Action Plan (Concordat Implementation Strategy) 2015-17

The Action Plan 2015 builds on our previous action plans from 2011 and 2013. These plans can be found at:
http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/policies-and-other-important-documents

	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.			
1a	Enhance the induction process for research staff. We will: - Conduct a focus group to identify issues and shortcomings around the induction process; - Enhance the PI checklist to include better signposting to resources to support researcher induction; - Monitor the impact of changes made to the process through an annual internal evaluation and through CROS and PIRLS 2017. Success measures: - Annual internal survey run to monitor take-up and impact of induction process for research staff. Feedback recognises positive impact of changes. - PI checklist revision completed by March 2016. - CROS 2017 shows increase in *'induction completed and was useful'* measure in comparison to CROS 2015 measure.	GS / RSA Research Institutes / Researcher Concordat Implementation Group	Run survey by May 2016. Interim data reported to RCIG by October 2016. CROS to be run by June 2017. Analyse data and report to relevant committees by October 2017.
1b	Work with HR to promote and increase opportunities for research staff to be involved in the recruitment and selection of staff to projects. Success measures: - Review current recruitment procedure for researchers (inc. senior researchers and research	RCIG / HR	Process of review to begin October 2015; progress to be monitored quarterly through RCIG; Pilot to begin Sept 2016. Evaluate at end of academic year 2016/17.

	leaders). - Research staff encouraged to undertake training in recruitment and selection. - Inclusion of research staff in selection panels encouraged where appropriate and relevant. - Processes evaluated and reported to Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee.		
1c	The HR director will continue to lead on reviewing our processes and procedures, including: - Monitoring the number and use of fixed-term contracts issued; - Opportunities for staff promotion and progression. Success measure: - Quantitative data relating to number of fixed term research contracts collated, reported and reviewed through committee structures. - Staff promotions and progression analysed by contract status, gender, age and ethnicity to identify any patterns of under / over-representation.	HR	Data reported annually to RCIG. First report by Sept 2016. Second report by Sept 2017. Reports via HR to Equal Opportunities and Human Resources Committee and / or Strategic Recruitment Committee
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.			
2a	Create a handbook for research staff / post-docs that provides a code of practice and clearly signposts the support and resources available to them. Success measure: - Handbook completed by January 2017. - Handbook distributed to all new and current postdocs by Mar 2017.	GS / RSA / RIs / RCIG	Handbook to be drafted by Oct 2016. RSA and research staff network to be consulted. Draft to be completed by Jan 2017. Handbook to be distributed to research staff by March 2017.
2b	Review data from the local university-wide staff survey (Brunel Voice). This was conducted for the first time in May 2015. The results were not stratified for research staff as a separate group, so we will explore the possibility of doing this in future iterations of the survey, which will be conducted biannually. Success measure: - A year on year increase in completion rate achieved for the survey. - The additional cost of survey analysis by staff group explored. - Survey analysed and stratified by staff group, if possible. - Data collated and shared with all staff groups, including research staff via research staff network meeting. - Any enhancement activities / outcomes stemming from the survey promoted across the	HR / SD / GS	Internal survey to be run by May and again between 2017. Data analysis by Aug 2017.

	University. - Research staff representation actively sought and encouraged within any post-survey advisory groups. - Survey findings compared to CROS / PIRLS outcomes to identify common themes and inform actions by Aug 2017.		
2c	Introduce a new PDR process – **mandatory** for all University staff – and review participation rates for different staff groups. Evaluate researchers' experiences of the process through annual focus groups and through analysis of feedback from the biennial CROS survey. Success measures: - PDR process delivered in line with University timetable with expectation of staff completion rate of over 80% (by Nov 2017). - Participation figures collated, analysed by group, to identify gaps in appraisal completion. - Annual focus groups completed and outcomes reported to RCIG and to HR. - Reported increase in PDR participation observed in CROS / PIRLS 2017 with response levels showing improvement over reported PDR participation for CROS / PIRLS 2015.	HR / Staff Development Review (GS / RSA / RCIG)	First mandatory PDR process to be completed by Nov 2015. Research staff focus group following first iteration of PDR by Apr 2016. Review responses re: PDR within CROS / PIRLS by Jun 2017.
2d	Evaluate and review the MINT and the Research Award schemes (numbers awarded, outcomes and progress of participants). Success measures: - Initial year of schemes evaluated in terms of **number and quality of applications** and reported through the Research Institutes committee structure. - A new field created in BRAD identifying all research staff and enabling quantification of their research activity as a group. - Number of grants involving research staff increases quantitatively over planning period.	Research Institutes / RCIG	Deadline Oct 2016.
2e	Re-establish regular meetings of the Brunel Research Administrators and Managers Network (BRAMNET) to provide a forum for information sharing and updates, planning and discussion amongst this particular staff group. Success measure: - All research administrators and managers invited to attend meetings. - At least one topic-linked meeting held per quarter. - Number of attendees quantified and feedback following meetings collated and reviewed	Planning / Research Institutes	Meetings to run once a term from Autumn 2015.

	annually.		
2f	Introduce explicit mechanisms for recognising and rewarding PIs / research leaders / supervisors who support the development of their staff and manage their research teams well. This will be a bottom up mechanism involving researchers and will be used as a focus for highlighting and sharing good practice. Success measure: - At least one University-wide mechanism of recognising and rewarding PIs / research leaders / supervisors introduced with ownership by research staff. - Researchers' activity involved in finalising the scheme and determining mechanism of operation. - Candidates and awarded individuals highlighted in University Newsletter.	RCIG / GS / RSA / Deputy VC (Research) / Dean of Research / College Vice Deans of Research VC	Annual recognition process to be established by Oct 2016.
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.			
3a	Pilot a Springboard programme for junior female research and academic staff. Evaluate programme and report to relevant committees. Establish links with other similar programmes within the region in order to explore facilitating a larger network for female researchers. Success measure: - Pilot successfully completed by Jun 2016. - Research and academic staff participation and completion rates monitored. - Evaluations completed and reviewed. - Outcomes reported to GS Committee and Equal Opportunities and HR Committee - Feasibility of regional network for female research staff to be explored by Aug 2016	GS / HR	Pilot to begin Feb 2016 and completed by June 2016.
3b	Improve mechanisms for regular coordinated communication about development opportunities for research staff, making better use of the University's new SharePoint system. Monitor engagement with system by research staff. Success measure: - At least one relevant SharePoint site for research staff introduced by end of planning period. - Levels of participation and usage reviewed by Dec 2016. - Improvements to communication identified and implemented by Jan 2017	RSA / GS / Marketing & Communications	Establish area within system by Oct 2015. Use system for communication between Oct 2015 and Dec 2016. Review participation and usage by Dec 2016.

3c	Increase researcher engagement with University-wide programmes and schemes (e.g. coaching and mentoring) and encourage wider participation through programme improvements, better promotion and stronger peer-communication strategies. Encourage engagement of researchers, where appropriate, both as trained coaches / mentors and coachees / mentees. Success measure: - Review conducted of existing coaches and mentors to expand provision (by Jan 2016). - Coaches identified and coaching routinely offered as development option for researchers (by Oct 2015). - Internal coaching and mentoring promoted to all staff within the University by June 2016. - At least one coaching / mentoring scheme piloted specifically fort researchers by Feb 2017. - Appropriate mentor matches made for above with briefing workshops attended by all parties. - Coaching programmes reviewed and evaluated by Sept 2017. - Involvement of researchers as coaches on internal programmes (student and staff) quantified annually and reported to RCIG Autumn meeting.	HR (staff development) / GS / PDC RCIG / RIs	Review existing pool of coaches by Jan 2016; Coaching promoted for all staff by June 2016; Coaching / mentoring programme for researchers piloted by Feb 2017.
3d	Pilot a collaborative cross-University development programme to help researchers develop skills required to enhance research performance (including securing funding, profile and output management, knowledge exchange and impact delivery). We will measure impact by exploring a range of success measures, including monitoring the number of grants on which research staff and ECRs are named as lead or co-applicants. Success measure: - *Collaboration in research* event delivered centrally for research staff with at least 75% capacity attendance (Nov 2015). - Pilot successfully delivered and reviewed by end of planning period (Sept 2017). - Increase in number of grants recorded on which ECRs and research staff are named as lead or co-applicants over the planning period (Sept 2015 – Sept 2017).	RSDO / RIs / College Vice-Deans Research	Programme planned and delivered by Sept 2017.
4a	Enhance and evaluate the provision of online training opportunities as an on-going part of the Researcher Development Programme. Promote and integrate the online courses that have been developed and establish mechanisms to evaluate usage and engagement. Collate feedback from researchers. Success measure: - Mechanism to quantify usage and engagement with courses established (in consultation with	ULRSD / GS / BEEC (Learning Technology Team)	From Sept 2015 followed by reviews – Apr 2016, Sept 2016, Apr 2017, Sept 2017. Implementation groups to meet annually (Mar 2016) with additional communication via webinar and online conferences).

	course developers). - Regular usage data collated and reported to GS Board. - Ongoing participation in international implementation groups for the online courses, providing pooled usage data (annual meetings). - Pooled usage data analysed through implementation groups and reported to GS and RCIG. - Increased integration of online courses in blended learning observed (with courses integrated as compulsory where appropriate). - Positive feedback collated from course users. - Evaluation completed and any new recommendations implemented by end of planning period (Sept 2017).		
4b	Improve our Career Development provision for researchers with input from the Professional Development Centre (Careers), RIs and Colleges. Success measures: - At least one Career Development Day for Researchers successfully organised at the University (with involvement of postdoctoral alumni, funders and employers) to include information about non-academic career opportunities by end of planning period (Sept 2017). - The feasibility of a London-wide career development event for researchers explored and discussed within the London regional network.	PDC / RSA Regional Network(s) / ULRSD / PDC	One Career Development Day by June 2017. Annual or biannual event (to run by August 2017).
4c	Launch Postdoc Career Development Programme targeting and supporting the most promising researchers. Success measure: - New leadership programme for junior to mid-career postdoctoral researchers designed for up to 12 researchers (to begin by December 2016). - Quantitative and qualitative outcomes measured through programme evaluation with all participants (to include fellowship applications, article submissions, coaching and mentoring). - Career development and transition of participants monitored along with research productivity.	Research Institutes (with support from HR / RSDO / PDC)	Series of workshops, meetings and events scheduled across the academic year to be launched by December 2016 and completed by end of planning period.
4d	Purchase a site license for the Vitae RDF planner for researchers. This will be supported by a series of implementation workshops and the level of engagement will be monitored quarterly. Use of the planner will be encouraged to support the PDR process for researcher staff. Success measure: - RDF planner successfully promoted so that at least 20% of research staff have engaged with the	GS / RSA / Research Managers / PIs	Acquire license by Sept 2015; implementation Oct 2015 to Apr 2016; quarterly review of uptake and usage. Review and renewal of license by Aug 2016; Repeat above for 2016 /17

	system. - Engagement and usage of the Planner monitored regularly between October 2015 and September 2017. - Qualitative feedback on planner acquired through Research Staff Network meetings, focus group and annual survey. - RDF planner highlighted to research managers / PIs as part of 'Managing Research Staff' workshops. - RDF planner recognised and referenced by increased number of staff by end of planning period.		
4e	Launch a new programme of workshops and seminars as part of the University's new Academic Practice and Professional Excellence Framework (APEX). These will offer support and opportunities for researchers and staff to develop / enhance their skills in academic practice and to pursue HEA accreditation. Success measure: - Workshop programme launched by October 2015, workshop programme shows cross-College attendance. APEX attendance quantified for researchers and outcomes reported. - Attendance on programmes and workshops by researchers shows year on year increase. - Increase in number of successful accreditation applications to HEA recorded during the planning period (between Sept 2015 and Sept 2017).	BEEC	Launch of programmes by Sept 2015. Workshop and programme attendance reported annually at end of academic year. Number of applications and percentage of successful application obtained for the planning period by Sept 2017.
4f	Organise three Professorial Workshops, to provide a collegial forum for PIs to discuss a range of issues pertinent to their roles.. Success measure: - Three workshops delivered by end of planning period and attended by a good representation of senior research staff (professors).	Dean of Research	Three workshops delivered by June 2016.
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.			
5a	The Research Staff Association will continue to liaise with internal stakeholders to help raise awareness of the Concordat implementation strategy and promote its activities to researchers. It will work to encourage broader membership of the group from the research staff community.	RSA (facilitated by GS)	RSA meeting once per term from Sept 2015. First annual conference to be planned by Aug 2016. Feedback collated and reported

	Success measures: - RSA meet at least once per term. - Terms of reference for Association established and reviewed annually. - Annual Research Staff Conference planned with support from the Graduate School / PDC. - Participant feedback from conference collated and reported to RCIG. - Four focus groups for research staff organised over the planning period, to gain feedback on Concordat implementation and plans for activity and further developments.		by Oct 2016. Second annual conference to be planned by Aug 2017. Feedback collated and reported by Sept 2017.
5b	Help research staff to develop a better online presence and improve links to resources, following University website redevelopment (by Mar 2016). Success measure: - Web pages for research staff reviewed and updated by Mar 2016. - Web pages maintained by GS but located and accessible from other relevant areas, such as University Research page (by Mar 2016) - Researcher-led *Research Life* project formally launched and resource better promoted to researchers by July 2016. - Mechanisms to monitor engagement and resource access (e.g. site visits, link access, 'likes', feedback and comments) measured to determine accessibility and impact of resources by the end of the planning period (Sept 2017).	GS / RSA	Jan to Mar 2016 (planned instalment of new BUL website and content updates). Research Life and general resources launched by July 2016 (at annual conference).
5c	Work with the alumni office, with a view to improving support for staff at end of contract, and to help build a stronger career development network for researchers. Success measure: - Activity to monitor and engage postdocs who have left the University scoped and completed by end of planning period.	PDC	Deadline July 2017.
5d	Extend channels of communication about Concordat action plan and outcomes from Concordat Implementation Group to better inform local activity at College / Departmental level (e.g. Staff Development Strategy Group, College Research Boards, and Institute Management Board). Success measure: - Annual report produced and delivered to College Research Committees.	Concordat Implementation Group / GS	Quarterly from Autumn 2015 to Autumn 2017.

	- Greater input invited from College Research Committees.		
E: Diversity and Equality **Principle 6:** Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.			
6a	Support actions within the University's Athena SWAN (AS) strategy (2015 – 2018) and the University's Equality and Diversity (E&D) Strategy (2015 – 2020) Success measures: - Athena SWAN strategy specifically encompasses Research staff within its remit. - Delivery of AS strategy evidenced through review of relevant data and impact measures available at end of planning period (*please see Athena SWAN action plan for reference*). - Delivery of E & D strategy evidenced through review of relevant data and impact measures available at end of planning period *(please see Equality and Diversity action plan for reference)*.	HR / E&D / Athena SWAN Committee / PVC E & D / College Vice Deans and Associate Deans E & D	AS strategy 2015 – 2018 (with annual evaluation and data review). E&D strategy 2015 – 2020 (with annual evaluation and data review).
6b	Revise the communication around the Athena SWAN Research Awards to make explicit that eligible independent researchers (REF definition) are encouraged to apply. Success measure: - Communication reviewed and made more explicit for all staff. - Number of applications received from research staff increases during planning period. - Success of communication and increased awareness of scheme reviewed via research staff network meetings.	HR / E&D / AS Committee	Update communication by Oct 2015. Review applications to scheme annually by Sept 2016, then Sept 2017.
6c	Work to identify female research staff who have been on successive contracts at BUL; examine data to identify any characteristics common to this group, and explore provision of additional support for their career development. Success measure: - Data above reviewed, quantified and reported on an annual basis. - Equality impact assessment reporting enhanced to enable development of targeted strategic intervention (by May 2017).	HR / PVC Equal Opportunities and Staff Development/ College Vice Deans of Research / College Deans Equal	Annually, by Nov 2016 and Nov 2017.
6d	Continue to run RCIG meetings 6 to 8 times per annum to oversee and review implementation of the Concordat Action Plan. Review membership annually to ensure adequate representation of internal stakeholders. Consider extending membership (e.g. to include PGR representation and representation from Communications or Marketing (e.g. Research Marketing Manager).	RCIG	6 – 8 meetings per annum (approximately every six weeks).

	Success measures: - Group meets six to eight times per annum. - Key developments shared with researchers as a regular item in RSA / Research Staff Network meetings. - Membership reviewed annually at Autumn RCIG meeting. - Up to two new members invited to the join the group per annum if required.		
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.			
7a	Continue to participate in sector-wide surveys (PRES, CROS, PIRLS), relevant regional and national stakeholder consultations, conferences and meetings. Success measure: - Response levels to CROS and PIRLS remain in line with, or above, sector average. - Additional communication activity around CROS and PIRLS survey completions – outcome data presented to research staff and other stakeholder groups. - Recommendations generated and shared with senior management.	ULRSD / GS / RCIG	Survey to run by June 2017. Data analysed and reported by Sept 2017.
7b	Continue to raise awareness of the Concordat (to support the career development of researchers): Success measure: - Concordat report produced for College and Institutes Research Committees. - Annual report produced for Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee. - CROS / PIRLS data and findings summarised and reported through committee structure. - Improved communication before and after launch of CROS and PIRLS surveys, with assistance from Communications team. - Completion rates for CROS and PIRLS 2017 match or exceed previous completion rates of 29% and 44% respectively (for 2015).	RCIG / ULRSD / Planning / Communications and Marketing	Reporting to committees to coincide with committee schedules. Data compared to sector aggregate by Dec 2017.

This implementation plan will be overseen by the (Researcher) Concordat Implementation Group (RCIG). This group comprises: University Lead for Research Staff Development (Graduate School), Planning Manager (Research Strategy), Senior HR Consultant, Equality and Diversity Manager, and research staff (including Chair of the Research Staff Association). It is chaired by the Dean of Research, who is also the Career Development Champion for research staff. Reports and actions from RCIG are then referred to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) and are reported to Executive Board. Reports and actions might also be referred to other University committees as

/ when necessary (such as the Equality and Diversity Strategy Group). Annual reports are also submitted to the College Research Boards and Research Institutes Board. Membership of RCIG is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

The University is committed, through its action plan and related activity, to creating a positive, supportive and career-enhancing environment for its research staff. Comments, suggestions and queries are encouraged and invited and can be sent to the Researcher Concordat Implementation Group.

Glossary

APEX - Academic Practice and Professional Excellence Framework

BEEC – Brunel Educational Excellence Centre

BRAMNET – Brunel Research Administrators and Managers Network

BUL – Brunel University London

CROS – Careers in Research Online Survey

E&D – Equality and Diversity team

GS – Graduate School

HR – Human Resources

MINT – **M**onthly **Int**ernship Scheme for Postdoctoral Researchers

PDC – Professional Development Centre (containing the Graduate School, Careers, Innovation Hub and Modern Languages)

PDP – Professional Development Plan

PDR – Performance and Development Review

PIRLS – Principal Investigators and Research leaders Survey

RCIG – (Researcher) Concordat Implementation Group

RIs – Research Institutes

RSA – Research Staff Association

RSDO – Research Support and Development Office

SD – Staff Development

ULRSD - University Lead for Research Staff Development

VLS – Virtual Learning Environment