

Strategy for implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers HR Excellence in Research Award

Gap Analysis

August 2020

The University's revised Strategy for implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was approved by Academic Board on 4th March 2020 (minute no. 19.51.2), following the publication of the new Researcher Development Concordat in September 2019 and a subsequent period of consultation.

1 Strategic Context

The University's Strategy is informed by and is consistent with the University's corporate Vision and Strategy to 2025, which includes as priorities, 'Develop research capacity and capability of the university by developing its staff', and 'Grow the post-graduate research community'. Glyndwr University commits to acting in accordance with the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat:

1. Environment and Culture: Excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture
2. Employment: Researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions
3. Professional and career development: Professional and career development are integral to enabling researchers to develop their full potential

The University's Strategy is concerned with putting these principles into practice. It has a focus on staff whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who are employed specifically for this purpose, in line with the focus of the Concordat itself (generally, Post-Doctoral Research Assistants). The University also extends the provisions of the Strategy to Graduate Teaching Assistants. GTAs are not engaged in research in that role; their principal relationship with the University is that of postgraduate research student. However, their employment as a GTA indicates that they are at an early stage in a potential academic career path and so it is felt appropriate to apply this Strategy to GTAs. For both PDRAs and GTAs, the University's overall aim is to ensure that they are supported in taking steps to realise their own career ambitions.

The focus on staff whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and GTAs marks a departure from previous iterations of the Strategy, which had previously been concerned with all academic and academic related staff. The University is committed to ensuring effective support for the welfare and professional and career development of academic staff generally, and training and development related to research-related skills and ambitions including PGR supervision is routinely included in annual programmes. The annual PDR process now includes an expectation that staff produce and/or update a Personal Research Plan which also provides opportunities to reflect on, discuss and take forward training and development issues. Consideration is being given to how research ambitions of

other University staff may also be supported. Regarding PGR students, the University's provision is consistent with the RCUK Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training. The consultation undertaken through the Research Committee and within academic departments has confirmed that it is appropriate to focus this strategy on staff at very early stages of academic career paths.

In implementing the Research Development Concordat, the University's key strategic aims are aligned with the three principles of the Concordat:

1. **Environment and culture:** continue to build and enrich the research environment across all areas in the University through the Associate Deans (Research) and the Research Strand Leads, encouraging research groups to form and collaborate.
2. **Employment:** ensure a focus on recognition, explicitly including PDRAs and GTAs in the University's processes for self-reflection, for the availability of critical friends, and for review of research ambitions and barriers.
3. **Professional and career development:** ensure that PDRAs and GTAs are included in all relevant opportunities to take part in events and training & development activities, supporting the acquisition of transferable skills and valuable experiences.

The University's compliance with the Concordat underpins its HR Excellence in Research Award accreditation. Institutions are provided with a Researcher Development Concordat Action Plan template which acts too as an HREiR template. This Gap Analysis provides an assessment of the University's current position in relation to each of the Obligations (for institutions; managers; researchers) in the template, and forms the basis for the Action Plan for the academic year 2020-2021.

Environment and Culture

Institutions must:		
ECI1	Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat	There is information on the staff intranet, and reference is made to the Concordat in induction, but there is no systematic approach to complying with this obligation. Not all new staff attend induction. GTAs are introduced to the Concordat in their PGR induction, which takes place in October and February each year. ACTION REQUIRED
ECI2	Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers	Policies and practices relevant to researchers are wide-ranging and include those with a clear focus on research activity (e.g. Regulations on Research Practice; Process for applying for a Research Development Award) and those which apply to all staff (e.g. relating to employment, or equality, diversity and inclusion). The University provides significant support to all staff in relation to their awareness and understanding. All staff (including new staff during their probationary period) are expected to attend an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at WGU session; attendance is monitored by the HR Team and recorded on a CPD tracker. A report is provided to the University's HR Committee which details CPD activity undertaken and planned activity. This is now being developed as an online resource. Refresher training will be scheduled to take place on a 3-yearly basis, unless legislation

		<p>around E&D changes. A training resource is currently in development, aimed at all staff who write and approve policies and practices, to ensure that they can consider EDI and negative impacts on protected individuals/groups, to ensure effective completion of the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment. We also now offer a tailored LGBT+ Inclusive session, which includes an awareness of gender identity, terminology, work is also currently being undertaken to enable a more blended approach to delivery.</p> <p>All EDI related development sessions and research related development includes an understanding of legislation, University Policy with reference to employment, progression, and promotion, regulations on research practice; assessment for supervisory status, bidding for external funding, and many other areas,</p> <p>Any new or reviewed policies/practices are shared with staff via the University's staff newsletter "Campus Talk", with consultation taking place for key policies/strategies which will involve staff, Union Officials and students (dependent on the policy type).</p> <p>ACTION REQUIRED</p>
ECI3	<p>Promote good mental health and wellbeing through, for example, the effective management of workloads and people, and effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues</p>	<p>The University has undertaken a significant amount of work to ensure our staff's wellbeing is supported, this includes the development of the following: People Strategy; Wellbeing Strategy; Managing Stress and Promoting; Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy and Guidelines; Management of Sickness Absence Policy; Flexible Working Policy; Working from Home Policy; Returning to Work Support Plan. The University also provides external support mechanisms (which include, but are not limited to the Education Support Helpline, access to Occupational Therapy, Counselling and Access to Work Support).</p> <p>Workloads are managed via the WAMs (Work Allocation Model) and PDR (Personal Development Review) process, with the system providing evidence of open discussion and that allocation of work/objectives is delivered in a fair and robust manner.</p> <p>We have a number of staff who are trained as Mental Health First Aiders, who are available to support staff. The University has recently been awarded funding to support safeguarding and wellbeing, which will be used to train and support our staff in these areas. Plans are in place to enable 48 members of staff to become Mental Health First Aiders, with the first cohort of 16 staff commencing their training in September 2020.</p> <p>The HR Team, working in collaboration with the Student Advice and Guidance Manager have recently developed a Wellbeing Staff Development programme, which will focus on providing staff with the confidence and capacity to support students should they present with mental health and wellbeing issues.</p>

		<p>The University has signed the "Time to Change" pledge, which means that as a University we are working towards an approved action plan to raise awareness and reduce the stigma attached to Mental Health within the workplace. We also have 11 trained "Time to Change Champions" who work voluntarily to support staff who may need to talk through their problems; signposting them to further support should it be required.</p> <p>The University is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within its practices and activities and aims, supported by its EDI Policy for Staff and Students. The University has established an Equality & Diversity Action Group who have recently developed the University Strategic Equality Objectives for the period 2020-2024, which link to our values and focus our staff, student and community journey. In addition to the E&D Action Group, staff have also established an LGBT+ Staff Network, Disability Group and a Religion & Belief Forum. The E&D Action Group are currently setting up a Race Equality Group.</p> <p>The University is a Stonewall Diversity Champion, have risen 235 places within the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in the last 2 years. We are also a Rare Aware Pledged Employer, with support mechanisms in place to support staff who have (or their family members have) a rare disease. The University is a Disability Confident L2 Employer.</p> <p>We are working towards White Ribbon Accreditation, working through an action plan enabling us to support women who experience violence and domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Equality & Diversity Action Group are currently working towards the Race Equality Charter and planning to work towards Athena Swan accreditation.</p> <p>The University values inclusivity and wants to ensure that all staff and students are treated with dignity and respect, supported by our Dignity at Work Policy and procedure, ensuring that staff members are protected from bullying and harassment.</p> <p>NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021</p>
ECI4	Ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and including, wellbeing and mental health	<p>See ECI2. There is no specific systematic approach to ensuring the managers of RAs and GTAs undertake the training.</p> <p>ACTION REQUIRED.</p>
ECI5	Ensure that researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity	<p>All individuals undertaking research are instructed to become familiar with the University's Code of Conduct on Research Practice (which is linked to the Regulations in Research Practice, and training on the Research Ethics approval process is provided as a generic resource (face-to-face and online) and for specific cohorts of students. The Research Committee considers any reports of research misconduct as a standing item, and the University publishes an annual</p>

		report on Research Integrity. However, there is no systematic approach to ensuring that RAs and GTAs and their managers have completed the training. ACTION REQUIRED
ECI6	Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and use the outcomes to improve institutional practices	The University regularly reviews and reports on aspects of the research environment and culture for a number of purposes (including monitoring against its Vision and Strategy, for reporting to its Research Degree Awarding Body, and to support its preparation of an application for RDAP), including seeking feedback from researchers. However there tends to be a poor response rate to surveys, and there is no accepted definition of 'quality' with regard to the research environment and culture. ACTION REQUIRED
Funders must:		
ECF1	Including requirements which promote equitable, inclusive and positive research cultures and environments in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies	n/a
ECF2	Consider how funding opportunities and policies can facilitate different patterns and ways of working, and promote the wellbeing and mental health of researchers	n/a
ECF3	Ensure that funding call requirements and selection processes offer equality of opportunity between different groups of researchers, recognise personal contexts, and promote positive research cultures and working conditions	n/a
Managers of researchers must:		
ECM1	Undertake relevant training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion, and put this into practice in their work	See ECI4 ACTION REQUIRED
ECM2	Ensure that they and their researchers act in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and professional conduct	See EC15 ACTION REQUIRED
ECM3	Promote a healthy working environment that supports researchers' wellbeing and mental health, including reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and poor research integrity	See ECI3 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
ECM4	Consider fully, in accordance with statutory rights and institutional policies, flexible working requests	The University provides a range of formal flexible working options that enable staff to balance the needs of their work and home life effectively and which can be formally requested via the flexible working process, Flexible Working

	and other appropriate arrangements to support researchers	Policy & Procedure. All managers are informed about the Flexible Working Policy. This policy applies equally to all employed members of staff including RAs and GTAs NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
ECM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution	The University provides formal and informal opportunities to contribute to strategy and policy development open to all staff, but there is no systematic approach to ensuring that managers of researchers have taken up such opportunities. ACTION REQUIRED
Researchers must:		
ECR1	Actively contribute to the development and maintenance of a supportive, fair and inclusive research culture and be a supportive colleague, particularly to newer researchers and students	All GTAs and RAs are encouraged to attend Open House for Research events and Research Seminars to present their own research and support colleagues. However, there is no systematic approach to ensuring that they do take part. ACTION REQUIRED
ECR2	Ensure they act in accordance with employer and funder policies related to research integrity, and equality, diversity and inclusion	See EC15 ACTION REQUIRED
ECR3	Take positive action towards maintaining their wellbeing and mental health	The University has undertaken a significant amount of work to ensure our staff's wellbeing is supported. PDR Guidance provided to managers to encourage discussion within PDR around work/life balance and general wellbeing of staff. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
ECR4	Use available mechanisms to report staff who fail to meet the expected standards of behaviour, particularly in relation to discrimination, harassment, bullying, and research misconduct	The University has a number of policies relating to performance and misconduct which include: Disciplinary Policy/Procedure; Capability Policy; People Strategy; Dignity at Work Policy/Procedure. Managers and staff would refer to the guidance and follow the relevant process set out within each policy and have access to a dedicated HR Business Partner who will offer advice and support. The number of episodes is recorded and monitored by the HR Team, with details (often suppressed due to low number) included within the annual E&D Report, which is reported to the Board of Governors, Vice-Chancellors Board and HR Committee. The report is published publicly. The University has a number of staff who act in voluntary capacity as Dignity at Work Advisors, who support and signpost staff who are experiencing bullying and harassment. The group report the number of cases and the HR Team report on this annually. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
ECR5	Consider opportunities to contribute to policy development aimed at creating a more positive research environment and culture within their institution	See ECM5 ACTION REQUIRED

Employment

Institutions must:		
E11	Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices	The University utilises an online platform to manage the recruitment process. All applications are anonymised, ensuring unbiased, fair and transparent selection and interview processes are in place. The data is reviewed and analysed to identify trends in selection, progression to

		<p>enable the HR Team to identify any negative trends in relation to protected characteristics and implement measures to address and promote opportunity for all. The data is reported annually within the E&D Annual Report, which is presented to the Board of Governors, Vice-Chancellor's Board and HR Committee and is publicly published.</p> <p>NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021</p>
E12	Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position	<p>See E12</p> <p>ACTION REQUIRED</p>
E13	Provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers' contributions and the diversity of personal circumstances	<p>The PDR process on an annual basis enables discussion to take place in relation to career aspiration, which includes a discussion in relation to individual personal circumstances, where reasonable adjustments may be required to support the staff member. This can include discussion of the criteria for applying for a Readership and/or Professorship, and for RAs and GTAs, progression into a mainstream academic role. The University also promotes all leadership development opportunities to all staff, providing the opportunity for all staff to apply/undertake development to support their current/potential leadership or managerial skills. The University deliver an annual Leadership Programme, open to all staff and in recent years have commenced offering the opportunity for female staff to undertake the Aurora Programme (a programme aimed at female staff to support their progression within HE). Internal vacancies are always advertised both through the University intranet and through all staff email. Filling these vacancies are based on merit. All staff researcher training is open to GTAs and RAs .</p> <p>All academic staff are encouraged to undertake PGCert (leading to HEA Fellowship). The course is provided to them free of charge and line managers to give them the necessary time to engage. GTAs and RAs should also receive the same opportunity.</p> <p>ACTION REQUIRED</p>
E14	Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent	<p>Arranged and delivered as required. All managers are expected to access the training outlined above in EC12.</p> <p>NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021</p>
E15	Ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation	<p>The University has well-established processes in place for annual appraisal (Professional Development Review) and workload allocation; the PDR process on an annual basis enables discussion to take place in relation to career aspiration.</p> <p>NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021</p>
E16	Seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress	<p>All internal vacancies are open to staff currently employed by the University.</p> <p>Staff who are employed on fixed term contracts are eligible to apply for redeployment opportunities. All staff on a fixed contract meet with a member of the HR team and their line manager ahead of the end of their contract to discuss</p>

		redeployment opportunities and, where appropriate, extensions to contract. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
EI7	Consider researchers and their managers as key stakeholders within the institution and provide them with formal opportunities to engage with relevant organisational policy and decision-making	See ECM5 ACTION REQUIRED
Funders must:		
EF1	Include requirements which support the improvement of working conditions for researchers, in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies	N/A
EF2	Review the impact of relevant funding call requirements on researchers' employment, particularly in relation to career progression and lack of job security	N/A
EF3	Support institutions to develop policies and frameworks to promote sustainable employment arrangements and enhance job security, and provide opportunities for career progression	N/A
EF4	Consider the balance of their relevant funding streams in providing access to research funding and its impact at all career levels	N/A
Managers of researchers must:		
EM1	Undertake relevant training and development opportunities so that they can manage researchers effectively and fulfil their duty of care	See EI4 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
EM2	Familiarise themselves, and work in accordance with, relevant employment legislation and codes of practice, institutional policies, and the terms and conditions of grant funding	See ECi2 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
EM3	Commit to, and evidence, the inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment, promotion and reward of researchers	This is evidenced via the PDR process. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
EM4	Actively engage in regular constructive performance management with their researchers	All RAs and GTAs have an annual PDR in which their performance is discussed. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
EM5	Engage with opportunities to contribute to relevant policy development within their institution	See ECM5 ACTION REQUIRED
Researchers must:		
ER1	Ensure that they work in accordance with, institutional policies,	See ECi2 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021

	procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder	
ER2	Understand their reporting obligations and responsibilities	See ECI2 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
ER3	Positively engage with performance management discussions and reviews with their managers	See EM4 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
ER4	Recognise and act on their role as key stakeholders within their institution and the wider academic community	See ECR1 ACTION REQUIRED See ECM5 ACTION REQUIRED

Professional and Career Development

Institutions must:		
PCDI1	Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors	Some structured support through researcher development events. This sits with line manager. The WAM provides hours for CPD. The PDR process provides a section for goals for professional development. However, there is no systematic approach to ensuring that researchers have a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year. ACTION REQUIRED
PCDI2	Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers	All line managers receive training in undertaking PRPs. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCDI3	Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers	Support is available from Career Centre staff. Also staff may approach a senior member of staff who is not their line manager, for example an Associate Dean (Research) in either Faculty. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCDI4	Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	Internal leadership training programme is open to all Concordat beneficiaries. The programme is run by an outside organisation. The University is recruiting a Research Impact Officer whose role includes supporting staff in developing their public research identities. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCDI5	Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this	See E13 ACTION REQUIRED
PCDI6	Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews	This is recorded by HR and reported annually to the HR Committee. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
Funders must:		
PCDF 1	Incorporate specific professional development requirements in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and	N/A

	policies. This should include researchers' engagement in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata per year, and evidence of effective career development planning	
PCDF 2	Embed the Concordat Principles and researcher development into research assessment strategies and processes	N/A
PCDF 3	Acknowledge that a large proportion of the researchers they fund will move on to careers beyond academia, and consider how they can encourage and support this within their remit	N/A
Managers of researchers must:		
PCD M1	Engage in regular career development discussions with their researchers, including holding a career development review at least annually	See E13 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCD M2	Support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and secondments	RAs and GTAs have access to the University's support mechanisms on the same basis as all staff. These do include mentoring (when available), access to careers advice, training and secondments. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCD M3	Allocate a minimum of 10 days pro rata, per year, for their researchers to engage with professional development, supporting researchers to balance the delivery of their research and their own professional development	See PCDI1 ACTION REQUIRED
PCD M4	Identify opportunities, and allow time (in addition to the 10 days professional development allowance), for their researchers to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills, and provide appropriate credit and recognition for their endeavours	See PCDI4 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCD M5	Engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development	See E14 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
Researchers must:		
PCDR 1	Take ownership of their career, identifying opportunities to work towards career goals, including engaging in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year	See PCDI1 ACTION REQUIRED
PCDR 2	Explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different	See PCDM2 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021

	sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments	
PCDR 3	Maintain an up-to-date professional career development plan and build a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their experience, that can be used to support job applications	The University request that all academic staff complete a Personal Research Plan (PRP). This is reviewed during the PDR process. The PRP requires that a research mentor 'signs off' on the objectives and provides support to the individual completing the plan. NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCDR 4	Positively engage in career development reviews with their managers	See PCDM1 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCDR 5	Seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills	See PCDR3 and PCDI4 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021
PCDR 6	Consider opportunities to develop their awareness and experience of the wider research system through, for example, knowledge exchange, policy development, public engagement and commercialisation	See PCDR3 and PCDI4 NO IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED; REVIEW IN 2021