

## SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

### POLICY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2008 CONCORDAT TO SUPPORT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCHERS

#### Introduction

Swansea University recognises the crucial contribution that its research staff make to our research performance and the need to build on our existing internationally excellent and world-leading research. The success of our research staff underpins our ambition which will drive forward research quality, create a suitable environment for research to flourish, whilst ensuring that the impact of our research is maximised. To this end, we are committed to providing a genuinely supportive environment and culture, where researchers can thrive both professionally and personally. Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are especially important to sustain high quality research and the University is committed to valuing and promoting career development for this diverse group of staff.

This policy sets out how the University undertakes to fulfil this commitment through the implementation of the 2008 Concordat<sup>i</sup>. This policy applies to all staff on research grades.

#### Background

The revised 2008 Concordat provides a good practice guide for the management of research staff. It sets out clear expectations for managers and employers of research staff and Swansea University intends to deliver in full upon these expectations.

The Concordat comprises seven key principles:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research
2. Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research
3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career

5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning
6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers
7. The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK

An Action Plan for the implementation of the Concordat has been developed and approved by the Human Resources Policy Committee and the University Research Committee. This Action Plan was drawn up following a detailed review of existing internal policies and practices identifying where Swansea University met the requirements of the Concordat and specifying particular actions where gaps were identified. In addition, consultation was conducted with a focus group of research staff across the institution. Their views on whether the action plan satisfied the aims of the Concordat were incorporated into a final revision. The Action Plan can be found in Appendix I, which addresses each of the Concordat's seven principles and identifies priorities that will support career development. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually and progress against it will be reported to the Human Resources Policy Committee and the University Research Committee who may recommend further developments or actions to be included as they see fit. Wider engagement with the research community will also inform the annual review process. Implementation of the Concordat will be reviewed by a nationally established steering group three years after its launch. All HEI's will be required to provide evidence of their progress towards implementation. This policy and its supporting Action Plan will provide the evidence needed to respond as and when required.

### Responsibilities

The University Research Committee is responsible for promoting high quality research and for developing and monitoring the University's research strategy. More significantly its terms of reference include "working towards the implementation of the Concordat to support the career development of research staff and for increasing their contribution, capability and visibility in the institution". It therefore falls to the Research Committee to have overall responsibility for adherence to the Concordat at Swansea University. Implementation of the Concordat will be subject to review from time to time, it is anticipated that any reporting requirements will be collated and approved through the Research Committee.

The responsibilities of various other groups of staff and departments are set out below:

### Heads of College will

- Provide an environment within their Colleges in which research staff are supported and valued.
- Develop and maintain a College induction programme and process to ensure that all new staff are properly introduced to their College and University.
- Ensure that there are appropriate channels for research staff to raise any concerns or issues through their College Research Committee.
- Support the continuity of employment of researchers within their Colleges by, for example, supporting short gaps of employment between grants and adhering to the redeployment policy.

### Research Staff Managers

- Will undertake relevant workshops and inform themselves appropriately to ensure that they are equipped to support their research staff, including career development guidance.
- Will properly manage their research staff in accordance with the relevant University policies including Induction, Probation, Code for Fixed Term Staff and Professional Review.
- Review their researcher's personal development and progress separately from their performance against the project's goals and objectives.
- A Research Supervisor's action plan has been developed to support implementation of the Concordat locally. Research managers are expected to put these actions into practice.

### Research Staff

- Should engage in opportunities to enhance their career development and transferable skills and take responsibility for managing their careers.
- Take the opportunity to discuss their careers and seek support from their manager's mentors, staff development and the careers service.
- Record their continuing professional development activities and regularly review and update their personal development plans.

### Human Resources Department

- Will uphold best practice in the areas identified in the Action Plan as already meeting the expectations of the Concordat.
- Implement any outstanding actions needed to ensure that we comply with the Concordat's principles.
- Support Research staff and ensure that they are treated no less favourably than any other group of staff irrespective of the duration of their contract.
- Continually monitor and refresh the Concordat policy and action plan

### Academic and Professional Enhancement Centre Swansea (APECS)

- Will provide appropriate development opportunities to support the personal and career development of research staff and to enable them to develop their transferable skills.
- Provide appropriate training for Research Staff Managers including equality and diversity, performance management.
- Network and share best practice with other HEI's on the provision of training opportunities and general support for Research Staff.

### Human Resources Policy Committee

This body will monitor progress against the Concordat Action Plan and support the Human Resources Department and APECS in the delivery of this Policy.

## Concordat Action Plan to Support the Career Development of Researchers 2011-12

	Areas for Implementation	Action Taken / Action Needed	Action By	Status	Review Date
<b>Recruitment &amp; Selection</b>	1.1 Recruitment & progression panels should better reflect diversity.	At the time of interviewing PIs <sup>ii</sup> are asked by the recruitment team to identify their interview panel members. The recruitment team advises PIs that panels must reflect diversity and discusses alternative/additional panel members where necessary.	Recruitment Team / Director of HR <sup>iii</sup>	Implemented	June 2013
	1.2 Recruitment & progression panels should have received relevant recent training.	When panels are being confirmed the PI is advised that any untrained panel member will be expected to complete the online Marshall Training prior to acting on the panel. The link to this training is then forwarded to the PI.  Additionally HR are informed of all academics applying for grant funding which includes a salaries allocation. This enables early intervention and appropriate targeting for Recruitment and Selection training.	Recruitment Team	Implemented  Implemented	June 2013
	1.3 Person Specifications must clearly identify the skills required for the post and be relevant to the role.	Since the implementation of HERA <sup>iv</sup> and the generic role descriptions, person specifications for research clearly identify the requirements for the post. HR Development Officer periodically checks person specifications and discusses them with the Recruitment team.	Recruitment Team / Director of HR	Implemented	June 2013
	1.4 Posts should only be advertised as fixed term where there is a recorded and justifiable reason.	A new policy for staff on fixed-term contracts and fixed-term funding streams has been implemented. This allows staff with four or more years' service and more than 6 months future funding to be converted to indefinite contracts.	Post Approvals Group / HR Officers	Implemented	June 2013

<b>Recognition &amp; Value</b>	<p>2.1 Like other staff members, researchers should have regular, formal progress and review meetings. Two distinct meetings are recommended to prevent development and career plans becoming neglected. The two meetings recommended are : Project Review Meetings and Development Review Meetings</p>	<p>Project Review Meetings happen as a matter of course. The need for Development Review meetings will be met through improved application of the Professional Review.</p> <p>All research staff and managers receive an automated e-mail to remind them to schedule an interim Professional Review half way through the review year.</p>	<p>Deputy Director of HR (Performance)</p> <p>Deputy Director of HR (Performance)</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>Jan 2013</p> <p>Mar 2013</p>
	<p>2.2 Employers should ensure that research managers are made aware of, and understand their responsibilities for the management of researchers and should provide training opportunities, including equality and diversity training, to support research managers in doing this.</p> <p>Institutions will wish to consider how research managers' performance in these areas is developed, assessed and rewarded.</p>	<p>Basic training in HR matters for line managers has been developed and is run twice a year. The Research Development Officer nominates PI's to attend this training. Following the success of this programme, 1 session per year is now aimed at academic and research managers. This requirement needs to be cascaded via Heads of College and incorporated into the Professional Reviews of Managers of Research Staff</p>	<p>APECS / Deputy Director of HR (Performance)</p> <p>Heads of College</p>	<p>Implemented</p> <p>Planned</p>	<p>Oct 2013</p> <p>Sept 2013</p>
	<p>2.3 Research managers should be required to participate in active performance management, including career guidance.</p>	<p>All managers are required to conduct Professional Reviews with their staff and are required to attend training in how to conduct such reviews. It is expected that career direction is discussed during the course of review. A link to the RDF is included on the University's Professional Review forms and PIs have been briefed on discussing the RDF with research staff during the review.</p>	<p>Development Unit / Deputy Director of HR (Performance)</p>	<p>Implemented</p>	<p>Oct 2013</p>

Recognition & Value	2.4 Development of researchers should not be undermined by instability of employment contracts.	<p>The University has recently implemented a new procedure for staff on fixed-term funding. As a result of this we anticipate offering permanent contracts to many more of our research staff.</p> <p>A review of the use of fixed-term contracts will be carried out across the University one year on from the implementation of the revised model statutes.</p>	<p>Post Approvals Group</p> <p>Development Officer for Research Staff</p>	<p>On-going (See 2015 action plan)</p> <p>Planned (See 2015 action plan)</p>	<p>Mar 2013</p> <p>Mar 2013</p>
	2.5 Organisational systems must be capable of supporting continuity of employment for researchers, such as funding between grants, other schemes for supporting time between grant funding, or systems for redeploying researchers within organisations where resources allow.	A redeployment policy has been running for four years and has led to a number of successful redeployments of Research staff. There is also a facility for Colleges to apply for bridging funds for the employment of staff between contracts for up to three months.	Senior Management Team/Director of HR	Implemented	June 2013
	2.6 It is helpful if clear career frameworks for early stage researchers are outlined in organisational HR strategies.	Role profiles for each of the grades of Researcher are available on the HR webpages <sup>v</sup> , from which staff can ascertain the expectations for the grades above their current grade. The promotion policy is available on the web, and a number of staff have applied for a promotion with the support of their PI. The Development Officer is available to give advice on applications for promotion.	Recruitment Team / Development Officer for Research Staff	Completed	
Support	3.1 It is recognised that researchers need to develop transferable skills, delivered through embedded training, in order to stay competitive in both internal and external job markets.	APECS offer a comprehensive research training programme, some of which is targeted specifically at supporting research staff in the development of generic and transferable skills, such as communication skills, networking and collaboration skills and basic finance skills. This training programme is complemented by a series of targeted workshops run by other research training providers within the University, such as the Department for Research and Innovation.	Staff Development Officer	Implemented	May 2013
	3.2 Employers should provide a planned induction	The Induction process has been revised so that all new	HR Policy	Implemented	June

	programme for researchers, on appointment to a research post, to ensure early effectiveness through the understanding of the organisation and its policies and procedures.	staff are personally e-mailed with an induction checklist shortly after taking up post. The checklist requires that managers cover understanding of the role, the organisation, and relevant policies and procedures. In addition all Heads of College have been required to develop a College specific Induction package so that the necessary information is easily accessible to managers and researchers. APECS monitor returns of checklists.	Committee / Heads of College		2013
Support	3.3 All employers will wish to review how their staff can access professional, independent advice on career management in general, particularly the prospect of employment beyond their immediate discipline base, or offering training and placements to broaden awareness of other fields and sectors.	The Development Officer for Research Staff offers 1:1 sessions with staff which include consideration of future career options.  The redeployment list offers staff nearing the end of their contracts the opportunity to consider posts elsewhere in the University and in some circumstances trial periods have been arranged to give individuals the chance to take up a post outside their immediate area of expertise.	Development Officer for Research Staff  Human Resources Department	Implemented  Implemented	
	3.4 Employers should consider articulating the skills that should be developed at each stage of their staff development frameworks and should encourage researchers to acquire and practise those skills. For example, researchers may be given the opportunity to manage part of the budget for a project, or to act as a mentor or advisor to other researchers and students.	A link to the RDF is included on the Professional Review form and PI's and research staff have been briefed on the use of the RDF.	Deputy Director of HR (Performance)	Implemented	June 2013
		The SURF <sup>vi</sup> Coaching scheme has been running for three years and provides staff with the option to coach others once appropriate training has taken place.	SURF	Implemented	Nov 2013
The EPSRC funded Bridging the Gaps programme allows researchers to gain experience of bidding for small amounts of money as well as funding multi-disciplinary research.  Mentors for new research staff are identified at interview stage. Established researchers are often		Programme Manager for Bridging the Gaps  Development Officer for Research Staff / HR Officers	Implemented  Implemented	Mar 2013  Jun 2013	

		encouraged to take on this role.			
<b>Support</b>	3.5 Research managers should actively encourage researchers to undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, so far as is possible within the project. It should be stressed that developmental activity can often have a direct impact on the success of the project.	The importance of encouraging CPD among research staff is included in PI training provision. The need for CPD is also stressed at the New Researchers Lunches & articulated on the University website and is proactively followed by the Development Officer for Research staff.	APECS Development Officer for Research staff	Completed Completed	
	3.6 Employers also should provide a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, which should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers.	Roberts' Forward Strategy developed and agreed. Funding for researcher development is now part of the University's core budget.	Director of HR	Completed	
<b>Career Development</b>	4.1 Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation or management committees.	All Heads of College are required to ensure Researcher representation on College Research Committees.	Research Committee	Implemented	June 2013
	4.2 Employers will wish to ensure that developmental activities open to researchers include preparation for academic practice. Employers will ensure that where researchers are provided with teaching and demonstrating opportunities as part of their career development, suitable training and support is provided.	Refine generic job descriptions to include and clarify this.  The University provides the Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education course (tHE), onto which Research staff are encouraged to enrol.	Recruitment Team  APECS	Planned  Completed	Feb 2013
	4.3 Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.	University policy implemented from point of recruitment for probationers, training offered for mentors. Research mentoring scheme in operation in a number of College. In addition University participation in WUMS <sup>vii</sup> .	HR Department / APECS	Completed	

<b>Researchers' Responsibilities</b>	5.1 Researchers should recognise that responsibility for managing and pursuing their career is theirs. They should identify training needs and seek out opportunities for learning and development.	Researchers should take a pro-active view of their responsibilities by attending workshops provided by APECS. A list of these courses is sent to researchers annually and attendance encouraged. Reminders are sent on a regular basis. Researchers are also invited to contact APECS <sup>viii</sup> for further advice if they have a development need that they feel is not currently being catered for.	Research staff / Development Officer for Research staff	Implemented	
	5.2 Researchers should ensure that their career development requirements are regularly discussed with their manager throughout the year.	Researchers should properly prepare for and make the most of their professional review. In addition Researchers should initiate discussions regarding career development with their managers at appropriate opportunities.	Research Staff	On-going	Jun 2013
	5.3 Researchers are encouraged to record their Personal Development Planning (PDP) and CPD activities, a log of which may be presented to current and future employers as appropriate.	Generic job descriptions for all research staff include the following duty: Demonstrate and evidence own professional development.  The Development Officer for research staff encourages the use of the RDF and its online development tool.	Recruitment Team  Development Officer for Research staff	Completed  On-going	April 2011
<b>Diversity &amp; Equality</b>	6.1 Employers should ensure that the working conditions for researchers provide the flexibility necessary for successful research performance in line with legal requirements. Working conditions should allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career.	Appropriate diversity, work life balance, family friendly policies in place at the University level.	Equal Opportunities Committee	Completed	
	6.2 It is important for employers to respond flexibly to requests for changed work patterns and to resist instant refusals on the assumption that, because research has always been carried out in a particular way, it cannot be done differently.	Awareness raised by inclusion in HR management training provision	Deputy Director of HR (Performance)	Completed	Mar 2013

	6.3 Employers should consider participation in schemes such as the Athena SWAN Charter <sup>ix</sup> , the Juno Project and other initiatives aimed at promoting diversity in research careers.	Participation in Athena SWAN Charter and WUMS.	Equal Opportunities Committee	Renewal submission for Athena SWAN made Nov 2013	
Implementation & Review	7.1 The signatories agree to draw up an implementation plan for the Concordat, to ensure a coherent and sustained approach by organisations operating in the sector and the appropriate use of survey and monitoring tools such as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS).	This implementation Action plan has been approved by HR Policy Committee and Research Committee and progress against it was reported in June 2010.  Swansea was included in the 2009 and 2011 round of CROS and 2011 PIRLS, results were reported to HR Policy Committee and Research Committee. Swansea will participate again in 2013.	HR Policy Committee / Research Committee  Director of HR/ Development Officer for Research Staff	Completed  Completed	Jun 2013  May 2013
	7.2 Engage in sharing best practice between Institutions.	The HR Development Officer for Research Staff is an active member of the local branch of Vitae and has contributed a number of innovations to the database of practice and will continue to share best practice through these already established channels.	Career Development Officer / Development Officer for Research Staff	On going	

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/505181/Concordat-to-Support-the-Career-Development-of-Researchers.html>

<sup>ii</sup> PI – Principle Investigator

<sup>iii</sup> HR – Human Resources

<sup>iv</sup> HERA – Higher Education Role Analysis

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/personnel/Pay%20Modernisation/HERA-RoleProfiles/Academic/>

<sup>vi</sup> SURF – Swansea University Research Forum

<sup>vii</sup> WUMS – Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme <http://www.cf.ac.uk/humrs/training/wums/wums.html>

<sup>viii</sup> APECS – Academic and Professional Enhancement Centre Swansea

<sup>ix</sup> Athena SWAN Charter - <http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/html/athena-swan/>