A new induction programme will be introduced for new-hire QMUL researchers including a short networking/ introduction event following on from institutional inductions (that run 3-times per annum) to introduce researchers to relevant professional services staff and Research Staff Associations (RSAs;). Deadline: Welcome event to be announced for May/June 2020 Leads: Leads: RD team with input from Relevant PS Units – e.g. Careers, Research Services, HR; RSAs Success Measure: Attendance from at least half of the researchers attending the institutional induction event, with a majority (over 66%) reporting them useful (as reported through event feedback) Action: These events will be supported by online resources hosted on the QM Intranet (e.g. QMplus or Connected). Initial drafts to be based on existing versions and updated with input from researchers (local RSAs)	Progress update: Feedback from external reviewers on AP2020 resulted in the addition of Aim 7 (launching a new RD Concordat Implementation Group), which was not part of the original action plan. In addition, the COVID pandemic lockdowns resulted in the RD Team having to devote significant time to shifting to online delivery. These two factors slowed progress on this Aim such that the new Induction events did not run, and we did not participate in the CEDARS pilot in 2020. Researcher Welcome Packs are currently being updated by the RDCIG. A short survey ran in September and October to collect tips from researchers to support new researchers in better integrating into the community. Outcomes: To support the development of a new set of welcome resources for researchers, a new Research Staff Code of Practice (CoP) was produced by the RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG; See Aim 7). This document maps to both the RD and the Research Integrity Concordats, and provides a set of standards of conduct for researchers within the context of QMUL, by signposting relevant HR policies, research and researcher support services at QMUL, information about the Researcher Development programme as well as HE Policy (e.g. The Concordats). This document will be distributed to researchers when they sign their employment contracts, and a living document (with live links) will be available from Early February 2022. This will be updated every 2

		Deadline: launched by August 2020, and available as an online resource by Dec 2020 **Leads:** RD team; input from local RSAs, Internal Comms, Design and Branding **Success Measure**: over 50% engagement of new-hire researchers with online welcome resources. **Action:** CEDARS survey to contain an institutional question soliciting tips (e.g., "I wish I had known this when I started…") from current QMUL researchers to enable the integration of new researchers in the community **Deadline:** included in CEDARS 2020 **Leads:** RD team, RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG)	years by RDCIG and will be available on the main QMUL research webpage. This information from the Welcome Pack Surveys will be compiled and made available from on the institution website (hosted in Queen Mary Academy pages, linked to on the How we support our researchers page on the main research pages) from early February, 2022. **Next Steps.** The questions used in the Welcome Pack Survey will be included in our CEDARS institutional questions from 2023 onwards. Input from these will inform a biennial update of the Welcome Pack alongside the CoP. See Appendix 2 for new actions in AP2022 that follow on from this Aim to better support new researchers when they join QMUL. AP2022 – Aim1: A Concordat Signatory Action Plan Launch Event; and Aim 2: New induction events for researchers.
Aim 3 – RD Team to explore some of the barriers to researcher engagement with CPD	PCDR1 – Researchers should engage in a minimum of 10 days CPD per year PCDR2, 5, 6 – Researchers should engage in training to prepare for work across a number of sectors; develop their research identity; gain experience in knowledge exchange, policy and public engagement Equivalent Concordat 2008 Clauses (for reference) 3.1 – UK HEIs to provide career development provision comparable to other sectors 3.3 – Transferrable skills training to be embedded in CPD training	**Action:** Explore the barriers of researcher engagement with CPD provision: 13% of researchers are either not engaging in CPD or doing so less than 1 day per year. With Concordat 2019 suggesting a minimum of 10 days CPD, and in line with the recommendations of the Roberts Review (2002), we will explore some of the barriers to engagement with CPD experienced by our researchers using focus groups, to better inform our practice. **Deadlines:** Focus Groups to run by April-May 2021 **Lead:** RD Team **Success Measure:** Focus groups with researchers and managers to run with representation from all faculties. **Action:** QMUL is in the tendering process of acquiring a new Learning Management System (LMS) to enable staff and students to book on to and track their CPD activity. [i] We will assess this functionality for its suitability to	**Progress update:** The actions involving the review of barriers of engagement with CPD activity were fulfilled. We now have valuable information both from researchers and managers and will build on this in AP2022. Some of this Aim was reliant upon the procurement of an LMS that would enable QMUL researchers to better track and plan their CPD activity. When the pandemic closures began in 2020, the acquisition of the new LMS was delayed. The procurement process has restarted, and we hope to introduce a new LMS by September 2022 – See 'Next Steps'. **Outcomes:** Three "Faculty Forums" (focus groups) were run with research staff in May and June 2021 from each Faculty by the RDCIG. Researchers were asked about their professional and career development opportunities at QMUL and whether they met their needs. Some of the feedback included: • Opportunity is not equal across the board: well-funded research groups are able to give their postdocs more opportunities than those with less funding. • To guide decisions on how to direct their CPD/training efforts, the RD programme should be structured by career stage and focus on areas like funding, career planning and options, and recognised teaching experience

	3.7 – Employers and funders to articulate skills that should be developed at Each Stage	support researchers to track and plan their CPD, and [ii] run focus groups with researchers and managers from all faculties to inform how the tool will be used. [iii] Assuming the fitness of CPD tracking/planning functionality within new EMS, we will trial with a limited cohort of researchers from all faculties. **Deadlines (Leads):** [i] investigate CPD tracking and planning function with new LMS from Jan 2021 – June 2021. (Lead by: RD team, with consultations with OPD.) [ii] Run focus groups with researchers and managers April – May 2021. (Lead: RD.) [iii] Trial to run June – October 2021, and feedback from trial cohort collected by November 2021 (Lead: RD) **Success Measures**: [i] LMS is judged as fit for purpose. [ii] Focus groups with researchers and managers to run with representation from all faculties. [iii] Feedback from researchers participating in the trial to be collected in Nov 2021, with a majority (>66%) of participants finding the process/tool useful to record and plan their CPD.	• Better communications about central and local postdoc development provision is needed to ensure greater awareness of the opportunities. Interviews with School/Institute leadership revealed a strong culture of support for CPD activity, focused on similar areas identified by postdocs in the faculty forums. This was corroborated by CEDARS data from all Academics (managers) responding that postdocs should be spending a minimum of 11-days (5%) of their time or more, on CPD activity. Our RD provision moved online in March 2020, and since then over double the amount of research staff from all faculties are engaging with the RD programme compared to 2019/20 (per booking system data). This also suggested that needing to travel to a different campus to attend training was a barrier, something which had only been anecdotally suggested in the past. Researchers have commented on the high quality of RD's online provision via course feedback forms. **Next Steps:** With information gathered in the first set of actions of this aim, we propose new aims in our next action plan (Appendix 2). AP2022 – Aim 3: Reorganise the Researcher Development Programme and website for research staff in line with their feedback for the 2022-23 academic year; and Aim 4: Explore functionality of new Learning Management System (LMS) for CPD tracking.
Aim 4 – Increase mentoring opportunities for Researchers	PCDM2 + PCDR2: Support researchers and explore a range of career options by encouraging and making use of mentors Equivalent Concordat 2008 Clauses (for reference) 3.1 – UK HEIs to provide career development provision comparable to other sectors 3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9. 3.14 – Support to explore and plan a wide variety of career paths open to researchers	**Action:** Researcher Development will investigate why researchers opt to not engage with mentoring (CROS 2019: 36%), or those that would like to engage with it haven't (38%, down from 47% in 2017). The review will include inputs from CROS2019 and feedback collected from previous mentoring cohorts, focus groups with researchers and a systematic review to investigate whether the centralised delivery model should be augmented to a local model (or some mixture of the two) for some Schools or Institutes. **Deadlines:** review of mentoring needs to run May-June 2020. Meetings with School/Institute leadership from September – December 2020. New Mentoring approaches	**Progress update and outcomes:** Mentoring review revealed that career mentoring approaches to support Postdocs and Research Fellows vary across the institution, with the most common form across QMUL is mentorship from their line manager. Research Fellows supported by external funding will have named a mentor (or hosting investigator) to support their career development. Two examples of supplementary mentoring support available from three Schools/Institutes described additional mentoring available: • Postdocs are automatically assigned to a (supplemental) mentor from outside their reporting lines when they start. It is left up to the researcher to engage with their supplemental mentor. • An 'open postdoc forum' that met 3-4 times per year where postdocs could present various topics for discussion and could receive a combination of support from peers and senior academics.

| | | to be trialled in 2021, with feedback collected in November/December 2021.
Lead: RD Team with input from Researchers, School/Institute Leadership
Success Measure: a doubling in the size of mentoring cohort (approx. 10% research staff) for the trial, with Actions to follow in AP2022 directed at being able to offer mentoring to all researchers who desire it. | Barriers to engagement with mentoring schemes include: [i] time spent mentoring postdocs/ECR followed is not formally recognised in academic staff managers' work models; [ii] a perception that mentoring is not recognised as a form of teaching in accreditation recognition programmes (for HEA fellowship); [iii] Approximately 35% (on average) are not aware of any mentoring opportunities that may be available to them.

The RD Team-run Researcher Mentoring Scheme has been running since 2016 in different forms, and as the numbers above suggest, only a minority (approx. 6%, or about 30 postdocs) of researchers engage with the scheme. Even with this low a number, matching as many postdocs with academic staff is still a resource-intensive challenge especially when postdocs are looking for a specific kind of mentor who may not be available in the pool of volunteers. When the scheme was expanded to enable PhD students to be mentored by postdocs two years ago, our number of volunteer postdoc mentors was outstripped by demand from PhD students.

Next steps: The information gathered by this review will inform additional work we carry forward as **AP2020 – Aim 5**. The RD Team run mentoring scheme will be paused for 2021/22 whilst they examine how best to implement mentoring solutions for postdocs across the institution, and develop more effective communications to keep postdocs informed of their options. Additional actions (and launch plan) to follow for AP2023. |
| **Aim 5 – Support establishment, continuity, revival of local Research Staff Associations** | ECR1: Actively contribute to a research culture and be a supportive colleague

ECR5+ECM5: Engage in opportunities to contribute to policy development to create a more positive research environment and culture

ER4: Recognise and act on their role as key | **Action:** [i] Conduct a review of the current state of Research Staff Associations (RSAs) by liaising with Schools and Institutes to either establish or support the revival or continuity of local Research Staff Associations. Some excellent examples of practice exist within some of our larger academic units (e.g. WHRI Postdoctoral Network, the Blizdocs – Blizard Institute). [ii] Facilitate a yearly/biannual opportunity to meet with other RSAs and with research leadership. This can help inform institutional strategy relevant to researchers, as well as present an opportunity for | **Progress update:** RD Team had to prioritise the redevelopment of online provision and the launch of the new RDCIG in 2020/21. Though several researcher support and focus group-type events were run in the first year of COVID lockdowns that worked against some of the isolation brought about by the pandemic, with most of the existing local RSA activity having also been impacted negatively by the pandemic, no larger scale organisation was possible on this front.
Readjustment to working under lockdown restrictions meant that local RSA activity was severely impacted, making a central meeting not possible within the planned time frame. Some Schools/Institutes described launching new online-based (usually hosted on MS Teams) 'coffee-mornings' to enable some social contact between isolated |

	stakeholders within their institution Equivalent Concordat 2008 Clauses (for reference) 3.13 – Researchers having a say in policy and representation on staff committees 5.5 – Researchers recognise primary responsibility for managing and pursuing a career is theirs and should identify training needs	researchers to engage in strategy and policy development that impacts them. **Deadline**: [i] review by February-April 2020; [ii] run first RSA meeting by May 2020 **Lead:** RD team with Input from existing/burgeoning local RSAs, School/institute leadership, and research management **Success Measures**: first QMUL-wide RSA meeting by October 2020 to include representation from new or revitalised RSAs from at least 5 Schools or Institutes.	researchers. CEDARS data (from an institutional question) suggests there is a healthy desire for these RSAs to exist. **Outcomes:** School/Institute leadership spoke of the involvement of PhD student and postdoc researchers in a number of different facets of their local research culture, even when RSAs did not exist. The Schools/Institutes that tended to have these RSAs also tended to have larger postdoc numbers. The activity of these groups was usually driven by several key postdocs who would remain engaged during their tenure at QMUL, but without any succession plans in place the groups were not always guaranteed to last after those driving members of staff would move to a different post or institution. **Next steps:** Action to be carried over, **AP2022 – Aim 6:** to enrich local research cultures and to amplify researcher voices, we will work to encourage local research staff organisations by approaching Faculties/Schools/Institutes with current or recent organisations to try to understand the practices that supported their success and to understand the barriers to their permanence.
Aim 6 – QMUL to apply for the Race Equality Charter Mark Award	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 Equivalent Concordat 2008 Clauses (for reference) 6.10 – Employers should also participate in schemes and other initiatives aimed at promoting diversity.	**Action:** Queen Mary became a signatory of the Race Equality Charter Mark (REC) in July 2018 and will submit for a REC award within 3 years. **Deadline:** August 2021 **Lead:** EDI Team **Success Measure**: Bronze REC Awarded by August 2021.	**Progress update:** An extension for the submission of the REC was granted by Advance HE. **Outcomes:** Since our last Action Plan three new senior appointments have been made: the Vice Principal of People, Culture and Inclusion (VP-PCI), Sheila Gupta, MBE (QMUL's Concordat Champion), and Alex Prestage, the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (who also sits on the RDCIG), and appointment of an EDI Manager in the final quarter of 2021 who will lead on race equality at Queen Mary. Work on race equality is underway, and will be further supported by this new post. **Next steps:** This action is carried forward in **AP2022 – Aim 7**: updated EDI strategy with follow-on aims (including an update for the REC submission) will be reported in our AP2023.
Aim 7 – QMUL to create a new Concordat Implementation Group	Signatory responsibilities 2 and 3	**Action:** Create a new Researcher Development Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) will be created to oversee future action plans and to review progress in implementing the Concordat. The CIG will include representation from researchers and managers of researchers across all three Faculties, be supported by the Queen Mary Academy, and report to the	**Progress update and Outcomes:** The new RD Concordat Implementation Group (RDCIG) has been meeting monthly since October 2020, and has representation from postdocs and academic staff (managers) from all Faculties, HR, Faculty Research Managers, EDI team representatives, and is chaired, managed and supported by the RD Team in the Queen Mary Academy. Our VP-PCI, Sheila Gupta, MBE, is our Concordat Champion. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the RDCID were published in December 2020.

		Senior Executive Team. The first priority of the CIG will be to declare its Terms of Service including: conditions for membership, frequency of meetings, and reporting line into SET. Another major priority for the CIG will be to declare its Concordat review and action planning processes moving forward. **Deadline:** February 2021**Lead:** RD Team **Success Measures**: RDCIG will announce its membership and meet for the first time by October 2020, and declare its Terms of Service, reporting lines and processes by.	**Next steps:** The ToR, role responsibilities, and our data/feedback sharing approaches will be reviewed in 2021/22 and biennially thereafter – **See AP2022 – Aim 9**