Brunel University: Action Plan 2013 – 2015

Brunel University is committed to the implementation of the *Concordat to Support the Development of Researchers* (2008). The Action Plan 2013 (below) reviews and updates progress against the initial Action Plan 2011.

✓ Indicates **actions completed** from previous Action Plan 2011 / **New actions** in blue

	CLAUSE	PROPOSED ACTIONS	LEAD	PROGRESS / 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.				
The University is committed to the regular review and maintenance of best practice in this area.				
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, assessed and rewarded and how effectively this supports good research management.	✓ (2011) Research managers to be encouraged to attend training on *'Managing your research staff'*. We will strengthen areas of training that support supervisor and PI development within the Staff Development programme; we already provide supervisors with training on the RDF and will ensure broader coverage and encourage RDF use to inform PDPs and staff development reviews. This training will be delivered within new Colleges and Research Institutes to ensure maximum coverage. Mechanisms for supporting and recognising good researcher management will be explored through review of the appraisal of principal investigators /	Heads / Staff Development / HR / Graduate School Staff Development / Graduate School / HR	Regular activity, termly, Oct 2013 – Apr 2015 Jan – Apr 2014

		senior managers.		
		Further engagement with PIs and senior managers through workshops /seminars on good management of research staff and related issues.	Staff Development / 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.	✓ (2011) Promotion procedures for research staff are transparent and clearly outlined within the staff handbook and on the University's intranet.		Completed
		✓ (2011) The University intends to develop a *code of practice for the management of research staff* – this has already been made explicit in the University's Research Strategy.	HR / Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee (Senate)	Completed
		✓ (2011) 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.	Staff Development	Completed and continual regular activity: Sep 2013 onwards
		We will appoint a Career Development Champion within the University for research staff.	Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee	By Oct 2014

C: Support and Career Development

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

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

| 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. | ✓ (2011) 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 | Placement and Careers Centre / Graduate School | Jul 2011 – 13 |

		Industry and a range of external employers.		
		✓ Sponsorship of research staff (7%) to attend Imperial University's intensive Career Development Residential workshops.	Graduate School	Apr 2012; Nov 2012; Apr 2013
		✓ Provide termly focus groups for research staff and activities tailored specifically around career development. Enable researchers to access specialist intensive career development workshops.	Graduate School / Placement and Careers Centre	Sep 2012, May 2013. Termly: Oct 2013, Feb 2014, May 2014, Jul 2014
		The *Ready for Work* programme (pilot) will be delivered to which researchers are recruited as group / project facilitators.	Placement and Careers Centre / Staff Development	Recruitment Jul – Oct 2013
		RSDO Impact Academy to help researchers improve their understanding of how best to work with companies in the automotive sector.	Research Support and Development Office (RSDO)	Jul 2013 (launch) through 2014
		The University will reorganise its research portfolio into three major research institutes thereby promoting better opportunities for researcher integration, collaboration and development.	PVC (Research) / senior management	Apr 2013 – Sep 2014
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 and processes for promotion and reward are transparent and clearly stated and that all researchers are aware of local and national career development strategies.	As 3.4		
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	✓ (2011) A central compulsory induction process is currently run through Staff Development. We will introduce a supplementary induction process, specifically for research staff only, to	Graduate School / Staff Development HR / Staff Development	Run termly, continual Continued from previous plan, to be

	and encourage them to maintain or start their continuous professional development.	enhance the current generic induction process which all staff attend and include clearer signposting to support and development resources available to them. We will also develop a specific induction checklist for researchers to increase PI awareness of processes and issues.	/ Graduate School /	implemented following completion of Transformational Change Prog (termly from Oct 2014)
		An electronic newsletter and updates on opportunities will be distributed (with mail-list updated termly).	Graduate School	Termly, Nov 2013 – Sept 2014
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.	✓ (2011) 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. ✓ (2011) Training provided through the Graduate School's Researcher Development Programme contains a range of activities and events aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF).	Graduate School / Staff Development / RSDO	Two workshops delivered per term from Sep 2012 (continual)
		An online portal will be developed to provide a single point of access to the full range of research-related services.	RSDO	By Oct 2014
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.	✓ (2011) Examples of current good practice within the University to be further evaluated. We will establish a new mentoring scheme for under-represented groups. We will enhance the coaching and mentoring culture within the University and opportunities for	Graduate School / Staff Development / HR / PIs and managers HR Staff Development, Graduate School, RSDO	Sep 2011 –13 Est. Nov 2012 and Nov 2013 On request, continual from Jan

		researchers to access these; one-to-one coaching along with support for fellowship and grant applications (through the Graduate School and RSDO). The University will provide ILM Level 5 training in Coaching and Mentoring for Leadership, growing a central pool of coaches and mentors.		2012 Jan – Oct 2013 (first tranche); Jan – Oct 2014 (second tranche)
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 ✓ Grant Academy Programme for ESRC Future Research Leaders – providing early and mid-career researchers with targeted writing skills training and support to develop research grants. A Research Impact Academy will be run, linked to EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) award. We will run workshops on widening participation and sandpit activities for researchers.	RSDO RSDO Graduate School / RSDO	2012/13 From Jul 2013 – Jul 2014 Oct 2013 – Oct 2014
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.	✓ (2011) Training for reviewers and reviewees (for performance and development review) is provided. ✓ Appraisal system exists for all academic staff, including research staff. We will appoint a Career Development Champion for research staff to visibly support career development initiatives and activities within the University.	Staff Development HR HR / Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee	Completed Continual and subject to review and monitoring through Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee (a committee of Council)
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	We will actively review training provision in academic practice as part of the University's Transformational Change Programme. We will establish a revised programme of support	Brunel Education Enhancement Centre (BEEC) / Academic Practice BEEC	Oct 2013 – Apr 2014 From Oct 2014

	another.	for academic practice through which staff can develop their teaching and learning skills. See 4.12		
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.	✓ The inclusion of dedicated sessions on PhD supervision and the RDF within the University's annual Teaching and Learning Symposia. Online training in 'University and College Teaching' will be available to all staff, including all researchers, and will be integrated into blended learning opportunities in this area.	Academic Practice / Graduate School Graduate School	Apr 2013 – Jul 2015 From Sep 2013
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.	✓ (2011) Greater involvement / representation of research staff at University Committee level is currently being explored through the Staff Development Strategy Group. We will launch a new Brunel Research Staff Association. New committees arising as part of the University's Transformational Change Programme will ensure representation of research staff on appropriate committees. We will appoint a member of research staff to University Senate.	Staff Strategy Group Graduate School University Senate	2011 – 12 Jan – Feb 2014 Oct – Dec 2013 Oct 2013
4.14	Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.	✓ (2011) Mentoring workshops are currently run through Staff Development and related schemes have been piloted in two academic Schools. We will evaluate pilot schemes and continue to provide training for mentors and mentees. We will	Staff Development / Graduate School /	Jul 2013 – Sep 2014

		propose a formal mentoring system for research staff within the University (also see Principle 6 below).	Deputy Heads of Research	

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.	✓ (2011) Build on the training in knowledge transfer currently provided for research staff through the Graduate School. This involves internal and external knowledge-transfer experts.	Graduate School / Placement and Careers Centre / Research Support and Development Office	Jul 2011
		We will encourage the University's initiatives / partnerships to engage more with research staff through planned events and meetings; research staff will be encouraged to exploit existing expertise / resources within these initiatives.	(as above)	Continual (activity monitored through Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee)
		✓ With a £600k EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA), RSDO established an Impact Academy to help early and mid-career researchers improve their understanding of how best to work with companies in the automotive sector.	RSDO	2012 - 2013
		✓ Collaborative training opportunities, with the aim of helping researchers to broaden their networks, provided research staff with access to seven additional events.	Graduate School / regional collaborators	Aug 2012 – Jul 2013
		We will run regional collaborative training on networking and collaboration for researchers, at least four events per annum (Brunel, QMU, UEL, UCL).	Graduate School	06-12-13; 12-03-14; 07-05-14; 12-06-14
		We will develop an internal electronic database of research staff to highlight expertise and support / promote collaboration.	Graduate School	Jan – Dec 2014

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.	✓ (2011) Training in research ethics is currently provided for research staff as part of the staff development programme within the University. ✓ University is signed up the Concordat for Research Integrity. Deliver integrated training on research integrity and data management; on-line training in Research Integrity will be available to all researchers.	UREC / Staff Development / Graduate School Graduate School / Library / Research Integrity Working Group	Regular provision in Staff Development and Graduate School programmes Dec 2013 – Jul 2015
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 they displayed to reach that position.	As 3.4, 3.8 and 5.6.		
5.5	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.	(2011) Principal Investigators to be encouraged by School Heads to attend training on managing research staff (as 2.3) We will launch and support a Brunel Research Staff Association.	Staff Development / Graduate School Research Staff / Graduate School	Continual workshop provision within Staff Dev prog subject to termly evaluation and review Scoping activities - 26 Sep 2013 / 12 Nov 2013; Launch Jan-Feb 2014
5.6	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.	We will promote PDP and CPD to researchers through the Researcher Development Programme and raise awareness of electronic resources to support record keeping (e.g. Vitae RDF planner). Active review of PDP will be encouraged as part of performance review and development. We will review the pilot of the Vitae RDF planner.	Graduate School / Learning & Technology Team Graduate School	Form part of regular induction sessions for researchers (monthly, first Wednesday of each month) Pilot ends 21 Nov 13

		We will explore developing an internal PDA-based PDP tool for researchers.	Graduate School	Jan – Oct 2014

E: Diversity and Equality

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

Areas delivered:

- ✓ The University's 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 their induction process. Further training on cultural awareness is provided by staff development through a dedicated diversity and equality trainer.
- ✓ The University has a 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.
- ✓ 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.

   Additional activity:

   The University received a Bronze Athena SWAN award in April 2012.

   The University appointed a senior academic to the position of Equal Opportunities Champion affirming the importance of its commitment to this area (Oct 2012 continual).

   Two University departments plan to submit applications for Silver Athena SWAN awards (Nov 2013).

   New mentoring schemes have been developed for (i) Black and Ethnic Minority staff and (ii) Female researchers / academics (2012/13, 2013/14).

   The University has established a series of Equality Objectives (2012 – 2016) – detailed below.

   The University will provide 40 STEM PGT scholarships for women in 2014 through a dedicated programme as a pipeline for building research capacity in this area.

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.

- ✓ Regular participation in sector-wide surveys (PRES, CROS, PIRLS), relevant regional and national stakeholder consultations and meetings.

Actions and progress relating to the plan will be monitored by the Action Group, chaired by PVC (Research), comprising representation from the Graduate School (lead), HR / Staff Development, RSDO, PCC and local RSA. Progress will be reported to University Council through the Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee.