

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers University of Birmingham Review Summary 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.

Below are the key areas for concern revealed by both surveys linked to their specific Concordat Principles.

- Inconsistent local induction processes (Principle 1)
 - Recognition of RS contribution to the full range of academic activities (Principle 4)
 - Involvement of RS in development and performance management discussions (Principle 4)
 - Awareness of development opportunities for RS (Principles 4/3)
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.

The Review

Policies, procedures guidance in place to support The Concordat	Key Principle	Revised
Recruitment & Selection	1	February 2011
Promotion & appointments	1 / 4	2010/11
Academic job family framework which includes research staff	1 / 4	Current
Fixed Term Contract policy reflecting recent case law and best practice	2 / 4	Nov 2009
Bridging funding policy	1 / 2	No policy exists as yet – see Action Plan No19
Conditions of employment as academic colleagues	2	Currently under review & consultation
Re-deployment & promotion of internal vacancies	2 / 3 / 4	July 2009
Equality & Diversity – existing 3 schemes being replaced by single scheme	1 / 2 / 6	Currently under review – launch Autumn 2011
Bullying & harassment	1 / 2	2006 – now under review
Code of Practice for Research	3 / 5	2010 / 11
Staff Development Review	2,3,4	Under review, target for implementation Oct 2012

Principle	Actions in place
1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & selection (R&S) training, development and support for all recruiting staff is available centrally and also being delivered locally specifically for those recruiting Research Staff (e.g. 1 College has provided R&S training for 59 academic staff) • Principles of Performance Management workshops for PIs and other Academic Leaders have been piloted in one College. Evaluation supports roll out across all areas which is a key action within the Human Resources (HR) Compact.
2. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS are recognised as 'academic staff' in the University's legislation and are employed on broadly the same conditions of employment as academic teaching staff • RS are covered by all relevant University of Birmingham (UoB) HR policies and procedures (see above) • Staff Development Review (SDR) process applies to RS • Social Sciences Research Staff Committee established and has developed a tool to enable Colleges & Schools to review their approach to the Concordat • A local approach to embed the principles of the Concordat has been developed by some Colleges. • Direct input to College research strategy and planning within one College • Researcher Development Committee now established in one College and is delivering a range of development support including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grant writing ○ Careers workshops ○ Access to mentors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management is a key strand within the HR strategy and therefore the performance management skills of PIs are being developed through the programme noted above.
3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.	<p>Research staff have access to the full range of learning & development opportunities available to all staff. This includes researcher specific activities:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership skills - Research Team Leader available to research staff aspiring to lead research teams as well as existing Research Leaders. • Effective Researcher Programme for new researchers • Post Graduate Certificate (PGCert) in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education • Enterprise & entrepreneurship development programme • Researcher specific on-line training modules available via the virtual learning environment
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development and lifelong learning is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.	<p>Central transferable skills development including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) nationally accredited programmes • Project management • Interpersonal skills <p>As well as enabling the University to deliver additional specific training & support over a number of years, Roberts funds have also been made available to local Colleges to provide development that meets a specific local need. This has included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant and academic writing – classroom & on-line resource development • Career development seminars • Computer modelling techniques • Innovative use of technology in research <p>In addition the structure of the University's People & Organisational Development (POD) unit includes a dedicated consultant per College whose remit includes the support of development activity for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career planning support via dedicated researchers careers adviser and specific workshops. • Staff mentoring scheme in place for all new starters / staff new to role. • SDR process identified above • Developing Your Future on-line resource available to all staff and promoted directly to research staff
5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to proactively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers actively involved in local Research Staff groups where they are established. • UoB involvement in CROS 2010 - 21% response rate • Researchers identified as a specific group within UoB internal staff survey 2009 & 2011 (Response 48% 2009, 56% 2011) • Researchers from all Colleges have developed, proposed and implemented local development activities funded via Roberts, including Grant Writing, Careers Workshops and on-line materials & resources.
6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe UoB is fully compliant with all D&E legislation subject to ongoing action plans including implementation of single equality policy.

<p>aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee well-being support available to all staff including Occupational Health, Counselling, Mediation • Comprehensive guidance / policy on grievance and disciplinary situations. • Fixed Term Contract (FTC) policy in place as detailed above • Updated on-line Diversity & Equality training being rolled out • Signatory to the Athena SWAN Charter to support equality of opportunity of women in Science Engineering & Technology research.
<p>7. The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research staff responses extracted from UoB Staff Survey 2009 & 2011 for specific analysis • UoB participation in 2010 CROS • The above surveys have informed this analysis

The review illustrates that at an institutional level we are committed to the principles of the Concordat. However key areas for action are

1. Inconsistent local application of recruitment, induction and performance management of Research Staff
2. Inconsistent opportunities for researchers to be engaged in identifying and developing opportunities for development locally
3. Communication of relevant information to researchers