

<b>Name of Institution</b>	Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
<b>Reporting period</b>	November 2023 t November 2024
<b>Date approved by governing body</b>	Approved by the University Court on 18 December 2024
<b>Date published online</b>	7 January 2025
<b>Web address of annual report</b>	<a href="https://www.qmu.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/strategy-and-culture/concordats-and-sector-good-practice/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/">https://www.qmu.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/strategy-and-culture/concordats-and-sector-good-practice/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/</a>
<b>Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage</b>	<a href="https://www.qmu.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/strategy-and-culture/concordats-and-sector-good-practice/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/">https://www.qmu.ac.uk/research-and-knowledge-exchange/strategy-and-culture/concordats-and-sector-good-practice/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/</a>

Statement on how the organisation creates, maintains and embeds a research culture that upholds a positive and inclusive environment for researchers at all stages of their careers.

aspirations and career development opportunities for research staff and research leaders. In 2024 our RCG, chaired by a member of our Professoriate, in collaboration with our Research and KE Centres, championed QMU participation in the national pilot Research Culture Landscape Survey (RCLS), which will contribute towards development of a new institutional research culture framework and KPI, inclusive of both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

A secondment of a member of our academic staff to the role of

Promote a working environment that supports the mental health and wellbeing of researchers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Commit to ongoing participation in CEDARS to monitor excellence in our research culture and environment and allow for national benchmarking and longitudinal comparison.

Ensure School, Research and KE Centre and Professional Service Operational Plans are aligned with strategic priorities for research and KE and provide transparent and robust enablers.

### **Employment**

HR policy review to ensure transparent and equitable access for Contract Research Staff (CRS) to enhance terms of employment, career pathways and professional and career development.

Improve clarity and support for the use of the Academic Workload Allocation Model (AWAM).

Take account of CRS feedback on HR policies as part of HR policy review.

Ensure the QMU sabbatical policy and other mechanisms for researcher development are visible and embedded.

Enhance support for researchers returning from periods of absence e.g., parental leave or secondments.

Engage in sector developments to address precarity in research careers.

### **Professional Development of Researchers**

Support Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and CRS in consolidating external research identities and profiles.

Develop new guidance to enhance systems and support for researcher identity.

Provide a clear KE and impact career pathway.

Gather and publish data on the career destinations and subsequent career paths of researchers.

Promote and monitor uptake of the institutional policy of 10 days (pro rata) for professional development for colleagues involved in research and KE.

Strengthen support and infrastructure for researcher development by growing external and collaborative researcher training.

Review how we support internal and external collaboration through sector researcher development, research leadership and ECR networks and mentoring.

Embed training and development opportunities for doctoral, ECR, and mid-career Researchers to improve skills and update learning to respond to current research environments.

Provide training and guidance for managers in undertaking effective development conversations.

**Summary of actions taken, and evaluation of progress made, in the current reporting period to implement your plan to support the three pillars in respect of each of your key stakeholder groups.**

In 2024 QMU participated in the national pilot Research Culture Landscape Survey (RCLS). Independent analysis and benchmarking of QMU performance against aggregate data from other participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was completed by Vitae. This provided valuable data for measuring advancement of Y D h Concordat for Researchers Development Action Plan 2022-25 and a tool to measure progress towards excellence in our research environment and culture over the REF 2029 census period, in addition to data from biennial CEDARS.

Data from this pilot has been used to evaluate progress towards target outcomes within the reporting period. Where no relevant data from the 2024 pilot RCLS is available, we include evidence from CEDARS 2023 as a measure of evaluation.

**Environment and Culture**

**Institution**

In 2024, new Institutional Research Governance structures were approved by QMU Research Strategy Committee (RSC). Work to finalise their remit is ongoing, pending further development in 2024-25.

A strategic review of our Research and KE Centres (RKEC) takes place annually to ensure that institutional Concordat commitments are embedded and monitored at a local level. Quarterly meetings of RKEC Directors provide a mechanism to review collective developments and share good practice, further supported by School Research and KE Leads.

New QMU guidance for Safeguarding in Research MU ab(guida



	<p>CEDARS 2023 result (59%). These results were in line with the pilot aggregate.</p> <p><b>Researchers</b></p> <p>In September 2024, researchers from QMU School of Health Sciences, in partnership with RKEDU, hosted a workshop for delegates across modern universities in Scotland to strengthen collaboration and promote collegiality in research culture. The workshop resulted in a collaborative funding bid for the Royal Society of Edinburgh Collaboration Grant, to support long-term engagement.</p> <p>Pilot RCLS 2024 identified that largely, researchers perceive QMU as a suitable (76%), safe (94%) and accessible (87%) place to work. 73% believed that they could voice ideas, concerns and questions without fear of repercussion or humiliation. These results were in line with the pilot aggregate. Although 74% staff expressed a sense of belonging at QMU, only 59% felt part of a research community (lower than 74% pilot aggregate). 79% respondents reported that different ideas and approaches to research are valued. 83% agreed that there are opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. However, only 54% reported that they adopt open research practices, lower compared to what is observed in the pilot aggregate (70%). 85% felt that ethical standards are high in their research environment and 84% believed they can be transparent about all aspects of the research process. 59% respondents felt that the working environment supports their mental health and wellbeing, a decrease from CEDARS 2023 results (66%).</p>
--	--

**Employment**

**Institution**

New proposals for QMU Academic Career pathways are being developed, with staff consultation taking place in Autumn 2024. In 2023/24 Reward and Recognition processes were postponed but will go ahead in 2024-25, with our



	<p>their immediate manager supported them to develop their research identity and 23% of women disagreeing strongly that their manager supports them in their broader career aspirations, compared to no men in both cases. These results reflected the UK-wide results and were consistent with</p> <p><b>Y D h [ • î î î í Ć • μ o š • X</b></p> <p><b>K v o Ç î ð 9 } ( Ć • Ć Z Ć • [ u v P Ć •</b></p> <p>for conducting appraisals/development reviews of staff and the same number for managing staff performance. These numbers were similar to the UK aggregate. 40% of QMU respondents felt that activities related to developing researchers were valued (27% UK), and 44% felt valued for supervising research students, the same as the UK aggregate. Respondents at QMU felt more valued for their contributions related to management and administration within the institution than the UK average (58% QMU, 34% UK).</p> <p><b>Researchers</b></p> <p>RCLS 2024 indicates that 48% of QMU respondents have access to clear career progression pathways, with a similar proportion of staff (41%) disagreeing that such opportunities are available to them. Only 45% of QMU respondents felt that their future at the institution is secure, which is markedly lower than the pilot aggregate (79%). Further 18% stated they did not know if they feel like their future is secure, compared with the aggregate 3%.</p> <p>In September 2024, QMU RCG revised progress towards gathering and publishing data on the career destinations and subsequent career paths of researchers. This will be taken forward in session 2024-25, with leadership from the Head of Graduate School and Research Centres Directors.</p>
--	--

Professional development

Institution

our subscription, QMU will have ongoing access to this resource from April 2025.

We engage in collaborative initiatives with other HEIs and partners (The British Academy ECR Network, Converge, Scottish Research Integrity Network, Scottish Parliament Academic Network, Scottish Higher Education Researcher Developers, Scottish Policy Research Exchange, UK Policy Engagement Network and Universities Scotland Researcher Development and Culture Committee) to expand professional development opportunities available to QMU researchers.

As a small HEI, QMU researchers have benefited from increasingly shared inter-institutional researcher development. For ECRs, collaboration in researcher training sets the foundation for ongoing interdisciplinary research and future collaboration. We have had a very positive experience in joint training with the University of Edinburgh, Napier, HWU, Abertay, Stirling, RCS, GSA and University of St Andrews.

We have continued to support QMU researchers to acquire skills for the Commercialisation of Research. In 2024, we published a new [QMU Entrepreneurial Sub-strategy and Action Plan](#), setting out our entrepreneurial ambitions and mechanisms for their delivery.

We have entered the strategic Bright Red Triangle (BRT) Partnership with Edinburgh Napier University and Edinburgh College which will extend enterprise support and embed entrepreneurial skills across the QMU curricula.

As part of the Start For Future (SFF) alliance of HEIs, startups and industry partners from across Europe, we have participated in the LEARN and Match & Start entrepreneurial training and coaching programmes designed to develop entrepreneurial skills among research staff and students.

Other key initiatives promoting commercialisation of research at QMU include [Converge](#), with 2 of 5 QMU

submissions to the Converge Challenge 2024 reaching the finalist stage, and one winning a runner-up prize; the THRIVE Programme, for current and future food and drink entrepreneurs; and SHIFT U Y D h [ • v v μ o v š Œ skills training programme for practitioners in the creative and cultural industries.

Building from our membership of the Scottish Alliance for Food, Health, Equity and Sustainability (SCAF), established in 2023, in June 2024 QMU hosted the "Being Innovative about Food Innovation" conference, an event designed to unite a diverse community involved in food research, study, industry and charity. The event attracted approximately 100 participants from the UK, Europe, and the US, offering delegates the opportunity to network, exchange knowledge and explore potential for collaborations.

Between February and July 2024, Y D h [ • Z • Œ Z Development Unit, in collaboration with Research Centres, facilitated an interim internal mentoring scheme, which supported 11 mentorship partnerships.

### **Academic Managers of Researchers**

In 2024, we launched and delivered a dedicated, cross-school manager training programme, with key themes including coaching approaches, neurodiversity awareness in the workplace and conflict resolution.

### **Researchers**

QMU Researcher Development Programme 2023-24 was delivered with an expanded portfolio of professional development opportunities for CRS, aimed at early- and mid-career colleagues. In total, 140 staff members benefited from these opportunities. Training includes quarterly drop-in sessions focused on the Concordat to Support Researchers Development and the Research Integrity Concordat, Generative AI, Entrepreneurship at QMU, Intellectual Property. Additionally, colleagues have ongoing access to Staff Training Calendar coordinated by HR.

To support the development of our research community, a series of four informal connection events were facilitated in

**Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period.**

Implementing Research and KE Centre 3 Year Plans.

Capacity and Capability Building via external collaborations.

Progress proposals for a research data management system.

Develop mechanisms for recording and publishing data on career destinations and subsequent career paths of researchers.

Develop a QMU Research and KE Culture Framework, to support monitoring of changes in culture across a set of value-led measures, both quantitative and qualitative, aligned with the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) data and REF 2029 People, Culture and Environment (PCE) indicators.

Finalise QMU criteria for identifying staff with Significant Responsibility for Research and Research Independence, in line with REF 2029 staff eligibility criteria and PCE indicators.

Strengthening research and KE Culture through close collaboration with the newly appointed SFC Scottish Research Cultures Collaboration Manager (SRCCM).

Introducing new research and KE Governance Structures and Policies, including development and implementation of QMU Code of Practice in Research and KE and Procedure for Investigating Research Misconduct.

Review and update institutional Research and KE web pages, including those of our Research centres.

Supporting impact portfolios and capture.

Fully embedding a refreshed and updated REF 2029 Code of Practice as a driver for culture change beyond REF.

Continuing to enhance and strengthen support for CRS via co-produced initiatives and resources.

Building on CEDARS and pilot Research Culture Landscape Survey data, develop new metrics to support People, Culture and Environment in REF 2029.

Work with the sector to define and adopt new metrics in support of KE culture, via the KEIF Fund (KEIF).

