HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD

Updated 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, which covers the period for 2014-15, has been updated to include evidence used to review progress. The review process followed is described in the

Abbreviations:

ADR	Associate Dean for Research
ADE	Associate Dean for Engagement
AII	Academic Investment Initiative
CROS15	Careers in Research Online Survey 2015
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit
FEC	Full economic cost
FG	Focus Group (14/12/15)
FTC	Fixed term contract
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
LEAP	Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice Directorate
PI	Principal Investigator
PIRLS15	Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey 2015
RC	Research Councils
RDF	Vitae Researcher Development Framework
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RFO	Research Funding Office
RIS	Research Information System
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	Departmental Actions	Timescale	Progress (1/12/16)
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.	Review the practice of appointing "named researchers" to ensure good practice.	HR		Dec 2015	Anecdotal evidence from FG suggests that providing clear and consistent advice remains challenging
	Disseminate guidance provided by Research Councils (RC) and assess applicability to other sponsors of research activity.	Research Funding Office	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		Head of RFO confident that guidance from RC is shared appropriately. Future use of new RIS will ensure greater consistency. CROS15: open competition is increasing; all vacancies have information about skills required.

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	PIRLS15: two thirds confident when recruiting, 35% would like further training. Feedback offered to all as standard. Use of a RDF-derived checklist to be developed.

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	Departmental Actions	Timescale	Progress
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. Terms of reference for Steering group to be agreed	July 2014	Completed at UREC meeting summer 2014
	Accountability for implementation at Faculty level to be vested in Associate Deans for Research and Enterprise	EMG/UREC	A descriptor to be prepared for role of ADRs outlining new accountabilities.	June 2014	Completed
	Seminars on sharing good practice in managing researchers to be held annually.	HR/SD/SDU ADRs	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	SD led event held on 25/6/15 designed by ADR.
	Process introduced to enable researchers to apply for progression as part of the annual academic promotion round.	HR		May 2014.	Process in place. Two researchers promoted using this route since 2014. CROS15: Fewer researchers feel integrated into their department's or Hull's research community than in 2013; 64%:81%

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	Departmental Actions	Timescale	Progress
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 and Employability Service.	SD/Careers Service		Jan Feb 2015	On going collaboration e.g. Vitae Advancing in Academia used. dual facilitation (17/7/15)
		HR/SD	Provision for researchers is reviewed annually at SD planning meeting in consultation with Associate Deans, PIs and RFO.	Jan & Aug 2015	4 additional Vitae courses run in 14/15
			SD to work with Careers Service to establish a process for disseminating careers information to researchers.	Aug 2014	CROS15: increase in the no. of days used for training. 73% of the sample up to 5 days; 9% using none.

PIRLS15: 93% PIs believe that developing researchers important to be successful, but 40% did not feel recognised for it.

Promoted at events |
| | Liaise with Careers Service over promotion of opportunities for career talks etc to research staff. | | | | |

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	Number of licences increased to 150. Vehicle for assessment in 2 Grad School programmes
	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 AII.	HR/SD	SD to promote Vitae RDF to HR colleagues at HR departmental meetings	June 2014	HR & SD collaborate to use RDF to provide L&D underpinning for job profiles
		SDU/SD	Form integrated into the new Research Information System To feed into the Converis Review.	Dec 2014	Discontinued as Converis is being replaced by new RIS
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	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.	Researchers with mentors and PIs.	PIs and mentors to facilitate discussion on exploring wider development opportunities through appraisal and career planning reviews as part of AII.	Dec 2015	CROS15 70% of researchers feel encouraged to engage in development - 21% used the RDF .
			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.	CROS 2015 data to inform review. Target response rate of 60%.	CROS 15 response rate: 38% CROS15: 63% had a recorded development plan.

training of researchers is a significant contribution to research output and they encourage employers and mentors to adopt these practices.					
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.	Access to professional development and accreditation in academic practice available to all research staff with teaching responsibilities (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, (PCAP)).	LEAP directorate	Monitor take up and communication of opportunities	Dec 2015	Teaching hours requirement for PCAP curtails researcher involvement
	Access to professional accreditation as Professional Manager in Higher Education (PMHE) at Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma level.	SD	Monitor take up and communication of opportunities	Dec 2015	No take up during this time period
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.	Research staff are fully integrated members of their school or area	HoD		Dec 2015	CROS15: Fewer feel integrated into Dept's research community; 64%:81% Awareness of RSA to CSG Jan 15 meeting.
	Channels of communication for the University's Research Staff Association to feed into the new Concordats steering group.	SD		August 2014	
14. Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.	Review mentorship provision and process for appointing mentors		Gain commitment of UREC to provision of mentorship across researchers at the University	Annual review by UREC in October	CSG-led review of mentoring suggests variety of practice. CROS15: 22% of researchers mentored and 49% would like to be.
	Faculties to have delegated responsibility for establishing mentorship schemes where appropriate with the help of SD as part of Academic Investment Initiative	ADR/ CSG/ SD	Standing item for Concordats steering group with action plan in place	July annually	

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	Departmental Actions	Timescale	Progress
1. Researchers are employed to advance knowledge and should exercise and develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought throughout their careers.	To continue to ensure that researchers are made aware of research ethics during the induction process, including; o The UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research offers guidance and checklists to promote good practice and prevent misconduct o The University's Policy on Research Misconduct has been revised by UREC and is awaiting approval from the Senate Executive Board o The University's Code of Practice on Scientific Misconduct is available from the Research Funding Office This information is included in the Online Induction Toolkit for managers of researchers.	UREC Secretary/RFO Concordats Steering Group	Ensure easy access to materials available to researchers and PIs on the University portal	Dec 2014	CSG audit of current practice and governance of research integrity leading to revised University policy and good practice advice. CROS15: suggests scope to increase awareness of the Concordat to support Research Integrity (25% aware)
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 organisation, as well as the wider society and economy as a whole	The Knowledge Exchange provides seminars to promote engagement with development opportunities for enterprise and public engagement	Knowledge Exchange/ SD/ CSG	To promote available opportunities in these areas – targeted communication with academic staff across the University in support of AII	Dec 2014	Vitae 'Engaging Researcher Jan 2015. CROS15: 30% involved in KE and 37% would like to. 53% feel activity valued. External collaboration viewed as important by 89% of PIRLs.

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	ToR available Sept 2015 CSG has driven policy and advice for good practice in research through UREC.
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 AII discussions.	Researcher	PI to review during appraisal and as part of conversations held under AII	HR to review take up of AII in June and Dec annually Target: 100% engagement.	CROS15 49% of researchers appraised. Local and national evidence suggest researchers on FTCs less likely to be appraised. Anecdotal evidence from FG suggests possible lack of clarity as to whether AII applied to researchers.
	Researchers encouraged to use Vitae RDF to record and report development plans and activity	ADRs		Annual review	CROS15: 21% used RDF to help them plan and record their development.

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	Departmental Actions	Timescale	Progress
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.	To date ADRs have reported to CSG on specific issues e.g. research integrity and mentoring
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	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	University achieved Bronze Award autumn 2015. Departmental applications on going.

should allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career.					
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 health issues. Employers and funders should change policies or practices that directly or indirectly disadvantage such groups	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	CROS15: female researchers less confident about fair treatment. Aver 44%:70% PIRL15 area of difference career progression, reward and participation in decision-making: Aver 44% to 67%
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	Work on applications on going; 3 submitted Nov 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	Minerva group launched including female researchers from all subject areas.

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	Departmental Actions	Timescale	Progress
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.	Reporting on specific issues (integrity) and informing discussion on future directions (sharing good practice on managing researchers).
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	As above Adapt the monitoring and review mechanisms to reflect the new organisational structure and institutional initiatives.	SD/SDU			Part of governance remit of UREC and CSG
	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	Completed and results disseminated to CSG and UREC Sept 2015. Response rates: CROS15 37% PIRLS15: 17%

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 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).					
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	Continue to engage with other stakeholders via Vitae national events and through membership of the local area Vitae Hub steering group.	SD/SDU/ Graduate School	Be active members of the Vitae Hub and national community	Ensure member ship of Vitae and participa te in Vitae area Hub and national events. Target: member ship taken out and	University is a member of Vitae and contact with regional and national maintained. Membership of new regional group instigated (Network of Expert Researchers – NERDS)

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.				participation monitored.	
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.	Application for the Athena Swan awards across departments using data to monitor efficacy of concordat implementation	UREC	Departments to initiate activities as stipulated by UREC for specific departments to be awarded Athena SWAN bronze award SD and HR to produce a guidance pack for HoD looking to pursue Athena Swan accreditation. HR to support HoD with provision of relevant policies and data	Dec 2015	Co-ordination between CSG and ASSG maintained through through representation and PVC direction Data from CROS and PIRLS used to inform AS application in 2015 for University award.