Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
Oxford Brookes University - Institutional Action Plan - Approved by University RKEC, 9th Feb 2021

Environment & Culture

Institutions must:	Action plan:
1. Ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat.	Produce short training video on the Concordat to be circulated to all current researchers and their line managers in 20/21. (SB to make video, Jan 2021. JC to circulate by Feb 2021.) Run workshops at University RKEC Away Day (Jan 2021) to gather views of research leaders, contract researchers and professional services staff who support research on how the university can provide training and support for researchers and their line managers in accordance with the 3 core Concordat principles. Roll out of new training in academic year, 21/22 (SB/JC).
2. Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers.	Review and revise the 2012 "Code of Practice for the career management and development of researchers" (By Dec 2021, SB/JC) Athena SWAN group to review University research policies and practices contained within revised CoP to ensure they are inclusive, equitable and transparent. (Heather Griffiths to take to Athena SWAN group, Dec 2021).
3. Promote good mental health and wellbeing through, for example, the effective management of workloads and people, and effective policies and practice for tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment, including providing appropriate support for those reporting issues.	OCSLD/HR to report back to working group on outcome of discussions with senior managers on conversations with staff around workload, prioritsation and Work-Life Balance. (JP to report on progress at Easter 2021 and identify actions arising.) Ensure managing workload, wellbeing and WLB is embedded in new training for managers of researchers (SB/JC, to roll out training during 21/22 academic year). Flag existing OCSLD Time Management course to ECRs and add this to the "Wellbeing for Researchers" web page (JC, semester 2, 20/21). Develop new "Time Management for Researchers" training on how to apply the principles of good time management to own situations, time to reflect on how to manage own time more effectively and an opportunity to hear from senior staff on how they manage their time (to roll out during 21/22 academic year, JC/SB) Look into practicality, within data protection regulations, of establishing of ECR forums/networks at either Faculty or University level to faciliate communication, peer group discussion and support, and reduce sense of working in isolation. (JC to raise at URKEC, May 2021).
4. Ensure that managers of researchers are effectively trained in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing and mental health.	Flag OCSLD's EDI and mental health training to line managers of researchers as part of new university training for leaders/managers of researchers (SB/JC, to roll out during 21/22). Monitor engagement of managers of researchers with the new Skills Boosters offering in EDI, mental health and wellbeing. (JP to report back on engagement and suggest further actions informed by data, at end of 21/22.)
5. Ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity.	Open up new 20/21 mandatory university training sessions for new research-active staff on research integrity: i) Navigating the Research Ethics Approvals Process, ii) Data Management, iii) Open Research & Research Integrity to all current, established research-active staff. Request feedback on each new session during 20/21 to find out what worked and how we can improve. Improvements to be implemented in 21/22 academic year. (JC/SB) Faculty Research Managers to include Research Integrity Resources web page in Faculty Research Inductions for new staff. For existing staff, RI Resources to be added to Faculty intranets/Google sites. (Semester 2, 20/21, JC/RMs) ORIGIN group to review and revise the Research Integrity Resources web page (Action on: ORIGIN group. JC to place on ORIGIN agenda, Semester 1, 21/22). When it becomes available, implement the UKRIO online Research Integrity course as part of the mandatory University Research & KE EXPLORE@Brookes training programme. Aiming for roll out in 21/22 academic year. (JC/SB) Research Data Manager post to be put in place in 21/22, to be funded by the Central Research Fund. Job description has been agreed and post graded by HR. Advert ready to run, post to start from 1st Aug 2021. This post will support academic staff, including research-only staff, to ensure their data meets the principles of FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability & Reusability) (ST/LK)
6. Regularly review and report on the quality of the research environment and culture, including seeking feedback from researchers, and use the outcomes to improve institutional practices.	Participate in CEDARS in 2022. This will help us to identify further areas for improvement, not only for our contract researchers but also to identify how the university can best support their line managers. Establish baseline data for response rates to CEDARS (JC/RMs to promote CEDARS 2022). ORIGIN group to review institutional use of the UK Reproducibility Network's (UKRN's) biennial survey, which will be based on the Wellcome Trust's "What Researchers Think about the Culture They Work in" 2020 report. (ST to report on this, semester 1, 21/22)

Employment

Institutions must:	Action plan:
1. Ensure open, transparent and merit-based recruitment, which attracts excellent researchers, using fair and inclusive selection and appointment practices.	ORIGIN group to take forward actions of the "Oxford Brookes University and Responsible Metrics" statement to promote and support merit-based recognition in OBU recruitment and selection. (ST to report back on progress, Semester 1, 21/22) Analysis of past recruitment of ECRs (using 5 years' data from HR) to check bias/challenge assumptions. Action on: BC. Data to be provided by Laura Woodley, HR. Data analysis to be carried out by Heather Griffiths (Athena SWAN/Concordat Working Group) Aug 2022. HR to ask recently appointed research-only staff for their feedback on how they found the recruitment & selection process and to make suggestions for improvements. Unsuccessful applicants also to be approached for their feedback, to reduce bias. Action on: BC (By Aug 2021). Concordat working group to contribute to survey questions.
2. Provide an effective induction, ensuring that researchers are integrated into the community and are aware of policies and practices relevant to their position.	Faculty RMs to carry out their own reviews of Faculty Research Induction. RMs to request feedback from new researchers 6 months after start date & implement improvements, from academic year 21/22. Laura Woodley, HR to provide regular reports to each Faculty RM on new research-only staff, to facilitate timely Faculty Research Induction. From semester 2, 20/21. OCSLD to review the new starter experience for research-only staff using Staff Experience Survey data (JP, by Sep 2021).
3. Provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers' contributions, and the diversity of personal circumstances.	Actions on ORIGIN group to take forward the "Oxford Brookes University and Responsible Metrics" statement to promote and support merit-based recognition in promotion. (ST to report back on progress at start of 21/22). GEARING-Roles project to report on findings of analyses conducted as part of the implementation of its Gender Equality Plan, e.g. to understand perceived barriers and enablers to promotion. Action on Heather Griffiths (Athena SWAN/Concordat Working Group) to analyse 5 years of promotions data and ECRs' experiences (by Dec 2021).
4. Provide effective line and project management training opportunities for managers of researchers, heads of department and equivalent.	Run workshops at the University RKEC Away Day in Jan 2021 (from research leaders, researchers and professional services staff who support research) to develop the University's Research & KE training programme for Line Managers of researchers and PIs (training to be rolled out in 21/22 academic year, SB/JC). OCSLD is committed to delivering Project Management training for a return in 21/22. Project Management training will be open to both managers of researchers and to research-only staff. (JP to report on Project Management offering at start of 21/22. JC to promote training to research-only staff and managers of researchers.)
5. Ensure that excellent people management is championed throughout the organisation and embedded in institutional culture, through annual appraisals, transparent promotion criteria, and workload allocation.	Further promotion of the importance of the PDR process to Line Managers of contract research staff and grant PIs through the expanded university RKE training programme for senior staff to run 21/22, developed from RKEC Away Day feedback (Jan 21). (SB/JC) Faculty RMs to flag expectation of PDR to researchers and their Line Managers at Faculty Research Induction. (Semester 2, 20/21 onwards, RMs) Take part in CEDARS, 2022 to assess numbers of researchers engaging with PDR. Increase target from 60% to 80% at next national survey measure, with a long term aim to achieve 100%. Action on: All Line Managers of ECRs & on all ECRs (from PDR 2021, onwards). Promotion of CEDARS (JC, 2022). Monitor progress towards adequate WLP time granted for participation in EXPLORE (JP, OCLSD to report on progress at end of 20/21 and monitor at end of academic year, ongoing annually). Encourage early discussions of workload expectations between researchers and their managers as part of new University RKE training for managers of researchers/PI's. (Roll out of new training in academic year, 21/22, SB/JC).

6. Seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress.	LK/Ruth Davies, Director of HR to report on progress to date on use of more open-ended contracts for ECRs across the university (end of 20/21). Develop training/resources to prepare research-only staff to move into academic roles. (LK/SB/JC to develop during 21/22).
7. Consider researchers and their managers as key stakeholders within the institution and provide them with formal opportunities to engage with relevant organisational policy and decision-making.	Faculties to fill ECR reps at FRKEC asap. (Action on FRKECs. RMs to report back on positions filled in semester 2, 20/21). University to approve formal mechanisms to facilitate ECR communication with other ECRs, whilst adhering to data protection regulations e.g. The establishment of Faculty ECR networks. (JC to raise at URKEC, May 2021). Written guidance to be produced on the role of the ECR rep at RKEC, to help promote clarity on how ECRs feed into decision-making and policy-making. (Action on LK as Chair of URKEC, semester 2, 20/21). Laura Woodley, HR to provide Faculty RMs with current list and subsequent monthly reports of new research-only staff, to facilitate Faculty communication. (From semester 2, 20/21 onwards).

Professional and career development

Institutions must:	Action plan:
1. Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.	Revised 2012 Code of Practice to include examples of what is meant by the Concordat's definition of "professional development" activities. (SB/JC, Dec 2021). Add a note into the PDR form guidance for research staff, reminding them and their Line Managers that the university has signed up to the Concordat which mandates a minimum allowance of 10 days per year pro rata for professional development for all contract researchers. (Before next PDR round, by Easter 2021, JC/JP) University Research & KE training - Video to be produced and circulated to explain/remind both researchers and their managers what the concordat means for them and highlighting the obligation to provide 10 days per year pro rata for training & development. (SB to produce video, Jan 2021. JC to circulate, by Feb 2021). Embed video on the Concordat web page so this resource can be accessed at any time (semester 2, 20/21, JC/Webdev Team). University decision on which funding source will fund the 10 days per annum pro rata for training & development activities for EU-funded ECRs (LK, Jan 2021). Agree process for how this is communicated to Faculties. (JC to inform RMs & Faculty Finance, semester 2, 20/21).
2. Provide training, structured support, and time for managers to engage in meaningful career development reviews with their researchers.	Link the Vitae RDF, OBU Researcher Development Matrix & Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers to the PDR Reviewer guidance (https://www.brookes.ac.uk/human-resources/working-here/learning-and-career-development/pdr/reviewer-guidance/) to facilitate the career development review of researchers. (Before next PDR round. By Easter 2021, JC/JP) Add in links to the University's Research & KE training programme for staff and EXPLORE@Brookes to PDR Reviewer guidance under "Supporting information to help you" on University web pages. (By Easter 2021, JC/JP) Add information on the Vitae RDF, OBU Researcher Development Matrix, Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, University's Research & KE training programme, EXPLORE@Brookes & Careers Centre training & development for contract researchers to a new section specifically on "Reviewee guidance for Research-only staff" and to the PDR guidance for Academics/Line Managers also. (By Easter 2021, JC/JP) Careers Centre to contribute to new proposed University RKE training for Line Managers/Research Leaders/Grant PI's on how to carry out a tailored and meaningful career development review for the unique needs of their contract researchers, including principles of good coaching conversations and limits/signposting/when to refer on. Training to be delivered in 21/22 academic year (JM/SB/JC)
3. Ensure that researchers have access to professional advice on career management, across a breadth of careers.	Ensure there are links to the Careers Centre offering for contract researchers on Faculty intranets/Google sites (RMs, semester 2, 20/21). Promote use of Careers Centre one to one advice, training and resources as part of new proposed training for Line Managers of Researchers/Grant PI's, to be rolled out during 21/22 academic year (SB/JC)

4. Provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.	Make OCSLD's new Leadership & Management training programme available to all researchers, as part of the new EXPLORE@Brookes programme. (JP, Oct 20 onwards). Researchers do not need to be enrolled on EXPLORE to access the L&M training, they can sign up for individual sessions and being a manager is no longer a prerequisite to participate. Promote OCSLD's new Leadership and Management training to research-only staff. (JC, semester 2, 20/21).

Reminder of Concordat stipulation that Line Managers of researchers must "allow time (in addition to the 10 days p.a. pro rata for professional development) to develop research identity" to form part of new training programme for Managers of Researchers/grants PI's, to be rolled out in 21/22 (SB/JC)

Revised 2012 Code of Practice to include guidance on how to interpret use of the additional time allowance to develop research identity (SB/JC, by Dec 2021).

Flag to Line Managers suggestions raised at ECR focus group (Dec 2020) to faciliate research-only staff integration into department as part of new training for LMs of Researchers to run in 21/22 (SB/JC), e.g offering ECRs opportunities to e.g. teach/run seminars as part of dept community life and ensure inclusion in invitations to departmental activities.

Investigate opportunities to connect researchers, e.g through Faculty or University networks, to develop their Research Identity and facilitate peer discussion (JC to take to May 2021 URKEC). |
| 5. Recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and support opportunities for researchers to experience this. | Enterprise Team to run pilot development programme, BRIDGE (Building Researchers Innovation & Developing Goals with Enterprise), which will be open to all ECRs. Pilot to take place in Semester 2, 20/21 and roll out more fully to follow after successful review of the pilot. Action on: Lydiah Igweh, Director of Enterprise Support. JC to promote to ECRs.

University to review how to best collect career destination data from ECRs post-OBU. URKEC to discuss how to best stay connected, how to capture this information and who is best placed to drive this (JC to raise issue at URKEC, May 2021). |
| 6. Monitor, and report on, the engagement of researchers and their managers with professional development activities, and researcher career development reviews. | Ensure the University's position on completion of PDR for all research-only staff is clear in revised 2012 "Code of Practice for the career management and development of researchers" (JC/SB, Dec 2021).

HR to send targetted comms to Line Managers of Researchers and ECRs using CORE HR data. Reminders to be sent about purpose of PDR, where to find the forms, training for Reviewer & Reviewee and flagging the commitment to carry out PDR for all ECRs. To send annually in May and follow up reminder in June, ahead of PDR season. Action on: BC (May/June 2021 and annually thereafter).

As part of Concordat video for researchers and their line managers, highlight CROS data on low reported completion rate for research-only staff PDR and importance of carrying this out. (SB to make video, Jan 2021. JC to circulate, by Feb 2021).

Make sure PDR completion is covered in new university training for leaders/managers of researchers (SB/JC, roll out during 21/22 academic year).

OCSLD to monitor completion of PDR in 2021 and make suggestions for improvements following review (JP, end of 2021 PDR year, Sep 2021). |

Key for actions:
BC = Ben Cooper, HR Business Partnership Manager
JC = Jennie Cripps, Researcher Development Co-ordinator
JM = Dr Jo Moyle, Careers Consultant
JP = Prof. Jackie Potter, Head of Oxford Centre for Staff & Learning Development (OCSLD) and Deputy Director of HR
LK = Prof. Linda King, Pro Vice Chancellor - Research & Global Partnerships
RMs = Faculty Research Managers
SB = Prof. Susan Brooks, Director of Researcher Development
ST = Sarah Taylor, Director of Research Support

Concordat Working Group:
Dr Adam Baimel - Early Career Research Fellow - HLS rep
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Dr Juliet Carpenter - Senior Research Fellow - TDE rep
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Prof. Jackie Potter - Head of OCSLD & Deputy Director of HR
Sarah Taylor - Director of Research Support