

Mapping the University's provision for Research Staff on to the revised Concordat

Introduction

This report will discuss the extent to which the University currently meets the principles and the framework of implementation that the revised Concordat sets out. It will outline areas where the University needs to develop its practice and a process to enable it to do so.

Background

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was signed on 25th June 2008 by Universities UK, Research Councils UK, trusts, Government departments and funders of research. It builds on the 1996 Concordat which set standards for the career management and conditions of employment of contract Research Staff. The revised concordat updates matters in the light of developments such as Sir Gareth Roberts report Set for Success, and the European Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.¹

Content

The revised Concordat sets out seven principles which cover the areas of: recruitment and retention; valuing researchers and their contribution; skills and career development; life long learning; researchers' responsibility for their own development; promoting diversity and equality in their recruitment and promotion; and the regular collective review of progress in the implementation of the Concordat. Accompanying each principle is a set of recommendations for embedding them into institutional practice.

Significance

The Concordat sets up a framework within which the University can develop its provision for Research Staff. Sir Ivor Crewe has been appointed to chair the board in charge of the tri-annual review of the implementation of the Concordat. It is likely that the University's provision for Research Staff will be rated against other HEIs. If the University achieves a positive evaluation this may add to its ability to recruit high calibre Research Staff.

Conclusion

The University's current provision for Research Staff has been mapped against the revised Concordat overleaf. This demonstrates that the University's support for Research Staff in many of the areas outlined in the Concordat is already of a high standard. However, the following areas need further examination:

- Equal Opportunities and Diversity training for all members of recruitment and promotion panels;
- Evaluation and possible further development of mentoring schemes for Research Staff at the University;
- Increased take up by Principal Investigators of training in leading and managing Research Staff;
- Embedding and supporting the management of this issue at a School level;
- Revision and re-launch of the local Concordat in line with the revised national Concordat;
- Advancement through the Athena Swan award scheme;
- Development of web page dedicated to the needs of international Research Staff arriving at the University as part of Research Staff web site;
- Review of Maths Meteorology and Physics initiative to support RS via Staff Development Review with possible roll out to the rest of the University.

These areas will be discussed by the Research Staff Working Group, chaired by Prof. Richard Ellis Dean of Life Sciences, which will report to the University Board for Research and Staffing Committee in the Summer term with a strategy document in response to the Concordat.

¹ Links to these documents can be found at the Policy Library page of the RS web-site
<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/researchstaff/about/rstaff-policylibrary.asp>

Mapping University's Provision onto the Revised Concordat:

Concordat Principle & Framework	University's provision	Areas for improvement and plans for implementation
<p>Principle 1 Recognition of the importance of recruiting selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All chairs of interview panels receive training in recruitment and selection. • Mentoring policy for new Research Staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Centrally administered mentoring scheme. ○ School provision of mentoring for Research Staff. • CSTD New Staff Induction. • CSTD Research Staff Induction. • Email to new Research Staff and Principal Investigators to support role induction. • Induction section on Research Staff website. 	<p>Training for Recruitment and Promotion Panels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing for Heads of School and School Directors of Research on all aspects of the University's application of the revised Concordat. • Roll out Recruitment and Selection training for all academics on a School by School basis by Autumn 2010. New Academic staff to be automatically enrolled on Recruitment and Selection Training. <p>Effectiveness and take up of Mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of School mentoring schemes to take place over Summer 2009.
<p>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.</p> <p>Point 3. Research managers should be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay levels for RS have been put on the same level as equivalent staff through the implementation of the Framework Agreement and Equal Value Audit. • Human Resources strategy point 39: "We will instigate particular measures to develop our ability to manage and develop Research Staff and RCUK Fellows, to enhance our reputation for research quality". • Implementation of the Fixed Term 	<p>Increased take up of Management Training for Principal Investigators to equip them to deliver Point 3.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing concerning the new Concordat and resultant policy changes and training provision for PIs on a School basis. <p>Embedding the management of the above issue at School Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PVC for Research Dianne Berry has now requested Schools to include the following in their annual

<p>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</p>	<p>Employees Regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Concordat for Research Staff. • The provision of a dedicated “one stop shop” web-site for Research Staff. http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/researchstaff/rstaff-home.asp <p>CSTD provision for developing Principal Investigators as leaders and managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two Institute of Leadership and Management accredited programmes plus five one off courses. • There are a further two courses aimed at the specific needs of PIs: Leading Research Groups and the Essential Guide for New Principal Investigators. • CSTD also provide School based briefings for Principal Investigators on management and policy issues relating to Research Staff. • Publication and distribution of <i>Good practice for the management of Research Staff</i> to all Principal Investigators in 2007. • Under development: a “one stop shop” web-site for principal investigators to enhance their skills as research managers and leaders and develop their own careers. 	<p>research planning process: <u>“Implementing the Research Concordat</u> Please report on the extent to which the School’s PIs and research staff have participated in staff training and development activities over the past year, including SDRs. Indicate how you develop the leadership and management skills of your PIs and the research, career and personal management skills of your research staff.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSTD in conjunction with Finance and HR Systems have developed a way of accessing training records for staff in Schools which indicates those who have and have not attended training. They will provide this information to Schools annually. <p>Revision and re-launch of local Concordat reflecting changes in National Concordat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised Local Concordat has been passed by Staffing Committee and the University/UCU Committee with minor amendments. After it has been approved by Council it will go on to be launched at the Research Staff Conference which is provisionally booked for 4th November.
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<p>Principle 3 Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twenty specific courses for Research Staff including courses on leadership and management, communication and entrepreneurship as part of the wider provision of 350 courses available to staff this year. • There are a wide range of development opportunities for Research Staff outlined on the Research Staff web-site. 	<p>Positive change in training and development culture amongst Research Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in PI participation in management development (see above). • Embedding and supporting the management of this issue at a School level. • Enabling increased Research Staff involvement via the establishment of a Research Staff Committee and a Research Staff Association. A Research Staff Committee has been formed and has met three times. It is made up of school representatives. Currently its focus is the organisation of the Research Staff Conference and devising how a Research Staff Association would work. A networking site for Research Staff has also been established at http://uorresearch.ning.com/ • Revision of Local Concordat
<p>Principle 4 The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accredited course in research career management is offered to Research Staff. This introduces Research Staff to reflective practice and uses a Professional Development Record (PDR) to map their skills and enable them to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further advertising of courses has been commissioned. This year there will be a Training and Development Brochure published for Research Staff and delivered to every member of RS at the University.

	<p>think about their career direction. The PDR is available on the RS website to download for all Research Staff to use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses for RS range in level, from those aimed at new RS such as Peer Reviewing Papers, through to high level courses on Leadership and Management. • A research project to map the career development of RS from Reading will commence this year to enable the University to clarify the career options for existing Research Staff. (Pending Roberts funding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new insert for RS will go into their dedicated Welcome Pack, to raise the profile of their provision and the Local Concordat. • CCMS has funded this project. Interviews with Research Staff who have finished their contracts are ongoing. The expected output is going to be 10 case studies. A second project is in the planning stage where interviewees will be recruited before they leave the University.
<p>Principle 5 Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating to RS their own responsibility for their development is one of the key aims of the Certificate in Research Career Management. • Research staff are prompted about this in the Local Concordat which is included in their Welcome Folder when they arrive at the University. • The Local Concordat is one of the items discussed at Research Staff Induction. • The Staff Development Review should encourage RS to discuss these issues. • According to the 2005 Careers in Research On-line Survey the level of participation in the University's SDR was 64.5%. This made it the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further increase in SDR participation rates for RS combined with increase in positive feedback on usefulness of SDR. • Evaluation of Maths Meteorology and Physics scheme. If successful, role out to other Schools. <p>Revision of Local Concordat.</p> <p>Increase in SDR participation rates and positive feedback on the usefulness of SDR.</p> <p>This will be communicated at all stages of a researcher's contract at the University. It will be in the local concordat that they receive in their</p>

	<p>highest take up rate when compared to a range of institutions from the 94 and Russell groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new policy initiative on supporting Research Staff in Maths Meteorology and Physics addresses this issue through SDR. 	<p>Welcome Pack. It will be raised as one issue to be discussed under their Topics for Discussion with their Principal Investigator, emailed to them after they have joined the University. It will be discussed at Research Staff Induction. Discussed at the Research Staff Conference as part of the application of the Concordat.</p>
<p>Principle 6 Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of chairs of interview panels. • The University policies on Equal Opportunities & Diversity apply to Research Staff. • The Athena Swan Bronze Award. • The introduction of a Career Development Planning workshop for women Research Staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim is to roll this out by Autumn 2010. • Continued partnership with UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering & Technology (SET) on events to support female Research Staff. • To be built Summer 09. • Appropriate training of all interview and promotion panel members. • Advancement through the Athena Swan Award Scheme. • Addressing the needs of new international Research Staff via a specific page on RS web site.
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University participates in the Careers in Research On-line Survey and is contributing to the process of developing the contents of the next version via the Research Staff Development Advisory Group (RSDAG) of Vitae where the University is represented.² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University has just participated in the Careers in Research On-line Survey 2009. • The University's Career Profiling Survey will enable some evaluation of the impact of the policies to support the career and personal development of Research Staff. • Give input on the development of

² Justin Hutchence represents the University and the Vitae South East Hub on Research Staff matters.

		the review process via RSDAG and respond appropriately when the review is implemented.
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