Concordat to Support the Career Development of Research Staff

European Commission HR Excellence in Research Badge

Action Plan 2019- 2021

The present University of Bedfordshire's Concordat Implementation Action Plan (originally developed in 2013, revised in 2015, and extended in 2017) has been drawn up by the Head of Research Development (appointed in November 2018), with input from Human Resources, the Innovation & Enterprise Service, the Research Graduate School, the Centre for Learning Excellence, and the University's Research Institutes. Following the existing procedure (as outlined in the Action Plan 2017-19), the plan underwent the internal evaluation through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee which disseminated the Action Plan to the Directors of Research Institutes (9 institutes). The plan was then discussed at the Research Institute boards (on which ECRs and PGR students are represented), and the outcome of the discussion was sent to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee for

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 exper

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measures	Lead	Date

D	(ii) Encouraging and monitoring staff applications for senior academic titles. Criteria for appointment to senior academic titles are published and the DVC(Academic) runs a workshops for more junior academic staff to prepare them for application for promotion, with the aim of encouraging applications from a wider range of eligible staff:
	   o DORI to hold meetings with academics whose research is matured to discuss research-related career paths; the meetings are to align with the annual review cycle.
	   o In PDA, research-related career plans to be defined by the academic and their line manager;
	   o These are to be collated by HR, who will inform HRD;
	   o HRD will assign mentors as appropriate and monitor the engagement with the programme (mentors and mentees are expected to have at least 3 meetings per year).
	In 2018-19, the review found the rates of applications and successful outcomes to be in line with the University's demographics.
	Promote he suite of sessions for mid-career academics (to be rolled out in 2019-20) included in the new Research Skills Development Programme (started in January 2019). These sessions (mapped on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF from here onwards)) cover research leadership issues, publishing from mature research projects, managing collaborative projects, and other matters related to career progression for experienced academics seeking to move to senior roles
		Increase in number of applications by 15% in the first year of the cycle and by 25% in total by the end of the second year
		
		Applications and outcomes continue to align with the University's demographics
		
		Mid-career academics engaging with the training – at least 10% of total staff by the end of 2019-20 and at least 20% by the end of 2020-21; increase in number of applications (as above)
			DVC(A) HR
			
			HRD DORI
			
			HRD DORI
				Twice per year: October (for February-August) and March (for September-January) – reports received by RKE.
				
				This segment of the programme is run twice a year: November-February and May-July

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measures	Lead	Date
E	The online Performance Development and Appraisal (PDA) has been established (see section A above). To establish a reporting line and accountability for PGR supervision.	Monitoring the use of online PDA PGR supervision included as a bespok1 (R)-2./ ( )Tj EMC /P <</MCID 26 >>BDC 69 /TT3 1 Tf		

Principle 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

2.1   Employers are encouraged to value and afford equal treatment to all researchers, regardless of whether they are employed on a fixed-term or similar contract. In particular, employers should ensure that the development of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts. This approach should be embedded throughout all departmental structures and systems.

2.2   Commitment by everyone involved to improving the stability of employment conditions for researchers and implementing and abiding by the principles and terms laid down in the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (2002) and Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) guidance on the use of fixed-term contracts will provide benefits for researchers, research managers, and their organisation.

2.3

Action   Description of Activity and Progress

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Status/Date
F	Introduce a central research and research supervision mentoring scheme to grow research and research supervision capacity across the University. Provide academic coaching training for mentors. Monitor uptake and increase this in consultation with DORI. In addition, local research mentoring schemes to be organised and maintained by Research Institutes focus not only on outcomes but on means by which career development can be provided, training opportunities available and means by which research profiles can be developed and enhanced.	Provide at least 20 mentors by the end of 2019-20 with the view to increase the number to 40 by the end of 2020-21, with the uptake of the provision at 3-5 mentees per mentor. By the end of 2020-21, at least 100		

Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment

3.1

Actions in Support of Principle 3

Action

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Date

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 (new)				

Principle 5:

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Date
	Research Data Management Policy. Training for students and supervisors to run from September 2019. A University-wide system of support for the implementation of the Research Data Management Plan requirement for research student to come in force from September 2019. Monitoring of compliance with the Research Data Management Plan requirement to			

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Date
		benchmarks in Concordat Sections A-E, and linked action planning.	HR	REF strategy revision in November 2019
F	Following changes to the UREC structure and appointment of the new Head of Research Development, the development of a research ethics handbook has been stopped. The following actions have replaced this: Review and amend the University Research Ethics and Integrity Policy in line with the updated Concordat to Support Research Integrity; Develop an online information suite for research ethics and integrity with contributions by all disciplines within the RIs; Provide Research Ethics and Research Integrity training through the mandatory research student induction, RSDP, and Institute-based discipline-specific sessions. Establish Research Data Management Plan training and support system (see Point C above).	An online information suite for research ethics and integrity available by November 2020 An updated Research Ethics and Integrity Policy (by the end of 2019-20) Attendance at the RDM training sessions – at least 25% of students registered from October 2019 to attend on-site training by the end of 2019-20. Once the provision is available online, at least 50% uptake of the session by the students registered from October 2019.	RKE UREC HRD RI Ethics Leads UREC HRD	June 2020

Principle 6 : Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers

6.1   The UK legislative framework outlaws discrimination on the basis of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, race or religion. It also requires public bodies to take positive steps to promote equality, based on evidence and priorities, and to develop specific schemes and action plans related to gender, race and disability to address specific issues of underrepresentation or lack of progression.

6.2   As is the case for society as a whole, UK research will benefit from increasing equality and diversity in the recruitment and retention of researchers. The Concordat encourages the recruitment and retention of researchers from the widest pool of available talent, including those from diverse backgrounds.

6.3

Actions in Support of Principle 6

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Date
D				

As part of the work programme of the E&D Committee, apply for Mindful Employer and the Gender and Race Equality Charter Marks in 2015.

Principle 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

7.1

Action	Description of Activity and Progress	Success Measure	Lead	Date
				areas with a significant reason for concern