

University of South Wales Concordat Implementation: HR Excellence in Research Award Two Year Action Plan 2019 - 2021

Our research successes have been due to the hard work and talent of our academic staff, postgraduate research students and dedicated support staff. We understand the importance of scholarship and applied research which impacts on our students, local, regional, national and international business, charities, communities and governments. We see research and innovation as an integral part of our mission to help our region of South Wales play an increasingly important role in the global economy. Our commitment to the creation of knowledge and its transfer will help us recruit, develop and retain the best staff in order to generate that seamless scholarly community which encompasses all of our students and all of our staff: we are all learners together.

Following our four-year review, the new action plan seeks to build upon the progress made over the last six years and as such, reflects an alignment of new and ongoing items from the previous Action Plan. In some cases, actions have been reworded to reflect the changing requirements of the institution and progress required moving forward.

Two key documents; the USW 2030 Vision and the Research Strategy 2018-2028, have been used to inform and develop our 2019-2020 plan. The USW 2030 Vision is to change lives and our world for the better. To become a leading UK university, maximising positive impact for students, partners and communities. Our core purpose is to be a knowledge creator, through research and innovation to make a difference now and in the future. The Research Strategy 2018-2028 prioritises people, by aiming to provide a high-performance culture to attract, retain and develop talented research active staff and students engaged with business, industry and commerce and working on societal challenges. At USW, staff on teaching and research contracts are predominantly at Lecturer and Senior Lecturer level. For the period 2017-2019, the majority of our academic staff are on permanent contracts at Senior Lecturer (SL) level, with a small number of staff who are either Academic Manager, Associate Professor or Professor. Overall numbers of USW staff on research-only contracts are low.

This action plan will be overseen by the University Research Committee, which will formally review progress at their meetings (held three times per year). Day to day implementation and progress monitoring will remain the responsibility of those assigned to specific actions, with support and advice from the HR Excellence in Research Steering Group.

1.	Recruitment and Selection	Responsibility and timelines		Deadline
1.1	Research website			
	<p>New Action The Digital Marketing Officer (Research and Engagement), will produce and implement high quality, engaging digital content for the University's research web presence, that aligns to the Research Strategy and University Strategy for 2030. The research pages will be fit for purpose for all research stakeholders from staff, students through to research funders, policy makers and REF panel members.</p> <p>As well as work with academic researchers to enable and encourage them to nurture, sustain and promote research</p>	Lead Director of RBE	<p>Success measure Securing funding to enable the permanent appointment of the Digital Marketing Officer (Research and Engagement), which in turn will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a dedicated resource to enable academic staff to promote their research more widely. • Use analytical tools to provide up-to-date statistics and insights on website performance, thus driving continual improvement and delivering on Key Performance Indicators. 	06/2020

	with impact that crosses disciplinary boundaries and addresses societal challenges.			
1.2	HR Policy for Recruitment of Academic Staff			
	<p>Continued Action Staff recruitment and selection processes will support the attraction and recruitment of excellent staff, able to develop and support our approach to learning and teaching and contribute to our focused research areas.</p> <p>All relevant HR policies and procedures to be reviewed and if necessary amended to ensure that where appropriate a research active member of staff is included on interview panels for all new academic appointments.</p> <p>Recruitment guidance will be reviewed to strengthen the profile of L&T and research in all parts of the selection process. This will include stronger references in recruitment literature and dedicated selection methods.</p>	<p>Lead Head of HR</p>	<p>Success measure Where appropriate, all panels for academic appointments will feature an active researcher to ensure the interview contains sufficient testing of research capability and/or potential.</p> <p>The role of research as a key academic requirement will be promoted at the same level as learning and teaching.</p> <p>To have produced revised recruitment guidance that strengthens the rules for the interview process of academic appointments, which will include the advice that at the very least research and scholarly specific questions are included at each academic staff interview panel.</p>	<p>07/2020</p>
1.3	Recruitment and Selection Training			
	<p>New action Currently the overall conversion rate for application to successful appointment for white applicants is 10%, compared with 5% for BAME applicants. To address this imbalance we intend to implement compulsory recruitment and selection training, incorporating unconscious bias, for all USW staff involved in recruitment.</p>	<p>Lead Head of HR</p>	<p>Success measure Will be complete parity in conversion rates from application to appointment for candidates of all ethnicities and genders.</p>	<p>08/2021</p>
2.	Recognition and Value	Responsibility and Timeline		Deadline
2.1	Career Pathways			
2.1.1	<p>New action Review the DPR process, to include the embedding of career progression within it and incorporate the four routes to becoming either an Associate Professor/ Professor.</p>	<p>Lead Head of HR</p>	<p>Success measure Research becomes an integral part of the annual academic planning cycle, with measurable targets set against identifiable metrics such as outputs, income and citations.</p>	<p>07/2021</p>

			We will measure the effectiveness of changes to the DPR process using the staff engagement survey, CROS and PIRLS as well as at engagement workshops with 85% respondents reporting positive DPR experience by 2022.	
2.1.2	<p>New Action</p> <p>Develop a framework to be used by the committee assessing Associate Professor/ Professor applications, that highlights the reductions of outputs from part time staff and staff who have been absent due to ill health /maternity /adoption/ shared parental leave/caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Raise the profile of the process and benefits of becoming an Associate Professor/Professor by implementing a targeted communications campaign, which will involve profiling female Associate Professors/Professors, including BAME Professors and STEM Associate Professors/Professors, including running specific workshops for women in STEM at Lecturer and Senior Lecturer levels.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <p>Director of RBE</p>	<p>Success measure</p> <p>Updated regulations approved and implemented.</p> <p>Increase in applications from female academics for Associate Professor/Professor to 40%.</p> <p>Increase in proportion of female professors – to 50% AHSSBL and 18% STEM.</p> <p>Increase proportion of BAME professors to 6%.</p>	12/2021
2.3	Research Student Representatives			
2.3.1	<p>Continued Action</p> <p>Postgraduate Research students are an integral part of our research teams, and as future academics we are interested in the views of our cohort of Postgraduate Research Students therefore representatives will continue to have a position at all research related committees at both faculty and University level, RBE will monitor the attendance of and contributions made to the research student community by these representatives; feedback will also be measured using PRES.</p> <p>To identify career pathway trends and report on the career progression of current PGR students will be recorded and reported on to inform the training provision offered by the Graduate School.</p>	<p>Lead</p> <p>Postgraduate Research Manager</p>	<p>Success measure</p> <p>To continue to engage with PRES and receive high levels of student satisfaction in PRES 2017 over 70% of students thought that the University values and responds to their feedback. By 2020 we aim to increase this percentage by another 10%.</p>	12/2021

2.4	Researcher Forums			
2.4.1	<p>Continued Action In response to feedback from Early Career Researchers (ECR) and working alongside the Head of Research for the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education (FLSE), we will develop and pilot an ECR Forum. The forum will include contract researchers and run alongside the informal researcher meetings that are already taking place across the University, following the successful trial we intend to roll out across the institution.</p>	<p>Lead Director of RBE/ Head of Research FLSE</p>	<p>Success measure Using the Research Excellence Framework definition of Early Career Researcher, we aim to establish the ECR forum during academic year 2019/20, from here we will benchmark membership.</p> <p>The attendance at the forum meetings will be monitored with an aim to achieve a noticeable increase year on year.</p> <p>One ECR forum every year will be dedicated to capturing the feedback from contract researchers and ECRs.</p>	03/2020
2.5	Impact			
2.5.1	<p>Continued Action Nurture and sustain research with impact that crosses disciplinary boundaries and addresses societal challenges.</p> <p>The new USW 2030 Strategy identifies four Advanced Development Areas (ADAs) which are cross-disciplinary.</p>	<p>Lead PVC-Innovation and PVC-Research</p>	<p>Success measure Leads to be appointed to each of the four ADAs with detailed plans to develop research and innovation for each ADA produced and implemented by December 2020.</p>	12/2020
2.6	External Engagement			
2.6.1	<p>New Action Identify and develop a plan to maximise engagement with 'Top 10' organisations for each faculty, plus 'Top 10' for the university in growth potential areas.</p> <p>Top 10 list developed and shared with Executive with plan to broaden depth of relationships for each strategic partner.</p>	<p>Lead PVC Innovation</p>	<p>Success measure Identified a number of potential areas for growth in terms of strategic partnerships and developed plans to broaden depth of relationships resulting in 10 new strategic partnerships.</p>	12/2021
3.	Support and Career Development	Responsibility and timelines		Deadline
3.1	Continuing Professional Development			
3.1.1	<p>Continued Action Develop and maintain a continuous, high-tempo, research-focused CPD programme with monthly events for</p>	<p>Lead Director of RBE</p>	<p>Success measure In 2018/19 there were 59 workshops for 400 attendees, it is our aim to increase this number incrementally over the</p>	12/2021

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	leaders, managers and academics spanning research and knowledge exchange that is supplemented by targeted support; DPR training for managers to include reviewing research activity and career pathways.		next 2 years to 500 distinct attendees by 2021. Survey feedback will be used to evaluate effectiveness.	
3.1.2	Continued Action Having developed a process for identifying new starters and recognising there is a need to strengthen induction arrangements. We are working with CELT to launch a mandatory course for early career researchers, research assistants and all new academic staff. This course will focus on the basics including research governance, research funding and University research systems and support as well as the previously mentioned mandatory unconscious bias training.	Lead Director of RBE	Success measure Staff will feel supported and satisfied with the support offered to them by USW, this will be demonstrated by 95% (currently at 75%) satisfaction rates from future CROS surveys.	12/2019
3.1.3	New Action Match all female HAA applicants with a colleague who has already achieved an Associate Professor/ Professorship title, to support the applicant through developing their case and submitting a high quality application.	Lead Director of RBE	We expect to see an increase in the proportion of female professors – to 50% AHSSBL and 18% STEM.	12/2021
3.2	Mentoring			
3.2.1	Continued Action Having been delayed by the development of the online matching system, we will launch the Research Mentoring Scheme, Spring 2020. Workshops for mentoring will be developed in conjunction with CELT to help mentees understand what they might gain out of the mentoring arrangement and for mentors to understand the role they will play in their mentees development.	Lead PVC Research	Success measure Introduction of online mentoring application system. Seamless collaboration with other USW mentoring schemes/opportunities. To successfully create at least 20 mentoring pairs in 2020.	06/2021
3.3	Induction			
3.3.1	Continued Action The Faculty of Creative Industries will pilot a new comprehensive induction process, for all academic staff; we will review the outcome of this pilot to determine	Lead Director of RBE	Success measure Adoption of the induction scheme across the institution.	07/2021

	whether it is appropriate to be rolled out across the institution. Faculty Research Leads to be involved in the induction programme, to provide individualised induction and support.		All new academic staff will have an experienced research-active mentor who is associated with a research centre or group. All academic staff will be able to request a mentor and internal peer-support for writing research outputs.	
3.3.2	New Starters Buddy System			
	New action Data from our new staff engagement survey revealed the desire for a 'buddy' being offered to all new starters to support their orientation. As a result we intend to develop and implement a 'buddy' system as part of induction for all new starters.	Lead Head of HR	Success measure New starters feel supported and satisfied with their induction to USW, as demonstrated by 95% satisfaction rates from all three stages of the '100 days' survey.	09/2021
3.4	External Engagement for PhD students			
	New Action Launch a new Research Engagement Fund, which will offer grants to postgraduate research students to enable them to develop networks and research engagement profiles.	Lead Postgraduate Research Manager	Success measure By 2021 50% of all PGR students have experience of public engagement and or engagement with external partners.	12/2021
3.5	Professional development of research support staff			
3.5.1	Continued Action Continue to encourage all Research Innovation Services staff to become members of ARMA or equivalent and to utilise the services on offer.	Lead Head of RiSE	Success measure 100% of Research and Innovation support staff are members of ARMA or equivalent.	12/2021
4.	Researchers' Responsibilities	Responsibility and timelines		Deadline
4.1	Research Governance			
4.1.1	New Action Develop a new online governance system, which will encompass everything from training, to contracts, IP, to data management, research funding applications and ethics.	Lead PVC-Research	Success measure Online governance system, including research funding applications and ethics is launched and adopted in time for the start of the next academic year. Six months after its launch we will monitor the uptake and use of the system and benchmark usage from there.	09/2020

4.1.2	<p>Continued Action The Research Librarian will facilitate and support a series of RDM training to both staff and students.</p> <p>The website will be enhanced to ensure that staff and students are able to access support and advice via this route.</p>	<p>Lead Research Excellence Manager</p>	<p>Success measure Whilst continuing to support researchers to comply with RDM requirements through the lifecycle of their research, the Research Librarian will focus on ensuring that all current projects awarded by funders are compliant with their RDM policy.</p>	12/2021
4.2 Open Access				
4.2.1	<p>Continued Action The Research Librarian will continue to provide support and develop training for researchers to enable them to confidently respond to the requirements of the Open Access agendas.</p>	<p>Lead: Research Excellence Manager</p>	<p>Success measure We ensure that outputs continue to comply with REF/Research England policies on open access post REF 2021.</p>	12/2021
5. Diversity and Equality		Responsibility and timelines		Deadline
5.1 Athena SWAN				
5.1.1	<p>Continued Action Awaiting the outcome of the Athena Swan submission made November 2019.</p> <p>Following an unsuccessful application in 2018, USW continued to implement the Athena Swan Action Plan.</p>	<p>Lead Director of RBE and Head of HR</p>	<p>Success measure To ensure that the profile of Athena SWAN and its commitment to principles remains visible at USW and that staff are aware of key areas of progress/success made through the Athena swan action plan. This awareness will be demonstrated by 95% of staff responding favourably in future CROS and PIRLS surveys.</p>	08/2021
5.1.2	<p>Continued Action Expand the FairPlay30 initiative that won the Advancing Staff Equality Award (University Guardian Awards 2019).</p> <p>An invitation for new champions will be launched early 2020.</p>	<p>Lead Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager</p>	<p>Success measure FairPlay30 team has been reinvigorated with 15 new champions recruited, to help us ensure that inclusivity is at the core of our work at USW.</p> <p>Their work will include implementation of Inclusive Language Guidance throughout USW and development and implementation of guidance for staff on including their pronouns in their email signature and encourage as university-wide practice.</p>	01/2021

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5.1.3	Continued Action Coordinate the Women's Development Programme. Feedback from the delegates will be monitored and tracked for 24 months after the programme is completed. The feedback will used to inform future programmes.	Lead Director of RBE	Success measure Programme launched annually with a cohort of 20 delegates. Over 90% of delegates report improvement in baseline confidence and resilience as well as career progression.	01/2020
5.1.4	Continued Action Stonewall Equality Index The USW Group were proud to join Stonewall Cymru's Diversity Champions Scheme in June 2016. Continue to promote a series of workplace and education resources on the Stonewall website and to engage in the Equality Index.	Lead Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Success measure To remain in the top 50 in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. 2019, USW were 43 rd 2018, USW were 104 th 2017 USW were 297 th The latest application has been submitted, the results are expected in 2020	06/2020
5.1.5	Continued Action LGBT+ Role Models to arrange workshops, events and training sessions that raise awareness and promotes inclusion across the university. USW launched an LGBT+ Role Models initiative in 2017, with 5 visible role models across different areas/ campuses. Since its launch, this initiative has grown to nine LGBT+ Role models, including a Trans Role Model.	Lead Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager	Success measure The success of this group will be monitored and membership will be targeted to grow at least 10% year-on-year.	09/2020
6.	Implementation and Review	Responsibility and timelines		Deadline
6.1	Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS), Principle Investigators Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) and Postgraduate Research Environment Survey (PRES)			
	Continued Action Continue to use surveys as a means of collating views of researchers, and to monitor participation in each survey to be comparable to previous internal and external surveys.	Lead Research Excellence Manager and Postgraduate Research Manager	Success measure Future CROS, PIRLS and PRES surveys will see an increase in the number of respondents by at least 10% each year.	06/2021

6.2	Researcher Engagement			
6.2.1	<p>Continued Action We will continue our work to ensure that senior management are engaged with this action plan, consequently the following charter marks appear on the agendas for the University and Faculty Research Committees;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Excellence in Research Award, • Athena Swan, • Disability Aware, • Time to Change and Stonewall. 	<p>Lead Director of RBE</p>	<p>Success measure 83% of CROS 2019 respondents claimed to not be aware of the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research. By improving the lines of communication between the centre and faculties we aim to show an increase in the number of respondents who understand the Concordat in future CROS surveys by 10% biennially.</p>	06/2021
6.3	HR Excellence in Research Steering Group			
	<p>Continued Action The HR Excellence in Research Steering Group will meet regularly to review this action plan. All relevant University committees will have sight of this action plan regularly and receive updates on progress.</p>	<p>Lead Director of RBE</p>	<p>Success measure Successful implementation /adoption of the action plan in a timely manner. USW retains HREIR award.</p>	12/2021