

STRES1617008 Annex 1

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Action Plan 2017-2019

[October 2017, updated May 2018]

PROGRESS REPORT OCTOBER 2019

This action plan supports the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Key issues arising from the gap analysis conducted in 2016 concerned ensuring effective research leadership, mentoring, induction for new staff, supporting staff in planning and recording personal and professional development, and encouraging external networking and collaboration.

Following review in August 2017, the key areas for development in 2017/18 and 2018/19 are to be:

Issue	Concordat Principle(s)	Action	Responsible	By When	Success Measures	Progress to October 2019
Periodic training of academic staff responsible for research assistants and graduate teaching assistants, to enhance their awareness of employment, career and personal development best practice	2, 4, 5	Put in place a regular programme of 3 to 4 training sessions each year; ensure that these are incorporated in Performance Development Review and Work Allocation Model frameworks to ensure recognition for relevant staff. Head of Research Services to prepare training checklist.	HR Business Partner Development and Diversity	Review and Refine: July 2018 Review and Refine: July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 training sessions held per annum Number of attendees, with % of relevant staff; with exception report if not 100% Follow-up feedback requests (immediate, and after 3 months), show increased confidence re. dealing with related employment issues 	<p>2017/18 session had identified that relevant staff confident in all areas covered by training checklist.</p> <p>Academic restructuring Spring 2018, 2 Faculties created – new action required, to identify which academic staff are now responsible for research assistants and graduate teaching assistants.</p> <p>October 2019: Interviews in 2019 identified that relevant staff were confident in all areas covered by training checklist; no training events required.</p>

<p>Ensure that support for researchers and research activity and the University's expectations of researchers are included in induction for new staff</p>	<p>1, 3, 5</p>	<p>Put in place a regular programme of 3 to 4 corporate induction sessions each year with 'responsibilities' and 'support' both included. Head of Research Services to prepare induction checklist.</p>	<p>HR Business Partner Development and Diversity</p>	<p>Review and Refine: July 2018 Review and Refine: July 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 induction sessions held per annum • Number of attendees, with % of relevant staff; with exception report if not 100% • Follow-up feedback request shows confidence re. a) expectations of researchers and b) support and resources available to researchers 	<p>Head of Research Services has delivered 'research' session with new academic staff at all inductions held (in April, June and September 2018), with 6 academic staff attending. October 2018: Awaiting feedback. Awaiting confirmation of % of new staff taking part.</p> <p>October 2019: During Academic Year 2018-2019, 17 new academic staff (59% of starters) attended a total of 3 induction events which included the 'research support and expectations' element. Staff receive a feedback questionnaire following attendance, with responses anonymised. Responses were received from 8 (47%) members of academic staff within this time frame, with 100% of them indicating that they feel more confident and informed in relation to research and the expectations upon researchers.</p>
<p>Put in place an action plan to work towards applying for Athena SWAN membership</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Review potential implementation plan and associated workloads.</p>	<p>Researcher Development Tutor</p>	<p>October 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and Draft Action Plan submitted to Research Committee 	<p>Review has confirmed that further progress unlikely to be feasible in short term in parallel with other developments; to be reviewed again in April 2019.</p> <p>October 2019: Decision not to progress in the short term confirmed.</p>

Review and evaluate effectiveness of Mentoring Scheme following pilot in 2017/18	3, 4	Set evaluation criteria and complete evaluation and report	Researcher Development Tutor	August 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Report – to include examples of achievements and benefits reported 	Review identified positive outcomes, detailed in a separate report to the Research Committee which includes a recommendation to continue in 2018/19, and recruit and train additional mentors to enable extending the scheme in 2019/20.
Extend Mentoring Scheme (if pilot successful)	3, 4	Train initial mentors as mentor trainers; recruit and train additional mentors; invite applications from prospective mentees	Researcher Development Tutor	July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 additional mentors trained 	<p>October 2019: Staffing changes have prevented the scheme being extended. Informal mentoring is continuing, but re-establishment of formal scheme will require appropriate resources to become available.</p>
Identify training and development requirements for Graduate Teaching Assistants	4	Consult with GTAs and relevant managers	Researcher Development Tutor	December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training requirements identified 	Researcher Development Tutor met with GTAs at two lunch meetings. No explicit training needs identified, but GTAs keen to continue meeting to exchange experiences, good practice, etc. See above.
Ensure relevant training and development for GTA staff is available and included in annual staff CPD & student programmes for delivery	4	Liaise with GTAs to undertake gap analysis and develop additional centrally provided content as required	Researcher Development Tutor	July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional content in place as a result of the interaction with GTAs 	<p>October 2019: 5 GTAs across the two Faculties. GTAs meet informally. No further specific training requirements indicated. GTAs invited to all Researcher Development events.</p>
Consult with researchers to gain feedback on implementation of Concordat	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Run annual staff and student online consultation surveys Liaise with GTAs and RAs in small groups	Head of Research Services	May 2018 & May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys: Reports to Research Committee in October each year 	PGR Student Survey: launched June 2018; closed date extended to achieve better response rate.

		Meet University Research Centre Heads regularly			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTAs and RAs: 3 meeting per annum • URC Heads: 4 meetings per annum • Identify and act on needs for change / new developments, to be incorporated in updated Actions Plans and endorsed by Research Committee 	<p>Report to Research Committee January 2019. Academic staff survey: delayed because of academic restructuring followed by technical issues re. survey tool. To be launched instead December 2018 (so as not to clash with main staff engagement survey) with Report to Research Committee January 2019.</p> <p>October 2019: GTAs – see above. RAs – one RA only in post in 2018/19, who is a member of Research Committee (Research Staff Rep). URC Heads – following restructuring creating two Faculties there are two Associate Deans for Research. The ADRs meet regularly and co-operate extensively to avoid duplication of effort re. researcher development amongst other objectives. Position of ‘Research Strand Leads have been created to act as champions within discrete subject areas; two away-days were held with Research Strand Leads in 2018/19. Personal Research Plans were introduced in 2018/19, with 61% return rate by October 2019. PRPs are mandatory for PGR</p>
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						supervisors. The PDR process includes reference to PRPs. PRPs include opportunities to comment on perceived barriers, requirements, etc.
Develop specific Action Plan to maximise effectiveness of the Vitae RDF as a tool for staff and students, including consideration of its working in parallel with Simitive software which charts student CPD engagement	3, 5	Examine implementation of Simitive software to establish nature and extent of its contribution to a useful recording and reporting framework for staff and students	Researcher Development Tutor	May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Research Committee, May 2019 	<p>2019 review outcome: Simitive project not progressed. When initial discussions and developmental objectives for the introduction of Simitive began, all students were registered under the University of Wales regulations. However, following the agreement with the University of Chester for them to become our new awarding body in September 2016, whilst PGR student CPD requirements were unaffected, the Annual Monitoring processes for students were complex in comparison to those of the University of Wales and it was not possible to easily align Simitive with the requirements of the University of Chester regulations.</p>
Encourage staff to prepare and implement Personal Research Plans (PRP)	4, 5	Include a PRP template in the annual Performance Development Review process	Head of Research Services	June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult staff on 2017/18 experience; refine In particular, investigate impact on 'Work Allocation Model' process 	<p>Questions included in academic staff survey; see above.</p> <p>October 2019: Personal Research Plans introduced in 2018/19; PDR process asks whether or not a PRP has been submitted. 2018/19</p>

				March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement refinements 	Staff survey reported to Research Committee May 2019; 63% of respondents reported that the preparation of a PRP had been helpful to them. By October 2019, 61% of academic staff had submitted a PRP; expectation going forward is that all academic staff prepare/update a PRP as a matter of routine. A current PRP is a prerequisite for PGR Supervisor status.
Assist staff in developing external networking and collaboration opportunities	3, 7	Target small grant support support to staff who have specific plans for new external research related collaborations	Head of Research Services	January 2018 May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 new collaborations Report to Research Committee on impact of grants 	<p>2017/18 Research Development Awards: 4 applications received; 3 supported, all achieving beneficial outcomes reported to Research Committee in a separate report. Scheme extended to 2018/19 (with addition of 'conference contribution' awards, for staff and for PGR students).</p> <p>October 2019: 4 proposals funded in 2018/19 with beneficial outcomes; all recipients giving talks at Open House events. Scheme continued in 2019/20; 4 awards confirmed to date.</p>