

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

Universities and Research Institutes

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Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat (refer to Researcher Development Concordat Reporting Guidance)	

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)

LSTM's mission is to undertake world-class translational research to improve health outcomes for disadvantaged populations across the world. We believe that an inclusive, supportive and collaborative research culture enables this mission, reflected in our values of Inclusivity, Integrity, Partnership and Impact.

Our Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research Culture and Integrity leads our work to evolve a research culture which nurtures and rewards openness, good research practice, supporting others and provides fair recognition. We strive to create an inspiring place for individuals to develop their career, whether directly involved in research, or providing other essential contributions for a research institution to thrive; whether based on our Liverpool campus or our Global Hubs. Our focus on research culture is structured to routinely seek staff feedback, working with staff groups and networks of different levels and cadres to understand challenges and priorities. We also participate in a number of external Research Culture Networks to keep up to date with best practice from the sector to ensure we learn, evolve and adapt.

Our framework of committees and working groups is designed to allow staff to participate in the day-to-day operation of LSTM and to ensure they can participate in and influence the decision-making that impacts organisational processes and environment. In this context, LSTM signed the Researcher Development Concordat in July 2020 and established the Career Development of Researchers (CADRe) working group to oversee progress towards meeting the commitments set out in the Concordat. The group was designed with representation from LSTM's four academic departments, plus early- and mid-career researchers, research group leaders, HR and our Global Hubs.

The CADRe group met regularly, raising and discussing issues relevant to researcher development and overseeing the implementation of the group's action plan. This year we are transitioning to a new governance structure that will oversee culture and environment activities more broadly across LSTM. It will similarly have representation from all academic departments and cadres, with mechanisms to engage with the staff body to obtain feedback. It will govern the multiple initiatives adopted by LSTM to improve the research culture, which as well as the Researcher Development Concordat, includes the Technicians Commitment, the Declaration on Research Assessment and the Research Integrity Concordat.

This transition is part of our ongoing transformation in the Professional Services and Research Support functions to ensure a culture that is agile and responsive, underpinned by effective infrastructure, systems, processes and organisational structures. New appointments of a Chief Operating Officer and a Director of Research Services will help drive operational effectiveness.

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)

LSTM's strategic objectives are built around four core themes: Research, Education, Partnerships and Investing in our future. To undertake world-class translational research, we strive to create a culture that attracts and supports the brightest and best talent in cross disciplinary global health research, embedded in an environment in which all staff feel included and valued.

The implementation of our strategic plan addresses each of the three pillars of the Researcher Development Concordat:

Environment and culture

We wish to create a unifying culture of excellence, equity and inclusion where staff feel recognised and valued for their contributions. This comprises:

- Promoting inclusivity and celebrating diversity at all levels
- Supporting employee well-being and work-life balance
- Encouraging open communication and collaboration
- Recognising contributions and celebrating achievements
- Enabling open research and promoting the highest standards of ethics and integrity

Employment

Our aim is to advance LSTM's position as a global employer of choice to attract and retain the most talented people. To achieve this we aim to:

- Ensure transparent, fair and inclusive recruitment practices
- Offer an efficient and comprehensive onboarding and induction process
- Provide clear and transparent merit-based reward and promotion pathways, recognising the full range of researchers' contributions
- Provide ongoing support to research group leaders and managers of researchers to ensure effective people management
- Improve job security

Professional Development of Researchers

We wish to support the development of all of our research staff and research enabling staff, providing opportunities for learning and development to support them to achieve their full potential. We aim to:

- Establish clear and inclusive career pathways for all across LSTM
- Provide mentorship and guidance at all career stages
- Offer a broad range of training and development opportunities and resources and facilitate a culture of continuous learning
- Support staff to explore a range of alternative careers outside academia

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*)

Activity	Progress in current reporting period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and promote guidance on intranet on mental health and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR intranet pages fully revised and updated to include advice and information on health and wellbeing • Employee Assistance Programme reviewed and new provider introduced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and mental health training delivered as part of annual L&D plan and/or Research Group Leader sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions relating to EDI, wellbeing and mental health delivered throughout year and on quarterly CPD days, including: Dignity & Respect Champions Training, Accessibility, Preventing

	<p>Bullying & Harassment, Assertiveness, Sexual Harassment, Misconduct Panel Training, Disability Awareness, Making the most of the Employee Assistance Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparatory work for our submission for a Bronze Race Equality Charter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Research Integrity training sessions annually and make materials available online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions delivered throughout year, including: Introduction to Research Integrity, Research Integrity in Publications, Altmetric and Responsible Use of Metrics, Good Practices in Open Research, Information and Data Management in Research Projects, Lab Research Planning and Research Data Management, Communicating Your Results, Good Practice in Lab Book and Sample Management, Safeguarding in Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote cohort of Research Integrity Champions and ensure they are engaged across LSTM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RI champions recruited, trained and meeting regularly to discuss issues relating to research integrity • Regular promotion of RI champions as option for staff to discuss concerns • Introduction of Authorship Panels to provide advice on authorship disputes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all research datasets are traceable, accountable, retrievable and archived 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a new research information system to facilitate open sharing of research outputs. • Development of a research integrity plan which includes actions to increase compliance with principles of open research and open data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage across sector to learn from good practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance and presentation at Research Culture conference (Warwick), September 24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at Wellcome Trust Research Culture events (online and in person meetings) • Engagement with Research Culture Enablers Network (regular online meetings)
Employment (<i>max 600 words</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Recruitment and Selection policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Policy produced and enacted to ensure fair and consistent implementation of LSTM selection procedures • Guidance on hiring process developed and circulated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of transparent policy for benefits and allowances for staff relocating internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy produced, circulated and enacted to provide clarity, transparency and equity in relocation allowances and support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure promotion processes require meaningful participation in improving research culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion criteria revised to include contributions to mentorship, citizenship, progressive leadership and a positive research culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen project management support across LSTM through WT IFRC project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet site developed sharing tools, resources, templates and good practice in research management to increase efficiencies and sharing of expertise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce written resources to correspond with expectations stated in Research Group Leader framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet site produced providing detailed guidance, information and resources on expectations outlined in framework
Professional development (<i>max 600 words</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training in having/participating in career conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written guidance and resources shared and made available on intranet

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with ECR network and alumni office to produce resources showcasing alternative career pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event held in June 2025, including panel discussion with former LSTM researchers who have moved into other sectors and practical workshops to support career transition • Promotion of Prosper resources to research staff considering alternative career pathways.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular CPD days to give researchers time and space to focus on career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of four CPD days per year with a programme of development workshops and protected time to focus on personal development goals

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)

Over the past 24 months we have been undergoing a major transformation in the structure of our professional services teams. Now that the restructure is largely complete, we will be looking at ways to further strengthen links between research and research enabling staff. As an example, the process of developing a Research Integrity Action Plan required engagement across the organisation and reflection on obstacles to embedding agreed policies and processes. By identifying 16 distinct goals, and breaking these down into specific, timebound objectives, we hope to increase accountability and transparency.

Equitable global research partnerships have been a major area of focus this year, following the presentation of our co-developed principles of equitable partnership in our 125th year. Funding from the Wellcome Trust Institutional Fund for Research Culture has enabled us to increase the support for research management services across our global hubs. Capacity assessments were conducted in partner organisations in Kenya, Malawi, Cameroon and Zimbabwe and training programmes in Research Administration and Management were completed, followed by a *train the trainers* event to sustain the learnings. To enable shared leanings across the partnerships we have recently supported the establishment of Communities of Practice for cohorts of professional services teams and are establishing resource packs to reduce redundancy during project start up. We have invested efforts in developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning

programme for this Wellcome funded project and will look to ways to expand this to reflect the broader series of actions that we are embarking on to continue our journey towards embedding equity across our partnership portfolio.

Our race equity survey, completed 2 years after the publication of an independent report into Race Equality within LSTM, showed that we still have much work to do in transforming LSTM into an actively anti-racist organisation. The actions identified as priority areas following the review remain relevant and data indicates that these have not yet translated into noticeable improvements in the experiences of racially minoritised staff at LSTM. In addition to increasing racial literacy across the organisation, including in the senior leadership teams, over the coming year work will start on an independent review of our history and the positive action programme to support BAME ECRs will be initiated. We remain committed to listening, learning and adapting and will use external facilitators and create safe spaces to ensure that voices of those directly impacted by racism are centred in our discussions and actions.

Finally, we recognise that the work of our growing cohort of technical staff has not always been fully appreciated and celebrated. We have greatly strengthened our support for the Technicians Commitment action plan over the past 12 months and look forward to moving forward on strengthening career pathways and recognition of this cohort of staff in the coming year.

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

Our objectives for the coming year are focused around four key objectives:

- Making it easier to get things done
- Strengthening two-way dialogue between LSTM Executive and staff
- Increasing connectivity
- Career development

1. Making it easier to get things done

Many staff have reported finding LSTM's systems too cumbersome and inefficient. This year we will focus on working towards more streamlined and effective processes and procedures that facilitate research and are responsive to feedback. This will include:

- Further development and roll-out of our Current Research Information System (CRIS), which will act as a strategic enabler for LSTM’s research ambitions. It will keep real-time, accurate data in one place, reducing manual reporting, streamlining workflows and supporting strategic decisions
- A completely new and revised institutional website including a Virtual Academy for Education, Research and Enterprise
- Roll out of the CRIS system will enable earlier identification and resolution of bottlenecks in the systems and processes that support the delivery of research
- Implementation of the research integrity action plan to focus on priority areas and embed responsible research
- Supporting shared technology platforms, to increase access to specialist equipment, and recognise the expertise of dedicated technical staff.

2. Strengthening two-way dialogue between LSTM Executive and Staff

To build trust and dialogue between LSTM leadership and the staff body we will undertake a series of activities designed to improve the staff voice and create opportunities to meet with management. These will include informal introductory and networking events, targeted at different cadres of staff enabling sharing of experiences, challenges and feedback. We will also be revising the format of our School Staff Forum, with more time devoted to bottom up ideas and to enable a more transparent and inclusive approach to staff engagement.

3. Increasing connectivity

A vibrant research culture thrives on collaboration and mutual support. To this end we will increase opportunities for staff to work together, learning about each other’s strengths and contributions, and facilitate ways for expertise and knowledge to be better shared across the institution. This will include:

- Reintroduction of a weekly seminar series, showcasing current research and findings from across the institution
- Inaugural seminars from senior researchers joining LSTM, to help communicate their experience and expertise, facilitating networking and their integration into the LSTM community
- Better sharing of programme management capacity and resources, breaking down silos in research groups and sharing best practice
- Facilitating profession-focused Communities of Practice across our global hubs, sharing knowledge, experiences and good practice in HR, data management, research governance and safeguarding

4. Professional Development

Opportunities for career development is a key priority for all of our researcher and research enabling staff, we will continue to expand the offerings in CPD days, and to increase opportunities for staff to learn more about career pathways in other sectors. In addition, we will focus additional support in the coming year on

- Clear pathways for technical staff
- More support to facilitate research staff submitting fellowship applications
- A programme of positive action and support for BAME early career researchers.

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 report was prepared by the Research Culture Programme Manager and the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research Culture and Integrity following a townhall event, and additional discussions with the ECR network to review progress and agree on priorities for the coming year. The report was then reviewed by Research Committee, which includes representation from the different academic departments and career stages and approved by the chair of the committee, Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation.

Signature on behalf of governing body:



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.