

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers University of Birmingham Action Plan June 2011

The University of Birmingham Strategic Framework "Shaping our Future: Birmingham 2015" states that **"We must become the destination of choice for staff as well as students"** to do this we will **"provide a supportive and dynamic intellectual environment to attract and develop high quality research faculty."** We will do this by

- Employing talented professional staff
- Providing opportunities to develop leadership and management skills
- Fostering an environment of supportive and effective performance management
- Encouraging all staff to excel.

The aims outlined in the Strategic Framework align with the Principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. However it is important for the University to ensure its policies, procedures, and actions are in accord with creating the appropriate environment and opportunities for all our researchers. Therefore a review has been carried out and an action plan developed to address key gaps.

The following review activities have taken place in relation to the Concordat

1. An initial review of the University's compliance with the principle of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was carried out in 2010. This focused primarily on the central support & institutional commitment via policies, procedures, guidance and development opportunities.
2. Between 2005 and 2011 a number of local focus groups and other collaborative activities have taken place to engage Research Staff (RS) in their own development and to provide opportunities for them to influence their local research environment (College of Medical & Dental Sciences (MDS), College of Life & Environmental Sciences (LES), College of Social Sciences (CoSS))
3. Surveys
 - a. 2009 and 2011 internal staff surveys which identified researchers as an independent group for analysis.
 - b. The University took part in the Careers in Research On-line Survey (CROS) 2010.
4. 2011 the Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) for Research Prof Adam Tickell sponsored a task group to consolidate all related review activities, to identify gaps and propose actions to enhance the opportunities and general environment for research Staff at Birmingham. This group included a Director of Research, Chair of a College Researcher Development Committee, Assistant Director of HR, an Organisational Development Consultant and Research Staff.
5. The review illustrates that at an institutional level we are committed to the principles of the Concordat. However key areas for action are
 - a. Inconsistent local application of recruitment, induction and performance management of Research Staff
 - b. Inconsistent opportunities for researchers to be engaged in identifying and developing opportunities for development locally
 - c. Communication of relevant information to researchers

The Action Plan

While policy and strategy can help to create the environment, it is recognised that true commitment can only be demonstrated by actions and behaviour at a local level. The plan below therefore includes central and local actions to help ensure any changes are behavioural and take place where they can have most effect.

The overall action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee, chaired by the PVC for Research & Knowledge Transfer (R&KT)

The Action Plan also draws clear links between the Concordat's Principles and The University Key Strategic Goals (below)

UoB Key Strategic Goals

1. Enhance our research power
2. Provide our students with a distinctive, high quality experience
3. Sustain our financial strength and use it purposefully
4. Enhance our performance and status as an "engaged university"
5. Be the destination of choice amongst our peers

	Actions	Concordat Principle	UoB Strategic Goals	By when	Responsibility	Progress
Recruitment & performance management						
1.	To ensure a consistent, fair and robust approach to recruitment of research staff, all colleges to	1	1,3,5	Sept 2013	College Boards / POD / HR Ops	
	a) Review recruitment & selection capabilities of those recruiting Research Staff (RS)				College Boards / POD / HR Ops	20%
	b) Develop and implement a training & development plan to address subsequent requirements.				College Boards / POD / HR Ops	20%
2.	All Colleges to review their local approach to induction of research staff and develop & implement a consistent approach using best practice guidance from HR and other Colleges.	1,2,4	4	Sept 2013	College Boards / POD / HR Ops	10%
3.	Principles of Performance Management training programme delivered to College senior management and their direct reports	1,2,3	1,4	Oct 2012	College Boards / POD / HR Ops	10%
4.	Annual research performance review implemented	1,2,4	1,4	Dec 2011	VC / PVC Research / Heads of College	
5.	Implementation of revised Staff Development Review system to ensure fair, consistent and effective development & performance discussions between research staff and PIs	1,2,3	1,4	Oct 2012	HR Policy / POD / Heads of College	10%

Provide Research Staff with access to information, support and development resources						
6.	Research Staff dedicated website portal to provide single point of access to all relevant information and support materials.	3,4,5	4	Sept 2011	Project Team / POD	
7.	a) Implement an integrated, coordinated, professional system of support for research grant development, to facilitate increased grant capture as recommended by the recent "Clark Review".	3	1,3,4	Sept 2013	PVC R&KT / HR Ops / Finance / RCS / POD	60%
	b) Colleges to carry out a review of learning & development priorities for research staff to take advantage of new research support structures.	2,3,4,5	1,3,4	Sept 2013	College R&KT Directors / POD	
8.	Continued development of our integrated leadership development programme for all academic staff (from those aspiring to be research leaders to Heads of College and aspirant Vice Chancellors)	2,3,4,5	1,4	Ongoing	POD	70%
9.	Implementation of Researcher Development Framework linked to existing UoB Capability Framework. This will include development of researcher carer pathways and principles of talent management to enhance our research power	2,3,4,5	1,4	Sept 2013	POD	
10.	All Research Staff have a personal learning & development plan	2,3,4	1,4	Sept 2013	POD / College Boards	
11.	College consolidated learning & development plans include the requirement of Research Staff	2,3,4	1,4	Sept 2013	POD / College Boards	20%
12.	Recurrent funding to maintain provision of Research Team Leader, Effective Researcher, and associated staffing to support these and the general development of RS	2,3,4	1,4	July 2011	UEB	90%
Diversity & Equality						
13.	The University is committed to the advancement of the careers of women in SET in higher education and research practice , and has recently signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter. We further propose making a submission for a Bronze Award.	2,4,6	4,5	Nov 2011	HR Policy	10%
14.	The University will participate in the Vitae / HEFCE project "Every Researcher Matters". We will attend workshops and the national event to inform a review of how we plan to implement the principles. Review and proposals to be complete and submitted by Dec 2011	2,4,6	4,5	Dec 2011	HR Policy	
15.	Roll out of On-line Diversity & Equality training modules for all staff	2,4,6	4	Dec 2011	HR Policy / POD / Heads of College	10%
16.	Consolidated Diversity & Equality Policy in place.	2,4,6	3,4	Nov 2011	HR Policy	

Engagement & Involvement of Research Staff						
17.	The experience of MDS & CoSS in engaging with and providing support for their research staff has generated a number of benefits. Similar approaches should be adopted in other Colleges	2,4,5	1,4	Sept 2012	Heads of College / R&KT Committee / POD	
	a) Colleges to review the examples of MDS & CoSS and propose an equivalent approach that meets their specific requirements.					
	b) All Colleges have established an appropriate local mechanism for RS support, development and representation					
18.	80% research staff report having engaged in an annual performance and development review at the next Staff Survey	2,3,4	1,4	May 2013	R&KT Committee / Heads of College	
19.	All Colleges to review Staff Survey results for research staff and identify 3 key areas to be addressed as per published survey action plan time line	2,3,4	1,4	Dec 2011	College Boards	
20.	Bridging funding is seen as a key element in retaining high performing researchers and maintaining continuity of researcher employment (where appropriate) and providing necessary security for research staff. It is recognised that Colleges operate in different circumstances in relation to research funding. Colleges are asked to	2,3,4	1,4	Sept 2013	R&KT Committee / College Boards / Finance	
	a) Review and propose an approach to the provision of bridging funding that meets their specific circumstances, taking into account numbers of researchers, availability of funding and appropriate assessment criteria.					
	b) Implement and communicate local bridging funding processes					

Glossary

CoSS – College of Social Sciences

HEFCE – Higher Education Funding Council for England

HR Ops – HR Operations Team

MDS – College of Medical & Dental Sciences

POD – People and Organisational Development

PVC – Pro Vice Chancellor

R&KT – Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee

RCS – Research & Commercial Services

RS – Research Staff

UEB – University Executive Board

VC – Vice Chancellor