

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Implementation Action Plan: October 2011

Introduction

Queen's University Belfast supports the principles outlined in the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Support for researchers is demonstrated through investment in research posts and the range of training, development and support offered to those employed to undertake research.

In 2010, a review of researcher-related training and employment issues was initiated to consider the implementation of the revised Concordat, launched in 2008. A working group chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduates considered these issues including a gap-analysis of existing practice against Concordat principles.

One output of the working group was to publish a guidance booklet which sets out how the Concordat principles are being implemented in the University and provides guidance on how researchers might expect to develop their careers in the short and longer term. The guide was produced by reviewing policies and procedures and actual working practice over many years in relation to employment and development of research colleagues. This also incorporated the results of staff surveys (Careers in Research Online Survey) and consultations with researchers, academics and relevant staff carried out by the Staff Training and Development Unit (STDU).

Discussions were also held with the Contract Research Staff Development Working Group, which was established in 2006, to improve engagement with this group of staff and encourage and enhance their professional and career development. Further information on the development support provided to Queen's Research Staff is available from the Research Staff [website](#).

[Queen's University Researcher Career Development Guidance Booklet](#): *(PDF Download)*

Governance and Engagement

Queen's continues to engage with research staff, those who manage and supervise researchers and other stakeholders in supporting research. Mechanisms for this include:

- Concordat Working Group
- A Contract Research Staff Development Working Group;
- Senior management boards and committees receive reports and recommendations;
- Careers in Research Online Survey (every two years);
- Evaluation of the researcher training programmes (STDU);

- Formal and informal consultation and working groups.

Through these processes, a proposal to continuously review and enhance existing processes in relation to the management, training and career development of researchers was approved. This has resulted in the action plan below, which highlights a number of key actions and responsibilities for the 2011-12 and 2012-13. This is aligned to Concordat principles, and the UK –wide process to gain the European Commission’s “HR Excellence in Research Award”; it is hoped that this will enable an external recognition of good practice to be achieved by Queen’s.

Ownership and Key Stakeholders

This plan has been endorsed by the senior management listed below and progress against these actions will be reviewed formally every two years. It will be the responsibility of managers and support teams listed in the Action Plan in conjunction with Heads of academic Schools and others who manage and undertake research to progress the stated actions. The Concordat Working Group will be re-configured to champion and review the action plan, with membership to include those listed below:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduates
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Research and Enterprise.

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers Implementation Action Plan: October 2011

The actions below have been developed to enhance the skills and career development of research staff.

Objective/Theme	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Concordat Principle	Progress
1. Concordat Principles					
Concordat Principles: review	1.1 Conduct a gap-analysis between Concordat Principles and Queen's policies and processes	HR/Concordat Working Group	Work undertaken during 2010-11 academic year Actions also identified in recent consultations with staff on the content of the action plan	7	Completed
Concordat Principles: promotion	1.2 Produce Queen's Research Career Development booklet as an outcome of action 1.1. The guide sets out how Concordat principles are being implemented in Queen's University and provides guidance on how researchers might expect to develop their careers in the short and longer term	HR – Personnel and STDU	Work undertaken during 2010-11 academic year	7, 1	Completed
Concordat Principles: promotion	1.3 Distribute guide booklet to all new research staff and academic staff as part of induction	HR – STDU and Schools	On-going	1	On-going
Concordat Principles: promotion and engagement	1.4 Undertake CROS survey every two years. Use summary report to feed into this action plan and review process	HR – STDU and Schools	CROS 2009, 2011 and 2013 survey and report	1,2, 7	2011 survey complete
2. Researcher learning and development programme					
Researcher learning and development programme: allocation of resources	2.1 University to review and clarify resources to sustain the professional and career development support for research staff following the withdrawal of "Roberts"/RCUK funding	HR/Finance/ PVC Research & Postgraduates	January 2012	2, 7	
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: prioritisation	2.2 Align training and development provision with the Researcher Development Framework (RDF)	HR–STDU	March 2011	3 & 4	Completed 2011

Objective/Theme	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Concordat Principle	Progress
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: promotion	2.3 Promote the recommendation of 5 days central personal and career development per year and regularly monitor actual engagement	HR-STDU/Faculties	On-going via range of communication and measurement methods	3 & 4	
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: promotion	2.4 Briefing for PIs on Concordat-related issues: management of staff, recruitment, appraisal, progression, development and creating an effective research environment (REF). To include information on research staff related employment procedures, e.g. redeployment policy and bridging funds	HR-Personnel and STDU, Research & Enterprise, in conjunction with Schools	Sept 2012-June 2013	1,3,4	
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: coaching and mentoring	2.5 Enhance and support mentoring and coaching for research staff at Queen's in general and specifically on applying for research fellowship grants. This will require the provision of information and training in the use of mentoring and coaching to research staff and Research Leaders/Pis.	HR-STDU and Schools	Jan 2012 – June 2012	4	
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: review	2.6 Annual review of training and development provision to ensure it continues to meet needs of individuals, funders and university. These reviews should consider the variety of experience and discipline background within the research staff population and include a review of an annual profiling report.	HR-STDU	On-going – annually June – August each year	7	On-going
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: career development support	2.7 Increase awareness and uptake of career development support	HR-STDU, Careers Service, CRSDWG and Schools	On-going promotion Review uptake every 12 months	3, 4 & 5	
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: career development support	2.8 Increase employer input to the researcher development programme, e.g. employer based seminars and enterprise focused development activity.	HR-STDU, Careers Service, Research and Enterprise and Schools	2011-12	3, 4 & 5	
Researcher Learning and Development Programme: individual responsibilities	2.9 Engage with school based research staff societies about professional and career development. Encourage collaboration between these societies in the planning and organising of school-based development activity.	HR-STDU, CRSDWG and Schools	On-going Report to each CRSDWG meeting	5	

3. Researcher personal and career development processes					
Objective/Theme	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Concordat Principle	Progress
Researcher personal and career development processes: induction	3.1 Ensure effective dual approach (central events/school induction) to researcher inductions: Review school-based (research centre/cluster) induction for research staff, provide information to support schools and deliver central induction events and resources	Schools and HR-STDU	Jan 2012 – June 2012	1,2, 4	
Researcher personal and career development processes: induction	3.2 New research staff to receive an information pack on professional and career development support and resources. This will include central and school based information.	Schools, HR STDU and HR Personnel	Jan 2012 – June 2012	1,2, 4	
Researcher personal and career development processes: induction	3.3 Annual monitoring of attendance at central induction and completion of school-based induction	Schools	Annual report	1,2, 4	
Researcher personal and career development processes: appraisal	3.4 Annual monitoring of appraisal for research staff – completion rates.	HR–Personnel and Schools	Annual appraisal report	2, 4, 5	
Researcher personal and career development processes: appraisal	3.5 Provide additional appraisal guidance and support to ensure that alongside review of performance and setting objectives, sufficient time is taken to reflect on and plan the skills and career development needs of research staff. For all research staff but with a particular focus on research staff who have held more than one contract.	HR–Personnel and Schools	Tbc	2, 4, 5	
Researcher personal and career development processes: appraisal	3.6 Updated guidance notes on research staff appraisal to be added to download site for appraisal forms	HR–Personnel	September 2012	2, 4, 5	
Researcher personal and career development processes: exit	3.7 Design and conduct exit interviews/surveys with research staff leaving Queen’s, as appropriate.	HR–Personnel and Schools	Tbc	3, 4	
4. Supporting Research Leaders/Principle Investigators (PIs)					
Supporting Research leaders/PIs	4.1 Review training available to Research Leaders/PIs to support their management of research staff	HR–STDU and Schools	2012-13	3 & 4	
Supporting Research leaders/PIs	4.2 Work with Heads of School to ensure completion of appraisal for both Research Leaders/PIs and research staff	HR-Personnel and Schools	2012-13	2	

Objective/Theme	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Concordat Principle	Progress
Supporting Research leaders/PIs	4.3 Conduct Principal Investigator/Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) to gather evidence of Research Leaders/PI views on development issues	HR-STDU	March 2012	2	
Supporting Research leaders/PIs	4.4 Promotion and implementation of the Concordat will demonstrate links to the REF. Include information on Concordat in staff briefings on REF.	Schools, HR-STDU, PVC Research & Postgraduates , Research and Enterprise	On-going	2	
5. Diversity and Equality					
Diversity & Equality	5.1 Ensure Queen's overall SWAN and individual School SWAN action plans incorporate the needs of researchers	HR-EO Unit and Schools; Queen's Gender Initiative	On-going	6	
Diversity & Equality	5.2 Review "Every Researcher Counts" project report from Vitae for relevance to Queen's	HR- EO Unit, STDU;, CRSDWG	May 2012	6	
6. Institutional internal quality assurance and review					
Institutional internal quality assurance and review	6.1 Contract Research Staff Development Working Group to act as an engagement and advisory group on Concordat implementation	CRSDWG, HR-STDU	October 2011 – on-going	2, 3, 4	
Institutional internal quality assurance and review	6.2 Concordat Working Group to conduct internal review of the implementation every two years	Concordat Working Group, HR, PVC Research & Postgraduates & Research and Enterprise	October 2013	7	
Institutional internal quality assurance and review	6.3 Incorporate CROS actions (above) into overall review process and monitor changes over time	HR-STDU and CRSDWG	2011-12 – on-going	7	
Institutional internal quality assurance and review	6.4 Provide opportunities for research staff to meet and share experiences with researchers and others from across the University. School-based Post-doc/Research societies to support this activity.	HR-STDU, Research and Enterprise, Schools and CRSDWG	Annual research staff event	3,4, 5, 7	
Institutional internal quality assurance and review	6.5 Continue to gather additional evidence of the impact of the researcher development initiative for individual researchers and the institution.	HR-STDU, Schools, CRSDWG	On-going	7	

Abbreviations: HR-STDU: Staff Training and Development Unit; CRSDWG – Contract Research Staff Development Working Group; CROS – Careers in Research Online Survey