



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

**CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT
THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF
RESEARCHERS:
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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Summary: This is the implementation plan for the University to align itself with the national Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.	

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers Implementation Plan

Introduction

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers sets out the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. It aims to increase the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK and to improve the quantity, quality and impact of research for the benefit of UK society and the economy.

The Concordat aims to ensure that researchers are nurtured and supported during their career development. By setting out clear expectations for researchers, research managers, research institutions, and funders of research, the Concordat aims to enhance the research workforce and thereby sustain research excellence, bringing benefits to health, economy and wellbeing in the UK.

The Concordat document (<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/vitae-concordat-vitae-2011.pdf>) consists of a set of key principles for the future support and management of research careers and, under each principle, an explanation of how it may be embedded into institutional practice.

The Concordat's key principles are:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
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.
3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

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

The main constituency for which the Concordat seeks to enhance career development consists of research-only staff, research assistants and postgraduate research students. However, the principles set out above also apply, to a lesser extent, to teaching staff at the university because of the requirement that staff undertake 400 hours (FTE) of RKE or related activity per year.

The University of Winchester is committed to implementing the Concordat, and indeed was strongly recommended to do so at institutional audit in 2009. This document lays out the practical steps of implementation.

Implementation at the University of Winchester – Action Plan

Recruitment and Selection

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

‘Research posts should only be advertised as a fixed-term post where there is a recorded and justifiable reason.’ (Concordat Principle 1.3)

Action 1 Check all relevant job adverts and descriptions. [HR]

Action 2 Line managers to enshrine this principle in drafting of relevant job adverts and descriptions. [Deans, Heads of Dept.]

‘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 organisation.’ (Concordat Principle 1.6)

Action 3 Pay grades and career progression for Research Assistants and related posts should be clearly set out by HR for research staff and their line managers. [HR]

Recognition and Value

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. (Concordat Principle 2)

‘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.’ (Concordat Principle 2.1)

‘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 organisations.’ (Concordat Principle 2.2)

Action 4 Line managers and potential line managers to be familiarised with the Fixed Term Employees Regulations and JNCHES guidance. [HR]

‘Research managers should be required to participate in active performance management, including career development guidance, and supervision of those who work in their teams. Employers should ensure that research managers are made aware of, and understand their responsibilities for the management of researchers and should provide training opportunities, including equality and diversity training, to support research managers in doing this. Institutions will wish to consider how research managers’ performance in these areas is developed, assessed and rewarded, and how effectively this supports good research management.’ (Concordat Principle 2.3)

Action 5 Staff development training, in relation to the issues raised in the paragraph above, to be provided for line managers of researchers. [Staff Development & Training Group]

‘Organisational systems must be capable of supporting continuity of employment for researchers, such as funding between grants, other schemes for supporting time between grant funding, or systems for redeploying researchers within organisations where resources allow. Funders are expected to make it a priority to consider how their policies, guidance and funding can be enhanced to help employers to achieve this objective.’ (Concordat Principle 2.4)

Action 6 Line managers to ensure continuity of contracts, wherever possible. [Deans, Heads of Dept.]

‘Pay progression for researchers should be transparent and in accordance with procedures agreed between the relevant trade unions and the employers nationally and locally. In HEIs, pay progression will be in accordance with the Framework Agreement, though recognising the flexibility that institutions have in implementing the Framework.’ (Concordat Principle 2.5)

See Action 3

‘Researchers need to be offered opportunities to develop their own careers as well as having access to additional pay progression. Promotion opportunities should be transparent, effectively communicated and

open to all staff. It is helpful if clear career frameworks for early stage researchers are outlined in organisational HR strategies.’ (Concordat Principle 2.6)

Action 7 All research posts to be fully advertised internally. [HR, Faculty Managers]

Support and Career Development

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

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

‘It is recognised that positions of permanent employment are limited in the UK research and academic communities and that not all researchers will be able to obtain such a position. It is, therefore, imperative that researcher positions in the UK are attractive in themselves (and not, for example, solely as potential stepping stones to permanent academic positions). This requires that they provide career development which is comparable to, and competitive with, other employment sectors.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.1)

See Action 3

‘Employers, funders and researchers recognise that researchers need to develop transferable skills, delivered through embedded training, in order to stay competitive in both internal and external job markets. Therefore, as well as the necessary training and appropriate skills, competencies and understanding to carry out a funded project, researchers also need support to develop the communication and other professional skills that they will need to be both effective researchers and highly-skilled professionals in whatever field they choose to enter.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.3)

‘All employers will wish to review how their staff can access professional, independent advice on career management in general, particularly the prospect of employment beyond their immediate discipline base, or offering training and placements to broaden awareness of other fields and sectors.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.4)

Action 8 Staff development and career development opportunities to be made available to all research staff and PGR students. [Staff Development & Training Group, RKE Centre]

‘Researchers benefit from clear systems that help them to plan their career development. Employers and funding bodies should assist researchers to make informed choices about their career progression by ensuring that their own policies and processes for promotion and reward are transparent and clearly stated and that all researchers are aware of local and national career development strategies.’ (Concordat Principle 3.5)

Action 9 Set up email network to inform research staff and PGR students about career issues and opportunities. [RKE Centre]

‘Employers should provide a planned induction programme for researchers, on appointment to a research post, to ensure early effectiveness through the understanding of the organisation and its policies and procedures. They should also ensure that research managers provide effective research environments for the training and development of researchers and encourage them to maintain or start their continuous professional development.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.6)

Action 10 Include all research staff in the staff induction programme and PGR students in the PGR induction programme. [Staff Development & Training Group, RKE Centre]

‘Employers also should provide a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, which should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers. All researchers should be familiar with such provisions and arrangements.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.8)

‘Research managers should actively encourage researchers to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, so far as is possible within the project. It should be stressed that developmental activity can often have a direct impact on the success of the project, by distributing work, taking advantage of individual strengths and talents, and increasing the skill and effectiveness of researchers in key areas such as writing for publication or communicating with a wider audience. Funding bodies acknowledge that the training of researchers is a significant contribution to research output and they encourage employers and mentors to adopt these practices.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.9)

‘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.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.10)

Action 11 All research staff and PGR students to be included in the Annual Review process. [Deans, Heads of Dept., PGR supervisors]

‘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.’ (Concordat Principle 3/4.11)

Action 12 Review the compatibility of Winchester's CPD scheme with those of other comparable institutions. [HR, Staff Development & Training Group]

'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.' (Concordat Principle 3/4.12)

Action 13 Mentoring of and training for research staff and PGR students involved in teaching, to be provided. [Deans, Heads of Dept., PGR supervisors]

'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.' (Concordat Principle 3/4.13)

Action 14 Research staff, on whatever form of contract, to be considered full members of their academic departments, and to be represented on relevant staff committees. [Heads of Dept.]

'Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.' (Concordat Principle 3/4.13)

See Actions 10, 11 and 13

Researchers' Responsibilities

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

'Researchers should recognise that the primary responsibility for managing and pursuing their career is theirs. Accordingly, they should identify training needs and actively seek out opportunities for learning and development in order to further that career and take personal responsibility for their choices. Research managers and employers also have a responsibility to provide honest advice and appropriate structures, and to equip researchers with the tools to manage their own careers. Research managers should encourage research staff under their supervision to attend appropriate training and career development courses and events.' (Concordat Principle 5.5)

'Researchers should ensure that their career development requirements and activities are regularly discussed, monitored and evaluated throughout the year in discussion with their research manager and mentor, and that they commit themselves fully to all such activities. Researchers are encouraged to record their Personal Development Planning (PDP) and CPD activities, a log of which may be presented to current and future employers as appropriate.' (Concordat Principle 5.6)

See Actions 8, 9 and 13

Diversity and Equality

Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers. (Concordat Principle 6)

‘It should be emphasised that the demanding nature of research careers has a disproportionate effect on certain groups. We strongly recommend that all members of the UK research community actively address the disincentives and indirect obstacles to retention and progression in research careers which may disproportionately impact on some groups more than others.’ (Concordat Principle 6.3)

‘Employers should ensure that the working conditions for researchers provide the flexibility necessary for successful research performance in line with legal requirements. Employers should recognise that for parents and others who have taken career breaks, including parental leave, have worked part-time, or have taken atypical routes into research, the “early career” period may be prolonged, and this may be a time where the risk of attrition from the research path is most acute. Working conditions should allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career.’ (Concordat Principle 6.4)

‘It is important for employers to respond flexibly to requests for changed work patterns and to resist instant refusals on the assumption that, because research has always been carried out in a particular way, it cannot be done differently.’ (Concordat Principle 6.5)

Action 15 Review working conditions of research staff, in relation to the issues raised above. [HR]

Implementation and Review

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. (Concordat Principle 7)

‘The signatories agree to draw up an implementation plan for the Concordat, to ensure a coherent and sustained approach by organisations operating in the sector and the appropriate use of survey and monitoring tools such as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS).’ (Concordat Principle 7.2d)

‘The signatories agree to undertake and publish a major review of the implementation of the Concordat after three years reporting to the signatories and taking account of progress against the benchmark report and the views of researchers and employers (both outside and within the HE sector).’ (Concordat Principle 7.2e)

Action 16 Respond to requests for data on implementation from national bodies. [RKE Centre]

'The signatories recognise the value of innovation in practices and of sharing practice between institutions and aim to promote these throughout the implementation and review process. The funding signatories will consider aligning their support for transferable and career development skills. It is expected that Vitae, the national programme dedicated to realising the potential of researchers, funded by the Research Councils, will play a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the sector to implement aspects of the Concordat, as well as establishing strategic partnerships between funders.'

(Concordat Principle 7.4)

Action 17 Make use of Vitae website for viewing best practice elsewhere, and for adding material on our best practice. [RKE Centre]

Action 18 Review the progress in implementation of this Plan at the June 2015 meeting of Senate RKE Committee. [RKE Centre]

Further Reading

European Union 2005 *EUR 21620 — The European Charter for Researchers. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities
<<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>>

RCUK 2008 *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*
<<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/vitae-concordat-vitae-2011.pdf>>