

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

Universities and Research Institutes

Name of Institution	Goldsmiths, University of London
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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

Goldsmiths is committed to cultivating a research environment that champions inclusivity, creativity, and collaboration. This commitment underpins our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy and guides how we support researchers at all stages of their careers. Our research culture is sustained through the active involvement and collective participation of our community, reinforced by structures that enable growth, professional development, and innovation. We aim to provide the conditions for all researchers to thrive—through access to quality professional development opportunities and through supportive, interdisciplinary, and collegial spaces that strengthen both individual and collective research practices.

Goldsmiths' Research and Enterprise Committee (REC) is responsible for the oversight and strategic leadership of research culture activities. REC is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, who also serves as the institutional 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, chaired by the Academic Lead for Research, Governance and Compliance and reporting to REC. These committees, together with the REF Strategy Board and the Research Governance and Compliance Sub-Committee, 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 University'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 application and Race Justice Strategy, and in maintaining our status as a Disability Confident Employer.

Associate Heads of School for Research and Knowledge Exchange play a key role in tailoring institutional initiatives to local contexts and developing discipline-responsive efforts that address the needs of their School. They provide leadership in promoting positive research culture and support their Schools to advance local research environment priorities. Their efforts reinforce a shared commitment to

research culture across the University, nurturing environments where all researchers are supported to develop and thrive.

The Graduate School, working closely with School PGR Leads and under the direction of PGR Board, supports PhD and postgraduate researchers by providing a collaborative environment that encourages experimentation, develops research skills, and builds the foundations for the future growth and innovation of our disciplines. The training and development of postgraduate researchers is enhanced further by participation in two doctoral training partnerships (DTPs), CHASE (supporting doctoral researcher training in the Arts and Humanities) and SENSS (supporting doctoral researcher training in the Social Sciences). Goldsmiths has benefited substantially from, and plays a leading role in these consortia, with colleagues serving as Deputy Directors for both DTPs with responsibility for DTP wide training and development.

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

Goldsmiths' commitments towards delivering each of the three pillars of the Researcher Development Concordat are interwoven into the governing strategies of our institution, including the institutional and research strategies, the Race Justice Strategy, and our HR Excellence in Research priority areas. The objectives and implementation plan for the 2024/25 academic year were established in collaboration with Goldsmiths researchers through the development of our HR Excellence in Research Award action plan, which guides our priorities and activities from 2023-2026. Working closely with researchers spanning career stages, the following four priority objectives were identified, around which our HREiRA action plan is structured:

- Increasing researcher engagement with researcher development, culture, and governance efforts, prioritising communication and researcher voice
- Realising a vision of researcher development that extends beyond the training room into our projects and management relationships
- Developing innovative infrastructure to support researcher careers, prioritising equity, diversity and inclusion

 Cultivating research culture as a collaborative act; outward facing and practice-sharing both internally and sector-wide

The impact and effectiveness of these efforts continue to be measured through SMART evaluation criteria combining qualitative researcher feedback and quantitative CEDAR survey results across the action plan period and beyond.

The growing acknowledgement of the importance of this work is evident through the prominence of these efforts in Goldsmiths' recently launched Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy (2025). This roadmap places researcher development and research culture at the heart of our vision for creative, collaborative, and socially engaged research.

The strategy's first listed priority, 'Developing capability and capacity,' foregrounds the importance of researcher development to our ambitious goals of addressing the great challenges of our time. The strategy sets out a vision for Goldsmiths as a place where curiosity, learning, and continuous development are celebrated and foundational to our research endeavour. The focus on the development of research and team leadership will allow us to be sector leading in cutting edge research while, importantly, improving the working conditions for the next generation of researchers.

Through these integrated strategies and collaboratively developed actions, Goldsmiths is embedding researcher development and research culture at the core of institutional practice. These aligned commitments reflect Goldsmiths' belief that investing in researcher development is fundamental to research excellence, social innovation, and addressing the great challenges of our time.

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

During this reporting period, Goldsmiths has further aligned its research culture initiatives with institutional priorities, reinforcing openness, equity, and collaboration as guiding principles of our research environment.

Listening to and learning from our researchers

Goldsmiths' participation in the 2025 Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) marked a key step in evaluating progress against our HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) priorities and identifying evolving challenges across the research environment. Engagement rates for both colleagues on research-only contracts and the research community at large notably increased since 2023, a positive sign of strengthened researcher engagement in shaping the University's research culture. Complementing the quantitative findings, qualitative feedback from CEDARS provides firsthand insights into the lived experience of researchers at different career stages and across disciplines. This feedback will play a key role in shaping the next phase of our HREiR action plan (2026– 2029), helping to drive forward priorities that are evidencebased, inclusive, and responsive to researcher experience.

Embedding equity and sustainability

Goldsmiths has continued to work towards strengthening the inclusivity, sustainability, and fairness of its research environment. The University reaffirmed its commitment to sustainable research practices by becoming a signatory to the Environmental Sustainability of Research Concordat, formalised through a letter of endorsement from the Vice-Chancellor. Practical measures to support this commitment include new training on reducing the carbon footprint of research and the initial development of a sustainable research toolkit.

The Race Justice Strategy has been further developed and restructured into eight focused work areas to improve coordination, accountability, and measurable outcomes. This year has seen significant progress on the development of anti-racism training for all staff, preparations for a forthcoming Race Equality Charter application, and the development of an EDI in Research Toolkit as part of the 'Researcher Outcomes' workstream. These ongoing efforts are helping to embed equity and inclusion into all aspects of the research endeavour and to provide researchers and managers with the tools and guidance to foster a fairer environment.

Staff networks—including the Race Equality Group, LGBTQ+ Network, Women's Network, (Dis)ability Network, Parents and Carers Network, and Menopause Network—have become influential consultative communities, providing a clear channel for staff voice and input into institutional practice. Through a dynamic programme of events aligned with key dates and cultural observances, these networks have strengthened visibility, connection, and engagement across the University.

Building community and connection

Research culture thrives through connection and collaboration. This year saw the establishment of **Thematic Research Networks** in Artificial Intelligence, Climate Crisis, and Health and Wellbeing, providing cross-disciplinary spaces for collaboration, community building, and developing future partnerships. The **Early Career Researcher Network** also held a series of in-person events, creating valuable spaces for researchers to share work, discuss challenges, and develop professional relationships. These initiatives were well received, with feedback emphasising their role in fostering a stronger sense of community and belonging.

Celebrating Contributions and Impact

Research culture is strengthened when the successes and contributions of researchers are recognised. An expanded 'Research Opportunities Bulletin' and the launch of the 'Celebrating Goldsmiths' newsletter have created regular opportunities to showcase researcher success, project impact, and sector recognition. These communications strengthen a shared sense of pride and visibility across the University and celebrate the successes and contributions of our colleagues.

Strengthening engagement and wellbeing

Work to enhance engagement and wellbeing across Goldsmiths has continued through the development of a new Staff Engagement and Wellbeing Plan. This plan aims to build stronger dialogue between colleagues and leadership through initiatives such as Campus Connect events and the 'Make it Happen' pilot, which supported collaboration and staff-led change. While still at an early stage, these efforts represent important steps towards building greater trust, transparency, and shared ownership within the Goldsmiths community.

Employment

During the 2024–25 reporting period, Goldsmiths advanced a range of initiatives and multi-year projects designed to promote fair, transparent, and equitable employment conditions for researchers at all career stages.

Supporting Career Progression and Work-Life Balance

This year saw the formalisation and publication of a policy enabling academic colleagues on teaching-only contracts to apply for a transition to contracts that include dedicated research time. This update improves transparency and allows

colleagues to plan and present a compelling case for career progression in research. The University has also introduced a **childcare contribution policy**, covering up to 20% of childcare costs for preschool and primary school-aged children, for all staff members and funded research students. This policy supports a more inclusive working environment by helping colleagues balance caring responsibilities with career ambitions and reducing structural barriers to progression.

Staff Engaged in Decision-making

This year, Goldsmiths established additional opportunities for colleagues to contribute to the development of institutional policies and initiatives. Recurring 'Campus Connect' events provide an open forum for all staff to hear updates from the Executive Board on key university business and to engage in dialogue with senior leaders. These sessions encourage feedback, foster transparency, and help colleagues feel connected to the University's strategic priorities. In parallel, 'Campus Exchange' events invite staff to represent their teams in more consultative, "blue skies" discussions, ensuring that colleagues actively shape initiatives and inform institutional decision-making.

Transparent and Effective Governance

In February 2025, Goldsmiths commissioned the Halpin Partnership to undertake an independent review of the effectiveness of the University's Council and governance committees as part of Goldsmiths' ongoing commitment to reflective and effective governance. Conducted during the 2024/25 Spring and Summer terms, the review included engagement with the University community through self-assessment surveys, interviews with Council, Secretariat, and Executive Board members, focus groups with staff, academic leaders, and student representatives, observation of key

committees, attendance at a Council awayday, and opportunities for anonymous feedback.

In response, Council has developed a 12-point implementation plan to be delivered over the next two years, designed to address review recommendations including further enhancing staff and student engagement as well as communication in decision-making.

Embedding Good Management and Development Practices

Goldsmiths has also progressed work to update the current Performance Development Review (PDR) process into a Career Development and Wellbeing Review, reorienting the exercise towards professional development and wellbeing. The updated process, planned for implementation in 2026/27, has been shaped by feedback from CEDARS 2023, highlighting the need for more consistent and development-focused review discussions for researchers.

In order to increase engagement levels with essential training, this year saw the introduction of an annual "Essential Training Week" in June, to provide protected time for staff to complete mandatory compliance and safety training. Line managers now receive quarterly updates on completion rates for their teams, while Departmental Directors receive biannual reports, helping to ensure compliance and effective support for staff development.

Goldsmiths has also introduced **research project design and management training,** applying the principles of project management to help researchers plan and realise their project ambitions. This series also incorporates guidance on the importance of project leads providing effective management and career development opportunities to their research teams, reinforcing a culture of supportive leadership and professional growth.

Expanding Wellbeing Support

Goldsmiths has continued to expand its support for staff wellbeing, introducing new resources and activities to promote mental, physical, and social health. The introduction of the Ele wellbeing portal gives staff flexible access to mental and physical health resources. The new portal is complemented by on-campus nutritionist appointments, workshops, and wellbeing groups. A wide range of physical and creative activities—including yoga, Pilates, creative writing, capoeira, and furoshiki workshops—have offered opportunities for staff to engage with peers, take meaningful breaks from work, and develop skills outside their roles.

Equitable Environments and Careers

Goldsmiths is currently preparing applications for key equality and inclusion benchmarks to further improve representation, progression, and inclusivity. Work towards the **Athena Swan** 2027 submission is actively progressing, drawing on insights from the current Athena Swan action plan and progress reviews to strengthen institutional practices, enhance gender equity, and advance meaningful progress across all staff role types. Similarly, preparations for the **Race Equality Charter** application are in progress, with submission planned for the 2026/27 academic year. Preparations for REC are closely aligned with ongoing work under Goldsmiths' Race Justice Strategy, including the development of a new anti-racism e-learning course.

Professional development

Expanding Researcher Development

Goldsmiths' Researcher Development Programme, now in its third year, continues to grow and adapt, shaped by feedback from research staff. This ongoing evolution reflects the University's commitment to responsive and tailored professional development, with opportunities designed to be

relevant, inclusive, and supportive of researchers at all career stages and contract types.

The 2024–25 academic year saw the programme expand, on year, from 42 to 59 events, with participation rising from 411 to 512 attendees from across all 18 academic departments (now subject areas). This growth reflects the programme's increasing reach and accessibility, providing researchers across all disciplines with relevant professional development opportunities.

In response to this growth and researcher feedback, the programme has been reorganised into thematic clusters. This structure helps researchers navigate the expanded programme, identify sessions aligned with their priorities, and plan professional development more strategically. Current clusters include:

- Impact & Engagement Developing strategies to maximise research impact, visibility, and engagement with diverse audiences
- Collaboration & Community Building effective networks, partnerships, and collegial support
- Research Funding & Project Development –
 Supporting competitive grant writing, project design and management, and research funding strategies
- Researcher Career Development Researcher career opportunities, strategic planning, and progressing career goals
- Mentoring & Coaching Developing mentoring skills and access to quality 1:1 development support
- Ethics & Integrity Promoting awareness and application of responsible and ethical research practices
- Equitable & Sustainable Research Practices –
 Supporting inclusive, environmentally responsible, and socially responsible research
- Publishing & Open Access Guidance on disseminating research outputs openly and

effectively, including practice research and other non-traditional outputs

This year, new training sessions have been introduced in consultation with researchers, equipping staff with the skills, knowledge, and practices to navigate the evolving challenges and opportunities of research careers.

- Mentoring Skills for Researchers: An interactive workshop introducing the principles and tools of effective mentoring.
- Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Your Research:

 Supporting researchers to understand and reflect on the environmental impact of their work and explore practical steps to reduce research-related emissions.
- Open Access for Practice Researchers: Supporting practice researchers to make their work accessible, navigate licensing, and explore open research practices for practice research outputs.
- Sustaining Positive Research Environments: A discussionbased workshop on fostering healthy, inclusive research settings, helping participants identify challenges and develop actions to enhance their local research areas.
- Grant Writing Development Week: An intensive, weeklong programme supporting researchers to develop competitive funding applications. Sessions cover project design, impact planning, budgeting, and fellowship preparation, with time for writing, feedback, and one-to-one tutorials.

Expanding Integrity and Ethics Training

As signatory to the UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Goldsmiths is actively strengthening its approach to embedding responsible and ethical research practices across the institution. Work is underway to align institutional processes and the training provision with the commitments of the refreshed 2025 Concordat.

Over the past year, Goldsmiths has **expanded its research integrity and ethics training** offer, with accessible training opportunities that embed responsible and ethical research practices across the institution. The newly adopted UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) *Introduction to Research Integrity* course provides a flexible, video-based introduction to responsible research practices for researchers at all career stages.

A Research Ethics & Integrity Training Guide was developed to help researchers navigate the growing number of internal and external resources, identify relevant training, and align their learning with institutional policies. The guide consolidates information on recommended training, ethical approvals, and research misconduct, alongside curated recommendations from UKRIO's national webinar series and training library.

Diversity in Research Leadership

Developing and enabling leadership opportunities for Global Ethnic Majority (GEM) researchers is a key priority within the University's Race Justice Strategy 'Researcher Outcomes' workstream. As part of this commitment, Goldsmiths has now sponsored three cohorts of GEM researchers to participate in the sector-wide StellarHE programme, a targeted leadership development initiative designed to equip participants with the skills, confidence, and strategies needed to progress into senior strategic roles within higher education.

Building on years of Goldsmiths' engagement with the sector-wide StellarHE programme, this year the College launched the Ethnically Diverse Leaders (EDL) Stellar Foundation Programme, delivered in partnership with The Diversity Practice. This initiative broadens access to

leadership development by enabling more Global Ethnic Majority (GEM) staff to participate, while tailoring the learning to Goldsmiths' local context. The programme combines interactive workshops, reflective learning resources, and line manager engagement to strengthen leadership readiness, foster professional networks, and equip participants with practical strategies for progressing into leadership roles.

These initiatives demonstrate how Goldsmiths is translating strategic commitments into concrete action, embedding EDI principles into researcher development, and ensuring that leadership development pathways are equitable, supported, and aligned with the University's broader Race Justice Strategy.

Embedding Coaching in Researcher Development

Following the pilot launch in 2023/24, the Research Coaching Programme has now supported over 30 researchers to progress their development goals through more than 100 individual coaching sessions. Through one-to-one research coaching, participants receive targeted support to pursue career aspirations, address challenges, and map practical steps for progression. Feedback highlights increased confidence, motivation, and resilience, with participants attributing successes such as securing publishing contracts and research funding to the programme. 100% of post-programme respondents said they would recommend research coaching to colleagues. By combining personalised support with actionable tools, the programme strengthens researchers' ability to reflect, plan, and advance their development priorities.

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.

Over the past year, the institutional landscape continued to shift as the University navigated financial pressures and implemented internal changes to ensure long-term sustainability. This period of transition reinforced the importance of adaptive and reflexive researcher support that evolves to the changing needs of the research community. While this period brought pressures on time and capacity, it also offered valuable insight into how to support researchers through flexibility, community-building, and responsiveness to evolving needs.

A key lesson from this period has been the growing importance of personalised and adaptive approaches to researcher development. As competing demands made it harder for some colleagues to engage in group-based training, one-to-one and small-group opportunities—particularly research coaching—proved highly effective. These formats provided space for reflection, goal setting, and problem-solving that aligned with individual priorities and career trajectories. Going forward, we will continue to broaden access to research coaching, embedding it alongside training and workshops to provide a more holistic and flexible development offer.

The past year has shown the value of creating spaces that enable collaboration and practice sharing among researchers. Initiatives designed to bring colleagues together around shared research interests—such as the introduction of thematic research networks in Artificial Intelligence and Climate Crisis—provided valuable opportunities for connection and cross-disciplinary exchange. Going forward, these networks will be expanded to include new thematic areas to support further collaboration and researcher practice sharing across the University.

As the Researcher Development Programme expanded in both scope and participation, colleagues expressed a need for clearer guidance in navigating the broadening range of opportunities. In response, training and resources were reorganised into thematic clusters to help researchers identify relevant sessions. Looking ahead, this feedback will inform the development of structured 'development pathways' that map opportunities to particular career stages and for practice researchers, supporting participation in professional development in a more intentional and accessible way.

Fluctuating engagement numbers over the year also encouraged greater experimentation with delivery format and timing. A variety of scheduling modes were trialled, including the first Research Funding Bid Development Intensive Week, which condensed a term's worth of weekly workshops into a single week. This pilot saw high levels of participation and positive feedback, suggesting that

intensive, time-bound delivery modes can be an effective addition to our programme planning.

Taken together, these experiences have reinforced the value of flexible, responsive, and inclusive approaches to researcher development. Lessons from the past year will guide refinements to delivery, support structures, and programme design, ensuring that Goldsmiths continues to provide accessible, meaningful, and career-enhancing opportunities for researchers across all disciplines.

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

Key Objectives for 2025–26

Over the 2025–26 reporting period, Goldsmiths will continue to develop a research environment that is inclusive, supportive, and sustainable, with a focus on professional development, leadership, and research culture.

Evaluating Progress Towards Research Culture Priorities

We will analyse the results of the 2025 CEDARS survey, examining trends by career stage, contract type, and research area. Findings will be reported to relevant governance bodies and used to evaluate the impact of our HREIRA activities and priority areas. Researcher feedback will support us to identify areas for improvement and inform future priorities. Insights will also be shared with the broader research community to foster engagement and collaborative solutions to challenges highlighted by the survey.

Co-Develop HREiRA Action Plan 2026-2029

As part of the renewal process for the HR Excellence in Research Award, Goldsmiths will consult meaningfully with research staff—particularly those on research-only contracts and early career researchers—to inform the development of our 2026–2029 action plan. Engagement will take place through focus groups, one-to-one discussions, feedback forms, and consultations with networks. This process seeks to develop a plan that reflects the lived experiences of the research

community, addresses priority challenges, and fosters a thriving, inclusive research environment.

Renewal of Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter

Preparatory work for the next institutional submissions will continue through evidence gathering, consultation, and institutional self-assessment. These activities will lay the groundwork for evidence-based action plans that advance Goldsmiths' commitments to gender equity and race justice.

Research Culture and Leadership Development

Goldsmiths will expand its support for research leadership development, creating new opportunities for researchers to build confidence, capability, and inclusive practice. Researchers will be supported to take part in AdvanceHE's Research Leadership Programme, fostering leadership growth, strategic decision-making, and confidence in managing research groups and initiatives.

To further enable collaboration and engagement, three new thematic research networks—(In)equalities & Social Justice, Migration Research, and Creative Technologies—will be launched. These networks will connect colleagues working on shared challenges and providing platforms for the development of future collaborations.

Complementing these initiatives, a series of Research Culture Toolkits will be developed to support researchers working within the SHAPE disciplines in embedding good practice across their work. The toolkits will provide resources and practical suggestions for integrating equality, diversity, and inclusion into research design; understanding and reducing the carbon footprint of research; and developing mentoring and coaching skills to support peers and students. Together, these activities aim to cultivate confident, connected, and responsible research leaders at all career stages.

Progression of Key Projects

Work will also continue on several of the key multi-year projects including, governance reform, the launch of anti-racism training for all staff, and the

finalisation and implementation of the Career Development and Wellbeing Review. Through these efforts, Goldsmiths aims to foster a research environment where all researchers can thrive and engage fully with the University's research and societal mission.

Please provide a brief statement describing your institution's approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body

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:

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Vivienne Hurley, Executive Director, Research and Social Innovation

Contact for queries:

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This annual report will be analysed by the 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.