

University of Essex – Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Action Plan 2020 Review

Principle 1: Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

Completed Actions 2018				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress</i>
Action Plan 2014	1.1	Development of a research strategy encompassing the recruitment of staff in line with our commitment to excellence in research.	PVC Research, REO Director	The strategy was published in May 2014.
Action Plan 2014	1.2	School of Biological Sciences and School of Health and Human Sciences to apply for Athena SWAN Silver Award.	School of Biological Sciences/School of Health and Human Sciences	<p>School of Health and Social Care (formally Health and Human Sciences):</p> <p>First application submitted April 2015, Bronze Award obtained.</p> <p>Second application submitted April 2017, Silver Award obtained.</p> <p>School of Biological Sciences: Applications submitted November 2014, November 2016, Bronze Award retained.</p>

Additional Actions 2016-18	1.2	From 2016, all other departments will commence application processes for Athena SWAN Bronze Awards.	Heads of Department	<p>Department of Psychology and Department of History applications submitted November 2016, Bronze Awards obtained.</p> <p>The School of Mathematical Sciences and The School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering applications submitted November 2016. Following feedback these departments will resubmit applications in April 2018.</p> <p>See also "Actions in Progress".</p> <p>Essex Business School application submitted November 2017</p>
Additional Actions 2016-18	1.5	Equal Pay Review for all staff, aiming to close any pay gaps identified.	Director of HR	The equal pay review was carried out in February 2018 and reported on the Government

				Equal Pay portal in March 2018.
Actions in Progress				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress/Target Dates</i>
Additional Actions 2016-18	1.2	From 2016, all other departments will commence application processes for Athena SWAN Bronze Awards.	Heads of Department	All but 4 of our academic departments currently hold awards. Remaining departments to have submitted applications by April 2021.

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.

Completed Actions 2018				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress</i>
Action Plan 2014	2.3	Embed equality and diversity training within training for managers and Head of Department inductions. Introduce attendance monitoring of “Managing Diversity” training.	Equality and Diversity Manager	Autumn Term 2014
Action Plan 2014	2.3	Revise formal job descriptions for Heads of Department and departmental research directors to provide clarity on roles and responsibilities.	Director of HR	New templates for all academic job descriptions, clarifying expectations for every role and aligned with internal promotion criteria, were rolled out in January 2018.

Completed Actions 2020				
Action Plan 2018-20	2.1	Reduce the use of fixed-term contracts for research staff, with a view to improved overall workforce planning for academic staff.	Director of HR	Percentage of research staff on fixed-term contracts has reduced year on year, from 17.7% in 2018 to 14.7% in 2020.
Action Plan 2018-20	2.6 and 3,4.14	Review role of Professor: consultation with Professors on how to support career development and build the community of Professors. Pilot Action Learning sets with newly promoted Professors to enable access to mentoring and peer support.	Deputy VC	Professors' network launched in 2019, providing regular opportunity for professors to network and feed into university strategy.
Action Plan 2018-20	2.4	Introduce Excellence in Research and Excellence in Research and Education Awards to recognise exemplary staff achievements, alongside existing Excellence in Education Award.	PVC Research	Inaugural Celebrating Excellence in Research Awards held May 2019. See also the entry below.
Action Plan 2018-20	2.4	Hold Celebrating Research Impact Awards Annually to recognise the contribution of individuals or teams of research staff in creating research impact.	PVC Research	From 2020, Research Impact awards and Excellence in Research awards have been combined into an annual Celebrating Excellence in Research and Impact Awards
Action Plan 2014	2.3	Review processes for supporting appraisal and personal development scheme, including annual monitoring.	Head of Employee Engagement and Policy	The details of our new approach to PDR have been made available to

				all staff on our website. The new approach will be formalised for the 2020/21 academic year.
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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 and promoted at all stages of their career.

Completed Actions 2018				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress</i>
Action Plan 2014	3/4.1	Introduce annual monitoring and reviewing of uptake of Proficio research training for PGR students, additional training opportunities offered as appropriate.	Director of Research Training	Autumn Term 2014
Action Plan 2014	3/4.2	Roll out full university-wide coaching service, to be available to all research staff	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Autumn Term 2014
Action Plan 2014	3/4.2 and 8	Review the "Wise-up Wednesdays" training programme with the aim of giving PGR students and early career researchers access to the expertise of senior academics and university senior managers.	Learning and Development Manager for Doctoral Skills Development	2016
Additional Actions 2016-18	3/4.2 and 8	From 2017, postgraduate research students will be offered a one-day workshop on research careers in the UK with the aim of giving students access to the expertise of senior academics and university senior managers.	Director of Research Training	Academic Year 2016-17 (online course launched)
Action Plan 2014	3/4.3	Introduce annual monitoring of take-up of staff skills development opportunities.	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Autumn Term 2014
Action Plan 2014	3/4.4	Regular training to broaden awareness of other sectors within the current research student professional development offering.	Learning and Development Manager for Doctoral Skills	Autumn Term 2014

			Development	
Action Plan 2014	3/4.6	Review current induction procedures with a view to the possibility of introducing a longer-term programme of induction.	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Academic Year 2014-15
Additional Actions 2016-18	3/4.6	Launch online induction portal for all new staff, complementing existing face-to-face sessions and facilitating a longer term programme of induction. Aim for all staff joining the university from Autumn 2016 to complete the online course.	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Online induction portal was launched at the beginning of the academic year 2016-17. All new staff are required to complete the elements that are relevant to their role.
Action Plan 2014	3/4.7	Consideration of a statement of expectations outlining skills development expectations of research staff at all grades, both in terms of research output and other areas of activity (supervision, administration, budgeting etc) and encouraging staff to seek opportunities to acquire the necessary skills.	PVC Research	Autumn Term 2014
Action Plan 2014	3/4.7	Investment in Epigeum online programme for the training of research supervisors.	Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education	Autumn Term 2014
Additional Actions 2016-18	3/4.7	Online doctoral research supervision training will be rolled out to all academic staff in autumn 2016. Aim for all new Supervisors to complete either face-to-face or online training within their first year of supervising.	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	As of February 2018, a total of 43 doctoral supervisors had completed the online training.
Action Plan 2014	3/4.13	Establish a University-wide Postgraduate Researcher network.	Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education	Autumn Term 2015
Additional Actions 2016-18	3/4.9	Additional investment will be made in support for researchers through a dedicated research coaching offer and additional research leave.	PVC Research	Research coaching was piloted in July 2016 to support staff working towards eligibility for REF 2020. Two individuals took part in the coaching pilot.

Additional Actions 2016-18	3/4.14	Formalise mentoring requirements for research staff across the university; an e-mentoring platform will be launched in autumn 2016 to ensure a consistent mentoring offer to all research staff. Aim for all junior research staff to be paired with a mentor via this scheme.	PVC Research	<p>The e-mentoring system was piloted in the Autumn Term 2016 but did not generate engagement with mentoring. Following review in 2016-17, a more informal approach based around developing skills in mentoring and producing resources to support this was adopted.</p> <p>See also New Actions</p>
Completed Actions 2020				
Action Plan 2018-20	3,4.14	Ensure that early career researchers have consistent and continuous access to mentoring.	Head of Employee Engagement and Policy	<p>All new ECRs are now paired with an academic adviser to provide coaching and mentoring for Pathway to Permanency. All academic departments have received mentoring guidance. Percentage of researchers successfully applying for permanency has increased year on year between 2018</p>

				and 2020.
Action Plan 2018-20	3,4.6	Hold NeWComers training sessions for all new cohorts of ECRs.	Director of REO	NeWComers research week is now held annually every January
Action Plan 2018-20	3,4.5	Revise Probationary guidance and support to ensure ECRs are better aware of requirements and are supported both before and after applying for permanency	Assistant Director of HR (Organisational Development)	Academic probation process has been reviewed and a new Pathway to Permanency process has been introduced. Percentage of researchers successfully applying for permanency has increased year on year between 2018 and 2020. Pulse surveys on Pathway to permanency and academic promotion will be issued annually from 2020/21 (see also additional actions 2020-22).
Action Plan 2018-20	3,4.5	Revise promotion guidance and support for academic staff to enable researchers to set career development goals. In particular, review feedback processes for successful and unsuccessful promotion applications.	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Percentage of eligible staff applying for promotion increased from 18.1% in 2018 to 23.8% in 2019. 2020 figures are not

				yet available owing to Covid-19 delaying the 2020 process.
Actions in Progress				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress/Target Dates</i>
Action Plan 2018-20	3/4.4	<p>Develop tools and resources on 'building an academic career', introduce annual workshop for key staff (e.g. probation supervisors) to promote engagement in using tools. Introduce 'Managing and developing your career' workshops</p> <p>Increase support available to line managers of researchers, particular, principal investigators working with fixed-term research staff and/or postdoctoral researchers.</p>	Head of Academic and Professional Practice/ Head of Policy and Employee Engagement	<p>Career building workshops are now delivered regularly.</p> <p>We are currently working on a new framework for research leadership- see Action Plan 2020-22.</p>

Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning

Completed Actions 2018				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress</i>
Action Plan 2014	5.2	Implement Annual Research Impact training session for PhD students.	Learning and Development Manager for doctoral skills development	Spring Term 2015
Action Plan 2014	5.5	Develop new training needs analysis procedures to allow PGR students to better identify their individual training needs and find out how to access these	Director of Research Training	Autumn Term 2014
Action Plan 2014	5.6	Develop the <i>HR Organiser</i> system to allow all staff and their managers to monitor and record their professional development activities year-round.	Director of HR	HR Organiser system now allows the booking of internal learning events, recording

				external events and evaluation of each of these.
Completed Actions 2020				
Action Plan 2018-20	5.4	Produce and disseminate a series of case studies of recently promoted professors to inform individuals considering applying for promotion about skills development opportunities and to encourage applications, particularly from underrepresented groups.	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Percentage of eligible staff applying for promotion increased from 18.1% in 2018 to 23.8% in 2019. In 2019, 51% of promotion applications came from female staff.

Principle 6: Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

Completed Actions 2018				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress</i>
Action Plan 2014	6.1 and 10	Participation in the Equality Challenge Unit's Gender Equality Charter Mark trial.	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	September 2014 (Institutional Gender Equality Charter Mark achieved)
Action Plan 2014	6.10	Application to Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	First application was in Spring Term 2015 where the University of Essex was ranked 194 th out of 397 employers. In January 2018, the University was included in Stonewall's Top 100 Employers list.

Action Plan 2014	6.7	Revise Annual Review Procedures for Academic and Research Staff and carry out Equality Impact Audit on these revisions.	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Formal Equality Impact Auditing is now longer required by legislation, however these procedures are now revised annually on an ongoing basis, with the involvement of the Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
Actions in Progress				
Action Plan 2018-20	6.1	Qualitative analysis aiming to understand equal pay audit finding that women wait longer to apply for academic promotion than men.	Employee Engagement Officers/OD Information Officer	This action will now be taken forward in Autumn 2020.

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.

Completed Actions 2020				
Action Plan 2018-20	7.1	Introduce robust mechanisms for research staff to provide feedback on Concordat implementation.	OD Analyst	Feedback on progress with actions has come from our Professors' network, Early career researcher events and online research strategy consultation.
Actions in Progress				
<i>Origin</i>	<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Progress/Target Dates</i>
Action Plan 2014	7.1	Annual Review of Implementation Progress	Assistant HR Director (Organisational Development)	Ongoing annually at the start of each academic year.

Action Plan 2018-20	7.1	Improve researcher representation on university level research committees	PVC Research	We have increased the number of members of the research committee in addition to ex officio members as well as giving additional opportunities for all researchers, especially early career or fixed-term, to provide their views on research strategy.
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Additional Actions 2020-22

<i>Concordat Clause</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Success Measure</i>
2.1	Reduce the number of fixed-term researchers who have been on successive fixed term contracts over a number of years.	Assistant Directors of People and Culture	June 2022	Continued year on year percentage reduction in use of fixed term contracts for researchers.
3,4.1	Review workload allocation models to ensure they do not present obstacles to teaching and research.	Assistant Directors of People and Culture	October 2021	Revised models to be introduced as needed in the academic year 2020/21. Target 10% improvement in perception of workload in annual employee voice survey.
3,4.3	Introduce new support and resources for researchers of all levels to	Director of REO	By end	Series of Impact Academy

	engage with the impact agenda		Academic Year 2020/21	workshops to be held in Academic Year 2020/21 Impact Toolkit to be launched by July 2021.
3,4.3; 3,4.7; 3,4.8	Develop and implement a Research Leadership framework and Programme specifically supporting colleagues who are (or will be in the future) responsible for leading large research projects. This will include leadership of global research projects and partnerships with industry.	Deputy PVC (Research)	By end Academic Year 2021/22	New framework and development programme to be in place by end July 2022.
3,4.5	Introduce online networking events for new Pathway to Permanency Academics. Form a network of new Essex academics across departments.	Assistant Director of People and Culture (Organisational Development)	October 2020	All new Pathway to Permanency academics to attend at least one event.
3,4.5	Targeted coaching support for Academic Advisers to help them develop the skills needed for development conversations with their Pathway to Permanency Academics.	Assistant Director of People and Culture (Organisational Development)	October 2020	All academic advisers to be offered coaching support sessions. Evaluation by online feedback form aiming for all participants to report a positive experience of the support.
3,4.5	Roll out Electronic Document Management for permanency and promotion processes.	Director of People and Culture	July 2022	All permanency and promotion applications to use Document Management system by end academic year 2021/22
3,4.6	Expand Newcomers programme to offer year round sessions in addition to annual research week, blending face-to-face and online delivery to improve accessibility.	Director of REO	By end Academic Year 2020/21	13 sessions to be held in Autumn Term 2020. Similar numbers of sessions on an ongoing basis.
6.3	Continuous and long-term engagement with the Athena SWAN charter.	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Ongoing	All academic departments to achieve Athena SWAN awards by end 2021. By 2025, achieve silver awards in 50% of departments, and institutional

				silver award.
7.1	Annual cycle of pulse surveys on support for researchers during permanency and promotion processes as part of ongoing employee voice consultation	People and Culture Information Manager	Launch in academic year 2020/21, then ongoing	75% response rate to pulse surveys.