

HREiR Action plan template May 2021

Details		The institutional audience* for this action plan includes (complete or delete, as appropriate):		
Institution name:	Northumbria University	Audience (beneficiaries of the action plan)	Number of	Comments
Cohort number:	Cohort Eight	Research staff	156	Fixed term research staff
Date of submission:	21-May-21	Postgraduate researchers	621	
Institutional context:	Northumbria is on a journey to place research, alongside education, at the heart of all our activities. Our strategic investment in building our research capacity has changed the University's academic make-up and is exemplified by our REF 2021 submission of 1096 academic staff, triple the size of the submission in 2014 (REF 2014, 343 FTE submitted). We currently have a small (156 staff) but growing cohort of contract researchers (c.9% of our academic and research staff). We take an inclusive approach to identifying our internal early career researcher (ECR) cohort, including Post-Doctoral Research Assistants (PDRAs) and contract research staff, final year Postgraduate researchers (PGRs), and Vice Chancellor Fellows (VCFs), but recognising that established academic staff may be moving — even at a later stage in their academic career — from teaching-focussed responsibilities to developing a research track record. As a result, we take a broad approach to support for researchers and implementation of the Concordat principles, recognising that the needs of those starting out on their research journey, may differ from those in established academic posts who are nevertheless new to research.	Research and teaching staff	1405	All academic staff including Lecturers, Vice Chancellor Fellows, Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors, Professors.
		Teaching-only staff	N/A	
		Technicians	98	Across all four Faculties
		Clinicians	N/A	
		Professional support staff	1641	Including 98 technicians
		Other (please provide numbers and details):		24 Graduate Tutors; 7 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships; 34 Academic Management (Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deputy Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors, Heads of Department.

Obligation	Action	Success measure (SMART)	Deadline	Responsibility	Progress update (to be completed for submission)	Outcome/ result
Environment and Culture						
Institutions must:						
ECI1	Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat	1. Regular meeting to review revised Concordat and to update the action plan accordingly. 2. Hold information events (3 per annum) on revised Concordat for academic and research staff. 3. Update online guidance and webpages, including developing a short video on the Concordat.	An increased awareness and engagement of the Researcher Development Concordat. 1. Increase CEDARS question 42.1 score by +20%. 2020 CEDAR results show that 57% of respondents are aware of the Researcher Development Concordat.	Sep-22	Chair of Researcher Development Strategy Group	
ECI2	Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers	1. Through the Athena Swan University Self-Assessment Team develop a comprehensive action plan to address Gender Inequality across the university. 2. Departments are currently preparing to apply separately for Athena SWAN departmental awards. 3. Northumbria is a signatory to the Race Equality Charter and through the Race Equality Charter University Self Assessment Team we will develop actions to address race inequality see: ECF1; EM1	1. Achieve Bronze award for the Faculty of Business and Law, and Bronze awards for the departments of Geography and Environmental Sciences; Psychology, and Nursing, Midwifery and Health, Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing, and Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation 2. Ensure adequate representation of researcher and EDI issues on Concordat Working Group and Athena SWAN University Self-Assessment Team to support researcher voice in these discussions and to support evaluation and impact of AS action plan. 3. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 13.6; 18.3; 26.10; 40.3 scores by 10%.	31/09/2021	HR Manager (RDSG Member)	

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ECI3	Promote good mental health and wellbeing through, for example, the effective management of workloads and people, and effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support	1. In 2021 we will launch an Unacceptable Behaviour policy which will bring together policies on tackling bullying and harassment across Northumbria, including new methods of reporting allegations, and recording	1. Unacceptable Behaviour Policy implemented (which will replace current single versions) we will monitor numbers of allegations and develop evaluation tool as the system is rolled out to	Sept-2021 Dec-2021	Ethics and Integrity Manager, RIS		
ECI4	Ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and including, wellbeing and mental health	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
ECI5	Ensure that researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity	1. In order to ensure staff are up to date with ethics and research integrity training, and that they can complete their roles as reviewers competently and confidently we will develop an online ethics reviewer training component.	1. Monitor number of staff who have completed reviewer ethics training 2019/20 (80% completion rate) and increase 2020/21 (95% completion rate). 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 27.7a; 38.1 scores by 25%.	Dec-21	Research Policy Manager, RIS.		
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	1. We have a number of feedback mechanisms to review and report on research culture including research staff representation on RaKE, RDSG, ECR Forum and Faculty Committees. This supports quantitative mechanisms such as our Staff Survey and CEDARS. 2. We will analyse data collected through surveys (University Staff Survey, CEDARS) to monitor the engagement levels of academic colleagues and to increase response rate by identifying any areas of concern that need further consideration and will contribute to our GAP analysis. 3. Improve awareness of CEDARS and increase future participation through targeted campaigns e.g. 'you said, we did'. See also: ECM2	1. Interim progress measure: an increase in participation rates for CEDARS 2022 by 25%. 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 15.7 score by 15%.	Sep-23	Research Culture and Quality Manager, RIS.		
Funders must:							
ECF1	Including requirements which promote equitable, inclusive and positive research cultures and environments in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies	We will develop an inclusive bid-management process and support by reviewing how we can promote opportunities equitably and encourage researchers from BAME backgrounds in applications. 1. Undertake analysis to track engagement with funding calls. 2. Research Development Managers will review the way funding calls are managed and communicated to research staff so that staff find them relevant, and inclusive by working with BAME network and Race Equality Manager on inclusivity in bid applications.	1. Interim progress measure: an increase in BAME participation rates for CEDARS 2022 by 20% 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS questions, 36.5 score by 15%. 3. Increase in BAME colleagues submitting bids +25 01/09/2023	01/09/2023	Research Culture and Quality Manager, RIS		
ECF2	Consider how funding opportunities and policies can facilitate different patterns and ways of working, and promote the wellbeing and mental health of researchers	N/A					
ECF3	Ensure that funding call requirements and selection processes offer equality of opportunity between different groups of researchers, recognise personal contexts, and promote positive research cultures and working conditions	N/A					
Managers of researchers must:							
ECM1	Undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work	See: ECI2, EC13 ECI5.					

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ECM2	Ensure that they and their researchers act in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct	A project to complete a full Ethics and Integrity Policy Review has begun . The Review is led by a Departmental Ethics Lead, supported by the RIS Policy Team. The review will evaluate research ethics and integrity training, roles and responsibilities in the ethics processes, support for HRA approvals, and a restructuring and updating of research ethics policy. . The benefits of the project and anticipated outcomes include: I. Improving staff and student experience by ensuring consistent policy and processes are applied throughout the university, and ensuring ethical processes are applied fairly and consistently, thereby assisting with risk mitigation. II. Improving compliance (e.g. Concordat to Support Research Integrity) by enhancing staff understanding and knowledge of policies and processes. III. Upskilling of staff to promote best practice and good research conduct. Additionally see EC15; ECM5	Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 40.2 score by 20% (from 70% in 2020).	Dec-21	Research Ethics and Integrity Manager, RIS		
ECM3	Promote a healthy working environment that supports researchers' wellbeing and mental health, including reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and poor research integrity	See: EC13					
ECM4	Consider fully, in accordance with statutory rights and institutional policies, flexible working requests and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers	No additional initiatives planned at this time. Information on Northumbria working practices can be found here: https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/work-for-us					
ECM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution	To undertake a review of Northumbria's research culture, including; examining reward and recognition for collaborative research (e.g. Co-I accreditation), good research practice, and communication and engagement mechanisms with research staff by: 1. Undertaking research culture workshops (based on the Royal Society template) in June 2021 with Multidisciplinary group leads, which are drivers for strong research culture and interdisciplinarity across the institution. 2. Implement and share areas of good practice identified. 3. Identify areas for development and develop action plan for addressing issues (including any identified in CEDARS 2020).	1. Increase in Staff Survey response; how optimistic staff are about their opportunities for career progression +5%; how the University recognise and appreciates good performance +5% 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 14.1; 15.7 score by 20%.	Sep-22	Deputy Director, RIS		
Researchers must:							

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ECR1	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	To provide a University-wide, cross-disciplinary space for our different ECR communities to develop support mechanisms and raise issues relevant to the different ECR experience at Northumbria. Support continued development of the University-wide ECR Forum. 1. Refresh the ECR forum management group membership and elect a new chair annually. 2. Develop the Terms of Reference for the Group to ensure they are fit for purpose and include contract research staff. 3. Plan two events per annum for ECRs on career support aimed at contract researcher staff See also: ECM5	1. Delivered four forums per annum by August 2022. 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 29.3; 29.5; 32.1 (<i>I have done this</i>) score by 30%	Aug-22	Chair of ECR Forum		
ECR2	Ensure they act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity, and equality, diversity and inclusion	See: ECI3, ECM2, ECM5					
ECR3	Take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
ECR4	Use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour, particularly in relation to discrimination, harassment, bullying, and research misconduct	See: ECI3, ECM2.					
ECR5	Consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution	See: ECM5; ECR1.					
Employment							
Institutions must:							
E11	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices	See: ECI2; EI3.					

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EI2	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position	<p>We identified that although our research induction has had a positive impact on researchers, we still have some way to go to match the sectors response in CEDARS.</p> <p>In order to better on board our researchers HR and RIS will deliver up to four induction programmes annually that will cover an introduction to research and knowledge exchange at Northumbria. This module will introduce new academic colleagues to Northumbria's research and knowledge exchange strategy, including REF planning, and the research policy landscape. The session will also introduce Northumbria's research integrity training and governance, and how the University supports academic colleagues to strengthen NU research outputs by increasing their quality, accessibility and impact of their research outputs. It will also familiarise attendees with institutional processes and support mechanisms around; submitting applications; costing and pricing; and working with business, government and third sector and ways to develop pathways to impact.</p> <p>2. The dedicated OD Manager for RIS will deliver regular induction drop-in sessions for managers to compliment the information that is available via the manager's induction and manager's toolkit.</p> <p>3. Drop-in sessions will also be made available for any other management development matters, such as conducting appraisals, having 1-1's, giving feedback etc.</p>	<p>1. Aim to have 90% of new ECRs attend (including the VCF cohort). 2. 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 question 19.1 score by 30% from 54% in 2020.</p>	Sep-22	Researcher Development Manager, RIS		
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	<p>Through the Scholarly Communications Group we will promote the use of responsible metrics in promotion and recruitment criteria See also: EC12</p>	<p>Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions, 13.6; 18.3; 26.10; 40.3 scores by 10%.</p>		Research Culture and Quality Manager, RIS.		
EI4	Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent	<p>We will develop line management and research project management support as part of RIS cohort programmes with co-delivery from HR (see PCDM5), including information on redeployment and supporting contract research staff. This will improve the awareness of line management support for researchers and managers of researchers, and support for PIs who manage teams of researchers but who have no line management. OD will provide standalone training session as part of ECR forum events on 'Managing Researchers'.</p> <p>A sharing best practice session will also focus on conducting appraisals and supporting contract research staff, to ensure better trained managers of researchers.</p>	<p>1. Target attendance of 50 researchers over the academic year.</p> <p>2. Delivery of two standalone sessions on 'Managing Researchers'.</p> <p>3. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions; 20.a; 20.b; 22.2; 26.2; 27.2 (I have done) by 25%.</p>	01/09/2022	Researcher Development Manager, RIS.		
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	<p>Raise awareness of appraisal support and promotion pathway via the ECR forum.</p>	<p>Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions 16.1; 20.a; 26.1 by 15%.</p>	01/06/2022	Research Culture and Quality Manager, RIS.		
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	<p>No additional initiatives planned at this time.</p>					

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E17	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: ECM5.				
Managers of researchers must:						
EM1	Undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care	1. We will review of PGR supervisor training and development of online training materials. 2. Develop online resources to ensure supervisors are up to date with relevant training and changes in PGR processes or policies including updates on inclusivity and supporting PGRs from BAME background. 3. Develop systems for monitoring supervisors training completions to support the competency of supervisors, and the PGR experience. See: E14.	1. Training module live and available to staff by December 2021. 2. Monitor completion rates +75% completion rate by December 2022. 3. Develop training module according to feedback (70% positive feedback, with a 10% increase each year). 4. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 question 27.5 by 10%.	01/09/2022	Graduate School Manager	
EM2	Familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding	See: ECI3; ECM2				
EM3	Commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers	See: ECI2; E13.				
EM4	Actively engage in regular constructive performance management with their researchers	No additional initiatives planned at this time.				
EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution	See: ECI6				
Researchers must:						
ER1	Ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder	See ECI3; ECM2				
ER2	Understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities	See ECI3; ECM2				
ER3	Positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers	No additional initiatives planned at this time.				
ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the wider academic community	See: ECI6; ECR5				
Professional and Career Development						
Institutions must:						
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	See: PCDI3				
PCDI2	Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers	No additional initiatives planned at this time.				
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers	1. We will develop and deliver career management workshops with internal and external speakers to provide insights into working both outside and inside academia. 2. Provide tailored support to contract research staff from Research Development Team through online resources, face to face workshops, and support for funding applications, through an online ECR Hub.	1. Careers workshop for ECRs and contract research staff (aim for 30+ attendees): June 2020. 2. Development of online and face to face support for contract researchers to develop funding applications (March 2022). 3. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions 29.3 by 30%.	Sep-22	Researcher Development Manager, RIS.	

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PCDI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	We will review the current use of the mentoring scheme to support ECRs including PDRAs, contract researchers and staff with a L&T background). Identify areas of best practice in Departments and develop an approach to drive improvement in other areas so that ECRs are allocated an appropriate mentor and feel supported to take responsibility for their own growth and learning and development. 1. Understand the current position on the number of ECRs who have a mentor through the ECR Forum and RAKE. 2. Identify areas of best practice in Departments and utilise this to construct a university framework for ECR Mentoring. 3. Develop mentoring training ensuring that the responsibilities of the mentor and mentee are clear. Ensuring mentors are skilled and supported to undertake their role effectively.	1. Early Career Researchers are allocated an appropriate mentor (our aim is for each ECR to have research mentor). 2. Positive feedback from mentors and mentees (70% positive feedback on scheme). 3. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions 15.3 by 20%.	01/092022	Researcher Development Manager, RIS.		
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	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
Funders must:							
PCDF1	Incorporate specific professional development requirements in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies. This should include researchers' engagement in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata per year, and evidence of effective career development planning	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
PCDF2	Embed the Concordat Principles and researcher development into research assessment strategies and processes	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
PCDF3	Acknowledge that a large proportion of the researchers they fund will move on to careers beyond academia, and consider how they can encourage and support this within their remit	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
Managers of researchers must:							
PCDM1	Engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually	See EI4, EM1.					
PCDM2	Support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and secondments	See PCDI4					
PCDM3	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	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
PCDM4	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 endeavours	See PCD13					

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PCDM5	Engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development	We will develop leadership and management session as part of Future Research Leaders training programme. This will support better trained managers of researchers, especially support for PIs who manage teams of researchers but who have no line management (following feedback from the ECR Forum and RDSG).	1. Interim progress measure to utilise existing HR resources to deliver training module within the Future Research Leaders programme by 01/06/2022. 2. Increase positive response in CEDARS 2022 questions 15.2 by 30%.	01/09/2023	Researcher Development Manager, RIS.		
Researchers must:							
PCDR1	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	1. We will develop training for research staff including contract research staff that will include: developing external partnerships; teaching support; moving from professional practice to academia; writing support; grant applications for contract research. 2. Additionally create an ECR survey to confirm ECR needs and shared with anyone identifying ECR forum future offer.	1. Run survey with 50+ response rate. 2. Develop 2 to 3 training sessions over 2021-22 academic year with 25 attendees at each session. 3. Increase CEDARS survey response rate by 15%+.	Sep-22	ECR Forum Chair		
PCDR2	Explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments	We will develop a comprehensive training programme on lecturing or demonstrating at university for PGRs and route to HEA fellowship. Supporting the development of peer to peer networks for teaching support. See: PCD14 <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Launch training programme for PGRs who teach or demonstrate. 2. Monitor completion rates and feedback– 80 PGRs per year completion rate by December 2022, with 80% satisfaction rating. 3. Review PRES results for teaching support feedback increase of +15%.	01/09/2022	Graduate School Manager		
PCDR3	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	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
PCDR4	Positively engage in career development reviews with their managers	No additional initiatives planned at this time.					
PCDR5	Seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	See PCD14.					
PCDR6	Consider opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system through, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement and commercialisation	See PCDR1.					

* The 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 Concordat encourages institutions to include other groups who actively engage in research as beneficiaries of their Concordat action plan. These could be postgraduate researchers; staff on teaching and research, or teaching contracts; clinicians; professional support staff; technicians.