HR Excellence In Research - University of Sussex Concordat Implementation Plan 2015 – 2017 Progress Update 2017

Progress summary:
Of a total of 38 actions – 30 Completed; 5 Roll forward to 2017-2021 action plan; 3 Superseded by other developments

Action	Concordat Reference	Action	Lead	Success Measure	RAG	Progress Comment	Timescale
1	1.1, 3.1, 5.1	Explore options and models for University funded research fellowships	Research Staff Office (RSO) and Research Staff Working Group (RSWG)	Recommendations for university fellowship scheme(s) presented to RSWG and other relevant committee(s). Principles agreed and next steps identified.		ECR placement fellowship scheme Kroto Fellowships, implemented by Sussex Research (Nov 16), giving researchers opportunity to visit overseas partner institutions to establish collaborations and projects. 2 Projects funded in pilot round Jan 2017, second round launched Feb 2017. Helena Normanton Fellowships will appoint two 2yr fellows in areas of strategic priority. RSO raised request for additional university fellowship schemes with new VC in drop in session; awaiting new University strategy July 2017 for any future developments. Action continuation in 2017-21 action plan (Action point 8)	July 2015
2	1.2, 1.5, 2.5, 2.6	Account for research staff role progression (i.e. promotion) in grant proposal budgets where appropriate and allowed by funder	Research Development and PIs	PIs routinely asked about researcher progression when costing proposals. Increase in proportion of projects where research staff are promoted during grant term.		Due to other priorities this action was not taken forward by Working Group for this implementation plan. Rolls forward into 2017-21 action plan (Action point 9 on 2017-21 action plan).	May 2017
3	2.4	Encourage transparency in using school funds to bridge research	Research Staff Office and Research Staff	Bridging funding guidance published and adopted by Schools		*Sept 15 -* Bridging funding guidance published on HR website and links from Research	July 2015

		contracts by publishing guidance for Schools/PIs/researchers	Working Group			Staff Webpages. Communications in newsletter and to Heads of School. Reminder communication to be sent in new academic year. *Sept 16* – Embedded into business as usual.	
4	**1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6**	Monitor annual fixed-term contract review by schools	HR, Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team, RSWG	Annual overview report of fixed-term contract statuses and numbers of transitions to indefinite contracts received. Further actions identified as appropriate.		Annual review of staff on fixed term contracts implemented in Autumn 2014 and embedded into business as usual. Researchers automatically transitioned to indefinite contracts when they have reached 4 years on 2 or more contracts; or if they play a significant role in managing the outcomes of a research group. 2014 56 individuals transferred to indefinite contracts 2015 8 transfers to indefinite contracts 2016 50 transfers to indefinite contracts	Annual Summer Term of each year
5	**2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5**	Enhance research staff management information reporting through the new HR management system.	HR	Automated reports for Research Staff Contextual data, accurate lists of research staff managers accessible.		RES data team have developed reports for generating research fellow contact lists and general monitoring. Research dashboard generates up to date lists of RFs. Current HR Systems resourcing means that research manager lists cannot be generated from HR system. RSO keep records for maintaining up to date mailing lists of research staff and has established channels for information dissemination across schools. Embedded into business as usual.	Sept 2015

6	1.1, 2.1, 2.4	Share School's best practice in support for people applying for independent fellowships/mentoring through fellowship.	RSO, Research Development and Schools	Case studies on school support for fellowship applicants and holders shared with Heads of School		*Sept 2016* – Case study approach was superseded by Aiming for fellowship workshops run in June 2015, June 2016 and planned for 2017 programme. Led by fellowship reviewers/mentors, fellowship holders, and Research Development Officers. So far 25 researchers have been through the workshop. Of the 12 attendees of the 2015 workshop 5 are known to have subsequently applied for fellowships. Workshops embedded as business as usual into Research Staff Development Series.	April 2016
7	2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.8	Update career pathway information on HR website to provide distinct information for research career pathways.	HR and RSO	Clear guidance and documentation of Research Career Pathway published and communicated.		*November 2015* – Promotions workshop for research fellows led by Deputy Vice Chancellor (12 participants). Tips for promotion from the workshop circulated to Research Staff mailing list with links to promotions process and reminder of eligibility. Feb 2016 20% increase in research fellow promotion applications in 2016 (over 2015). *November 2016* – Specific area of HR webpages for research fellow career pathway created. Promotions workshops held in Sept and Nov 2016 (27 participants in total). Communications to RFs in November to highlight promotion opportunities and process. Number of research fellow promotion applications more than tripled in 2017 (6 in 2016; 19 in 2017)	Sept 2015

					Business as Usual – monitor promotion applications annually; further interventions as required. Further action regarding PI awareness of processes to be implemented in 2017-21 action plan (action points 4, 9,10 & 11 in 2017-21 plan) .	
8	**2.3, 2.6, 3.5, 3.8**	Update research faculty career management guidance from HR website and move to Research Staff Webpages.	Research Staff Office and HR	Career management guidance up to date and located with other research staff materials		[Start of contract discussion guidance] published on Research Staff Website and linked from HR page and replaces outdated 'induction checklist'. [PI webpages] launched and replaces outdated career management information. New action for 2017-21: New leaflet for PIs 'Inducting and Managing Researchers' will be delivered as part of the 2017-21 action plan (Action point 4).	July 2015
9	**2.1, 2.2**	Refine the way research staff job titles are presented, improving consistency and recognising role distinctions – e.g. where an individual is a PI and/or holds a prestigious fellowship	HR	Titles on web profiles consistent with job role and identify where fellow is a PI/holds an independent fellowship		Research Fellow Job titles revised to align with academic teaching faculty titles - Business as Usual. Process for adding additional titles to web profiles (eg Independent fellowship awards) established and adopted by Schools. Business as Usual	December 2015
10	**2.3, 2.6, 4.10,**	Develop a tailored appraisal form for research staff coupled with supporting document with best practice guidance and links to supporting information/resources to aid career development discussions.	HR and RSO	New form and supporting information published and used in research staff appraisals.		New Appraisal forms developed, published, communicated in May 2015. Communications campaigns (summer 2015; 2016) to encourage researchers to participate in appraisals. Short survey developed based on CROS appraisal questions and ran for 2 weeks from 3rd October	July 2015

						2016 to evaluate effectiveness of interventions (24% resonse rate, n=90). Survey indicated **63% increase** in research staff appraisal participation since 2013 and a **119% increase** in overall perceived usefulness of appraisal since 2013. Report of outcomes disseminated to research staff community and School management teams Feb 2017.	
11	2.6, 3.5	Establish mechanism for documented recognition of research staff supervision of PhD and UG students	RSA and Academic Registry	All supervision by research staff recorded by institution		Action superseded by major university project to implement new student administration systems (incl. teaching records). New action in 2017-2021 action plan to provide templates for teaching information capture (Action point 13)	May 2016
12	3.2, 3.3	Capture research achievements of research staff through newsletter and case studies published on website	RSO, Schools and Research Staff	Newsletter highlights compiled into case studies published on web pages		Spotlight profiles of research staff published on new Spotlight webpage (Nov 2016) communicated across University Channels, twitter, email and Sussex researcher newsletter. Spotlight webpage received 240 unique views in the first 2 weeks and the most popular profile has had over 470 unique views to date. Recommendations for future Spotlight profiles received from a number of Schools; new profiles developed on rolling basis (Business as usual). Plans for Spotlight Symposium to showcase postdoctoral research at Sussex Impact Day to be included in 2017-21 implementation plan (Action Point 12).	May 2016

13	2.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9, 5.5	Create a specific web page for managers of research staff that provides best practice guidance and links to further relevant policy information, guidance and support.	Research Staff Office	Webpage for research staff managers published and communicated to Schools/PIs		Principal Investigators: Supporting Your Research Staff Webpage launched and communicated at PI practice sharing event and to Heads of School, Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange (DRaKEs) April 2016. Reminders of PI pages given to DRaKEs during 1:1 meetings with RSO (Nov 2016). Average of 30 'unique views' per month. Monitor use of pages regularly (Business as Usual). To increase awareness and use of pages a new leaflet for PIs recruiting researchers will be delivered as part of the 2017-21 action plan (Action Point 4).	December 2015
14	2.3, 3.9, 5.5	Explore options for specific training packages for PIs managing postdoctoral staff	RSO, HR, Staff Development Unit	University plan and investment into PI management support		PI practice sharing event held on April 13th 2016. 30 PIs in attendance, outputs to inform training and development requirements. Research conducted of PI T&D programmes at other HEIs and current provision at UoS mapped against requirements for PI training programme. to market all PI relevant training and development in a single events listing. In anticipation of the University's new Strategic Plan, plans for a standalone PI development programme will roll forward to 2017-21 action plan (Action Point 10) and are will form part of future Researcher Development Strategy for the University (Action point 1 of 2017-21 plan).	May 2017

15	3.2, 3.9, 4.1,	Establish a research staff faculty 'champion' role in Schools with 20+ research staff	Schools	Role description agreed, individuals identified, and in role		Three schools (Life Sciences, Psychology and Brighton and Sussex Medical School) now have research staff champions (with different titles). 50% of schools with 20+research fellows have a nominated champion. The Life Sciences Athena SWAN Silver Award feedback praised the creation of the role. Champion role discussed with DRaKEs in 1:1 meetings in November 2016. There are currently no further plans in other Schools to appoint faculty champions as the role is satisfactorily served by DRaKEs in most Schools. (Business as Usual)	September 2016
16	4.4, 5.2, 5.5, 5.6	Build on the existing group of Research Staff Representatives to ensure that every school with 5+ research staff members has a nominated Rep	Research Staff Office, Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange	Majority of Schools have at least 1 research staff representative		Increase in numbers of reps recruited. Current level is 15 Reps across 9 Schools; only schools without reps currently are: Global Studies, English (no research staff) and Media Film and Music (<5 research staff). Reps meet 3 times during the academic year and have been instrumental in providing input and ideas for the 2017-21 action plan. Maintenance of participation in reps group is ongoing - business as usual.	September 2015
17	3.6, 4.1	Ensure that all schools maintain an up to date mailing list of research staff, with new staff added upon arrival at the institution	Academic Schools, RSO	Each school has a dedicated mailing list for research staff members		Discussed at Induction practice sharing meeting 1st March. Schools took action to implement where not already in place. All Schools have Res-only mailing lists. Business as Usual	July 2016

18	3.3, 3.8, 3.9, 5.5	University guidance/policy for research staff training and development – e.g. nature of development opportunities, guidance around acceptable levels of engagement with training and development.	RSO and RSWG	Training and Development guidance published and communicated		Research Staff Professional Development Guidance approved (Oct 2016) recommends minimum of 5 working days for training and development for research staff and provides expectations and examples of training and development. Guidance communicated to Research Staff Via Sussex researcher newsletter, added to webpages, communicated to Heads of School, DRaKEs, incorporated into induction materials. Business as Usual	July 2016
19	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9, 5.5, 5.6	Provide guidance through induction information/communication to research staff and PIs to encourage career development discussions and objective setting at the start of a new research contract	RSO/Schools	Reference to career development discussion in welcome communications, guidance for PIs published on website. Responses to CROS indicate career development discussions are taking place.		Start of contract discussion documents signed off and published on website (April 2016). Communicated to Heads of School and to School induction coordinators via practice sharing event. To be reviewed following CROS 2017 outcomes Start of contract discussion documents included on PI webpage as well as in new researcher emails and on Research Staff Policy and Resources Library -Embedded into business as usual Work to increase awareness and uptake of start of contract discussions included in 2017-21 implementation plan (Action Points 3).	Sept 2015
20	3.6, 5.3, 5.5	Roll out school level induction handbook starting with those schools with the largest cohorts of research staff	RSO, Academic Schools	All schools have a clear induction process and appropriate induction materials for new research staff. Improvement in positive responses		CROS 2015 results indicated clear improvements in induction participation and perceived usefulness at all levels (34% increase in proportion of	July 2016

				to CROS questions relating to induction.		researchers citing institutional induction as useful/very useful. 32% decrease in researchers reporting that they were not offered an induction.) welcome guide for research staff complete and published Jan 2016. Distributed by HR to all new research staff with appointment documentation before their arrival at Sussex. Practice sharing meeting with School researcher induction coordinators held in March 2016 Report and recommendations circulated to Schools to inform induction practice. Standard HTML template for research staff School induction webpage rolled out to induction coordinators in all schools in July 2016. To date 6 Schools have implemented with a further 2 planned. To support PIs in induction of research staff a leaflet for managers recruiting research staff will be delivered as part of the 2017 – 21 action plan (Action Point 4)	
21	3.2, 4.5, 6.3	Evaluate and widen circle mentoring scheme	Research Staff Office, Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team	Increased proportion of research staff enrolled in circle mentoring scheme and scheme widened to include schools outside of STEMM disciplines. Positive feedback from scheme focus groups and questionnaires.		Evaluation of 2014/15 Women in STEMM Mentoring Circles Scheme completed and recommendations implemented for 2015/16 scheme. 2015/16 scheme had 33 participants drawn from all STEMM schools. 2015/16 scheme was evaluated in August 2016. As an outcome of the evaluation changes were	Sept 2015

						made to the 2016/17 scheme to make the scheme less time consuming for mentors/mentees. 2016/17 Women in STEMM circle has been launched in revised format with positive reception to date. In total to date over 65 female postdoctoral researchers have participated in mentoring circle sessions. Evaluation and roll out of revised mentoring circle scheme incorporated into 2017-19 implementation plan (Action Point 19)	
22	1.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.6, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.8	Provide tailored information and support for international researchers moving to the UK to take up research posts at Sussex	RSO, HR	Webpage for international researchers moving to UK published. 'Moving to Sussex' guidance document/link to online resources sent out with contract information for international new starters.		International Researchers webpage launched (*Sept 15*). Specific guidance for international researchers included in the Welcome guide for new researchers sent out by HR before arrival at Sussex. International researcher lunch held in November 2016 joint with Researcher Development Programme and with attendance from prof services that support international staff and students. 60 attendees with positive feedback. Embed into business as usual as an annual event.	April 2016
23	4.4, 5.5	Enable Post-doc representation on every school research committee	RSWG, PVC, Schools	ToRs of School Research committee updated to include requirement for Research Staff Representation at meetings. Research Staff Reps invited to Research Committee meetings		Organisation of the University Document was updated to specify that School Research Committees must have research staff representation included in committee membership. Changes communicated to reps, DRaKEs and Heads of School.	July 2015

						All Research Staff Reps are now automatically invited onto School Research Committee meetings. Embedded into business as usual	
24	4.4	Provide clear information to research staff regarding governance structures for researchers, relevant committees and lines of responsibility for researchers.	Research Staff Office	Research staff webpages updated with governance and committee information and diagrams with links to overarching organisation of the University		*Sept 15* - Webpages updated new dedicated page outlining role of Research Staff Working Group and links to overarching governance. *Nov 16* – Governance structure diagram redesigned and incorporated into new design Welcome Guide and Research Staff Working Group Webpage	September 2015
25	3.1, 3.2, 5.2	Evaluate current activities and develop a plan to further extend opportunities for research staff to engage with entrepreneurial, knowledge exchange, Impact and public engagement activities.	RSO, Research Quality and Impact, Sussex Innovation Centre	Extended opportunities for raising awareness and engaging with entrepreneurial and KE, impact and public engagement identified and promoted to research staff		Research staff Forum May 2016 focussed on Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Short session on Entrepreneurship in Sussex Impact Day, Workshop 'Making Public Engagement Work for You' June 2016 (10 attendees), Workshop 'Creativity and Innovation Skills for Career Success' delivered July 2016 (18 attendees); second workshop planned for summer 2017 – embedded into annual programme business as usual. Plans for increasing networking opportunities with other sectors included in 2017-21 action plan (action point 23)	July 2016
26	2.4, 5.4,	Introduce communications to research staff 6 months prior to end of contract to outline support and information available across the University. This would be in addition to the HR legal communication 3 months prior to contract end.	RSO	Automated report of those with 6 months to contract end available. Communications approved and sent out on a monthly basis to staff 6 months from fixed-term contract end.		*Sept 15* - Access to automated lists of leavers granted. Email to research staff leavers sent monthly to those within 6 months of contract end. Email outlines sources of career development support and information around the University and externally (e.g.	Sept 2015

						vitae) and provides links and information for next steps. The email has received positive feedback from researchers and has resulted in increased uptake of 1:1 coaching. Leavers email process embedded into business as usual.	
27	5.2, 5.5	Add an overview of internal funding sources to the research staff web pages – e.g. open access funding, Researcher Led Initiative Fund, Sussex Research etc	RSO	List of Sussex internal funding sources and links to relevant information on research staff webpages.		Internal funding opportunities overviews and links are included on the funding for researchers webpage. Updated regularly, business as usual.	July 2015
28	6.3, 6.4	Evaluate success of University sponsored Daphne Jackson Fellowships and develop a long term strategy for the support for returning researchers	Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team, RSO, Schools and Human Resources	University strategy for supporting returning researchers agreed and implemented		Briefing to be provided to new Deputy PVCs for E&D. Decision for continuation to be taken forward by DPVCs E&D. Action rolls forward to 2017-2021 action plan (action point 30)	May 2017
29	6.5, 6.5, 6.6	Introduce further information and guidance for schools, managers and researchers for supporting parents pre, during and post maternity/parental leave	HR	Maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave guidance and support published and publicised to schools/researchers.		*Jan 16* – Additional guidance for managers and staff regarding maternity leave added to the family friendly policies section of HR website in summer 2015. New Guidance communicated to researchers in Sussex Researcher Newsletter Sept 2016 – business as usual	July 2015
30	6.8	Monitor the uptake and success rates for the new promotion procedures that take into account special personal circumstances	HR	Paper considered by the RSWG and University Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team		Promotions data provided by HR and information paper provided for April 2016 RSWG meeting. Data indicated a 20% rise in RF in promotion applications in 2016 and a higher success rate of applications declaring special circumstances (72% compared to 67% of applications without special circumstances)	July 2015

						Promotions workshop run in Nov 2015, Sept 2016 and Nov 216 for research fellows. Other actions as described in action 7 of this plan. Annual update to RSWG on RF promotions embedded into business as usual.	
31	6.7	Analysis of diversity spread of research staff/PIs in relation to protected characteristics	HR	Paper considered by the RSWG, further actions identified as appropriate		*Jan 16* – Research staff officer and Assistant Director of HR met to discuss diversity data held on central database. Protected characteristics information is incomplete in the database as there is currently no facility for staff to keep information updated. It will be necessary for self-service function to be online in order to report accurate data. There is currently no indication of timescale for this phase of system implementation.	July 2015
32	6.5	Analysis of flexible working requests and outcomes for research staff	HR	Paper considered by the RSWG, further actions identified as appropriate		Data provided by HR and included in information paper for RSWG April 2016 meeting. No action required other than regular monitoring – embedded into business as usual.	Sept 2015
33	6.10	University to successfully renew Athena SWAN Bronze award and be working towards the institutional Silver award. All Academic Schools in STEMM discipline areas to work towards the Athena SWAN Silver award. Non STEMM schools working towards the newly expanded Athena SWAN award.	PVC, Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Teams (University and School level)	University Bronze Award status renewed. All STEMM Academic Schools Bronze or Silver status.		*Nov 2016* – University Bronze Renewal, Psychology Bronze and Maths Bronze all successful. All STEMM Schools now either Bronze or Silver Status. University SAT expanded to include non STEMM schools. Athena SWAN activity taken forward by DPVC E&D.	May 2017

34	7	Analysis of 2014 staff survey with respect to research staff responses	RSO, HR, RSWG	Analysis paper considered by RSWG, further actions identified as appropriate		*Action superseded by outcomes of CROS 2015. RSWG to consider future staff survey outputs*	July 2015
35	7	Run and analyse CROS 2015 survey and refine support in light of findings.	Research Staff Office	Survey run and outcomes communicated to relevant parties. Recommendations identified and incorporated into relevant action plans.		*Sept 15* - CROS 2015 run with 41% response rate. Outcomes analysed and report and recommendations agreed at RSWG meeting Sept 2015. CROS Communicated and discussed with Senior Management Group Dec 2015, discussed in Jan 2015 by University E&D committee, new Vice-Chancellor briefed in September 2016. New actions arising from CROS incorporated into Concordat Implementation Plan	July 2015
36	7	Review of current development initiatives (e.g. mentoring, training workshops etc)	RSO and RSWG	Review conducted and outcomes published. Actions identified and development provision refined where appropriate for the 2016/17 academic year		Review conducted April-Aug 2016 Paper considered at Autumn 2016 meeting of RSWG. Agreed Recommendations implemented for the 2016/17 programme. Business as Usual	April 2016

New actions arising from CROS 2015 – added Dec 2016 *(The actions below arise from the recommendations of the Sussex CROS 2015 outcomes. The other recommendations from CROS 2015 were already covered by actions previously identified in the 2015-2017 Concordat Implementation plan set out above)*

Action	Concordat Reference	Action	Lead	Success Measure		Progress Comment	Timescale
37		Review alternative approaches to fixed-term contract management implemented at other HEIs and broader sector. Produce report and recommendations based on review.	RSO and RSWG	Full review of alternative approaches undertaken and report considered by University senior management. Actions for next steps identified.		Rolled forward to 2017-21 action plan (action point 2)	April 2017

| 38 | | Investigate other HEIs approaches to supporting postdoctoral health and wellbeing. Make recommendations for health and wellbeing interventions for 16/17 | RSO | Health and wellbeing interventions identified and implemented for the 2016/17 academic year. Positive feedback recorded for interventions and CROS 2017 indicates improvements in 'health and wellbeing' related outcomes. | | Review of internal support for Health and Wellbeing and comparison with other HEIs conducted (April 2016). A plan for health and wellbeing provision/promotion developed for inclusion in the 16/17 provision. New Researcher Wellbeing Page developed and launched in September 2016. Wellbeing coffee morning held Feb 2017 with representation from (Student Life Service, University Counselling services, Chaplaincy, Sussex Sport, Researcher Development, Occupational Health). *'Manage stress, challenge 'imposter' feelings and build your resilience'* workshop held on 24th March (20 attendees) 2017 | July 2016 |