

Case study: Researcher Forum at Plymouth University

The Researcher Forum at Plymouth University was established in 2008 following the publication of the Concordat and enables the University to facilitate communication and consultation with our Researchers. The Researcher Forum comprises of research staff, academics and staff supporting researchers. Meetings are held every 2-3 months and are themed according to Concordat-related activities and University-wide initiatives and issues for researchers. Each meeting starts with a short networking lunch followed by presentations, Q&A and discussion. Some themed meetings have included:

- Introducing the Concordat
- Careers in Research Online Survey
- Research Excellence Framework
- Researcher Development Framework
- Authorship
- Professional Development
- Public Engagement
- Supporting Research (Research & Innovation Showcase)
- External Grant Submissions
- Developing the Researcher Forum
- Developing the Research Support Programme
- Open Access
- Impact

Researcher Forum meetings have resulted in real progress for example:

- Revisions to the University Ethics Policy (in relation to Good Practice in Research)
- Development of a tailored programme and web page for Research Staff
- Introduction of public engagement training
- Performance development review and links to the Concordat and Researcher Development Framework
- Improved links between researchers and the teams providing support for research
- Increased engagement with training and development activities for researchers
- Improved representation on high-level university committees by giving the Researcher Forum representative a place on the Research & Innovation Committee and HR Excellence in Research Steering Group

The HR Excellence in Research Steering Group works closely with the Researcher Forum on Concordat-related activities and themes. Steering Group members participate in Researcher Forum meetings (and vice-versa) and this enables ongoing communication and consultation between the two bodies. The Researcher Forum is well supported by our researchers and is a highly effective mechanism to link and enable networking between our researchers, academics and staff supporting researchers. The activities of both the Researcher Forum and the HR Excellence in Research Steering Group are pivotal to our support for our researchers and help realize the goal of our Research and Innovation Strategy.