



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

# HR Excellence in Research Award

10 Year Review –  
September 2020

QMU Context  
Statement

# HR Excellence in Research Award – 10 Year Review – Context Statement

## 1. Commitment to the 2019 Concordat – Institutional Approach

We recognise that the last few years have seen fundamental change in the research landscape as funding and policy increasingly straddles the domains of research, innovation, skills and place. In recent months our researchers have also had to demonstrate unprecedented resilience in response to COVID 19. Since our 8-year report in 2018, we have made significant progress in implementing our Action Plan for the 2008 Concordat. The new Action Plan reaffirms Queen Margaret University (QMU's) commitment to supporting the 2019 Researcher Development Concordat underpinned, by core centralised research support and provision continuing to be a key driver over the next period of the Concordat; defined by our collaborative approach, nationally and regionally with external partners. Central to this activity is an ethos of co-creation and importantly shared-ownership between the institution and its research community.

In July 2020 we were 1 of only 22 UK HEIs to participate in the national UK Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS). The survey feedback will be used to further enhance the 2020-22 Action Plan SMART Measures and underpin robust benchmarking of progress over the next 2 years. We are committed to running CEDARS again in July 2021 to monitor progress against July 2020 baseline data. It is important to note that the timings of CEDARS (survey closed 31 July 2020) and submission to the 10 Year Review Panel on 25 September 2020 over the summer vacation period) has not allowed for full and rich analysis, in consultation with staff, of CEDARS feedback to inform the development of robust SMART Measures. The development of SMART measures using CEDARS (July) 2020 results and comparison with CEDARS (July) 2021 results will be key to monitoring the successful implementation of our Action plan 2020-22.

## 2. Impact of COVID 19

The impact of COVID 19 and subsequent closure of our campus since March 2020 has had a direct impact on the development of our submission for the 10 Year HR Excellence in Research Retention Award. Opportunities for face to face staff discussion and more creative means of consultation have been limited. Nonetheless, despite the limitations of remote working, our Researcher Development Concordat Working Group continued to meet virtually and regularly to progress our Action plan and develop our submission. COVID 19 has also resulted in long periods of staff illness in our central RKEDU department (responsible for co- ordination of the submission to Cohort 1) at a critical period (March –July 2020) in the Action Plan development. As a small institution, with limited staff resource, this has presented particular challenges with 50% of our central researcher development support staff being absent in this period. As a consequence there have been additional specific delays to the launch of the new Researcher Mentoring Scheme.

## 3. Organisational Context

QMU is a small, modern (post-92) University with a total of 242 (196.43 FTE) academic staff of whom 79 (68.4 FTE) have Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR) and Research Independence (RI). The University gained research degree awarding powers in 1998 and secured university status in 2007. Our vision is to achieve an international research profile that ranks QMU as one of the leading post-92 universities in Scotland in a structure that allows researchers to pursue bold ideas, be creative and work to the highest standards, and in doing so, undertake research that acts as an impetus for innovation, delivers impact and enables economic growth. We have a diverse body of 7,600 students, including nearly 2,500 studying with our partners overseas. We also offer doctoral level studies through our Graduate School.



Following a period of financial uncertainty, the University undertook a major transformation project in early 2019 and the organisational structures for Researcher Development were reviewed. Committed to maximising researcher engagement with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy and acknowledging low levels of participation in CROS/PIRLS and limited progress in rolling out Mentoring, an outcome of this restructure was that the Researcher Development responsibilities of the teaching-focused Centre for Academic Practice (CAP) would be embedded and mainstreamed across other established research support structures including the Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Unit (RKEDU), Graduate School and Research Centres. This has raised both the strategic profile of Researcher Development and allowed us to align much more pro-actively with: our REF 2021 submission development; the new UKRI innovation and place agenda; and institutional commitments to external collaboration. A further review of Researcher Development by the Deputy Principal is scheduled for June 2021, following our submission to REF 2021 and analysis of pilot collaborative activity with other HEIs including back office commercialisation /IP support from the University of St Andrews.

## 4. Strategic Context

QMU's strategy is to maintain and enhance its pockets of research excellence while promoting the highest standards of integrity, and maximising impact in a research environment that is vibrant, inclusive and sustainable. Our research is focused on improving quality of life and building the evidence base for policy and practice through world-leading multidisciplinary, translational research and external collaboration.

Central to our mission are our regional roots and international influence. Located in the Edinburgh City area, we are the only university in East Lothian and are therefore uniquely embedded in the regional community, serving a civic and economic function as an institution with national and international influence. Through the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal we are seeking to elevate our position as a collaborator that provides connectivity and coherence in innovation and is strategically integrated into the regional growth agenda with £30 million secured to offer opportunities for industrial collaboration with the University research base.

Our research vision is global in focus, supporting our wider strategic objective of increased international reach. Our work in international health exemplifies this ambition well. Alongside doctoral study programmes attracting students from across Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and North America, we have increasingly leveraged major prestigious competitive international funding.

Research is delivered through our School of Health Sciences and School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management and supported through a structure of 6 interdisciplinary Research Centres:

- Centre for Health and Rehabilitation Research (CHEAR)
- Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS)
- Centre for Person-centred Practice Research (CPcPR)
- Clinical Audiology, Speech and Language Research Centre (CASL)
- Centre for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies (CCMS)
- Institute for Global Health and Development (IGHD)

Governance Structure for 10 Year Review Development and Consultation

