

University of Birmingham

Researcher Concordat Action Plan 2018-2020

Building on our current Strategic Framework 2015- 2020, the new 'Birmingham 2026' strategy sets clear and challenging goals to raise the academic performance of the University. To achieve these we will continue to invest in people and the intellectual environment and aim to be a destination of choice for the best researchers and students in the world. As we work towards these goals, the current 2015-2020 strategy continues to focus on

- Attracting, retaining and celebrating talented staff
- Growing leadership capacity – specifically research leadership, including supervision of research students.
- Collaboration including working with other Universities.

Following our 6-year review, our revised plan seeks to support these organisational priorities, addresses areas for further development and builds on areas of strength. The plan has been developed in consultation with the cross-university Researcher Development Support Group (RDSG), which comprises senior academics, early career researchers (ECRs) and professional services representatives.

The 2018-20 plan continues to focus on four key themes: -

- Enhancing the institutional commitment to the Concordat
- Developing research leadership
- Recruiting, developing and supporting talented research staff
- Equality & diversity

Key actions are

- Maintain senior leader engagement with ECRs
- Review of formal review of and reporting on Concordat implementation plans
- To continue to develop and deliver excellent leadership programmes and develop new opportunities that increase our leadership capacity and capability
- Institutional review of staff induction and implementation of revised approaches
- Design and delivery of specific targeted researcher development programmes in Ethics & Integrity, Public Engagement and Research Funding
- On-going commitment to Athena Swan new awards and reaccreditation
- Submission to Race Equality Charter Scheme

The majority of actions below require “immediate” implementation, mostly during 2018. These short and medium term actions will be reviewed formally during 2018, either via the RDSG or relevant specific project groups. Actions resulting from these reviews will be added to the overall plan for 2019/20

Key Area of Focus / Action	Key Principle	Success Measure	By When	Who	
<p>Institutional support for and monitoring of Concordat implementation Having established more robust and formal structures to enhance our ability to meet the Concordat principles we must now embed these and ensure they support the delivery of organisational aims and objectives. Senior leadership engagement with ECRs will maintain focus on our implementation of the Concordat Principles.</p>					
1.	Researcher Development Support Group maintain focus on key areas identified in initial report to University Research Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDR for ECRs • Induction practice • Career guidance 	1,2,4,7	Report on PDR practice complete and distributed to ECRs & College Leadership 1 report to Research Committee	Sept 2018	RDSG
	12 month progress against Concordat Action Plan presented to Research Committee	2,7	Report approved by Research Committee	February 2019	RDSG
2.	In partnership with HR Director, implement ECR related actions as they emerge from the institutional review of induction and academic mentoring.	1,2,3,4	ECR induction actions identified $\leq 10\%$ ECR report induction not offered	June 2018	RDSG, POD, HR Director
	Review impact of institutional induction & mentoring recommendations.	1,2,5,7	70% report induction to be useful	June 2019	RDSG, POD, HRD
3.	Review of purpose and degree of success of Researcher Development Support Group	1,2,5,7	ToR, membership & purpose revised or confirmed	March 2018	RDSG

4.	UoB Senior Leadership carry out follow up meetings with this years' ECR groups to review progress.	1,2,3,4	Meetings complete Report submitted to UEB	September 2018	UoB Senior Leadership Team
5.	UoB Senior Leadership carry out new breakfast meetings with a different group of early-career academics	1,2,3,4	Meetings complete Report submitted to UEB	December 2018	UoB Senior Leadership Team
6.	Heads of College to work with Heads of School to review approach to induction and identify opportunities to improve this at School-level.	1,2,3,4	Report submitted to UEB	December 2018	Heads of College
7.	Heads of College to work with Heads of School to review approach to mentoring and identify opportunities to improve this at School-level.	1,2,3,4	Report submitted to UEB	December 2018	Heads of College
8.	Director of HR, to review central induction in light of ECR feedback	1,2,3,4	Institutional review of Induction practice commissioned Findings and recommendations submitted to UEB	December 2017 (Complete) February 2018	HR Director, POD
Research Leadership & Management					
Effective leadership and management are critical to our success. Continue to build academic leadership and management capability.					
9.	Training & Development SLP – 1 programme RLP – 1 programme ELP – 2 programmes 2017/18; 3 programmes 2018/19 DRATL - Two programmes pa.	1,2,4	Programmes run at $\geq 90\%$ capacity	On-going	POD

10.	Evaluate behavioural impact of RLP DRATL	1,2,4	Participants report changes to personal leadership & management practice and performance	October 2018 October 2019	POD
<p>Recruitment, development and support of talented research staff</p> <p>Local researcher development groups are now established across all Colleges. These groups will continue to be key to developing a community of early career researchers and providing locally focused support and development opportunities. RS input and feedback will continue to drive the work of these groups and inform cross-institutional activity via the RDSG.</p>					
11.	CEPS revised approaches to Induction, Mentoring & PDR to be implemented and reviewed	1,2,3,4	90% CEPS ECR staff report receiving induction 70% report induction to be useful	October 2018	Deputy Head of College
	In partnership with HR colleagues agree communication process for informing College of new starters				
	School Operations Managers formally allocated responsibility for managing local induction process				
	Standardised ECR induction checklist template created				
	Local induction briefing videos agreed and created				
	Local CEPS induction webpage created to signpost relevant information				
12.	Deliver dedicated PDR reviewer training within CEPS	1,2,3,4	80% CEPS ECR staff report having a PDR	October 2018	Deputy Head of College
	Explore alternative mentoring approaches to include opportunities for ECRs	1,2,3,4	Proposal for formal mentoring approach made to College Board		Deputy Head of College
13.	Review of CEPS induction, PDR and mentoring actions to identify appropriate actions to be recommended in other Colleges.	1,2,3,4,5,7	Actions identified and initial plan agreed for implementation	January 2019	RDSG

Learning & Development

Based on CROS and local feedback, key learning and development priorities continue to be career development & planning, research and associated skills and leadership skills. Existing local and central provision will be maintained in these key areas, supplemented with specific locally identified support. Additional specific actions are identified below.

14.	Following consistent feedback, an initial proposal to provide dedicated, specialist careers guidance for ECRs was approved in principle. More detailed work is now proposed to scope a solution including purpose, funding and accountability.	3,4	Detailed proposal submitted to Research Committee	June 2018	RDSG in partnership with Careers Network
15.	Following feedback and review of demand & current provision, an integrated programme of training and development in Public Engagement in Research will be developed and launched to meet the needs of researchers at all career stages.	3,4	Pilot Level 1 delivered Pilot level 2 delivered Pilot level 3 delivered Evaluation of all programmes	March 2018 June 2018 September 2018 March, June, Sept 2019	Public Engagement, POD, Cultural Affairs, Policy Engagement & Business Engagement teams
16.	A project has been agreed, to develop a single, clearly articulated, accessible and consistently promoted annualised programme to equip academics with the skills and knowledge to compete successfully for funding.	3,4	Proposed training programme presented Training programme implemented	April 2018 September 2018	Research Support Services
17.	A lack of training and resource to support researchers' development in research integrity issues has been identified. Research Committee has agreed that : - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A training officer role is considered within the research ethics and integrity team 	3,4	Detailed proposal for the Training officer role is submitted Online training module available for use.	Jan2018 – Complete September 2018	Head of Research Governance & Ethics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high quality interactive UoB ethics and integrity online training module be planned and produced 		80% new staff complete module	December 2019	
18.	Formal evaluation of annual researcher development programme	3,4	80% recommend Participants report changes to personal leadership & management practice and performance	January 2019	POD / RDSG
19.	Review of CMDS researcher development programme evaluation survey		Report & recommendations presented to PERCAT & RDSG Recommendations implemented in CMDS	March 2018 October 2018	MDS PERCAT
20.	All Colleges have local information portal / resource	3,4	Information portals established	June 2018	RDSG

Equality & Diversity

Our aim is that all staff are treated with dignity and afforded respect as key aspects of their wellbeing. We will build on existing success in this area.

21.	Submission to the Race Equality Charter scheme	6	Application submitted	February 2019	HR
22.	To implement College Level Equality Action plans	6	Action plans published	October 2019	HR / Colleges
23.	Remaining 2 STEMM Schools to obtain Athena Swan awards	6	Award obtained	Submissions by November 2018	Local School
24.	Schools to seek renewal or enhanced Athena Swan award as appropriate	6	Awards obtained	Dependent on reaccreditation schedule	Local School
25.	CAL / CoSS to seek Athena Swan award	6	Award obtained	Submissions by November 2018	Local School

Evaluation of Action Plan

The RDSG will coordinate overall evaluation including the specific input from ECRs. CROS survey and other internal systems will provide specific evaluation data. However, due to an inconsistent approach to gathering feedback and use of CROS data it is proposed to review our approach to these. Approaches to evaluation of this action plan may change as a result of this review.

26.	Review and agree revised approach to monitoring of Concordat implementation activities	5,7	Schedule of HR Ex reports to RDSG and HRD agreed	June 2018	RDSG
27.	Formal review of Concordat Action Plan to update and add further actions for 2019	5,7	Additional actions identified and scheduled for 2019 Review approved by PVC Research	January 2019	RDSG, POD, PVC Research
28.	Review College involvement in CROS survey and subsequent use of data.	5,7	Review and agreement on responsibilities with College representatives Revised approach implemented for CROS 2019	September 2018 May 2019	RDSG
29.	Birmingham will take part in CROS 2019	5,7	35% participation Summary of CROS 2019 data presented to University Research Committee	May 2019 July 2019	RDSG, POD

Glossary

CAL – College of Arts and Law

CEPS – College of Engineering and Physical Sciences

CLES – College of Life & Environmental Sciences

CMDS – College of Medical & Dental Sciences

College – Principle academic organisational unit within the University of Birmingham

CoSS – College of Social Sciences

CROS – Careers in Research On-line Survey (national researcher survey)

DRATL – Developing as a Research / Academic Team Leader

ELP – Emerging Leaders Programme

HR – Human Resources

HRLT – HR Leadership Team

PDR – Performance Development Review scheme.

POD – People and Organisational Development. Team within University HR Department

PVC – Pro-Vice-Chancellor

RDSG – Researcher Development Support Group

R&KT – Research & Knowledge Transfer

RIS – Research Innovation Services

RLP – Research Leaders Programme

SLP – Senior Leaders Programme

STEMM – Science Technology Engineering Mathematics and Medicine

ToR – Terms of Reference

UEB – University Executive Board

UoB – University of Birmingham