HR Excellence In Research - University of Sussex Concordat Implementation Plan 2017 – 2021

(A glossary of terms is provided at the end of this document)

Action Number	Concordat Principle(s)	Action	Action status	Involvement (lead in bold)	Success Measure	Timescale
1	All	Scope a comprehensive 'Researcher Development Strategy' to set out the commitments, expectations and provision for supporting researchers across the whole research career span	New	**HR, RSO,** Schools, Relevant Committees	Researcher Development Strategy defined and published. Associated business case agreed and delivery structures implemented.	September 2019
2	Recruitment and Selection	Review alternative approaches to fixed-term contract management implemented at other HEIs and broader sector. Produce report and recommendations based on review.	carried forward from 2015-17	**RSO**	Review conducted and report and recommendations received and considered by RSWG and Parent Committees. Subsequent actions identified and agreed.	July 2018
3	Recruitment and Selection	Increase awareness and uptake of start of contract discussions by: • Communicating data to Schools regarding current level of take up and benefits of discussions reported by researchers • Provide examples of Schools that have successfully implemented start of contract discussions. • Include guidance for start of contract discussions in new PI leaflet (action point 4)	New; building on 2015-17 plan	**RSO**, Schools, PIs	Increased uptake of start of contract discussions as measured by repeat of the 2016 survey questions, double to 60% by May 2019, increase to > 90% by May 2021	May 2019
4	Recruitment and Selection	Production of leaflet for PIs on key information and resources for research staff management. Leaflet to be given to PIs at point of receiving shortlisting documentation when recruiting a researcher. Hardcopy in 2017, with pdf available on PI webpages and in e-recruitment once University system migrated.	New	**RSO,** HR	Leaflet developed, approved by RSWG and HR Committee and embedded into recruitment processes. Increased uptake of start of contract discussions (as per action point 3). Positive qualitative feedback from PIs (e.g. through focus group/practice sharing). 25% increase in proportion of respondents citing local induction as useful/very useful in CROS 2019	September 2017

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5	Recruitment and Selection	Develop factual document to provide information and guidance relating to pros/cons F-T vs indefinite contracts to be hosted on HR policy section of website. Communications to those invited to transfer to indefinite contracts as part of annual review updated to include link to the information document	New	**HR** and RSO	Document published on HR website and linked from Research Staff and PI webpages, communicated to Researchers and included in PI leaflet.	Sept 2017
6	Recruitment and Selection	In autumn 2017 host practice sharing event for schools regarding processes for visiting research fellows. Meeting to include representation from School Managers/administrators, HR, Research Development. In autumn 2017 host focus group for current visiting research fellows to hear about experiences and any challenges encountered.	New	**RSO,** School administrators, Research Development, HR, Visiting Fellows	Report of meetings and recommendations to address key issues considered by RSWG and parent committees. Actions identified and agreed. Implementation of actions in academic year 2017/18	July 2018
7	Recruitment and Selection	Institutional assessment of European Commission Open Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment (OTM-R) - Review using checklist and implement any adjustments as required	New	**HR**	Institutional alignment to OTM-R reviewed by HR. Report and recommendations considered by RSWG and parent committees. Any required actions agreed and implemented. Institution fully compliant with OTM-R	December 2017
8	Recognition and Value	Explore initiatives/mechanisms for enabling researchers to generate independent research outputs and demonstrate independent research leadership: - Research HEI best practice - Generate range of costed options to put forward into University planning process.	Building on 2015-17 plan	**RSO,** RSWG, Reps	Preferred mechanisms identified and budget agreed as part of Researcher Development Strategy (action point 1). Mechanisms implemented and communicated to researchers – take up of initiatives is positive. Longer term success measures: first author publications from RFs, RFs leading new collaborations, higher proportion of research fellows as PIs/Co-Is on funding bids, researchers securing promotions and permanent jobs. *(Baseline data required ahead of specifying numerical targets).*	July 2020

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9	Recognition and Value	Account for research staff role progression (i.e. promotion) in grant proposal budgets where appropriate and allowed by funder. Introduce a specific consideration of this into the bid costing process.	Carried forward from 2015-17	**Research Development**	PIs routinely asked about researcher progression when costing proposals. Progression of named researchers is routinely costed into proposals. 50% more externally funded researchers applying for promotions	December 2017
10	Recognition and Value	Explore options for specific training packages for PIs managing postdoctoral staff and enhance marketing of existing provision. Specifically: • Research HEI best practice in PI development and use outputs of PI event and focus groups with PIs and outputs of Head of School appraisal reports to conduct training needs analysis. • Map existing SDU provision to PI needs and develop tailored promotional communications/materials to enhance PI engagement with existing programmes. • Identify gaps in PI provision and develop and cost plans for additional training/development activity to be considered in University Planning exercise.	Carried forward from 2015-17	**SDU**, **RSO**, PIs	University plan and investment into PI management development activity as part of Researcher Development Strategy (action point 1). By the end of academic year 2018/19, 25% more PIs attending existing SDU courses (as measured by attendance figures) and providing positive feedback (as measured by post-course evaluations and staff survey). Research Fellows report that they are well supported by their managers (as measured by standard questions in CROS and UoS Staff Survey)	September 2019

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11	Recognition and Value	Further increase the number of promotion applications from Research Fellows via specific interventions including: • Celebrating the success of RFs that achieve promotion in 2017 via Sussex Researcher Newsletter. • Invite successful 2017 promotees to be promotion mentors at the 2017/18 promotions workshops and/or provide case studies of their approach to securing promotion. • Raise PI awareness of research staff promotion processes via PI leaflet, email communications and PI webpages. • Continued monitoring of promotions applications from RFs and targeted communications to Schools where application rates are low.	New, building on 2015-2017 plan	**RSO,** RSWG, HR	Increased promotions applications from RFs, 50% increase in RF promotion applications. Success rates in alignment with other faculty groups	July 2018
12	Recognition and Value	Spotlight Symposium to showcase impact of postdoctoral research to form one of the sessions at Sussex Impact Day 2017. 1.5 hour session with short postdoctoral research fellow impact talks from research areas spanning the variety of disciplines at Sussex. To be complemented by Spotlight profile posters in the exhibition space. Speakers to receive training session on impactful research communication in advance of the event. Spotlight profiles of speakers and applicants to be developed for release from Autumn 2017	New, Building on 2015-17 plan	**RSO,** Research Fellows, Research Quality and Impact Team	Positive response to call for applications for presentations (Year 1 target to exceed 10 applications). Good attendance figures from the session (Year 1 target to exceed 30 people) and positive feedback from speakers and attendees as evidenced by post session feedback forms. Positive effect on the hit rate of Spotlight webpage and profiles. External coverage of Sussex researchers as a result of the event	June 2017

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13	Recognition and Value	Develop a template for Research Staff to self-record teaching activity as an interim measure in lieu of new student record system being delivered. Consideration of template for feedback from students supervised by research staff. RSWG to make formal recommendation to student record system project to ensure incorporation of teaching records for RFs into the system specification.	New, Building on 2015-17 plan	Phase 1 & 2: **RSWG and RSO** Phase 3: **Student Records Project Team**	Phase 1: Recommendations for system requirements communicated by RSWG to student record systems project. Phase 2: Template(s) developed, communicated and in use by Research staff. Phase 3 2. New system incorporates RFs teaching responsibilities. RF automated teaching transcript available	Phase 1: July 2017 Phase 2: July 2018 Phase 3: July 2021 (or by Student Records project completion)
14	Recognition and Value	Include question(s) in CROS 2017 to explore whether postdoctoral researchers still perceive that they are treated/ perceived as students rather than staff by other colleagues. Establish extent of any issue across the University. If patterns emerge follow up with focus groups to explore the underlying issues and identify potential solutions to address.	New	**RSO,** Research Fellows	Clarity on the extent that this is a perception of research staff vs other colleagues. Understanding of the underlying behaviours that contribute to these perceptions. Actions identified as appropriate to address any specific issues at School/University levels. Responses to repeat of questions in CROS 2019 demonstrates positive improvement.	May 2019
15	Recognition and Value	Raise awareness of impact of space issues for Research staff; specifically by: Include question(s) in CROS 2017 to gather information regarding space allocations for Research Fellows. Collate any published expectations of funders with respect to space allocation for Research Staff. Provide report and recommendations to the RSWG of outcomes and disseminate to relevant University Committees, Heads of School and School Managers.	New	**RSO,** Research Fellows, Academic Schools	Report considered by RSWG and communicated to relevant committees, Heads of School and School managers. Repeat of questions in CROS 2019 demonstrates positive improvement.	May 2019

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16	Recognition and Value	Incorporate recognition of research staff management into academic promotions processes by: • RSWG recommendation to APATC to review promotion criteria to include management of research staff/teams. • Briefing for members of promotions boards on the value of research staff management for career progression. • Provide case studies of good practice in research staff management to support promotion applicants and demonstrate how research staff management maps across other aspects of the promotions criteria	New	**Academic Promotions and Titles Committee (APATC),** HR, RSO	Promotions criteria updated to include specific reference to Research staff/team management. Promotions boards briefed on criteria Promotions applications from Research Staff Managers make reference to success measures in managing their broader research teams.	May 2020
17	Recognition and Value	Explore potential spaces and propose options for a dedicated researcher hub with networking space, training and consultation rooms.	New	**RSO,** RSWG, Estates Committees.	Proposal approved, Space allocated and researcher hub open	July 2021
18	Recognition and Value	Audit of University annual policy/process related communications to Schools to ensure that eligibility of Research Fellows and Teaching Fellows is explicit for key initiatives (e.g. appraisal, promotions, pay review etc)	New	**HR,** RSO	Communications updated where necessary. Research Fellows aware of eligibility and processes of key annual initiatives (appraisal, pay review, promotion) as indicated by responses to CROS and informal feedback. Researchers encouraged by PIs to participate in the annual processes as evidenced by CROS feedback.	July 2017

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19	Support and Career Development	Evaluate revised group Mentoring Circle Scheme for Women in STEMM via survey of mentors and participants from 2016/17 and comparison with previous Mentoring Circles evaluations. If evaluation is positive, roll out a mixed gender scheme for early career researchers using the same model.	New, Building on 2015-17 plan	**RSO**	Positive feedback from the 2016/17 scheme from participants and mentors. (>75% of participants cite that they would recommend to other researchers) Scheme rolled out to ECRs across the University. Full attendance at mentoring circle meetings. Positive feedback in 2017/18 scheme evaluation from mentors and participants.	July 2018
20	Support and Career Development	Explore options and best practice relating to Schools/University providing top-up funding for small projects/collaborations/conference attendance. Collate information about current practice across the University and share with Schools along with recommendations. Where significant gaps are identified propose options for central provision within University planning rounds. Collate success stories of outcomes of use of career development funds	New	**RSO, Academic Schools**	Research staff across all academic Schools are able to access University/School funds to support their career development. Case studies of successful outcomes of career development funding leading to significant outputs (e.g. funding, publications, promotions, collaborations, patents etc)	May 2019
21	Support and Career Development	Provide Information and guidance about mechanisms for Research Fellows to be primary/co applicants on research proposals. Specifically this will include: - Guidance about schemes/situations where Research Fellows are eligible to be primary/co- applicants. - Guidance about the support required of schools to facilitate RF eligibility as primary applicants/co-applicants. - Raise awareness of potential for Researcher-Co-Investigator status.	New	**Research Development Team,** RSO	25% more research proposals submitted with Research Fellows as either PI, Co-I or Researcher Co-I.	Dec 2018

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22	Support and Career Development	Best practice review followed by establishment of leadership development programme for RFs aspiring to fellowships/permanent faculty positions.	New	**RSO,** RSWG, Staff Development Unit (SDU)	Leadership development programme funded and implemented as part of the Researcher Development Strategy (action point 1). Interest in the programme as demonstrated by applications to participate. Positive feedback from participants as demonstrated by end of course evaluation survey.	July 2020
23	Support and Career Development	Increase researcher engagement with industry/other sectors by the introduction of 'Hack Days' for researchers and businesses to come together to jointly solve business problems. Base on successful model already trialled in School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. Link with Sussex Innovation Centre (SINC) to source potential organisations. Couple with creativity and ideation training.	New	**RSO**, SINC,	Two Pilot 'Hack Days' hosted and deemed successful via participant and organisation post-event feedback. Evidence of continued collaborations between researchers and Hack Day business partners	July 2018
24	Support and Career Development	Enhance online provision for Research Staff Careers support including: Case studies of career paths, online career planning module. New and refreshed webpages with links to careers related information, resources and support.	New	**RSO, Careers and Employability Centre**	New/updated webpages published and content frequently used as evidenced by hit rates, bounce rates and other google analytics data. Improvement in proportion of researchers that state that they have developed career plans as evidenced by CROS responses – increase to >70% by 2019	May 2019
25	Support and Career Development	Develop a mentoring framework and supporting information/resources that can be customised for different areas of the University. Staff involved in mentoring (coordinators, mentors/mentees) to receive training to support roll out of mentoring framework. Mentoring to be recognised in workload allocation models.	New	**SDU,** Athena SWAN SAT, RSO, Mentoring Coordinators, Schools	Mentoring framework and accompanying resources published and adopted by Schools. (ii) 100% University mentoring schemes are operating under the mentoring framework. (iii) >80% of mentors and mentees enrolled in mentoring schemes report productive mentoring relationships via scheme evaluations.	April 2018

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26	Support and Career Development	Explore enhanced links and collaborations with University of Brighton Researcher Development. Identify opportunities for hosting joint events and opening courses for booking by UoB researchers and vice versa.	New	**RDO** and University of Brighton Research Staff Ambassador	Minimum of 2 joint researcher development events established annually. Agreement reached regarding mutual access to researcher development workshops/events across both institutions. Events cross-publicised and regularly have representation from both institutions.	May 2019
27	Support and Career Development	Conduct focus groups/consultations with part-time and distance research staff to establish specific requirements with respect to support for career development.	New	**RSO**	Consultation completed and report considered by Research Staff Working Group. Recommendations from the report implemented.	December 2017
28	Researchers responsibilities	Introduce new webpage for researchers to signpost teaching information, guidance and resources. Include clarification of appropriate teaching roles/responsibilities of Research Fellows.	New	**RSO, Academic Quality and Enhancement,** Research Staff Reps	Webpage published and communicated to Research Staff and linked to and from other relevant pages. Content engaging as evidenced by low bounce rates. Researchers report improved knowledge of teaching opportunities/responsibilities as evidenced by CROS and feedback from Reps.	July 2017
29	Researchers responsibilities	Raising awareness amongst research staff of the Sussex Junior Research Associates (JRA) scheme as an opportunity for supervisory responsibility: - active promotion of the scheme via newsletter, mailing list and forum - Email to Heads of School and Directors of - Research and Knowledge Exchange to encourage them to put Research Fellows forward to supervise JRAs - Inclusion of JRA scheme in teaching/outreach themed coffee morning	New	**RSO, Doctoral School**	20% Increase in number of research fellows acting as supervisors for undergraduate JRA projects	December 2017

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30	Diversity and Equality	Evaluate success of University sponsorship of Daphne Jackson Fellowships and investigate alternative (in-house) options for offering fellowships for researchers returning from a career break.	Carried forward from 2015-17 plan	**Athena SWAN SAT,** RSO, HR	(i) Evaluation report of the University Sponsorship of Daphne Jackson Fellowships considered by SAT and University Executive Group. (ii) Future model for University sponsorship of returners fellowships is agreed, resourced and implemented (iii) New cohort of Fellows successfully recruited.	July 2018
31	Diversity and Equality	Introduce a mandatory Equality & Diversity online training package for all members of Sussex staff	New	**HR, SDU**	All current staff have completed mandatory E&D training. Process in place to ensure new starters complete the training as part of probationary process. Improvement in Equality & Diversity related responses to staff survey and CROS	July 2017
32	Diversity and Equality	Revise current policy for Research Fellows without PhD to enable them to progress up Salary Scale, where they have equivalent level professional experience to PhD qualification.	New	**HR, Trade Unions**	All Research Fellows without PhD qualification but with equivalent professional experience are on progressable grades and receive annual increments in alignment with other Research Fellows	April 2017
33	Diversity and Equality	University engagement with Stonewall, expanded Athena SWAN process and other equality charters	New	**PVCs for Equality and Diversity,** Athena SWAN SAT, Equality and Diversity Committee, E&D Forum	University recognised as Stonewall Diversity Champion. All STEMM Schools retain or improve on their current Athena SWAN award. Non-STEMM Schools have submitted Athena SWAN applications or are working towards a submission Longer term Equality and Diversity strategy articulated as part of the broader University strategy.	May 2019
34	Diversity and Equality	Introduce an informal network for Researchers with caring responsibilities. To include regular informal meetings quarterly and an online forum.	New	**RSO**	Carers network established and has a regular core membership. Feedback positive from participants.	December 2017

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35	Implementation and Review	Run the Biennial CROS Surveys of Research Staff	Building on 2015-17 plan	**RSO,** Research staff community, Academic Schools	CROS 2017 completed with response rate of 41% or higher. Results communicated to Research Staff Community, Schools and relevant University Committees. Actions identified and incorporated into Concordat Implementation Plan	September 2017
36	Implementation and Review	Termly review of progress against implementation plan by RSWG	Building on 2015-17 Plan	**RSWG,** RSO	Concordat Implementation plan regularly updated with progress. Successes are celebrated and disseminated and challenges/risks are identified and action taken to mitigate	Ongoing
37	Implementation and Review	Explore mechanisms to track destinations of Sussex researchers to include: - Review of Pilot of Exit interviews in Psychology for potential roll out across Schools, - Canvass opinions from Reps and Researcher forums about mechanisms they would engage in for longer term contact with the University. - Explore mechanisms for PIs to contribute knowledge of researcher destinations (e.g. via appraisal/promotions processes) - Explore potential of social media groups for former Sussex Research Fellows - Explore options for in School information capture of researcher destinations	New	**RSO**, HR, Academic Schools, Research staff	Report of potential options considered by RSWG. Actions identified and implemented. Mechanism(s) for tracking researcher destinations is in place and destinations of Research Staff leavers are recorded. Information on destinations of Sussex researchers is used to inform professional development activities of current research staff.	May 2019
38	Implementation and Review	Practice sharing with other institutions Nationally and internationally via: - RSO to present externally annually - Engagement with Vitae Regional Networks and South East Researcher Development Forum - Research Staff Officer activity as HR Excellence Peer Reviewer	Building on 2015-17 plan	**RSO,** Research Staff Reps	New ideas resulting from practice sharing incorporated into Concordat Implementation Plans and/or RSO/Reps activities. Regular innovations to University provision for researchers that are appreciated by researchers as evidenced by feedback from CROS surveys and informal feedback.	ongoing

					Presentations of UoS activity at conferences and networking events. Invited talks and/or requests for advice/input on external initiatives.	
		- Exploration of visit to European partner institution(s) to share researcher development practice - Reps and Postdoctoral Network engagement with UK Research Staff Association				

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

APATC   - Academic Promotions and Titles Committee
CO-I   - Co-Investigator
CROS   - Careers in Research Online Survey
ECR   - Early Career Researcher
F-T   - Fixed-Term
HEI   - Higher Education Institution
HR   - Human Resources
JRA   - Junior Research Associate
ORCID   - Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier
OTM-R   - Open Transparent and Merit Based Recruitment
PI   - Principal Investigator
RF   - Research Fellow
RSO   - Research Staff Office
RSWG   - Research Staff Working Group
SAT   - Self-Assessment Team
SDU   - Staff Development Unit
SINC   - Sussex Innovation Centre
STEMM   - Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine
UKRSA   - UK Research Staff association
UoB   - University of Brighton
UoS   - University of Sussex