HR Excellence in Research Award

Action Plan for Implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Review of progress 2014-2016

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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Continue to build on the positive developments in recruitment and selection processes: ~ continue clear advertising rather than reliance on 'word of mouth' ~ provision of a written job description and details of the qualifications & skills required of the post-holder **Success measures** 1. Exploration and evidence gleaned through the '*conversational tour*' 2. HR operations review of practice at operational meetings	5.2015 6 monthly	PIs who are recruiting, supported by Faculty HR	**Done** 1. All narrative findings from the conversational tour (7.2) relating to recruitment and selection were forwarded to HR operations for inclusion as part of their practice review. 2. Operational meetings reviewed practice and the decision was taken to undertake a formal process improvement review. The 'Nebula' project, was a deep exploration of candidate experience, selection methods, University branding, recruiting methods and 'about the job' (ATJ) construction. **Additional** 'Narrative goals' discussion took place in some Departments to look at the language used in adverts and the link to Departmental goals / strategy. The recommendation is to recruit to gaps and for difference not the same again and again. Influencing person specification and having a skills focus should make recruitment more open and inclusive. In one Faculty (of five) the ATJ is given as standard at induction to all newly appointed researchers. Faculty of Engineering wanted to tackle Unconscious Bias on a large scale, specifically to improve numbers of females through the recruitment process. They trialled faculty sessions, leading to very positive feedback and requests for departmental training to support Athena SWAN implementation, which have been arranged.

Provide recruitment & selection training and ongoing support with the process. **Success measure** 1. Uptake levels at training events and ad hoc queries - to be reviewed by HR	Annually	HR Policy Development / Staff Development	**Done** 1. Chair training provided by Staff Development is now online to improve access/equality of access and so people can be trained at the point of need. We have trained 234 staff as Chairs of Interview panels in the time period Sept 2014 to June 2016.

Concordat 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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Enhance the re-deployment system so it enables RS to match their transferable skills to appropriate, relevant vacancies right across TUoS: **Success measures** 1. Investigation in to the potential for researchers to be able to search vacancies to self-select 2. Provision of information and support to ensure RS complete their profiles to maximum impact	6.2015	HR Policy Development	**Done** 1. Self-led selection is now in place. 2. Comprehensive redeployment guidelines are in place (LINK) and monthly drop in sessions were run 2015-2106 with cessation agreed through the Joint Union and Campus Committee due to lack of demand.
Production of faculty tailored statements of expectations between RS, PI & the relevant faculty that are then communicated and implemented to support culture change: **Success measures** 1. Professional expectations between PI and RS are articulated and communicated from induction (reciprocal expectations need to be	8.2015 8.2015	All faculties led by Directors of Research & Innovation	**Ongoing** 1. Faculty of Medicine Dentistry & Health (MDH) = 'inspire' and 'aspire' statements are shared at induction and available online. Faculty of Science= paper based document is in development. Faculty of Engineering = expectations are set out at both researcher & academic induction but no formal written statement has been produced as yet. Faculty of Social Sciences – expectations are set out in 1-1 induction but no formal written statement has been produced as yet.

clarified upfront). 2. Professional expectations between academic department and research staff are articulated and communicated from induction (i.e. minimum standards governing provision for research staff in academic departments, including CPD).		and supported by R&IS	Faculty of Arts & Humanities – expectations are set out in 1-1 induction but no formal written statement has been produced as yet. 2. The conversational tour (7.2) led to production of five Faculty level good practice sharing documents and an explicit statement of recommended practices in regards to the environment for research staff that are expected at all levels. **Additional** The Faculties of Science & MDH have an SRDS (appraisal) form specifically tailored to needs of research staff, which explicitly prompts discussion around research, teaching & supervision, administration and career and professional development.
Research staff should be thoroughly integrated as scholarly colleagues within academic departments at all levels (e.g. with PI, with fellow research staff, within research group or team or centre, within department): **Success measures** 1. Integration into appropriate groups/committees. 2. Building and sustaining research staff communities/associations through informal and/or formal practices/processes. Improved practice will be measured through staff consultation and departmental/faculty review of the implementation of faculty statements of expectation.	9.2016	All departments led by Heads of those Departments R&IS and HR as well as departmental review	**Ongoing** 1. Research staff representation on the RSDC has increased from one to two (for STEMM and for AHSS). Faculty champions are lobbying for researcher representation on Faculty level committees and this has been agreed in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities. The tour drew out narrative examples of practice from individual departments/schools including research staff involvement in away days, inclusion in circulation lists, having access to research support meetings and invitations to departmental meetings and seminars. 2. A number of larger departments have research staff associations and some have refreshment funding available. Many departments have coffee mornings once a month to bring all staff together. The Faculties of MDH & Engineering have very established Faculty Research Staff Associations which enable social interaction, learning and development opportunities and research staff ability to input into Faculty strategy.
Support should be given to PIs to enable them to competently and confidently set expectations, performance manage and enable career			**Done/ongoing** 1. Tailored Faculty level offer available to PIs but only 18% of those staff from across the University that engaged with MANAGE events were from

development:
Success measures
  1. Tailored management development for PIs within the MANAGE programme (numbers engaged)
  2. Improved web resources available for PIs – launch of PI specific pages and leaflet
  3. SRDS training
  4. Awareness raising of Think Ahead – people know what it is when asked to explain
	9.2015
	
	1.2015
	
	Annual offer 9.2014
		HR Staff Development, RPD, Student Services	academic/research environments compared to 56% of those in the Professional Services/Managerial staff category.
			2. A Research Leaders portal was released within the researcher portal
			3. SRDS training has been made available online as well as face to face to increase access opportunities mindful of time pressures on PIs. Specific guidance on conducting SRDS for research staff is freely available and has been circulated and the new SRDS form for researchers enables PIs to frame the conversation appropriately.
			Additional
			A quarterly electronic newsletter for PIs has been piloted to increase their awareness of the support available.
			The University held a month long celebration of learning and development to promote the values around CPD and academics were actively encouraged to engage.
			The MDH Faculty 'excellence through inclusion' committee is looking at the training line managers have undertaken (e.g. SRDS, chair of interview panel, unconscious bias, equality and diversity) with a view to encouraging uptake of training.
			A scoping exercise of job descriptions and other strategic articulated expectation of PIs has been undertaken to help better understand the development needs of this group.

Develop mechanisms to broaden and communicate the recognition and value of researchers inside and outside of the institution and at peer and hierarchical levels:
Success measures
  1. Roll out of Kroto Research Inspiration – successful launch of the awards & competitions
  2. Build on the 'Faculty of Science Researcher Awards' model – duplicated in at least one other faculty
	8.2015
	
	9.2016
		KRI working group, Faculties	**Done**
			1. Kroto Research Inspiration was launched in 2015 and a showcase and awards ceremony happened in both 2015 and 2016. An increased number of engaged researchers was seen over the two years.
			2. Researcher prizes were awarded in MDH and Engineering in 2016.
			Additional
			The institution has raised the profile of The Deal as a mechanism for researchers to be recognised

TUoS needs to be better at identifying talent at a very early stage of a fixed-term contract and then investing in and developing that talent: ~ having conversations early on ~ providing access to relevant professional development early on **Success measure** 1. Increase in the volume of Fellowship development programmes across the faculties	12.2015	PIs in departments who line manage staff RPD	**Ongoing** 1. In 2015 the first, 'First grants club' cohort was launched, offering development for incoming Fellows. Also in 2015, an inaugural 'Steps To Research Independence' for life sciences researchers was held. Two cohorts of the Early Career Researcher Scheme were held, enabling 47 researchers to engage in learning and development activity related towards research independence with 13 being awarded funding (approx. £13,500 each) for independent research projects to support Fellowship applications It has been acknowledged that the Think Ahead Sure scheme supervisors (PGR/research staff who have an undergraduate summer intern) are a natural group to encourage for further academic career development. Based on conversational tour, the MDH Early Careers Group started a piece of work to look at talent retention e.g. provision of open ended contracts and/or scientific officer (or similar) positions for research staff, whilst being pragmatic about current financial commitments and considerations in the institution.

Improve the management of the exit process for those reaching the end of fixed term contracts, including provision of support and information.
Success measures
   1. Development of a new questionnaire
   2. Increased exit data available from departing researchers
	4.2015
	2.2016
		HR Policy Development / PIs whose staff are leaving	**Done**
			1. A new university-wide exit questionnaire was developed and launched in 2015
			2. No previous exit data was available for research staff in any coherent or exploitable way and now the new survey has generated 30 returns, the data from which is feeding in to improvements.
			Additional
			The RSDC has commissioned a project to improve the continuity offer for researchers, particularly those who are likely to return when new funding is secured or who have research outputs they continue to be associated with. This project is joining Library, HR, R&IS and CiCS together to improve the process.

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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Continue to fully support schemes that enable FTCRS to increase their trajectory towards independence: **Success measures** 1. Provision of the Early Career Researcher Scheme 2. Provision of Crucible 3. Provision of TA:SURE	9.2014 5.2016 9.2016 8.2016	PIs, R&IS, RPD	**Done** 1. Two cohorts of the Early Career Researcher Scheme were held, enabling 47 researcher to engage in learning and development activity related towards research independence with 13 being awarded funding (approx. £13,500 each) for independent research projects to support Fellowship applications. The scheme has been fully evaluated and there is a planning round underway looking at financial support for developing independence. 2. The Sheffield Crucible ran in 2014 & 2015, enabling researchers in the development of interdisciplinary practices. 3. TA:SURE has run every year, providing 34 student Summer research projects per year, developing PGRs and research staff as supervisors and undergraduate students as a pipeline to PhD. **Additional** In 2015, an inaugural 'Steps To Research Independence' for life sciences researchers was held, reaching over 80 aspiring researchers.
Enable and support FTCRS who have demonstrated talent to apply in their own right for income (e.g. for small network grants and/or Fellowships). Utilising the above internal schemes and signposting to relevant external funding e.g. ESRC Future Leaders **Success measures** 1. Details of sessions run 1-1 or in groups and translation in to applications	8.2016	PIs, R&IS, RPD	**Ongoing** Anecdotally, this work has been happening through various teams in the organisation but it is hard to track the precise numbers of interventions as they are done across roles and teams, both centrally and in departments.

Develop the 'v i s t a: carers beyond academia' strand to increase awareness of all employment opportunities **Success measure** 1. Activity has occurred under the strand e.g. seminars, mentoring, careers expo	8.2015	RPD	**Done** 1. The v i s t a seminar series has run once per month over the last two years, totalling 26 sessions with an average attendance of 40 researchers per session (c800 people allowing for multiple attendances). The 2014 careers expo on roles in the public sector and HE attracted 6 speakers and 80 delegates.
Further embed Think Ahead **Success measures** 1. Comparative data analysis to show increase in uptake and consistent or improved anecdotal feedback from PGRs and ECRs year on year 2. A consistent or improved engagement from partners e.g. mentors, speakers, facilitators with the delivery of the framework and its ambitions	8.2016 8.2016	RPD	**Done** The 2014-2015 Think Ahead Impact review detailed population reached, level of engagement across the institution and evidence of impact on individual progression. The alumni and friends contributing to v i s ta has increased and these mentors have also engaged with a newly launched e-mentoring portal. A thesis mentoring programme has been launched in the last two years, offering support to PGRs by researchers who have been mentees, supporting an additional c120 people since launch. 2949 attendances occurred at Think Ahead development events in 2014-2015, representing 1468 individuals participating in activity.
Roll out the new Kroto Research Inspiration (the focus of which is on promoting an ethos of creative research communication): **Success measures** 1. Provision a suite of awards and recognition mechanisms that celebrate early career researchers' contribution to research 2. Successful year two delivery of KRI, ideally with increased uptake / submissions to competitions	8.2015 8.2016	KRI working group	**Done** 1. & 2. This was launched in 2014 and repeated in 2015. Four prize categories were awarded and two other opportunities for performance were made available through the Three Minute Thesis competition in 2014 and the Ignite Academy in 2015. There was an improved quality standard over the two years across all competitions and a wider range of applicants, with all Faculties represented. **Additional** A Twitter handle was launched in 2016 to help promote the initiative and the importance of outreach, public engagement and the use of media in research communication.

Provide all contract research staff and PGRs with access to mentors in the public, private and third not-for-profit sector (drawn from alumni) and to academic mentors within the University of Sheffield. **Success measure** 1. Launch of the mentoring e-portal and collation of a baseline year of engagement data for progress measurement in 2017	4.2016	RPD	**Done** The v i s ta e-mentoring portal has been lunched and there are currently 20 pilot mentoring pairs working together.
Utilise digital technology in CPD delivery to enable virtual engagement in learning **Success measure** 1. Evidence of online learning being created and made available to PGRs and ECRs that does not currently exist	8.2016	RPD and providers of DDP modules	**Done** 1. There has been some development of resources including a suite of reflective learning materials for PhD students, Research Ethics Integrity compulsory doctoral student module available online in the Faculty of Science and a newly launched 'introduction to impact' module.
Further develop induction practices at local, faculty and institutional level to promote the integration of all staff in to local and institutional communities (regardless of contract type or working pattern) **Success measures** 1. New practices at faculty / department level 2. Increased engagement with current provision	5.2015 9.2016	HR Staff Development, RPD, Departments, Faculties	**Ongoing** 1. Life Science and Engineering Faculties all have regular group induction for new research staff. 2. Measuring of an 'increase' in engagement is not achievable as records are kept on different systems and in varying parts of the organisation. **Additional** Launch of a university-wide induction portal for all new staff complemented by coffee morning and networking opportunities at university level. New communities such as parents@TUoS. Via the MDH Early Career Group and based on the conversational tour, the group have made some recommendations for departments in the faculty for induction, which are being implemented through meetings with key individuals in each department to help them succeed with the changes.

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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Continue the provision of mentors for researchers at all career stages: **Success measures** 1. Continuation of the ECR mentoring programme 2. Continuation of the Thesis mentoring scheme with increased mentor numbers	8.2016	RPD, academics, research staff	**Done** 1. The Researcher mentoring programme continues supporting c100 researchers per year with 26 mentors nominated as 'dedicated & outstanding'. 2. The thesis mentoring scheme supported 65 pairs in 2014-2015 with 44 mentors nominated as 'dedicated & outstanding' in that period. **Additional** Monthly thesis surgeries were launched in early 2015. These are one off 1-1 appointments for PGRs stuck in the writing phase and are provided by previous research staff mentees, offering them further professional development.
The SRDS process should be used to review the contribution of research staff in the round (i.e. to review core research project role and contributions outside of the project) and research staff should be able to undertake the review with someone other than their PI, should they prefer to. **Success measures** 1. Updated SRDS guidelines to include a statement about the need for all managers to be reviewed against their performance in the role of manager, in addition to their functional role. 2. Further investigation of departments where numbers of contract research	6.2015 8.2015 9.2014	HR Organisational Development, PIs who manage staff	**Done/ongoing** 1. An SRDS form specific for research staff was designed by and launched across the Life Sciences . The form was created with researchers and negotiated through the unions. It has now been shared with all other Faculties for them to adopt. It is also the published on the central SRDS information pages of the HR website. A supporting set of guidelines are also available http://hr.dept.shef.ac.uk/srds/ecr_srds_booklet.pdf *Delayed/not achievable* – the performance measurement of PIs in relation to conducting SRDS. 2. There were no 'action required' departments in the 2015 cycle and there is good engagement and a general upward trend. 3. Departmental leads are all in place for SRDS and the key 'getting the most out of SRDS' learning resource is now online. SRDS is signposted at all Faculty level researcher induction. **Additional** In addition to the form tailored specifically for research staff, MDH also

staff participating in SRDS is lower than average in order to increase participation 3. Further promote the SRDS process with a view to continually improving its effect on changing work practices			included some information on the SRDS form in 2016 to promote equality and diversity and a discussion of work life balance. A document was also put together for the reviewer to help address any work-life balance issues.
Ensure that the benefits of a CPD opportunity are explicit, particularly in relation to research progress and impact: **Success measures** 1. The LMS advert makes clear the perceived outcomes understandable for PIs and RS to ensure appropriate CPD selection "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" (CtStCDR)	10.2014	RPD	**Done** 1. LMS now clearly state the aims and objectives of any given learning event for researchers. **Additional** The University held a month long celebration of learning and development to promote the values around CPD and academics were actively encouraged to engage. The researcher portal webpages now contain evidence of the impact of engaging with learning and development and culture change. The annual impact review clearly articulates the benefits of engaging with continuous professional development.
Get feedback from the VC Fellows and the EPSRC fellows to see their perspectives on the input they receive re. CPD to identify trends, good practices, cultures, values etc. **Success measure** 1. Anecdotal evidence gleaned during & at exit point.	8.2015	RDS	**Ongoing** 1. The VCF scheme is currently being reviewed as the first cohort are only just approaching the end of their tenures. The 'first grant and fellowships club' pilot was reviewed and as a result, the coordinator, embarked on the delivery of a new strand of personal development. "The Fellows I work with have suggested that the most relevant personal development training comes from other Academics. With this in mind, I've worked with prestigious academics across our five faculties to develop the first item in the series: 'Project Management for Academics'. This document is divided into various sections related to the management of projects in academia."

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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Provide CPD on research ethics and integrity to all contract research staff. **Success measure** 1. The provision of learning and development opportunity in this area	8.2015	Q&GT	**Done** 1. An online, externally purchased module is available to all staff and PhD students. Learning resources are freely available on the Integrity & Ethics webpages. A face to face learning session was piloted in 2015 but uptake was very low, hence the curation of online learning resources instead. Research staff can also develop their skills as tutors to PhD students on the compulsory Research Ethics & Integrity module.
An academic should be named as the champion of research staff within each academic department (e.g. comparable to the PGR Tutor). **Success measure** 1. The existence of such a person in each department	7.2016	Departments, R&IS	**Ongoing** 1. An academic champion for researchers exists in every department in the Faculties of MDH & Science but only in some departments in Engineering, Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities.
Actively encourage and support RS to maintain a record of their CPD activity, the impact it has had and to link this to a career development plan **Success measure** 1. Ability to identify evidence of this practice happening in order to promote the benefits	9.2016	RPD, HR, PIs, champions	**Done** 1. Low uptake but resource is in place e.g. Pebblepad. People have very different approaches to reflection but the encouragement and the tools are made available. As a minimum, all staff must formally reflect on their career and development as part of SRDS.

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress
Good practice case studies with respect to research staff should be collected and used to further raise awareness about the benefits that accrue from investing in research staff and to further raise the profile and recognition of the research staff population. **Success measure** 1. Case studies created and made available online	5.2015	R&IS	**Done** 1. Examples of success and progress are published on the researcher portal, such as dedicated outstanding thesis mentors, annual prize winners etc. **Additional** The conversational tour outputs highlight the value of this staff group and the structures that must be in pace to enable them to make their maximum contribution to research.

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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Retain institutional Athena Swan Charter award. **Success measure** 1. Retention of the award	8.2016	HR & departments	**Done** The institution now has the Silver Award rather than just retention of the Bronze and every STEMM department has its own award.
Consider improvements that can be made to the employment experience and career development of part-time researchers (lower percentages were recorded for engagement in; budget management, supervision of PGRs, applying for funding independently, papers, induction, conferences, career planning) and implement them **Success measure** 1. Internal recommendations paper	10.2015	RSDC	**Delayed** 1. Whilst consideration and some local exploration has been done in to supporting this staff group, an internal focused project and resulting set of recommendations was not able to be completed. Some of these issues have been covered in other university-wide strategy work, including the Athena SWAN action plan.

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress
Ensure a thorough support system for females preparing for maternity leave, through to their return to work, to enable an effective return and to ensure recognition of the value and impact of the employee's work and contribution **Success measure** 1. Existence of a formal support system	9.2014	HR Organisational Development & PIs who manage female returners	**Done** 1. The University has several support strands in place: ~ Women Academic Returners Programme (WARP) ~ Parents@TUoS ~ Parent to Parent buddy scheme http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/equality/support/p2p which can provide support and advice during pregnancy and for up to two years after return to work. ~ The Faculty of Science led development of a scheme to offer maternity support for PGRs who were not covered by their funders which has now been adopted University wide, by all faculty E&D committees. ~ Whyte payment to provide a one off payment for childcare so women on maternity leave can use a 'keep in touch' day.

Concordat 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

Action required	Deadline	Who	Progress (done / ongoing / delayed)
Oversee enhancements to the TUoS' provision for contract research staff by taking a strategic perspective, supported by regular review and consultation. **Success measure** 1. Minutes of meetings (3 per academic year) and recommendations in to actions	Ongoing to 2016	RSDC	**Done** 1. The RSDC has met three times per year, as constituted. A new chair has been appointed and the research staff representation increased from 1 to 2. Academic champions have begun taking forward the findings of the conversational tour in their own faculties.
Implement a project that is designed to collect data from academic departments on the different dimensions that together contribute to the research environment - the '*conversational tour*':			**Done** 1. As part of the conversational tour held 2014-2015, 26 conversations took part, involving all departments and 129 individuals. Conversational write ups were available for participants, a summary was created for each Faculty and a final set of University-level recommendations were agreed by both the PVC

~ experience for ECRs in order to create a baseline from which to measure further improvements ~ collect good practice examples ~ identify support needs of PIs / the department to achieve environment enhancements **Success measure** 1. Reports available for departments, for faculties and an overarching university 'good practice sharing' publication.	5.2015	R&IS, supported by Director of Training and External Affairs, Faculty of Science	for Research & Innovation and the Faculty Directors of Research & Innovation. Implementation work is now the focus going forward.