

Brunel University: Action Plan 2011

Brunel University is committed to the implementation of the *Concordat to Support the Development of Researchers* (2008). To that end, the University conducted a gap analysis between July and September 2010, preceded by a survey and focus group of research staff undertaken by the Graduate School and Staff Development. The survey and focus group indicated that, despite a number of events at which the Concordat was discussed and distributed, further work is needed to raise its profile and address institutional shortcomings in its full implementation. The gap analysis was presented to the university's Staff Development Strategy Group in October 2010. The action plan below coordinates effort from a range of stakeholders within the university. This includes the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, the Graduate School, Planning and Policy, HR and Staff Development, and the Placement and Careers Centre. Actions will continue to be monitored and reviewed through the university's Staff Development Strategy Group (*through the formation of a proposed 'Concordat Working Group'*) and the Research and Knowledge-Transfer Committee where appropriate.

CLAUSE	PROPOSED ACTIONS	LEAD	TIMESCALE	
A: Recruitment and Selection				
Principle 1: Recognition and the Importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.				
✓ Gap analysis revealed no additional action required.				
B: Recognition and Value				
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.				
2.3	Research managers should be required to participate in active performance management, including career development guidance, and supervision of those who work in their teams. Employers should ensure that research managers are aware of, and understand their responsibilities for the management of researchers and should provide training opportunities, including equality and diversity training, to support research managers in doing this. Institutions will wish to consider how research managers' performance in these areas is developed,	Research managers to be encouraged to attend training on ' <i>Managing your research staff</i> ' run by Staff Development and Graduate School. This training will also actively be delivered within all Schools and Special Research Institutes to ensure maximum coverage. Equality and diversity training is already compulsory for all staff at the university. Mechanisms for supporting and recognising good researcher management will be explored through	Deputy Heads of Research Group / Staff Development Staff Development	May 2011 onwards

	assessed and rewarded and how effectively this supports good research management.	review of the appraisal of principal investigators / senior managers.	Strategy Group / HR	
2.6	Researchers need to be offered opportunities to develop their own careers as well as having access to additional pay progression. Promotion opportunities should be transparent, effectively communicated and open to all staff. It is helpful if clear career frameworks for early stage researchers are outlined in organisational HR strategies.	<p>✓ Promotion procedures for research staff are transparent and clearly outlined within the staff handbook and on the university's intranet.</p> <p>The University intends to develop a <i>code of practice for the management of research staff</i> – this has already been made explicit in the University's Research Strategy.</p> <p>The university will raise awareness amongst research staff of the existence of the 'special panel for promotion of research staff'. Relevant training will be provided by staff development / Graduate School.</p>	HR / Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee (Senate)	September 2011 – 2012/13
<p>C: Support and Career Development</p> <p>Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.</p> <p>Principle 4: The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.</p>				
3.4	All employers will wish to review how their staff can access professional independent advice on career management in general, particularly the prospect of employment beyond their immediate discipline base, or offering training and placements to broaden awareness of other fields and sectors.	Greater involvement from the Placement and Careers Centre (PCC) will be requested, as outlined in the university's Research Strategy. Specific sessions for research staff on careers guidance and training will be developed, and research staff will be actively encouraged to participate in the forums that already exist linking Brunel to Industry and a range of external employers.	Placement and Careers Centre / Graduate School	July 2011 – 2012/13
3.5	Researchers benefit from clear systems that help them to plan their career development. Employers and funding bodies should assist researchers to make informed choices about their career progression by ensuring that their own policies	As 2.6		

	and processes for promotion and reward are transparent and clearly stated and that all researchers are aware of local and national career development strategies.			
3.6	Employers should provide a planned induction programme for researchers, on appointment to a research post, to ensure early effectiveness through the understanding of the organisation and its policies and procedures. They should also ensure that research managers provide effective research environments for the training and development of researchers and encourage them to maintain or start their continuous professional development.	A central compulsory induction process is currently run through Staff Development. The introduction of an additional induction stream, specifically for research staff, will be considered. CPD provision is under development with a series of innovative activities planned to highlight its importance.	Graduate School / Staff Development HR / Staff Development / Heads of School	September 2011 onwards
3.7	Employers and funders will wish to consider articulating the skills that should be developed at each stage of their staff development frameworks and should encourage researchers to acquire and practice those skills. For example, researchers may be given the opportunity to manage part of the budget for a project, or to act as a mentor or advisor to other researchers and students.	Workshops to promote Researcher Development Framework (RDF) alongside opportunities for personal / professional development to be added as regular skills workshops. Mentoring of research students by research staff to be developed (several already engaged in advising other researchers and students).	Graduate School / Staff Development	September 2011 onwards
3.8	Employers also should provide a specific research career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, which should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers. All researchers should be familiar with such provisions and arrangements.	Examples of current good practice within the university to be further evaluated. A university-wide mentoring scheme for research staff to be developed.	Graduate School / Staff Development / Deputy Heads of Research Group	September 2011 – 2012/13
3.9	Research managers should actively encourage researchers to undertake CPD activity, so far as is possible within the project. It should be stressed that developmental activity can often have a direct impact on the success of the project, by distributing work, taking advantage of individual strengths and talents, and increasing the skill and effectiveness of researchers in key areas such as writing for publication or communicating with a wider audience.	As 5.6		

4.10	Researchers should be empowered by having realistic understanding of, and information about, their own career development and career direction options as well as taking personal responsibility for their choices at the appropriate times. Employers should introduce appraisal systems for all researchers for assessing their professional performance on a regular basis and in a transparent manner. It is important that researchers have access to honest and transparent advice on their prospects for success in their preferred career.	<p>✓ Training for appraisers is currently provided.</p> <p>The formal appraisal system for academic staff will be rolled out to ensure coverage of all research staff, with training available as required.</p> <p>One-to-one coaching available for researchers to discuss development and career aspirations through staff development / Graduate School.</p>	Staff Development / HR / Graduate School	September 2011 onwards
4.11	Employers will wish to ensure that development activities open to researchers include preparation for academic practice. Employers should take measures to ensure broad recognition of CPD schemes from other employing organisations as far as possible, so that researchers are not duly disadvantaged when moving from one employer to another.	As 5.6		
4.12	Employers will ensure that where researchers are provided with teaching and demonstrating opportunities as part of their career development, suitable training and support is provided.	<p>✓ Several research staff currently engaged in teaching / demonstrating where this is of interested.</p> <p>Academic Practice (within Staff Development) and Graduate School to provide further training opportunities in teaching skills. On-line training in these areas is also currently under review.</p>	Staff Development (Academic Practice) / Graduate School	2012 onwards
4.13	Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation and management committees.	Greater involvement / representation of research staff at University Committee level is currently being explored through the Staff Development Strategy Group.	Staff Development Strategy Group	June – December 2011
4.14	Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.	<p>✓ Mentoring workshops are currently run through Staff Development and related schemes have been piloted in two academic Schools.</p> <p>Evaluation of pilot schemes to be completed.</p>	Staff Development /	Current and on-

		Training for mentors and mentees to continue. Formal mentoring system to be recognised and supported for research staff throughout the University.	Graduate School / Deputy Heads of Research Group	going
D: Researchers' Responsibilities				
Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning.				
5.2	Researchers should develop their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge where appropriate and facilitate its use in policy making and the commercialisation of research for the benefit of their employing organisation, as well as the wider society and economy as a whole.	Build on the training in knowledge transfer currently provided for research staff through the Graduate School. This involves internal and external knowledge-transfer experts. Brunel initiatives / partnerships will be encouraged to engage more with research staff through planned events and meetings; research staff will be encouraged to exploit existing expertise / resources that exist within these initiatives. An annual cross-sector career-planning event for researchers will be planned.	Graduate School, Placement and Careers Centre	July 2011 – onwards 2012/13
5.3	Researchers should recognise their responsibility to conduct and disseminate research results in an honest and ethical manner and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Training in research ethics is currently provided for research staff as part of the staff development programme within the university. <p>Training in research ethics and integrity to be enhanced through further workshop provision; Brunel is part of the development group for a series of Epigeum on-line modules on <i>Research Integrity</i> which will be made available and integrated into training for researchers once complete.</p>	University's Research Ethics Committee / Graduate School / Staff Development Website	September 2011 – 2013 (and ongoing)
5.4	Researchers should also be aware that the skills and achievements required to move on from a research position may not be the same as the skills and achievements which	As 3.4, 3.8 and 5.6.		

	they displayed to reach that position.			
5.5	<p>Researchers should recognise that the primary responsibility for managing and pursuing their career is theirs. Accordingly, they should identify training needs and actively seek out opportunities for learning and development in order to further that career and take responsibility for their choices. Research managers and employers also have a responsibility to provide honest advice and appropriate structures, and to equip researchers with the tools to manage their own careers. Research managers should encourage research staff under their supervision to attend appropriate training and career development courses and events.</p>	Principal Investigators to be encouraged by School Heads to attend training on managing research staff (as 2.3)	Staff Development / Graduate School	2011 onwards
5.6	<p>Researchers should ensure that their career development requirements and activities are regularly discussed, monitored and evaluated throughout the year in discussion with their research manager and mentor, and that they commit themselves fully to all such activities. Researchers are encouraged to record their PDP and CPD activities, a log of which may be presented to current and future employers as appropriate.</p>	Training for Researchers on PDP and CPD. Raise awareness of electronic resources to support record keeping. Review of PDP to be encouraged as part of systematic appraisal.	Staff Development / Graduate School / E-Learning Team	Current activity – 2013/14

E: Diversity and Equality

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

- ✓ Gap analysis revealed - no additional action required. Brunel University procedures and policies are in full accordance with related legislation, applied to all staff, regardless of contract terms. Diversity and equality training is compulsory for all members of staff as part of induction process. Further training on cultural awareness is provided by staff development through a dedicated diversity and equality trainer.
- The university has clear policy and code of practice on harassment and bullying and a number of resources to support staff, including Anti-Harassment Advisors.
- Staff representativeness is continually monitored and published annually.
- The University is signed up to the Athena SWAN Charter and several other initiatives.
- Specialist training and a range of workshops for staff with English as a second language have been developed through staff development; this includes investment in the development of complementary specialist on-line training.

F: Implementation and Review

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.