

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” ([UKRI Concordat Action Plan 2020](#)). 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 (at institutional, faculty, and sub-faculty levels) and reporting for HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) and Concordat Signatory status (See Appendix 1).
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., Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team-related working groups, 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, *post currently vacant*; referred to as the Concordat Champion.
- The Concordat Champion(s) will communicate our progress towards implementing the Concordat at Queen Mary annually to the Senior Executive Team and to Queen Mary Council. A copy of this report will be circulated amongst VP-Research and Innovations Board, Heads of Schools, Human Resources lead team, The EDI team, and the Careers Group.
- The RDCIG will report to Vitae triennially to maintain our HREiR Award (See Appendix 1). A copy of this report will be circulated amongst The Research and Innovation Board, Schools/Institute leads, 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.
- 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.

Profile of Representatives and other RDCIG members (see Appendix 2 for more detail)

In general, the RDCIG should be representative of the diverse QMUL research community, and as such appointments should consider including representing varying lengths of service at QMUL, disciplinary areas (within each faculty), a mix of caring/parenting responsibilities, other elements of diversity inclusion (including age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation).

Action planning will be informed by survey instruments like the [Culture, Employment, and Development in Academic Research Survey](#) (CEDARS; which with runs biennially in the Spring of odd-numbered years), the

Queen Mary Staff Survey, or indeed other information from, instruments or efforts run at, different levels of The University.

Each Faculty shall nominate the following representatives:

- **Two postdoc or early-career researcher (ECR) representatives**, ideally be from different Schools or Institutes within that faculty
- **An academic staff representative who should currently be line-managing at least one postdoctoral researcher** and be able to demonstrate experience of Queen Mary and its structures
- **A member of research support staff operating at faculty level**, like the Faculty Research Manager, or a similar cultural/strategic role in the faculty

Additional representation should include:

- **A member of HR Staff**, like a Faculty Strategic HR Partner
- **A senior member of staff from the EDI team**
- **The Executive Officer for Research and Innovation**
- The Group is chaired by the Head of Researcher Development, and Managed by the Researcher Development Manager for Postdocs.
- Ad hoc contributors to support specific work.

Wherever possible, the Faculty Dean for Research, and directors of research or FMD Institute Directors should help to find a replacement from their faculty or directorate.

Meetings and Time commitment

The core-RDCIG will aim to meet **6-times per year, for 1-hour each** time. Some 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 months where meetings don't run, an asynchronous chat will be hosted on MS Teams / an email update will be circulated.

In addition to core-RDCIG meetings, the Faculty representatives should report or contribute to the relevant body overseeing work on research culture and research staff matters in their faculty (i.e., The FMD Research Culture and Environment Committee or the Research Advisory Groups in HSS and S&E).

Representatives will be expected to contribute to events (e.g., focus groups) with research staff and the academics who manage and supervise them, in order to gain feedback on future action planning.

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 and reporting to the Senior Executive Team and Council, and to Vitae towards the maintenance of QMUL's [HR Excellence in Research Award](#) (see Appendix 1).

Appendix 1: Concordat Reporting Mechanisms

The HR Excellence in Research Award

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 regular action planning cycle.

[Vitae](#) manages the process in the UK and assembles the external review panels. Queen Mary is part of [Cohort 4](#): reporting in late January of the designated years. A new triennial reporting cycle was introduced in 2022. We were most recently assessed in 2022 and retained our award. We will be (externally) reviewed next in January 2024 before entering into a 3-year cycle that is reviewed externally every three years, thereafter (2027, 2030, 2033, etc...).

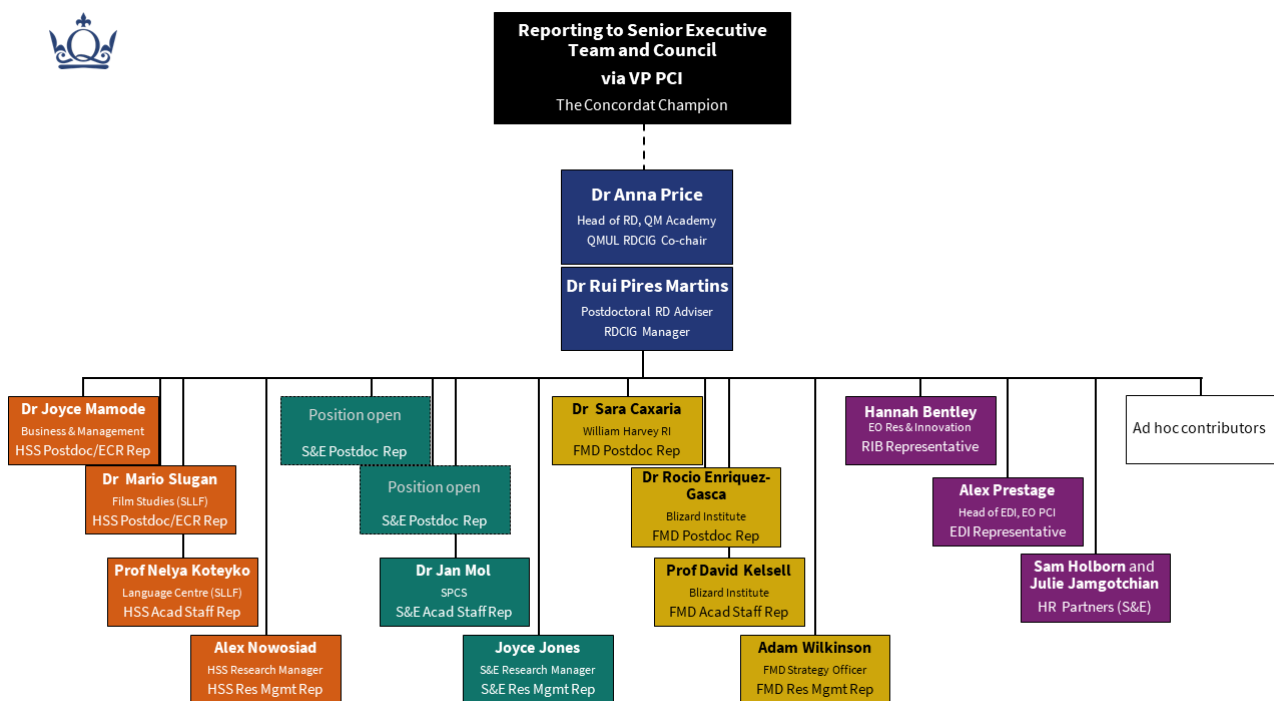
The action plans and reports detail an organisation's Concordat implementation progress and a strategy that demonstrates that positive future trajectory. These reports are assessed by an international review panel that is convened by Vitae, and the process culminates in an interview.

Concordat Signatory Status

Queen Mary [became a signatory](#) to the RD Concordat in January 2021. 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. The [Queen Mary Senior Executive Team](#) and [Council](#)), which is published ([online](#)). 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.

All of QMUL's Concordat-related reporting, including our past and present HREiR action plans can be found at www.qmul.ac.uk/rd-concordat.

Appendix 2: RDCIG Organisation and expanded RDCIG Role Descriptions



Postdoc or early-career researcher (ECR) representatives. These individuals should be able to speak to the postdoc or ECR experience in the faculty, albeit likely informed heavily from that within their Schools or Institutes. Each faculty will nominate two representatives. These should ideally be from different School or Institutes within that faculty. Individuals who are teaching fellows (with doctoral qualifications) who are research-active and not yet permanent members of academic staff may also represent this group. As these individuals tend to be on fixed-term contracts, we anticipate regular turnover in these roles. Out-going members should help to recruit their replacements along with Faculty Deans for Research.

An academic staff representative. This individual should be able to speak to the experience of someone who line-manages or supervises researchers. To this end, they should currently be line-managing at least one postdoctoral researcher and be able to demonstrate experience of Queen Mary and its structures. Academic staff are asked to serve up to two years on the RDCIG. Out-going members should help to recruit their replacements along with Faculty Deans for Research.

A member of research support staff operating at faculty level, like the Faculty Research Manager or a similar cultural/strategic role in the faculty. This role brings faculty-level operational knowledge, and a reporting line into the Faculty Deans for Research.

A member of HR Staff, like a Faculty Strategic HR Partner, who is knowledgeable about the HR policies, and employment practises and law, especially where they impact researchers.

A member of staff from the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team; someone who is active in EDI efforts at Queen Mary and should be aware of how these kinds of issues impact researchers.

The Executive Officer for Research and Innovation leads on Research Culture efforts at Queen Mary and brings an institutional-level perspective to the group, as well as a reporting line into the VP-Research and Innovation's office.