Concordat to Support the Career Development of Research Staff

European Commission HR Excellence in Research Badge

# Action Plan 2017- 2019 - UPDATED

The University of Bedfordshire's Concordat Implementation Action Plan was originally drawn up in 2013, with a substantive revision in 2015 as part of the two-year review process. A further interim review

which is research, provides a framework for some of the initiatives and actions outlined here; evaluation of these actions will, in turn, feed into the overall evaluation of the Strategic Plan.

Abbreviations

CLE	Centre for Learning Excellence
DORI	Director of Research Institute
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
E&D	Equality and Diversity
FTC	Fixed Term Contract
HR	Human Resources
I&E	Innovation & Enterprise Service
PDA	Performance Development and Appraisal
PI	Principal Investigator
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
RDF	Researcher Development Framework
R&EC	Research and Enterprise Committee
RGS	Research Graduate School
RI	Research Institute
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
VC	Vice Chancellor
VCEG	Vice Chancellor's Executive Group

Key to Actions
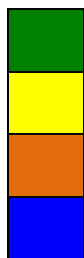
█	Actions that were in the 2015 action plan and are now established in policy and practice. Monitoring and review processes in place.
█	Actions that were in the 2015 action plan but where elements are still to be addressed or new issues have arisen. Where actions have been revised or timescales have been adjusted, these are shown with rationale in italics.
█	Actions that were in the 2015 action plan but which have been suspended or substantively revised Rationale is shown in italics.
█	Actions that are new in the 2017 action plan. Subsequent monitoring implications and target or review dates are indicated.

Note

For the sake of brevity, descriptions of actions initiated in 2013 and largely or entirely completed by 2015 have been summarised. Letter identifiers have been maintained to allow reference back to the 2015 document.

Principle 1: Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research

1.1   All members of the UK research community should understand that researchers are chosen primarily for their ability to advance research at an institution.

1.2   Employers should strive to attract excellence and respect diversity. Recruitment and selection procedures should be informative, transparent and open to all qualified applicants regardless of background. Person and vacancy specifications must clearly identify the skills required for the post and these requirements should be relevant to the role.

1.3   Research posts should only be advertised as a fixed-term post where there is a recorded and justifiable reason.

1.4   To assure fairness, consistency and the best assessment of the candidates' potential, recruitment and progression panels should reflect diversity as well as a range of experience and expertise. In order to promote these values, individuals who are members of recruitment and promotion panels should have received relevant recent training. Unsuccessful applicants should be given appropriate feedback if requested as this may be of assistance to the researcher in considering their further career development.

1.5   The level of pay or grade for researchers should be determined according to the requirements of the post, consistent with the pay and grading arrangements of the research organisation.

Actions in Support of Principle 1

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measures	Lead	Date
A	The Organisation and People Development Strategy was approved in 2013 and subsequently revised in 2014. The action plan associated with this strategy is reviewed regularly and revisions are endorsed through the University Resources and Employment Committea .002 Tc 0.001 Tw 9.96 T Q q -12 (and)-12.2-12.3 (n)]TJ 0v.44 299.28 Ty-6.3 (at)B the Uoms t.2 (w)-2.9 (i)3.2 (t)-121 (h t)-1.1 (r)-6.3 (y-6.3			

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Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measures	Lead	Date
B	Mandatory online training is provided for all new staff as part of induction and probation requirements, with periodic updates for existing staff. Equality and Diversity training was reviewed in 2015 to ensure its continuing effectiveness and brought in line with other e-learning modules via single logon. Completion of this and other mandatory e-learning is monitored and there is a system of reminders with all line managers providing assurance that staff ha1 -1.1o>g asssuran(ana D 19 >>BDC Q q 120.12 406.68 387.120.12 4.f)-13.2 (L20 (y)28.)-24.4 (od6.4 (ev)-8 .002 i and ttifan(ann)]TJ 0 Tc h TJ -8.482 e HJ -4ton o 3.1 (.)1 (v)4 (e.1 5.7ana D 195 Q q 120.12i)3.2 (rn01 Tw 0 m)-24.4 8.1 1.1 (.013 T3.2-1.1 (af)-13.2 (f)-1ea D 195			

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measures	Lead	Date

Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measures	Lead	Date
	(iii) Some issues have been resolved with regard to the contracts of staff employed as research assistants and research fellows. This have been under review, with clear role descriptors for research assistants, research fellows and senior and principal research fellows, compliant with HERA descriptors. These reflect the academic functions of research fellows and align progression opportunities more closely with those of lecturing staff. They provide the basis for a specialist research career in addition to the standard research and teaching contracts. In 2017-18, 2 research assistants and 2 research fellows were employed; in 2018-19, 3 research assistants and 6 research fellows were employed.		Role descriptions to R&EC Approval	DORI' EMC /P <	

Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measure	Lead	Status/Date
D	The current University Strategy (2012-2017) states that all academic staff will have a minimum of five days CPD per annum, and actions to ensure delivery of this form part of the Organisation and People Development strategy. This is recorded through the Staff Review (appraisal) scheme documentation and it is the responsibility of managers to ensure that CPD days are used and outcomes monitored. As this has not been an electronic/ online process it has not always been possible to monitor this systematically. Progress since 2015: The introduction of the PDA made monitoring of training needs and use of CPD time more transparent and easy to monitor. UPDATE: Further changes to the PDA system, including clearer accountability for research mentoring and development (including PGR supervision), will be made in 2019-21.		Means to develop reporting against the expectation developed & implemented	HR HODs and other line managers	As main PDA timescale (1 (E) above).
E	Encouraging and monitoring staff applications for senior academic titles. As Principle 1, Action D(ii) above		Applications and success more closely reflect the University demographics	HR R&EC	Annually (Sep)
F	Research mentoring schemes organised by Research Institutes focus not only on				

Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measure	Lead	Status/Date
G (new)	The University Strategic Plan for 2017-2020				

Principle 3:

Actions in Support of Principle 3

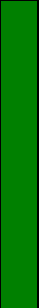| Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measure	Lead	Date
A	The Staff Review process which was refreshed and progressively improved in 2014-2016 has been comprehensively reviewed and will be replaced in 2017 by a new Performance and Development Appraisal process which will be administered online This will give an improved ability to monitor and report on staff development activities. New for 2017: The PDA process encompasses and encourages both short and mid-to-long term development. Learning needs and plans are identified to aid staff in their current role, whilst future aspirations are recognised as development needs. To support managers in this area, training is being offered in how to identify training and development needs. Furthermore, the introduction of University behaviours to the appraisal process encourages staff to develop the skills and actions required in current and future employment. UPDATE: Further modifications of the PDA process are to be carried out in 2019-21, as outlined earlier in the updates for this plan. These will facilitate the analysis of training needs through categorisation		Implemented through PDA	HR	See process and dates in 1 (E),

Principle 4: The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their   career

4.1   Researchers should be empowered by having a realistic understanding of, and information about, their own career development and career direction options as well as taking personal responsibility for their choices at the appropriate times. Employers should introduce appraisal systems for all researchers for assessing their professional performance on a regular basis and in a transparent manner. It is important that researchers have access to honest and transparent advice on their prospects for success in their preferred career.

4.2   Employers will wish to ensure that developmental activities open to researchers include preparation for academic practice. Employers should take measures to ensure broad recognition of CPD schemes from other employing organisations as far as possible, so that researchers are not unduly disadvantaged when moving from one employer to another.

4.3   Employers will ensure that where researchers are provided with teaching and demonstrating opportunities as part of their career development, suitable training and support is provided.

4.4   Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation or management committees.

4.5   Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.

Actions in Support of Principle 4

Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measure	Lead	Date
A	The policy and practices for mentoring for all academic staff are under review as part of the Organisation and People Development Strategy, and will be reflected in the new Performance Development and Appraisal process. At the same time, revised guidance as to RI membership, associate membership and definitions of 'research activity' (as part of the Research and REF strategies) has meant that mentoring and support arrangements will be consistently applied across Faculties and RIs and this was reflected in the UoA review that took place in late 2016. The post-REF review process that began in 2014 and was continued through the mid-term UOA review has led to a number of key outcomes: - Research Institutes have identified areas of strategic focus - Research institute membership/associate membership criteria identified and consistently applied, shared and used to inform transparent decision making - Identification of Associate members of institutes on trajectory to inclusion in REF and ECRs with potential to achieve associate and full RI membership Outcomes and decisions from mentoring are fed into more general staff development and review (will be PDA) processes undertaken by Heads of Departments and Executive Deans. Research Institute membership continues to grow, with the numbers of both full and associate members increasing. In 2017-18, the total number of full RI		Review complete. Updates and implementation as required as part of RI and UoA review processes.	HR DORI's PIs	Reviewed annually through RI reports (Sep)

	members was 104; the total number of associate members was 46. In 2018-19, the total number of full RI members was 109; the total number of associate members was 53. The growth in numbers is due to new appointments, staff producing higher quality outputs more consistently, and more PGR students joining the Institutes. The Research Institute membership criteria is available on the University intranet (https://live-beds-uni-cdnep.azureedge.net/live-beds-uni-media/267067/research-institute-membership-criteria.pdf)				
B	Investigate the participation in CROS or a similar means of receiving feedback from research staff to inform development and support activities This action suspended pending completion of the review process described in 4(A) above and the introduction of the PDA. Participation in CROS to be revisited in this review period with potential involvement in 2019.		Decision whether to participate in CROS		

Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning

5.1 Researchers are employed to advance knowledge and should exercise and develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought throughout their careers.

5.2 Researchers should develop their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge where appropriate and facilitate its use in policy making and the commercialisation of research for the benefit of their employing organisation, as well as the wider society and economy as a whole.

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Action   Description of Activity

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Date
	doctoral training centres, the National Centre for Research Methods, British Library etc.			
	Online calendar and alerting system is used to publicise internal activities (organised by central services and RIs) and external events. Events are booked online allowing monitoring of attendance, collection of feedback and follow-up R			
	Training organised by Innovation and Enterprise for staff on research funding, proposal writing, IPR, data management.9 (,)-1.6 -1.13.2 (.9 (m9 (o3(h f)-13.1 (un)]T (pr)[1 (a)-12.2 ( )P)-1.1 (s)]TJ 2EMC /P .1 (P)2.us)]TJP)-1.1.1 (oTc 0.002[2.1			

Actions in Support of Principle 6

Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measure	Lead	Date
A	The University's Equality and Diversity Policy and Strategy 2012-2017 is reviewed annually by the Equality & Diversity Committee. There is also information and guidance available on the staff intranet.		Review & any necessary action planning	HR E&D	Annually
	The University has run E&D awareness raising training and also training on conducting equality impact assessments, and have an e-learning module which is mandatory for new starters and which is going to be rolled out to all existing staff.		Module rolled out		
	Progress since 2015: The new PDA which is behaviour-based includes specific behaviours concerned with equality and diversity issues. https://www.beds.ac.uk/about-us/our-university/foi/policies/eq-div				

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure

Action	Description of Activity and Progress		Success Measure	Lead	Date
J	The University's Bullying and Harassment, Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures were reviewed in 2014. They are all still fit for purpose, but in practice the HR Department has moved to a more facilitative and mediated style of resolving grievances and complaints of harassment and bullying, so that where possible issues are addressed informally and quickly, which is proving effective. Where issues cannot be dealt with informally they are resolved using formal procedures, and all staff are assured that complaints will not affect career prospects All complaints of bullying and harassment are overseen and reviewed as part of the employee relations caseload tracker, and activity is reported to the Resources and Employment Committee and as part of the E&D annual workforce monitoring report whereby activity is monitored by the protected characteristics. The University also reports annually to a Higher Education benchmarking report and uses the comparison with data from other HEIs as part of its own monitoring and action planning.		Continued monitoring and responses as required	HR	Annual monitoring (March)
K	As part of the Organisation and People Development Strategy, the University is creating a new Behavioural Framework which will underpin the values around treating others with dignity and respect. This will complement the new Partnership Agreement which also sets out expectations for students and staff. Progress since 2015: This has evolved into the new PDA which is referred to elsewhere in this action plan		Framework completed and disseminated.	HR	Completed

Principle 7: