

1. Recruitment and Selection: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
1.1-1.4, 2.4	Development and enhancement of Ulster University's Researcher Pool.	People & Culture Deputy Director of People & Culture - Partnerships and Services	In order to help build the employability and enhance the CVs of early career researchers the University has established a Researchers Pool. For contracts of less than four months Pls can also hire from Ulster University's 'Researcher Pool'. PhD researchers are invited to be added to this pool on the submission of the PhD. A focus of the new dedicated Contract Research Staff (CRS) web page will be to make more CRS aware of the Researcher Pool so that they can ensure they are added and benefit from the opportunities this provides.	<p>The overall target is to increase awareness of Ulster University's Researcher Pool amongst PhD completions and engage eligible CRS in the Researcher Pool. The following commitments will help to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Researcher Pool to be extended to allow for recruitment of contracts up to 6 months. Where the People & Culture Directorate receive a recruitment requisition for short-term contract research post (less than 6 months duration), in all cases the first approach will be to consider if an appointment through the Researcher Pool is possible. • All CRS to have a 6-month, 3-month and 1-month meeting before the end of their contracts. All eligible CRS to be invited to join Researcher Pool at 6-month meeting. Numbers of CRS in Researcher Pool to be monitored and recorded at end of the academic year 2019/20 and 2020/21.

2. Doctoral College: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
2.1, 5.4, 5.5	Continued access to the Researcher Development Programme, aimed primarily at PhD Researchers and open to Contract Research Staff.	Doctoral College Led by Dean of Postgraduate Research and Doctoral Development Manager	<p>The Researcher Development Programme (RDP) at Ulster is guided by and mapped to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. The wide range of face to face workshops and online training provision is linked to each of the four domains of the Framework. They include transferable skills as well more specific skills, designed to support and enhance professional and personal development and ultimately their employability. PhD Researchers are advised to undertake at least 10 days of researcher development activity per year.</p> <p>PhD Researchers and Contract Research Staff will be actively encouraged and supported to undertake a Training Needs Analysis and Personal Training Plan.</p> <p>The Doctoral College uses a new online web-based programme for PhD administration (PhD Manager). PhD Manager has an online Training Needs Analysis, Training Plan and Training Log function enabling the PhD Researcher to plan and organize their training according to the Framework. They also have an up to date Log of training and development activities.</p> <p>Following the success of the second annual Festival of PhD Research, which took place 8-11 April 2019 across 4 campuses, this event will continue to take place annually. Each day included a keynote, oral and poster presentations by PhD researchers (100+) with prizes for best oral and poster. Over 300 staff and PhD researchers attended the event. Additionally, the 3MT competition will continue to run annually and the results of Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), which closes in May 2019, will be analyzed to develop an action plan for continued PhD researcher engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase participation in the RDP across fewer more focused events. The success of the RDP will be measured by an increase in spaces filled over the past two years: Attendance – PhD Researchers (no data for CRS involvement specifically) 2017/2018: 1179 places filled 2018/2019: 1789 places filled 2019/2020: 1800+ overall target 2020/2021: 1800+ overall target To maintain the high standard of the RDP. 100% of courses are ranked at least 8/10 and substantive feedback on the Programme as a whole, as well as individual sessions, is overwhelmingly positive. The target for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 is to maintain this 8/10 ranking as a minimum standard. To ensure that all PhD Researchers and Supervisors to undertake TNA and PTP in first three months of PhD. Should be completed by Initial Assessment (on PhD Manager). Reviewed annually and this is measured by Annual Reports process on PhD Manager. To run a Festival of PhD Research and 3MT competition annually in 2019/20 and 2020/21. To develop an action plan based on responses to the PRES by September 2019.

3. Principle Investigators: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
2.3	<i>Leading an Effective Research Project Team</i> Programme for Principal Investigators (with Contract Research Staff Project Team members) to be developed and delivered in academic year 2019/2020.	Staff Development People & Culture Led by Head of Staff Development	<p>The purpose of the <i>Leading an Effective Research Project Team</i> Programme is to enable Principal Investigators to lead, manage and develop an effective research project team.</p> <p>People & Culture (P&C) directorate underwent a significant restructure with a number of key appointments and the creation of two new sections which will lead on the employee experience through organisation design and people development.</p>	<p>Following engagement with contract researchers in April 2019 at a workshop, P&C will undertake a further workshop by Sept 2019 / 1-1 activity with current / former contract researchers to form up the development of a framework / guidance for the way in which the University will manage the career development of contract researchers going forward.</p> <p>The creation of two new teams – looking at People Development and Organisation Design – will provide resource to undertake these workshop / 1-1 interactions later in 2019. From this a series of recommendations will be made for implementing in the 2019 / 2020 academic year. this will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme for PIs on leading an effective team. • Each Contract Research Staff member to have completed a Local Induction. • An Annual 1-1 Performance Development and Review. <p>The People & Culture Director will report annually on the % of Contract Research Staff who have completed an Annual Performance Development & Review and agreed a Personal Development Plan and take appropriate action to maximize participation. P&C will report on the % of PI's participating on leadership development.</p>

4. Research Communications Training: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
2.6	Further engagement with UCommunicate https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/our-research/researchers .	Department for Research & Impact (R&I) Led by Head of Innovation & Impact and Faculty Impact Manager	UCommunicate is the annual training programme aimed at academics and researchers, to enhance skills and networks for communicating research to new external audiences for impact generation. After 11% of attendees at 2019's UCommunicate event were CRS the aim is to increase this in each of the next two years. To increase CRS engagement UCommunicate will feature on the new CRS website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 engagement target: 25% of CRS to have participated in UCommunicate in 2020. • 2021 engagement target: 25% of CRS to have participated in UCommunicate in 2021.

5. RIGOUR: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
3.5	Ulster will continue to develop and deliver RIGOUR, its bespoke Research Income and Grant Opportunities for Ulster Researchers programme.	Department for Research & Impact Led by Head of Research Development and Head of Research Management	<p>RIGOUR aims to give academics and researchers at Ulster a competitive edge by providing an insight into what the funding panels are seeking when they review applications and how to write applications to address funder requirements. There are plans to hold 10 RIGOUR events over 2019-20. In planning these events there will be collaboration between colleagues across R&I to ensure that these events compliment the SOARING training programme and Impact Development Series, with meetings taking place to plan this in May 2019. Anticipated themes include how to access Research Council funding, how to build meaningful partnerships and the international funding environment.</p> <p>As 17% of attendees on RIGOUR events between 2017 and 2019 were CRS there will be a focus on increasing this participation moving forward. To increase CRS engagement RIGOUR will feature on the new CRS website and is highlighted in the new Guide to Research Support Services that will be issued to all new CRS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic year 2019/20: a total of 10 events will be held. Target for 25% of CRS to have participated in a RIGOUR event in the academic year. Academic year 2020/21: a total of 10 events will be held. Target for 25% of CRS to have participated in a RIGOUR event in the academic year.

6. SOARING: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
3.5	Ulster will continue to develop and deliver SOARING (Significance and Originality in Academic Research: Interpreting New Guidance) is a support programme focused on further strengthening of Ulster's research outputs by increasing their quality and REFability.	Department for Research & Impact Led by Head of Research Performance	<p>SOARING aims to provide researchers with insight into what peer review and REF panels are seeking when they review research outputs, and how their research outputs can be maximised to address these requirements. Through a series of panels, workshops and support information, the programme will provide a platform to stimulate a better understanding of what it means to produce internationally excellent and world-leading outputs. These workshops and events cover topics including Tactics for success; Getting more from your outputs; Applying REF standards; How to do world-class research; and Working across disciplines.</p> <p>There are plans to hold 10 SOARING events in 2019-20. As above, in the planning of these events there will be collaboration between colleagues across R&I to ensure that these events compliment the RIGOUR training programme and Impact Development Series, with meetings taking place to plan this in May 2019.</p> <p>In 2018/19 16% of SOARING attendees were CRS. To increase CRS engagement SOARING will feature on the new CRS website and is highlighted in the new Guide to Research Support Services that will be issued to all new CRS. Additionally, SOARING events will be videoed and made available to CRS online to further facilitate CRS engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic year 2019/20: a total of 10 events will be held. Target for 25% of CRS to have participated in a SOARING event in the academic year. Academic year 2020/21: a total of 10 events will be held. Target for 25% of CRS to have participated in a SOARING event in the academic year. <p>CRS participation includes watching videos made available online. Engagement with videos will be monitored alongside attendance.</p>

7. Impact Development: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
3.5	Ulster will continue to develop and deliver the Impact Development Series, a support programme designed to help academic researchers to develop skills to create impact from research, and will provide strategies and tactics for maximising the reach and significance of the impact of Ulster's research excellence.	Department for Research & Impact Led by Head of Innovation & Impact and Faculty Impact Manager	<p>The Impact Development Series is Ulster University's support programme designed to help academic researchers understand impact, enhance the impact of their research, track and evidence it, and generate new pathways to impact. The Impact 30 series has been particularly tailored towards CRS as the 30 minute sessions are easily accessible in a busy working day.</p> <p>There are plans to hold 10 events in 2019-20. As above, in the planning of these events there will be collaboration between colleagues across R&I to ensure that these events compliment the RIGOUR and SOARING training programmes, with meetings taking place to plan this in May 2019.</p> <p>Since January 2018 16% of attendees on the Impact Development Series have been CRS. To increase CRS engagement the Impact Development Series will feature on the new CRS website and is highlighted in the new Guide to Research Support Services that will be issued to all new CRS. Additionally, Impact Development Series events will be videoed and made available to CRS online to further facilitate CRS engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic year 2019/20: a total of 10 events will be held. Target for 25% of CRS to have participated in an Impact Development Series event in the academic year. Academic year 2020/21: a total of 10 events will be held. Target for 25% of CRS to have participated in an Impact Development Series event in the academic year.

8. Mentoring: Continued

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
3.8, 4.5	Ulster to continue to develop new formal Staff Mentoring Scheme launched in May 2019	Department for Research & Impact Led by Head of Research Performance	To support the continued professional development of its staff, Ulster University has launched a formal Staff Mentoring Scheme whereby staff can sign up to be mentors and mentees and they will be matched according to their expertise/research interests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRS uptake of the new scheme (May 2019) has been strong (27 of 114 mentees are CRS). The target is to maintain this level of participation at 24% or above. Additionally, as this is a new mentoring scheme, all participants will be surveyed in December 2019 for feedback on the first 6 months of mentoring. The Department for Research & Impact will develop an action plan to improve the programme based on this feedback.

9. CRS Mentoring: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
3.8, 4.5	Ulster to roll out the School of Nursing pilot of the CRS mentoring of PhD researchers.	CRS Secondee	In 2018/19 the Institute of Nursing and Health Research, piloted a scheme for CRS to mentor PhD researchers in collaboration with the Doctoral College. This is beneficial for both the PhD researchers, who receive additional support beyond the supervisory team, and the CRS, who receive training on being a mentor and experience of research leadership. This will complete the mentoring 'chain' from senior staff through to PhD researchers.	The target is to roll out this new scheme in at least one more school from September 2019 with responsibility given to Associate Deans for Research to manage this pilot with the support of the CRS Secondee. This will be followed by an impact review at the end of academic year 2019/2020 to determine the feasibility of rolling this mentoring scheme out across all schools.

10. Equality and Diversity: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
Principle 6	To continue roll out of Athena Swan applications and begin dialogue with BME CRS.	Led by Section Lead Equality & Diversity	<p>Between 2017 and 2019 the University saw a number of successful Athena Swan applications, reflecting the commitment to gender equality. Over the next two years the primary aim is to increase the number of applications.</p> <p>Additionally, the University has developed a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which contains a number of priorities. This document was finalised and approved by Senior Leadership Team in May 2019. This new strategy will galvanise and revitalise Ulster University's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p> <p>In recognition that BME staff make up a larger proportion of research staff than other employment categories we will undertake to establish a dialogue about their experiences to inform future recommendations.</p>	<p>The below Athena Swan targets have been identified for 2019-21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All STEM schools to have applied for an Athena Swan award by November 2019. • 75% of AHSSBL schools apply for an award by April 2021. <p>To ensure that the views and experiences of BME CRS staff are recognized and integrated into training, development and new guidance a dialogue will be opened starting with the CROS survey in June 2019 (see below point).</p>

11. CROS Survey: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
2.6	CROS survey to be launched in May 2019.	Research Concordat Co-ordinator	<p>CROS Survey to be launched in June 2019 by the Research Concordat Co-ordinator. In addition to the standard questions the Ulster specific questions will have two main functions:</p> <p>1 – To gain CRS-specific feedback on the Ulster training programmes discussed in this document.</p> <p>2 – To determine participant's ethnic background in order to isolate BME responses and develop an action plan to improve BME experiences.</p> <p>More broadly, the response to the CROS survey will inform the themes of the two annual workshops organised by the HR Excellence in Research Implementation Group.</p>	<p>Research Concordat Co-ordinator to break down data to isolate responses of BME staff with a view to opening a dialogue about CRS BME experiences. Following the survey, the HR Excellence in Research Implementation Group will agree an action plan to further engage with BME staff and ensure their experiences are represented.</p> <p>CROS Survey results to feed into themes of annual workshops (see below action point).</p>

12. The Research Governance Triangle / Two annual meetings: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
Principles 4 and 7	To hold two annual workshops between the HR excellence in Research Implementation Group, the Research Concordat Co-ordinator and the CRS.	HR Excellence in Research Implementation Group (Chaired by Director of Research & Impact)	Following the successful workshop between the HR Excellence in Research Implementation Group, the Research Concordat Co-ordinator and the CRS in April 2019, we have committed to organise two annual workshops between these stakeholders. This is an important part of maintaining a dialogue between CRS and these other groups.	<p>The two annual meetings/events/workshops as a new mechanism to ensure the Research Governance Triangle discussed in the 2017 Action Plan is effective.</p> <p>The HR Excellence in Research Group to be responsible for organising two annual meetings with CRS. In order to establish a structure for the triangular relationship with the Contract Researcher Forum, CRS will be consulted regarding the agenda for these events in advance, which will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Improving guidance for PIs. 2 – CRS career development. 3 – Networking and improving CRS communication <p>A measure of success will be 25% of CRS attending at least one of the two annual workshop.</p> <p>In recognition that there are ad hoc arrangements in place regarding CRS forums a review will take place by October 2019 (refer to point 3 above) of effectiveness to ensure they are effective networks and support for CRS. This will be led by the new CRS Seconded (section 14 of this action plan).</p>

13. Web Page: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
Principle 4, 5.5	To Develop a dedicated CRS web page to action as a single point of contact for CRS.	CRS Seconded	<p>In order to maximize CRS engagement and participation with available training, the Researcher Pool and mentoring scheme. A dedicated Contract Research Staff webpage has been set up: https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/our-research/support/contract.</p> <p>This web page will provide clarity about what opportunities are available to CRS as feedback from the CRS workshop (April 2019) suggested that some CRS were unclear what training was intended for them. Additionally, this webpage provides information on the Research Concordat, the responsibilities of Principle Investigators and directs CRS to the new CRS Seconded as a point of contact for any questions they might have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Webpage to be monitored and updated by the CRS Seconded on a quarterly basis. New material, such as the Research Concordat Consultation report, to be added when appropriate. The new webpage to be highlighted in an 'Insight' article, shared via an all staff email and recommended as a resource to all new CRS. Data on CRS engagement will be monitored after the web page has run for 6 months (December 2019) and actions taken to increase visibility if necessary.

14. CRS Secondment: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
Principle 7	R&I and P&C to allocate a dedicated resource to the CRS group to ensure implementation of key actions.	CRS Seconded	To help reinvigorate the Research Governance Triangle, a dedicated resource has been committed to second a CRS member for six months (starting March 2019) to lead on the implementation of key actions. The priority is to ensure improved communication within the triangle structure. Moving forward beyond this period, both People & Culture and Research & Impact have committed to allocate staff resources to ensure the effective delivery of this action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRS Seconded to meet with CRS Forum and review the existing structure by October 2019. CRS Seconded to launch and promote the new CRS webpage in June 2019. This webpage will be reviewed periodically by the HR Excellence in Research Implementation Group. CRS Seconded to support the roll out the new CRS mentoring scheme to be piloted in at least one new school starting September 2019. This action will be continued by the Associate Dean for Research of the chosen school.

15. Promotions Workshops: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
2.5-2.6	People & Culture to run a specific promotions workshop for researchers.	Human Resources People & Culture Led by Deputy Director, HR	Ulster has an annual promotion cycle specifically for CRS, which allows advancement from Research Assistant right through to Professor. Following the CRS workshop in April 2019 it became clear that many CRS were unaware of this process and wanted guidance regarding promotions and career progression. As a result, People & Culture have committed to providing annual promotions workshops tailored for CRS specifically.	Annual CRS promotions workshops with a target of at least 50% of CRS who come forward for promotion attending.

16. Connected Programme to Promote Research Collaboration Across the Education Sector: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
3.9	Deliver the Connected Programme to generate impact through specific projects, internal knowledge transfer, Competitive Fund and promotion of the role knowledge providers play in the generation of economic growth.	Department for Research & Impact Led by Head of Innovation and Impact	<p>Department for Education (DfE) issued a Letter of Offer to the Vice Chancellor for Round 4 of the Higher and Further Education Collaboration Fund: Connected 4 in July 2018. The offer is for a four-year programme, to cover the four years from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2022 and is for £925,852 in total over the 4 year period.</p> <p>This funding will be used for education projects with multiple cross-sector stakeholders. The money funds activity within the University to undertake projects and CPD for academics and research staff.</p>	The programme action plan will be agreed in June 2019 with the DfE and rolled out thereafter up until March 2022.

17. Sabbatical Policy: New

Concordat Clause	Action Description	Lead	Additional Comments	Success Criteria and Timescales
Principle 4	Further develop sabbatical policy for research staff which constitutes at least one sabbatical period per Research Institute core member within a REF cycle, subject to approval by Faculty Executive.	Head of Research Performance	The introduction of a sabbatical policy for research staff which constitutes at least one sabbatical period per Research Institute core member. The Sabbatical Policy for 2018/19 was launched in June 2018 and 25 applications were received. Following a review of applications received and approved in 2018/19, the Head of Research Performance will work with faculties to increase awareness of sabbatical policy and opportunities.	In 2018/19 there were 25 sabbatical applications. The target for 2019/20 and 2021/22 is to increase the number of applications to above 25 per academic year, with a proportional representation of BME and female staff.