

Details

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Institution name:	University of Essex
Cohort number:	10
Date of submission:	
Institutional context:	<p>Institutional context: As part of an elite group of dual intensive universities, we are committed above all to two main things, excellence in teaching and excellence in research.</p> <p>Having developed an international reputation for research we are a member of Young European Research Universities Network (YERUN) and Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) alliance. Our diverse community and international profile create an outward looking research culture underpinned by our values of inclusion and responsibility, academic freedom, respect, trust, and evidence-based rigour. We nurture and support our researchers at all career stages by embedding a strong yet flexible research development framework and encouraging continuous personal and professional growth.</p> <p>We nurture and support our researchers at all career stages by embedding a strong yet flexible research development framework and encouraging continuous personal and professional growth.</p>

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

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Audience (direct beneficiaries of the action plan)	2024/25 HESA Headcount	Comments
Research staff	160	The key target audience of this action plan.
Postgraduate researchers		
Research and teaching staff	718	
Teaching-only staff	301	
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 impact of the action (reporting against the success measure)	Outcome (ongoing/carried forward/no further action)	
Environment and Culture										
Awareness and engagement										
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: -										
Essex already has in place a published commitment to the Concordat available for the whole researcher community (and the wider staff) on our Staff Directory (our intranet). Our Concordat underpinning institutional Researcher Development Framework is included in our induction programme for all researchers (and wider academics). The University's Research Strategy and supporting action plan, and the REF Code of Practice are accessible on our Staff Directory, which sets out our governance standards, links to the Concordat, and includes our Code of Good Research Practice.										
EC11	Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat.	Our commitment to, and a link to, the Concordat principles to be included as part of the recruitment 'pack' for all research roles.	N	Dec 2022	Head of Resourcing	100% of new researchers at all grades aware of the Concordat		Complete		No further action.
		Commitment to the Concordat to be included in the 'Pathway to Permanency' (P2P) supporting materials, development conversations and networking events.	N	Dec 2022	HR Business Partner – Academic	100% of all researchers involved in the P2P process aware of the Concordat within twelve weeks of joining the university.		Complete	All individuals engaging with P2P will be introduced to the concordat during briefings and through guidance.	No further action.
		Our career development statement to be available as part of the recruitment process for new researchers, and we will share more detailed information as part of our on-boarding process.	N	Dec 2022	Head of Resourcing	Incorporated into the recruitment/on-boarding process for all new researchers (100%)		Complete	All new researchers receive this information.	No further action.
		We will provide annual reporting for the Researcher Development Framework to Research Committee and the People Culture and Inclusion Advisory Group (which includes members from the University Steering Group) to highlight progress with the Staff Concordat.	N	Dec 2022	Director of OD, Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Maintaining a high visibility and profile of the Concordat and our action plan with senior researchers and university leaders via an annual inclusion in the Research Committee agenda and annual update to the People Culture and Inclusion Advisory Group.		Complete	RDF Annual update reported to Research Committee and Senate, with input from senior leaders in REO and Faculty Deans Research.	No further action.

<p>Institutional policies are drafted with equality and inclusion considerations, go through a range of consultation mechanisms, including key research stakeholders, staff networks, trade unions, and our People, Culture, and Inclusion Advisory Group. Institutional policies and practices are freely available (in accessible formats) on our staff directory (intranet), with new policies/significant changes communicated to senior researchers for onward communication and engagement with the researcher community, and to all staff via our newsletter (Essex Weekly) and email updates from People and Culture (P&C). We also undertake focus groups and some one-to-one interviews (invitations include researchers) as part of our policy development phase – recent examples of this includes our Neuro-inclusion, Domestic Abuse, and Misogyny policies, and changes to our approach to induction for researchers.</p>											
ECI2	<p>Ensure institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers</p>	<p>A new Equality Impact Assessment process for policies is being reviewed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team currently, and consultation on any changes will include members of our researcher community.</p>	N	July 2023	Director of Inclusion	<p>New Equality Impact Assessment process has been developed, with engagement with representatives of the researcher community, and implemented to ensure greater identification of any equality impact considerations and applied to all new and revised policies from Autumn 2023.</p>		Complete	<p>The Inclusion Manager collaborated with the Projects Governance Manager throughout 2025 to redesign the existing Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) template and process. This initiative aimed to integrate governance considerations from both Estates and Systems into the EIA framework, ensuring its applicability to not only policies but also current and future projects. The updated process will be designed to be sustainable and aligned with existing resources. Additionally, the revised template will prioritise ease of use while providing project managers with sufficient, relevant information to thoroughly assess the potential impact on protected characteristics before the implementation of projects and policies.</p>	No further action.	
<p>We have a number of institutional mechanisms and roles which ensure the research culture and quality of research is championed, supported and reviewed including: Research Committee, Faculty Research Committees, Faculty Deans Research, and Research Directors. The Research Action Plan is reported to Senate. There are termly reports from Faculty Research Committees. We have regular People Landscape meetings to review practice and identify trends and areas for action. Within Faculties, Faculty Deans Research often lead informal sessions based on research themes.</p>											
ECI6	<p>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.</p>	<p>We will review and make a decision about whether the University of Essex should participate in the CEDARS survey in 2025 onwards</p> <p>Staff surveys and focus groups will be held with the research community to understand the experience of induction and career development from the individual and manager perspective, with a revised approach, informed by their feedback, being introduced in 2022/23</p>	N	July 2023	PVC-Research/ Director of People and Culture	<p>An informed decision about participation is made ahead of the cut-off date for involvement in CEDARS</p>		<p>Stopped. Decision was made not to engage with CEDARS during 2023. Internal staff surveys have since been delivered in 2024 and 2025. See below.</p>	<p>Review of Academic induction involved engagement with key manager roles and did not include surveys or focus groups.</p> <p>Employee Voice Survey conducted in 2024 to all staff, with some insights related to support for research staff.</p> <p>Researcher Experience Survey and Focus Group took place in 2025.</p> <p>University of Essex has fully engaged with the REF People, Culture and Environment Pilot between Nov 24 – Apr 25.</p>	<p>Support for researchers is reviewed at least annually, discussed through formal committees and through engagement with managers as appropriate.</p> <p>RDF engagement data for 2023-24 shows that there was a 39.4% increase in attendance at centrally delivered Research related learning events compared to the academic year before (820 compared to 588).</p> <p>Mentoring opportunities, accessed by 230 researchers with 94% reporting positive results.</p> <p>Participation in the REF People, Culture and Environment Pilot has increased institutional awareness of how job security impacts research quality.</p> <p>Research-only staff feedback collected during the pilot highlighted the importance of consistent redeployment support, which is now under review.</p>	<p>No further action.</p> <p>No further action. Researcher Experience Survey and pulse surveys are now scheduled to be completed during alternate years, with targeted consultation to follow in areas that surveys have highlighted. This will be included in the forward-looking action plan.</p>

								Researcher Development Framework annual update provides a summary of levels of engagement to support researchers.		
								Technician's Commitment Steering Group meets termly to ensure that Technicians are fully supported.		
All researchers are encouraged to mentor other colleagues through the institutional peer mentoring database and through external mentoring schemes with Eastern ARC and YUFE. Role specific Essential Training (Postgraduate Research Supervisors, Pathway to Permanency Academic Advisers, Heads of Department) highlights expectations to be a supportive colleague, particularly for those new to research. There is a 'citizenship' responsibility included in every researcher role description, which includes commitments to things like mentoring, environment, knowledge exchange.										
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.	See above. No new actions.								
Wellbeing and mental health										
The aims of these obligations are to champion positive wellbeing amongst researchers, both through appropriate training and enabling new ways of working:										
Essex have signed the Mindful Employers Charter as part of our commitment to supporting mental health at work. We have an extensive provision of wellbeing support through internal and external providers, including our Employee Assistance Programme (with counselling service), SilverCloud (CBT) programme. There are sections dedicated to wellbeing in the Future Leaders, Strategic Leaders and New Heads Induction programmes. We have a Mental Health First Aider roll-out programme, with annual 'booster'. Stress Risk Assessments are completed within every department.										
ECI3	Promote good mental health and wellbeing through the effective management of workloads and people.	A detailed workload survey was undertaken involving all staff in 2021. A joint working group with the trade unions is being established in Autumn 2022 to oversee a review of the approach/principles for workload allocation models and a range of focus groups to explore some of the key themes emerging from the workload survey and to try and identify actions to improve some of the factors impacting workload e.g. systems.	Y (3,4.1)	October 2023	Director of People and Culture, Head of Employment Policy and Projects	Areas for action are identified, with either 'quick wins' put in place, or specific sub projects set up to explore and realise improvements and actions in more complex areas that will have a positive impact on workload for the researcher community.		Complete	Principles for Workload Allocation Models in academic departments was updated in Nov 24, including guidance for employees and Heads of Department.	No further action.
		Our organisational Stress Policy and supporting resources are currently being updated, with revised guidance due to be published in 2022-23, including specific sections for wellbeing and mental health, and organisational commitments in relation to workload.	N	December 2024	Director of People and Culture, Head of Employment Policy and Projects	Stress Policy and guidance approved and communicated to researchers. Pulse surveys or other forms of engagement indicate a positive shift in views on workload, resulting in a 20% reduction in instances of reported stress.		Complete	Updated Stress Management Policy approved by USG in June 2023 and published to Staff Directory in October 2023.	No further action.
ECI4	Ensure managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to wellbeing and mental health.	A new 'How We Manage at Essex' Essential Training programme for managers of researchers will be launched in Autumn Term 2023, which includes modules/sections related to wellbeing and mental health	N	December 2023	Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Revised training programme launched with modules covering wellbeing and mental health, with 70% attendance by managers of researchers in first year of launch.		Ongoing. How we manage at Essex Essential Training for all managers was launched in Sept 25. All managers are required to complete this and completion levels are reviewed annually by Council. Open programme of management development has been available for all managers since 2023. This includes a range	All managers are required to complete How we manage at Essex and completion is reviewed annually by Council. The resource was soft launched to managers on 18 th Sept. Completion was 20% as at 27 th Oct.	No further action. Targeted support for researcher managers will be carried over to the 2025-28 action HREIR plan.

								of programmes, including Apprenticeships, workshops, resources and guidance to support applying policy in practice. Role based support programmes are also available for Directors of Research and PGR Directors which signposts to relevant support in their role.		
ECM3	Ensure managers promote a healthy working environment that supports	Our organisational Stress Policy and supporting resources are currently being updated, with revised guidance due to be published in 2022-23, including specific resources to promote wellbeing and support for mental health, and guidance for managers of researchers.	N	July 2023	Director of OD/Director of Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing	Revised Stress Policy and supporting resources approved and communicated to 100% of managers of researchers.		Complete. Updated Stress Management Policy approved by USG in June 2023 and published to Staff Directory in October 2023. Following on from the policy, Stress Risk Assessments were introduced to be completed between a manager and individual. Training on completing these risk assessments was provided during Sept 2024, aimed at senior managers. Wellbeing Directory created to provide further resources on mental health and wellbeing	Annual How We Work at Essex Booster is launched annually to all staff with high levels of completion (approx 95% at least annually). This includes key information related to Health, Safety and Wellbeing, ensuring awareness of key legislation, policy and practice related to working at University of Essex	No further action.
	researchers' wellbeing and mental health.	'Enabling Environment' is a core principle in the University's People Supporting Strategy, and we are working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to gain Enabling Environments Accreditation. Our 'Essential Training' which all research staff complete and have 'boosters' annually is being revised, with strengthened sections/information in relation to wellbeing and mental health, and includes extra modules specifically for managers.	N N	July 2024 July 2024	Director of OD/Director of Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Enabling Environments Accreditation gained. Revised training programme launched with modules covering wellbeing and mental health, with 70% of researchers undertaking the revised training in the first year of launch.		Work towards the Enabling Environments Accreditation has been paused. See EC14 and ECM3. Stress Risk Assessment training available to all staff online and updated resources are available on Wellbeing Directory.		No further action. No further action.
Our recruitment practices for all researcher roles encourage consideration of flexible working arrangements before appointment. We have a range of institutional policies and guidance for managers that include: Flexible Working, Family Leave, and Special Leave.										

ECM4	Ensure managers consider fully flexible working requests and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers.	New Hybrid Working organisational principles have been developed with specific principles for our researcher community (allowing for different approaches for different subjects/faculties within the overarching principles). Researchers have been actively engaged in the development of the principles and have been provided with resources/development to help them to manage hybrid teams effectively. The new principles and supporting resources will be published in Autumn 2022.	N	Dec 2022	Director of People & Culture/Director of OD/Head of Employment Policy/PVC Research	Hybrid Working principles and resources approved and shared with researchers and guidance published for researcher managers, enabling effective hybrid working.		Hybrid working information and guidance is available to all staff and was communicated to senior leadership roles during implementation. This policy was drafted but is currently paused due to other institutional priorities.	Principles were consulted throughout the organisation and approved through governance channels.	No further action.
		We are currently developing a new Volunteering Policy, to support, promote and allow for volunteering in the wider community, for interested staff, including the researcher community. There will be consultation and engagement on the new policy (including with researchers) and it will be considered by our People, Culture, and Inclusion Advisory Group.	N	December 2023	Head of Employment Policy/Policy Officer/Director of OD	New Volunteering Policy developed, approved, and communicated to all researchers by end 2023.			Flexible working is a day one right and this is reflected in essential training and induction information for all employees and managers.	No further action.
ECR3	Ensure researchers take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health.	See above actions.								
Bullying and harassment										
The aims of these obligations are to eliminate bullying and harassment in the research system, tackled through progressive policies and secure mechanisms to address incidents:										
Essex has a 'Zero Tolerance of Harassment and Bullying' policy for all staff and students, which is easily accessible through our Staff Directory and reviewed and updated regularly. We provide 'bystander intervention' training, with 300 staff (including researchers) and students trained in being 'active bystanders' to date. The Harassment Advisory Network allows confidential discussion of harassment and bullying.										
ECI3	Promote a healthy working environment through effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues.	A new 'Tackling Misogyny' policy is currently being developed (with extensive consultation through a range of internal groups and networks, which include research staff, and specialist external organisations). We aim to publish the new policy with supporting guidance before the end of the 22/23 academic year.	N	July 2023	Director of People and Culture/Director of Inclusion	New Tackling Misogyny Policy developed, approved, and communicated to 100% of all managers of researchers, for briefing and dissemination to all the researcher community.		Complete	The 'Tackling Misogyny' policy was approved and published in 2022- 23, with content integrated within Essential Training for all staff.	No further action.
		Following focus groups with staff (including researchers) and students, we will be reviewing our 'Report and Support' service. This service can be used by staff and students to report small (e.g. micro aggressions) and serious incidents of harassment, bullying and violence, and reports can be made anonymously if someone wishes. We will be reviewing the dashboard and rebranding the service to ensure that people know what it is for and how they can use it.	N	December 2023	Director of Inclusion/Inclusion Manager	Revised Report and Support Service implemented and communicated to 100% of all managers of researchers, for briefing and dissemination to all the researcher community.		Complete	Report and Support Service has been reviewed and rebranded and campaigns run twice a year at least since 2022-23.	No further action.
		Increased Privilege and Microaggressions training scheduled for delivery in the professional development opportunities for all staff in academic year 22/23, with promotion and attendance aimed specifically at our researcher community.	N	July 2023	Director of Inclusion/Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Privilege and Microaggressions training taking place with active participation from 30% of the research community in the first year of scheduled training.		Complete	Privilege and Microaggressions training was delivered to Senior Leaders, and Microaggression delivered to Future Leaders in both 2022-23 and 2023-24.	No further action.
ECM3	Ensure managers encourage reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination,	The 'Report and Support' system (and its rebrand – see above) will be included in the How We Manage At Essex programme, so that managers of researchers understand and can promote the system to their teams.	N	December 2023	Director of Inclusion/Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Promotion of the revised Report and Support system included in the How We Manage at Essex training programme.		Complete	Report and Support is included within the annual How We Work at Essex Booster for all employees, not just managers. The role of the manager is also outlined within Essential Training for managers .	No further action.

	bullying and harassment.									
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 above sections.								
Equality, diversity and inclusion										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure managers and researchers are trained in, aware of- and adopt practices enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion:										
At Essex, all new researchers undertake our essential 'How We Work at Essex' training, which includes modules in relation to diversity and inclusion and automatic bias. Completion of this training is monitored through the probation agreements. There is an annual How We Work at Essex 'booster' programme which all employees undertake. The University is leading a pioneering new project 'Transitions and Transformations: Black Researcher's Journey' aimed at developing a sustainable model of support for Black researchers consisting of a digital platform, training for PGRs and research staff, funding, mentoring, career and professional development opportunities. We have University of Sanctuary Status – supporting refugees and people in the asylum system. We hold the MoD Silver Armed Forces Covenant. The University of Essex has made a public pledge to encourage more young people from Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater (GTRSB) communities to come to Essex. All managers undertake our Essential Training for Managers (How We Manage at Essex programme), which includes content related to managing diversity, and equality/diversity in relation to recruitment and selection. We have senior 'Diversity Champions' for all Protected Characteristics, and a range of equality and diversity-related staff networks, including: Essex LGBT Alliance, Essex Access Forum, Global Forum, LGBT+ Allies, Women's Network, Parent's Support Network. The Researcher Development Framework outlines support for funding for research and a dedicated area for inclusive research										
ECI4 / ECM1	Ensure managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work.	Our essential training for managers (How We Manage at Essex) programme is currently being reviewed with an aim to include more on 'inclusion' and 'automatic bias'. We hold an institutional Athena Swan bronze award and 14 departmental awards. We are proactively working with the remaining 4 eligible departments to submit in 2023. We have also made contact with AdvanceHE to explore whether previously ineligible departments may now be eligible under the transformed charter. We are aiming to submit an institutional application for the Race Equality Charter.	N Y (see 6.3 in 20-22 plan) N	December 2023 December 2023 January 2024	Director of Inclusion/Head of Academic and Professional Practice Director of Inclusion/Inclusion Manager Director of Inclusion/Inclusion Manager	Revised training programme launched, with 95% of research managers undertaking the training Retain institutional AS Award. 80% of eligible departments to hold a bronze or silver award by 2025. We have been successful in our application for the Race Equality Charter		Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	All managers are required to complete Essential Training for Managers and completion is reviewed annually by Council. We have 10 Departments awarded Athena Swan Bronze and 4 with Silver awards. REC Bronze Award in July 23 until Nov 28.	Continue to review completion rates of How We Manage at Essex annually. Commitment to the Athena Swan award will continue in 2025-28 HREIR action plan. Commitment to the Race Equality Charter will continue in the 2025-28 HREIR action plan.
ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to equality, diversity and inclusion.	See above (in grey) for existing 'equality, diversity and inclusion' commitments and actions already in place.								
Research Integrity										
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:										
At Essex we have departmental Directors of Research who are responsible for supporting the strategic development of the department's research activity, including excellence in research quality, integrity, intensity and impact. They provide research mentoring and peer support. Comprehensive training programme in research integrity is delivered in line with the Concordat. We have a Research Integrity and Misconduct Task and Finish Group. We have a centrally co-ordinated research governance structure with a University Code of Good Research Practice and a Research Integrity Annual Report is published. We have a Responsible Use of Research Metrics Guide (based on the principles of the Leiden Manifesto). Institutional policies are in place to act as a channel for managers to report. The University produces an annual Research Integrity Report for Senate and Council which is made public. We have an institutional Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct, which is visible to all researchers and their managers.										
ECI5 / ECM2	Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct.	See above (in grey) for existing 'research integrity' commitments and actions already in place.								
ECM3	Ensure managers report and address incidents of poor research integrity.	See above (in grey) for existing 'research integrity' commitments and actions already in place.								

ECR2	Ensure researchers act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity.	See above (in grey) for existing 'research integrity' commitments and actions already in place.								
ECR4	Ensure researchers use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour in relation to research misconduct.	See above (in grey) for existing 'research integrity' commitments and actions already in place.								
Policy development										
The aims of these obligations are to encourage all researchers to actively contribute to the development of policies driving positive change at their institution:										
At Essex, the researcher community is represented at a senior governance level (including Senate) and has opportunities to engage with decision-making. They are represented by UCU union, which the university has a formal recognition agreement with. Researchers are involved in a range of policy consultations, recent examples include our new Hybrid Working Principles, Financial Sustainability, Tackling Misogyny, and work to develop a Neuro-inclusion Policy at Essex.										
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.	As part of changes to how we engage on the development of new/revised policies, we will be setting up workshops, involving managers from the researcher community to help shape new policy approaches.	N	July 2023	Head of Employment Policy and Projects	Policy development workshops being held once a term with active engagement from members of the research community.		Complete. Research Committee has appointed academics members. In the latter half of AY2024-25 we also initiated a programme inviting observers to Research Committee drawn from all Directors of Research and Directors of Impact.	This is now standard practice. Embedding Directors of Research and Impact to be invited as observers to Research Committee has broadened representation and strengthened the link between institutional decision-making and the lived experience of researchers and their managers. This has increased transparency and ensured that decisions on research strategy, funding priorities, and support frameworks are informed by those directly managing or undertaking research. Feedback from observers has already shaped agenda items, including [example – e.g., redeployment processes, mentoring expansion, REF preparation], demonstrating tangible influence. For research-only staff, this representation means their concerns are channeled into committee discussions through their managers, making it more likely that issues around job security, career progression, and workload balance are considered at the highest level.	No further action.
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.	See E17 and above (in grey) for existing 'policy development' commitments and actions already in place.								

EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution.	See E17 and above (in grey) for existing 'policy development' commitments and actions already in place.								
ECR5	Encourage researchers to consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution.	See E17 and above (in grey) for existing 'policy development' commitments and actions already in place.								
ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the									

	wider academic community.									
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Employment

Recruitment and induction

The aims of these obligations are to ensure recruitment of researchers is open and fair and researchers receive effective inductions into the organisation:

OTM-R is at the heart of our recruitment processes at Essex, and we operate in line with the requirements as a YUFE partner, including open internal and external advertisements; consistent/ standard application approach for all roles; pre-defined and consistent job descriptions/job criteria. Every interview panel member is required to attend training in fair selection prior to being allowed to attend. The equality profile of those applying for promotion, both successful and unsuccessful candidates, is audited annually and identified issues are considered by our governance committees, including the Academic Staffing Committee. The Technician Commitment action plan outlines a commitment to maintain regular updates for technical staff.

E11	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.	See above (in grey) for existing 'recruitment and induction' commitments and actions already in place.								
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E12	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	New model of Academic Induction being developed for implementation in Autumn 22, including role specific Essential Training for new heads, academic advisors and new research staff.	N	December 2023	Head of Academic and Professional Practice	New Academic Induction programme launched and attended by 95% of new members of the researcher community within the first twelve months.		Complete	Model of academic induction was reviewed in 2022-23 and programme of support with supporting guidance is provided to researchers. Updated information is now available for new researchers on the Staff Directory. New Heads induction has been attended by 100% of new heads of Academic Department, with the programme expanded based on identified training needs of Heads. See E16. Role Based Support events are now delivered as standard for Departmental Director roles, led in partnership of Faculty Deans and OD team. This complement existing termly networks for Departmental Director roles.	No further action.
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Recognition, reward and promotion

The aims of these obligations are to ensure the fair and inclusive recognition of researchers as part of their career progression:										
At Essex we have clear procedures, guidance and processes for research staff to demonstrate their achievements in order to gain reward and promotion. The guidance is kept under review annually. Decisions about additional remuneration are made by formal committee decision, and outcomes are monitored to ensure fairness and equity across protected characteristic groups. The decisions for promotions are reviewed by the University Steering Group and Senate, and the decisions for additional incremental progression reported to ratified by the Remuneration Committee. There is established promotion criteria consistent across every role (with incremental steps from early career through to professor. We will continue to monitor, support and advise managers at all levels to follow the established University policies and procedures for equitable recruitment, supporting researchers with career progression and additional reward mechanisms. This will be monitored by various means including recruitment data and the annual reporting to Senate and Remuneration Committee on salary review and promotion outcomes.										
EI3	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.	To set up a joint working group with the trade unions for 2022/23 academic year to address our equality pay gaps specifically focusing on gender, ethnicity and disability. This will include considering pay gaps in the context of intersectional identities. Our Academic Staffing Committee will be involved, which includes our PVC-Research. Roll out of the system for promotion applications, managed through the Electronic Document Management System	N Y (3,4,5)	Jul 2023 End 2024	Director of People and Culture/Director of Inclusion Employee Reward Manager	Working group established with agreed actions identified to address equality pay gaps and a plan in place to implement focus areas. 95% of promotion applications managed through the Electronic Document Management System.		Gap Working Group established throughout 2023. On Hold. Promotion processes have not been developed on our internal system. Further work will take place once resource is allocated to this project. Complete. Equality Pay	Actions approved by University Steering Group.	No further action. This will be included in the 2025-28 HREIR action plan.
EM3	Managers commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers.	See E11 above regarding selection training for managers.								
Responsibilities and reporting										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure that researchers and their managers understand and act on their obligations and responsibilities:										
Our Research Strategy sets out our vision of Essex researchers as one of activists, advocates, change-makers, innovators, reformers and disruptive thinkers. Our diverse community and international profile create an outward looking research culture underpinned by our values of inclusion and responsibility, academic freedom, respect, trust and evidence-based rigour. Our institutional policies are easily accessible through our Staff Directory, and key additions or changes are highlighted to managers of the researcher community. Our Essential Training for managers covers core expectations in relation to good people management. At Essex, all our people-related policies and strategies reflect our values of inclusion, partnership and community. We are clear with our managers and the wider research community that we expect judgement and decision-making to be based on our institutional values, and our procedures are designed to help colleagues connect their judgements, decisions, behaviours and actions with our values, legislation and any funder requirements.										
EM2	Managers familiarise	See E15 and above (in grey) for existing 'responsibilities and reporting' commitments and actions already in place.								
	themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding.									
ER1	Researchers ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder.	Our 'Essential Training' which all researcher staff complete and have 'boosters' annually is being revised, with strengthened sections/information in relation to a range of policy areas e.g. wellbeing and inclusion	N	July 2023	Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Revised Essential Training programme launched with 95% attendance from the researcher community.		Complete	Annual Essential Training is developed, communicated and monitored, with all staff expected to complete it. Completion rates are reviewed annually by Council.	Continue in 2025-28 HREIR action plan.
ER2	Researchers understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities.	See E15 and above (in grey) for existing 'responsibilities and reporting' commitments and actions already in place.								
People management										

								Research Leadership Development Programme has also been promoted to all Essex Researchers. (places were attended for the pilot cohort of the YUFE Research Leadership Programme (Jan 25))		
EM1	Managers undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care.	See response to ECI4 / ECM1 and EI5								
EM4	Managers actively engage in regular	See above (in grey) for existing 'people management' commitments and actions already in place.								
	constructive performance management with their researchers.									
ER3	Researchers positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers.	See EM4 response								
Job security										
The aim of this obligation is to improve the job security of researchers:										
Our Redeployment Policy was revised in 2021. We have an established commitment to the use of appropriate contract types in the University's People Supporting Strategy, with annual reporting to the People, Culture and Inclusion Advisory Group.										
EI6	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.	We have agreed to review the contracts of all fixed-term staff with four or more years' service on 31 July 2022. The aims of this review will be to identify where additional permanent posts can be created and/ or provide individual post holders with additional career development support to enable them to apply for permanent roles at Essex or elsewhere, should they choose to. The University is genuinely committed to decasualisation and we would conduct this review in that spirit.	N (2.1 of 20/22 action plan)	December 2022	Director of Employee Relations and Reward	Fixed term contract review completed with revisions made to identified researchers on fixed-term contracts and identified actions for additional career development support have plans in place for implementation.		Complete. Joint decasualisation working group identified and ensured that training for new academic heads included how to manage conversations around fixed term contracts and managing research funding staff, since March 2024. Resources and support for all researcher career stages are available on the staff directory. A range of mentoring opportunities are available to researchers both internally and externally.	These activities have helped strengthen the institutional approach to job security and career development. Embedding guidance on managing fixed-term contracts into head of department training has improved confidence in handling redeployment discussions and created greater consistency in supporting staff on research funding. The enhanced visibility of career pathways, mentoring schemes, and researcher development resources has increased awareness of long-term opportunities and progression routes, contributing to reduced reliance on casualised contracts. Updating the Researcher Development Framework to	No further action.

		Our Pathway to Permanency Moodle Resource has been developed to support colleagues engaged with the P2P process, with highlighted support for academic advisors, including coaching support, as a means of supporting career development and job security and will be implemented in Autumn 2022.	Y (3,4,5 of 20/22 action plan)	December 2022	HR Business Partner - Academic	P2P Moodle Resource developed and implemented within the researcher community, with 70% engagement.	<p>Enhanced career pathway support and guidance is now available for researchers on the staff directory.</p> <p>Our institutional Researcher Development Framework has had a core theme changed from Enhancing Professional Skills to Enhancing Professional Skills, Environment and Culture, with additional guidance for inclusive research environment as a subtopic.</p> <p>Pathway to Permanency Moodle resource was cancelled as the information could be shared with colleagues through guidance and Faculty based networking events instead.</p>	<p>explicitly reference Environment and Culture has reinforced the importance of sustainable, inclusive research careers. By moving permanency-related information into networking events and guidance, support is now provided in more interactive and contextually relevant ways, increasing engagement from both researchers and managers.</p>	No further action.	
Professional and Career Development										
Championing professional development										

<p>The aims of these obligations are to promote the importance of professional development and ensure researchers have the time to engage in it:</p> <p>A University of Essex Researcher Development Framework has been designed and implemented, with involvement of the researcher community, to ensure that colleagues have a consistent level of support and focus for their researcher development at all career stages. One of the four themes of the framework is "Engagement, Knowledge, Exchange and Impact" that outlines resources and events related to the theme. The Impact Toolkit (an online resource) was launched July 2021 alongside an annual Impact Academy Programme that provides opportunities for researchers to attend impact related events throughout the academic year. The programme includes workshops, webinars and best practice sharing, including some externally commissioned training. We have established 'Newcomers' which is an active network for Early Career Researchers. It brings together researchers interested in different aspects of the research lifecycle and aims to stimulate collaboration and opportunities for shared learning. It also provides training and resources to support researchers. Develop at Essex resource provides guidance to support career development planning, in alignment with the Researcher Development Framework. Our 'development dashboard' includes monitoring of our researcher community. Researcher Development Framework Annual Update (submitted to Research Committee and University Steering Group) will outline levels of engagement with the framework and highlight institutional approaches to increase levels of engagement. Essential Training Policy outlines expectations for all managers to support direct reports to engage with professional development activities (no set limit).</p>										
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.	<p>Professors' network to support networking, collaboration and the development of a community that are strong role models and mentors across the university to be reintroduced and delivered biannually.</p> <p>Staff surveys and focus groups will be held with researchers to understand the experience of induction and career development from the individual and manager perspectives.</p>	N	July 2023	PVC-Research/ Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Re-launch of Professor's Network with promotion and engagement within the researcher community with 30% of professors attending in the first twelve months		Professors Network has been paused due to other institutional priorities.		No further action.
			Y (see 7.1 of 20-22 action plan)	July 2023	Director of OD/ Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Engagement with members of the researcher community taking place to gain their views on induction and career development.		Complete.	See ECI6.	See ECI6
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities.	See above (in grey) for existing 'championing professional development' commitments and actions already in place.								

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 above (in grey) for existing 'championing professional development' commitments and actions already in place.								
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.	Centrally delivered induction for researchers and the Pathway to Permanency Process (and the P2P role based Essential Training) highlight the importance to researchers of taking responsibility for their professional development. Further revisions are planned in 22/23, in collaboration with the researcher community to improve P2P and induction further	Y (see 3,4,5 of 20-22 action plan)	July 2023	Director of OD/ Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Revisions made (following researcher engagement) to both induction and P2P process with emphasis on taking responsibility for their own professional development.		Complete.	Revised Education and Research staff induction events, preparing for academic promotion and Faculty based Pathway to Permanency events are all delivered as standard in the open programme of development opportunities. These changes ensure that professional development is positioned as a normal and essential part of the research role. For research-only staff, the integration of P2P guidance and faculty events has provided clearer visibility of career pathways beyond their contract, increasing engagement with mentoring and other long-term development opportunities. The revisions to induction and P2P processes have strengthened the message that researchers are expected and encouraged to take proactive ownership of their career development. Embedding this expectation at the start of employment and reinforcing it through faculty-based events has improved consistency across departments	No further action
Career development reviews										
The aims of these obligations are to ensure researchers and their managers are engaging in productive career development reviews:										
Support is available to have development conversations, to conduct appraisals and develop career plans within the Develop at Essex Moodle resource. Researcher Development Framework Annual Update (submitted to Research Committee and University Steering Group) will outline levels of engagement with the framework, including engagement with the peer mentoring database.										
PCDI2	Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers.	See above (in grey) for existing 'career development reviews' commitments and actions already in place.								
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with researcher career development reviews.	See above (in grey) for existing 'career development reviews' commitments and actions already in place.								

PCDM1	Managers engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually.	See above (in grey) for existing 'career development reviews' commitments and actions already in place.								
PCDR4	Researchers positively engage in career development reviews with their managers.	See above (in grey) for existing 'career development reviews' commitments and actions already in place.								

Career development support and planning

The aims of these obligations are to promote researchers' career development planning through tailored support and gathering evidence of professional experience:

We have a well-established mentoring programme, academic advisors, CPD, professional networks and peer mentoring. Plot your career development pathway guidance is included within the Develop at Essex Moodle resource. Promotion criteria are transparent for all research roles with an indication of the type of evidence needed to demonstrate these successfully. Conversations are available with managers and mentors to discuss research related career development ambitions. We also provide research leave for members of the research community. Our Researcher Development Framework includes modules to support career development, including professional skills, funding your research, managing and leading research projects, and knowledge exchange and impact.

PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	See above (in grey) for existing 'career development support and planning' commitments and actions already in place.								
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.	See above (in grey) for existing 'career development support and planning' commitments and actions already in place.								

Research identity and leadership

The aims of these obligations are to provide researchers with opportunity to progress in their careers by developing their research identity and leadership capabilities:

We have introduced an Essex specific Researcher Development Framework (informed by Vitae's RDF), which provides a comprehensive programme of support – resources, training, and mentoring. One of the four themed areas of our Researcher Development Framework is 'funding your research'. This includes support and resources for the following themes: the research and innovation landscape; funding for research activities; developing and submitting research proposals; improving funding success. Essential Training policy outlines expectations for all staff and managers to engage with professional development. Guidance for Academic Advisors and Heads of Department integrated within pathway to permanency essential training resource. No institutional limit on the number of days CPD per year. Statement of Future Objectives in promotion applications. Develop at Essex Moodle course resources to 'plot your own path'. Centrally delivered leadership programmes (Future Leaders, and Strategic Leaders). Places offered on external Advance HE leadership programmes are also secured most academic years to Aurora and Diversifying Leadership. External leadership programmes also considered on an ad hoc basis.

PCDI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	See above (in grey) for existing 'research identity and leadership' commitments and actions already in place.								
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PCDM4	Managers identify opportunities, and allow time (in addition to the 10 days professional development allowance), for their researchers to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills, and provide appropriate credit and recognition for their endeavours.	See above (in grey) for existing 'research identity and leadership' commitments and actions already in place.								
PCDM5	Managers engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development.	Leadership training is part of the new Researcher Development Framework and a revised researcher leadership development programme is planned for 22-23, in collaboration with external providers.	N	July 2023	Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Revised leadership training launched within the researcher community.		See EC14.		
		New 'How We Manage at Essex' Essential training for managers (as mentioned above in EC14, E15).	N	July 2023	Head of Academic and Professional Practice	Revised training programme launched, with 95% of research managers undertaking the training		See EC14, EC15.		
Diverse careers										
The aims of these obligations are to recognise, value and prepare researchers for the wide range of career options available to them within and beyond research:										
Essex is leading a pioneering project, 'Transitions and Transformations: Black Researcher's Journey', aimed at improving access into research and diversifying and enhancing routes into a range of careers for Black researchers. Our People Supporting Strategy action plan commits to an action of: "Develop an approach to recruit colleagues who are changing careers or re-entering the workplace in a different capacity to further increase diversity and the Institution's access to skills from other sectors." Mentoring process in place for research staff of all career stages (peer mentoring database). A coaching for success service is available to provide opportunity for colleagues to consider their career development opportunities. Develop at Essex Moodle resource for all staff includes a resource dedicated to developing your career development pathway. Mentoring opportunities are possible through the Eastern ARC mentoring scheme. There are also mentoring opportunities available through YUFE and YERUN networks. New Centre for Public and Policy Engagement acts as a hub for dissemination of good practice, pump primes projects and provides training. Specialist teams support knowledge exchange, impact, and commercialisation.										

PCDI5	Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this.	We are currently developing a new Volunteering Policy, to support, promote and allow for volunteering in the wider community, and other sectors for interested staff, including the researcher community. There will be consultation and engagement on the new policy (including with researchers) and it will be considered by our People, Culture, and Inclusion Advisory Group.	N	December 2023	Head of Employment Policy and Projects/Director of OD	New Volunteering Policy developed, approved, and communicated to all researchers by end 2023.		See ECM4.		
PCDM2	Managers support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and secondments.	See above (in grey) for existing 'diverse careers' commitments and actions already in place.								
PCDR2	Researchers explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments.	See above (in grey) for existing 'diverse careers' commitments and actions already in place.								
PCDR6	Researchers consider opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system through, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement and commercialisation.	See above (in grey) for existing 'diverse careers' commitments and actions already in place.								

* 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)**

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**Abbreviations and glossary
(more rows can be added)**

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