



Gap Analysis and Action Plan to Support the Implementation of The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

This document sets out the various activities and interventions that have either already been implemented or are currently in the planning stage at Ulster University to ensure that the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (hereafter referred to as the Concordat) are acted upon.

Background

The University's Organisational Development Strategy (2011/12 – 2015/16) sets out how the University intends to manage, develop and engage **its entire** staff to optimise their contribution so that Ulster can prosper into the future. As part of the ODS the University is committed to developing:

- and managing CRS more effectively;
- more effective Performance Development and Review processes for all staff which supports the University's needs and at the same time facilitates staff development through improved systems that are consistent with Ulster's values;
- talent management/succession management systems to retain high performing staff with potential to succeed in key academic/leadership roles in the University,
- a University framework ensuring **equal** access to training and development tailored to the needs of different groups of staff.

The strategic management and monitoring of research is the remit of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation (PVC (R&I)) who is responsible for implementing the University's research strategy.

Research is managed and supported strongly within all Faculties across a number of disciplines grouped within 15 Research Institutes (RIs), each of which is led by a Research Institute Director (RID). It is the responsibility of the RIDs to ensure that Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and Contract Research Staff (CRS) who demonstrate clear research ability, are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. In Ulster, this involves the effective mentoring of such staff by more experienced colleagues, including direct assistance to become established among the most prestigious funding and publishing communities. Mentors also support project planning and management and effective networking and conference participation.

Since the initial launch by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) of the Research Concordat for Contract Research Staff in 1996, the University has sought to improve the terms and conditions of contract research staff (CRS). CRS have access to a range of staff development programmes, including a tailored induction session, to help them improve their profile while at the University. The University also operates an appraisal and promotion scheme specifically for CRS which allows for the advancement of high-performing individuals. All promotions/advancements are independent of the ability of the external funding source to cover the cost of the promotion.

Ulster values its research staff and already has a long tradition of ensuring that researchers are appropriately managed and that their developmental needs are met. In October 1998, as a result of the Research Careers Initiative (RCI), the University appointed a Co-ordinator to be responsible for the

oversight of all aspects of Institutional Contract Research Staff (CRS) policy and its implementation. Improved communication with CRS has been established by the Co-ordinator and various recommendations have been taken forward by the PVC (R&I) following a number of online surveys and other consultation exercises amongst CRS.

A further result of the RCI was the establishment in 1999 of a Working Party on the Concordat which eventually became the Research Concordat Steering Group (RCSG). This is a sub-committee of the University's overarching Research and Innovation Committee (RIC). The RCSG is currently chaired by the PVC (R&I) and comprises the University's Concordat Coordinator and representation from Human Resources, Staff Development, the University College Union, the Career Development Centre, CRS Line Management together with a REF Unit Co-ordinator and a CRS representative from each of the University's six faculties. The RCSG provides a forum for CRS to raise pertinent issues in relation to their working conditions. The remit of the RCSG is to:

- monitor and review the implementation of institutional policy related to Contract Research Staff (CRS);
- review the University's progress in meeting the recommendations of the Research Careers Initiative;
- receive reports from the University's Co-ordinator for the Concordat on CRS Career Management, and
- receive reports from Human Resources and Staff Development on matters related to CRS.

The table below presents a more detailed account of how the University has implemented the Concordat and the following paragraphs highlight how it has attempted to embed the Concordat principles into its policies, procedures and practice.

Recruitment and Selection (Principle 1)

To ensure Ulster's compliance with Principle 1, recruitment and selection procedures have been discussed extensively at the RCSG and the Research/HR forum (a forum established to ensure more effective engagement between the research community and the Human Resources Department). A set of guidance notes entitled '*Recruiting Contract Research Staff – Guidance Notes for Principal Investigators*' has been developed and approved and is available on the University's website (see <http://research.ulster.ac.uk/info/researchstaff2.html>). One of the main recommendations in the guidance notes is that all Principal Investigators (PIs) must complete the University's recruitment and selection training course and, where appropriate, attend refresher training at least once every five years. Additionally, this document serves to highlight, and make PIs explicitly aware of, the University's policies and procedures in relation to all aspects of the recruitment and selection of contract research staff.

Recognition and Value, Career Development, (Principles 2 – 5)

To determine the CPD needs of all research active staff in the University, a 'Research Continuing Professional Development Working Group' was established in January 2011. Its remit is to work in partnership with Staff Development to collectively develop, promote and facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive Initial and Continuing Professional Development Framework for Research Staff in the University. The work of this group is influential in shaping training and development policy for their induction and CPD. As a result of the early deliberations of this working group, along with information provided by Staff Development on role profiles for contract researchers, a thorough consultation with contract researchers is planned in the coming months to determine their perceived induction and CPD needs. It is hoped that this consultation exercise will augment existing engagement and communications exercises and mechanisms which have been in existence in the University since the signing of the Concordat. For example, since 2009 a series of open campus fora

for CRS have been held at each of the University's four campuses where CRS have been encouraged to engage with the Concordat Coordinator and relay their issues and concerns. As a result of issues raised during the most recent meeting (held in April 2012) the issue of effective appraisal opportunities for CRS has been placed firmly on the agenda of both the Research Concordat Steering Group and Research/HR Forum. The Concordat Coordinator, working with a number of RIDs, has been active in developing new appraisal documents that are designed to meet CRS requirements (a pilot exercise is currently being undertaken and the results will be presented to the RCSG later in 2012).

In addition, to ensure that CRS at the University receive timely and relevant information, an active webpage has been set up which is devoted to issues of interest to CRS (web address here), including important information relating to all relevant policies and procedures and the revised Concordat and the Research Training Programme. Finally, to ensure that the University policies and strategies are in line with other Higher Education Institutions in the UK, since 2005 the University has participated in the Career in Research On-line Survey (CROS). The data obtained from this national survey have allowed the Ulster University to better understand the needs of its CRS and provides an opportunity for benchmarking against many other UK Higher Education institutions.

Diversity and Equality (Principle 6)

The University takes its duty to promote and support equality and diversity seriously and the PVC (R&I) works closely with Equality and Diversity Services in the development and implementation of an appropriate internal code of practice. This meets the requirements of equalities and other legislation and promotes an inclusive environment for research. In addition, all RI Directors have been provided with equality training as part of the University's overall programme of activities relating to equality and diversity.

The University is currently a member of the Athena Swan charter to promote equality for women in STEM subjects. Athena recognises and promotes best practice in the recruitment, retention, progression and promotion of women in SET subjects. This fits with the University's plans for equality and diversity and it is likely that this will be a requirement for future research funding from some grant awarding bodies. To illustrate the on-going commitment to this charter, the university plans to submit for the institutional bronze award in April 2013, whilst some individual schools will aspire to achieve such recognition by 2015.

Gap Analysis and Action Plan to Support the Implementation of The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The gap analysis and action plan are informed by consultation between the Concordat Co-ordinator for CRS; the Research Office; Equality and Diversity Services; the Employability and Career Development Centre; Contract Research Staff and Human Resources and Staff Development. .

In Table 1, the seven principles and their related clauses are presented with evidence of the current scenario and actions already taken in the university. The lead person or departments responsible for managing or taking particular issues forward are also shown. The current status of each clause is also shown, with 'OM' for 'Ongoing Monitoring' and 'SAR' denoting that a 'Specific Action is Required'. A summary of the specific actions which need to be implemented relating to the clauses are shown in Table 2 along with timescales and the person / department responsible. The action plan is approved and supported by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

Table 1.

| Principle 1. | | | |
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| <i>Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research</i> | | | |
| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
| 1.1 All members of the UK research community should understand that researchers are chosen primarily for their ability to advance research at an institution. | The University's Policy on Recruiting and Selecting Employees (http://www.ulster.ac.uk/hr/policies_and_procedures/index.html) is explicit in its commitment to appointing well-qualified, high quality and high performing staff to help the University achieve its corporate goals, one of which is "Focused Research Excellence and Innovation" (Corporate Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16 - http://www.ulster.ac.uk/corporateplan/) | Human Resources | OM |
| 1.2 Employers should strive to attract excellence and respect diversity (see Principle 6). Recruitment and selection procedures should be informative, transparent and open to all qualified applicants regardless of background. Person and vacancy | Ulster operates a very robust and efficient policy on Recruiting and Selecting Employees. See HR Website for details: http://www.ulster.ac.uk/hr/policies_and_procedures/index.html The University operates an on-line application process. Applications are issued and received via the on-line recruitment website at www.ulster.ac.uk/jobs | Human Resources | OM |

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| <p>specifications must clearly identify the skills required for the post and these requirements should be relevant to the role.</p> | <p>The University's Organisational Development Strategy (2011/12 – 2015/16) illustrates the university's commitment to attracting high performing research staff. Key to this is the development of flexible approaches to recruitment. The University uses a wide range of selection techniques including psychometric testing, assessment centres, specific job-related tests, presentations, assessed public lectures and 'un-seen' presentations.</p> | | |
| <p>1.3 Research posts should only be advertised as a fixed-term post where there is a recorded and justifiable reason.</p> | <p>Research Posts are only advertised as fixed-term where there is a recorded and justifiable reason, i.e. the purpose/expected outcomes of the post and the reason for proposed end date (time-based event). This is rigorously applied throughout the university when considering researcher recruitment and selection.</p> | Human Resources | OM |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>All PIs must attend University Recruitment/Selection Training Course and refresher training at least once every 5 years. Guidance Notes for Principal Investigators are in place and are available on the HR website (http://www.ulster.ac.uk/hr/policies_and_procedures/index.html)</p> <p>CRS may also obtain feedback on a selection decision as part of their personal development.</p> <p>All decisions made throughout the selection process will be based on merit. This is important both from equality and business perspectives. It is a demonstration of the University's commitment to equality of opportunity and the quality of the service it delivers.</p> <p>The University is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity and complying with the law and best practice. Employment vacancies are advertised in media that are accessible to all sections of our diverse society. A statement, which encourages and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity, is included in all advertisements.</p> | Human Resources | OM |

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| <p>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.</p> | <p>Pay and grading structures are in line with the National Framework Agreement (NFA).</p> <p>The University is committed to rewarding CRS fairly and equitably in relation to the roles to which they are appointed and is committed to the principles of equal pay for work of equal value.</p> <p>Generic Role Profiles (GRP's) had been developed and agreed at a national level for Research staff at the outset of the NFA.</p> | <p>Human Resources</p> | <p>OM</p> |
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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*

| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
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| <p>2.1 Employers are encouraged to value and afford equal treatment to all researchers, regardless of whether they are employed on a fixed term or similar contract. In particular, employers should ensure that the development of researchers is not undermined by instability of employment contracts. This approach should be embedded throughout all departmental structures and systems.</p> | <p>Ulster conforms to all relevant legislation in terms of employment matters for CRS.</p> <p>Fixed-term contracts are only issued where clear purpose/expected outcomes of the post and the reason for proposed end date (time-based event) have been applied.</p> <p>Guidance notes for Consultation on Fixed Term Contracts, which are due to end, and Redeployment are available (http://www.ulster.ac.uk/hr/policies_and_procedures/index.html)</p> <p>The University's Code of Practice in the Selection of Staff for REF2014 ensures that fixed-term staff are treated on the same basis as other researchers.</p> <p>All staff development activities, which are related to research skills and knowledge attainment, are openly advertised to all research active staff regardless of contract type.</p> | <p>Human Resources / Equality and Diversity Unit / Staff Development</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>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</p> | <p>The University has established a Redeployment Register and regularly consults with researchers whose contracts are due to end. Ulster recognises the valuable skill-set and often-transferable skills which researchers possess. While on the register researchers have access to the redeployment section of the e-recruitment website which includes details of redeployment opportunities.</p> | <p>Human Resources</p> | <p>OM</p> |

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| <p>(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.</p> | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>To ensure that the Performance Management processes and practices are more focussed and relevant for contract researchers, more tailored appraisal forms have been developed and are currently (Since June 2012) being piloted in the School of the Built Environment.</p> <p>One of the Action Lines in support of Strategic Aim 2 of the Research and Innovation Strategy "To support the continuing attraction, retention and the intellectual and professional development of staff and students" is that all line managers will be expected to contribute fully to the identification of research staff training needs and encouraging their participation in CPD activities.</p> <p>In addition, all RI Directors have been provided with equality training as part of the University's overall programme of activities relating to equality and diversity.</p> <p><i>Also see Clause 2.6 below regarding the Developmental Appraisal Review for CRS.</i></p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development</p> | <p>SAR</p> |
| <p>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</p> | <p><i>See clause 2.2. Above re: Re-Deployment</i></p> <p>In addition Line Managers of CRS and Principal Investigators are encouraged to plan ahead and seek further funding when funding is coming to an end. CRS are also actively encouraged to apply for funding where applicable and are given the opportunity to attend an</p> | <p>Research Office</p> | <p>OM</p> |

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| <p>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.</p> | <p>internal training course on writing grant applications provided by the Director of Environmental Sciences Research Institute.</p> <p>In addition, the Research Office send all Research institutes a copy of the 'Research Fortnightly' magazine produced by www.researchresearch.com. This publication allows the various stakeholders in the university's research community to access potential funding streams and co-ordinate tenders in their institutes.</p> | | |
| <p>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 locally. In HEIs, pay progression will be in accordance with the Framework Agreement, though recognising the flexibility that institutions have in implementing the Framework.</p> | <p><i>See clause 1.5 above.</i></p> | <p>Human Resources</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>To help researchers understand the potential ways in which they can develop their current roles, the CRS website displays some examples /case studies (e.g. Biomedical Sciences, Nursing and Psychology) which illustrate how researchers have successfully progressed their careers at the university or have been active in commercializing their research.</p> <p>The University operates an Annual Review (AR) process for CRS which allows the advancement of high-performing researchers and all promotions/advancements are independent of the ability of the external funding source to cover the cost of the promotion.</p> <p>To ensure that researchers understand the potential for moving between roles (e.g. – advice on transitioning to non-academic roles)</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator, Career Development Centre and Research Office</p> | <p>SAR</p> |

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| | <p>regular Consultation Meetings between the HR Business Partner with responsibility for research issues and researchers are held. Allied to this researchers have the opportunity to raise issues and concerns at the annual Development Appraisal Review meeting which is linked to the new Researcher CPD Framework also includes a section on Strategic Career Action Planning which is promoted for CRS.</p> <p>Finally, if researchers are participating in the redeployment process they will have regular meetings with PI's and Research Institute Directors to discuss potential moves</p> | | |
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| Principle 3 | | | |
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| <i>Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment</i> | | | |
| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
| <p>3.1 It is recognised that positions of permanent employment are limited in the UK research and academic communities and that not all researchers will be able to obtain such a position. It is, therefore, imperative that researcher positions in the UK are attractive in themselves (and not, for example, solely as potential stepping stones to permanent academic positions). This requires that they provide career development which is comparable to, and competitive with, other employment sectors.</p> | <p>Generic Role Profiles are issued to all research staff with contracts of employment.</p> <p>Research staff have access to transferable professional development programmes provided by Staff Development on the internal intranet webpage: http://portal.ulster.ac.uk/render.userLayoutRootNode.uP?uP_tparam=utf&utf=http://staffdev.ulster.ac.uk/index.php?page=about-us-2</p> <p>The Initial & Continuing Professional Development for Research Staff Working Group was established to develop a Researcher CPD Framework and as a result the new 'Researcher CPD Framework' was approved by the Research & Innovation Committee at the end of March 2012 and the Head of Staff Development is coordinating the implementation of the CPD Framework for 3 prioritised constituent groups of active researchers which includes CRS</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>3.2 A wide variety of career paths are 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</p> | <p><i>See Clauses 2.6 above and 3.4 below?</i></p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator, Career Development Centre and Research Office</p> | <p>OM</p> |

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| that all career paths are valued equally. | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>To ensure that researchers are exposed to the full range of university roles and gain broad experience, they are encouraged to participate in all relevant training and development activities. For example, for those who are interested in HE teaching there is the opportunity to participate in the University's 'First Steps to Teaching' and/or 'Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice' (PGCHEP) programme which is designed more specifically for new lecturing staff, but is available for those members of staff who are participating in teaching and learning related activities.</p> <p>It should be noted that the 'First Steps to Teaching Programme' leads to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA) whilst the (PGCHEP) leads to Fellowship of the HEA. Contract researchers also have access to a suite of accredited Leadership & Management Development Programmes</p> <p><i>Also see Clause 3.1 above.</i></p> | CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development | SAR |
| <p>3.4 All employers will wish to review how their staff can access professional, independent advice on career management in general, particularly the prospect of employment beyond their immediate discipline base, or offering training and placements to broaden awareness of other fields and sectors.</p> | <p>A dedicated liaison for researchers has been set up with the Employability / Careers Department at the University. This contact is responsible for dealing with researchers career development and employability questions and queries and regularly attends events and seminars designed specifically for CRS (e.g. CRS Campus Fora). Researchers are directed to the contact through the CRS webpage.</p> <p>An Employability / Careers Department representative is a permanent member on the RCSG.</p> <p>The Employability / Careers Department also provide updates and information on potential career development. Researchers can sign up for e-mail updates and notifications information.</p> | Employability / Careers Department and RCSG | OM |

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| <p>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.</p> | <p><i>See Clauses 2.3, 2.6 and 3.4 above.</i></p> | | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>The Initial & Continuing Professional Development for Research Staff Working Group was established to develop a Researcher CPD Framework.</p> <p>As a result of the University's engagement with the CROS Survey 2011 it has been recognised that the induction of CRS is vital to ensure that they are fully integrated into the research community. With this in mind new researchers participate fully in the recently redesigned Staff Development induction programmes which include 'institutional/corporate' 'local, and 'role specific' induction. The internal intranet webpage has more details of these: http://portal.ulster.ac.uk/render.userLayoutRootNode.uP?uP_tparam=utf&utf=http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev</p> <p>As part of the Research & Innovation Strategy each newly-appointed staff member, wishing to enhance research and innovation skills, is assigned a research and/or innovation mentor (normally Professorial level). The mentor will support, <i>inter alia</i>, project planning and</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator</p> | <p>SAR</p> |

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| | <p>management, funding applications, effective networking and conference participation, dissemination of outputs etc.</p> <p>At the RIDs annual 'away day', chaired by the PVC Research and Innovation, issues relating to 'Research Culture' are discussed and each RID reports on how a more effective research culture is being fostered in their Research Institute.</p> | | |
| <p>3.7 Employers and funders will wish to consider articulating the skills that should be developed at each stage of their staff development frameworks and should encourage researchers to acquire and practise those skills. For example, researchers may be given the opportunity to manage part of the budget for a project, or to act as a mentor or advisor to other researchers and students.</p> | <p>Throughout their tenure at the University researchers take part in the Development Appraisal process (noted above) and can avail of other CPD activities. For example, to encourage researchers to become more active in the management of their research projects several have participated in specialist courses such where PRINCE 2 methodologies are covered.</p> <p>As noted in Clause 3.6 above, each ECR is assigned a mentor, who may be a more experienced CRS member.</p> <p>Researchers are expected to comply with the University's Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the conduct of Research (and to have successfully completed the University's short online course on research integrity) (http://research.ulster.ac.uk/office/rofficeeg.html)</p> | Staff Development | OM |
| <p>3.8 Employers also should provide a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, which should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers. All researchers should be familiar with such provisions and</p> | <p>Access to career development activities is open to all researchers regardless of contract status or career stage.</p> <p>Concerted efforts have been made to address the issue of researcher development through the 'Research Continuing Professional Development Working Group' which was set up (January 2011) to work in partnership with Staff Development to collectively develop, promote and facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive Initial and Continuing Professional Development Framework for Research Staff in the University.</p> | Staff Development / Careers Development Centre | OM |

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| arrangements. | | | |
| <p>3.9 Research managers should actively encourage researchers to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, so far as is possible within the project. It should be stressed that developmental activity can often have a direct impact on the success of the project, by distributing work, taking advantage of individual strengths and talents, and increasing the skill and effectiveness of researchers in key areas such as writing for publication or communicating with a wider audience. Funding bodies acknowledge that the training of researchers is a significant contribution to research output and they encourage employers and mentors to adopt these practices.</p> | <p>Researchers are supported to attend conferences and participate in other networking activities to enhance their career development and lifelong learning.</p> <p>For example, in the Business and Management Research institute (BMRI) for example, the importance of early career researchers is clearly illustrated. Hence, a mentoring scheme is in place for less experienced researchers, with senior staff providing guidance and advice to those at an early point in their career. As part of the mentoring process early career staff agree their research agenda, which covers their publication, funding and conference strategy over a three-year period. This is then monitored and assessed by the Research Institute Director in conjunction with the mentor and also through the appraisal and probation process. In addition, early career researchers are encouraged to collaborate with experienced staff on publications, funding opportunities and postgraduate supervision.</p> | All RIDs and PIs | OM |

Principle 4

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

| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
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| <p>4.1 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.</p> | <p>Ulster is committed to ensuring that appraisal and review procedures are effective in identifying and meeting staff needs and this is one of the action lines in support of Strategic Aim 2 of the Research and Innovation Strategy “To support the continuing attraction, retention and the intellectual and professional development of staff and students”. The University’s aim is to enhance the research and innovation culture by paying specific attention to research and innovation training and development for all researchers.</p> <p>Information about potential career development routes is communicated to all research staff in a number of ways including at the local and role specific induction sessions which all are required to attend. Also, as noted in Clause 2.3 above, a more tailored CRS Performance Management system has been developed to better monitor and manage the career development needs of CRS.</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development</p> | <p>SAR (see Clause 2.3)</p> |
| <p>4.2 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.</p> | <p>The new Researcher Development Framework for Ulster, which was developed as a result of the work of the Research Continuing Professional Development Working Group, clearly maps the broader professional development opportunities available at Ulster with the Researcher Development Framework used by Vitae. This allows Ulster to recognise the development that CRS have undertaken at other organisations. Details of this are available on the internal intranet webpage: http://portal.ulster.ac.uk/render.userLayoutRootNode.uP?uP_tparam=utf&utf=http://staffdev.ulster.ac.uk/index.php?page=about-us-2),</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development</p> | <p>OM</p> |

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| <p>4.3 Employers will ensure that where researchers are provided with teaching and demonstrating opportunities as part of their career development, suitable training and support is provided.</p> | <p><i>See Clause 3.3 above.</i></p> <p>Additionally CRS may participate First Steps to Teaching programme ran by Staff Development and accredited by the Higher Education Academy, which is targeted at supporting part-time tutors and Post Graduate Teaching Assistants (PgTAs.) This programme consists of a two-day workshop followed by a period of work-based learning and assessment. Successful completion leads to Associate Status of the Higher Education Academy.</p> | <p>Staff Development</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>4.4 Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation or management committees.</p> | <p>There is active participation by RI Directors and CRS in relevant University committees and working groups, not least the RCSG which has a CRS representative from each Faculty and Research institute.</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and HR Business Partner responsible for research policy.</p> | <p>SAR</p> |
| <p>4.5 Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.</p> | <p>One of the Action Lines in support of Strategic Aim 2 of the Research and Innovation Strategy “To support the continuing attraction, retention and the intellectual and professional development of staff and students” is that the University will ensure appropriate support for staff members who are at the earliest stages in a research career, e.g. Effective mentoring of newly-appointed staff by more senior researchers is provided. Assistance is given to allow the CRS to become established in the most prestigious funding and academic communities.</p> | <p>Carer Development Centre / Staff Development and CRS Concordat Coordinator</p> | <p>OM</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***

| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
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| <p>5. 1 Researchers are employed to advance knowledge and should exercise and develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought throughout their careers.</p> | <p>As noted in the introduction and in Clause 4.2 above Ulster has been very active in developing a coherent policy towards researcher development. With this in mind a new Researcher development framework has been developed, based upon the framework developed by Vitae. The framework explicitly links the potential development courses and programmes which are available throughout Ulster to the full range of skill requirements of researchers. For example, researchers are actively encouraged by their Research Institute Directors to participate in workshops and modules on pertinent issues such as the ‘writing grant applications’ module. See the researcher development website for opportunities and training activities available to researchers:</p> <p>http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staffdev/Research_Training/controller.php</p> | <p>Staff Development and CRS Concordat Coordinator / Research Office</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>The Office for Innovation offers a professional service to allow staff to potentially commercial research outputs and achieve wider impact. As noted in Clause 2.6 Case studies from researchers who have been able to commercialise their research are available for CRS to give them an indication of the kind of projects that their colleagues have been involved with and how commercialisation has developed</p> <p>http://research.ulster.ac.uk/info/researchstaff2.html)</p> | <p>RCSG</p> | <p>OM</p> |

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| | <p>Also see Office of Innovation for details of support available to all staff including CRS http://oi.ulster.ac.uk/</p> <p>Additionally as noted in Clause 3.9 CRS are actively encouraged to attend relevant academic and practitioner conferences to present findings related to their research.</p> | | |
| <p>5.3 Researchers should recognise their responsibility to conduct and disseminate research results in an honest and ethical manner and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge.</p> | <p>Researchers are expressly communicated with through a quarterly e-mail from the PVC Research and Innovation regarding the University's Code of Practice surrounding research governance and ethics policies and the related training.</p> <p><i>See also Clause 3.7 above regarding the University's Code of Practice for Professional Integrity in the conduct of Research</i></p> | <p>Research Governance</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>5.4 Researchers should also be aware that the skills and achievements required to move on from a research position may not be the same as the skills and achievements which they displayed to reach that position.</p> | <p>The Employability and Careers Service provide a comprehensive service to CRS relating to preparation for employment and future career direction.</p> | <p>Employability and Careers Service</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>5.5 Researchers should recognise that the primary responsibility for managing and pursuing their career is theirs. Accordingly, they should identify training needs and actively seek out opportunities for learning and development in order to further that career and take personal responsibility for their choices. Research managers and employers also have a responsibility to provide honest advice and appropriate structures, and to equip researchers with</p> | <p>The CRS Fora which are run by the CRS Concordat Co-ordinator provide an opportunity for CRS to identify training needs.</p> <p>In addition the University's developmental appraisal scheme provides a further opportunity for identifying training and development needs which should enhance CRS employability.</p> <p>The Initial & Continuing Professional Development for Research Staff Working Group constantly reviews the induction and CPD framework for researchers.</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and RCSG</p> | <p>SAR</p> |

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| <p>the tools to manage their own careers. Research managers should encourage research staff under their supervision to attend appropriate training and career development courses and events.</p> | | | |
| <p>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.</p> | <p><i>See Clause 2.4 above, which describes the University's Developmental Appraisal system for CRS.</i></p> | | |

| Principle 6 <i>Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers</i> | | | |
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| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
| 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. | <p>Equality and Diversity is embedded in all University processes, policies and committees and the University adheres to ‘all’ relevant legislation within NI.</p> <p>The University’s wide range of policies regarding Equality and Diversity are available to all staff including those on fixed term contracts. See Equality and Diversity website for details: www.equality.ulster.ac.uk</p> | Human Resources and Equality and Diversity | OM |
| 6.2 As is the case for society as a whole, UK research will benefit from increasing equality and diversity in the recruitment and retention of researchers. The Concordat encourages the recruitment and retention of researchers from the widest pool of available talent, including those from diverse backgrounds. | <p>The University also has an on-going Organisational Development Strategy. There are three Strategic Programmes included in this strategy including: 1. People Management; 2. Leading and developing people and the University; 3. Valuing People – engagement, recognition, reward and equality. As can be appreciated the final of these is most relevant to researchers career management. In a similar vein the university’s Corporate Plan and particularly the Corporate Goals around Research explicitly link to and recognise the contribution that researchers make towards the overall mission and goals of the university.</p> <p>The university also operates and complies with all policies and regulations from the UK Borders Agency (UKBA).</p> | Human Resources | OM |

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| <p>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</p> | <p>To ensure that the university effectively plans for REF 2014 the REF 2014 Equality Working Group was set up in March 2012. The co-ordinator for the Concordat for CRS is a member of this working group and represents CRS interests. Issues discussed at this meeting are reported to the RCSG.</p> | <p>RCSG</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>6.4 Employers should ensure that the working conditions for researchers provide the flexibility necessary for successful research performance in line with legal requirements. Employers should recognise that for parents and others who have taken career breaks, including parental leave, have worked part-time, or have taken atypical routes into research, the “early career” period may be prolonged, and this may be a time where the risk of attrition from the research path is most acute. Working conditions should allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career.</p> | <p>In terms of initiatives to encourage and facilitate work life balance the University offers a suit of policies which are available to all staff members. For example, flexible working initiatives, crèche facilities and childcare vouchers are actively promoted. www.equality.ulster.ac.uk</p> <p>In the CROS survey 2011 specific feedback from female researchers illustrated that they appreciated the flexibility which the crèche facilities created for them. See CROS 2011 report on CRS website http://research.ulster.ac.uk/info/researchstaff2.html</p> | <p>Human Resources and Equality and Diversity</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>6.5 It is important for employers to respond flexibly to requests for changed work patterns and to resist instant refusals on the assumption that, because research has always been carried out in a particular way, it cannot be done differently.</p> | <p><i>See Clause 6.4 above</i></p> | | |

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| <p>6.6 Funders should continue to ensure that their funding mechanisms and policies are adapted to changing diversity and equality legislation and guidance, for example in their provision of additional funding and duration of grant to cover paternity and adoptive leave as well as maternity leave.</p> | <p>N/A</p> | | |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>The University applies Equal Opportunity principles throughout the full employment cycle. For example, efforts are made to ensure that there is a gender balance for all recruitment and selection interviews for new appointments and for positions which are using the redeployment register.</p> | <p>Human Resources</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>6.8 Account should also be taken of the personal circumstances of groups of researchers. Examples would include researchers who have responsibility for young children or adult dependants, researchers for whom English is not a first language, older or younger researchers, or</p> | <p><i>See Clause 6.3 above</i></p> <p>Additionally the University’s Code of Practice for the Selection of Staff for Inclusion in REF2014 specifically addresses those staff whose personal circumstances have negatively impacted upon their research output</p> | <p>Human Resources and Equality and Diversity</p> | <p>OM</p> |

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| <p>researchers with disabilities and long-term health issues. Employers and funders should change policies or practices that directly or indirectly disadvantage such groups.</p> | | | |
| <p>6.9 All managers of research should ensure that measures exist at every institution through which discrimination, bullying or harassment can be reported and addressed without adversely affecting the careers of innocent parties.</p> | <p>The University has a policy for dealing with complaints of bullying and harassment www.equality.ulster.ac.uk</p> | <p>Equality and Diversity</p> | <p>OM</p> |
| <p>6.10 Employers should also consider participation in schemes such as the Athena SWAN Charter, the Juno Project and other initiatives aimed at promoting diversity in research careers.</p> | <p>The University is currently a member of the Athena Swan charter to promote equality for women in STEM subjects. This fits with the University's plans for equality and diversity and it is likely that this will be a requirement for future research funding from some grant awarding bodies.</p> | <p>Human Resources and Equality and Diversity</p> | <p>SAR</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*

| Clause | Current Scenario and Actions taken | Lead | Current Status |
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| <p>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.</p> | <p>The key mechanisms for ensuring that the Concordat is fully implemented and monitored are through the RCSG and Research/HR Forum. These groups will on average meet once every semester and include representation from all relevant stakeholders (i.e.: the Concordat Co-ordinator, key personnel responsible for research policy and procedures, RI Directors, CRS Line managers, CRS representatives, and appropriate representation from HR and Staff Development.</p> <p>The University has participated in the CROS survey for a number of years now (since 2005) and uses the findings from the survey to help develop new policies and procedures designed to enhance the researcher’s experience at the University. For example, the new Developmental Appraisal forms for CRS have been developed as a result of the findings from the 2011 survey.</p> <p>In terms of other mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Concordat a series of Campus Fora are held each year with current researchers where they are invited to give their opinion and feedback regarding pertinent issues connected to their working conditions and career development. In addition the University is required to report on progress in terms of delivery of the Concordat to the Department of Employment and Learning NI annually.</p> <p>Finally the University encourages the Co-ordinator for the Concordat to attend Vitae events and conferences, most recently the event in 2011 in York connected to the CROS survey.</p> | <p>CRS Concordat Coordinator and RCSG</p> | <p>SAR</p> |

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| <p>7.2 The signatories agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to constitute a steering group under an independent chair to oversee the implementation and review of the Concordat with appropriate representation of the funders and sector bodies including the Professional Institutions. This group will inform the UK Research Base Funders^{cc} Forum of progress. b. to procure an independent benchmarking study to assess the state of the sector at the launch of this Concordat. c. to contribute an appropriate share of the costs of supporting implementation and review, including the benchmarking report. d. to draw up an implementation plan for the Concordat, to ensure a coherent and sustained approach by organisations operating in the sector and the appropriate use of survey and monitoring tools such as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS). e. to undertake and publish a major review of the implementation of the Concordat after three years reporting to the signatories and taking account of progress against the benchmark report and the | <p>N/A</p> | | |
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| views of researchers and employers (both outside and within the HE sector). | | | |
| 7.3 The signatory funders will ensure that their terms and conditions of, for example, project grants include the expectation that the Research Organisations that they fund will adopt the principles of the revised Concordat. | N/A | | |
| 7.4 The signatories recognise the value of innovation in practices and of sharing practice between institutions and aim to promote these throughout the implementation and review process. The funding signatories will consider aligning their support for transferable and career development skills. It is expected that Vitae, the national programme dedicated to realising the potential of researchers, funded by the Research Councils, will play a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the sector to implement aspects of the Concordat, as well as establishing strategic partnerships between funders. | N/A | | |
| 7.5 Under public sector equality schemes, employers are required to monitor equality and diversity indicators for | <i>See Clause 6.1 above.</i> | Human Resources and Equality and Diversity | |

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| <p>their researchers. This section focuses on the co-ordination and enhancement of existing information collection and not on the creation of additional data. There is a strong presumption that in implementing the Concordat, significant emphasis will be placed on the use of existing data and information sources and on the sharing of good practice between institutions and to provide evidence of its impact.</p> | | | |
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Table 2. Action Plan

| Related Clause | Action Description | Lead | Timescale |
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| 2.3 | To review the use and relevance of the CRS Appraisal documents | CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development | April 2013 |
| 2.6 | To help enhance this part of the website it is planned to include 'talking heads' sections where instead of including written biographies, researchers will comment upon their particular development and progression activities using video case studies. | CRS Concordat Coordinator and Research Office | December 2012 |
| 3.1 | Continue to develop professional development programme offerings based upon feedback and consultations from CRS, including CROS 2013 and CRS 2013 Fora | CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development | Summer 2013 |
| 3.3 | Continue to monitor CRS participation in PGCHEP and ensure that it is fulfilling CRS requirements. | CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development | Summer 2013 |
| 3.6 | Review the uptake and satisfaction with the new induction programme amongst CRS | CRS Concordat Coordinator and Staff Development | Summer 2013 |
| 4.3 | To review uptake and satisfaction amongst CRS who participate in the First Steps to Teaching programme. | Staff Development | Winter 2013 |
| 4.4 | Monitor membership of the relevant committees for CRS and ensure that it is refreshed and updated when CRS representatives leave the university or take up different roles. | CRS Concordat Coordinator and HR Business Partner responsible for research policy. | On-going (ensure review of CRS committee membership at start of each academic year) |
| 5.5 | The CRS Concordat Co-ordinator to organise CRS For a on each of the three main campuses in the University to provide an opportunity for CRS to discuss relevant issues and concerns. | Concordat Coordinator and HR Business Partner responsible for research policy. | Summer 2013 |
| 6.10 | To illustrate the on-going commitment to this charter, the university plans to submit for the institutional bronze award in April 2013, whilst some individual schools will aspire to achieve such recognition by 2015. | Human Resources and Equality and Diversity | April 2013 |
| 7.1 | CRS Coordinator for the concordat to run the CROS survey in Spring 2013 and report findings. Also CRS Coordinator to get more involved in Vitae branch and possibly hold an event? | CRS Concordat Coordinator | December 2013 |

