



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Concordat Action Plan

January 2019 – December 2020



















PRINCIPLE 1: Recruitment & Selection

Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
1.	The HR L&D team will work in partnership with the research community to evaluate the value of the existing University induction programme for new to Swansea and new to College researchers. We will sustain the areas of value and develop and implement with pace areas of required improvement.	HR: L&D December 2019	70% of researchers are satisfied with the quality of this induction. 100% of newly appointed researchers complete the revised University induction programme within the first month 100% of statutory and essential training completed.
	Embed attendance MI to ensure all research colleagues attend induction process to monitor and ensure all staff complete staff induction within the first month of employment. This will include the following statutory and essential training modules: • Data Protection, Anti-Money Laundering & Anti-Bribery • Equality and Diversity in the Workplace • Fire Awareness & Display Screen Equipment • Unconscious Bias • Information Security Essentials • Line Manager Health & Safety (where applicable)	HR: L&D June 2020	 100% research staff sent welcome email on appointment detailing induction. 100% research staff are satisfied with University induction. Completion MI developed to monitor statutory and essential training completion by new starters within the first month of employment. To mitigate impact of COVID-19, virtual induction product developed and implemented to enable quality induction experience for new research colleagues*. To mitigate impact of COVID-19, virtual 'VC's welcome' video developed and implemented to enable a personalised message from the VC to new starters during this period*.
	Research Integrity Online Training (All Academic & Research Staff)		



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
2.	HR will continue its approach to supporting the University in promoting gender equality and in addressing challenges in different disciplines. We will do this through embedding positive action statements in job adverts across STEMM as part of our five-stage recruitment framework and will monitor impact. The number of researcher job adverts with positive action statements will be systematically monitored through a compliance framework and a systematic approach explored as part of the introduction of a new recruitment system in 2019.	HR: Performance Lead December 2019	 100% of researcher job adverts in STEMM disciplines have positive action statements. Compliance framework in place. Increased applications from females across research roles in STEMM subjects by 10% (success rates for 2017/18 = 13.12%). All recruitment and selection procedures are transparent and policies/procedures are published on the University webpages. We have embedded a compliance framework to ensure 100% researcher job adverts contain Positive Action statements. The number of female applicants for research roles in STEMM subjects has increased by 24% during this period (August 2019 – July 2020) compared to the previous year. In STEMM, success rates for females at the shortlisting and interview stage are 37% and 41% for 2018/2019 and 48% and 43% for 2019/2020, respectively. Our recruitment and selection policies and procedures are transparent and published on our webpages/intranet. 100% of our job adverts have Athena SWAN logos to demonstrate commitment to gender equality. A requirement for interviewees is there have training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity and Unconscious bias training. Gender balance on interview panels is also encouraged wherever possible.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
3.	CROS 2017 indicated that 10.75% of Swansea researchers had not received a written summary of what the job entailed at appointment (compared to 5.54% nationally). No job will be advertised without the job description in place. We will skill Pl's to ensure job descriptions are clear, state the requirements of the role and detail the level of information that any particular application would need. We will utilise CROS 2019 and 2021 to assess whether the action has made a difference. As part of our revised and improved recruitment framework we will engage with successful applicants to explore their experience and monitor compliance via our new recruitment process for all appointments, including research.	HR September 2019	 100% Research staff are recruited and appointed to a written job description and are clear on the purpose of their role. Workshops delivered on writing job descriptions with evaluation showing 100% participants able to develop quality job descriptions that are clear, state the requirements of the role and detail the level of information that an applicant would need. As part of our recruitment compliance processes, no job is advertised without a job description in place that makes clear the requirements of the role. 93% of Swansea researchers stated that they had been appointed to a written job description (CROS 2019) that stated the qualifications (92%) and specialist research skills required (90%). We have developed 'on demand' recruitment resources to enable recruiting managers to develop job descriptions that are clear, state the requirements of the role and the level of information that an applicant would need. Tailored recruitment support is provided as required by the HR Business Partnering and Service delivery teams.



PRINCIPLE 2: Recognition and Value

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.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
4.	Continue to sustain 100% PDR participation rates for research staff colleagues - enabling research staff to have meaningful professional development conversations regarding their current role and their career aspirations.	HR: Interim Professional Development Reviews (1st Mar – 31st May. 2019/20) HR: Annual Professional Development Reviews (1st Sept – 30th Nov. 2019/20)	 100% eligible research staff have a professional development discussion with their reviewer with clear outcomes linked to development and training support. The University continues to enable performance with 100% eligible research staff having a professional development review discussion with their Reviewer in both 2019 and 2020. Outcomes agreed during this discussion for the forthcoming period are linked to development and training support.
5.	Continue to increase Research fellowship opportunities including recruitment of 'FloMo' Fellows (second cohort) with dedicated support provided.	REIS: Associate Director December 2020	 Year-on-year increase in research fellowships by 20% from baseline of 37 (2016-2018). The University has continued to increase research fellowship opportunities with 43 Fellowships awarded (£18.9million income). There has been a further cohort of early career researchers engaged in the Florence Mockeridge Fellowship Group – with a total of 22 early career researchers mentored and developed in the areas of bid writing, funder/fellowship and grant awareness, interdisciplinary collaborations, resilience and leadership.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
6.	Continue to offer flagship public engagement events such as the Swansea Science Festival, Three Minute Thesis, Fame lab and Research as Art to provide researchers with an opportunity to develop their communication skills.	REIS December 2019	 100% of Researchers are made aware of opportunities to develop their communication and researcher participation in each event measured. We have continued to offer flagship public engagement events to provide researchers with an opportunity to increase their visibility and develop their communication skills. Awareness is raised through all-staff and targeted communications to the research staff community, and through engagement with the RSWG (see minutes 6.11.19). Engagement has included: Swansea Science Festival 2019 and 2020; Research as Art; Three Minute Thesis Famelab – L&D Manager attended as a judge at the regional and all Wales final.
7.	Continue to commit University budget and engage in Welsh Crucible as a means of developing future research leaders, and monitor researcher attendance at roadshows /engagement sessions	HR: L&D Manager	 100% eligible researchers contacted and invited to information workshops to raise awareness of Welsh Crucible and to encourage applications from researchers, interested in developing as a future research leader. The University continues to commit a budget and engage Welsh Crucible as a means of developing future research leaders. Every year, 30 highly promising early/mid-career researchers from across Wales are selected to take part, via a highly competitive process, managed by six Partner Institutions in Wales. Over the last two years, Swansea has supported 10 researchers, four of which are research staff, on this prestigious programme.



ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
8. We will encourage applications from Early Career Researcher's to the University Research and Innovation Awards.	REIS: Associate Director December 2019	Researchers are recognised in University Research & Innovation Awards ceremony through nomination and success in the Rising Star − Early Career (January 2020). The University continues to celebrate the role of Early Career Researchers via the University Research and Innovation Awards (January 2020). The total number of nominations increased in 2020 (112 in 2020; 87 in 2018), with 13 for the prestigious Early Career Researcher Rising Star Award. This year's prize was awarded to a Technology Transfer Fellow from the College of Engineering. Research & Innovation Awards 2020.



PRINCIPLE 3 & 4: Support and Career Development

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

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

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
9.	Feedback from RSWG highlights that some ECRs are not familiar with the opportunities for promotion or other career routes. The University will develop and implement a systematic approach to monitor the number of successful promotions, applications for fellowships and other career progression opportunities. Develop and implement a transparent and systematic approach to embed Academic Career Pathways (ACP) in research promotion.	HR: Head of Transformation REIS: Deputy Head of Research Development, December 2019 HR: Head of Transformation December 2020	Revised researcher promotion webpages in place, containing clear and consistent messages / timescales. Systematic approach in place that monitors: Numbers of research staff applying for (i) fellowships and (ii) promotions Research promotion success rates for gender and race. 183 staff have applied for fellowships during this period with a total of 43 appointments made. The University continues to develop its promotion process for research staff, which now incorporates feedback for all unsuccessful applicants and the opportunity to discuss in person with the Director of Research or during current times via zoom. The number of applicants for both Research Officer and Senior Research Officer has increased by 50% since 2018. The last round of promotions (2019/20) resulted in; 75% success for promotion to Research Office Grade 9. Success rates for promotion to Senior Research Office Grade 9. Success rates for promotion to research officer by female and BAME research staff remained the same as in 2018. Success rates for promotion of female researchers to Senior Research Officer were reduced in comparison to the 2018 promotions, while the number of successful BAME applicants remained the same as the previous year. We used positive action



ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
		statements for encouraging attendance from BAME applicants and this has been successful.
		ACP included in researcher promotion.
		• We have undertaken extensive external benchmarking on the Research Promotion career routes across the sector and continue to work on the Research Promotion Criteria to mirror the Academic Career Pathway framework. We are continuing to review and develop the work within the Research Promotion policy and procedures.
		Researcher promotion workshops implemented with 100% of researchers attending stating they are clear about the University process for promotion.
		 We remain committed to delivering promotion workshops for research staff in line with implementation of revised research promotion criteria. In the short-term, we will continue to update the website and employees with clear and transparent promotion information. 100% of promotions panel committee members have completed EDI Training and Unconscious bias training, ensuring decisions made are fair an without bias.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
10.	Continue approach for PIs in terms of developing their leadership through the University Core Leadership Development programme and 360 leadership feedback.	HR: L&D December 2020	 100% eligible staff having engaged/completed the programme by December 2020. We have developed an online toolkit for University Managers (Managers Hub) 113 (68 in 2019 and 45 in 2020) academic Principal Investigator's took part in 360 leadership feedback based on our leadership expectations. In each instance, leadership feedback from a range of sources including direct reports, colleagues and peers, and line managers is used to highlight leadership strengths, as well as areas for leadership growth. Research staff with line management responsibilities are also invited to participate in this process and gain feedback on their leadership.
11.	Package the University researcher support (training, online resources, coaching, mentoring and research guidance) in one clear communication and use the research hubs and RSWG to disseminate.	HR, REIS, RSWG, Hubs, Marketing, Recruitment & International Development; March 2019	New University Research webpages designed, developed and implemented enabling Research Staff to navigate and access university wide services / opportunities. In line with the University centenary year, we have developed our research webpages so that they contain accurate and clear communication on University researcher support. The RSWG was engaged in the development of these webpages (see minutes 6.11.19).
12.	Although mentoring is supported by the University – not all researchers are aware of it (feedback from the RSWG). The HR L&D team will work in partnership with the research community to evaluate the value of existing	HR: L&D Manager July 2019 HR: L&D Manager May 2020	 100% of new research staff are offered a mentor as part of their appointment and induction process. We have strengthened our process for allocating mentors to new research staff following feedback from CROS (2019) and the RSWG. All new researchers are allocated a named mentor on appointment



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
	mentoring, sustain the areas of value and develop and implement areas of required improvement.		and the mentor is now included in the welcome email to new research staff starters.
			HR L&D deliver eight mentoring skills workshops across the reporting period.
			 We continue to deliver mentoring skills workshops to support mentors in their role with seven delivered since 2019.
			Establish a baseline percentage of respondents who have a mentor in CROS 2019 and increase by 10% in 2021.
			 Research staff representatives from the RSWG act as points of contact for researchers requiring a Mentor as part of their continuing professional development, signposting as appropriate. College of Engineering have introduced a local mentoring scheme, and are seeking to share areas of good practice and impact of this support and at a University level. We will utilise CROS 2021 to measure the impact of these activities and measure how many research staff have a mentor in comparison to the previous survey (CROS 2019; 20%).
13.	Increase awareness of PI's of costing researcher career development into funding bids.	REIS: Associate Director December 2019	 Career development for researchers included in the University research support process and evident in funding bids Dedicated Research Hubs are the first point of contact for researchers thinking of applying for external grant funding. One to one PI support via a team of dedicated bid-writers raises awareness of costing researcher career development into high-quality funding proposals. Where funders require additional information, the Bid Writers liaise with the relevant units to pull together all relevant details and integrate this into a coherent narrative to support the PI's



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
			case for development support. They also identify areas of weakness within proposed career development activities and suggest training options to mitigate these risks, identifying external opportunities where necessary. As funders increasingly ask Pls to demonstrate 'fit' with broader Institutional strategies, the Bid Writers use their familiarity with University plans to ensure that such links are made clearly.
14.	Engage all new PGR supervisors in supervision training and review and evaluate the programme. Monitor engagement with the suite of four training modules specifically to support PGR supervisors. All new to supervision or new to supervising at Swansea complete 'PGR Supervision at Swansea University.'	PGR Office: Head of Postgraduate Research September 2019	 Revised suite of PGR supervision training in place, 100% new PGR supervisors receive the training on time. Supervisor training has been reviewed on an annual basis in line with the broader PGR Training Framework. To supplement training modules an online supervisor toolkit has been created (December 2019) to support supervisors and enable flexible access. The University participated in the 2019 national pilot scheme, led by UK Council for Graduate Education to develop a Good Supervisory Practice Framework and recognition scheme with successful recognition for the two supervisors who participated. Programme now being rolled-out to all supervisors across the University. To date, we have made steady progress towards our target with 54% Supervisors having completed "PGR Supervision at Swansea University." A review of scope and delivery mechanisms for supervisor training and support is planned for 2021.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE & OUR EVIDENCE
15.	Continue to support PI's in providing advice to research staff on the range of career opportunities by developing and implementing a checklist for PIs to discuss with their researchers about career development at review meetings (in support of recommendation 13 of the Concordat).	HR: L&D Manager Swansea Employability Academy (SEA) Head February 2019	Pl's continue to feel confident in providing this advice (PIRLS 2019 confidence measure of 70%) and researchers feel that their PDR discussions are useful or very useful in focusing their career aspirations (greater than 60% in CROS 2021). ◆ Pl's are able to access a range of development and support including online resources to support career conversations with research staff (information and support for Pl's). Pl's continue to view developing research staff as being very important (98%), and remain more confident in providing career advice than the benchmark group (PIRLS measure is 88% compared to 71% nationally).
16.	CROS 2017 responses indicate that 12.5% of researchers had not participated in training or other CPD activities. Although this is less than the national average (13.93%), Researches at the Researcher Development Day 2017 felt that the capacity to attend training and development opportunities remains an issue.	HR: L&D Manager, REIS September 2019	Increase the number of online and short courses available to researchers by 10%. The number of online and short courses has increased by 61% since our last submission (53% in online courses, and 8% in short courses of less than 3.5 hours).



PRINCIPLE 5: Researchers' Responsibilities

Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE
17.	HR to implement a system to allow staff at the University to engage with mentors as part of their continuing professional development.	HR: L&D January 2020	 Mentoring contacts for 100% College identified and mentoring activity taking place Researcher representatives of the RSWG are the main contacts for researchers requiring a Mentor as part of their continuing professional development, signposting as appropriate. College of Engineering currently have their own mentoring scheme available to PGR's and research staff.
18.	Researchers are responsible for the integrity of their research and for ensuring it is conducted in an honest and ethical manner. Monitor and review researcher engagement with the online training module for 'Research Integrity'.	Research Integrity Lead September 2019	 100% completion for new research staff and completion of existing staff involved in research monitored and reported. We have developed and implemented a process to systematically monitor and review researcher engagement with the following Research Integrity training modules: Statutory Modules: Good Research Conduct Irresponsible Research Practices Planning your Research Managing and Recording Research Scholarly Publication Supplementary Modules: Data Selection, Analysis and Presentation Professional Responsibilities



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE
			 Communication, Social Responsibility and Impact Conflicts of Interest Research Involving Human Participants The Care and Use of Animals in Research Intellectual Property Export Controls 462 of our current staff have undertaken the Research Integrity training to date and work is progressing to ensure 100% compliance. Dedicated Research Integrity website implemented with up to date code of practices and policies, dedicated contact for research misconduct and research integrity training. Annual Research Integrity Report to HEFCW with Research Integrity updates also with figures of the research misconduct investigation and their status. Further training on Research Integrity, Research Governance, Working with Human Tissue and protocols of undertaking Clinical Trials, is also available to researchers.
19.	Researchers continue to engage in their personal and career development through the design, development and implementation of a research staff development day, informed by researcher feedback.	RSWG November 2019	 ▶ Research staff representatives from the RSWG have designed, developed and implemented a Research Staff Development Event (by Researchers for Researchers) 11.12.20. Areas included Career Progression as a Researcher, Using Research Skills in Non-Academic Careers, Inter-disciplinary Collaboration, Using Oriel Science as a vehicle for "Impact" in grant applications, Working with the Media: expect the unexpected. 226 attendees. Speakers included Head of Research Programme Development, Welsh Government and our Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation). Excellent feedback collated.



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

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE
20.	Continue to engage with the Athena SWAN Charter as a means to identify and embed good practice: Computational Foundry - Bronze College of Engineering - Silver Medical School - Silver College Of Human and Heath Sciences - Silver	HR: Head of Equality Team/RSWG April 2019 November 2019	Colleges and Academic Departments successfully gain award. 88% of our researchers agree or strongly agree that Swansea is committed to equality and diversity (CROS, 2019) in comparison to 83% nationally. We continue to engage with the Athena SWAN Charter as a means to progress and recognise diversity and equality: • Engineering obtained - Silver – April 2019 • Medicine obtained - Silver – April 2019 • Computational Foundry – Bronze - November 2019 • Geography obtained – Bronze - November 2019 • College of Human and Health Sciences - Silver - submitting April 2021 • Law – Bronze - Submitted November 2020. • College of Arts and Humanities - Bronze - submitted November 2020 • A representative of the RSWG is also on the University Self-Assessment Team for Athena SWAN, thus providing a strong link in terms of representing the interests of Research staff through the Athena SWAN charter.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE
21.	Using the five-stage recruitment process and management information, monitor and review recruitment success rates by gender for all appointments, including research staff.	HR: Performance Lead January 2020	 100% roles are planned and recruited on time. Baseline data is established and positive action taken to ensure year-on-year improvement in numbers of females progressing through all stages of the framework. Recruitment and selection procedures are transparent and policies/procedures are published on the University webpages. Positive action statements are embedded in job adverts across STEMM and the number of female applicants in these areas increased by 24% during this period (August 2019 – July 2020) in comparison to the previous year.



PRINCIPLE 7: Implementation and Review

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.

	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE
22.	Ensure alignment between the actions relating to the Concordat, Athena Swan, Race Equality Charters and PGR Matters. Work with the REF Manager to ensure that these support the development of the Swansea REF Environment Statement and our Research Strategy.	Head of Postgraduate Research, Head of Equality/Athena Swan and REF Manager February 2019	Meet with the REF Manager to ensure information and evidence required for the REF submission is available and work aligns with the research strategy. All departments receive clear guidance about information required and provide appropriate examples about local equality initiatives to support REF environment and research strategy. • There is an ongoing and coordinated approach to ensure that actions from the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers are used to inform the Institutional REF environment statement. Governance of the Concordat will ensure activities are aligned to our research strategy (currently in development).
23.	Ensure that the experience of researchers at Swansea is understood and appropriate actions developed. Continue to engage in CROS and PIRLS and PGR Student Experience Survey (2019), and enhance amount of engagement with researchers post survey to better understand view raised.	HR: L&D Manager / RSWG November 2019	 Engage in CROS and PIRLS survey (May 2019) and develop appropriate actions via RSWG and CRIS. The University continues to engage with CROS and the RSWG is utilised to enhance engagement with research staff to better understand view raised. The views and experiences of our research staff representatives have shaped the approach to mentoring for new research staff appointments (Action 12). We will engage with CROS 2021 and develop appropriate actions via RSWG and CRIS.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE / TARGET DATE	SUCCESS MEASURE
24.	Ensure researcher development and progress on the implementation of the HRER action plan continues to be regular item at CRIS.	PVCR, L&D Manager, RSWG	 HRER and research staff development a regular item at CRIS. Researchers know they are valued at all levels in the university. We have strengthened the links between the RSWG and CRIS with both the Chair of the RSWG and a research staff representative in attendance at CRIS. The current HRER submission has been reviewed at this level and the forward University action plan developed via a working group convened on behalf of CRIS. Progress on the implementation of this action plan will be reviewed as a regular item at CRIS.
25.	Review role, function and membership of RSWG.	RSWG, L&D Manager March 2019	 Revised membership in place, RSWG continues to meet regularly and monitor progress against Concordat Action Plan The RSWG continues to meets regularly in line with CRIS. Terms of reference and membership of this group was reviewed in 2019 with an addition of nine new researcher representatives from across the University, each nominated at a senior leadership level via their Heads of College.

Abbreviations:

ACP – Academic Career Pathway; CRIS - Committee for Research and Innovation Strategy; CROS – Career Researchers Online Survey; HR – Human Resources; HRER - HR Excellence in Research; HoD – Head of Department; L&D – Learning and Development; MI – Management Information; REIS - Research, Engagement & Innovation Services; RSWG – Research Staff Working Group; STEMM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine.