Action Plan (Concordat Implementation Strategy) 2017-19

This Action Plan builds on previous action plans from 2011 and 2017. These plans can be found at:

http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/policies-and-other-important-documents

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A: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

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

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
A.1.3 *Research posts should only be advertised as a fixed-term post where there is a recorded and justifiable reason.* *Also see B.2.2*	HR Director / Senior Business Partners	Quarterly monitoring via RCIG.	We will demonstrate consistent and justifiable use of fixed-term appointments across the University.
A.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.* *Also see B.2.6* (Aligned to AS action 4.5) Although exit interviews are conducted with all staff leaving the University, it has been difficult to capture the next destinations of the researchers that have left or moved into other roles within the University. Therefore, we will strengthen the exit process for research staff, to include exit interviews. We will appoint an external / independent agency to support this activity and (a) Review, discuss and approve subsequent outcomes.	Director of HR, Deans and Directorate heads, DVC (AA&CE)	(a) Dec 2017 (b) Jan 2018 (c) Jan 2018 onwards (d) Jan 2019 (e)	(a) Appointment of Agency and exit interviews conducted. (b) Increase in exit interview completion from 21% to 60% of all leavers by Dec 2019 (to be monitored by HR). (c) Confidential feedback provided to EO & HR Committee, Deans and Directorate on reasons and trends. (d) Improvement actions identified and annual account of data provided in HR and E&D report. (e) Researcher Lifecycle to parallel to Academic Lifecycle drafted.

(b) Complement external agency with improved leaver processes and follow up post TIGER implementation. (c) Feedback quantitative and qualitative trends to EO & HR Committee. (d) Request researcher sub-group data from the above and feedback to RCIG to inform further actions if required. (e) Adapt the Academic Lifecycle so that a corresponding Researcher Lifecycle exists for all research staff – to inform recruitment, performance review and promotions.			
A.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.* A review of researchers' job titles and pay grades suggest inconsistencies in determining pay and grade across different projects. We will (a) Systematically review how pay and grade is determined for researchers recruited to project grants to ensure consistency. (b) Produce a 'Guide on the use of Named Researchers' to assist decisions related to this.	HR, BRICS, RCIG	Review Jan – March 2018 Complete Oct 2018	(a) Pay and grades for researchers on project grants reviewed against role requirements. (b) 'Guide on the use of Named Researchers' drafted and circulated for comment. Guide circulated to grant applicants.

B: RECOGNITION AND VALUE

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.

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
B.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 organisations* See A.1.3 above (Aligned to AS action 4.4) We will	Director of HR (Employment Policy, Relations and Engagement Specialist)	To be completed Dec 2018	(a) RCIG quarterly monitoring of sector practice evidenced in agendas and meeting notes. (b) Options explored and an appropriate way forward to reduce FTCs has been identified. (c) Report submitted to EO & HR Committee detailing outcome of explorations.

(a) Actively monitor sector (best) practice in relation to fixed-term contracts (with particular reference to the S10 group). (b) Explore options for reducing fixed-term contracts (FTC) whilst remaining financially sustainable and explore options for converting FTCs to open-ended contracts where possible and where the funding pipeline is strong. (c) Report findings and recommendations to EO & HR Committee			
B.2.3 *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.* We will (a) Consider different communication options with PIs to clarify researcher management responsibilities (b) Explore adapting the performance checklist for research leaders and PIs to include explicit reference to researcher management expectations. (c) Enhance the PI checklist, to be given out to all PIs on receipt of grant and to include explicit guidance on responsibilities to research staff. (d) Establish a charter to be signed by research staff and their managers in agreement to shared expectations and responsibilities.	RCIG, Senior HR Business Partners, College Directorate	(a) Ongoing activity from Nov 2017 – 2019 (b) Jul 2018 (c) Jan 2018 (d) Jan 2019	(a) There is better understanding amongst PIs of their responsibilities in relation to the management of research staff as demonstrated by improved staff feedback. (b) Discussion with senior management and HR in relation to performance indicators for research leaders. (c) Checklist enhanced to include specific guidance on research staff management and circulated. (d) An agreed set of expectation and responsibilities is drafted for a new Charter, following consultation with research staff and their managers / PIs.
B.2.4 *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* We will (a) Review the redeployment process for research staff (b) Introduce a more structured and active redeployment process for research staff. (c) Create a database of researchers' skills to facilitate better matching of new project requirements to potential internal opportunities.	HR Directorate, RSDO	Jan – Oct 2018	(a) Redeployment process reviewed. (b) Changes to process proposed and circulated for consultation and approval. (c) Database of skills created and researchers invited to populate with their data (subject to approval after consultation).
B.2.5 *Pay progression for researchers should be transparent and in accordance with procedures agreed between the relevant trade unions and the employers nationally and*	DVC (AA&CE), Senior HR	(a) Sept– Dec 2017	(a) Research staff consulted about promotions criteria.

locally. In HEIs, pay progression will be in accordance with the Framework Agreement, though recognising the flexibility that institutions have in implementing the Framework. (And C.3.5) We will (a) Continue to consult with research staff on the regular review and update of promotion criteria (b) Complete review of promotions criteria. (c) Introduce appropriate promotions criteria for research staff. (d) Monitor applications from researchers to the promotions panel and corresponding outcomes.	Business Partner, RSA	(b) Apr 2018 (c) Jun 2018 (d) Annual monitoring Sept 2018; Sept 2019	(b) Review completed and proposed changes circulated for consultation. (c) Changes introduced and communicated to research staff (d) Number and outcome of applications monitored for the review period.
B.2.6 *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.* (And C.3.10) We will (a) Increase participation in PDR / appraisal (b) Communication and engagement of researchers' line managers to ensure all researchers are offered PDR /appraisal	HR / RCIG / RSA	(a) Dec 2017; Dec 2018 (b) Jun 2019	(a) Year on year increase in PDR completion rate across the institution. (b) Increase in percentage of research staff (CROS 2019) invited to complete PDR and completing PDR.

C: SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
C.3.2 *A wide variety of career paths is open to researchers, and the ability to move between different paths is key to a successful career. It is recognised that this mobility brings great benefit to the UK economy and organisations will, therefore, wish to be confident that their culture supports a broad-minded approach to researcher careers and that all career paths are valued equally.* We will (a) Provide better support for supervisors / PIs (those managing researchers) so that they are aware of a breadth of career options for researchers and are better able to signpost them to appropriate resources and expert careers advice.	PDC (Careers), Graduate School, Alumni Office	(a/b) Jan – Feb 2018 (c/d) by Sept 2018	(a) Review of current provision to inform clearer signposting to expertise and resources (internally and externally). (b) Current employer events / provision reviewed to determine appropriateness for researchers. (c) Provision expanded to cover career opportunities outside academia and to include talks from alumni and industrial research partners. (d) Requirements reviewed, and if appropriate, a case made to the University for the appointment of a dedicated careers

(b) Explore availability of Careers events with employers for researchers and promote to researchers. (c) Create a forum for *careers outside academia* to enable researchers to actively engage with alumni and peer expertise through information sharing events. (d) Appoint dedicated p-t careers advisor with explicit remit for researchers, to contribute to Graduate School's Researcher Development Programme.			advisor for researchers to support developments and provision in this area.
C.3.3 *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.* We will (a) Increase the number of PGR students linked to industrial partnerships. (b) Enhance the RDP to include an annual career event for researchers bringing together a range of employers, alumni, and stakeholder. (c) Work with PDC (Careers) to promote career development training opportunities and better signpost career development resources. (d) Explore options to co-facilitate a cross-London careers event with input from industrial partners and businesses. (e) Continue to build on successes of 3MT training and participation, and the high proportion of research staff involvement in knowledge transfer and public engagement activity reported in CROS 2019.	PVC (R&I), DTP Directorate, PDC, GS	(a) Oct 2019 (b) Annual provision from 2018 (c) Annual provision from Oct 2017 (d) Dec 2017 (e) Mar 2018; 2019	(a) 40% of all studentships linked to industrial collaborations by 2019. Increase in doctoral and postdoctoral researchers appointed through the University's DTPs. (b) Event held. (c) 4-6 career development workshops for researchers added to the Graduate School's central Researcher Development Programme (RDP) per annum. (d) Options for a cross-London careers event discussed through the London researcher-developer network and plan agreed. (e) 3MT Competition run annually with increased engagement of public as audience members in the competition final.
C.3.5 *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.* See C.3.3(c) above We will	Graduate School, DVC (Research & Innovation), RSA	Jun / July annually	RSA conference run annually.

Continue to support an annual RSA conference and, following feedback from research staff, invite participation from other staff groups interested in research staff matters			
C.3.6 *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.* We will (a) Run termly supplementary induction for all staff involved in research. (b) Develop new grant holder training to signpost research leaders to development opportunities. (c) Appoint RS ambassadors within colleges / departments to support information sharing and communication about activities and events.	RSDO, Scholarly Communications Office (SCO), Graduate School & Planning, RCIG, RSA, College Deans	(a) From Oct 2017 (b) Mar 2018 (c) Apr 2018	(a) Termly induction delivered for new 'staff involved in research'. (b) Workshop developed and run twice in review period. (c) At least one RS ambassador per College.
C.3.10 *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. (And D.5.6)* We will (a) Increase participation in PDR / appraisal (b) Improve communication to researchers' line managers to ensure all researchers are offered PDR /appraisal	HR (PDR team), RCIG, RSA	(a) Dec 2017; Dec 2018 (b) Jun 2019	(a) Annual increase in PDR completion rate across the institution (b) Increased percentage of research staff (CROS 2019) reporting PDR invitation and completion
C.3.11 *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.* We will (a) Promote BEEC provision and encourage research staff to participate in opportunities to develop their skills in academic practice	BEEC, LTT	From Oct 2017 (ongoing provision)	(a) Increase in researchers' participation in BEEC AP workshops. (b) Increase in level of engagement with online UCT course (availability of specific outcomes to be determined with assistance from LTT).

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
(b) Promote the online course – University and College Teaching – to researchers			
C.3.14 *Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.* We will (a) Identify mentorship opportunities and promote opportunities for researcher participation. (b) Engage researchers in mentor training.	HR (Staff Development), GS	(a) Review: Jan 2019 (b) Mar 2018	(a) More researchers informed about mentorship opportunities and engaged in central programme as mentors or mentees. (b) Mentor training workshop run for researchers.

D: RESEARCHERS' RESPONSIBILITY

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

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
D.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.* We will (a) Enhance provision through the RDP to include workshops on entrepreneurship and innovation (b) Liaise with the innovation hub to better promote entrepreneurship resources and training to researchers (c) Conduct pilot study to explore opportunities and barriers to entrepreneurship and innovation amongst BUL researchers in comparison to researchers in developing world context	GS, PDC (Innovation Hub), RSDO, RSA	(a) Annual (b) By Dec 2018 (c) July 2018	(a) At least 2 workshops per annum added to RDP focused on E&I. (b) Peer network for researchers working in global enterprise and innovation established with calendar of meetings (c) Report on pilot study produced and workshop arranged to share findings.
D.5.6 *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* *(also see actions associated with C.3.10 above)*	GS, Dean of Research, ESRC DTP leads,	(a/b/c) from Oct 2017 ongoing provision (d)Oct 2017 – Dec 2018	(a) Increase in number of staff using the RDF online planner; improved awareness amongst staff of how the RDF planner can be integrated into their annual PDRs. (b) RDF planner used by researchers as part of certain modules of the Brunel Integrated Pathways PhD. (c) Annual focus groups on 3-D Researcher Development Tool.

We will (a) Continue to promote the Vitae RDF planner to research staff and encourage them to record PDP and CPD activities. (b) Maintain integration of the planner within the Brunel Integrated Pathways PhD as a compulsory element of assessment on the course. (c) Continue to conduct annual focus groups with PhD students on their use of the Brunel 3-D Researcher Development Planner and make improvements to the tool as necessary (d) Trial Inkpath (a new app-based PDP tool), as a formal part of our ESRC DTP with the Open and Oxford Universities. This will provide comparative data with which to review researchers' engagement with both the Vitae RDF online planner and BUL 3-D Researcher Development Tool.			(d) Data from Inkpath trial shared with DTP members; trial reviewed and costed.

E: DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

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

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
E.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* *(And E.6.10)* We will: (a) Continue to engage with Athena SWAN and support its action plan, to ensure awareness and integration of good practice. (b) Continue to support the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy and corresponding action plan. (c) The University will run a reasonable adjustment survey via the Business Disability Forum (of which we are members). Two focus groups will be run, one for staff and one for line managers using the results of the survey. (d) Develop a reasonable adjustment policy and hope to create a central fund for reasonable adjustments.	AS Committee, E&D Manager and AS Coordinator	(a/b) Ongoing from 2017 (c)Nov 2017 - Feb 2018 (d)Apr – May 2018	(a/b) Updates provided to RCIG via E&D Manager or AS Coordinator and included in meeting notes. (c)Reasonable adjustment survey and focus groups run by the Business Disability Forum; qualitative report produced. (d)Development of adjustment policy by the Business Disability Forum.

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
E.6.3 *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.* We will: (a) Develop guidance on the use of named researchers on grant applications and monitor usage. (b) Conduct a focus group with BME researchers to further explore issues raised within local CROS 2017 survey and to better inform specific actions around intersectionality.	RSDO, Dean of Research, E&D (HR), RCIG	(a) Ongoing development; complete draft Jul 2018. (b) Focus group Oct 2018 Ongoing activity	(a) New guidance on the use of named researchers on grant applications drafted and approved. (b) Focus group conducted and outcomes reported to RCIG and E&D.
E.6.7 *Employers should aim for a representative balance of gender, disability, ethnicity and age at all levels of staff, including at supervisory and managerial level. This should be achieved on the basis of a transparent equal opportunity policy at recruitment and at all subsequent career stages. Diversity should be reflected on selection and evaluation committees. What is 'representative' will vary according to the nature of the institution and the academic research subject, but institutions should aim to ensure that the percentage of applicants, and ultimately appointments, from a particular group to any given level should reflect the percentage in the available pool at the level immediately below.* We will: Implement a mechanism of regular collection and analysis by gender and race on University boards and committees (e.g. College Management Boards) (associated AS action 5.31).	AS Coordinator / E&D	On-going monitoring	Committee membership reviewed and analysed by gender and race, with data reported to RCIG.

F: IMPLEMENTATION

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.

Concordat clause and proposed action	Lead by	Timescale	Success Criteria / Outcome(s)
This action plan will be overseen by the University's (Researcher) Concordat Implementation Group (RCIG), chaired by the Dean of Research and reporting to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).	Dean of Research, RCIG	Termly monitoring and at least annual reporting	DVC updated by Dean of Research on RCIG activity. Reports delivered at least once a year to relevant committees, including College Research Strategy Committees and E&D Strategy Committee.

We will: Keep abreast of any new recommendations that may emerge following completion of the Concordat Review and integrate new recommendations the outcomes	Concordat Review Committee	2018-19	Updated Concordat circulated to all internal stakeholders Action plans monitored and updated accordingly (by RCIG).
F.7.1 *The implementation of the Concordat's principles will lead to greater integration of researchers into the mainstream management and career development structures of their employing organisations. The aim of this section is to promote implementation through a collective commitment to reviewing its progress.* We will: Encourage senior staff – Research Directors, College Deans and Vice-Deans – to become more actively involved in review, implementation and planning linked to the Concordat.	DVC (R&I), Dean of Research	Jan 2018; Aug 2018; Aug 2019	Senior staff better informed about Concordat actions and invited to participate in implementation and review of activity in their own areas and report to College / Institute Research Committees.

The University is committed, through its action plan and related activity, to creating a positive, supportive and career-enhancing environment for its researchers. Comments, suggestions and queries are encouraged and can be sent to the Researcher Concordat Implementation Group via the Graduate School.

All documents relating to the HR Excellence in Research award can be found at:

http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/policies-and-other-important-documents under EU HR Excellence in Research

GLOSSARY

APEX – Academic Practice and Professional Excellence Framework

AS – Athena SWAN

BEEC – Brunel Educational Excellence Centre

BRAMNET – Brunel Research Administrators and Managers Network

BUL – Brunel University London

CROS – Careers in Research Online Survey

DVC (AA&CE) – Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs & Civic Engagement)

DVC (R&I) – Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation)

E&D – Equality and Diversity team

GS – Graduate School

HR – Human Resources

LTT – Learning Technology Team

PDC – Professional Development Centre

PDP – Professional Development Plan

PDR – Performance and Development Review

PIRLS – Principal Investigators and Research leaders Survey

RCIG – (Researcher) Concordat Implementation Group

RIs – Research Institutes

RDP – Researcher Development Programme

RSA – Research Staff Association

RSDO – Research Support and Development Office

SD – Staff Development

ULRSD - University Lead for Research Staff Development

VLS – Virtual Learning Environment