

Details

<b>Institution name:</b>	Royal Veterinary College
<b>Cohort number:</b>	6
<b>Date of submission:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Institutional context:</b>	The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is the UK's largest and longest-established independent vet school and is a Member Institution of the University of London. We conduct research in veterinary and biological sciences including clinical research. The RVC aspires to be the leading organisation of its kind globally in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge relevant improving the health of humans and animals. <a href="#">About RVC Research and Researchers</a>

The institutional audience\* for this action plan includes (only include direct beneficiaries; complete or delete, as appropriate):

Audience (direct beneficiaries of the action plan)	Number of	Comments
Research Staff	72	These are the primary audience for this work- included are all posts with research as their primary purpose, whose employment is funded through grants and fellowships (or bridging funds). We do not include those who support research through administrative roles, or who are PhD students. There is the occasional person in this category who is also a veterinary clinician or research technicians. Research staff are referred to as Early Career Researchers ECR.
Postgraduate researchers		
Research and teaching staff	46	In scope in the context of their role of management and support of research staff- referred to as Principal Investigators. Does not include academics who do not have research staff funded through grants/fellowships. To note the RVC has 1045 staff in total of which ~ 20% are academics. Most lead or conduct research and have research teams but are not in the number above as they do not currently have an early career researcher staff member in their team. Four of the managers are also ECRs as they are Fellows with their own research team. In addition, we have about 130 PhD students.
Teaching-only staff		
Technicians		
Clinicians		
Professional Support Staff		
Other (provide numbers and details)		

Complete for submission								To be completed only when reporting on action plan		
Obligation	Action	Carried over from previous action plan?	Deadline	Responsibility	The targeted <u>impact</u> of the action (success measure)	Comments (optional)	Progress update	The actual <u>impact</u> of the action (reporting against the success measure)	Outcome (ongoing/carried forward/no further action)	
<b>Environment and Culture</b>										
<b>Awareness and engagement</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to work towards an open and inclusive research culture, and to ensure broad understanding and awareness of this amongst researchers.										
EC11	Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat.	Update the Concordat code of practice then publicise via communications and an event  Mention in induction coffee sessions	No	October 2024	Chair of RCWG with support from all RCWG	Question in CEDARS- aim >70% aware by 2025				
EC12	Ensure institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers.	Add a question to the exit interview to gather perceptions of inclusiveness	No	July 2023	Work overseen by the Equality and Diversity Committee	Feedback is used to enhance interventions and actions to support an inclusive RVC	EDI is an area of focus for the RVC; we have a new VP post on EDI and more resource; a new EDI strategy is in draft, and training is being reviewed;			
EC16	Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and using the outcomes to improve institutional practices.	Run CEDARs in 2023 and 2025. Formalise how feedback from the survey is shared. Review of exit interviews by RCWG. Biannual RCWG meetings Monthly informal meetings between Chair, HR and the RA.	Yes	ongoing	RCWG	90% ECR feel included within their immediate research environment / research group (CEDARS) 90% feel valued at work (CEDARS) 90% feel they have a good level of job satisfaction (CEDARS)				
ECR1	Encourage researchers to 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.	Encourage/mandate new starters attendance on revised EDI training (blended learning) that promotes allyship and how to enhance inclusiveness- (conditional on resource approval)	No	September 2024	SDM and EDI manager, PIs and researchers	See EC16				
		Pilot a researcher buddy scheme for new starters (optional for them)	No	September 2023	RA	Evaluation of buddy scheme				



ECR4	Ensure researchers use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour in relation to discrimination, harassment and bullying	See EC13 When report and support becomes more embedded, analysis of use of report and support will be assessed		September 2025	Employee relations manager along with LWB	See EC13				
<b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in-, aware of- and adopt practices enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion.										
EC14 / ECM1	Ensure managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work.	Launch a revised EDI strategy (currently in draft);  Evaluate pilot and implement findings of revised approach to EDI compliance training. Broaden the range of EDI awareness interventions and focus on understanding experiences and empathy creation	No	March 2023  September 2023	Head of EDI and VP of EDI;  Head of EDI and SDM;	Review as part of review of EDI strategy implementation  CEDARS 90% ECR feel included within my immediate research environment / research group  5% more positive response to the various CEDARS questions on EDI in 2023 CEDARS and further 5% in 2025	Part of the new EDI strategy will involve making a case to expand EDI training. New e-learning has been implemented and we have piloted a blended training for new starters that also emphasises allyship.			
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to equality, diversity and inclusion.									
<b>Research Integrity</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in-, aware of- and maintain high standards of research integrity, and are able to report infringements or misconduct.										
EC15 / ECM2	Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct.	(a) Enhance ECR and PI understanding of research reproducibility/research integrity through maintaining the RVCs participation in the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN).  This includes 20% time of a senior Institutional lead (currently Professor Dominic Wells, a local network lead and a RA Research integrity/reproducibility champion). These individuals will lead additional training in research integrity/reproducibility as well as setting up the "ReproducibiliTea" meetings, enabling discussion between PIs and ECRs.  (b) Continue to require mandatory training on research integrity at induction, monitoring that this has been done through the on-line process and associated quiz and is refreshed every 4 years; (c) Encourage researchers to report on factors that impact negatively on research integrity by driving inappropriate behaviours and suggest ways in which these can be discouraged/ prevented.  The UKRN activities will be supported by a 60% FTE funded by Research England in a grant to	Yes	Ongoing  Evaluate by September 2025	RIO and UKRN Institutional lead	(a) 75% of ECR are aware of Research Integrity Concordat and think the RVC take research integrity seriously (CEDARS) (b) Number and attendance of UKRN badged events held at the RVC; (c) Compliance with mandatory Research Integrity training monitored to ensure compliance - those who have not done the training are not allowed to apply for travel grants to go to meetings to present their research				

		the UKRN (RVC Share). This funding will be used to develop and deliver additional training on research reproducibility/integrity.								
ECM3	Ensure managers report and address incidents of poor research integrity.					Monitor 'report and support' cases of unprofessional behaviour to HR on an annual basis for trends				
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity.					Research integrity rolling cycle of reminders every 4 years- ongoing. 80% compliance with training.				
ECR4	Ensure researchers use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour in relation to research misconduct.					Monitor 'report and support' cases of unprofessional behaviour to HR on an annual basis for trends				
<b>Policy development</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to encourage all researchers to actively contribute to the development of policies driving positive change at their institution.										
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.									
ECM5	Encourage managers to engage with opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution.	A new section- the values and behaviours' form- in the Senior Academic promotion process asks for narrative including Collegiate and EDI activities. We believe this will encourage academics to feel more valued for contributing to wider activities such as committees where policies are developed.	Yes	Reviewed with SAP by December 2023	HoDs and Head of HR operations	PIs response to CEDARS question 'to what extent does your institution value contributions that you make to Institutional policy and decision making is 40% positive in 2023 and 45% positive in 2025 (was 36% positive in 2021)				
EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution.									
ECR5	Encourage researchers to consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution.									
ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the wider academic community.									
<b>Employment</b>										
<b>Recruitment and induction</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure recruitment of researchers is open and fair and researchers receive effective inductions into the organisation.										
E11	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair	Recruitment data for researchers will be monitored for any potential bias. Implement the BAME recruitment	Yes	Ongoing-part of annual EDI reports	EDI committee	100% of panel trained. Higher percentage of underrepresented groups moving through the recruitment process.				

	and inclusive selection and appointment practices.	project recommendations once they are available.			Staff Development and HR operations HR and recruiting managers					
E12	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	Embed use of on-line induction /probation form and continue to refine it. Continue specific invitation of new researchers to 'coffee' with the RA and relevant contacts from the RIO and HR Introduce an optional buddying scheme for new researchers	Yes	Ongoing  Ongoing  September 2023	HR and managers  RA	Maintain effectiveness of local induction at 80% and increase score for departmental and institutional induction by 5%  Evaluation of pilot				
<b>Recognition, reward and promotion</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure the fair and inclusive recognition of researchers as part of their career progression.										
E13	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.	Continue to use the new values and behaviours form in Senior academic promotion (this asks about Collegiate activity, EDI activity and reflection against the RVC behaviours). See ECM5 Collect and review quantitative data on gender and race of staff research outputs and funding applications	No  No	Review with SAP by December 2023  ongoing biannually	Head of HR Operations  VP RI, VP EDI, Head of EDI	Review trends from the values and behaviours form once this has been in place for two years.  Data reviewed and documented		Athena Swan Charter Action		
EM3	Managers commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers.									
<b>Responsibilities and reporting</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure that researchers and their managers understand and act on their obligations and responsibilities.										
EM2	Managers familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding.	New research managers to attend Management Development Programme- that includes good employment practice. Any updates to be included in experienced supervisor refresher training. All managers to keep informed of College and Funder Policy and communicate this to researchers as part of induction.	Yes	Ongoing-reviewed with each new cohort-usually twice a year	HR and managers	All new academic managers of ECRs have attended the MDP.				
ER1	Researchers ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder.	As a result of local induction researchers should ensure they are aware and abide by policies and procedures. - see induction checklist and mandatory on-line training. They should seek information re funder requirements from their manager.	Yes	Ongoing	Researchers	Should this be relevant to any formal procedures involving researchers, e.g., grievance or disciplinary cases, feedback by Employee relations manager to RCWG members of any relevant generic learning.	On-line induction probation reminds managers and new staff to discuss this, including mandatory training and the RVC Behaviours			
ER2	Researchers understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities.					See ER1				

<b>People management</b>									
The aims of these obligations are to ensure that researchers are well-managed and have effective and timely performance reviews.									
E14	Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent.	<p>Continue to develop the staff development offering and ask new PIs to attend the MDP</p> <p>Ensure representation on the Staff Development Advisory group of PIs and researchers to help build engagement and refine the programme</p> <p>Project management will be enhanced by use of the new 'worktribe' system</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Ongoing-offer reviewed as part of monthly HR:RA meetings</p> <p>September 2022 and on-going</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Staff Development</p> <p>Research and Innovation Office (RIO)</p>	<p>PIs in CEDARS express confidence in their abilities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment</li> <li>Support for researcher career aspirations</li> <li>Providing feedback and acknowledging good performance</li> </ul> <p>-Maintain CEDARS score of over 90%</p> <p>- Increase CEDARS score by 5% 2023 and 10% 2025 for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appraisal and review</li> <li>Dealing with poor performance</li> <li>Managing flexible work applications</li> <li>Responding to issues of bullying and harassment</li> </ul>			
E15	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>Increase appraisal completion rates</p> <p>Once the researcher appendix in full use, monitor for trends re amount of development</p> <p>Continue to develop the workload allocation model for academics</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Annually and by September 2025</p> <p>January 2024</p> <p>July 2025</p>	<p>Managers with support from SDM</p> <p>RCWG</p> <p>Deputy COO, Deputy Principal and Acting vice Principal</p>	<p>Appraisal rate for ECRs over 72%</p> <p>Athena Swan Charter action</p>			
EM1	Managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care.	<p>Offer an action learning set for PIs to discuss management of researchers</p> <p>Ask new PIs to attend the MDP; continue with experienced supervisor refreshers</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>By academic year 2023-24</p> <p>Ongoing-biannually for MDP and refresher training every three years</p>	<p>SDM and PIs</p>	<p>Action learning set evaluation</p> <p>Staff Development statistics re academics</p> <p>Also see E14</p>	<p>PIs continue to rate confidence managing performance as low but have not attended training courses offered in this- action learning may be a better way forward</p>		
EM4	Managers actively engage in regular constructive performance management with their researchers.	Managers clarify expectations, give regular feedback and conduct appraisals	Yes	Ongoing and part of annual appraisal		<p>&gt;72% completion of appraisal/ probation reviews</p> <p>Maintain 80% positive score by ECRs on CEDARS re managers providing feedback on performance</p>			
ER3	Researchers positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers.	Researchers actively contribute to performance discussions in one-to-one meetings and their appraisal	Yes	Ongoing and part of annual appraisal		>72% % completion of appraisal/probation reviews			
<b>Job security</b>									
The aim of this obligation is to improve the job security of researchers.									

E16	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.	Explore mechanisms for supporting research staff on Fixed Term Contracts to minimise the impact of career breaks  Active monitoring of ECRs on FTCs - how many go onto open ended limited by funding and how many progress to lectureship - number of contracts - how many on contracts of less than 12 months  Refresh and re-publicise the FAQ on employment	No	January 2025  January 2025	VP RI, VP EDI, Head of EDI  Head of HE Operations	New mechanisms arising and/or greater awareness of current mechanisms  Benchmark with previous CEDARS, and National Cedars statistics	Athena Swan Charter Action  Our CEDARS 2021 indicates that we are similar to national CEDARS statistics			
<b>Professional and Career Development</b>										
<b>Championing professional development</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to promote the importance of professional development and ensure researchers have the time to engage in it.										
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.	Use revised Concordat code of practice (EC11) to re-promote RVC expectations and guidelines regarding researcher development and commitment to 10 days.  Continued development of programme of opportunities using HR RA meetings to inform the programme  Explore opportunities for joint activities with other HEIs  Promotion of coaching scheme, ECR mentoring scheme and shadowing opportunities	No	May 2023  Ongoing-monthly meetings  September 2023  Ongoing-specific time points annually	RCWG  HR with support from RA  Staff Development  Staff Development	No ECRs have less than a day on development in next survey (currently 10%) Continuous progress towards all ECRs having 10 days development (currently 8%- target 100%);  80% positive answer to exit interview question 'Did the college's Staff Training & Development Programme meet your developmental needs?'				
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities.	Develop systems to enable better recording of non-course-based staff development activity to get full picture of activity  Embed use of researcher appendix area where past CPD is recorded- briefing to go out to all researchers and their managers before appraisal 'season' and in appraisal briefings	No	September 2023 to enable better stats for 2024  May 2023 and annually	Staff Development	System adapted  95% of ECRs are making use of the appendix	Current data underreports as non-prebooking events, viewing on-line materials, job specific development and coaching/mentoring not well captured			
PCDM3	Managers 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.	See PCDI1  Revised Concordat code of practice (EC11) to include guidance prompters list that covers a range of development activities Promote this with appraisals and in supervisor training and code launch	Yes  No	Ongoing  May 2023	Managers  RCWG	80% positive ECR responses to the question 'Were you given adequate time off and support to take up training and development opportunities?'				
PCDR1	Researchers 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.	See PCDI1				See PCDI1				
<b>Career development reviews</b>										

The aims of these obligations are to ensure researchers and their managers are engaging in productive career development reviews.										
PCDI2	Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers.	Revised code of practice to include an appendix with resources guidance and links regarding career development planning. Promote this with appraisals and in supervisor training and code launch.	No	May 2023	SDM with RCWG	75% ECRs say they have a formal career review with their manager in CEDARS 2025	An explicit section of the appraisal looks at career development (separate to development) but only 53% of ECRs in CEDARS say they have regular formal career review with their manager- although those that did considered it useful.			
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with researcher career development reviews.									
PCDM1	Managers engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually.									
PCDR4	Researchers positively engage in career development reviews with their managers.									
<b>Career development support and planning</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to promote researchers' career development planning through tailored support and gathering evidence of professional experience.										
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	Expand the pilot with Chaperone that matches ECRs with a range of careers advisors and people in a variety of careers – academic and beyond.	No	2022-23 academic year onwards	SDM	Feedback from Chaperone sessions continues to be more than 4 out of 5				
PCDR3	Researchers 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.									
<b>Research identity and leadership</b>										
The aims of these obligations are to provide researchers with opportunity to progress in their careers by developing their research identity and leadership capabilities.										
PCDI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	Include ideas for activities in the revised code of practice development prompter- see PCDM3 Encourage PIs to allow funds for conferences and CPD etc in their grant applications Develop open access opportunities and knowledge exchange support	No	May 2023	RCWG  Staff Development  Senior staff and RIO	ECR response in CEDARS to question you have time to develop your research identity increases from 49% to 55% 2023 and 60% 2025  Monitor researcher and academic uptake of staff development as part of Staff Development Statistics- annually.				





\* The Researcher Development 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 Researcher Development 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.

Further hyperlinks and supplementary information (more rows can be added)	
1	<a href="#">RVC website</a>
2	<a href="#">Concordat implementation Strategy</a> (where past and present HREiR action plans are found)
3	<a href="#">About RVC Research and Researchers</a>
4	<a href="#">London Biosciences Innovation Centre</a>
5	<a href="#">Chaperone</a>
6	<a href="#">Report and Support</a>
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Abbreviations and glossary (more rows can be added)	
RA	Researcher Association
RCWG	Research Concordat Working Group
PI	Principal Investigators- line managers of contract researchers
RVC	Royal Veterinary College
ECR	Early Career Researchers - staff researchers in posts funded by grants and fellowships
EDI	Equality Diversity and Inclusion
CEDARS	Culture Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey
RSG	Research Strategy Group
RIO	Research and Innovation Office
SDM	Staff Development Manager
MDP	Management Development Programme – a series of modules including recruitment, absence management, appraisal etc
HoDs	Heads of Department
LBIC	London BioScience Innovation Centre (an organisation owned by the RVC that hosts bioscience companies)
UKRN	UK Reproducibility Network