RVC Concordat Action Plan and Implementation Strategy 2016 – 2019

		Timescale	Status	Accountable	Critical Success Measure	Progress/Outcomes
Principle 1	**Recruitment and Selection**					
i	**Recruitment Process** Review recruitment process and remove any barriers that may disadvantage minority groups from successfully moving through the recruitment process.	January 2017	Completed/ongoing	HR	All recruitment processes have been reviewed to ensure any unconscious bias elements have been removed. As a result we would expect to see an increase in the percentage of underrepresented groups being shortlisted and appointed. This will be evidenced in our annual recruitment monitoring report.	We have reviewed the recruitment process with the aim of minimizing bias. As a result of this the 'recruitment toolkit' (which forms part of a new managers mandatory training) has been revised to include unconscious bias. Our recruitment statistics do not indicate any statistically significant bias in the recruitment of researchers. We will continue to monitor the effect of this training and the impact of the Athena Swan Action plan by trend analysis.
ii	**Recruitment Training – Equality and Diversity** Provide appropriate training such as Equality and Diversity Refresher training and unconscious bias training to all staff to enhance the transparency of the current process.	January 2017	Completed/ongoing	HR	Expand the number and range of courses in our awareness training programme by 50%.	We achieved our success criteria of expanding our awareness courses by 50%. New examples include training in mental health, trans-awareness, flexible working and managing diversity. Our College Executive committee have all received unconscious bias training, enabling us to demonstrate to our staff that this is being engaged with at senior levels.
iii	**Compulsory Training** Ensure that the composition of the recruitment panel always includes someone that has completed the recruitment training course. This will be robustly monitored by HR with the support of the VP for Research and Innovation	August 2018	On-going	HR	All research recruitment panels have been able to progress on the basis that a panel member has completed the recruitment training course.	We still have work to do in order to achieve our success measure of having a trained member on each recruitment panel. During the implementation of this action plan we have experienced many learning points around the most effective way to engage staff in this training. Based on this learning we have revised our approach and now offer more flexible training on a more regular basis. With this new approach we expect to be able to achieve our target and have carried forward this action onto our 2018 – 2020 action plan.

		Timescale	Status	Accountable	Critical Success Measure	Progress/Outcomes
Principle 2	**Recognition and Value**					
i	**Recognition of teaching in Research** In order to support and recognise contract researchers for the teaching activities they conduct we will provide an appropriate course which could contribute to a recognised qualification. • Development of the course • Implementation of the course	June 2016 January 2017 Ongoing	Completed	VPRI/VPT	Contract research staff will have enrolled on, and successfully completed, the RVC run course which provides a qualification in Research project supervision In addition we expect up to 10% of contract researchers to be named as co-supervisors for PhD students.	15 Contract researchers and 31 PhD students are/have taken part in the TLiHE- and have 8 done the fuller PG certificate in Teaching and Learning. Further development of the course will enhance the relevance of one to one project supervision and teaching. A new policy, agreed by the Research Degrees Committee, details the terms for a contract researcher to be named as a PhD supervisor. In the 2017-18 academic year, 10 researchers on a fixed term contract were named as supervisors of PhD students.
ii	**Action Plan update** In order to communicate to contract researchers that they are valued we will publish 6 monthly updates on the website so that people are aware of the good work that we are doing in line with	January 2016 / Ongoing	Completed	RCWG	Regular updates of progress against the action plan are clearly detailed on our website	Website updates e.g. Summer 2017, March 2018, Summer 2018.
iii	**Participation in Research committees** Actively encourage participation of contract researchers in "Ethics & Welfare" and "Research data management" committees thus enhancing recognition of contract researchers through valuing their views and allowing them to contribute to these important decision-making processes which directly impact their work.	September 2016	Completed	VPRI/PIs	Ethics and Welfare and Research data management committee minutes regularly have contract researchers documented as attendees.	Researchers are now represented on six committees including 'Ethics and Welfare' (the 'Research data Management committee was discontinued)'. The impact is evidenced in the increase percentage of CROS survey respondents who agreed they have opportunities to participate in decision making (55% in 2015, 64% in 2017)

RVC Concordat Action Plan and Implementation Strategy 2016 – 2019

		Timescale	Status	Accountable	Critical Success Measure	Progress/Outcomes
Principle 3	Researchers are **equipped and supported** to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research					
i	**Research Highlights Day** Establish the annual college-wide "Research Highlights Day" to showcase research at the RVC to a wider audience, provide networking opportunities and raise awareness of the support and resources available for contract researchers.	December 2016 (annually)	Completed	RA/HR/ Marketing	Increased attendance at the Research Highlights day and improved awareness of the Researcher Association, Vitae and the Research Concordat, which will be evidenced in the CROS and PIRL survey where we aim to achieve 75% awareness in all these areas.	Research Highlights 2016 and 2017 have both been successful networking events with a wide variety of audiences from students, members of public and inter-disciplinary researchers to funding organisations. This event runs annually at the RVC-and will continue to evolve and provide a platform to promote the work of the researcher community. Improved awareness of the Researcher Association is evidenced in the recent RA survey- only one respondent was unaware- 34 aware and 4 did not state. The CROS survey indicated all respondents were aware of the RDF and most of Vitae - (exceeded the success measure of 75%) - although not all respondents knew the detail.
ii	**Training – Researcher Development Framework (RDF)** Continue to review and align the training provision for researchers with the domains/sub-domains of the RDF	July (annually)	Completed	HR	All courses within the Research section of the training programme have RDF domains clearly identified.	All courses within the Research section of the training programme have had RDF domains clearly identified- we now need to maintain this for coming and future programmes.
iii	**Training**- developing and refreshing training opportunities	Ongoing	Completed and On-going	HR with support from the RA	(N/A as not in original action plan)	The training offering has been developed with: • a new conference style event 'shaping successful scientists'. There were 53 delegates and 28 speakers/market place contributors – 50% of which were external to academia. • a careers round table • an event on reaching beyond academia which examined employability skills, knowledge transfer and engaging with non-academic partners.

		Timescale	Status	Accountable	Critical Success Measure	Progress/Outcomes
iv	**Research Funding** Communicate with contract researchers more effectively as to how they can apply for research funding either independently or gain recognition for their input into funding applications from their research team	May 2016	Completed	VPRI/RO	The number of contract researchers being named on external grants applications will increase over the action plan period from 10% of all grant applications submitted to 15% by the end of the action plan	Opportunities and limitations that contract researcher might face in order to apply for research grants have been clearly dissected in a section of Researcher Association website and are kept updated by the Research Office.

There were 19 Early Career Researchers named on fellowships or grant applications in 2017 (this includes 2 PhD students)

Further work to advance this area includes re-publicising the support available, including lists of recently successful applicants, and rebranding a funding workshop on fellowship writing aimed at contract researchers- in our 2018-20 action plan. |
| **Principle 4** | The importance of Researchers' **personal and career development**, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career | | | | | |
| **i** | **Central development record** Establish and promote use of a central electronic professional development record/portfolio available to all RVC staff | On hold | On Hold | HR | Contract Researchers are using the online system, regularly updating it and view it as a useful tool for their career development (as assessed by the CROS survey) | Our initial design of a central record did not receive positive feedback. This project is on hold pending feedback on changes to probation and appraisal. |
| **ii** | **Career development communication** Regularly review the RVC Research and Researcher Association webpages to improve visibility and accessibility of career development resources and opportunities. | Biannually | Completed | RCWG

IT/RA | Researcher Association webpages that clearly signpost a variety of career development opportunities and support. | A segment of the Researcher Association website has been allocated to upcoming training programmes /career development opportunities at the RVC. |

		Timescale	Status	Accountable	Critical Success Measure	Progress/Outcomes
iii	**News Feed** Create news feeds on the Researcher Association section of the website to further promote career development opportunities.	April 2016	In progress	RA	Regularly updated news feeds that promote career development opportunities	External and internal training, networking and socialising opportunities are circulated via Researcher Association email distribution list. A twitter account has been set up and there are currently 55 followers.
iv	**Researcher Alumnus network** Engage with RVC contract researcher alumni to build a supportive network for existing contract researchers to gain peer support and advice on career options	Jan 2017	Ongoing	RA/HR/VP RI	A growing Researcher Alumni who are willing to engage with current contract researchers to provide career advice and who recommend the RVC as a place to work with 15-20 individuals agreeing to have their contact details published on our website.	We have 12 Alumni, some of whom attended one of the RA/HR events. We will be putting in place new processes to invite those whose next destination is not known upon first leaving the RVC.

Principle 5	Researchers Responsibilities					
i	**Researcher Association structure** Review and expand the management structure of the Researcher Association to include a new "Communications Officer" position and potential other roles within the association	March 2016	Completed	RA	A defined management structure containing roles that support the effective running of the Researcher Association.	The Research Association's Constitution has been developed. A new post of communications officer has been appointed to.
ii	**Networking** Enhance networking opportunities for contract Researchers both internally via: • A planned events programme run by the Researcher Association • Externally through collaboration with other institutions	January 2017	Completed	RA	A vibrant and active Researcher Association with an increased number of well attended events run by the Researcher Association. Six networking events per year will be organised.	The RA organises two networking events in both campuses per year, as well as the Research Highlights and training days. The number of attendees has increased from initial meetings and is now around 10-15 people per site. This has increased the RA visibility (as shown in the survey) and helped to identify contract researchers' views.

		Timescale	Status	Accountable	Critical Success Measure	Progress/Outcomes
Principle 6	**Equality And Diversity**					
i	**Athena Swan** • Achieve Organisation Athena SWAN Bronze Award • Achieve Organisation Athena SWAN Silver Award	January 2017 January 2019	Completed In progress	S A T	Achievement of both the Bronze and Silver Athena SWAN award by 2019.	The RVC has achieved the Athena Swan Bronze award (November 2017). HR and the Researcher association were both actively involved in the Athena Swan SAT and application process of the RVC.
ii	**Family Leave Policies** Family leave policies, including guidance for PI's will be displayed on the Research website to provide a clear, readily accessible framework for PIs and contract researchers	February 2016	Completed	HR	Clear information posted on the website that provides guidance and support for both PIs and contracted researchers regarding family leave options and arrangements.	Family leave policies are now clearly signposted on the Researcher Association's website
iii	**Family leave budget** Budget to be made available for departments to utilise for family leave such as temporary replacement posts to cover parental leave	February 2016	Completed	CEC	Clear details made available to all staff regarding the use of the centralised family leave budget.	Budget has been allocated and utilised for this purpose.
iv	**Flexible working** Explicitly welcome formal flexible working arrangements/requests from all staff by providing training for managers on how to deal with requests for flexible working. This will embed a culture which supports formal flexible working arrangements	Sept 2016	Completed	HR/SMG	Increased number of flexible working requests	Flexible working training is now available and is a mandatory part of our programme for new managers. 50 people have been trained. We will continue to monitor the impact on the number of formal flexible working requests.

Principle 7	**Implement and Review**					
i	**Review** Through the RCWG, to continue to review the Action plan on a 6 monthly basis.	Ongoing	Completed and on-going	RCWG	Minutes of the RCWG document the 6 monthly reviews of the action plan.	Actively under review.