IMPLEMENTING THE CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCHERS:
Summary of current provision and action plan
2011-13

Foreword

At Leicester, we have high expectations of how our researchers are supported, managed and developed. We have endeavoured to create an inclusive and collaborative community of scholarship that attracts and retains people with outstanding talent and potential from all walks of life and all parts of the world. As stated in our Research Strategy, we aim to match institutional aspirations to individual excellence, and provide a stimulating and supportive environment for all students and staff. We see responsible leadership as key to creating excellence in research -- a leadership that is consultative, leaving communication open at all levels, whilst equally emphasising personal responsibility and accountability.

Our research staff are a highly valued part of our research environment. We are committed to providing them timely and effective support, both in their research, and in the wider choices they make about their careers. We fully endorse and support the Concordat, and our commitment is exemplified in the many strands of work underway to embed the principles of the Concordat into several key strategy and policy areas. This Action Plan provides us a baseline, and we will monitor and evaluate our performance at regular intervals.

Sir Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor

Introduction

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was signed on 25 June 2008 by Universities UK, Research Councils UK, various trusts, charitable organisations, 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 takes cognisance of further developments including Sir Gareth Roberts' Set for Success and the European Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The revised Concordat sets out seven principles which cover the areas of (i) recruitment and retention; (ii) valuing researchers and their contribution; (iii) skills and career development; (iv) lifelong learning; (v) researchers' responsibilities for their own development; (vi) promoting diversity and equality in their recruitment and promotion; and (vii) the regular collective review of progress in the implementation of the Concordat

With a view to both showcasing the work Leicester is doing, and to enable the mapping of provision in line with the Concordat, a new site has been launched on the university website (see http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/staff-development/research/concordat). The site provides guidance on best practice and also includes examples activities being carried out in different parts of the university towards implementing the Concordat.

This document is informed by a gap analysis conducted in March 2010 to assess where Leicester stood in terms of the core principles enshrined in the Concordat. The analysis took into account a broad range of stakeholders. Letters were sent out in mid-2009 to heads of department, heads of college and all research staff to both raise awareness of the principles enshrined in the Concordat, and with a view to map provision and align policies to best meet the objectives of the Concordat in relation to early career researchers. The Academic Practice Unit was tasked with mapping provision in line with Concordat guidelines and soliciting responses and ways forward at a central and College-level. At the central level, there was close engagement with the Human Resources Division, and at the level of the four colleges, discussions were begun and continue at College research strategy meetings to look at improving provision for early career research staff. There was also a closer examination of the responses from the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) conducted in 2009, with special focus group discussions with research staff to get a wider and deeper insight into some of the issues involved.

This document discusses the extent to which the University of Leicester currently meets the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and underlines the areas where more work is needed, both in terms of setting up processes, and providing support to existing practice. As such it will provide a baseline against which to review progress in two years' time. An Annex (1) provides a list of roles and responsibilities against various action points.

The University will create a Concordat Steering Group, led by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) to oversee the effective implementation of the Concordat. There will be representation from Human Resources, the Training and Development Group, the Academic Practice Unit and research staff and the Steering Group will have responsibility for assessing the implementation on a half-yearly basis against suggested timelines (see Appendix 1) with a full report on implementation by end March 2013.

Current Provision and Action Plan 2010-12

(The numbers against 'Further Action Required' cross-reference action points to the Appendix of Roles, Responsibilities and Timelines.)

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

Current Provision
The University is dedicated to attracting and retaining excellent, committed staff, and values the experience, skills and knowledge that they hold. In order to recruit, select and retain researchers with high potential:
- Training is available to Principal Investigators (PIs) and responsible others in good recruitment and selection practices and the law.
- All staff, whether on fixed term or open-ended contracts, are covered by procedures to support the fair and equitable management of their employment status.
- There has been a move from fixed term to open-ended contracts wherever possible, with tenure rights accruing after continuous employment for four years. (The University's policy and procedure with respect to fixed term contracts, as well as all related documentation, is available at http://www.le.ac.uk/personnel/docs/ftc.html.) The University tries to ensure that fixed term contracts are used only where appropriate and where there is a legitimate reason for doing so.
- Managers of staff employed on a fixed term contract are offered full support and guidance in order to ensure compliance with current legislation.

- The University has a redeployment policy to minimise compulsory redundancies for all staff, including those on open-ended and fixed term contracts.
- HR offers and provides support to managers, and grant holders, at meetings with all staff at risk of redundancy, irrespective of type of contract they are on, to discuss future options and support available.
- The University has a single pay spine encompassing all staff, including career researchers.

Further Action Required
- The retention of researchers of quality and experience is vital to building up Leicester's research profile. As such, a clear career development strategy is needed for those on a research career, and should include not only 'early stage' but also 'experienced' researchers (4.1).
- There must be more active provision of local induction for researchers at departmental level, preferably provided by the PI within a month of their being in post (2.1).
- It might be useful to publish (online) a Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff (1.3).
- The effectiveness of research staff redeployment needs to be evaluated. For instance, the possibility of setting up a Talent Register (as, for instance, practised in Edinburgh) which staff coming to the end of a contract are encouraged to join. A published Redeployment Guidance for Recruiters would also be useful (see, for instance, http://www.humanresources.ed.ac.uk/Recruiters_Manual/Talent_Register/Redeployment_Guidelines_Recruiters.pdf) so there is clarity on university procedure in this matter (1.4; 1.5).
- The University is committed to embedding Performance and Appraisal/Review meetings for all staff. This should increase occurrence of annual appraisal/review meetings for both research staff and their managers/PIs, thus supporting and recognising their achievements (1.6).

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.

Current Provision
- There is increasing recognition of the need to engage researchers in key discussions and decision-making across the university, particularly in the two colleges with a large research staff representation (Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology (MedBioPsy) and Science and Engineering (S&E). A number of departments have already begun to include research staff representation in staff meetings to ensure that (i) research staff are aware of teaching/research-related developments in the department/university; and (ii) have a say in matters concerning them.
- In MedBioPsy, a senior academic has been tasked with leading support provision for early career research staff, with career support, mentoring and support for self-organisation available to all research staff.
- There is also research staff representation on the Training and Development Working Group to bring to the table issues affecting researchers at a central, university-wide level.
- There is a move to support researcher requests for taking on teaching and supervision where possible, with recognition being granted for such activities with a view to helping building researchers' career.
- A dedicated research staff web presence has been created, which includes policy documents, training and skills upgradation opportunities. A monthly newsletter from the Academic Practice Unit provides a digest of information and opportunities on a regular basis.

- A short presentation on fixed term and open-ended contracts provided by Personnel at the central induction event would give researchers added clarity on their position, particularly in terms of rights and entitlements (1.7).
- There is an ongoing dialogue on how PIs might best be supported in relation to their responsibilities (legal and managerial) with respect to their research staff. More leadership development opportunities in an academic/research context need to be provided (1.1; 1.2; 2.3; 2.4; 5.3).
- Interpretative documents (such as FAQs and Fact Sheets) which spell out what policies mean to research staff and PIs (e.g. maternity, fixed term contracts, redundancy, redeployment) must be made available on the HR web pages, with the links sent out to all PIs and research staff (1.8).

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

Current Provision

- The last few months have seen a significant surge in sessions supporting the personal and career development of research staff. Sessions such as 'Moving your Career in the Right Direction' and 'Broadening Horizons' support researchers to consider their future career options, both within and outside academia.
- A Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA)-accredited programme is in place for early career researchers to support the development of their research and more generic skills and capabilities (the Enhancing Research Practice programme).
- Support is being extended to researcher requests for opportunities for teaching and supervision, where possible.

Further Action Required

- Further work is needed with PIs to raise awareness amongst them of the right of early career researchers to training and continuing professional development activities at the rate of about 0.5 days a month, whilst making a distinction between training that is strictly project-related, and that which is for personal and professional development in a broader sense (1.9; 2.4; 2.5; 3.2).
- A wider range of opportunities will be available for exploration as the Enterprising Researcher programme is rolled out, providing support for attracting research grants and income, communicating with non-academic audiences, knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer and enterprise development (4.1; 5.2).
- Delivery of training, support and guidance to researchers post-Roberts needs to be both sustained and enhanced, using face-to-face as well as web resources (5.2).
- The training for researchers who teach/ demonstrate must include externally accredited programmes (e.g. Higher Education Academy) (2.2; 5.4).

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

Current Provision

- See points against Principle 3 above.

- Opportunities are provided for researchers to reflect on career direction and strategy (e.g. Broadening Horizons) and develop their personal and professional development plans
- There are opportunities within and outside the university for personal and career development and lifelong learning, advertised through a dedicated monthly research staff newsletter and research staff website
- A mentoring scheme is currently being trialled in MedBioPsy to provide support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers.

Further Action Required
- PIs/research managers need to actively encourage researchers to undertake continuing professional development activities, so far as it is possible within their project (2.5, 3.2, 5.1).
- Personnel Services need to provide an information sheet for PIs and researchers on entitlement of time to undertake training which is not project-related (1.9).
- The university needs to make explicit the career paths available to research staff (e.g. Research Assistant, Research Associate, through to Senior Research Fellow and further, with a clear promotions policy) (4.1).
- The University must ensure that the current University appraisal scheme is adhered to with appropriate reporting mechanisms in place (1.6; 2.6).

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

Current Provision
- Early career researchers informed about Concordat and opportunities for development at induction events held three times a year.
- Support is available through a range of activities and personnel (including a centrally supported staff member dedicated to meeting research staff requirements based in the Academic Practice Unit) to help researchers chart out their own pathways and make informed choices and decisions.
- Networking and self-organisation of research staff is being facilitated, for example in MedBioPsy, by a senior academic tasked with supporting early career researchers. Furthermore, opportunities for learning and sharing experiences across groups are being advertised through a dedicated monthly newsletter for research staff.
- The University has in place strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s) (see https://swww2.le.ac.uk/offices/researchsupport/policyandstrategy/Research%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20Jul%202011.pdf).
- The University's policies and practices specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial organisations, as provided for under specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement.

Further Action Required
- Networks to be supported to help researchers develop their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge where appropriate and facilitate its use in influencing policy or commercialising their research (3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 4).

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

Current Provision
- The University ensures that all recruitment policies and practices are open and fair, treating all candidates equally. Recruitment and Selection training is compulsory for everybody before they take part in recruitment panels.
- The University supports and promotes health and well-being at work, with support to staff with disabilities or health issues through its Occupational Health service.

Further Action Required
- The University is an Athena Swan bronze award holder and this is an area where we need to do even more both to further justify the award and to make successful submissions for department-based silver and gold awards (3.5).
- Research grant-income providers must be lobbied for clarity on maternity leave, and pay, and no-cost extensions, to avoid potential discrimination against women, particularly in the sciences and medicine, where the majority of research staff are employed (4.2).

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.

Current Provision
- At the moment, there is provision to re-visit issues around research staff every six months at college research committee meetings, or the Training and Development Working Group, which then feeds into the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee (VCAC).
- We continue to engage with policy initiatives at the macro-level for research staff, aligning policies at departmental, college and university level to national and Europe-wide requirements.
- The University is committed to running the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) this year and in 2013, and a further review/implementation plan will be devised on the basis of the emerging results.

Further Action Required
- The University should consider the creation of a Concordat Steering Group, chaired by the PVC Research and Enterprise, and with membership from HR, the Training and Development Working Group and the Academic Practice Unit (4.3).
- Administration of the Principal Investigators and Leaders of Research Survey (PIRLS) in 2011 (5.6).

APPENDIX 1: Implementing the Concordat
Roles, Responsibilities and Timelines

Below is a list of roles, responsibilities and timelines for reviewing activities to be undertaken towards implementing the Concordat to support early career researchers:

1. **Division of Human Resources:**

   The Division of Human Resources is responsible for:

1.1	Training for Principal Investigators (PIs) on recruitment and selection practice	Ongoing (review in 2013)
1.2	Supporting and guiding managers of staff on fixed term contracts, and/or at meetings with staff at risk of redundancy	Ongoing (review in 2013)
1.3	Publishing an online 'Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff' which would then form part of the recruitment guidance. All existing and new PIs will be sent this link.	December 2011
1.4	Publishing an online 'Redeployment Policy with relevant Guidance for Recruiters' for use by PIs	June 2012
1.5	Assessing effectiveness of staff redeployment policy and practice to ensure it meets current and future needs	Ongoing (review in 2013)
1.6	Embedding performance and appraisal review meetings for all staff	Ongoing (Review June 2012)
1.7	Making presentations on fixed-term and open-ended contract application and conditions at university induction events for research staff	From September 2011
1.8	Making available interpretative documents (FAQs/factsheets) on maternity, fixed term contracts, redundancy, redeployment etc. on Research staff website with links sent to all PIs and research staff	December 2011
1.9	Information sheet for PIs and researchers on entitlement of time to undertake training which is not project-related	December 2011

2. **Principal Investigator/ Line Manager:**

   The PI/Line Manager is responsible for:

2.1	Taking initiative in providing local induction for researchers at departmental level within a month of their being in post	October 2011
2.2	Supporting research staff requests for teaching and supervision, where possible, to enhance CVs, as well as provide more leadership development opportunities	March 2012
2.3	Ensuring right of research staff to be listed and /or quoted in the context of their contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents etc., or to publish their research results independently of their supervisor(s)	Ongoing (review in 2013)
2.4	Actively participating in development opportunities offered to enhance ability to effectively manage and support research staff	Ongoing (review in March

		2012)
2.5	Raising awareness of right of research staff to continuing professional development activities at the rate of .5 days per month	Ongoing (review in 2013)
2.6	Ensuring that appraisal of research staff is undertaken on a regular basis	March 2012

3.   Colleges:

Colleges are responsible for:

3.1	Engaging researchers in key discussions and decision-making departmentally and at college-level on research activities and plans	March 2012
3.2	Raising awareness of right of research staff to continuing professional development activities at the rate of .5 days per month	March 2012
3.3	Rolling out mentoring scheme to provide support and guidance for personal and professional development of researchers	December 2011
3.4	Facilitating networking and self-organisation of research staff	Ongoing (review in 2013)
3.5	Encouraging departments to make submissions for Athena silver and gold awards	Ongoing (review in 2013)

4.   Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Research):

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Enterprise and Research) is responsible for:

4.1	Developing career development strategies for early stage to experienced research staff	June 2012
4.2	Lobbying research grant providers for clarity on maternity leave and pay, and no-cost extensions to avoid potential discrimination against women, particularly in the sciences and medicine	Ongoing (review in 2013)
4.3	Creating a Concordat Steering Group with membership from HR, each of the four colleges and Academic Practice Unit to embed the principles of the Concordat into University strategy.	October 2011

5.   Academic Practice Unit

The Academic Practice Unit is responsible for:

5.1	Maintaining and continuing to update research staff pages on website, and providing a digest of information and opportunities on a monthly basis through a newsletter	Ongoing (review in 2013)
5.2	Continuing to provide and improve delivery of training and support in personal and career development for research staff with face-to-face as well as web resources	Ongoing (review in 2013)
5.3	Providing a training programme for mid career researchers and PIs on research leadership and management	March 2012

5.4	Advertising to research staff accredited and non-accredited programmes for development of skills and capabilities relevant to them	Ongoing (review in 2013)
5.5	Informing research staff about Concordat and opportunities for development through induction events	Ongoing (review in 2013)
5.6	Coordinating running of CROS and PIRLS surveys	June 2011