

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 Queen Mary as UKRI and a number of key funders have identified that the organisations they fund should “sign up to the Concordat and engage with their obligations” ([UKRI People and Teams Action Plan 2023](#)). Upholding the Concordat is of further strategic importance as the associated actions taken on by universities to improve their research culture and can factor into REF People, Culture and Environment narratives.

The role of the RDCIG is

1. To oversee the implementation of the RD Concordat at Queen Mary.
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 Queen Mary.
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 Queen Mary (e.g., Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team-related working groups, Research Integrity Committee), and others, as appropriate.

Reporting lines

- The RDCIG will communicate our progress towards implementing the Concordat at Queen Mary annually to the Research and Innovation Board, and then to the Senior Executive Team and to Queen Mary Council.
- The RDCIG will report to Vitae triennially to maintain our HREiR Award (See Appendix 1). In accordance with Concordat signatory status, this report will replace the annual report in the relevant years, and follow the same process.
- 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 Researcher Development Team, within the Queen Mary Academy.

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).

Researcher voice will be included in the action planning, through events like the Postdoc Conference, and 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 other information from, instruments or efforts run at different levels of The University.

Each Faculty shall nominate the following representatives:

- **Two postdoc or Research Fellow 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**
- **A member of research support staff operating at faculty level**, like the Faculty Research Manager, or a similar cultural/strategic role in the faculty

Institutional representation should include:

- **A member of HR Staff**, like a Faculty Strategic HR Partner
- **A senior member of staff from the EDI team**, like an EDI manager
- **A member from the Research Culture Team**
- 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.

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 up to 90 minutes each** time. Meetings will take place over MS Teams to alleviate commuting between campuses. RDCIG members will meet once per year in person.

Asynchronous chats (via MS Teams) and email communication may come between 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 consult and engage with the groups that they represent.

In addition to time spent in meetings, Faculty and HR representatives will contribute to the RD Concordat action planning, implementation, and reporting to support university wide efforts in maintaining the Concordat.

Appendix 1: Concordat Reporting Mechanisms

Concordat Signatory Status

Queen Mary [became a signatory](#) to the RD Concordat in January 2021. Signatory organisations [are required to](#) form a working group to monitor Concordat implementation (in Queen Mary's case, this is RDCIG). Reporting to a member of their senior leadership team (in Queen Mary's case, the VP-Research and Innovation, as the chair of RIB), the group conducts 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 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 RD Concordat serves as an analogue to the Charter & Code in the UK. Queen Mary has held the award since 2012. To retain the award, we are assessed through a peer reviewed action planning process, triennially. The action plans and reports detail an organisation's Concordat implementation progress and future strategy.

[Vitae](#) manages the process in the UK and assembles the triennial external peer review panels. Queen Mary is part of [Cohort 4](#): reporting in late January of the designated years, with an interview to follow in February-April). Our Action Plans will be peer reviewed next in 2027, then 2030, 2033, etc...

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](#)).

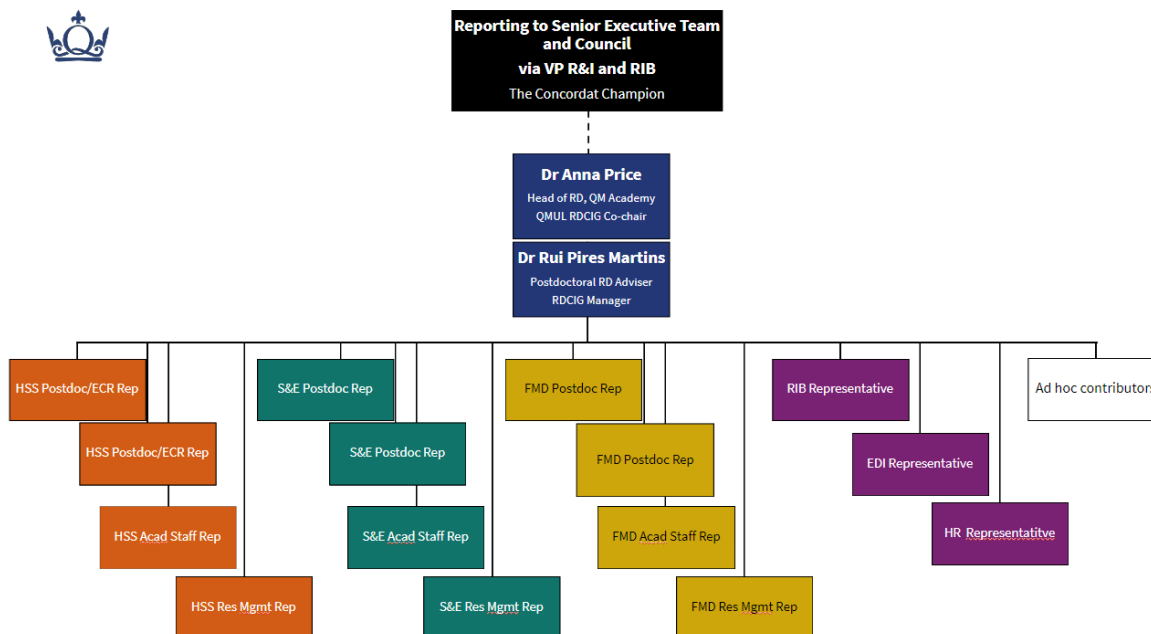
Harmonising these processes

The signatory process is separate and parallel to that of the HREiR. The reporting process defaults to that required as a signatory, except in review years, where the HREiR process is followed.

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



Two Postdoc or Research Fellow representatives. These individuals should be able to speak to the postdoc or fellow experience in the faculty – as the key beneficiaries to the RD Concordat – 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 funding, 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 postdoctoral researchers or mentors research fellows. 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 three 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; like and EDI manager, someone who is active in EDI efforts at Queen Mary and should be aware of how these kinds of issues impact researchers.

The Research Culture Manager leads on Research Culture efforts at Queen Mary and brings an institutional-level perspective to the group.