

Cranfield University HR Excellence in Research Action Plan 2015 to 2017

Overall Cranfield University has a broad range of HR policies and practices already in place to support the personal and career development of researchers as outlined by the UK Concordat. However, reflecting the nature of the University structure prior to August 2014 and the nature of the University's work, there is a considerable variation in that offered between and within Schools providing a patchy picture against the Concordat. Similarly, the perception of researchers themselves varies depending on where they are located and how long they have been in post. There are differing perceptions of the support available for researchers between researchers, research managers/PIs and HR Managers.

The main thrust of Cranfield University's actions therefore will be to raise awareness of the policies and practices in place, to improve the consistency of what is offered and to strengthen the personal and especially career development support available, whilst engaging researchers in their own personal and career development.

Below we have identified the policies and practices (green header) we have in place followed by the additional actions we believe we need to take (orange header)

KEY to abbreviations

R&I	Research & Innovation	HROs	Human Resources Officers
PVC	Pro Vice Chancellor	DoRs	Directors of Research (in Schools)
L&D	Learning & Development	HRMs	Human Resources Managers
Dir	Director	Academic Prof Dev Lead	Academic Professional Development Lead

Principle	Overarching Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
All	Ensure consistency in provision of personal and career development for researchers across the university. Ensure researchers know what is available to them and how to access it.	R&I Committee PVC and Dir of R&I Head of L&D	March 2017	Consistency in provision and researchers are aware of that provision, measured through staff survey
All	At each meeting of the Research Committee, review progress of actions to date. Formally review progress against the action plan after 1 year and 2 years	Action Group Research Committee	April 2016 and between January and March 2017 ready for next phase of HR Excellence in research	Able to re-apply for HR Excellence in March 2017 in a timely manner with the support of researchers and the Research Committee, progress measured through traffic light system, with urgent action to be taken to remediate any areas marked amber or red.

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

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
1	Recruitment and selection policies and practices for all staff based on jobs being openly advertised, providing job descriptions and person specifications, ensuring that people are selected on merit and career pathways are specified for all job families
1	Pay and grading is based on job evaluation; progression and recognition awards available for all staff including researchers with criteria publicised on the Intranet
1	Fixed-term contracts are in place due to the nature of research funding. Many staff transfer across to permanent contracts. All researchers and academics have to develop their own independent funding stream in order to support their activities and work collaboratively with other researchers
1 & 2 & 6	A broad range of Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study policies and support are in place

Actions

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
1	Strengthen recruitment procedures, providing a common core job description/person specification for research jobs and advertising in appropriate publications to ensure attraction of the best candidates	Head of HR Operations HROs	Summer 2016 and ongoing	Targeted recruitment campaigns, measured by the quality and the number of applicants per post and successful appointments made More researchers staying with us after the end of their contracts as we have recruited, supported and developed the best people available, measured as a function of staff turnover numbers and feedback from exit interviews
1	Ensure recruiting research managers are aware of their responsibilities for diversity issues, reasonable adjustments, and actively develop their own recruiting skills via L&D recruitment & Selection programme	HROs Head of L&D	Summer 2016 and ongoing	Managers participate in R&S programme. More researchers staying with us after the end of their contracts as we have recruited, supported and developed the best people available, measured as a function of staff turnover numbers and feedback from exit interviews
1&2	Review the need for fixed terms for researcher contracts; explore possibility of continuity funding for researchers between grants	PVC R&I Dir of R&I Dir of HR&D	Autumn 2015	Review carried out of reasons for use of fixed terms contracts for researchers

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Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
1&2	Reduce the levels of researchers leaving citing better career prospects as the reason	PVC Schools Dir of Themes DoRs in Schools HRMs Research Managers	March 2017	Increased numbers of researchers remaining employed by Cranfield after the end of their contracts as we have recruited, supported and developed the best people available and have suitable career progression for them in place as well as ongoing funding. Fewer leaving citing improved career prospects elsewhere, measured as a function of staff turnover numbers and feedback from exit interviews

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Principle 2 Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation’s human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world class research

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
1 & 2 & 6	As outlined in Principle 1
2 & 5	Performance feedback should be provided as part of the Performance and Development Review (PDR) and ongoing 121s. This is available for all staff including researchers on fixed-term contracts – how it is handled varies across the University and some fixed-term contract research staff seem not to be included
2 & 5	All members of staff have the opportunity for face-to-face discussion with their line management regarding a “team brief” which summarises key developments across the University, such as in health and safety, professional services review, staff changes etc.
2 & 3 & 4	A wide variety of personal development activities are offered centrally via Learning & Development including development designed specifically to support researchers and academics to develop independent income streams working with commercial organisations. There is also local provision within Schools, but the practice varies and many researchers have little awareness of what is offered overall. This is an area where greater centralisation, consistency and improvements in generic researcher development will benefit researchers alongside more subject-specific local provision

Actions

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
2&3&4&5	Review use of PDRs for all researchers, ensuring that managers are able to hold effective PDRs and 121s that are motivating for researchers, identifies the career and personal development needed by them and leaves them feeling valued members of the University. Run development sessions for managers in holding career development discussions.	PVC Schools Directors of Theme Dir of R&I DoRs and Research Managers HROs Head of L&D	Between summer 2015 and Spring 2016	At year 1 review improved responses from researchers to PDRs and quality of discussions about career and personal development during PDR; measured through staff survey?
2	Raise awareness of recognition awards, progression and promotion policies and career pathways for researchers and their managers and clarify how researchers can access promotion	HROs Research Managers Dir of Themes	Autumn 2015	Researchers able to explain what is available at year 1 review; greater number of staff going through promotion review; and/or receiving recognition awards

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Principle 3 Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile global research environment

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
3 & 5	<p>CPD for researchers is supported by research managers. Current spend on career and personal development and CPD stands at just under £30K, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conferences £14,811 (not full picture as conferences are often paid for in a variety of ways that are not easily track-able) • subscriptions to Professional Bodies £1,119 (subs are often paid for in a variety of ways that are not easily track-able) • external development £13,008 (figure taken from suppliers' invoices so not a full picture of the expenditure) • internal provision – unable to fully identify costs associated with this as provision is widespread across the University, some central, some part of DTCs, some within separate Schools/Depts.
3 & 5	The University is a member of Vitae but few researchers know who they are or what they can offer in terms of career development support

Actions

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
3&4	<p>Identify the skills needed by researchers at different levels of their careers, (map against Vitae RDF), what career pathways are available to them and how they access appropriate development. Engage researchers with their own career development</p>	<p>DoRs HROs Research Managers Head of L&D PVC Schools Dir of Themes</p>	March 2016	<p>A comprehensive development provision in place against skills needed by researchers. Record % staff take-up of researcher development programmes to create a benchmark for future reference Increased numbers of researchers remaining employed by Cranfield after the end of their contracts as we have recruited, supported and developed the best people available and have suitable career progression for them in place. Fewer leaving citing improved career prospects elsewhere, measured as a function of staff turnover numbers and feedback from exit interviews</p>

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Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
3&4	Provide experienced and well-briefed mentors for all researchers to support their career development and ensure the time needed for mentors and mentees to meet is supported/provided	DoRs Head of L&D HRMs Research Managers	March 2017	Mentor programme in place and accessed by 75% of mentors. Researchers receive much needed support from effective mentors. 75% of staff have a mentor. Improved levels of grant funding applications, 20 % or greater success rate.
3	Ensure consistent local School-based induction is provided for researchers, involving R&I Office where appropriate. Review centrally provided Induction to ensure relevance to researchers	HROs DoRs Dir of R&I Head of L&D (central Induction)	Summer 2015 and ongoing	Newly recruited researchers able to describe their local induction, measured through staff survey (CROS) % staff participating in local induction.

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Principle 4 The importance of researchers personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
2 & 3 & 4	As outlined in principle 2
4	Mentoring is recognised as being worthwhile and is patchily widespread but mostly informal. Creating improvements in mentoring of researchers and ensuring mentors are better prepared for mentoring researchers will result in improved benefits for the career development of researchers
4 & 5	We have a Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) that is open to researchers who start teaching. Module 3 specifically focuses on support for research and students covering supervision, writing up research for publication and writing proposals
4	One School has an Academic Fellow scheme that enables researchers to progress onto an academic career over a 5 year period, supported by a mentor and career development

Actions

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
4	Raise awareness of PGCAP sessions that are appropriate to researchers for teaching and supervision of students	Academic Prof Dev Lead DoRs	Summer 2016	Increased numbers of researchers participating in appropriate PGCAP sessions and seeing the relevance; measured as number of staff undertaking PGCAP.
4	Ensure staff representatives on the R&I Committee engage with research colleagues before and after Committee meetings to gain input into policy/strategy and implementation	PVC R&I Dir of R&I Staff Reps	Spring 2015	Two way flow of ideas etc. Researchers perception that their voice is heard, measured through a local staff survey
4	Undertake a feasibility study for the introduction of Academic Fellow scheme within all Schools	PVC Schools Dir of Themes HRMs	Summer 2016	Feasibility undertaken and outcome progressed through Research Committee

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

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
2 & 5	Performance and feedback is provided as part of the Performance and Development Review (PDR) and ongoing 121s. This is available for all staff including researchers on fixed-term contracts – how it is handled varies across the University and some fixed-term contract research staff seem not to be included
2 & 5	All members of staff have the opportunity for face-to-face discussion with their line management regarding a “team brief” which summarises key developments across the university, such as in health and safety, professional services review, staff changes etc.
3 & 5	As outlined in Principle 5
3 & 5	As outlined in Principle 5
4 & 5	As outlined in Principle 4

Actions

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
2&3&4&5	Actions already covered in previous Principles			
4&5	Develop a research community of practice across the University as well as within Schools to provide networking opportunities within Cranfield University	Dir of R&I DoRs	March 2017	Researchers recognise there are networking opportunities and they participate in provided activities; measured through staff survey (CROS)
3&5	Develop a careers strategy for researchers and publicise across the University so that all researchers are aware of the strategy and what support they can expect for their personal and career development. Build access to external support and provision from Vitae into strategy. Participate in CROS survey administered by Vitae	Dir of R&I DoRs Head of L&D Careers Service	Between Autumn 2015 and March 2016	At year 1 review researchers can describe the content of the strategy and what is available for their development; feedback from staff survey (CROS)
3&5	Develop a central programme of career development activities for researcher staff and appropriate local activities as needed and provide careers advice for researchers. Provide development and support in ethics, IPR/Patents, research proposals, presenting to research councils, presenting research for maximum impact and writing for quality journals	Dir of R&I DoRs Head of L&D	March 2017	An integrated and coherent development programme for all researchers across the whole University, irrespective of provider, measured by % staff accessing development offerings, recorded through Agresso Creating an initial benchmark

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Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
3&5	Publicise Vitae and its work to raise awareness of external/sector support for career development.	Head of L&D Dir of R&I DoRs	Summer 2015	More researchers and their managers recognising the support and external development events provided by Vitae; % staff attending Vitae events

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

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
6	The University recently became a member of Athena Swan to increase the number of senior women in all disciplines who will then be able to act as role models for others, aiming to achieve Bronze recognition in Autumn 2015
1 & 2 & 6	As outline in Principle 1

Actions

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
6	Raise awareness of the application for Athena Swan Bronze for October 2015 and the Aurora Programme and how we are addressing the need for more senior female role models in all disciplines within the University	Diversity Manager	Autumn 2015	Ensure researchers receive notification about Athena Swan award, its action plans and achievements through Staff news cascade and other media.
6	Reinforce flexible working policies and ensure managers are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area and the need to consider how to include those with caring responsibilities in day to day activities (e.g. meetings)	HROs Dir of Themes Research Managers	Year 1 review March 2016	Fewer meetings called outside core hours as reported by researchers More researchers working flexibly
6	Raise Diversity Awareness via the online learning programme and participation in Cross Cultural competencies	Head of L&D Diversity Manager HROs	Summer 2015	Increased numbers working through Diversity online learning and participating in Cross Cultural Competence
6	Raise awareness of Dignity at Work and Study Advisers and how they can provide support to researchers, the University's policy on Dignity at Work and managers' responsibilities within the policy	HROs Employee Relations Manager Diversity Manager Dir of Themes Research Managers	Summer 2015	Researchers can access support from Dignity at Work Advisers and can describe such support. Researchers feel less isolated; feedback from staff surveys

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Principle 7 The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK

Concordat principle	Cranfield University policies and practices in place
7	We are members of Vitae and various people represent the University at regional meetings

Concordat principle	Actions	Responsibility	By when	Success Measures
7	To engage across the sector (via Vitae membership and with funders' groups) to ensure we maintain currency of our practices	PVC R&I Dir of R&I Head of L&D	Ongoing	Better understanding of the sector and Vitae which feeds into our policies and practices; number of staff participating in Vitae activities