

Appendix 3 - Lessons Learned from Implementation of AP2022

Queen Mary expanded responsibility for Concordat implementation to include faculty level action planning in addition to Institutional level in the 2022-24 period, which was facilitated through the new RDCIG structure (AP2020 – Aim 9). This increased the capacity, scope and visibility of the work and meant that tailored actions could be created to local and disciplinary contexts. This was supported by ensuring that RDCIG representatives reported to their respective structure responsible for research culture, providing a direct line to report RDCIG progress and CEDARS data to the faculties. Having taken this new process through one cycle, we will be looking at ways to better coordinate the reporting from faculty groups, alongside reporting from other working groups in the research culture space like the RC and EDI teams and looking at how we can draw out excellent local practice which could be tried elsewhere in the institution.

This next HR Excellence action planning round moves to a 3-year window and will fall out of phase with the 2-year CEDARS cycle, meaning we will have to explore new approaches to meet our reporting requirements.

The Postdoc Conference was not only an excellent community building event, but also a pulse check on postdocs' experience of research culture, and an empowering listening exercise that informed our Concordat action plan.

The RD/QMA team was restructured in 2022/23, focusing the team's support to postdoctoral researchers and research fellows. The new programme being launched in 2023/24 benefits from lessons-learned from elements that were piloted in 2023 and is being designed in response to postdoc needs (identified through CEDARS, the Postdoc Conference, and feedback on past provision) as well as institutional priorities and strategy. A defining feature of the new provision involves a new 'cohort approach', aiming to foster community, encourage peer support, peer learning, and networking amongst postdocs and fellows, to work against the feelings of isolation and siloed working habits reported in CEDARS. Participants have fed-back to us through the pilot runs, "by the end of the session I felt connected to my peers, empowered to take on new challenges". The cohorts will work through short programmes of development, providing more in-depth and tailored learning and support on a broad range of topics important to postdocs and fellows, including developing the skills to apply for successful research funding bids, career management and planning (within and outside of academia), commercialisation of research, and academic skills development, combining taught elements with individual feedback, peer support and a mentoring programme. The RD/QMA website is being restructured to reflect these changes and to better guide postdocs and fellows in planning their development.