

**University of Birmingham**  
**Concordat Action Plan 2013 – 2015 Review**  
**August 2015**

This review of our Concordat Action Plan identifies progress over the last 2 years

Following a review of our original 2011-13 Action Plan we retained a focus on 4 key themes.

1. Recruitment & Performance Management
2. Access to information, support & development resources
3. Diversity & equality
4. Engagement & involvement of research staff (RS)

The key actions were:-

1. Continued roll out and development of the Performance and Development Review Scheme (PDR) to include all researchers in all Colleges.
2. Development of Learning & Development (L&D) Plans that identify the requirements of research staff across the University.
3. Through the University of Birmingham Year of Equality in Employment, implement key equality & diversity principles to fully embed the Equality Scheme. The focus will be on key equality in employment aspirations and will include issues of particular relevance to researchers (e.g. academic progression for female staff, supporting greater staff work / life balance, equality training for all recruitment panels). This wide ranging initiative will also encompass the achievement of Athena Swan recognition in more areas and involvement in the LFHE Aurora Project.
4. Review of staff survey outputs, specifically academic staff where possible, to provide evaluation data and inform further action in relation to research staff.
5. Investigate the feasibility of UoB participation in Careers in Research On-line Survey (CROS) 2015.

### **Summary Progress**

Progress against the majority of key actions has been good.

- Academic PDR has been successfully rolled out and ongoing support for reviewers is being provided. Specific participation data shows 67% research focused staff have engaged in a PDR review in the last 12 months.
- L&D plans have been created for all Colleges. The plans evolved as People & Organisation Development (POD) partners worked with College and School leaders and other local partners to identify specific development opportunities for research staff. While the interventions provided were well received, greater benefit could have been gained from more sharing of good practice and collaboration on common themes. Therefore, in conjunction with a broader evolution of organisational development support, it has been agreed to provide focused, specialist support across the University to promote, develop and monitor RS focused interventions in line with the revised University and HR strategies.

- The Equality Scheme has had a significant impact with progress being made against all the actions.
- Due to operational issues the internal survey was delayed and breakdown of specific research staff responses was not possible.
- Birmingham participated in CROS 2015. This has provided the majority of the evaluation data for our 4 year review

Below is a more detailed review of progress against specific actions.

## Detailed Progress Review

	Actions	Principles	Progress
	<b>Recruitment &amp; performance management</b>	1,2	
1.	Review of central induction events to ensure they are appropriate and useful to research staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Induction updated. Content revised to ensure relevance to all staff including researchers.</li> <li>• University Induction process and guidance revised &amp; re-launched. Specific on-line checklist developed for RS induction.</li> <li>• 384 staff attended</li> <li>• 13% improvement in reported usefulness of Institutional Induction between 2010 and 2015</li> <li>• 85% staff receiving local induction report it to be useful</li> <li>• 55% staff attending central induction report it to be useful</li> <li>• Concern that 33% of CROS respondents report not being offered central induction</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Roll out of PDR to all research staff.</b>	2,3,4	
	a. Local review of experience to identify additional bespoke support and development required to enhance the effectiveness of the system.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDR Training delivered – In addition to the 340 academic reviewers trained during the initial roll-out, 157 new / additional academic reviewers attended since Sept 2013</li> <li>• PDR training is now part of the open programme and is mandatory for new reviewers.</li> </ul>
	b. Standard training available on the PDR system and key performance management skills available via POD for new reviewers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local coaching and guidance provided by POD Consultants to support reviewers. E.g. Workshops on Objective setting and Handling challenging conversations; individual coaching for managers / leaders as appropriate</li> </ul>

	c. Use of central monitoring systems to record PDR activity.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>67% Post Docs engaged in PDR 2014 – 2015. 5% increase since 2010 (CROS data)</li> </ul>
3.	Review of research staff responses to internal staff survey questions related to staff reviews.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data not available for “R” category staff however involvement in CROS 2105 provided this data.</li> <li>84% report PDR being useful for reviewing progress compared with 71% in 2010</li> </ul>
	<b>Provide Research Staff with access to information, support and development resources</b>	3,4,5	
4.	Research Staff dedicated website portal to provide single point of access to all relevant information and support materials.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pages revised and communicated</li> <li>Usage data shows 360 hits for 2014 at an average of only 1 minute duration</li> <li>Anticipated resource was not sufficient to maintain and promote resources. Colleges have developed their own tailored web pages linking to central resources as appropriate.</li> <li>New project, managed by Research Support Services, launched July 2015, to consolidate on-line RS support information. This will provide more resource to page maintenance &amp; promotion.</li> </ul>
	a. Re-market revised pages		
	b. Quarterly review of page content by project group including research staff		
5.	Learning & Development plans created for all Colleges		
	a. Identify common development themes emerging from College L&D plans and adjust central provision as appropriate.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>L&amp;D plans have been developed for all colleges.</li> <li>College level provision delivered by a variety of local partners in particular research grant capture, 4* publications, fellowship applications, ethics, career planning, teaching as well as specialist technical training. Circa 700 participants have attended these programmes.</li> <li>CROS data indicates that there are a number of key areas where RS would like to undertake development but have not done so to date. These include both academic and general skills areas. The new University and HR strategies have created a new drive to address these areas through allocation of focused resource.</li> </ul>
	b. Working with local partners identify researcher development themes and support local delivery options		

6.	On-going promotion of Researcher Development Framework (RDF) via local researcher development events and PDR development activities		
	a. Explore the feasibility of using the RDF Planner for researchers at UoB		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot carried out March – June 2015. Only 8 participants showed interest of which only 3 maintained any regular usage. Decided not to continue with full implementation. However RDF card packs purchased to be used with local career and development planning activity.</li> </ul>
7.	Delivery & evaluation of centrally delivered researcher development activities		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on researcher development provision completed which identified the range of development provision for RS across the University, and also the numbers involved.</li> </ul>
	a. Complete pilot of Early Career Researcher Leadership Programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot programme complete. Following evaluation of the pilot and 2014 programmes a new cohort started June 2015. Funding has been secured for a 2016 cohort. Programme re-named “Developing as a Research Team Leader” (DRTL). It is now a firmly established component of the University’s academic leadership development portfolio.</li> </ul>
	b. Evaluate Early Career Researcher Leadership Development programme 2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DRTL 2014 evaluated. The participants reported consistent impact in the following areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Application of appropriate leadership styles in different situations</li> <li>○ Clearer specific communication of work priorities to team members</li> <li>○ Greater consideration of team and individual skills when allocating work</li> <li>○ Clearer focus on activity that will lead to a permanent position.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Colleges continue to support this programme through their nomination of specific candidates. Research leadership and the collaborative aspect of this programme clearly meet the revised strategic priorities of the University.</li> </ul>
	c. Deliver & evaluate “Impactful Researcher”		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme changed to Making Your Mark.</li> <li>• 2 sessions delivered by external facilitators in 2014 / 15. Evaluation revealed the following elements to be of most benefit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How to communicate your research and the importance of tailoring to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

			<p>the audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The opportunity to discuss issues and concepts in a highly interactive environment</li> <li>● Consistently scoring over 4/5 across all evaluation measures</li> <li>● We now have internal capacity to deliver this programme and have an agreement with University Planning Office to provide specific input on REF related impact.</li> <li>● Programme is scheduled to run during 2015/16 - 4 sessions.</li> </ul>
	d. Deliver & evaluate Grant & Journal Writing programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10 each of Grant and Journal Writing have been delivered during the last 2 years. Funding has been secured to continue this programme – 5 each scheduled 2015/16.</li> <li>● Evaluation revealed specific impacts on participants’ behaviours and attitudes including: - overcoming writer’s block, identifying and overcoming personal sticking points, improving clarity of papers, applying structures to current papers and grant applications, securing first grant, increasing efficiency in writing grants.</li> <li>● Consistently scoring over 4/5 across evaluation criteria.</li> </ul>
	e. Complete delivery and evaluate Emerging Leaders Pilot Programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This programme has very quickly gained credibility across the institution. Additional cohorts have been scheduled for 2015/16. The programme provides emerging senior leaders with the skills and knowledge to support and develop researchers and to create an appropriate research environment.</li> </ul>
	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	6	
8.	2013 / 14 has been designated the “UoB Year of Equality in Employment” and is sponsored by the Provost and Vice Principal Prof. Adam Tickell. In keeping with the principle of good HR practice for all staff, activities and principles will apply equally to research staff.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The year of Advancing Equality in Employment at UoB resulted in a co-ordinated strategy that embeds Equality &amp; Diversity (E&amp;D) at a cultural level, culminating in winning the HR Excellence National Award for Diversity and Inclusion in July 2015 and being placed in the top 100 of the Stonewall Index.</li> <li>● Athena Swan continues to be a significant measure of commitment to E&amp;D principles. The College of MDS achieved Athena Swan Silver award in November 2013. As of July 2015, all 4 Schools in the College of LES hold Bronze</li> </ul>
	a. 1 College submit for Athena Swan Silver Award		

	b. 5 Schools submit for Athena Swan Bronze Award		<p>Awards and 6 of 9 Schools in EPS hold awards including one Silver award.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools in CAL and CoSS have begun preparation for Athena applications following the expansion of the charter to non-STEMM subjects in May 2015.</li> <li>Training to date includes:- 80% of staff having undertaken on-line Equality &amp; Diversity training, updates sent monthly to senior leaders to encourage completion; equality and unconscious bias featuring significantly in recruitment and selection training; unconscious bias being offered as a stand-alone programme; 41 staff trained in the Aurora Leadership Programme with another cohort scheduled for Autumn 2015.</li> <li>Each School &amp; Budget Centre has appointed an Equality Champion resulting in 48 people across the UoB who have specific responsibility for driving the equality agenda.</li> <li>A central budget has been created to fund maternity pay. Schools retain the individual's budgeted salary to make appropriate cover arrangements. 81 members of staff were supported by the central maternity fund.</li> </ul>
	c. The University will participate in LFHE's Project Aurora		
	d. On-going use of on-line Equality & Diversity training for all staff		
	e. Non STEMM Colleges explore how Athena Swan principles can be applied in their environments		
	<b>Engagement &amp; Involvement of Research Staff</b>	7	
9.	The re-scheduled internal staff survey will provide important evaluation data and inform further action.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to operational reasons it was not possible to identify specific research staff responses from the internal survey.</li> <li>Birmingham participated in CROS 2015 with a 30% response rate. This was an increase of 9% over the 2010 survey.</li> <li>CROS outputs have informed the 2015-17 action plan</li> </ul>
	a. Research staff responses will be reviewed specifically wherever possible.		
	b. Action plans to address issues emerging from staff survey completed		
10.	Investigate the feasibility of UoB participation in CROS 2015. This is now a more realistic proposition following the re-scheduling of our		

	internal survey.		
11.	Review & evaluate local researcher support & development activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local RS Development data has been collected. Participation data is noted in section 5.</li> <li>• Evaluation of local development activity is limited to anecdotal information</li> <li>• PERCAT was launched in LES in collaboration with MDS. A local learning needs survey carried out to identify specific local requirements.</li> <li>• Funding has been secured to maintain dedicated administrative support for LES and EPS</li> <li>• CoSS ECARS re-launched</li> </ul>

## Glossary

CAL – College of Arts & Law

CoSS – College of Social Sciences

DRTL – Developing as a Research Team Leader; early career research leadership development programme delivered in collaboration with University of Nottingham

ECARS – Early Career and Research Staff support group. Researcher support & development group in CoSS.

EPS – College of Engineering & Physical Sciences

LES – College of Life & Environmental Sciences

MDS – College of Medical and Dental Sciences

PERCAT – Postdoctoral and Early Researcher Career Development and Training. Researcher support & development group in MDS & LES