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Faculty of Engineering

Researcher Concordat Action Plan

Feb, 2023

What is the Researcher Concordat?

Agreement between **employers of researchers** and **research funders** on the expectations for the professional development and employment conditions of researchers in the UK

Overarching principles:

1) Environment and Culture
Excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture

2) Employment
Researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise their value and importance

3) Professional and Career Development
Professional and career development are integral to enabling researchers to develop their full potential

Obligations for each of the four stakeholders:

1) Institutions
Universities and research institutes as employers of researchers

2) Funders
Providing funding for public or private research

3) Managers of researchers
Having direct line management responsibility for researchers

4) Researchers
Employed primarily to conduct research

The Concordat
to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Commonly known as the Researcher Development Concordat

SEPTEMBER 2019

Faculty of Engineering will …

Environment and Culture

- Communicate 'Concordat Launch' via a dedicated event by faculty leadership
- Maintain researcher focussed communication (i.e. via Town Hall meetings) including feedback / outcomes from surveys involving research staff
- Hold dedicated Induction sessions each quarter for new researchers (include role of People Board, ERF etc., and their remits)
- Send funding opportunities email by default to all researchers, highlighting clearly which ones can be applied for by research staff
- Raise awareness of support structures and processes for reporting bad practice including bullying
- Provide regular research integrity training for all research-active staff

Employment

- Communicate processes around recruitment and redeployment, highlighting transparency and fairness
- Review the ADC form in line with other faculties and HR to ensure they are fit-for-purpose for researchers
- Review and refresh induction and training related to quality researcher supervision, in conjunction with the Research Academy, ensuring fit-for-purpose; and that it is refreshed and attended by all supervisors at suitable intervals
- Communicate roles and responsibilities to PIs and line managers and raise awareness of processes if dealing with conflicting demands
- HR to contact research staff who have been on University contracts for more than 4 years and inform them of their change to "permanent with underlying funding"
- Provide the opportunity for leavers' to complete exit surveys beyond their leaving date to ensure responses

Professional and Career Development

- Actively communicate the 10-days researchers' personal development entitlement via a launch event for researchers (with a separate communications to supervisors)
- In collaboration with other faculties and HR, understand and implement how to include the 10-days development opportunities in new researcher contracts
- Establish and communicate guidelines and suggestions on what the 10 days can be used for
- Ensure the 10-day outcomes are a mandatory topic for the ADC meetings
- Develop and communicate case-studies highlighting different researcher career pathways beyond the initial post-doc contract
- Provide clear eligibility and training guidelines around teaching

Managers will …

Environment and Culture

- Attend relevant training on supervising and managing researchers, including refreshers at appropriate intervals

- Create inclusive environments (with accessible wellbeing and mental health support officers)

- Consider flexible working options in line with business need

- Promote information about opportunities for researcher engagement in outreach and policy making activities

Employment

- Undergo training on running effective ADC meetings and share best practice cases with others

- Undergo training on effective supervision practices (e.g. unconscious bias and EDI training)

- Support appropriate induction processes within guidelines

- Investigate ways to support continuity of contracts between projects, based on business need

- Engage in regular discussions with researchers around agreed objectives, achievement of these objectives and career aspirations

Professional and Career Development

- Highlight and acknowledge significant researcher inputs within successful awards by attributing appropriate recognition and credit splits

- Enable researchers to be part of the process of appointing an agreed ADC reviewer (i.e. line managers or non line manager), to ensure discussion on career development and training

- Where appropriate, ensure recognition for research staff as PGR co-supervisors

- Actively support, monitor and provide opportunities and access to 10-days career development, reporting as required to the faculty

Researchers will …

Environment and Culture

- Proactively engage with the Engineering Research Futures (ERF) to address researcher-related issues for the betterment of their working environment

- Actively engage with faculty bodies and committees, such as the Faculty People Board, EDI Committee, Health and Safety Committee; to ensure our community is fair and equitable

Employment

- Confirm they have engaged fully in the induction process document (i.e. FoE H&S online training sessions)

- Take personal ownership of their career development and training including actively engaging with 10 days allowance

- Record and feedback their use of 10 days allowance to be shared at ADC meetings

Professional and Career Development

- Contribute and engage with the ERF activities, newsletter and website

- Arrange at least one annual career development review meeting with their line managers (and/or Careers Services)

- Consider teaching courses, where relevant within the eligibility guidelines

Examples of researcher development opportunities

- Engaging with the public (e.g. Pint of Science)
- Supporting widening participation and outreach initiatives
- Engaging with policy-makers
- Participating within Department, Faculty or University wide committees
- Teaching and supporting student learning and supervision
- Entrepreneurial activities (IP, commercialising an idea, technology transfer)
- Engagement with professional societies' activities (IET, IMechE, etc.)
- Acquiring new cross-sector skills (e.g. finance, accounting, contract negotiation, languages, etc.)
- Developing training courses, etc.
- Volunteering to be mentors / mentoring activities
- Engaging with Careers and Employability Services
- Supporting proposal writing
- Participating in seminars, workshops and conferences not part of funded project

Any TRAINING which is required for researchers to conduct their work is not part of development, e.g. Research Ethics training, Software training, Safety training, etc.

For any questions, contact:
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