

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	Dr Gaynor Miller G.Miller@shu.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) 406 words

The Researcher and Innovator Development Academy (RIDA) was established in January 2024 and supports and connects people at all stages of research, innovation and knowledge exchange (RIKE) activity and from all professional backgrounds. Support for development is tailored to the needs of staff and students and is identified and refined based on data from surveys, feedback, and individual annual development plans. The RIDA development offer is designed to be accessible and equitable for all researchers, from doctoral researchers to professors, as well as staff who are new to or support RIKE activities.

Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion (EEDI) is a University-wide priority at Sheffield Hallam with strategic direction for all the work we're doing set by our EEDI Framework 2024-27. In October/November 2024 the University ran its first ever EEDI Staff Survey. These findings instigated roundtable discussions with key stakeholders (including research staff and students) on the priority areas of disability, neurodiversity and anti-racism. Based on the findings from the survey and roundtable discussions the University created a single EEDI Delivery Plan. This plan brings together multiple EEDI-focused action plans – including the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Action Plan and incorporates several actions that are aligned with the Concordat principles and will benefit the RIKE community at Sheffield Hallam, particularly under two (Learning & Development; and Recruitment, Reward & Progression) of its six workstreams.

The RIDA team has a reciprocal relationship with the EEDI team and the two small teams work together in collaboration with different areas of the University to develop and coordinate plans and activities, and monitor and report on progress (e.g. members of the EEDI team sit on our cross institutional Researcher Concordat Operations (RCOG) and Researcher and Innovator Development Steering Groups (RIDSG)). We work together to prioritise actions in our current HREiR Action Plan and will build on this collaborative approach to co-create and co-own our next HREiR Action Plan (2026-29). This year the two teams have supported one of our three Colleges (Business, Technology and Engineering), in the creation of a work-loaded role to lead a cross-College project on People, Culture and Environment (PCE) and EEDI for the 2024/25 academic year. Two research professors are sharing this role and aim to: enhance the coordination of PCE activities; develop and deliver a College-level RIKE induction and EEDI strategy; and instigate interventions to foster a positive, inclusive PCE. This new piece of work will be reviewed at the end of the academic year.

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) 600 words [HREiR Action Plan 2023-26 reference]

Since our last annual report, there have been positive changes in the executive leadership of Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE) to strengthen and further embed RIKE within strategic University decision-making. Professor Sarah Pearson was appointed as Dean of RIKE in February 2025 and holds responsibility for overseeing Sheffield Hallam's RIKE strategy. Professor Pearson is a member of the University Executive Board (UEB) and works closely with Professor Conor Moss as Executive Academic Lead for RIKE and other UEB members to ensure that our RIKE strategy is integral to, and supports, Hallam's wider strategy. The Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Committee (IKELG) was established to complement the Research Leadership Group (RLG).

As with others across the sector, we have continued to experience a period of financial turbulence which has necessitated ongoing restructuring, including reducing the size of our staff base in selected areas and reviewing costs as we work towards a secure financial footing for the University.

Throughout this period, we have continued to implement our RIKE strategy, based on the themes of *Capacity*, *Capability*, *Connectivity* and *Culture*, as a framework for supporting the continued development of researchers. The Researcher and Innovator Development Academy (RIDA), cuts across all four of these themes and is now firmly embedded as the cross-University vehicle for the aligned development and delivery of developmental programmes. RIDA leads on providing tailored opportunities in response to identified individual and organisational needs and embodies the Hallam values of ambition, collaboration, inclusion, innovation, and

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integrity. RIKE continues to be pivotal to our strategic plan and we have maintained the FTE of staff with significant responsibility for research (SRR) through our planning process. We have continued to prioritise RIKE infrastructure by: supporting and developing early career researchers to transition to SRR through programmes such as the Early Career Research and Innovation Fellows (ECRIF) (83 to date); providing scholarships for 18 collaborative Transforming Lives Studentships, and recruiting 10 Transforming Lives Fellows at Associate Professor and Professor level to boost our research leadership capacity.

Environment and culture

Awareness and engagement: Actively consider systemic issues in research in the sector when developing the new RIDA offer [ECI2]; Review PGR admissions practices to support access to PGR study for underrepresented groups [ECI2]; Champion and bring to life the “Hallam Values” [ECI6].

Wellbeing and mental health: Formulate and implement a University Wellbeing action plan [ECI3]; Introduce mental health training for managers [ECI4].

Bullying and harassment: Encourage the reporting of incidents via the University’s “Report and Support” process [ECM3].

Research integrity: Expand the pool of active research ethics reviewers to increase awareness and understanding of good research ethics practice [ECI5/ECM2].

Employment

Policy development: Provide opportunities for researchers and managers to co-create the new RIDA offer [EI7].

Recognition, reward and promotion: Evaluate the ECRIF scheme to understand its impact on the academic progression outcomes of participants [EI3].

Professional Development of Researchers

Championing professional development: Develop a new, co-created RIDA offer that will support staff to realise their full potential as researchers, innovators, collaborators and influencers [PCDI1].

Career development support and planning: Review existing mentoring provision and identify any gaps for researchers [PCDI3].

Research identity and leadership: Consider development across all career transitions, from PGR/ECR to Professor, and professional/academic transitions in the RIDA offer [PCDI4]; Develop and deliver a leadership programme to senior staff including SSG1/2 [PCDM5]; Promote new and existing development programmes and materials that researchers can access to develop their research identity and leadership skills [PCDR5].

Diverse careers: Review data on participation of staff as supervisors on the Transforming Lives Collaborative PhD Scholarship scheme, which involves external organisations, to assess equity of access across research areas [PCDM2].

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) 600 words

Institution

In the last year we have continued to monitor EDI data in our internal fellowship schemes. We compare gender, ethnicity, and disability profiles with University data at each stage of application, interview and appointment, to determine if further action is required to attract and/or support under-represented groups.

In our EEDI Staff Survey (November 2024) staff on research-only contracts scored lower than other staff groups on having a clear understanding of what the University is doing to become more inclusive, so raising awareness with this group is

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	<p>a future priority. We will also analyse CEDARS 2025 based on gender and disability to formulate actions to address any issues.</p> <p>The pilot of a competency-based PGR admissions framework which seeks to tackle inequality at scale by shifting the focus from track record to competencies required, is ongoing and will be reported on next year alongside other key learnings from the OfS/Research England projects on PGR race equity we have led or collaborated on.</p> <p>The Hallam Values (ambition, collaboration, inclusion, innovation, and integrity) underpin the University Strategy and shape our RIKE strategy. A set of behaviours to help clarify what the values mean and to set expectations for staff at all levels has been co-created. These behaviours will be formally launched with the 2025-30 People Strategy later this year and built into annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) processes and development and recruitment activities. Work with the Senior Leadership Team is underway to develop a set of leadership behaviours to sit alongside these.</p> <p>From 2022-24 a wellbeing strategy was developed and delivered, with 3 themes: Work-life Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing and Financial Wellbeing. A new strategy is being developed as part of a wider Health and Safety strategy review. Stress awareness and wellbeing training is available to line managers and employees including regular sessions for managers on how to have wellbeing conversations. Prompts for enhancing wellbeing discussions have also been incorporated into our PDR process this year. The 2024 EEDI staff survey did not specifically include questions on workload or wellbeing, but free text comments highlighted the need for better support systems and inclusive practices for staff and raised issues with support for mental health and disability, helping to inform the EEDI action plan. CEDARS responses from 2025 and 2023 will be compared to identify issues implementing our University wellbeing action plan, e.g. uptake of mental health training, and appropriate actions formulated. Financial wellbeing has been supported through webinars (32 sessions delivered to ~600 staff) and a cost-of-living intranet hub.</p> <p>Researchers and Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>The Report and Support resource is promoted to staff as part of our ongoing work tackling harassment with updated guidance and support for sexual harassment. Report and Support is highlighted as part of the Actively Building a Safe and Inclusive Culture workshop as part of the Protect & Respect programme, and in the follow-up information that is sent to attendees. A report containing information about staff disclosures to Report and Support is generated annually but cannot be split by staff type. Data from CEDARS 2025 and 2023 will be compared for bullying and harassment questions to enable appropriate actions to be devised.</p> <p>We have reached out to new members of staff and the PGR community to expand our pool of active research ethics reviewers this year, also increasing awareness and understanding of good research ethics practice. PGR students in their second year onwards can be lay reviewers on a three-reviewer process which enhances their development as well as diversifying and expanding the pool of reviewers. The current number of reviewers is 503, including 16 PGRs and 69 ECRs.</p>
Employment (max 600 words) 570 words	<p>Institution</p> <p>Researchers and managers have been able to shape RIDA priorities and the development offer through participating in CEDARS, RIDA focus groups, Town Hall discussions with Research Leaders, and direct requests for sessions or support. The</p>

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	<p>Town Hall events are a good example of one of the opportunities we provide for researchers at all levels to give feedback to our senior leaders and for them to influence decision-making. RIKE is an integral part of our University Strategy and as such all staff were invited to attend two rounds of on-campus workshops hosted by the University Executive Board, where they were asked to input into the development of the University Strategy. CEDARS showed similar scores in 2021 and 2023 for fair treatment in relation to opportunities to participate in decision-making processes (53% to 50%) and perceptions of feeling valued for contributions to institutional policy and decision-making (35% to 31%) which we will be looking to improve upon in CEDARS 2025.</p> <p>For academic year 24/25 standardised/online R&I plans were optional at department level. In total 493 staff completed these. For 25/26 online R&I plans became mandatory. In total 710 staff applied for research hours through this mechanism. The R&I plan is also a useful source for tailoring and targeting support because it asks staff to select areas that they would like help with. For example, we have used these data to prioritise new training for bid writing, external engagement, writing for publication, and to understand research mentoring needs. We have also worked with colleagues in Research and Innovation Services and College Research Leads to target staff to support. Allowing flexibility around timings, programme structure, and delivery methods helps to maximise researcher engagement.</p> <p>The Early Career Research and Innovation Fellowship (ECRIF) scheme has run annually since 2021 and to date has supported 83 Fellows. Fellows from a diverse range of backgrounds and disciplines are recruited to lead their own programme of RIKE activity. So far, mid-point and end-point reviews have been used to collect information on achievements, outputs and other outcomes; challenges and reflections; suggestions for improvements to the scheme; and additional support required to progress their development once the fellowship has ended. The majority of Fellows achieve more than they set out to and are on a trajectory to become future independent research leaders with several being promoted, securing major funding awards and publishing sector-leading findings. A cohort is currently being recruited for 2026 and previous ECRIF holders have been invited to review these applications to give them valuable reviewing experience alongside more experienced staff. A workshop which includes how narrative CVs should be considered alongside the applications is provided to support all of the ECRIF reviewers. Spotlight profiles have been published on the internal website to raise awareness of the Fellows and their plans in addition to reflective case studies which support and inspire future applicants. A follow-up review is planned for 2025 to understand longer-term impacts on the career progression of participants.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>Over the last year we have continued to promote and deliver our Leadership and Management Essentials (LME) programme which is aimed at all line managers. The programme is modular to ensure that staff can attend the development that is most relevant to their needs. In the last year, three new modules have been added to the programme – Overview of People Management, Leading a Valuable PDR and Managing Sickness Absence & Promoting a Healthy Workplace.</p>
<p>Professional development <i>(max 600 words) 598 words</i></p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>Over the last year we have piloted several new initiatives. e.g. writing for publication and career stage-appropriate bid development workshops, complemented by regular (3x month) in-person and online writing retreats.</p>

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	<p>The evaluation and evolution of the RIDA offer is monitored via the Researcher and Innovator Development Steering Group (RIDSG) chaired by the Head of RIDA (now Director). RIDSG is comprised of staff from all areas of the University involved in training and development of staff and students. In the next year, RIDSG will be expanded to include representation from researchers at all career stages. Three new groups have been formed to provide leadership for each of the three Concordat pillars, including Professional and Career Development.</p> <p>Information was gathered regarding the mentoring requirements of our researchers via CEDARS 2023, RIDA focus groups and individual R&I plans. CEDARS 2025 data will give us a comparison of participation and interest in mentoring. A working group was established last year and members shared best practice, knowledge of current schemes/opportunities and started to scope the potential demand and support for a University-wide R&I mentoring scheme. Staff who requested a research mentor via the R&I planning process were asked to prioritise their research mentoring needs with the top priorities being i) building a research portfolio and ii) career development/promotion advice. Whilst a decision has not yet been made to pilot a new institution-wide R&I mentoring scheme, we have been able to offer relevant research and research-adjacent staff a variety of opportunities to participate in the following mentoring schemes: cross-institutional mid-career (MCR) mentoring scheme; broadening horizons for translational researchers, mentoring for researcher developers and Vitae mentoring circles.</p> <p>Academic Managers of Researchers</p> <p>The Transforming Lives Collaborative PhD Scholarship scheme provides an opportunity for staff to supervise students and work with external organisations as collaborative partners. Since the scheme was launched in 2023/24, 18 projects have been approved. The majority of these (10) were awarded in Sport and Physical Activity, but there are alternative models available for projects in the Arts and areas where partners may be less likely to provide match funding. Personal data for supervisors have not been collected to assess equity of access but 12 supervisors have each had one project as Director of Studies (DoS) and two supervisors have each had three projects as DoS.</p> <p>In collaboration with senior academic leaders the University is developing a new leadership programme aiming to provide a structured and strategic approach to enhancing leadership capability across the institution. The programme will support all senior leaders, including those at Senior Staff Grades 1 and 2 as well as senior research staff. Once launched, it will form a key element of our commitment to fostering a strong, inclusive, and forward-looking leadership culture within our research community.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>Programmes and resources are available at Sheffield Hallam for researchers to develop their research identity and leadership skills but time to engage in these activities is often an issue as highlighted in CEDARS 2023 data. The ECRIF scheme is effective because it includes a protected time allocation to develop RIKE activity and support the transition to independence for early-stage researchers. The Transforming Lives Fellows, who have been specifically recruited as experienced and emerging leaders, have a phased introduction to teaching over the first three years of employment and are supported with induction meetings, a peer support group, and group coaching. The MCR mentoring scheme provides a space for research identity and leadership to be discussed where they are part of the mentee's</p>
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objectives. The scheme also provides opportunities for our research leaders, including the Transforming Lives Fellows to act as mentors.

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) 487 words

To accommodate requests from researchers with caring responsibilities and those working remotely we have scheduled online sessions and used alternative days for some sessions (e.g. grant writing and writing retreats). Where possible we offer recordings of our training events for researchers that may have missed sessions.

To maximise future attendee engagement, we hosted webinars to provide information and answer questions about new opportunities. Recordings of these sessions are provided with an expression of interest form allowing researcher suggested modifications to be accommodated.

Acting on feedback from narrative CV and ECRIF workshops, we invited previous Fellows to act as reviewers this year. 17 Fellows came forward and are reviewing 2-3 applications each, with accompanying narrative CVs. The Fellows are grouped with experienced reviewers to enhance the developmental opportunity. Feedback will be gathered to determine any modifications needed for next year.

All of the monthly networking session for this year's ECRIFs were scheduled at the beginning of the programme with two ECRIFs assigned as chair to set the agenda and host the meeting. Increased engagement and participation in these sessions has been observed. Academic and professional service RIKE leaders have been invited to some sessions, to increase visibility for the ECRIF and raise awareness of what support is available.

Acknowledging increasing time pressures, we have created three workloaded roles, two for People Culture and Environment for 2024/25 (referred to in the opening section of this report) and one for a local UK Reproducibility Network lead for 2025/26 (to build an Open Research community of practice).

The current consultation on the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award UK action plan template and process is welcomed as this complements the work we started this year with our EEDI team to simplify and coordinate our HREiR plan with other institutional plans. Having fewer but more focussed actions will be a priority for our renewal next year and makes developing, communicating, and reporting our actions and their progress a much more efficient and effective process both internally and externally.

To facilitate greater engagement by key stakeholders in the coordination of researcher and innovator development and ownership of the HREiR plan we set up some new groups in the last year. The Researcher and Innovator Development Steering Group (RIDSG) was established in November 2024 to provide strategic direction, oversight, and accountability for the professional development and training of postgraduate research students, staff engaged in RIKE activity and staff in RIKE-adjacent roles. There are now three subgroups of our Researcher Concordat Operations Group (RCOG), each focusing on a separate pillar of the Concordat and comprised of both research and research-adjacent staff. Each group is chaired by a senior leader as follows: Dean of RIKE (Environment and Culture); Head of Organisational Development (Employment) and the Director of RIDA (Professional and Career Development). The subgroups hold responsibility for monitoring and reporting on Concordat actions, establishing and reviewing targets, measuring impacts and co-creating the new 2026 action plan.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period (max 500 words) 421 words

The current HREiR Action Plan runs to January 2026 so for the rest of 2025 we will continue monitoring the impact of completed and ongoing actions, and work with researchers and other stakeholders to prioritise desired outcomes and actions for the next plan. We are running the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) at Sheffield Hallam from 28 April – 13 June 2025 and will be analysing and reporting on these findings in the autumn of 2025. This will provide measures against current actions and help identify areas to prioritise for follow-up action in the new plan.

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We will build on our initial RIDA priorities by:

1. **Enhancing Research culture:** *simplifying and signposting to support and guidance for RIKE activities within central and College structures, particularly for those who are new to the institution and/or new to research.*
2. **Coordination of researcher training and development:** *further developing content, improving navigation and raising awareness of the RIDA website as a one-stop shop for all researchers from PGR to Professor.*
3. **Improving communication:** *we will relaunch our ECR staff network to be more inclusive and rebrand as an R&I staff network; we will maintain momentum with our internal communications strategy around the refreshed RIKE strategy, CEDARS outcomes and HREiR Action Plan.*
4. **Expanding continuing professional development:** *we will continue to work with colleagues across the University to develop new programmes and resources to fill existing and emerging gaps in provision.*
5. **Evaluating and developing:** *we will continually evaluate our existing and future offerings in order to develop and enhance our provision and align with groups working on the new staff development policy and Learning Management System.*

During the next year we will be developing our People systems to ensure that they fully support the development of our staff. In the summer we will be launching a new module which will enable staff to undertake Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) and 360 reviews online. This will allow us to monitor PDRs and objectives, including development objectives, in terms of both completion and quality, more effectively. We will also be introducing a Learning Management System (LMS) before the end of 2025. The LMS will enable us to deliver, manage, and track learning and development activities more successfully and ensure that our development offer is more cohesive and effective.

To support those in our new Associate Head roles a new development programme will be delivered next year that will include: targeted workshops; action learning sets and supporting material; e-learning modules; and a biannual conference.

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) 138 words

This report has been created by members of the University Researcher Concordat Operations Group (RCOG), chaired by Dr Gaynor Miller (Director of RIDA). Consultation was carried out with HREiR action owners and with Senior College representatives from the RCOG membership. RCOG reports to the Research Leadership Group (RLG) chaired by the Executive Dean for Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange. RLG oversees University RIKE strategy and associated delivery.

This report provides an overview of our progress towards implementing our action plan over the past 12 months. It has been presented to RLG on 19 May 2025 and will be received by Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RIKEC) on 11 June 2025 and then recommended to the Academic Assurance Committee/Academic Board on 25 June 2025. After which, it will be made publicly available via the University's [Researcher Concordat webpages](#).

Signature on behalf of governing body¹:

Contact for queries: Dr Gaynor Miller, Director of RIDA and Chair of RCOG. G.Miller@shu.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 via the email address listed on the RDC website: www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk

¹ Signature provided on the copy sent to the CDR secretariat 11/8/25.

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Glossary of terms

Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS)

Director of Studies (DoS)

Early Career Research and Innovation Fellow (ECRIF)

Early Career Researcher (ECR)

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion (EEDI)

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

HR Excellence in Research (HREiR)

Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Leadership Group (IKELG)

Leadership and Management Essentials (LME)

Learning Management System (LMS)

Mid-Career Researcher (MCR)

Office for Students (OfS)

People, Culture and Environment (PCE)

Performance and Development Review (PDR)

Postgraduate Research (PGR)

Research and Innovation (R&I)

Research Leadership Group (RLG)

Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (RIKE)

Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RIKEC)

Researcher and Innovator Development Academy (RIDA)

Researcher and Innovator Development Steering Group (RIDSG)

Researcher Concordat Operations Group (RCOG)

Senior Staff Grade (SSG)

Sheffield Hallam Research and Innovation Fund (SHRIF)

Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR)

Transforming Lives Fellow (TLF)

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)

University Executive Board (UEB)