

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD

Action Plan for 2014- 2015 to Implement the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers at the University of Hull

The following Action Plan demonstrates the actions and achievements of the University to date arising from a gap analysis based on the seven principles of 'The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers' to which practice should be aligned and offers a focus for maximising the potential and effectiveness of the University's research staff.

Abbreviations:

All Academic Investment Initiative; CROS Careers in Research Online Survey; ECU Equality Challenge Unit; FEC Full economic cost; FTC Fixed term contract; HoD Head of Department; HR Human Resources; LEAP Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice Directorate; PI Principal Investigator; PIRLS Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey; Vitae RDF Vitae Researcher Development Framework; REF Research Excellence Framework; RFO Research Funding Office; R&S Recruitment and selection; SD Staff Development; SDU Strategic Development Unit; EMG Executive Management Group; UREC University Research and Enterprise Committee

Principle 1: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION				
Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research				
Sub principle	Action	Lead Responsibility	Departmental Actions	Timescale
2. Employers should strive to attract excellence and respect diversity (see Principle 6). Recruitment and selection procedures should be informative, transparent and open to all qualified applicants regardless of background. Person and vacancy specifications must clearly identify the skills required for the post and these requirements should be relevant to the role.	<p>Review the practice of appointing “named researchers” to ensure good practice.</p> <p>Disseminate guidance provided by Research Councils and assess applicability to other sponsors of research activity.</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>Research Funding Office</p>	RFO staff to disseminate guidance to all stakeholders and work with PIs/managers of researchers to ensure they are aware of the guidance and their responsibilities at point of application for funding	Dec 2015
4. To assure fairness, consistency and the best assessment of the candidates’ potential, recruitment and progression panels should reflect diversity as well as a range of experience and expertise. In order to promote these values, individuals who are members of recruitment and promotion panels should have received relevant recent training. Unsuccessful applicants should be given appropriate feedback if requested as this may be of assistance to the researcher in considering their further career development.	Cross reference the HERA profile used as the basis for recruitment and Vitae RDF to ensure a developmental focus for feedback to unsuccessful applicants for research posts	HR	Review applications for research posts and feedback provided following recruitment exercises.	Ongoing Annual Review – Dec 2015

Principle 2: RECOGNITION AND VALUE				
Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.				
Sub principle	Action	Lead Responsibility	Departmental Actions	Timescale
1. Employers are encouraged to value and afford equal treatment to all researchers, regardless of whether they are employed on a fixed term or similar contract. In particular, employers should ensure that the development of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts. This approach should be embedded throughout all departmental structures and systems.	Action plan to implement the Concordat for 2014-16 to be signed off by UREC.	UREC Secretary	Revised plan to be disseminated once approved by UREC.	July 2014
	Accountability for implementation at Faculty level to be vested in Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise	EMG/UREC	Terms of reference for Steering group to be agreed	July 2014
	Seminars on sharing good practice in managing researchers to be held annually.	HR/SD/SDU Associate Deans/	A new descriptor to be prepared for role of Associate Dean outlining new accountabilities.	June 2014
	Process introduced to enable researchers to apply for progression as part of the annual academic promotion round.	HR	SD/HR/SDU to develop opportunities. PIs and Managers to provide advice to researchers on career and personal development in line with the new job profiles for researchers.	Dec 2014
				May 2014.

Principles 3 & 4: SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT				
Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.				
Principle 4: The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.				
Sub principle	Action	Lead Responsibility	Departmental Actions	Timescale
2. A wide variety of career paths is open to researchers, and the ability to move between different paths is key to a successful career. It is recognised that this mobility brings great benefit to the UK economy and organisations will, therefore, wish to be confident that their culture supports a broad-minded approach to researcher careers and that all career paths are valued equally	Staff development opportunities tailored to research staff are offered at University level including the Vitae developed 'Broadening Horizons' delivered in conjunction with the Careers Service.	SD/Careers Service	Provision for researchers is reviewed annually at SD planning meeting in consultation with Associate Deans, PIs and RFO.	Jan Feb 2015
	Liaise with Careers Service over promotion of opportunities for career talks etc to research staff.	HR/SD	SD to work with Careers Service to establish a process for disseminating careers information to researchers.	August 2014
3. Employers, funders and researchers recognise that researchers need to develop transferable skills, delivered through embedded training, in order to stay competitive in both internal and external job markets. Therefore, as well as the necessary training and appropriate skills, competencies and understanding to carry out a funded project, researchers also need support to develop the communication and other professional skills that they will need to be both effective researchers and highly-skilled professionals in whatever field they choose to enter	Subsequent to participation in national pilot of the Vitae RDF planner application in late 2012 to embed use of Vitae RDF to support the articulation of transferable skills for all researchers.	HR/SD/Graduate School/RFO	SD to administer Vitae RDF website, advertise and promote use.	Review Dec 2014
	Create a piloted researcher development pro-forma for use by individual researchers in conjunction with the Vitae RDF. To be used as the basis for annual review in the All.	HR/SD	SD to promote Vitae RDF to HR colleagues at HR departmental meetings	June 2014
		SDU/SD	Form integrated into the new Research Information System To feed into the Converis Review.	December 2014

<p>9. Research managers should actively encourage researchers to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, so far as is possible within the project. It should be stressed that developmental activity can often have a direct impact on the success of the project, by distributing work, taking advantage of individual strengths and talents, and increasing the skill and effectiveness of researchers in key areas such as writing for publication or communicating with a wider audience. Funding bodies acknowledge that the training of researchers is a significant contribution to research output and they encourage employers and mentors to adopt these practices.</p>	<p>Research staff will be encouraged to use the Vitae RDF as a tool to help them map, evaluate and plan their professional development. They will be encouraged to identify the development opportunities that their current work provides and to proactively engage in discussion with more experienced colleagues about future directions.</p>	<p>Researchers with mentors and PIs.</p>	<p>PIs and mentors to facilitate discussion on exploring wider development opportunities through appraisal and career planning reviews as part of All.</p> <p>Researchers will also be encouraged to record their professional development activity as part of a portfolio of evidence that can represent their professional standing to future employers or funders.</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p> <p>CROS and PIRLS 2015 data to inform review. Target response rate of 60%.</p>
<p>11. Employers will wish to ensure that development activities open to researchers include preparation for academic practice. Employers should take measures to ensure broad recognition of CPD schemes from other employing organisations as far as possible, so that researchers are not duly disadvantaged when moving from one employer to another.</p>	<p>Access to professional development and accreditation in academic practice available to all research staff with teaching responsibilities (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice,(PCAP).</p>	<p>LEAP directorate</p>	<p>Monitor take up and communication of opportunities</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p>
	<p>Access to professional accreditation as Professional Manager in Higher Education(PMHE) at Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma level.</p>	<p>SD</p>	<p>Monitor take up and communication of opportunities</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p>
<p>13. Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation and management committees.</p>	<p>Research staff are fully integrated members of their school or area</p> <p>Channels of communication for the University's Research Staff Association to feed into the new Concordats steering group.</p>	<p>HoD</p> <p>SD</p>		<p>Dec 2015</p> <p>August 2014</p>
<p>14. Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.</p>	<p>Review mentorship provision and process for appointing mentors</p>		<p>Gain commitment of UREC to provision of mentorship across researchers at the University</p>	<p>Annual review by UREC in October</p>

	Faculties to have delegated responsibility for establishing mentorship schemes where appropriate with the help of SD as part of Academic Investment Initiative	Associate Deans/ Concordats Steering group/ SD	Standing item for Concordats steering group	July annually
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Principle 5: RESEARCHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning.				
Sub principle	Action	Lead Responsibility	Departmental Actions	Timescale
1. Researchers are employed to advance knowledge and should exercise and develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought throughout their careers.	<p>To continue to ensure that researchers are made aware of research ethics during the induction process, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research offers guidance and checklists to promote good practice and prevent misconduct ○ The University's Policy on Research Misconduct has been revised by UREC and is awaiting approval from the Senate Executive Board ○ The University's Code of Practice on Scientific Misconduct is available from the Research Funding Office <p>This information is included in the Online Induction Toolkit for managers of researchers.</p>	<p>UREC Secretary/RFO</p> <p>Concordats Steering Group</p>	Ensure easy access to materials available to researchers and PIs on the University portal	Dec 2014
2. Researchers should develop their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge where appropriate and facilitate its use in policy making and the commercialisation of research for the benefit of their employing	The Knowledge Exchange provides seminars to promote engagement with development opportunities for enterprise and public engagement	Knowledge Exchange/ SD/ Concordats Steering Group	To promote available opportunities in these areas – targeted communication with academic staff across the	Dec 2014

organisation, as well as the wider society and economy as a whole			University in support of All	
3. Researchers should recognise their responsibility to conduct and disseminate research results in an honest and ethical manner and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge	Concordats Steering Group to steer support for all researchers to maintain research integrity.	UREC/SDU	UREC to agree terms of reference for the steering group	Dec 2014
5. Researchers should recognise that the primary responsibility for managing and pursuing their career is theirs. Accordingly, they should identify training needs and actively seek out opportunities for learning and development in order to further that career and take personal responsibility for their choices. Research managers and employers also have a responsibility to provide honest advice and appropriate structures, and to equip researchers with the tools to manage their own careers. Research managers should encourage research staff under their supervision to attend appropriate training and career development courses and events.	Researcher to prepare annual research report and Professional Development Plan for appraisal and All discussions.	Researcher	PI to review during appraisal and as part of conversations held under All	HR to review take up of All in June and Dec annually. Target : 100% engagement.
	Researchers encouraged to use Vitae RDF to record and report development plans and activity	Associate Deans for Research		Annual review

Principle 6: DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers				
Sub principle	Action	Lead Responsibility	Departmental Actions	Timescale
1. The UK legislative framework outlaws discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, race or religion. It also requires public bodies to take positive steps to promote equality, based on evidence and priorities, and to develop specific schemes and action plans related to gender, race and disability to address specific issues of underrepresentation or lack of progression.	Provide development support for PIs/managers of researchers on the principles of the Concordats to ensure compliance and engagement.	SD/HoD	Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise to be responsible for ensuring that HoDs and PIs are aware of the Concordats and receive guidance on implementation of action plans	Reports to UREC 3 times annually: Oct., Feb., June.
4. Employers should ensure that the working conditions for researchers provide the flexibility necessary for successful research performance in line with legal requirements. Employers should recognise that for parents and others who have taken career breaks, including parental leave, have worked part-time, or have taken atypical routes into research, the “early career” period may be prolonged, and this may be a time where the risk of attrition from the research path is most acute. Working conditions should allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career.	Athena Swan application stimulating reflection on effectiveness of policies and practice in maintaining supportive working practices for researchers with caring responsibilities to work flexibly	HoD/PI	All policies available on the portal. Athena Swan steering group and Concordats Steering Group to be mindful of overlapping objectives to ensure all are met and to capitalise on shared activity.	Dec 2015
8. Account should also be taken of the personal circumstances of groups of researchers. Examples would include researchers who have responsibility for young children or adult dependants, researchers for whom English is not a first language, older or younger researchers, or researchers with disabilities and long-term	Researchers and managers of researchers to be made aware of appropriate policies. See 6.1	PI/HoD/HR/SD	Monitor through PIRLS and CROS surveys	Feb 2015

health issues. Employers and funders should change policies or practices that directly or indirectly disadvantage such groups				
10. Employers should also consider participation in schemes such as the Athena SWAN Charter, the Juno Project and other initiatives aimed at promoting diversity in research careers.	Application for University Athena SWAN bronze award made.	UREC	Appropriate Departments to initiate activities as stipulated by UREC for specific departments to be awarded Athena SWAN bronze award	From April 2014 Target: 100% of STEM depts to apply for Bronze Award by Dec 2015
	Disseminate good practice to other Departments	Depts/UREC/SD Athena steering/working group	Minerva scheme to be introduced by SD to facilitate women's development in Science	April 2014

Principle 7: MONITORING AND EVALUATION				
The sector and stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.				
Sub principle	Action	Lead Responsibility	Departmental Actions	Timescale
1. The implementation of the Concordat's principles will lead to greater integration of researchers into the mainstream management and career development structures of their employing organisations. The aim of this section is to promote implementation through a collective commitment to reviewing its progress.	Revised action plan is endorsed by the University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC) and responsibility for implementation to be delegated to Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise as part of the Concordats Steering Group.	SDU/UREC (Deputy Deans for Research)	Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise to establish implementation plans for their areas and monitor progress as part of the Concordats Steering Group.	Monitoring to UREC three times annually as standing item on agenda.
2. The signatories agree: a. to constitute a steering group under an independent chair to oversee the implementation and review of the Concordat with appropriate representation of the funders and sector bodies including the Professional Institutions. This group will inform the UK Research Base Funders' Forum of progress. b. to procure an independent benchmarking study to assess the state of the sector at the launch of this Concordat. c. to contribute an appropriate share of the costs of supporting implementation and review, including the benchmarking report. d. to draw up an implementation plan for the Concordat, to ensure a coherent and sustained approach by organisations operating in the sector and the appropriate use of survey and monitoring tools such as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS). e. to undertake and publish a major review	As above	SD/SDU		
	Adapt the monitoring and review mechanisms to reflect the new organisational structure and institutional initiatives. The Institution will continue to create and develop an evidence base by undertaking CROS and PIRLS surveys and use the outcome to inform future development and support mechanisms.	SD/SDU	Monitor through CROS and PIRLS surveys in 2015	Dec 2015

<p>of the implementation of the Concordat after three years reporting to the signatories and taking account of progress against the benchmark report and the views of researchers and employers (both outside and within the HE sector).</p>				
<p>4. The signatories recognise the value of innovation in practices and of sharing practice between institutions and aim to promote these throughout the implementation and review process. The funding signatories will consider aligning their support for transferable and career development skills. It is expected that Vitae, the national programme dedicated to realising the potential of researchers, funded by the Research Councils, will play a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the sector to implement aspects of the Concordat, as well as establishing strategic partnerships between funders.</p>	<p>Continue to engage with other stakeholders via Vitae national events and through membership of the local area Vitae Hub steering group.</p>	<p>SD/SDU/ Graduate School</p>	<p>Be active members of the Vitae Hub and national community</p>	<p>Ensure membership of Vitae and participate in Vitae area Hub and national events. Target: membership taken out and participation monitored.</p>
<p>5. Under public sector equality schemes, employers are required to monitor equality and diversity indicators for their researchers. This section focuses on the co-ordination and enhancement of existing information collection and not on the creation of additional data. There is a strong presumption that in implementing the Concordat, significant emphasis will be placed on the use of existing data and information sources and on the sharing of good practice between institutions and to provide evidence of its impact.</p>	<p>Application for the Athena Swan awards across departments using data to monitor efficacy of concordat implementation</p>	<p>UREC</p>	<p>Departments to initiate activities as stipulated by UREC for specific departments to be awarded Athena SWAN bronze award</p> <p>SD and HR to produce a guidance pack for HoD looking to pursue Athena Swan accreditation.</p> <p>HR to support HoD with provision of relevant policies and data</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p>