Three-year review of the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

March 2012
The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers sets out the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. It aims to increase the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK and to improve the quantity, quality and impact of research for the benefit of UK society and the economy.

Since the first of April 2011 Vitae has been responsible for leading the implementation of the following aspects of the Concordat principles:

- Supporting the Concordat Strategy and Executive Groups
- Leading the work programme, including managing the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS), and producing a review of the impact of the Concordat three years after its launch
- Managing the process for the European Commission HR Excellence in Research recognition awards

Vitae provides leadership and a single point of contact for both research staff career development and the wider Concordat agenda. Vitae also works with Universities UK and the research funders at the strategic level, to enhance the benefits of good management and career development of research staff to the UK research base, society and the economy.

www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat
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Executive summary

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was launched in 2008 and signed by all major UK funders of research and Universities UK to provide an unambiguous statement of the expectations and responsibilities of researchers and their managers, employers and funders. The aim of the Concordat was to increase the attractiveness and sustainability of higher education research careers in the UK.

The signatories to the Concordat agreed that a review of the implementation of the Concordat should be made after three years using existing evidence to minimise the burden on institutions. This includes agreed measures of progress (Appendix 4), which draw substantially on the 2009 and 2011 results of the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) of research staff and the new Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS).

Progress with implementation

Despite being a voluntary instrument, the Concordat is having a significant impact across the higher education sector. The intention to implement the principles of the Concordat is now widespread in institutions, and the corresponding infrastructure is increasingly in place.

The extent and depth of implementation is greatest for the principles on recruitment and selection, recognition and value, and equality and diversity: all themes where there is existing legislation or specific national guidelines for employment practice. Overall since the launch of the Concordat:

- 75 institutions have participated in CROS, with over 5,000 research staff responses in 2011
- 33 institutions participated in PIRLS, with over 2,500 responses
- 50 UK HEIs have gained the HR Excellence in Research Award
- recruitment processes have become more open and transparent
- the use of fixed term contracts has reduced, although there is less evidence that this is leading to more security of employment
- the availability of induction has increased at local and institutional level
- there is increased participation in appraisal and review
- more research staff report being integrated in their communities and some increase in recognition for their wider contributions
- the majority believe their institution is committed to equality and diversity and more institutions are signing up to the Athena SWAN Charter for women in science
- the majority of research staff on fixed-term contracts perceive equal or better fair treatment, compared to those on open contracts.

There has been less progress in support for career development, and especially researchers’ taking personal responsibility. The extent of engagement by research staff in their career development is still disappointingly low, and uneven between and within individual institutions. Overall:

- the majority of research staff have or would consult their principal investigator about their career development; less than a third consult a careers advisor
- there is little increase in the substantial minorities who take on wider activities and responsibilities
- awareness of the importance of professional development has increased; the awareness of Vitae has doubled
- the number of research staff associations has increased dramatically.

The existence and activities of the Concordat Strategy Group and Vitae have undoubtedly sustained institutional momentum and commitment for the implementation of the Concordat principles. Vitae’s leadership and central support for CROS and PIRLS have proved pivotal in providing institutions with instruments and data to understand researchers’ and principal investigators’ views and experiences to benchmark and review institutional progress. Similarly, Vitae’s role in aligning the UK process for the HR Excellence in Research Award with institutions’ Concordat implementation processes has been effective in sustaining implementation efforts. Fifty UK institutions had gained the award by January 2012; more than all other European member states combined (Appendix 5).
Remaining challenges

The extent to which individual Concordat principles have been achieved varies. Progress differs between institutions and participation by research staff is uneven and low. A variety of sources confirm that institutional provision for research staff is less embedded than for postgraduate researchers and more vulnerable to stalling or regressing due to the change in funding arrangements to indirect costs. Areas where more progress is needed include:

- whether the increase in open contracts is providing more security of employment for research staff
- research staff participation in appraisal processes achieving similar levels as principal investigators (82%)
- more active engagement of research staff in professional and career development
- focus on groups of research staff who perceive personal discrimination and unfairness.

The Every Researcher Counts project raised awareness of the importance of equality and diversity for research staff. However, more sustainable benefits will only be achieved through continued institutional commitment and targeted investment to:

- maintain exposure at senior level of the importance of equality and diversity for research staff
- extend reach to engage more principal investigators and senior researchers
- extend reach to and develop parallel resources for research staff
- strengthen and extend the Every Researcher Counts champions network.

Institutions identified the pivotal role of principal investigators to achieve full engagement of researchers and support their career development. PIRLS 2011 identified a series of actions to engage principal investigators, specifically:

- encouraging principal investigators to engage their research staff in effective appraisals
- ensuring principal investigators are informed, confident and actively engaging in human resources management and the career development of their researchers
- providing positive drivers, including workload models, to encourage and enable principal investigators and research staff to participate in development opportunities and more outward facing activities
- reviewing policies, practice and communication mechanisms to guard against inequalities and unfairness.

While many of the requisite policies are now in place, translation of these intentions into universal practice requires significant cultural change. The recommendations from CROS 2009 and 2011 (Appendix 6), PIRLS 2011 (Appendix 7) and the Every Researcher Counts project (Appendix 8) present a series of recommendations relating to each of the Concordat principles, which provide a useful road map for institutions.

Future implementation: resources and leadership

The impact of the Concordat is in most part due to sector-wide initiatives and structures, principally Vitae and the Concordat Strategy Group, which have catalysed and embedded progress. Bringing together institutions’ Concordat implementation processes with the requirements to achieve the European Commission’s HR Excellence in Research Award, participation in CROS and PIRLS, and linkages to the REF research environment has been highly effective. These initiatives are mutually reinforcing and comprise something of a virtuous circle and need to continue.

Collectively, these activities form the basis of a programme of evaluation and review through to 2015, which will provide substantial evidence of further progress, encourage institutional engagement and enhance provision and practice. The outcomes of CROS and PIRLS in 2013 and 2015 will be significant inputs to institutions’ two-year internal reviews of their HR Excellence in Research action plans and four-year external review.

The overall direction of travel is positive for all and there is unquestionable momentum. However, Vitae’s leadership and the visible commitment of funders through the Concordat Strategy Group are critical for continued institutional commitment to implementation. Without the continued existence of the Concordat Strategy Group and Vitae institutions will conclude that the agenda is no longer of importance and there will be significant risk of the agenda stalling, or regressing.
Recommendations

Concordat Strategy Group

The importance of implementing the principles of the Concordat is still timely and relevant. The continued existence and active engagement of the Concordat Strategy Group sends a clear signal of the importance and relevance of the Concordat to the UK. As the sector moves towards the breadth and depth of implementation of the Concordat principles needed to achieve required cultural change, the role of the Strategy Group also needs to evolve.

The Concordat Strategy Group should:

- Continue to meet on an annual basis, include more principal investigators and research staff representatives and increase its influence and reach by extending membership to sector groups, such as the Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA), Association for University Research and Industry Links (AURIL) and Association of University Administrators (AUA)
- Continue to promote the importance of the Concordat to institutional senior managers and through other UK stakeholders such as the mission groups, making the connections with other UK and European policy initiatives such as the REF, where appropriate
- Provide on-going support and direction to Vitae to continue its pivotal leadership and implementation role
- Focus on the main challenges to implementation; providing a platform to debate key issues, such as should research staff have a reasonable expectation of security of employment?
- Agree a programme of evaluation and review to 2015/16, with an interim report in 2013/14, based on the measures of progress (Appendix 4) and other sources of sector data, and linked to the HR Excellence in Research Award process and evaluation of REF outcomes

Funders

Research funders have an important role in driving the implementation of the Concordat. By providing demonstrable commitment to the Concordat through specific terms and conditions for research funding, targeted communications to institutions and principal investigators, and funding for Vitae so they can influence institutions’ strategic engagement with the Concordat.

Funders should:

- Recognise that implementation is not complete and provide funding to:
  - manage and support the Concordat Strategy Group
  - provide central drive and coordination for CROS and PIRLS in 2013 and 2015
  - undertake a programme of evaluation and review to 2015/16, with an interim report in 2013/14, coordinated with the HR Excellence in Research Award process
  - provide structures and networks to engage institutions, share experiences and practice
  - focus on specific challenges for implementation, such as equality and diversity or the use of fixed term contracts
- RCUK should review the impact of the change in funding regime for Roberts career development provision for research staff, identifying any implications for implementation of the Concordat principles
- HEFCE and the other Funding Bodies should explore the implications for research staff and the Concordat in their 2015 evaluation of the process and outcomes of the REF, particularly the research environment and equality and diversity
Vitae

It is through Vitae’s leadership, drive and support for institutions that the significant progress to date has been achieved. Through, collectively, CROS, PIRLS and the HR Excellence in Research Award process, Vitae has created a virtuous circle of action, reflection and review that needs to be sustained for continued progress. Much of the continued engagement of the sector will depend on Vitae providing strong leadership as institutions respond to current and future challenges to ensure that implementation of the Concordat remains at the forefront of institutional strategies.

Vitae should:

- Continue to provide the leadership, practice-sharing activities and supporting resources to inform and engage all stakeholders, including funders, institutional staff, and researchers in the implementation of the Concordat principles
- Provide a centralised leadership and capability for CROS and PIRLS to ensure the surveys are relevant, and extend institutional participation in 2013 and 2015 to provide robust evidence of progress and further challenges
- Actively share institutional successes and good practice in relation to the CROS and PIRLS recommendations, specifically increasing the engagement and development of principal investigators and research staff
- Encourage and facilitate institutions to apply for the HR Excellence in Research Award, especially those with substantial research staff populations
- Develop a programme of evaluation and review to 2015/16 building on the 2013 and 2015 CROS and PIRLS outcomes, and the two-year internal and four-year external reviews of progress for institutions with the HR Excellence in Research Award
- Work with the European Commission to agree the process for the four-year external review of the HR Excellence in Research Award, such that it is appropriate and proportionate for UK institutions
- Work with institutions and the UKRSA to develop mechanisms and resources to effectively engage research staff, and their principal investigators, in their professional development through use of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

Institutions

Institutions, as employers of research staff, are key to the successful implementation of the Concordat principles. There is clear evidence of the engagement of institutions and that the aims of the Concordat are being embedded in strategies and policies relating to research staff. However, as they seek to consolidate their achievements and embed the Concordat principles in usual practice, there are significant pressures on institutions, not least with “flat” research funding, changed undergraduate funding and replacement of the ring-fenced Roberts money through indirect costs on grants. Continued institutional engagement is critical to ensure progress in implementing the Concordat principles does not stall or regress.

Institutions should:

- Systematically review their progress in implementing the Concordat principles, particularly against the CROS recommendations relating to security of employment, engagement with effective appraisal processes and career development, and equality of opportunity
- Reflect on the findings of PIRLS 2011 in relation to how to support principal investigators in undertaking their leadership and management responsibilities for research staff
- Explore how to use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to effectively engage research staff, and their principal investigators, in professional development
- Participate in CROS and PIRLS in 2013 and 2015 to provide a robust view of the extent and impact of institutional and UK implementation of the Concordat principles
- Actively share successes and good practice through the Vitae Database of Practice and good practice events, particularly in relation to increasing the engagement and development of principal investigators and the engagement of research staff
- Commit to gaining and maintaining the HR Excellence in Research Award, as appropriate
Researchers

The Concordat stresses the importance of researchers taking responsibility for their career development. Although there is evidence of research staff being more aware of the importance of professional development, many more need to actively engage in appraisal processes and take advantage of increasing institutional provision of professional development opportunities.

Researchers should:

- Pro-actively take responsibility for their own development and career planning, and participate in a range of development activities.
- Use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework Professional Development Planner to assess and record their professional development needs.
- Seek out professional advice and be well-informed about their career progression and employment opportunities, including active participation in appraisal and review processes.
- Engage with their local research staff associations, and the UKRSA, to provide a collective voice for research staff within institutions.
- Take the opportunity to express their views and experiences through participation in CROS, PIRLS and other feedback mechanisms.
1 Introduction

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was launched in 2008 and signed by all major UK funders of research to provide an unambiguous statement of the expectations and responsibilities of researchers and their managers, employers and funders. Its intent is to support an increase in the attractiveness and sustainability of higher education research careers in the UK.

Principle 7 of the Concordat (Implementation and review) highlights the importance of undertaking regular and collective review of progress. Specifically, the signatories to the Concordat have agreed to undertake and publish a review of the implementation of the Concordat after three years.

The terms of reference of the review agreed by the Concordat Executive Group were to:

- review progress in implementing the principles of the Concordat since its launch in June 2008, drawing on the outcomes of the benchmarking projects and measures of progress
- identify impacts and any additionality by the main stakeholder groups identified in the Concordat (funders, supporters, research managers, employers and researchers)
- identify what still needs to be achieved and any areas of concern taking into account the current and potential higher education environment
- propose recommendations for future focus and activities, including the role of the Concordat Strategy Group.

2 Methodology

To avoid over-burdening institutions, it was agreed that the review should draw entirely on existing sources of evidence. Accordingly the review aims to provide a broad picture of the current state-of-play in relation to the implementation of the principles of the Concordat and compare this with the position when it was published in 2008. Contributory evidence is available from a series of benchmarking projects agreed by the Concordat Strategy Group and summarised in Appendix 1. Key amongst these are selected results from the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) in 2009 and 2011 based on the views and experiences of UK research staff, which provide quantitative indications of the distance travelled for some specific measures of progress. Analyses and implementation plans published by a range of universities provide a further view at institutional level.

3 The Concordat and its implementation

3.1 Background to the Concordat

The current drive to improve the employment and career development of researchers can be traced back to the Research Careers Initiative (RCI), 1997-2002 following the first Concordat in 1996. Prior to this there was little focus on the career development of research staff. In the final report of the RCI, Lord Sainsbury, then Minister for Science, reflected that much progress had been made during the RCI but expressed concern that:

“…there is still some disappointment that improvements are not yet taking effect in all the areas we might like to see... Isolated from wider national and institutional developments, the day-to-day experience of many individual research staff has, too often, not changed substantially for the better”

In his 2002 landmark review, ‘SET for Success’, Sir Gareth Roberts, who had chaired the RCI, acknowledged that much remained to be done. Amongst the recommendations, he called for institutions to take responsibility for ensuring that all their research staff had a clear career development plan and access to appropriate training opportunities. The review led to government funding to institutions from 2003, until March 2011, to implement this recommendation, colloquially known as the ‘Roberts money’.

Around this time the European Commission began to work towards the development of the European Researcher’s Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, which was launched in September 2005 at a UK Presidency Conference and broadly based on the UK Concordat.
It was in this context that the UK higher education sector, led by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and Universities UK, brought together a working group to revise the Concordat. The group mapped existing UK legislation, guidelines and good practice against the “European Charter and Code”8. Following a sector-wide consultation on the draft framework for the Concordat, it was clear that implementation and progress would require a higher profile than achieved by the first Concordat in 1996.

In June 2008, the new Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was launched, together with Vitae (previously the UK GRAD Programme), by the then Minister of State for Science and Innovation. All the main UK funders of researchers and employers of researchers (including groups representing universities) are signatories9 of the Concordat and form the Concordat Strategy Group. The membership and terms of reference for the Concordat Strategy Group are given in Appendix 2. A wide range of stakeholders including scientific associations and higher education agencies are recognised as supporters10.

The European Commission agreed that for the UK endorsing the principles of the Concordat, along with the QAA Code of Practice for research degrees, was equivalent to adopting the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

3.2 The environment for research staff in higher education in 2008

At the time of the launch of the Concordat, although some progress had been made in providing career development support and skills training opportunities for research staff, such provision was very patchy. A review of institutional reports to RCUK on the application of the Roberts money identified that in 2008 around one in three research organisations were offering extensive, structured training provision to their research staff and one in five some structured and tailored support. A significant proportion were offering only general staff training11. According to the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) in 2006, fewer than 40% of research staff were then taking part in appraisal/review processes and only 36% participating in training activities or courses. In contrast, by 2008 there had been widespread advances in the support for and provision of career and transferable skills training for postgraduate researchers.

A report for HEFCE in 2005 recorded that human resource management practised by research leaders within institutions varied greatly, with patches of excellence but inconsistency. It suggested that some research leaders’ drive to pursue research goals was at the expense of the management of the research staff for whom they had responsibility. The appraisal and review of research staff was drawn out as a resulting issue of concern. Amongst the report’s recommendations were that research leaders and higher education human resources and staff developers needed to co-educate each other, and that stakeholders such as research funders might beneficially encourage or facilitate such progress.

3.3 Activity to support Concordat implementation

RCUK and the UK Funding Bodies provided funding to support the implementation of the Concordat, including a Concordat Implementation Coordinator, based at Universities UK to coordinate activities across the sector. From April 2011 Vitae has had responsibility for leading and coordinating the future implementation of the Concordat and providing a single point of contact for both research staff career development and the wider Concordat agenda12.

Vitae is responsible for:

- supporting the Concordat Strategy and Executive Groups
- leading the work programme, including managing the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS)
- reviewing the impact of the Concordat three years after its launch
- managing the UK process for the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award.

A summary of Vitae’s activities to support Concordat implementation, which include awareness-raising, knowledge-building, practice-sharing and consolidation activities, is provided in Appendix 3.

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8 The European charter for researchers and code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers: a UK HE gap analysis, RCUK/Universities UK, www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/gapanalysis.pdf
9 Concordat signatories www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/signatories.html
10 Concordat supporters www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/supporters.html
11 ‘Analysis of university reports on career development and transferable skills training (Roberts) payments’, RCUK 2010, www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/Analysis20042009RobertsReports.pdf
3.4 The higher education research environment in 2011

The recognition that research innovation and a highly-skilled research workforce are key elements of strategy to support the future economic prosperity and wellbeing of the UK underpins the Science & Innovation Investment Framework and was recently highlighted in the 2011 higher education white paper. A HEFC 2010 overview of the English higher education workforce identified some of the challenges and conditions for achieving a healthy and sustainable workforce. The report contained recommendations that institutions should develop clearer frameworks and processes for performance review and development. It also identified staff well-being as an emerging area of interest across the sector.

The introduction of new duties under the Equality Act 2010 reinforced the importance of institutions promoting equality of opportunity for all researchers. As a HEFC workshop on equality and diversity in research careers identified, “making progress on equality and diversity in research careers is increasingly important if the country is to benefit from the endeavours of the pool of talented and committed researchers we have in our higher education (HE) sector.”

The importance of investment and development of human resources is now also formally recognised within the Research Excellence Framework which seeks to assess the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. Although there is emerging evidence that many of the aspirations of the Concordat are being embedded in the employment and management frameworks used by institutions, uncertainties remain, not least in an ever-increasingly competitive research base. Within a ‘flat’ funding environment for research, a new undergraduate funding regime and replacement of the ring-fenced Roberts money by the requirement to fund professional development for research staff through indirect costs on grants, there is significant pressure on universities and other research organisations as they seek to embed high quality researcher development activities within their employment and human resources practice and budgets.

4 Agreed measures of progress

In October 2010 the Concordat Strategy Group identified the need to identify measures of progress for the Concordat to both define whether the Concordat was having a sufficient impact upon policy and practice and to identify what more needed to be done.

Vitae worked with the sector to identify potential measures through a series of workshops at the Vitae Policy Forum, January 2011, which were subsequently refined by the Impact and Evaluation Group (IEG) and the Concordat Executive Group. The Concordat Executive Group proposed that only existing sources of data should be used for the measures of progress so as not to increase the burden on institutions and they would need to be put into context within the current changing environment within higher education. Collectively, and with appropriate commentary, the measures should give a good indication of progress.

The agreed measures of progress draw primarily on CROS, PIRLS, HESA and HR Excellence in Research data and are presented in Appendix 4. Where available, the differences between the UK aggregate results for comparable questions in CROS 2009 and 2011 are given as indications of the distance travelled in the implementation of the principles of the Concordat.

The deep and widespread engagement of institutions in CROS, resulting in over 5,500 responses, offers a powerful indication of the current experiences of research staff and Appendix 4 also includes a range of additional CROS data. A number of results from the first PIRLS data in 2011 are also included to give an indication of research leaders’ perspectives. This detailed information is also summarised in the next section.

14 ‘Higher education: students at the heart of the system’, BIS, 2011
www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf
17 Workshop on equality and diversity in research careers, HEFC, 2010 www.hecfe.ac.uk/research/careers/event_notes.pdf
18 Research Excellence Framework www.hecfe.ac.uk/research/ref/
19 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data
5 Evidence for progress

5.1 Evidence of institutional progress

In terms of qualitative data, the richest evidence for the position of institutions in relation to the implementation of the Concordat principles was provided by reviewing the published implementation plans of the 38 institutions who had gained the European HR Excellence in Research Award at the time of the review (Appendix 5 shows institutions with the award at March 2012). Most had undertaken a gap analysis of their policies and practice relating to the Concordat principles, informed by their institutional CROS 2009 results. The majority of institutions have created three-year action plans, with achievement in many areas expected by 2012 or 2013.

Institutional implementation plans show most progress in areas where the Concordat principle aligns with UK and national legislation, which they use as a framework to demonstrate compliance. This is within the Concordat principles of recruitment and selection, recognition and value, and equality and diversity. For example, many implementation plans refer to the institution’s compliance with:

- Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010 (and equivalent or earlier legislation) for equality and diversity
- Joint Negotiating Committee for HE Staff (JNCHES) guidance on reward
- Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) framework for recognition/job evaluation

All institutional plans refer to the existence of established appraisal or review systems, although with varying extent of participation of researchers, and, to a lesser extent, some form of induction programme for new staff.

Relatively greater variation exists in relation to the implementation of the Concordat’s principles on support and career development and researchers’ responsibilities. There is a range of progress from extensive, established offers of researcher development provision and researcher-focused policies and activities, through to positions where provision is being introduced and/or developments considered.

The 12 Russell Group institutions that had gained the HR Excellence in Research Award by September 2011 describe more advanced provision of support and also display greater confidence in achieving specific Concordat recommendations, than other institutions. Generally, the Russell Group institutions report that they are tailoring or tuning existing provision, testing improvements to policies or procedures, and undertaking institution-wide ‘roll-out’ of such procedures or offers of provision.

Perhaps not surprisingly given the different strategic priorities, research staff numbers and starting points, many smaller institutions and post-92 institutions are less advanced in implementing the Concordat principles. Although the picture is by no means uniform and there are pockets of strong practice, many are at the point of establishing or introducing procedures and training offers that are bespoke to research staff, or ensuring that research staff are explicitly included within existing staff policies. Significant numbers of smaller institutions report introducing new web sections for research staff, appointing new support staff and setting up new units to support researchers. Many report, for example, that they are now considering or have recently commenced participation in the Athena SWAN Charter for women in science25 process in relation to gender equality.

There is a common recognition and focus, particularly in the plans of more research-intensive institutions, on the key role of principal investigators and research leaders in supporting career and skills development for research staff. Several institutions stated directly a need “to train [them] in management as well as in research”, with performance management emerging as a distinct issue.

There is almost universal recognition of the need to engage a greater proportion of researchers in the provision and support offered, irrespective of how advanced that provision might be considered to be.

These observations are drawn from the published implementation plans of a minority of institutions and provide a useful picture of the position within those institutions early in the review period. However, these early-adopters of the HR Excellence in Research process and award are likely to be the more advanced in their provision and support for research staff and implementation of the Concordat principles, and they cannot be considered as indicative of the overall UK picture. This will become more apparent as more institutions publish their implementation plans.

5.2 Progress by Concordat principle

This section reviews the evidence of progress in implementing the Concordat by principle.

Principle 1: Recruitment and selection

The Concordat recognises “the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research”. There is evidence that institutions are increasingly operating open and transparent recruitment processes for research staff, supported by a variety of legislation and agreed national policies on employment. CROS results record significant progress against several of the activities encompassed within this principle. These include substantial increases in the extent of provision of job descriptions (72%), research skills requirements (62%) and personal attributes (39%) information for applicants. There were modest increases in research staff reporting open advertising of vacancies and implementation of recommended interview procedures in relation to their current posts, with only 20% of interviewees being interviewed only by the principal investigator.

Human resource specialists are aware of the implications of changes in legislation regarding fixed-term employment. However, the report of the benchmarking project on the use of fixed-term contracts revealed that there was evidence that principal investigators and research leaders were not fully familiar with institutional policies and that they may not be consistently applied across the institution. PIRLS 2011 reported that although 72% of principal investigators report confidence in the conditions of employment for research staff, 23% would like to be more confident.

The Concordat highlights that research posts should “only be advertised as fixed-term posts where there is a recorded and justifiable reason”. CROS results indicate a slight reduction in the proportion of research staff employed on fixed-term employment contracts from 82% in 2009 to 77% in 2011, but also reveals a trend for some shortening of those contracts. However, reduction in the proportion of research staff employed on fixed-term contracts may be too blunt a measure of progress, as open contracts for research staff do not necessarily imply increased security of employment.

“...the legislative changes have meant that the rights of fixed-term and open-ended employees are increasingly similar. However, the nature of research funding continues to be linked with a risk of redundancy. There is increasing diversity in the use of fixed-term and open-ended employment and in the nature and quality of these positions. The type of contract used is not, of itself, a useful indicator of the quality or security of the post. More nuanced understandings based on a range of factors, including the risk of redundancy, should be sought.”

The fixed-term contract report suggests that where there is a commitment from senior managers and where institutional policy, human resources and departmental management work together there is a strong chance of developing systems that better respond to the needs of the researchers as well as the institution. Further investigation is required to assess what institutional employment policy changes mean for research staff in practice.

Principle 2: Recognition and value

Principle 2 of the Concordat states that researchers should be “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.” Alongside improving the stability of employment conditions, it encourages active performance management and opportunities for pay progression and promotion.

The extent to which annual appraisal or staff review processes are undertaken by research staff continues to increase from 50% in 2009 to 55% in 2011 (CROS). This compares to 32% and 39% of research staff respondents to CROS in 2002 and 2006, respectively. This, however, remains markedly lower than the current position for principal investigators at 82% (PIRLS). Policies requiring appraisal for all staff are widespread, so it is the extent to which they are being implemented for research staff that remains the issue.

Around a half of research staff find appraisals useful for discussing various aspects of their research role and career development (CROS). PIRLS reports that around half of principal investigators express confidence in performance management (51%), appraisal and probation processes (59%). Forty-four percent of principal investigators would like to be more confident in managing performance, 31% in probation and appraisal processes. More needs to be done in encouraging and providing appropriate support to principal investigators to undertake effective appraisals and performance management related activities with their research staff.

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21 ‘Researchers, fixed-term contracts and universities: understanding law in context’, Vitae, 2010

22 ‘Researchers, fixed-term contracts and universities: understanding law in context’, Vitae, 2010
CROS records significant improvement in the proportion of research staff perceiving that they are integrated in their departmental (78%) and institutional (59%) research communities, and some increase in perceptions of recognition for their wider contributions to their institution, for example publications (71%), grant applications (50%), public engagement activities (47%), knowledge transfer (41%) and supervising/managing staff (38%). Within a Vitae survey of the visibility of researcher development in institutional strategies (2010)\textsuperscript{23}, three quarters of institutions made a direct statement of commitment to valuing researchers, although few (15%) explicitly referred to research staff in doing so.

CROS 2011 identified that a similar or higher proportion of research staff on fixed-term contracts perceived fair treatment compared with those respondents with open-ended contracts, for the recognition and value measures, for example:

- terms and conditions of employment, excluding the fixed-term nature of the contract
- requests for flexible working
- opportunities for promotion and progression
- opportunities to participate in decision making processes
- access to training and development opportunities.

However, CROS 2009 identified the lack of engagement and integration of certain small sub-populations of research staff, such as those who have long service through multiple short contracts. This had not improved in CROS 2011 and still remains a concern, for the goal of full implementation of the principles of the Concordat to all researchers.

**Principles 3 and 4: Support and career development**

Support and career development incorporates two of the Concordat principles:

- “researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment
- the importance of researchers’ personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career”

CROS records very distinct increases in the provision of inductions for research staff, such that the clear majority of research staff are now offered induction at local (72%), departmental (59%) and institutional level (67%). This reflects widespread human resource policies requiring that all new staff are supported through induction programmes, and some customisation of those policies in relation to research staff.

All institutions with the HR Excellence in Research Award express the intention to support and develop their researchers, based on published implementation plans. Three quarters of research staff report that they are being encouraged to engage in career and skills development (CROS 2011) and there have been increases too in the substantial minorities participating in career management training, from 10% in 2009 to 14% in 2011, and especially coaching or mentoring from 14% to 32%.

However, there is no evidence of an increase in the overall proportion of research staff participating in continuing professional development, or formally recording it. PIRLS results show that a substantial proportion of research leaders perceive participation in continuing professional development (CPD) to be relatively unimportant in the development of research leaders (although there is question over how principal investigators interpret the term continued professional development).

For these principles in particular, there is a significant variation between the stages of implementation for different institutions. However, the need for all institutions is common – to increase the engagement and participation of researchers. A key enabler for this is the positive engagement of principal investigators and research leaders in setting a culture in which development and support are the norm and that as research leaders they engage in their ‘people management’ role to the full.

**Principle 5: Researchers’ responsibilities**

The Concordat is clear that “individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning”.

From CROS 2011, the majority of research staff either have consulted their principal investigator or research leader in relation to immediate training and development needs (72%) and long term career planning (64%), or would be happy to do so. Fifty three percent have a career plan, slightly more than in 2009 (50%). Over half of research leaders are confident about giving career development advice. Around 30% of research staff have consulted a careers adviser about long term career planning to obtain professional advice/guidance, and half are aware or have at least partial understanding of the Vitae programme, up from 27% in 2009.

\textsuperscript{23} “The visibility of researcher development in UK higher education institutions’ strategies”, Vitae 2011

In CROS 2011 significant numbers of research staff are taking on wider activities and responsibilities beyond their immediate research role. Thirty five percent manage a budget and 54% plan and manage projects, with significant numbers of others (38%-46%) stating they would like opportunities to do these activities in their current role. A third have been involved in knowledge transfer, with 45% expressing interest in doing so. While 55% explain their work to people outside their field, only 40% have participated in public engagement activities; over a third would like to do this.

Up to half of research leaders feel that it is very important for research staff to have such experiences, and very few think that they are unimportant, in helping research staff to become future research leaders (PIRLS).

In terms of other developmental activities or opportunities undertaken by research staff, the picture changed little between 2009 and 2011. A majority (57%) of research staff are undertaking teaching, demonstrating and supervising of students, compared to a minority participating in departmental (23%) or institutional (10%) processes or committees. Although approximately a third report that they collaborate with industry, very few undertake secondments/exchanges outside higher education, while a substantial proportion suggest that they would like to do so.

Based on comparison of the 2011 and 2009 CROS results, there has been little increase in such engagement in these ‘wider’ activities and, in some cases, this has fallen slightly, e.g. writing grant proposals and supervising doctoral researchers.

On the other hand research staff associations are increasing in number rapidly, with 53 identified in 26 different institutions when surveyed in 2010, the majority in Russell Group institutions. Highlighting increasing instances of researcher-led activities, Vitae supported the formation and continued activities of the UK Research Staff Association (UKRSA) and established an annual conference for researchers leading or interested in forming research staff organisations.

A key action for the sector is to continue the cultural change towards widespread understanding that researchers themselves need to take responsibility for their own career and transferable skills development. To do this requires, not just the engagement of research staff but, the acknowledgement by principal investigators of the importance and value of providing the time for research staff to do so. The picture suggests that significantly more career development opportunities are open to research staff, so now the onus is on a greater number of researchers to take up those opportunities and assert their need for and right to support.

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**Principle 6: Equality and diversity**

Equality and diversity is embedded within the Concordat and “must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers”.

The vast majority (85%) of research staff believe their institution is committed as an employer to equality and diversity, and high proportions believe it treats all staff fairly with regard to a range of characteristics, for example age (80%), gender (77%) and ethnicity (77%). Around 10% overall perceive unfairness in relation to treatment by, for example, age (11%), gender (11%) or disability (3%), although this rises to around 20% amongst the specific protected group (i.e. females in relation to gender) (CROS 2011). In all cases the position has been maintained or improved since 2009.

This is a more positive perception of fair treatment than amongst principal investigators, where a substantial minority (31%) of female respondents perceive less than fair treatment with respect to gender (PIRLS). However, only 10% of principal investigators overall (and 17% of females) perceive that their institution is not committed to equality and diversity.

Despite the relatively positive view of research staff, statistical evidence\(^4\) suggests that there is scope for improvement in terms of equality of opportunity in research careers. Women are under-represented in more major research disciplines can discriminate against women and other under-represented groups.

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Despite the relatively positive view of research staff, statistical evidence\(^4\) suggests that there is scope for improvement in terms of equality of opportunity in research careers. Women are under-represented in more senior research positions and minority ethnic groups are generally under-represented amongst researchers. There is clear evidence that organisational cultures in major research disciplines can discriminate against women and other under-represented groups.

Institutions currently appear to be well-motivated to address further improvements in equality and diversity, perhaps prompted by publication of the Equality Act 2010. This is reflected in their interest and active strong participation in the HEFCE-funded Every Researcher Counts Vitae project and strong increase in take-up of the Athena SWAN Charter for women in science. The 65 institutions that are signatories to the Athena SWAN Charter principles hold 87 institutional or departmental awards, ranging from bronze to gold.

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Principle 7: Implementation and review

The signatories of the Concordat agreed the importance of “regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK”. The Concordat Strategy Group meets annually to review progress, while the Executive sub group meets quarterly to receive regular progress updates from Vitae, and prior to April 2011, the Concordat Implementation Coordinator.

Despite the Concordat being a voluntary instrument, institutions have responded extremely positively in acknowledging the importance of implementing the principles. As at December 2010, the vast majority (87%) of institution websites mention the Concordat and an increasing proportion have published their implementation plans, accelerated by the European HR Excellence in Research Award process. As part of the award process, institutions commit to publishing action plans, reviewing their progress after two years and to an external review after four years. However, most institutions are only now approaching their first review.

By spring 2010, a quarter of institutions had an implementation strategy in place and half were developing one, suggesting that the number of institutions gaining the award should increase.

Institutions value the opportunity to explore the views and experiences of their research staff, and benchmarking their institutional results through CROS. Since the revision and re-launch of CROS in 2009, 75 institutions have participated in CROS, of which 27 institutions participated in both 2009 and 2011. CROS 2011 represented the views of 25% of the research staff population of participating institutions. Several other institutions also have run CROS outside the UK survey period to suit local timing.

PIRLS was developed in response to requests from the sector of a similar survey tool to understand the views and experiences of principal investigators and research leaders. The participation of 33 institutions in the first survey in 2011 is strong evidence of the level of interest in gathering evidence to support institutional progress and priorities in implementing the Concordat principles.

Various reports confirm that local CROS results are being used to assess and inform progress with Concordat implementation and as evidence towards the HR Excellence in Research Award. Many institutions have expressed interest in running both CROS and PIRLS in the future.

5.3 Funders’ responses to the Concordat

Many research funding organisations that are signatories to the Concordat have provided responses to a request for their own strategies relating to implementation. A number of these are now available on the Concordat website and summarised in a report to the Concordat Strategy Group26, indicating both support for the infrastructure enabling greater implementation and in some cases specific guidance that requires grant holders to adhere to the Concordat principles.

A number of research funders are progressing to a position where they stipulate adherence to Concordat principles within their terms and conditions for funding. For example, within the Research Councils terms and conditions of grants:

“The Research Organisation is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for the management of research staff set out in the 2008 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and subsequent amendments.”

In July 2011 the Chief Medical Officer outlined her expectations that all medical schools wishing to apply for National Institute of Health Research Biomedical Research Centres and Units funding might need to have achieved an Athena SWAN Silver Award27.

25 ‘The visibility of researcher development in UK higher education institutions’ strategies’, Vitae 2011


27 www.ecu.ac.uk/news/chief-medical-officer-links-gender-equality-to-future-funding
5.4 Additionality

The visibility and reaction of institutions to the Concordat has encouraged other groups to adopt the concept. RCUK have developed a Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of research funders with respect to public engagement, to help embed public engagement in universities and research institutes.

The aim of the Public Engagement Concordat is to create a greater focus on and help embed public engagement with research. Its aims include researchers being recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement activities, and being enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, support and opportunities. Vitae has worked with the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) and the Beacons to promote the Concordat and public engagement through its networks. The Vitae ‘Engaging Researcher’ booklet28 was developed with the NCCPE.

Additionally, RCUK and Universities UK are developing a Concordat on research integrity based on the RCUK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct29. This provides guidelines on how to manage research to ensure the highest standards, and on the reporting and investigation of unacceptable research conduct.

In relation to gender equality, the Athena SWAN initiative has generated greater awareness of gender equality and career progression. In a recent evaluation, participants identified one of the strengths of Athena SWAN to be its value in working towards other specific outcomes, including REF submissions and implementation of the Concordat30. This ‘synergy’ effect may have contributed to the strong increase in the number of institutions signing the Athena SWAN Charter for women in science, now totalling 65 institutions. Should the National Institute for Health Research31 require research organisations to hold the silver Athena SWAN award in order to bid for funding, this would further embed progress towards implementation of the Concordat equality and diversity principles.

6 Overall findings

6.1 Progress with implementation

Despite being a voluntary instrument, the Concordat is having a significant impact across the higher education sector on the basis of qualitative evidence from individual institutions obtaining the HR Excellence in Research Award, recent surveys and reviews, and the quantitative measures of progress.

A commitment to support the career and skills development of research staff and achieve the principles of the Concordat appears to be widespread in institutions. Increasingly, the infrastructure with which to implement the Concordat principles is also in place, although this is less well-developed in some institutions.

In terms of the individual Concordat principles, the depth of implementation is greatest in relation to recruitment and selection, recognition and value, and equality and diversity: all themes on which there is existing legislation or specific national guidelines for employment practice. Overall since the launch of the Concordat:

- 75 institutions have participated in CROS, with over 5,000 research staff responses in 2011
- 33 institutions participated in PIRLS, with over 2,500 responses
- 50 UK HEIs have gained the HR Excellence in Research Award

Recruitment processes have become more open and transparent, with more information on job descriptions and less applicants interviewed only by the principal investigator.

- the use of fixed-term contracts has reduced, although there is less evidence that this is leading to more security of employment
- the availability of induction has increased at local or institutional level
- there is increased participation in appraisal and review, with half finding these useful for career development discussions

More research staff report being integrated in their communities and there are some increases in recognition for their wider contributions.

- the vast majority of researchers believe their institution is committed to equality and diversity and more institutions are signing up to the Athena SWAN Charter for women in science
- the majority of research staff on fixed-term contracts perceive equal or better fair treatment compared to those on open contracts.

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29 National Concordat for Research Integrity www.rcuk.ac.uk/researchPages/ResearchIntegrity.aspx
31 www.ecu.ac.uk/news/chief-medical-officer-links-gender-equality-to-future-funding

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However, generally support for career development of research staff is currently less embedded than for postgraduate researchers. Particularly, research intensive institutions who have gained the HR Excellence in Research Award are most likely to have well-established provision for research staff, although increasingly this is being developed and offered in other institutions. Although the majority of research staff are now encouraged to engage in skills and career development, there is little evidence of any increases in research staff participating in professional development activities.

The principle of researchers taking ownership for their own career development shows the least evidence of progress. The extent of engagement by research staff and their participation in their career development and related activities is still disappointingly low for some activities and uneven between and within individual institutions. Overall:

- the majority have or would consult their principal investigator about their development needs or career planning, although less than a third consult a careers advisor
- substantial minorities take on wider activities and responsibilities, with little evidence of increased participation since the launch of the Concordat
- awareness of professional development has increased with half of research staff now aware of Vitae, having doubled since 2009
- the number of research staff associations has increased dramatically in the last two years.

The existence and activities of the Concordat Strategy Group and Vitae have ensured that the Concordat has had considerable visibility with policymakers, senior managers and staff with responsibility for supporting researchers. This has undoubtedly sustained institutional momentum and commitment for the implementation of its principles.

Vitae’s leadership and central support for CROS and PIRLS have proved pivotal in providing institutions with instruments and data to understand researchers’ and principal investigators’ views and experiences to benchmark and review institutional progress and enhance provision.

Vitae’s central role in working with the European Commission to develop the UK process for the HR Excellence in Research Award and alignment of this with institutions’ Concordat implementation processes has been effective in sustaining implementation efforts. With 50 UK institutions gaining the award by January 2012, the UK publically demonstrates much greater commitment to the career development of researchers than other European member states.

Institutions consistently identify principal investigators and research leaders, as managers of researchers, as a critical group whose greater engagement is needed to achieve the engagement of researchers and support their career development. PIRLS reveals that principal investigators perceive human resource management, including appraisal, performance management and career development of research staff as much more important relative to research outputs.

### 6.2 Remaining challenges

The landscape for the career development of research staff has progressed significantly since publication of the Concordat. However, the extent to which individual principles have been achieved varies, and progress differs between institutions. Overall, the direction of travel is positive for all and there is unquestionable momentum.

While many of the requisite policies are now in place, translation of these intentions into universal practice requires cultural change, which takes time and, critically, the involvement and commitment of principal investigators, research leaders and managers, and research staff themselves. To effect this change will require continued effort on the part of institutions, funders and Vitae.

Progress on the recommendations of CROS 2009 (Appendix 6) has been greater in some areas than others. Areas where more progress is needed include:

- whether the increase in the use of open contracts is providing more security of employment for research staff
- research staff participation in appraisal processes achieving similar levels as principal investigators (82%)
- more active engagement of research staff in professional and career development, including use of Careers Services and the Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- focusing on groups of research staff who perceive personal discrimination and unfairness.

The Every Researcher Counts project raised awareness of the importance of equality and diversity for research staff. However, more sustainable benefits will only be achieved through continued institutional commitment and targeted investment to:

- maintain exposure at senior level of the importance of equality and diversity for research staff
- extend reach to engage more principal investigators and senior researchers
- extend reach to and develop parallel resources for research staff
- strengthen and extend the Every Researcher Counts champions network.
The pivotal role of principal investigators and research leaders, as managers of researchers, is highlighted in almost every institution’s Concordat implementation plan, with a variety of approaches to encouraging them to engage in training and development in order to be more effective and supportive in the institution’s development of its research staff. PIRLS 2011 identified a series of recommendations (Appendix 7) with respect to engaging principal investigators, specifically:

- encouraging principal investigators to engage their research staff in effective appraisals
- ensuring principal investigators are informed, confident and actively engaging in human resources management and career development of their researchers
- providing positive drivers, including workload models, to encourage and enable principal investigators and research staff to participate in development opportunities and more outward facing activities
- reviewing policies, practice and communication mechanisms to guard against inequalities and unfairness.

While many of the requisite policies are now in place, translation of these intentions into universal practice requires significant cultural change. CROS 2009 and 2011, PIRLS 2011 and the Every Researcher Counts project reports present a series of recommendations relating to each of the Concordat principles, which provide a useful road map for institutions.

The challenge remains that, despite the increasing availability of support for career development and transferable skills training in the majority of institutions, the extent of participation of research staff is still low and uneven. More widespread and depth of application of policies and practices is needed in order to reach all researchers in all institutions. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and associated Professional Development Planner, provides a major new approach to actively support researchers in their professional development and has the potential to make a significant impact on research staff engagement with their professional development.

A variety of sources confirm that institutional provision for the career development and transferable skills development of research staff is currently less embedded for research staff than for postgraduate researchers. Following the ending of ring-fenced Roberts funding, reported difficulties in recovering the costs of development activities for research staff through research grants, compared to through postgraduate fees, adds further uncertainty to progress in improving provision. Research funders need to review whether their terms and conditions of grants best facilitate the embedding of career development provision for research staff.

### 6.3 Future implementation: resources and leadership

Although the 1996 Concordat was successful in breaking new ground, the evidence demonstrates that the 2008 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers has had a greater impact and implementation of its principles is more advanced. Both this deeper implementation and the ability for it to be assessed are in the most part due to sector-wide structures and initiatives which catalyse and embed progress, principally Vitae and the Concordat Strategy Group. Their efforts in linking together and aligning differing initiatives, and engaging all stakeholders across the sector, appear to have added much momentum to progress. The Concordat Strategy Group has a continuing critical role during this consolidation period to consistently reinforce the importance of the Concordat principles and the need to make more progress in specific areas.

Vitae’s continued leadership, practice sharing activities and building the evidence base are also critical to sustaining implementation efforts. There are clear synergies between participation in CROS and PIRLS, development of a Concordat implementation plan and achieving the HR Excellence in Research Award: they are mutually reinforcing activities. Vitae needs to continue to encourage institutions to participate in CROS and PIRLS and implement the related recommendations, provide UK aggregate data analysis and leadership for the surveys and CROS/PIRLS Steering Group. Similarly, Vitae’s work in encouraging and supporting institutions to apply for the HR Excellence in Research Award needs to continue, particularly to ensure that all research-intensive institutions become award holders.

Collectively, these activities form the basis of a programme of evaluation and review through to 2015/16, which will provide substantial evidence of further progress, encourage institutional engagement and enhance provision and practice. The outcomes of CROS and PIRLS in 2013 and 2015 will be significant inputs to institutions’ two-year internal reviews of their HR Excellence in Research action plans and four-year external review.

The combination of legal requirements through the Fixed Term Employees Regulations and Equality Act 2010, the voluntary driver of the HR Excellence in Research Award recognition and continued drive through Vitae’s leadership and enhancement activities provide strong motivation for continued commitment to implementation progress. The encouragement provided to Scottish institutions by Universities Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council appears also to have accelerated their progress, particularly in achieving the HR Excellence in Research Award.
The requirement to provide evidence of development support for research staff and postgraduate researchers in the research environment aspect of the Research Excellence Framework is also likely to have further impact on institutions’ focus on implementation of the Concordat principles, and building the evidence base.

The overall direction of travel is positive for all and there is unquestionable momentum. However, Vitae’s leadership and the visible commitment of funders through the Concordat Strategy Group are critical for continued institutional commitment to implementation. Without the continued existence of the Concordat Strategy Group and Vitae institutions will conclude that the agenda is no longer of importance and there will be significant risk of the agenda stalling, or regressing.

7 Recommendations

From this broad depiction of the current state of play, the following recommendations emerge for the different stakeholders with interest in achieving the aims of the Concordat.

Concordat Strategy Group

The importance of implementing the principles of the Concordat is still timely and relevant. The continued existence and active engagement of the Concordat Strategy Group sends a clear signal of the importance and relevance of the Concordat to the UK. As the sector moves towards the breadth and depth of implementation of the Concordat principles needed to achieve required cultural change, the role of the Strategy Group also needs to evolve.

The Concordat Strategy Group should:

- Continue to meet on an annual basis, include more principal investigators and research staff representatives and increase its influence and reach by extending membership to sector groups, such as ARMA, AURIL and AUA
- Continue to promote the importance of the Concordat to institutional senior managers and through other UK stakeholders such as the mission groups, making the connections with other UK and European policy initiatives such as the REF, where appropriate
- Provide on-going support and direction to Vitae to continue its pivotal leadership and implementation role
- Focus on the main challenges to implementation; providing a platform to debate key issues, such as should research staff have a reasonable expectation of security of employment?
- Agree a programme of evaluation and review to 2015/16, with an interim report in 2013/14, based on the measures of progress and other sources of sector data, and linked to the HR Excellence in Research Award process and evaluation of REF outcomes

Funders

Research funders have an important role in driving the implementation of the Concordat. By providing demonstrable commitment to the Concordat through specific terms and conditions for research funding, targeted communications to institutions and principal investigators, and funding for Vitae so they can influence institutions’ strategic engagement with the Concordat.

Funders should:

- Recognise that implementation is not complete and should provide funding to:
  - manage and support the Concordat Strategy Group
  - provide central drive and coordination for CROS and PIRLS in 2013 and 2015
  - undertake a programme of evaluation and review to 2015/16, with an interim report in 2013/14, coordinated with the HR Excellence in Research Award process
  - provide structures and networks to engage institutions, share experiences and practice
  - focus on specific challenges for implementation, such as equality and diversity or the use of fixed-term contracts
- RCUK should review the impact of the change in funding regime for Roberts career development provision for research staff, identifying any implications for implementation of the Concordat principles
- HECFCE and the other Funding Bodies should explore the implications for research staff and the Concordat in their 2015 evaluation of the process and outcomes of the REF, particularly the research environment and equality and diversity

Vitae

It is through Vitae’s leadership, drive and support for institutions that the significant progress to date has been achieved. Through, collectively, CROS, PIRLS and the HR Excellence in Research Award process, Vitae has created a virtuous circle of action, reflection and review that needs to be sustained for continued progress. Much of the continued engagement of the sector will depend on Vitae providing strong leadership as institutions respond to current and future challenges to ensure that implementation of the Concordat remains at the forefront of institutional strategies.

Vitae should:

- Continue to provide the leadership, practice-sharing activities and supporting resources to inform and engage all stakeholders, including funders, institutional staff, and researchers in the implementation of the Concordat principles
Three-year review of the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers March 2012

- Provide a centralised leadership and capability for CROS and PIRLS to ensure the surveys are relevant, and extend institutional participation in 2013 and 2015 to provide robust evidence of progress and further challenges
- Actively share institutional successes and good practice in relation to the CROS and PIRLS recommendations, specifically increasing the engagement and development of principal investigators and research staff
- Encourage and facilitate institutions to apply for the HR Excellence in Research Award, especially those with substantial research staff populations
- Develop a programme of evaluation and review to 2015/16 building on the 2013 and 2015 CROS and PIRLS outcomes, and the two-year internal and four-year external reviews of progress for institutions with the HR Excellence in Research Award
- Work with the European Commission to agree the process for the four-year external review of the HR Excellence in Research Award, such that it is appropriate and proportionate for UK institutions
- Work with institutions and the UKRSRA to develop mechanisms and resources to effectively engage research staff, and their principal investigators, in their professional development through use of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

Institutions

Institutions, as employers of research staff, are key to the successful implementation of the Concordat principles. There is clear evidence of the engagement of institutions and that the aims of the Concordat are being embedded in strategies and policies relating to research staff. However, as they seek to consolidate their achievements and embed the Concordat principles in usual practice, there are significant pressures on institutions, not least with ‘flat’ research funding, changed undergraduate funding and replacement of the ring-fenced Roberts money through indirect costs on grants. Continued institutional engagement is critical to ensure progress in implementing the Concordat principles does not stall or regress.

Institutions should:

- Systematically review their progress in implementing the Concordat principles, particularly against the CROS recommendations relating to security of employment, engagement with effective appraisal processes and career development, and equality of opportunity
- Reflect on the findings of PIRLS 2011 in relation to how to support principal investigators in undertaking their leadership and management responsibilities for research staff

Explore how to use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to effectively engage research staff, and their principal investigators, in professional development

- Participate in CROS and PIRLS in 2013 and 2015 to provide a robust view of the extent and impact of institutional and UK implementation of the Concordat principles
- Actively share successes and good practice through the Vitae Database of Practice and good practice events, particularly in relation to increasing the engagement and development of principal investigators and the engagement of research staff
- Commit to gaining and maintaining the HR Excellence in Research Award, as appropriate

Researchers

The Concordat stresses the importance of researchers taking responsibility for their career development. Although there is evidence of research staff being more aware of the importance of professional development, many more need to actively engage in appraisal processes and take advantage of increasing institutional provision of professional development opportunities.

Researchers should:

- Pro-actively take responsibility for their own development and career planning, and participate in a range of development activities
- Use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework Professional Development Planner to assess and record their professional development needs
- Seek out professional advice and be well-informed about their career progression and employment opportunities, including active participation in appraisal and review processes
- Engage with their local research staff associations, and the UKRSRA, to provide a collective voice for research staff within institutions
- Take the opportunity to express their views and experiences through participation in CROS, PIRLS and other feedback mechanisms

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Appendix 1 Concordat benchmarking projects

The Concordat Strategy Group agreed six benchmarking projects in January 2009 which aimed to establish the state of research staff career development. The first three of these projects were identified as priorities.

1. Institutional approaches to embedding career development for researchers

In September 2010 a report was published based on 103 institutional responses to a survey on how institutions were responding strategically to the Concordat\(^\text{32}\). The responding institutions collectively employed 93% of research staff working in UK academia. The survey indicated that, in January 2010, 28% of institutions had an implementation strategy in place for the Concordat and 54% were in the process of creating a strategy.

Two thirds of respondents reported that they had a strategy in place for managing and supporting researchers, and the remainder were developing one. One in six institutions reported that significant changes had already been made to their policies in relation to Concordat requirements, and the vast majority of the remainder had embarked on programmes of change. It was on the back of the positive results of this survey that Vitae encouraged UK institutions to apply for the HR Excellence in Research Award.

2. Exploring the experiences of research staff

The Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) is a web-based survey designed to gather anonymously the views of research staff in UK higher education institutions about their experiences, career aspirations and career development opportunities. It was originally developed in 2002 through a project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and the Department of Trade and Industry/Office of Science and Technology (now Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) (DTI/OST - now BIS). After the end of funding in 2005, CROS was primarily self-funded by institutions through BOS licence revenues and participation was fairly low.

In 2008 Vitae agreed to support the administration of the, then, CROS Steering Group and provide funding, resources and strategic leadership for the analysis and publication of the annual UK aggregate results. Working in consultation with the sector and through workshops at the Vitae annual Researcher Development International Conference and Policy Forum, CROS was updated to reflect the principles of the Concordat. Institutions were encouraged to participate through a letter from Sir Ivor Crewe, Chair of the Concordat Strategy Group, to vice chancellors, supported by a communications campaign through Vitae newsletters and events, and the CROS mailing list.

The revitalised CROS was run in 2009 and 2011 and UK aggregate results published\(^\text{33}\). With 75 institutions participating between 2009 and 2011, and over 5,000 responses in 2011, CROS provides extensive representative data on the activities, attitudes and perceptions of research staff. The two survey points also provide a quantitative measure of progress for certain issues. Interest in the report of the UK aggregate results has been high, with almost 2000 printed copies of CROS 2009 distributed to institutions. Plenary sessions and workshops at the Vitae annual Researcher Development International Conference are always well attended, as was a CROS good practice event in November 2010. Following requests from the sector, Vitae also published an analysis of CROS 2009 by broad discipline groups\(^\text{34}\).

CROS is a key tool for both individual institutions and the higher education sector collectively in reviewing progress in achieving the principles of the Concordat. One of the strengths of CROS is the ability to compare institutional results against the UK aggregate of all participating institutions and to track changes over time.

3. Views and perceptions of principal investigators

In March 2009 the Executive Group identified a need to understand the views of principal investigators, and further noted that engagement of this group was the most difficult aspect of Concordat implementation. It was agreed to develop a survey targeted at principal investigators and research leaders, along the lines of CROS. The survey was developed jointly by the Concordat Implementation Coordinator, Vitae and the CROS Steering Group through workshops at the Vitae Policy Forum and annual conference, together with a series of focus groups for principal investigators hosted by the Vitae regional Hubs.

\(^{32}\) ‘Higher education institutions’ strategic responses to the Concordat’, Universities UK, 2010
\(^{33}\) ‘Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2011: Analysis of UK aggregate results’, Vitae, 2011
\(^{34}\) ‘Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2009: Differences between broad disciplinary groups’, Vitae 2010
The Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) ran in spring 2011. Thirty three institutions participated and over 2,500 responses were received, establishing a baseline dataset on the views and perceptions of this key group. Aggregate results from the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) in 2011 have been analysed and published by Vitae35, data from which informs some of the specific progress measures agreed (see section below).

4. Understanding the research cohort

This project recognised that the sector could improve knowledge of the research staff cohort, particularly more accurate numbers of research staff, their demographics, responsibilities, conditions of employment and career paths both within and outside the higher education sector, by improving the quality of the HESA staff record. Members of the Concordat Strategy Group provided a range of suggested improvements to the HESA consultation, the majority of which will be implemented. The revised coding framework and guidance has been issued to institutions for the 2012/13 data collection.

The significant changes to the HESA Staff Record will now enable the provision of more useful information and actions by institutions to understand the profile of the research staff cohort and track research staff between institutions and sectors. Specifically:

- the introduction of new REF-related fields for Early Career Researcher and Research Assistant should assist identification of research staff
- improvement of the Academic Employment function and a new field for grade/level of employment should give more differentiation of research staff positions and monitor progression
- the Terms of Employment (contract type) has been improved and a new field for parental leave added
- Equality and Diversity fields have been updated to reflect the Equality Act 2010
- there are new fields to record reason for end of contract, and activity and location after leaving
- the Current Academic Discipline has been improved to align it with the REF.

Improving the use of the Staff Identifier by adding names or national insurance number to be able to track research staff movements between institutions has been postponed until 2013/14.

5. Reviewing the use of fixed-term contracts

A report examining the UK legislation on fixed-term contracts, and how this is being interpreted within institutions, was published in July 201036. Based on case studies, there was evidence that although institutions have clear policies on terms and conditions of employment of researchers, understanding and implementation on the ground was variable. It highlights uncertainty amongst researchers about the nature of open-ended employment and the likelihood of redundancy: even with open-ended contracts the link between short-term funding and the likely duration of appointments continues.

The report suggests that where there is a commitment from senior managers and institutional policy, HR and departmental management to work together there is a strong chance of developing systems that better respond to the needs of the researchers as well as the institution.

“There are important findings about how to develop and implement HR strategy around researchers. However, one of the most important findings of this study is that successful implementation of HR strategy requires a whole institution response. It is therefore very important that university senior managers, heads of departments, principal investigators (PIs) and researchers themselves also engage with the findings of this study. We have seen enormous changes in the culture of management for researchers and this report highlights a wide range of the good practice that has developed in the wake of legislative and policy changes. It also provides some strong ideas about how to take this culture change forward”.

Mike Moore, then, Chair; UHR

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36 ‘Researchers, fixed-term contracts and universities: understanding law in context’, Vitae 2010
Appendix 2 Concordat Strategy Group

Terms of Reference (revised 28 April 2011)
The Concordat Strategy Group is responsible for promoting the implementation of the principles of the Concordat across the UK, in line with its implementation strategy and in partnership with other bodies. Specifically, it will:

- promote the aims and objectives of the Concordat at strategic levels in relevant organisations
- advise on policy and practice that promote the principles of the Concordat
- coordinate the actions and policies of Signatories, Supporters and relevant parties to meet the objectives of the Concordat
- monitor whether the Concordat is having a sufficient impact upon policy and practice, and identify additional actions, as appropriate
- oversee and ensure the delivery of major reviews of the implementation of the Concordat
- ensure that UK interests are considered in any relevant European Union initiatives
- work with the European Commission to provide a UK process for acknowledging UK institutions’ alignment with the European Charter and Code
- report annually to the UK Research Base Funders Forum on the implementation of the principles of the Concordat
- encourage the recognition, nationally and internationally, of the UK’s leading position in the development and training of researchers.

Current membership
Robert Barrett, Royal Academy of Engineering
Dr Iain Cameron/Rosie Beales, Research Councils UK (RCUK)
Dr David Cox, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
Dr Peter Craig, Chief Scientist Office, Scottish Government
Professor Sir Ivor Crewe, University of Oxford (Chair)
Professor Mathew Bennet, Bournemouth University
Fergus Devitt, Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DELNI)
Dr Ken Emond, British Academy
Dr Stuart Fancey, Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
Guy Gregory, Universities Human Resources (UHR)
Christopher Hale, Universities UK (UUK)
Dr Candace Hassall, Wellcome Trust
Paul Hubbard, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
Professor Peter Main, Institute of Physics
Paul Marshall, 1994 Group
Dr Paul McDonald, Royal Society
Professor Trevor McMillan, Lancaster University
Dr Janet Metcalfe/Ellen Pearce, Vitae
Professor Jeremy Pearson, British Heart Foundation (BHF)
Dr Liz Philpots, Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC)
Ellen Pugh, Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)
Professor Ella Ritchie, Newcastle University
Professor Sue Scott, Glasgow Caledonian University
Paula Shelley, Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA)
Professor Mike Smith, Sheffield Hallam University
Dr Alyson Thomas, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
Jane Thompson, University and College Union (UCU)
Professor Nigel Thrift, University of Warwick
Dr Daniel Weekes, UK Research Staff Association (UKRSA)
Appendix 3  Vitae activities to support Concordat implementation

This appendix describes Vitae activities to support the implementation of the Concordat through:

- raising awareness
- knowledge building
- consolidation activities
- practice sharing.

Raising awareness

The high profile launch of the Concordat in 2008, by the then Minister of State for Science and Innovation, followed over the year by many institutional launch events for both research staff and senior staff, raised initial awareness of the Concordat. RCUK have supplied around 60,000 copies of the Concordat to institutions to distribute to existing and new researchers.

Examples of UK and regional events to promote the Concordat include:

- Concordat Implementation in Scotland, Vitae Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub, 2008
- North East Researchers' Conference, 2008
- Implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, HEFCW/Vitae seminar, 2009, targeted at institutional senior staff
- Implementing the Concordat: one year on, Vitae London/East of England Hubs, 2009
- ESRC postdoctoral fellows conference, 2009
- BBSRC Next Generation Conference, 2009
- Euroscience Open Forum, 2010 highlighting the UK approach to European Charter and Code implementation
- ESRC Research Methods Festival, 2010
- Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, presentation to professional bodies, 2010
- Every Researcher Counts events, 2011

Additionally, Vitae's programme of annual UK events, and regional Hub events all cover topics relevant to the career development of research staff, i.e.:

- Vitae annual Researcher Development International Conference, 2009, 2010, 2011, includes a specific research staff strand and targeted workshops
- Vitae Research Staff Conference 2010, 2011, for members of research staff associations
- Vitae Connections 2009, 2010, 2011, using Vitae resources to develop the skills and careers of researchers, including research staff.

Throughout, Vitae has raised awareness of the Concordat through targeted communications to all stakeholders, including:

- regular Vitae news updates www.vitae.ac.uk/news
- Vitae Hub quarterly newsletters www.vitae.ac.uk/hubs
- a set of Concordat briefings, translating the principles of the Concordat into benefits, actions and examples of case studies for senior managers, staff developers, human resources specialists, careers specialists, principal investigators and researchers www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/56351/Concordat-briefings-to-engage-stakeholder-groups-.html
- regular articles on research staff in 'overview', Vitae's twice yearly bulletin for supervisors and principal investigators on policy, news, new developments and events relevant to postgraduate researchers and research staff, with particular reference to skills development www.vitae.ac.uk/overview
- briefings for research staff and principal investigators on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, which expresses the knowledge skills and attributes of successful researchers www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf
- research staff section of the Vitae website www.vitae.ac.uk/researchstaff including links to research staff communities
- research staff blog launched in 2009, where research staff can post articles on the experience of being a member of research staff, career development, applying for jobs, practical tips, and work-life balance. It is the most popular section of the Vitae researcher portal, receiving over 8% of the traffic and 90% of posts receiving comments www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/156431/Research-staff-blog.html.
Knowledge building

The knowledge-building activity has largely been through six benchmarking projects agreed by the Concordat Strategy Group and described in Appendix 1. These are:

1. Institutional approaches to embedding career development for researchers
2. Exploring the experiences of research staff through the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)
3. Views and perceptions of principal investigators
4. Understanding the research cohort
5. Reviewing the use of fixed-term contracts
6. Funders’ responses to the Concordat

Additionally, Vitae published or contributed to a series of publications that contributed to our knowledge and understanding of research staff experiences and careers:

- ‘What do researchers do? Career paths of doctoral graduates’. The report contains a section on the career paths of doctoral graduates, whose first destinations were employed as research staff in higher education www.vitae.ac.uk/wrd
- The ‘Impact Framework: one year on’ report, 2009, presents over 100 case studies evaluating the impact of researcher development activities and highlights a range of impacts from researcher development activities including successes in grant and fellowship applications for research staff. www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/RTIF_update_Sep09.pdf

Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)

The most significant development in relationship to the Concordat principles was the launch in 2010 of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, which describes the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of researchers and encourages them to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development. Four domains encompass what researchers need to be effective in their approach to research, when working with others and in contributing to the wider society and environment. www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

The accompanying Researcher Development Statement (RDS) is designed for policy makers, businesses and research organisations that provide personal, professional and career development for researchers. It replaces the Research Councils’ Joint Skills Statement (JSS) as the key reference statement for the development of postgraduate researchers’ skills and attributes and extends its applicability to research staff, and senior researchers. The Researcher Development Statement has been endorsed by 34 organisations including Research Councils UK, the UK Funding Bodies and Universities UK.

Together the Researcher Development Framework and Statement provide an underpinning professional development framework to support the implementation of the principles of the Concordat, in particular the career development principles, and to enable researchers to take responsibility for their own career development. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework has been well received by UK institutions, and has the potential to make a significant impact on research staff engagement with their professional development.

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework has been incorporated into a downloadable Professional Development Planner that enables researchers to identify their development areas, create an action plan and record evidence of their progress. It is a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. Vitae has developed a range of resources and learning materials designed to assist researchers in reflecting on their professional development needs through the Researcher Development Framework. It provides a language with which researchers can articulate their knowledge and expertise.
Consolidation activities

Where possible, opportunities have been taken to consolidate the implementation of the aims of the Concordat by aligning it with other initiatives.

The new Research Excellence Framework presented an opportunity to reinforce the importance of implementing the principles of the Concordat in improving the research environment for research staff. A letter to vice-chancellors from the Chair of the Strategy Group encouraging institutional participation in the CROS and PIRLS Groups stressed the relationship between the Concordat and the Research Excellence Framework.

“The development of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) recognises the importance of developing researchers. The research environment element of the REF is likely to make explicit references to the Concordat and require institutions to evidence their support for the development of researchers and academic staff.”

Concordat Strategy Group and Vitae responses, prepared in conjunction with the Vitae Research Staff Development Advisory Group, to the consultations on the Research Excellence Framework in 2009 stressed the importance of the Concordat and instruments, such as CROS. Draft panel guidance on the research environment element of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) makes explicit references to evidence and indicators of the implementation of the Concordat and “how the unit [of assessment] has been developing the research of early career researchers and support for integrating them into a wider, supportive research culture”.

In January 2010 the European Commission agreed a mechanism by which UK institutions could apply for the HR Excellence in Research Award based on the implementation of the Concordat. The mechanism builds upon the five-step approach outlined in its European HR Strategy for Researchers:

- Internal analysis by the research institution, involving all key institutional players, to compare institutional practices against the [Concordat] principles
- Publication of planned actions for improvements in compliance through a ‘Human Resources Strategy for Researchers’ incorporating the [Concordat]
- Acknowledgement of that Human Resources Strategy for Researchers by the European Commission
- Implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers by the institution, which through its internal quality assurance mechanism also carries out a self-assessment at least every second year, on the basis of which it may update its strategy as necessary
- An external evaluation, which takes place periodically, but no later than every fourth year

The 2009 survey of institutions’ responses to the Concordat provided a catalyst for encouraging UK institutions to apply for the HR Excellence in Research Award. Some institutions had already achieved many of the requirements to apply for the award, primarily by demonstrating that they had conducted an internal analysis and published an action plan. By building on the results of the survey, Vitae identified the early adopters of the Concordat and encouraged them to apply for the award. The review of institutional applications is undertaken by a sub-group of the Concordat Strategy Group, and includes a representative from the European Commission. At the time of the review 38 UK institutions had gained the award, more than the rest of Europe combined. Appendix 5 gives the UK institutions who currently hold the HR Excellence in Research Award (as at March 2012).

“There’s huge added benefits [to gaining the HR Excellence in Research Award]. We’d encourage anyone who hasn’t yet got the badge to do so…It will mean greater visibility for the university at European level…Without a doubt, internationally, we will recruit better researchers as an outcome.”

HR Excellence in Research UK Award holder

As part of its implementation strategy for the Concordat, HEFCE, supported by other UK Funding Bodies, funded Vitae to raise awareness and develop materials and resources in relation to equality and diversity for research staff through the Every Researcher Counts project. A resulting network of over 80 ‘champions’ now exists within UK institutions. A suite of new materials and resources targeted at principal investigators were launched at a national event in October 2011.

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27 Research Excellence Framework www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/
28 www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae%20response%20to%20REF%20consultation_15_Dec_09.pdf
29 www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/documents/REFconsultationletter.pdf
30 HR Excellence in Research Award www.vitae.ac.uk/hrexcellenceaward
Vitae agreed to host the leadership development for a principal investigators\(^4\) web section which aims to provide online resources for new and aspiring principal investigators. This collaborative project was led by the University of Nottingham with input from six other institutions, as well as Vitae, Research Councils UK, the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, Association of Research Managers and Administrators and Universities UK. It was funded by the HEFCE Leadership, Governance and Management fund and is a finalist for the THE Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development Award 2011.

The establishment of the UK Research Staff Association (UKRSA) provides research staff with the opportunity for a collective voice and is an indication that some researchers are taking responsibility for pursuit of issues within the Concordat. Within CROS results, the proportion of research staff that have at least some knowledge of the Concordat was 57% in 2011.

Supported by Vitae, the UKRSA supports the development of local and regional research staff associations. Since the launch of the Concordat there has been strong growth in the number of local research staff associations within research organisations and institutions. The UKRSA also represents the interests and views of research staff in interactions with relevant national bodies, provides input on policy affecting research staff and informs research staff of relevant policy issues.

The UKRSA has undertaken research into the impact of research staff associations\(^4\) and a guide to research staff associations\(^4\). They are currently reviewing the availability of research fellowships.

**Practice sharing**

One of Vitae’s strengths is the sharing of good practice between institutions, particularly through its network of university-based regional Hubs. In relation to Concordat implementation, this has been facilitated through its web-based databases, focusing on institutional practice, training and developers and Vitae resources, including specific targeted resources for research staff. Vitae annual UK events and regional Hub events have significant practice sharing elements.

**Vitae training and development materials available to institutions developed for research staff**

Vitae Hubs run tasters and train the trainer sessions for Vitae packages:

- How to be an Effective Researcher programme for research staff  
  www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/74611/Effective-researcher-research-staff.html

- Broadening Horizons: career management for researchers  
  www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/74351/Broadening-horizons-career-management-for-researchers.html

- The Digital Researcher event in collaboration with the British Library  
  www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/219961/Digital-researcher-blog.html

- Advancing in Academia for research staff  
  www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/313101/Advancing-in-Academia.html

- Social Enterprise  
  www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/352301/Social-Enterprise.html

**Vitae Database of Practice**

The Vitae Database of Practice is a free resource for the sector to enable the sharing of practice. The database is inclusive and submissions are encouraged from across the sector. As part of the implementation of the Concordat, Vitae upgraded the database structure to reflect the Concordat principles and are encouraging institutions to share practices relating to the Concordat. www.vitae.ac.uk/dop

**Vitae Database of Resources**

The Vitae Database of Resources contains resources, activities and packaged courses available free to UK institutions to support the career development of researchers. www.vitae.ac.uk/resources

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41 Every Researcher Counts, Vitae  www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts
42 Leadership development for principal investigators  www.vitae.ac.uk/pi
43 Understanding Research Staff Associations and their impact, UKRSA/Vitae, 2010  
www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/305181/Understanding-Research-Staff-Associations-and-their-impact.html
44 ‘Guide to research staff associations’, UKRSA, 2010  
www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/305191/Guide-to-Research-Staff-Associations.html
Every Researcher Counts project resources
The Every Researcher Counts project aim is to improve equality and diversity for research staff and is funded by HEFCE with support from the other UK Funding Bodies. Vitae has built a network of champions and developed a set of higher quality, flexible resources and case studies for principal investigators and staff developers to embed in training materials for principal investigators and supervisors. www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/462601/Every-Researcher-Counts-resources.html

Vitae researcher booklets
- ‘Creative Researcher: tools and techniques to unleash your creativity’, 2009, offers practical information and advice for researchers on creativity in a research environment
  www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/The_creative_researcher_Dec09.pdf
- ‘Engaging Researcher’, 2010 developed in association with the Beacons for public engagement.
  www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/The_engaging_researcher_2010.pdf

Vitae masterclasses
Vitae programme of masterclasses is aimed at researcher developers who are looking to innovate and develop their training provision. Examples of topics include:
- Training needs analysis and personal development planning
- Creativity
- Neuro linguistic programming (NLP) in researcher development programmes
- Demonstrating impact: evaluation
- Coaching and mentoring
  www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/74201/Staff-supporting-researchers-masterclasses.html

Leadership development for principal investigators
Vitae hosts the leadership development for principal investigators web section which aims to provide online resources for new and aspiring principal investigators. This collaborative project was funded by the HEFCE Leadership, Governance and Management fund. It is a finalists for the THE Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development Award 2011.
www.vitae.ac.uk/pi

Vitae Innovate projects relating to research staff
- Working creatively with sound and image: a collaborative, interdisciplinary learning workshop for researchers, University of Edinburgh
- Bill Law’s Three Scene Storyboarding: an innovative technique for supporting the career development of researchers, International Centre for Guidance Studies, Derby University
- Getting out more: contract research staff and public engagement activities, Imperial College London Science Communication Group and Arizona State University
- Non-Zero-Sum: developing a training resource to facilitate discussions on collaboration for researchers, Dr Nathan Ryder
- Win-Win: developing the transferable skills of research staff through mentoring, University of Sussex
- Facilitating research as a creative process, Imperial College London
- The research impact agenda and early career development for historians: a pilot study, University of Glamorgan
- The application of e-knowledge tools in researcher careers training and development, Open University
www.vitae.ac.uk/innovate
### Appendix 4 Progress with Concordat implementation: measures of progress by principle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concordat Principle</th>
<th>Available measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation and review: overarching measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-up and overall results of CROS and PIRLS</td>
<td>Measure 1 CROS HEI participation and overall response rate</td>
<td>Institutions participating in CROS</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions participating in 2009 and 2011</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating institutions new to CROS (revised survey)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total institutions to have participated in CROS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions participating in PIRLS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2588</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European HR Excellence in Research Awards</td>
<td>Measure 2 Number of HEIs seeking and gaining the award</td>
<td>UK institutions gaining award</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of cultural change</td>
<td>Measure 3 PIRLS Q7/15 confidence in participating in continued professional development and perceived importance for future leaders</td>
<td>Participating in continued professional development:</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• not currently relevant to themselves</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• not important for research staff in becoming future research leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility of institutional commitment to the Concordat</td>
<td>Institutions publically refer to Concordat on website</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Published action plan</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specific mention of Concordat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Specific mention of monitoring Concordat implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and selection</td>
<td>Evidence for extent of progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Recruitment and selection procedures should be informative, transparent and open to all qualified applicants regardless of background</td>
<td>CROS Q6 how research staff learnt about current post</td>
<td>Small but significant increase in the proportion of research staff respondents learning about their current post via websites</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small decrease in the proportion that learnt about their current post by word of mouth</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence in recruitment and selection</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2 Person and vacancy specifications must clearly identify skills required for post</td>
<td>CROS Q7 availability of job specifications and skills requirements</td>
<td>Increases in the proportion of research staff receiving:</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• job descriptions</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• details of specialist research skills required</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.3 Research posts to be advertised as fixed-term only where recorded and justifiable reason</td>
<td>Measure 4 CROS Q4 records proportion of research staff currently employed on fixed-term and open-ended contracts</td>
<td>Decrease in proportion of research staff respondents employed on fixed-term contracts</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HESA staff record</td>
<td>(2004) 88%</td>
<td>(2008) 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.4 Recruitment and progression panels should reflect diversity and range of experience/expertise</td>
<td>CROS Q8 records how research staff were interviewed for current post</td>
<td>Increased proportion report application interviews with panels including representatives from:</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• within the department</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• across the institution</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key measures are highlighted in bold
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognition and value</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B.1 Employers to afford equal treatment to all researchers regardless of employment status</strong></td>
<td>Measure 5 &lt;br&gt; CROS Q14 perception of fair treatment with other staff; comparison of responses of those with fixed-term contracts and open-ended contracts &lt;br&gt;[Not directly comparable with 2009 results]</td>
<td>Similar or higher proportion of respondents with fixed-term contracts perceive fair treatment as those with open-ended contracts, for all measures for, e.g.:&lt;br&gt;• terms and conditions of employment &lt;br&gt;• requests for flexible working &lt;br&gt;• opportunities for promotion and progression &lt;br&gt;• opportunities to participate in decision making processes &lt;br&gt;• access to training and development opportunities</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Extent of appraisal | Measure 6 <br> CROS Q20 extent of research staff participation in appraisal or staff review <br>CROS Q21 perceived usefulness of appraisal or staff review | Increase in research staff participating in appraisal <br>Apparently eligible research staff not invited to appraisal <br>Useful or very useful usefulness of appraisal for e.g.:<br>• overall <br>• in identifying your strengths and achievements <br>• to highlight issues <br>• focus on your career aspirations current role | 50% | 55% |
| | PIRLS Q11 extent of appraisal/review <br>PIRLS Q12 perceived usefulness of appraisal or staff review <br>PIRLS Q9 confidence in appraisal and probation processes | Principal investigators appraised in last two years <br>Useful in setting clear expectations and objectives | - | 82% |
| | | Confident in ability to manage promotion and appraisal | - | 59% |

| B.3 Research managers required to participate in active performance management and career guidance, Employers to ensure training opportunities to research managers to understand management responsibilities | Measure 7 <br> PIRLS Q8 confidence in performance management <br>PIRLS Q10 satisfaction with support in undertaking management duties | Confident in managing performance <br>Confident in providing career development advice | - | 51% |
| | | Satisfied with activities and support for, e.g.:<br>• conditions of employment <br>• managing performance <br>• probation and appraisal <br>• providing career advice | - | 56% |

| Degree of recognition of contribution of researchers | Measure 8 <br> CROS Q15 perceptions of research staff in relation to recognition of different contributions | Modest increases in the proportion that perceive recognition and value from their HEI for some specific contributions, e.g.: <br>• grant applications <br>• publications <br>• knowledge transfer and commercialisation activities <br>• public engagement with research <br>• supervising/managing staff <br>• teaching and lecturing | - | 61% |

| Perception of integration of researchers | CROS Q16 perceived levels of integration in various communities | Significantly increased integration within: <br>• departmental research communities <br>• institutional research communities | - | 78% |

| Support and career development | Measure 9 <br> CROS Q23 areas of professional development training | CROS 2011 small increase in the proportion that have undertaken useful training in a range of professional development areas, e.g.: <br>• ethics and research governance <br>• personal effectiveness <br>• career management <br>• knowledge transfer and outreach activities <br>• leadership and management | 13% | 16% |

| C.3 Researchers need support to develop communication and other professional skills | Measure 10 | CROS Q23 areas of professional development training | - | 16% |

| C.6 Employers should provide planned induction programmes for researchers | CROS Q9 extent of inductions undertaken by research staff when starting their current role <br>PIRLS Q9 confidence in ability on induction | Substantial increase in provision and take-up of inductions: <br>• local induction <br>• departmental induction <br>• institution-wide induction | - | 72% |

Key measures are highlighted in bold
### Support and career development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.8 Provide career development strategy including availability of mentors</td>
<td>✓ increase in proportion that had undertaken career management training</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIRLS Q8 confidence in providing career development advice</td>
<td>Principal investigators confident in providing career development advice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility of researcher development within HEI strategies survey</td>
<td>HEIs publically stating that they promote career development and training for all staff (including research staff)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.9 Managers to encourage research staff to undertake professional development</td>
<td>✓✓✓ Substantial increase in proportion of research staff reporting that they have been encouraged to engage in personal and career development</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research staff to undertake developmental activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.10 CROS Q23 proportion who have undertaken career management training</td>
<td>Little evidence for greater proportions undertaking range of developmental activities, e.g.:</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.11 CROS Q23 areas of training/development</td>
<td>collaborate with industry</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.12 Provide teaching and demonstrating opportunities</td>
<td>placement in another sector</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.13 Input to staff meetings and management committees</td>
<td>coaching, mentoring or action learning</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.14 CROS Q18 proportion of research staff encouraged to engage in personal and career development</td>
<td>Three or more days in the last year spent:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• overall on professional development</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• on training activities in institution</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• on training activities outside institution</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• in coaching/mentoring activities [Not directly comparable with 2009 results]</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Researchers’ responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existence of active research staff associations</td>
<td>Number of known research staff associations</td>
<td>(2010)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of HEIs with research staff associations</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of researcher development related policies</td>
<td>Heard of Concordat</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heard of Vitae</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of professional sources of advice for career and personal development</td>
<td>Would or have consulted principal investigator about:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• immediate training and development needs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• longer term career planning</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would or have consulted careers adviser about longer term career planning</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal investigators:</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• confident in giving career development advice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• satisfied with support for them in this area</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.2 Researchers develop ability to transfer and exploit knowledge</td>
<td>Undertake knowledge transfer activities in current role</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would like to do knowledge transfer</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would like to undertake knowledge transfer training and development</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge exchange important or quite important for future career leaders</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.3 Researchers should recognise their responsibility for good research conduct</td>
<td>Undertaken training in ethics and research governance</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would like to undertake ethics and research governance training and development</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good research conduct important or quite important for future career leaders</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key measures are highlighted in bold.
### Researchers’ responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.5 Researchers should recognise responsibility for career management</td>
<td>Have a clear career development plan</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflect on development needs</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.6 Researchers are encouraged to record their own PDP and CPD</td>
<td>Maintain record of professional development</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Equality and diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.7 Employers should aim for a representative balance of gender, disability, ethnicity and age at all levels of staff</td>
<td>Female research staff</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK nationals</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BME UK national research staff</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total declaration of any form of disability</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research staff between 30-40 years old</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research staff over 40 years old</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female principal investigators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK nationals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BME UK national principal investigators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total declaration of any form of disability</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal investigators between 30-40 years old</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal investigators over 40 years old</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Equality for research staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.10 Employers should consider participation in schemes such as Athena SWAN Charter</td>
<td>Agree HEI committed to equality and diversity</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree HEI committed to equality and diversity</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t know whether HEI committed to equality and diversity</td>
<td>Not asked</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree that HEI treats all staff fairly irrespective of, e.g.:</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gender</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• age</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree HEI committed to equality and diversity</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t know whether HEI committed to equality and diversity</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree that HEI treats all staff fairly irrespective of, e.g.:</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gender</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• age</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• ethnicity</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Institutional signatories to the Athena SWAN Charter principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence for extent of progress</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions holding Athena SWAN Awards</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total institutions and departments holding Athena SWAN Awards</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5 UK institutions with the HR Excellence in Research Award as at January 2012

Aberystwyth University  
Aston University  
Bath Spa University  
Brunel University  
Cardiff University  
De Montfort University  
Durham University  
Edinburgh Napier University  
Edinburgh University  
Heriot-Watt University  
Institute of Cancer Research  
Institute of Education, London  
King’s College London  
Lancaster University  
London School of Economics  
Loughborough University  
Newcastle University  
Plymouth University  
Queen Margaret University Edinburgh  
Queen Mary, University of London  
Queen’s University Belfast  
Royal Veterinary College, University of London  
Salford University  
Swansea University  
University of Aberdeen  
University of Bath  
University of Birmingham  
University of Brighton  
University of Bristol  
University of Cambridge  
University of Central Lancashire  
University of Dundee  
University of Exeter  
University of Glasgow  
University of Hertfordshire  
University of Huddersfield  
University of Hull  
University of Leeds  
University of Leicester  
University of Liverpool  
University of Manchester  
University of Nottingham  
University of Oxford  
University of Reading  
University of Southampton  
University of Stirling  
University of Strathclyde  
University of Surrey  
University of the West of England, Bristol  
University of York

The UK-wide process enables UK HEIs to gain the European Commission’s HR Excellence in Research Award, which acknowledges their alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment. The UK process incorporates both the QAA Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers to enable institutions that have published Concordat implementation plans to gain the HR Excellence in Research Award. The UK approach includes on-going national evaluation and benchmarking.

www.vitae.ac.uk/hrexcellenceaward

44 38 institutions held the award at the time of review
Appendix 6 CROS recommendations

Principle 1: Recruitment and selection

- Institutions should ensure that all recruitment policies are open and transparent, for example all vacancies should be promoted and advertised externally.
- Ensure that departments and principal investigators are aware of and follow institutional recruitment policies and procedures, including providing job descriptions to all post-holders.
- Wherever possible, all short-listed applicants should be interviewed by their prospective principal investigator/line manager, people from outside the immediate department should sit upon interview panels and opportunities for informal discussion with other researchers should be made available.
- All institutions should ensure that new appointees are offered induction to their role and department/institution, and provided with copies of relevant documentation, such as the HEI’s research strategy, code of practice, probationary requirements and information about career development opportunities. [2011] Institutions should explore whether they are tending to use shorter term contracts and, if so, whether they are being used judiciously, e.g. to provide bridging funding.

Principle 2: Recognition and value

- All eligible researchers should undertake regular reviews and appraisal; most research staff report these to be useful. [2011] A proportion of apparently eligible researchers (20%) remains that are not being invited to appraisal, which warrants further (local) exploration.
- Appraisal processes should also address work practices and problem-solving.
- Institutions should consider how they can recognise more fully the contribution of researchers, beyond their research activities.
- Institutions should identify any sub-populations of researchers who do not feel integrated into their departmental or institutional communities and help them to explore career development strategies. [2011] Institutions should guard against any reversal in the progress made in the integration of research staff, which might result from any trend to shorter contracts.

Principles 3 and 4: Support and career development

- Research staff should be encouraged to engage more actively in career development planning, using the experience of their managers, staff developers and careers advisors. [2011] Institutions should consider how they can encourage research staff to engage more with staff developers and careers advisors.
- Institutions should increase and promote the provision of information and advice about careers, career progression and application processes within and outside academia.
- Careers services should explore ways to improve their engagement with researchers.
- Institutions should recognise and build upon the desire for training/support for career management and personal development planning, through increased availability of and/or promotion of existing support in this area.
- HEIs should further promote the value of transferable skills (such as team-working) for future employability in order to increase the level of take-up of development activities. [2011] Institutions should consider using the Vitae Researcher Development Statement and Framework to promote the importance of professional development across the range of researcher capabilities.
- Institutions should explore how to provide more placement and secondment opportunities to broaden experiences of researchers and widen their career aspirations. [2011] Institutions should actively consider how to support opportunities for placements within businesses and other organisations in line with recent initiatives for postgraduate researchers.

45 ‘Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2011: Analysis of UK aggregate results’, Vitae, 2011 www.vitae.ac.uk/cros
Principle 5: Researchers’ responsibilities

- Managers and staff developers should stress that researchers need pro-actively to take responsibility for their own development and career planning, including being informed about their employment and progression and how to participate in a range of wider activities.
- Researchers need to be proactive in seeking out sources of information and advice in relation to career progression and employment, many of which exist already within institutions. There may be scope for career specialists and staff developers to promote the opportunities they offer more widely.
- Institutions should find mechanisms to assist researchers in recording and articulating their personal contributions to facilitate full recognition of researchers’ contributions, particularly outside their direct research activities. [2011] Researchers should be encouraged to consider utilising the Vitae Researcher Development Framework Professional Development Planner as a mechanism to record their professional development.

Principle 6: Diversity and equality

- Review institutional policies for unjustified inequalities between research staff and lecturers, particularly in promotion and progression and in participation in departmental and institutional decision-making processes.
- Ensure the institution’s commitment to valuing researchers is communicated effectively to researchers and their managers and implemented in practice.
- HEIs should review the free text responses provided by respondents in order to explore in more detail issues around discrimination.
- [2011] Institutions are encouraged to make use of CROS results as evidence they might provide when demonstrating due regard in relation to their duties under the 2010 Equality Act.

Principle 7: Implementation and review

- Institutions are encouraged to compare their own response data with the aggregate responses presented here, taking into account local conditions and cohorts.
- Institutions are encouraged to provide feedback to their research staff, both respondents and non-respondents, about their CROS results and subsequent actions. [2011] Institutions are encouraged to do more to make their CROS results and progress more visible to current and potential researchers and to research leaders.
- HEIs should engage in benchmarking groups and other activities to share knowledge and practice, enabling comparison between institutional populations.
- Institutions should be encouraged to take part in future CROS surveys and those that have run surveys both feedback their experiences to the Steering Group and also promote the benefits to colleagues in non-participating institutions. [2011] Institutions should recognise that participation in CROS provides useful evidence towards gaining the European HR Excellence in Research Award and in preparing their submissions for the research environment element of the Research Excellence Framework.
- The aggregate responses should be used to inform national activities to support the implementation of the Concordat’s principles.
- The CROS Steering Group should commission further analysis of sub-populations of the aggregate results, e.g. by broad subject areas, employment status.
- Institutions should identify areas of good practice and share these with the rest of the sector through the CROS and Vitae networks.
Appendix 7 PIRLS 2011 recommendations

For principal investigators and research leaders

- Research leaders are encouraged to become more informed about and to participate in professional development activities in areas where they feel less confident, for their own benefit and also to enable them to support better the leadership development of research staff.
- Principal investigators and research leaders should ensure that their research staff have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in an effective appraisal.

For institutions

- Institutions should explore ways to effectively communicate policies and procedures relating to human resource management and the employment of staff, and highlight their relevance to principal investigators and research leaders.
- Institutions and research funders should consider how to remove obstacles and provide more positive drivers, including workload allocation models, to enable research leaders, and research staff, to engage more effectively in outward-facing activities.
- Institutions should explore ways to provide and encourage research leaders to engage in effective development activities to increase their confidence in:
  - developing proposals and securing research funding
  - financial and budgetary management
  - performance management and effective appraisals
  - demonstrating impact, knowledge exchange and public engagement
- Institutions should review policies and processes, including working conditions, to guard against inequalities between different sub-populations of research leaders, particularly in relation to progression, reward and participation in institutional and departmental decision-making.
- Institutions should seek to identify any sub-populations of research leaders who are less satisfied with the balance of their life and work, and work with them to develop strategies to improve this.
- Institutions are encouraged to review their institutional free text responses to PIRLS relating to equality and diversity, and explore in more detail issues around perceived discrimination or unfair treatment, especially in relation to gender.
- Participating institutions are encouraged to compare their own PIRLS data with the UK aggregate and benchmarking results, taking into account local factors, and to provide feedback to their research leaders and others.
- Participating institutions are encouraged to consider their data alongside their CROS results, and together with their Concordat implementation plans.
- All institutions are encouraged to participate in PIRLS in the future as an effective tool to explore research leaders’ views and experiences and to support the development of research leaders in relation to the principles of the Concordat.

For UK organisations

- The Concordat Strategy Group is encouraged to consider continuation of support for the development, implementation and analysis of PIRLS, alongside CROS, as the UK benchmark of research leaders’ views and experiences in relation to implementation of the principles of the Concordat.
- The CROS/PIRLS Steering Group should explore how PIRLS can be enhanced further by seeking feedback from institutions and reflecting on the experience of conducting PIRLS 2011.
- The CROS/PIRLS Steering Group should explore whether PIRLS could be used for further investigation to understand better research leaders’ perceptions of continuing professional development and their needs in relation to participation in personal and career development.

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Appendix 8 Every Researcher Counts

2011 recommendations

1. Extend reach to engage more principal investigators and senior researchers

The project found that principal investigators would prefer to be part of a community of peers embracing good practice in equality and diversity. Primarily, the principal investigators involved with the Every Researcher Counts project were already aware of, or committed to, equality and diversity in their practice. A major initiative is needed to extend the reach of the resources to a greater number of principal investigators, heads of departments and research group leaders:

- Use the champions network to increase the number of local principal investigator peer role models, local interpretations of the implications of equality and diversity, and share resources to build a demonstrable ‘critical mass’ of excellence
- Highlight the importance of the contribution that good equality and diversity practice can make at local level to the research environment, research outcomes and developing research leaders of the future
- Develop successful strategies for disseminating relevant ECU information, REF research environment guidance, CROS and PIRLS outcomes to principal investigators and heads of departments
- Capture case studies from accomplished senior research leaders that highlight the responsibilities of principal investigators and associated research benefits
- Use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to highlight equality and diversity knowledge, behaviour and attributes as an important and aspirational aspect of professional development for principal investigators
- Highlight equality and diversity in the leadership lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework as a key area for leadership development for current and future research leaders
- Enhance the visibility of equality and diversity through an excellence award scheme, such as the UK Funding Bodies’ sponsorship of a principal investigator of the year award through nominations from research staff
- Continue to update and keep current the Every Researcher Counts web section and links to and from principal investigator relevant websites to provide principal investigators with easy access to relevant information, case studies of good practice, and local experts and role models through the champions network

2. Maintain exposure at a senior level of the importance of equality and diversity for research staff

To achieve cultural change within an institution, it is essential to have continued senior institutional management endorsement and visible support and enthusiasm for equality and diversity for research staff:

- Profile the connectivity and relevance of equality and diversity to key research drivers, such as the REF research environment, RCUK terms and conditions, the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the European HR Excellence in Research Award, particularly the relationship with the two-year internal and four-year external review processes
- Target relevant communications to senior managers to encourage greater visibility and institutional commitment to equality and diversity for research staff, including examples of institutional case studies and evidence of equality and diversity excellence and impact
- Widen engagement by working with relevant UK organisations, such as Universities UK, UHR, RCUK and UK Funding Bodies’ senior committees, and university mission groups to highlight the benefits of equality and diversity to their members, particularly pro-vice-chancellors and human resources professionals, through briefings, presentations and conferences
- Work with institutional senior managers and human resources directors to incorporate equality and diversity more explicitly into job descriptions, workload models and performance reviews for heads of departments, principal investigators and research leaders

The Every Researcher Counts project to improve equality and diversity for research staff within the higher education sector was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) with support from the other higher education funding bodies and delivered by Vitae. HEFCE and the other funding bodies see the project as an important part of their implementation strategy for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts
3. Strengthen and extend the champions network

The project has been successful in creating a UK network of approximately 90 self-elected champions encompassing a range of professionals, academics and researchers with a commitment to equality and diversity for research staff, which is ready, willing and able to be utilised to greater effect. There is opportunity to capitalise on the enthusiasm of this emerging network of champions to ensure that it becomes fully established and sustainable both across and within institutions:

- Consolidate the champions network as a dynamic self-supporting sustained community of practice with common goals and capable of delivering its potential benefits
- Broaden the membership of the champions network to include more principal investigators and, specifically, successful senior researchers
- Provide guidance to champions on how to raise the profile within institutions, for example identifying and working with the institutional REF champion, presenting to relevant committees, understanding how principal investigators and researchers access equality and diversity information
- Support the champions to create internal networks within institutions and in academic departments thereby extending reach
- Provide targeted communications to the champions network, including access through the website to current information and resources, new case studies and examples of ‘model’ responses to equality and diversity challenges

4. Extend the reach to and develop parallel resources for research staff

The Concordat highlights the responsibilities of researchers themselves for their career development. However, research staff appear to be relatively poorly informed of their rights, roles and responsibilities in terms of equality and diversity. There is much to gain by extending the reach of the Every Researcher Counts project specifically to include research staff as a primary audience. Additionally, research staff are keen to recognise and support good practice amongst principal investigators and can be empowered to lobby for and support cultural change within departments and institutions:

- Develop a corresponding set of Every Researcher Counts resources, case studies and briefings targeted at research staff
- Provide relevant information, for example from ECU, CROS, PIRLS and ‘What do researchers do?’ publications to help research staff, research staff committees and the UKRSA to promote the importance of equality and diversity and its linkages with the research environment and research excellence to principal investigators and senior management
- UKRSA to encourage their member organisations, and members, to identify principal investigators who are equality and diversity role models, encourage principal investigators to become champions and identify institutional and departmental case studies
- Vitae and UKRSA to encourage research staff, and especially those aspiring to be principal investigators, to join the champions network or engage in internal networks
- Use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and corresponding leadership lens, to highlight to research staff that equality and diversity knowledge, behaviours and attributes are important professional development activities for aspiring principal investigators and research leaders
Vitae

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK), managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities.

Vitae works with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed professional and career development in the research environment. Vitae plays a major role in innovating, sharing practice and enhancing the capability of the higher education sector to provide professional development and training for researchers.

Our vision is for the UK to be world-class in supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers.

Our aims:

- build human capital by influencing the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development
- enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers
- empower researchers to make an impact in their careers
- evidence the impact of professional and career development support for researchers.

For further information about the range of Vitae activities go to www.vitae.ac.uk or contact website@vitae.ac.uk

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