

Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Universities and Research Institutes

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Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development	Louis King, Researcher Development Officer researchtraining@gold.ac.uk
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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 (*max 500 words*)

The development of a positive, equitable, and outward-facing research environment is a core priority, foundational and interdependent with each of the institutional objectives detailed in Goldsmiths Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. In order to support the excellent research and researchers who constitute our community, our research environment must facilitate growth and development, respond to and advance the research endeavour, address systemic inequalities, and ensure openness, innovation, experimentation and high-quality performance. Our research environment must support career development, training, the capacity and capability needs of individuals and research teams, as well as supportive, interdisciplinary and collaborative spaces, infrastructures and cultures.

The development of this culture and environment is a communal effort, realised as much within the intellectually curious and generous interactions of community members as it is within the strategic direction of our governing committees. In our recent HR Excellence in Research Award (HREiRA) renewal, positive developments and initiatives were identified and celebrated at all levels of interaction, from individual initiatives, to research teams, to departments, schools and governance committees. At Goldsmiths, we seek to develop a research environment that supports, recognises and encourages this broad spectrum of contributions, while at the same time mobilising the strategic leadership and resources of the College to address structural challenges and inequalities.

In embracing Goldsmiths' intellectual creativity and creative practices, our appreciation of ensuring space for dissent, and our drive to confront and address the impacts of structural inequalities, we seek to develop and foster a unique, thriving research environment. Responsive to these values and the needs of our community, Goldsmiths aims to chart a unique path to research culture sector leadership in the decade to come.

Goldsmiths' Research and Enterprise Committee (REC) is charged with the oversight and strategic leadership of research environment and research culture activities. REC is chaired by the Pro-Warden for Research, who also serves as the strategic lead for both the HR Excellence in Research Award and our Researcher Development Concordat commitments. Research ethics and research integrity are championed by Goldsmiths' Research Ethics Sub-Committee, under the strategic

leadership of the Academic Lead for Research and reporting to REC. These committees, together with the REF Strategy Board, oversee the development and implementation of institutional programmes and initiatives which support research environment activities. Work towards implementing the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat is integrated with the College's activity in the retention of the Athena Swan Bronze Award and the Stonewall Silver Award, in realising our aspirations as set out in our Race Equality Charter and Race Justice Strategy, and in maintaining our status as a Disability Confident Employer.

Institutional leadership and initiatives are further developed and tailored to local contexts through faculty and school governance roles and committees. These roles and committees support the development of researchers with discipline-responsive training opportunities, integrate our postgraduate researchers into the academic community, and support the vibrance of our local research environments. The Graduate School supports the development of PhD researchers, the postgraduate community culture, and the environment of support and experimentation foundational to the future development of our disciplines.

Provide a short summary of the institution's strategic objectives and implementation plans for delivering each of the three pillars of the Concordat (environment and culture, employment, and professional development of researchers) for your key stakeholder groups together with your measures for evaluating progress and success (max 600 words)

Throughout 2023, Goldsmiths undertook an extensive researcher engagement exercise to determine, articulate, and refine our strategic research culture objectives and the implementation plans necessary to address these priorities. Through participation in the Culture, Employment, and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS), researcher focus groups, 1:1's, committee consultations and local feedback, we identified the following strategic priorities for the 2023-2026 action cycle.

Summary of Strategic Objectives

In recognition of the positive impacts of increased researcher ownership and engagement in these activities, we seek to further increase the quantity and quality of researcher engagement to ensure researcher perspectives lead our support strategy. We will generate innovative infrastructure to support researcher careers,

prioritising equity, diversity, and inclusion as fundamental to our vision of a thriving research culture. We will embed research culture and researcher development into the research project infrastructure using unique approaches and engagement at multiple levels. Finally, as a relatively small, social sciences, arts, and humanities-focused institution, we will build upon the strengths of our unique context and diverse community to innovate and share our successes and challenges both internally and with the industry at large.

Our institutional action plan is comprised of nearly 100 standalone activities with corresponding SMART evaluation metrics covering all three pillars of the Concordat. Our strategic objectives cut across the pillars of the Concordat, with actions to realise this strategy situated in the development of research environment and culture, the employment of researchers, and the professional development of researchers.

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 [Institution; Academic Managers of Researchers (Deans, Heads of Schools/Departments/PIs); Researchers]

Environment and Culture (*max 600 words*)

Over the past year, significant effort has been made in addressing Goldsmiths’ identified challenges and priorities for improving the research environment and culture. Some activity highlights include becoming a signatory to the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA), increasing access to research ethics and integrity training, expanded training on incorporating EDI into research development, and initiatives to support the collaboration and communication of research.

Research Ethics & Integrity

During this period, on demand training in research ethics and integrity has been made available to our entire research community, including doctoral students. All Goldsmiths researchers now have access to easily navigable training on responsible research practices, which can be referred back to

as projects develop, and questions arise. The policy and pathway for reporting research misconduct has been hyperlinked to the high-traffic landing page of our Researcher Development Hub, encouraging researchers to familiarise themselves with the policy and to report misconduct when it arises.

During the 2023-24 academic year, Goldsmiths hosted a cross-College discussion of the barriers, opportunities, and structural challenges of developing research ethics policies and procedures responsive to the unique needs of practice researchers. Building on the lessons learned and challenges articulated, we have engaged with UKRIO and other specialist institutions towards initiating a cross-sector dialogue and practice sharing event. Our researchers also participated in UKRIO's pilot research integrity training, providing feedback on the utility and relevance of the programme from the perspective and experiences of those working in the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

During the last year, Goldsmiths supported a second cohort of black, Asian, and minority ethnic researchers to participate in the StellarHE Strategic Executive Development Programme for Diverse Leaders in Higher Education. All researchers who expressed interest were supported to participate, with further costs provided to support teaching replacement. In light of both the positive feedback and the challenges identified from the two cohorts of participants who have now completed the programme, we have had a series of meetings with StellarHE organisers to discuss:

- a.) how the programme might evolve to better meet the challenges faced by researcher participants (e.g. time scarcity, fixed-term funding environments, competing academic priorities)
- b.) how Goldsmiths (and HEI's in general) might better engage with the programme and integrate learning

and opportunities for participants during and after completion.

StellarHE has invited our Researcher Development Team to attend programme workshops in the coming year to pilot ways their programme might better interface with institutional contexts and support. Following Goldsmiths' researcher feedback, they have also begun exploring the feasibility of an academic-focused programme, which reflects the time pressures and context-specific challenges faced by academic researchers. We look forward to further impact evaluation as our partnership with StellarHE evolves and participants have more time to apply the learning to their roles.

In progressing our priority of embedding EDI best practices into our research, we have incorporated a session on integrating EDI into all aspects of research development into our recurring training offer for researchers. This session approaches each aspect of a research project (from planning, to recruiting, to working with partners, to selecting methods) and then explores possible approaches for integrating EDI considerations into all structures and decision making.

Collegiality & Communicating Research

The period has also seen significant developments in supporting collegiality and improving the ways we articulate and share our research and its impact to a broader range of publics.

The creation of Goldsmiths' internal peer review programme has allowed colleagues to support one another with anonymous feedback, improving the chances that research ambitions become funded realities. Our researchers have generously and enthusiastically taken the time to review colleagues' work and provided constructive feedback on applications seeking nearly £12 million in external research funding.

	<p>The Collaboration Network was also established in this period to support researchers in building connections with colleagues across the College, identify potential areas of collaboration, and develop skills in structuring interdisciplinary projects. The Collaboration Network has provided valuable opportunities for researchers to meet those outside their immediate departments and to build a greater sense of community with research at its nexus.</p> <p>Goldsmiths has also worked to further develop and strengthen the ways we communicate our research as well as our individual and collective contributions to the research endeavour. Over the last year, our researchers have worked with a tech specialist on training to build an academic web presence and with a former BBC producer on interview coaching to support effective engagement with different forms of broadcast media. Research enabling colleagues have developed training and resources to support researchers to communicate their contributions through the new narrative CV format, encouraging a greater awareness and recognition of the importance of contributions to the research environment and culture. Finally, our internal research bulletin has been further developed to encourage recognition of, and participation in, a wider range of research-related activities, including research environment and culture initiatives.</p>
<p>Employment (<i>max 600 words</i>)</p>	<p>In efforts to improve the employment conditions and experience for researchers at Goldsmiths, the last year has seen a substantial engagement effort through an all-staff survey, with further significant initiatives to support mental health, to manage workplace stress, and to improve the academic promotions process for those on research contracts.</p> <p>All Staff Survey</p>

To better understand the experiences, perceptions, and priorities of our community, an all-staff survey was developed and evaluated over the course of the period. The survey was proactively designed to include questions on respondent contract type so that researcher perspectives could be appropriately explored as a key respondent grouping. Challenges and priorities arising from the survey have guided initial institutional initiatives and investments in staff support. Looking ahead, these survey results will support Goldsmiths to reflect and plan ways of developing and improving the experience of working at Goldsmiths in the future.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

In light of survey responses, significant and immediate efforts have been made towards supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Goldsmiths colleagues, with particular emphasis on managing stress in the workplace.

Updated guidance and resources towards managing workplace stress have been developed in line with best practice from the HSE, including a framework for supporting a spectrum of responses to stress. These new resources have been established to better support individuals to recognise the signs and risks of workplace stress and to provide a more user-friendly description of the range of resources to manage stress including workplace adjustments, counselling and employee support.

Line managers are now trained to support stress management within their teams through a newly introduced, mandatory eLearning module. This training supports managers to better understand common causes and expressions of workplace stress, ensures they are aware of the resources available, and better equips them to manage team stress and refer colleagues to available support when it is needed.

	<p>Improving the Academic Promotions Process</p> <p>In response to colleague and committee feedback on the academic promotions process, significant effort was made on improving the clarity of the guidelines and making the process more equitable for colleagues on research-only contracts.</p> <p>To improve the clarity of the guidelines, both the guidance and the application documents were amended to more clearly state expectations and requirements. Where needed, contextual information was added to clarify the meaning or expectations of specific sections. Repetitions, jargon, and ambiguity were eliminated wherever possible to improve guidance accessibility.</p> <p>In improving the process to support research staff, a previous requirement that a provision for promotions for grant-funded researchers must be made within the relevant grant has now been removed. This change will establish equity of treatment across different groups of academic staff and aligns with UKRI ambitions and Researcher Development Concordat principles to support the development of research-focused career pathways.</p> <p>Finally, to better evaluate the equity of our promotions process, we have also introduced an equalities monitoring form to better understand structural biases and progress towards inclusivity within our processes.</p>
<p>Professional development (<i>max 600 words</i>)</p>	<p>The reporting period saw a significant expansion in the breadth of professional and career development opportunities and resources for Goldsmiths researchers. 2023/24 marked the second year of our researcher development programme as a recurring, institution-wide resource, facilitating training and signposting to</p>

complementary development resources provided by departments across the College.

Over the course of the period, all researcher development and organisational development training was aligned with the corresponding headings of the researcher development framework to support researchers to plan and evidence their continuing professional development.

The last year saw many additions to the recurring programme of training opportunities, including:

- **Integrating EDI into Research Development**
 - Strategies for implementing EDI best practices into research design, methods, grant management, partner and participant interactions, and the sharing of research
- **Media Interview Training for Researchers**
 - Former BBC producer-led practical interview training to support researchers to engage the media with their research
- **Research Impact Suite**
 - A 4-part series supporting researchers to design, coordinate, and evidence projects to maximise their impact for the benefit of non-academic publics
- **Strategic Career Planning for Researchers**
 - Supporting the reflection, planning, and evaluation of career development goals and making progress against those goals
- **Research Ethics & Integrity Training [On-Demand]**
 - Developing understanding of responsible research best practices, supporting the quality of, and confidence in, research outputs and practices
- **Research Funding Bid Development Workshop Series**
 - An 8-part series supporting researchers with the development of each element of an external research funding application,

	<p>including developing partnerships, maximising impact, and narrative CV's</p> <p>In addition to training events, Goldsmiths piloted a programme of research coaching to support researchers' individual development goals through 1:1 professional coaching. The programme creates supportive and confidential coaching spaces for researchers to find solutions to professional challenges, identify and achieve meaningful development goals, and devise pathways towards pursuing new ideas.</p>
<p>Comment on any lessons learned from the activities undertaken over this period and any modifications you propose to make to your action plan and measures of success as a result. (max 500 words)</p>	
<p>While meaningful progress has been made in the advancement of our action plan over the last year, we have also faced challenges as a result of sector-wide financial pressures and a subsequent institutional restructure to address a serious financial deficit at the institution. The process of voluntary severance and compulsory redundancies has necessarily affected individual, local, and institutional priorities over the period. During this time, we saw a reduction in researcher engagement with professional and career development activities. Adapting to the situation, the Researcher Development Team modified planned action activities in favour of the expansion of individual development methods such as research coaching and strategic career planning. Despite low attendance, scheduled programming continued throughout the period to support those interested in engaging with career development activities. Optional 'extra' time was built into the beginning and end of in-person events to allow colleagues to speak with each other and maintain a sense of community.</p> <p>The sectoral financial pressures which necessitated the institutional restructure this past year unfortunately continue to persist. The year ahead will require investment and attention to the continued cultivation of an inclusive, supportive, and ambitious research culture, while at the same time attending to the necessary growth, visibility, and innovation of research at Goldsmiths. In developing our research culture, we recognise the vital interdependence between a culture of</p>	

care, wellbeing and community, and enhancing research excellence and growth. In adapting to challenges we have faced and those still to come, we believe that research excellence and growth are best achieved through a supportive culture and environment.

**Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period
(max 500 words)**

As we look to the year ahead, our researcher development programme will expand to include topics such as developing mentoring skills and reducing the carbon footprint of research. Research leadership development will be a priority, supported by training, opportunities for 'learning-by-doing' complemented by reflection, and facilitated practice sharing activities. New opportunities for community building and supporting belonging will also be established. Finally, in evaluating the impact of our researcher development and research culture initiatives, Goldsmiths will once again participate in the industry-wide Culture, Employment, and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) from March-June 2025.

Researcher Development

The third year of researcher development as a College-wide resource will see the introduction of 'thematic clusters' to support researchers to navigate the significantly expanded programme of events and multi-event programmes.

Autumn 2024/25 Researcher Development Thematic Clusters

- Diverse Leadership & Equitable, Inclusive Research
- Climate & Sustainability
- Mentoring & Coaching
- Collaboration & Community
- Research Funding & Impact
- Ethics & Integrity

Within these thematic clusters, an expansive programme of events is planned, including new topics such as 'Mentoring Skills for Researchers' and 'Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Your Research'. These thematic clusters help to align researcher development activities with both the pillars of Vitae's Research Culture

Framework and with Goldsmiths' Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy, ensuring that programming is responsive to both the career development needs of researchers and the strategic priorities of the College.

Community and Research Leadership

The coming year will see the first in-person gathering of the Goldsmiths Early Career Researcher Staff Network. This inaugural meeting for ECR staff involved in the network will be an opportunity to build a community with colleagues from across the institution and to feedback interests and priorities for the development of the network going forward.

The Collaboration Network will continue in an expanded form as a place for researchers to gather and connect with colleagues from across the College. Termly meetings of the network will now be complemented by further 'thematic' meetings to support continued conversations with colleagues working in similar thematic areas across different disciplines.

In developing research leadership across the College, colleagues will be supported with relevant training opportunities such as developing mentoring skills and expanded leadership and management training. In efforts to increase the diversity of the College's research leadership, a third cohort of black, Asian, and minority ethnic researchers will be supported to participate in StellarHE's Strategic Executive Development for Diverse Leaders in Higher Education as we explore opportunities to further imbed this learning into our research environment. Practice sharing opportunities will be facilitated to allow colleagues a platform to share their learning and experiences.

Lastly, research culture will be expanded as a priority topic of discussion, training, and engagement to encourage greater researcher agency in developing their local research environments.

CEDARS

In March 2025, Goldsmiths will once again join HEI's across the sector in participating in the Culture, Employment, and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS). Engagement with CEDARS helps Goldsmiths to monitor the impact of HR Excellence in Research Award and Researcher Development

Concordat activities. Researcher responses support the College to reflect on local challenges (contextualised against current industry aggregates) and to prioritise future activities in line with the evolving needs of our research community. Once evaluated, summary findings will be shared with REC followed by our research community at large. In reflecting on the challenges faced in our research environment as a community, we hope to encourage the innovation and collaboration required to meaningfully address these challenges.

Please provide a brief statement describing your institution's approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body (*max 200 words*)

The drafting of this report has been a collaborative effort between Goldsmiths' Research and Knowledge Exchange Department and the People and Organisational Development Department, who share ownership of the administrative monitoring and reporting of relevant activities. The report was shared with REC members for input, comments and final sign-off.

Signature on behalf of governing body:



Professor David Oswell

Pro-Warden for Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange

Goldsmiths, University of London

London SE14 6AF

Contact for queries:

Louis King, Researcher Development Officer

researchtraining@gold.ac.uk

This annual report will be analysed by Universities UK, secretariat for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, to identify good practices, themes for development and information to improve national research culture policy and practice.

If you have any questions, or suggestions on how the reporting process could be improved, please contact the secretariat at CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk

www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk