

University of Birmingham

Concordat Action Plan Detailed Review September 2013

Following the attainment of the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2011 we have carried out a detailed review of progress against the published action plan. Key achievements over the last 2 years are described below and clearly support the principles of The Concordat and the University's strategic, people focused goals of "Enhancing our performance as an 'engaged university' " and "Be the destination of choice amongst our peers".

Key achievements over the 2 years have been

1. Implementation and on-going roll out of a revised Performance and Development Review Scheme for academic staff across all Colleges. This included a pilot in one College with all research and teaching staff. Where a more limited initial implementation has taken place for academic teaching staff only plans are now in place to roll out to all academic staff.
2. The implementation of a professional and coordinated system of support for researchers seeking grant funding across all Colleges. Each College now has in place a team dedicated to providing bespoke advice and guidance to all staff in making research grant applications including fellowships and funding aimed at staff at a variety of stages in their career. This has contributed to a 55% rise in the value of research awards and an 80% increase in new awards from Research Councils since 2010/11.
3. Development of an integrated leadership development programme for academic leaders. The programme includes Research Team Leader, 42 participants, Introduction to Leadership for Early Career Researchers collaboration with University of Nottingham, 14 UoB participants. Mentoring and coaching support has also been offered. These programmes provide initial access to leadership development which feeds in to Emerging and Senior Leadership programmes. The overall programme creates a more consistent and robust research leadership environment.
4. Development of the University Equality Scheme, consolidating all aspects of equality and diversity for example a centralised maternity leave fund which will have a significant impact on Early Career Researchers, a significant proportion of whom are female. The Scheme also incorporates the organisational achievement of Athena Swan Bronze Award, and 5 Schools achieving local Bronze Awards. This work will be further embedded by the designation of 2013/14 as the "UoB Year of Equality in Employment", sponsored by the Provost & Vice Principal Prof. Adam Tickell.
5. Local researcher development activities e.g. Research Gala, Research Staff Master Classes, Post Doc away days and one to one tailored support, are now taking place across all Colleges. Additional organisation development resource has now been allocated to provide specialist local support to further develop consolidated and focused learning and development approaches for research staff.

Progress against the original action plan is shown in more detail below

Actions 2011 - 13		Progress / Activity
Recruitment & performance management		
1.	To ensure a consistent, fair and robust approach to recruitment of research staff, all colleges to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges monitor recruitment practices in partnership with HR professionals. These are compliant with all legal requirements and support the organisation's commitment to Equality & Diversity. Where specific needs have been identified bespoke processes have been implemented for example. <i>Production of an extensive guide to the recruitment and selection process that specifically notes examples of direct and indirect discrimination that may affect female candidates. A member of College HR staff checks all proposed short listing sheets prior to candidates being invited for interview to ensure equal opportunity concerns have been addressed.</i> Specific recruitment training remains in place and is reviewed annually to ensure best practice is being applied.
	a) Review recruitment & selection capabilities of those recruiting Research Staff (RS)	
	b) Develop and implement a training & development plan to address subsequent requirements.	
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Colleges have implemented local induction processes in addition to the existing organisation induction managed centrally. One College with the highest percentage of researchers has developed a researcher specific induction delivered by the local research leader.
3.	Principles of Performance Management training programme delivered to College senior management and their direct reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Performance & Development Review (PDR) scheme for Academic Research & Teaching staff has now been piloted in one College. All Colleges have piloted the PDR scheme for Academic Teaching staff. This covers all aspects of the academic role (research, teaching & administration). Each College has followed an implementation plan that best meets its local needs, including tailored training for local staff.
4.	Annual research performance review implemented	
5.	Implementation of revised Staff Development Review system to ensure fair, consistent and effective development & performance discussions between research staff and PIs	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reviewers have received the required training. • Where a more limited initial implementation has taken place for academic teaching staff plans are now in place to roll out to all academic staff. • An initial evaluation of PDR was carried out by a Deputy PVC which will inform future actions in improving the quality of reviews and focusing the necessary support to achieve this. The evaluation indicated that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the whole the PDR scheme is seen as beneficial • Further focused support for reviewers is required to maximise the quality of the reviews. • Further work required to ensure use of recording systems <p>https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/birminghamacademic/researcher/index.aspx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intention and principles within the Annual Research Performance Review, implemented specifically to support REF, are now continued within the academic PDR scheme.
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website portal is now available and is hosted by People & Organisation Development. This was developed & designed in collaboration with researchers. <p>https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/development/researcher/index.aspx</p> <p>This provides a central link to resource across the University website and externally organised into 3 key themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Your Research • Managing Your Research Career • Learning, Development & Employee Support
7.	a) Implement an integrated, coordinated, professional system of support for research grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each College now has in place a team dedicated to providing bespoke advice and

	development, to facilitate increased grant capture as recommended by the recent “Clark Review”.	guidance to all staff in making research grant applications including fellowships and funding aimed at staff at a variety of stages in their career.
	b) Colleges to carry out a review of learning & development priorities for research staff to take advantage of new research support structures.	<p>https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/research-support/index.aspx</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local training is facilitated by research support teams as required e.g. Discipline specific grant application training; Collaborative research workshops. • Central training and workshops provided for all researchers on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding opportunities – for all stages of a researcher’s career • Grant capture • Enterprise • Grant writing <p>https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/ris/events/index.aspx https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/development/documents/public/Development-brochure---Academic-staff-%28PDF---916KB%29.pdf</p> <p>Colleges have adopted tailored approaches to researcher development in this area. The approaches reflect the nature of the discipline, resources available and the local and organisational priorities. Approaches include annual programme of researcher development activities (training, workshops & conferences) and individually tailored support to meet specific needs. For example 100 research staff attended a College Research Gala and submitted 42 abstracts resulting in 5 presentations and 30 posters. An average of 40 attendees at monthly College Research Staff Master Classes on topics including fellowship applications. 40 participants on College Post Doc away day focused on researcher careers.</p>
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)	<p>There are now in place the key components of an integrated leadership development programme for all staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early career researchers - New Introduction to Leadership programme. Developed and piloted in collaboration with the University of Nottingham. 14 participants.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Team Leader. 42 participants to date. • Institute of Leadership & Management qualifications at level 2 (team leaders), 3 (first line managers) and 5 (middle managers). • Emerging Leaders Programme for those developing towards Academic & Professional senior roles, to be launched in Autumn 2013 • Senior Leadership Programme is now in its 6th cohort. 74 participants to date. <p>This integrated programme helps to develop a consistent and robust approach to leadership in the research community. In addition these programmes provide opportunities for professional services and academic leaders to work together in developing their leadership skills.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the RDF is now available via the Researcher Support web pages. • Workshops on using the RDF have been delivered in 2 of the 5 Colleges.
10.	All Research Staff have a personal learning & development plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges are at different stages in planning coordinated learning and development for Academic staff. The new PDR system provides an opportunity to re-focus on this. MDS / LES /BFS • Extensive prioritised L&D plans exist in 1 College which include dedicated local and central development for researchers. • Additional resources have been made available to share best practice across all Colleges. L&D plans for Colleges are a key objective for POD consultants in this next academic year. • Funding to support the development of research staff has been maintained and this is recognised as a core activity for POD. • Evaluation carried out of Research Team Leader and Effective Researcher using
11.	College consolidated learning & development plans include the requirement of Research Staff	
12.	Recurrent funding to maintain provision of Research Team Leader, Effective Researcher, and associated staffing to support these and the general development of RS	

		<p>internal surveys, feedback analysis and one to one interviews. This revealed that these programmes are well received by participants and have an impact on individual behaviour. However take up has decreased over the last 12 months. This has prompted a review of provision. We are committed to maintain early career research leadership and are piloting a collaborative programme with Nottingham. We have also piloted “Impactful Researcher” as an alternative to Effective Researcher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central delivery of Grant Writing and Journal Article Writing tailored for specific disciplines throughout 2012/13/14 • Access to Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice for research staff is being supported to develop teaching practice and experience. • We continue to promote the full range of development activities to research staff as part of the Academic community. This is collated in the new POD development brochures. <p>https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/development/documents/public/Development-brochure---Academic-staff-%28PDF---916KB%29.pdf</p>
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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.	<p>Athena SWAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University achievement of Bronze Award • 1 College has achieved the Bronze Award and is now working towards Silver. • 4 Schools achieved Bronze Award • 5 Schools working towards submitting for Bronze • Local workshops & management activities delivered to work towards local accreditation explore issues, develop best practice and raise awareness among all staff. • Non STEM Colleges exploring how to apply Athena principles to their areas <p>On-Line Equality & Diversity Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College average completion rate of 72%
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	
15.	Roll out of On-line Diversity & Equality training modules for all staff	

16.	Consolidated Diversity & Equality Policy in place.	<p>Consolidated Equality Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2011-2015 Equality Scheme, now in place, is a statement of the University's on-going commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity. • It sets out our equality objectives and the actions we will take to achieve them. • The Scheme has been developed with students and staff and reflects our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our Strategic Framework for 2010-2015. • Introduction from the VC https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/equality/documents/equality-scheme-introduction-%28PDF-262KB%29.pdf • The Scheme addresses the principles of the “Every Researcher Matters” project • Fixed Term Contract procedures reviewed and amendments implemented in April 2013 in line with best practice and legislation. • All the principles policies and actions are accessible to all staff via the dedicated Equality & Diversity pages https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/collaboration/equality/index.aspx
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDS and CoSS are maintaining and where possible enhancing Research Staff representation and support for development. Including input to research committees, researcher specific local inductions, programme of workshops and conferences.
	a) Colleges to review the examples of MDS & CoSS and propose an equivalent approach that meets their specific requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 additional Colleges have now begun to develop a similar approach to dedicated support for researchers focusing initially on building a research career, accessing grants and funding and research showcases. These approaches have been based on the schemes developed by MDS.
	b) All Colleges have established an appropriate local mechanism for RS support, development and representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The remaining College of the 5(with significantly fewer research only staff) has adopted an approach that tailors support to individual researcher requirements.
18.	80% research staff report having engaged in an annual performance and development review at the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in full implementation of PDR process across all Academic staff plus an

	next Staff Survey	<p>operational delay to the next Staff Survey mean detailed data is not currently available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College action staff survey action plans identify academic staff as a single cohort. Colleges consulted staff and developed and published action plans that meet local priorities and concerns. • New PDR process includes more structured & visible reporting process.
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	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Colleges have developed approaches to bridging funding that meet local priorities and availability of resources. In all Colleges decisions are made on a case by case basis.
	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