

Concordat Implementation Review Group

Best practice examples (December 2019)

Concordat Principle*	Event/Initiative	Impact on researchers	Date conducted
Institutional-wide			
2, 4, 6, 7	Postdoc Forum	A central forum to enable research staff representatives to raise concerns and plan activity to support the professional and career development of researchers. This is chaired by the PVC Research and Enterprise, with two representative from each school.	Established in 2015
2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Postdoc Group Mentoring Programme	The Group Mentoring Programme facilitates interdisciplinary groups of up to six postdoctoral researchers to meet regularly with an established academic Lead Mentor to discuss the experiences and challenges faced in their career development pathways.	Annual programme, established in 2017
3, 4, 5	10 days learning & development	Research staff are, by policy, entitled to 10 days per year for career development activities not related to their usual work.	2017 in MHLS Faculty, 3 Sep 2019 University-wide

2, 3, 4, 5	<p>MHLS Postdoc Society:</p> <p>Led by postdocs for postdocs, the society organises events like coffee mornings and research symposia.</p>	<p>The society provides an opportunity for postdocs to develop leadership skills and get involved in the organisation of events. The events focus on building a positive postdoc community and favours interactions and networking between the different schools of the Faculty, as well as increasing awareness about Faculty research. The symposium includes career talks.</p>	<p>Established in 2009</p>
2, 3, 4, 5	<p>AHSS Research Staff Society</p>	<p>The AHSS Research Staff Society (RSS) aims to support the careers of AHSS research staff from all five schools and allied research institutes. The main goals of the AHSS RSS are to support research staff with practical and professional queries arising during their contract period; to provide a vehicle for social interaction in AHSS; to facilitate training to enhance the career development of researchers, in academia and beyond, and to encourage knowledge exchange within and beyond the AHSS researcher community.</p>	<p>2019</p>

2, 3, 4, 5	EPS Postdoc Society	<p>The EPS Postdoc Society will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase integration of research staff into Centre/School/Faculty life. • Help research staff, particularly those new to Belfast to get to know other researchers. • Increase the voice and visibility of research staff within the Faculty. • Provide greater opportunities for interactions, discussion and dissemination of ideas, and collaborations. • Provide valuable social and networking opportunities. <p>It has organised a number of activities since the September launch including: <i>Postdoctoral Research Funding Opportunities and Rights in the Context of Brexit and a Christmas Quiz</i>. A twitter account has also been created https://twitter.com/QUBpostdocsEPS .</p>	2019
2, 5	VC Research Prizes	<p>The Vice-Chancellor's Prizes celebrate and acknowledge the significant contribution made by researchers at all levels across the University.</p> <p>The Prizes, including a Postdoctoral Research Prize, identify and reward excellence, and reflect the University's commitment to developing innovative and impactful research and to providing a supportive research environment.</p> <p>https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/StaffGateway/News/InPicturesVice-ChancellorsResearchPrizes2019.html</p>	Established 2011

2, 3, 4, 5	National Postdoc Appreciation Week	<p>Queen's was the only UK university celebrating NPAW (a US initiative) in 2018, which inspired many others to join in 2019 (from London, Manchester, Oxford...). Multiple events showcasing the work of postdocs and providing recognition were organised, including research showcase, prizes, social media campaigns, public engagement events and social events.</p> <p>Very well received locally and impactful nationally. It was the occasion to officially tell postdocs how much their contribution is recognised and make postdocs feel valued.</p>	Sep 2018 and Sep 2019
3, 4, 5	Online Writing for Publication course	<p>The programme, organised by OD and delivered by the Professional Writing Academy, provides a four-week online course to assist researchers navigate the academic publication world. This is a new innovative approach to supporting researchers to develop academic writing and publication knowledge, with an online tutor providing weekly feedback to the group and further learning by working with the other participants on the course</p>	
3, 4, 5	Developing your research career programme	<p>The four-part programme aims to support researchers in looking at their interests and abilities, their career objectives and to develop career management strategies that work for them. The programme includes a personally tailored career consultation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workshop 1: Career Exploration 2. Workshop 2: developing your CV and preparing for interviews. 3. Individual Career Consultation 	

Faculty of MHLS			
2, 3, 4	<p>Postdoc prizes:</p> <p>Yearly prizes have been created to reward the excellent contribution of postdocs not only to research, but also public engagement, citizenship (committee work etc.) and support of staff and students.</p>	<p>This is a clear demonstration that the University values postdocs and their contribution. It encourages researchers to get involved in activities historically not rewarded but essential like public engagement, making their CV more attractive and diversifying their skills. Winners (9 per year) can use this achievement on their CV to demonstrate their skills and also get a financial gratification (£500 each) and media exposure.</p>	<p>In MHLS since 2018, extended to all Faculties in 2019</p>
2, 3, 4, 5	<p>Postdoctoral Development Centre (MHLS):</p>	<p>The PDC provides bespoke resources and support for postdocs in the MHLS Faculty, from personal support to the organisation of events and courses or the development of policies. Significant increase in the provision of information, resources and support for postdocs in the Faculty, including many of the examples described in this document. The engagement of postdocs and their pro-activity in developing their career has increased.</p>	<p>Since 2018</p>

2, 3, 4	<p>Assistant Supervisor role:</p> <p>New role piloted in MHLS with the view to extend it to all Faculties in the next year. This officially recognised the significant contribution of some postdocs to the supervision of PhD students</p>	<p>Postdocs' contribution to students' supervision was not officially recorded until now and this new role and the recognition it brings is welcomed by postdocs and supervisors. This role also enables postdocs to attend supervisory meetings and as a result helps them develop management skills beyond the simple provision of technical training, thus benefiting their career. They are mentored by the student's supervisors to develop supervision skills.</p>	<p>Pilot from Sep 2019</p>
2, 3, 4, 5	<p>MHLS postdoc induction:</p>	<p>Complementary to University inductions, this short session focuses on Faculty structure, specific and wider career development resources, the role of postdoc and the importance of planning your career. Feedback is very good and 100 % of attendees so far recommend it and said it made them realise the importance and responsibility of planning their career and where to find support in the Faculty and University.</p>	<p>Roughly every 2 months since 2018</p>
2, 3	<p>Postdoc Buddy scheme:</p>	<p>Each new postdoc is paired with a current local postdoc who meets them on arrival, provides relevant information and a tour of the facilities. New staff feel more welcomed, get a friendly point of contact outside of their group and the opportunity to ask questions in a personalised and informal atmosphere.</p>	<p>Since 2016 in Centre for Experimental Medicine; other schools in MHLS in 2018 and 2019</p>

3, 4, 5	<p>Introduction to entrepreneurship and industry collaboration:</p> <p>5 MHLS postdocs were fully funded to attend the Young Entrepreneur Scheme competition (YES) and 3 to the Postdoc to innovator fair (P2i). The innovation training programme (ITP) provided training and seed funding for postdocs to set up collaborations with industrial partners.</p>	<p>Enabled postdocs to network with entrepreneurs, learn about building biotech companies, test their ideas, gain transferable skills and explore a potential career path.</p> <p>The ITP enabled researchers to learn about Academia-Industry Collaborations, how to network, approach stakeholders and monitor projects. It funded initial interactions between partners. At least one of the attendees has already secured a collaboration with a company but it is too early for the other involved. The feedback on courses was very positive with 100 % recommending the programme, and all feeling more confident in collaborating with an industrial partner.</p>	<p>YES Oct 2018</p> <p>P2i Nov 2018</p> <p>ITP Feb-Mar 2019</p>
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MHLS Career Development focused support			
3, 4, 5	Career exploration event (MHLS):	“Who wants to hire you?” was a half-day event at which 20 mentors from multiple employment sectors discussed their career with small groups of postdocs. Also involved 2 career talks and multiple networking opportunities. Positive feedback from attendees who all recommend the event and rated it as excellent or very good. Majority of respondents (93%) reported that the event expanded the knowledge of available career paths.	30/05/18
3, 4, 6	Career podcast: To provide information of postdoc life and career paths available. So far 3 recorded (careers in publishing, REF and working in research policy, being self-employed)	Provides career resources accessible anywhere at any time, thus fitting with the difficult schedules of researchers and making resources more accessible to part-time workers or staff working away from the main campus. Postdocs can also be involved in the interviews and gain transferable skills and experience.	Since the end of 2018
3, 4, 5	Career seminar series (CEM):	Lunchtime talks organised by postdocs in the Centre for Experimental Medicine. Topics included for example: pharmaceutical industry, clinical trials, publishing, academic PI etc. Provided examples of careers to postdocs as well as opportunity to talk to professionals about their job.	2016-2018

3 4, 5	<p>Personalised support for job application in MHLS:</p> <p>Ad hoc CV reviews, interview coaching and mock interviews for the jobs postdocs are applying for (on demand).</p>	<p>Excellent feedback with all beneficiaries saying that it was helpful to them. 100 % of the CV reviewed led to interview invitation. Out of the mock interviews, 71 % were appointed (including several lectureships) and 14 % were reserve candidates. Postdocs also take part in mock panels and learn a lot about the interview process this way.</p>	
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Faculty of EPS			
2, 3, 4	School of Math & Physics Career Day for PhD students and Postdocs	Range of speakers from different employment sectors, e.g. Medical physics, pharmacology, data science etc. Speakers discussed the transition beyond academia and offered guidance to researchers who would wish to explore potential career options. This event was supported by Athena SWAN. http://web.am.qub.ac.uk/wp/2019careerday/	
2, 3, 4, 5	School of EECS EECS/ECIT Research Society	Networking opportunities, organisation of events and industrial visits determined by the society.	Throughout the year
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	School of EECS 1.5 days' mandatory induction for all research staff	To help the researcher settle in quickly to the role and provide an opportunity to meet other new staff. Specific school initiatives are explained as well as University processes. Half day workshop on inclusion (unconscious bias focus).	First day induction carried out Full day induction takes place 4 times a year
2, 3, 4, 5	School of EECS Academic Apprenticeship Programme	Formal 1-1 mentoring. To provide structured guidance and support for research staff planning to apply for academic posts. Includes Researcher CV clinic, lecturing (including training) and HEA Associate Membership with mentoring provided as part of the application process.	Annual

2, 3, 4	EEECS Meet our Researchers Event (Social event for PhDs/Research and Academic Staff)	Social event to welcome new PhD's and postdocs to assist them integrate within their new working group in a more relaxed/informal social context.	Annually
1, 3, 4, 5	EEECS Research Society Event – Industry Meets Academia	Seminar for PhD's and Contract Researchers to learn about employment opportunities within local Industry. Developing networking and communication skills outside of academia.	Annually

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Best practice examples (November 2019)

Are you aware of examples of best practice in relation to the Concordat in your School or Department? Please add these to the table below. A number of the examples collected for 2020 review, are provided above and further examples available at:

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/hr-filestore/Filetoupload,865519,en.pdf>

Table 2: Best practice examples template

Concordat Principle	Event/Initiative	Impact on researchers	Date conducted
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*Concordat principles list below, appendix 1.

Appendix 1: The Seven Principles of the Concordat

A. Recruitment and Selection

Principle 1

Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

B. Recognition and value

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.

C. Support and Career Development

Principle 3

Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.

Principle 4

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

D. Researchers' Responsibilities

Principle 5

Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

E. Diversity and equality

Principle 6

Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

F. Implementation and Review

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.