The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers: Implementation and action plan

Background

The University of South Wales was formed in April 2013 following the merger of the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales Newport. As one of the largest universities in the UK, the University of South Wales offers a broad base of subjects whilst maintaining a strong focus on the STEMM disciplines. The University is part of the University of South Wales group of institutions along with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD), Merthyr Tydfil College of Further Education and the Universities of the Heads of the Valleys Institute (UHOVI).

The University currently has over 33,000 students and of the total 2464 core staff, 40% (977) are academic. Of these 49% (488) are involved in STEMM subjects. Following the excellent results in RAE2008 the University of Glamorgan joined with the four other main research universities in Wales to form a strategic collaboration group known as the St David's Day Group. The University of South Wales will continue to be part of this group.

Since merging the new University wishes to re-affirm its commitment to research and the staff involved in research activity and it is to this end that we strongly support the Concordat and use the principles contained within it to inform our actions which affect the careers and career development of researchers.

Research active staff at the University of South Wales belong to a Research Institute. Research Institutes have been established in the areas where the university already has a significant research profile and where the university has made a strategic decision to support this area of research strength. Research Institutes are independent of Faculty structures and are a mechanism for enabling researchers to conduct their research with appropriate support so that the University benefits from the resultant outputs from that research. It is anticipated that Research Institutes will have a positive impact on research focus, research sustainability and reputation for research at the University of South Wales.

The five Research Institutes are:

- Computing and the Digital Economy
- Energy and the Environment
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Science and Health
- Creative Industries.

Each Research Institute has its own research strategy which falls beneath the umbrella of the University's overarching research strategy. Guidance and support for research active staff can also be found in the Research Toolkit. This is intended to be an online one stop shop for researchers, highlighting research related processes and also opportunities for development and career progression. The Research Toolkit also highlights relevant strategies and policies including the Human Resource Strategy; the Code of Good Practice in Research; University Research Institute Strategy and Procedures (under development); the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the Strategic Equality Plan.

Gap analysis

In preparation for and following the merger, the University underwent internal strategic restructuring and reviewed all of its major Strategy documents and research structures. During this

time we have undertaken a gap analysis exercise of the Concordat involving a working group comprising of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Student Experience), Head of the Research Office, Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, Graduate Research Office Manager, HR Manager and the outgoing and in-coming Chair of Research Programmes Sub Committee.

During the summer of 2013, we met with representatives from Institutions who already achieved the HR Excellence in Research award to assist our internal analysis and benchmark against the sector. Assisting our analysis is data received from CROS 2013, PIRLS 2013 and PRES 2011 and 2013. CROS, PIRLS and PRES are being administered again in 2015. Also assisting our data analysis were views that were discussed at a number of staff engagement groups which were designed to capture thoughts about the newly merged institution from a wide cross-section of University staff including academics.

The gap analysis showed that the majority of the principles of the concordat were being adhered to. The action plan below was developed over the summer of 2013 and was approved by Research Committee in September 2013. It was agreed that the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Student Experience) should have overall responsibility for the action plan, however, he will be supported by the Self Assessment Team.

The action plan highlights areas which could be improved or need to be initiated to ensure compliance with the Concordat. Following implementation of the action plan, quarterly review will ensure a consistent approach is taken to upholding the principles of the Concordat.

A RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

All posts are advertised electronically and in other relevant publications. Each post has a clear job description and a specific person specification which is used throughout the selection process. All those involved in recruitment and selection are required to undergo the university training programme which covers a range of issues such as equality of opportunity and legal framework. All managers also attend an equality and diversity at work session which covers issues of unconscious bias (also covered during a mandatory session for all new staff). These courses seek to ensure that those involved in recruitment are aware of their responsibilities and of the need to challenge their own (often unconscious) prejudices, providing an unbiased and equitable experience for those who apply for posts. Panellists will often provide feedback to unsuccessful candidates in the process to assist them with career planning.

In order to obtain approval to fill a vacancy a rigorous internal process is ensued. This process takes into consideration whether the provision of fixed term posts is justifiable in line with the Fixed-term employees (Prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2002.

The University of South Wales has a consistent policy in place to ensure that the constitution of selection panels is appropriate. Records from panel members are routinely kept. Records are stored securely and are subject to review by the HR department to ensure best practice and compliance with policies.

The University holds the Two Ticks symbol. Employers who use the symbol have agreed with Jobcentre Plus that they will take action on these five commitments:

- to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- to ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities

- to make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- to take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- to review on an annual basis the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION	RESPONSIBILITY AND
	TIMELINES
<u>Recruitment</u>	
A dedicated section on recruitment of research staff has been added to the Research Toolkit.	
Actions	
The Research Toolkit to be publicised widely.	Lead: Head of Research Office Timelines: Review every quarter Success measure: Toolkit used will be monitored by recording number of hits on the web pages. Tracking users will highlight if there is work to be done in a particular area.
To ensure that the appropriate grade of researcher is included in grant applications, past grant applications will be reviewed by the Research Advisor and the HR Department.	Lead: Head of Research Office Timelines: quarterly with report to Research Committee Dec 2014
In 2012, the University moved to an e-recruitment system. This will be reviewed to ensure that any necessary changes are made if necessary	Lead: HR Manager Timelines: quarterly with report to Human Resources Steering Group Sept 2014 and necessary actions to be taken following agreement with the Human Resources

Researchers at the University are members of Research Groups and Research Centres. A Research Group consists of a group of researchers working together to take research in a particular discipline area forward. Each Group is led by a Group Leader who acts as a conduit for information to all Research Group members. Research Centres are umbrella organisations, spanning Faculties and containing a number of relevant Research Groups. Research Centres are also considered to be more outward facing and often have external members. Both Research Groups and Centres are approved by Research Committee however their membership is fluid and unregulated with some members of staff being members of several Research Groups and Centres at any one time. Research Groups and Centres sit within one of the five Research Institutes.

There is a calendar of events which maps onto the Researcher Development Framework and which is open to all research staff and students. Academic staff have access to development planners which are reviewed twice a year with their line managers. These are used to identify training and develop needs which may be met by learning "on the job" by specialist support or via formal training sessions which may be provided at the University or outside. The well established Leadership and management programme at the University deals with the managing of staff and their performance and this is open to all managers to attend.

The University is committed to the stability of the research workforce in line with the JNCHES guidance, and this is considered at pre advertisement stages. Close liaison is encouraged with funders to ensure that costings and longevity of funding is secured. Maintaining the relationship with them is fundamental to the success of research at the University in future. In circumstances where fixed term contracts expire, the University has an excellent track record of redeploying staff across its campuses, maintaining that expert knowledge within the University. We also have a strategic investment fund which can be used by academics as a source of bridge funding between grants to ensure that their employment is stable and unbroken. This fund is administered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Student Experience).

Progression

The University operates a system of annual appraisal. This is a time when staff will be encouraged to consider their career development, training needs and potentially applying for more responsibilities or a higher graded post. All posts are advertised openly on the University website, and staff will receive support from their line manager when applying for posts. Members of Research Institutes have the research related aspects of their role discussed and targets agreed with the relevant Research Institute Director.

Appraisal

The University operates a system of annual appraisal. In preparation for appraisal, staff are encouraged to reflect on the previous year, consider their objectives for the coming year, career development, training needs and potentially applying for more responsibilities or a higher graded post. All posts are advertised on the University website, and staff are encouraged to discuss opportunities their line manager when considering applying for posts. Members of Research Institutes will now have the research related aspects of their role discussed and targets agreed with the relevant Research Institute Director. Despite the fact that the appraisal is a once a year discussion with a review at 6 months, this features as part of the ongoing communication between the researcher and their Research Manager.

Higher Academic Awards (HAA)

Recognition of achievements is also gained by applying for an HAA. In the past, a readership was only available to research active academics whereas Professorial titles could be awarded for excellence in research, teaching and learning and innovation or a mix of two or more of these. These

regulations have been updated for Professors and Readers and have been implemented by the University of South Wales to provide clear career pathways in three distinct areas namely:

- Research and Development
- Teaching and Learning
- Innovation and Engagement

The two new routes enable academics who are heavily engaged in activities other than research to follow pathways via teaching and learning or the innovation and engagement route. The new routes have been designed to support the development and progression of academics, including female academics, who have followed a less traditional route to scholarship but whose significant contributions to research in their disciplines are appropriately recognised and valued by their peers.

Before each round of applications the Research Office staff hold "road show" sessions to encourage and support those academic staff considering applying.

Grading and pay progression for researchers

The USW agreed with its recognised Trade Unions to use the national job evaluation tool HERA to grade all of its posts. This was a key feature of the implementation of the National Framework Agreement in 2008. The national role profiles for researchers were also used. Pay progression is considered by way of the re-grading process which occurs twice a year, again by use of the HERA process.

RECOGNITION AND VALUE	RESPONSIBILITY AND TIMELINE
Actions All those with a leadership role in terms of research such as REF Unit of Assessment Leaders and Leaders of Research Groups and Centres should have clear guidance highlighting what is expected of them and support should be in place for them in their capacity as research leaders by issuing guidance notes.	Lead: DVC (Research) Completion: January 2014
Review the support to Research managers and ensure that they undertake the leadership and management programme.	Lead: Head of Research Office and Staff Development team Completion: January 2014 Success measure: 75%of all those in a research management position to have engaged with leadership and management programme
Research Institute members will discuss their research with the Research Institute Director and agree targets for the forthcoming year as well as support needed to achieve them. This will be noted and a written report will be provided to the individual's appraiser to inform the appraisal process.	Lead: DVC (Research) Timelimes: Research related discussions to inform appraisals to occur every September with 6

Representation and Communication

Participation in decision-making bodies

The University values the contributions made by its research community in terms of providing input and feedback about the research strategy at the University. Both research staff and students are involved in decision-making bodies through representation on the following Committees:

Research Committee (sub-committee of Academic Board)

Full representation of the research community (including Early Career Researchers and Post-Graduates via the Student Voice Representatives for research.)

Research Programmes Sub-Committee (sub-committee of Research Committee and Academic Board)

Research staff and research student representation.

Actions

Following feedback from Research Student Voice Representatives (SVRs), it has been agreed that pre-meetings for all research student voice representatives should be convened to discuss agendas for upcoming meetings so that the students can understand the issues and provide comments and feedback which is more informed. Although it was agreed that standing agenda items for Research Student Voice Representatives should continue, students should be encouraged to be involved in business that it is not of a personal or confidential nature.

month review

Success measure: Every Research Institute member to discuss their research with the appropriate Research Institute Director prior to formal appraisal with their line manager

Lead: Graduate Research

Manager

Completion: Dec 2013
Success Measure: All SVRs
to meet with the Graduate
Research Manager on
their appointment to
discuss their role on
research related
committees. All SVRs to
attend the pre-committee
meetings.

Researcher Forums

Previously the University held monthly Research Breakfast Meeting at which researchers could discuss work and share practice. The requirements for REF2014 lead to these slots being temporarily given over to REF submission planning sessions.

Actions

The establishment of a Research Forum should be trialled. Consideration should be given as to whether one forum should exist or separate forums for Early Career Researchers, Postgraduate Researchers should be developed.

Public Engagement

The University maintains an **Experts Directory** for Public Engagement managed by Marketing and Student Recruitment

Lead: Head of Research

Office

Timelines: Forums established and calendarised for 2014
Success measure:
Attendance at forums monitored – at least 80%

Department. The University encourages public engagement through exhibitions, performances and demonstrations and has a well developed School liaison team. Research and information is freely available through the University's website where there are pages maintained for each Research Group and Centre and individual researchers have their own profile pages.

attendance as a target for each meeting.

Actions

Public Engagement activities should be highlighted at appraisal and recorded. The University is currently formulating a new Research Strategy of which public engagement will be a part.

Lead: DVC (Research)
Completion: Research
Strategy under
development – approval
and adoption including
section on public
engagement May 2014

C SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Research Support is available from the Research Office at the University of South Wales. Support is provided for research students and research staff and provision follows the Researcher Development Framework. Research development can be considered in two contexts; the support that is needed for the researcher to effectively do their job and the support needed for the researcher to proceed to the next challenge in their career. The regrading round is open twice a year for consideration of promotion.

We recognise that an important part of career development for researchers is to form strong networks with their peers. We therefore encourage our research staff and students to engage with development opportunities outside of this institution. Examples of these opportunities include the Welsh Crucible and the Leadership Foundation's Senior Research Leaders Programme both of which University of South Wales researchers have attended.

The Research Office staff are engaged with the South West and Wales Vitae Hub which allows sharing of best practice from across the sector as well as the ability to design and facilitate joint events with other Universities in the area. The Effective Researcher programme is a good example of four universities working together to enable research students and early career researchers to take advantage of skills development opportunities that would not otherwise be available.

An annual calendar of events for both research students and staff is produced which is based around the Researcher Development Framework. We also host Research Showcase events and via the Research Institutes further events which are designed to help researchers to network with others and to consider opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaborations. The Research Office also produces a number of good practice handbooks such as the Codes of Practice for Research Supervisors and Examiners.

Whilst we support staff to undertake new roles appropriate to their career stage, for example chairing a PhD viva, we ensure that staff are trained to do this by providing development sessions on various roles. Feedback has indicated that this has resulted in individuals being confident about performing their new tasks. All new staff who are expected to lecture enrol on a postgraduate certificate (learning and teaching) to ensure they are well equipped to be lecturers of the highest quality.

The Research Office also tailor training to the needs of individual areas. For example in the Creative and Cultural Industries Faculty, a number of staff were keen to be involved with research but were not experienced researchers. We designed a series of workshops which discussed how to turn performance and practice into research as well as how others in similar fields have made the transition.

Staff also belong to research networks and are given time to play a role in these. Examples include High Performance Computing Wales and MAeKES (Materials and Advanced Engineering Knowledge Exchange Strategy) which is building effective collaborations with industry and informing Welsh Government in terms of priority areas for the next round of European funding.

Mobility

The University recognises the importance of researchers widening their horizons beyond academia and the benefits this can have for the individuals involved as well as the wider economy. The Strategic Insight Programme (SIP) funds and supports engagement between Welsh university staff and public, private and third sector organisations. SIP is a collaborative, pan-Wales programme, funded by HEFCW, which encourages innovation and provides time to scope new mutually beneficial relationships and strategic collaborative projects. Since the programme's inception in 2008, 183 placements have been undertaken by USW academics. 65% of those who took part in a SIP have confirmed that opportunities have arisen as a result of the engagement. These include funding bids, new collaborations, consultancy and career advancements.

Induction

All new staff attend a range of mandatory courses and are also invited to attend sessions led by the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), which are specifically tailored to their academic roles ranging from ethics to designing inclusive curriculums. A probationary system operates where each new employee meets regularly with their line manager during their first year to discuss how they are settling in to their new role and to set objectives with them from the outset.

When academics leave the University, an exit interview and survey are completed so that destinations of our researchers can be monitored.

SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT	RESPONSIBILITY AND
	TIMELINES
Support and Career Development	
Career pathways are clear from lecturer to reader to professor in three	
streams namely, research and development, teaching and learning and	
innovation and engagement. Research features in all three streams.	
Actions	
Workshops and one to one sessions are available throughout the year	Lead: Head of Research
to ensure that academic staff understand the opportunities available to	Office
them and at appraisal support is given to help academics to reach the	Timeline: ongoing with 3
next stage of their career.	workshops prior to Higher
	Academic Award
	deadlines
	Success measure: 100%
	applicants to attend a

workshop or one to one session prior to application being submitted.

Review the calendar of events at Research Programmes Sub Committee, Research Committee and the newly established Research Forum/s on an annual basis.

Lead: Head of Research

Office

Timelines: Annually each

July

Success Measure:

refreshed calendar of events produced by the beginning of each new academic year

Mentoring

A research mentoring scheme has been designed to help staff with a range of issues they may be facing in an informal and confidential way. The University has a well established mentoring scheme in place for all staff regardless of discipline.

The University is also a member of the Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme (WUMS). An innovative all-Wales scheme that aims to promote and facilitate professional development for women working in Welsh universities by supporting those in inter-university mentoring partnerships.

Actions

Workshops for mentoring will be set up to help mentees understand what they might gain out of the mentoring arrangement and for mentors to understand the role they will be play in their mentees development.

Lead: Head of Research Office with Directors of Research Institutes

Timeline: Dec 2013 introduction to mentoring event and scheme launch **Success measure:** 50 mentor-mentee pairs

following

launch

established

Induction

A comprehensive induction process is in place for all staff at the University of South Wales with many elements being mandatory, there is not a dedicated induction section for researchers.

Action

Review the induction process with a view to developing a dedicated induction designed for researchers.

Lead: HR Manager
Completion: June 2014
Success measure:
Researcher induction
produced and attended by
100% of staff who
undertake research within
two months of
appointment.

PhD Shadowing

The University supports the principle of "nurturing our own talent". To this end we have piloted a PhD shadowing scheme within our maths department where interested undergraduates shadow PhD students for a week to gain an insight into what a PhD involves. Not only does this help the undergraduate but it also benefits the PhD researcher.

Actions

Given the positive experiences of those involved in the PhD Shadowing Programme, this will be rolled out across other Faculties.

Lead: Research Programmes Sub Committee

Timeline: December 2014 **Success measure:** 50 PhD shadowing opportunities per annum across the University following roll out of the programme

D RESEARCHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Research students and staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal development but some training is mandatory for example Chairs of Viva training, Research Supervisor training and training for those involved in recruitment and selection of staff and students. The university is committed to adhering to the Concordat for Research Integrity and has a Research Good Practice Policy in place which is currently under review.

The University has a policy on ethics which applies to teaching and research (including postgraduate research projects) and staff are supported via Ethics Champions in each Faculty to help them if there are any issues that might arise. A central University Ethics Sub Group gives each Ethics Champion a chance to learn from each other and share best practice.

RESEARCHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES	RESPONSIBILITY AND	
	TIMELINES	
Continuing Professional Development/Personal Development		
Planning		
Postgraduate research students have access to a Personal		
Development Plan to record their development needs and skills and a		
similar facility available for academic staff.		
Astinu		
Action The University has considered using the DDE Dlanner provided by Vitae	Lead: Head of Research	
The University has considered using the RDF Planner provided by Vitae.	Office	
Following the establishment of Research Institutes, the University intends to pilot this system with Research Institute members as a	Timelines: Pilot discussed	
potential solution to this issue so that planning specifically for research	with Research Committee.	
can be achieved.	Success Measure: Full	
	pilot to be commenced	
	with Research Institute	
	members January 2014	
Research Integrity		
The University is currently reviewing the Code of Practice for Research		
which has been designed by the UK Research Integrity Office.		
Action		
The Code of Practice for Research or an amended version of it will be	Lead: Head of Research	
considered by Research Committee with a view to formal adoption by	Office	
the University of South Wales.	Timelines:	

The draft code has been considered at Research Committee. Following review to be considered Academic Board January 2014 prior to adoption **Ethics** The University is currently reviewing the Ethics Policy. **Action** The current University Ethics Policy is being updated following the Lead: Chair of Ethics Sub University re-structure to ensure that appropriate forums are available Group to allow ethical issues to be fully considered consistently across the Timelines: Completion Institution. and approval of new policy by March 2014

E DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

The University has an Equality and Diversity Steering Group which is chaired by the University Secretary and Clerk to the Board of Governors. Reporting to the Steering Group are the Race Equality Sub Group, the Disability Equality Sub Group and the Gender Equality Sub Group. The Equality and Diversity Steering Group is responsible for monitoring the Strategic Equality Plan and its associated Action Plan. An LGBT and Race equality staff network were put in place during the 2012-13 academic year.

The University conducted an Equal pay review in 2011 which is reviewed regularly. It is committed to promoting flexible working for staff in order to facilitate working arrangements for staff in all times of their research careers as well as part time working.

Parental leave, maternity, adoption and paternity leave are all publicised to research staff.

Protected characteristics are monitored for all staff to ensure a community of inclusivity, and these are monitored in line with the requirements of the Equality act 2010.

Dignity at work advisers are available for staff to approach in the faculties and departments in case of bullying and harassment.

The University is committed to encouraging a more diverse and inclusive environment for researchers by supporting them via the REF personal circumstances disclosure system which was also adopted for applications to the Research Institutes.

DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY	RESPONSIBILITY	AND
	TIMELINES	
Athena Swan		
The University of South Wales is a member of the Athena Swan Charter		
and has an application for an institutional bronze award which will be		

considered by the Equality Challenge Unit at their panel meetings commencing December 2014.

Actions

When the bronze award is achieved, two research groups will apply for departmental awards.

Lead: Equality and Diversity Adviser and relevant academics

Timelines: Submission of departmental awards by November 2014

As part of our ongoing commitment to gender equality for academics, the University is facilitating focus groups to discuss the barriers to women achieving professorial status at the Institution. The outcomes of the focus group will be considered by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and the Vice Chancellor (who has made a public commitment to tackling issues facing female academics where-ever possible.)

The University is considering introducing a maternity policy for doctoral students in line with Research Councils' best practice guidelines.

Lead: Head of Research Office reporting to the Vice Chancellor

Timelines:

Recommendations from focus groups currently being considered by Executive with actions arising to be implemented between February and May 2014.

Success measures: Focus groups to be re-convened in October 2014 to discuss whether interventions have been helpful.

Aurora

The University is involved in the Leadership Foundation's Aurora project. Aurora aims to enable a wide range of women in academic and professional roles to think of themselves as future leaders and to develop leadership skills and strategies. Aurora takes a partnership approach with institutions and participants, providing an intervention that combines education, mentoring and self-directed study to provide learning with a more enduring impact.

Actions

We have appointed an Aurora champion and are in the process of recruiting Aurora participants.

Lead: Aurora Champion
Timelines: Aurora
participants selected by
November 2013
Success measure: Five
researchers to take part in
Aurora Programme.

F IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW	RESPONSIBILITY	AND
	TIMELINES	
Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principle		
Investigators Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) and the Postgraduate		
Research Environment Survey (PRES)		
The University intends to continue with these surveys as a source of		

valuable information to inform research support and research strategy.

Action

To increase participation rates, prizes will be offered for those who fully complete a relevant survey.

Lead: Graduate Research Manager Success Measure: Participation in each survey to increase by 20% using 2013 as a baseline

The University also intends to engage with research staff and students at the proposed researcher forums as means of listening to feedback from those involved in research. Notes from these meetings will be fed up to the relevant University Committee, for example Research Committee or for student issues, Research Programmes Sub Group so that relevant actions can be taken.

Lead: Head of Research Office Timeline: Forums established and calendarised for 2014

The Concordat Steering Group will meet regularly to review this action plan. The action plan will also be reviewed at each meeting of the Human Resources Strategy Steering Group which consists of University Governors and the Executive. Furthermore, all relevant University Groups and Committees will have sight of this action plan regularly and receive updates on progress.

Lead: DVC Research **Timeline:** Steering Group will meet every two months and report to the **Human Resources Strategy Steering Group** Success Measure: In December 2014 we will survey all academic staff to find out how well informed they are with respect to this action plan. Results will be used to inform future actions in terms of communicating the Concordat and the action plan arising from it.