

Action Plan and Implementation Strategy 2018 – 2020- progress update July 2020

To note: this action plan is reordered to align with the revised Concordat. The original actions remain, and some further actions have been added in response to the latest surveys and the themes in the revised Concordat.

Principle	Aims and Actions	Timescale	Accountable	Measurement of completion or success	Progress
Environment and Culture	Enhance awareness of vitae, concordat and RDF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer termly Researcher events- include concordat awareness and support for researchers from the RVC 	By March 2020	HR and Research Office	In the 2019 CROS survey, 51% said they have never heard of the concordat. Thus, we will continue with the described measures and will assess their success in the CEDARS survey in 2021	March 2020 event postponed due to COVID. June training in appraisal (researchers and PIs)- and July launch of mentoring scheme- included promotion of the concordat, the RDF and vitae
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue to include information on the Concordat and the latest themes from this Action Plan in the 'Experienced supervisor' training sessions 	Dec 2020	HR		July experienced supervisor session included results of 2020 survey and concordat
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness of Research Integrity Concordat and disseminate best practice in reproducibility of research 	By March 2020	VPRI & Dominic Wells & RA	Run seminars and elect RA Research Integrity/Reproducibility champion	Several workshops on reproducibility have been held (20/11/19 and 29/1/20) and the RA champion has started the related journal club (Eleanor Lynam – first session 15/7/20)
	Enhance confidence and increase awareness of underrepresented role models in our research staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up a series of female and BAME STEM talks in liaison with internal research seminars 	July 2020	RA and EDC	Delayed due to COVID; new seminar series starts Oct 2020	The first seminar took place. The RA are seeking ideas for future speakers and the organisers will ask invited speakers if they would be willing to engage in a short discussion at the end of their presentation about their career path to date. If they accept then this will be advertised when the seminar is advertised.

	<p>Publicising support for welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure researchers are aware of support for their welfare by publicising the availability of departmental and support staff leads, the employee assistance programme, the employee relations lead, 'dignity at work' ambassadors, and the Researcher Association. 	Nov 2018	HR and RA	65% of respondents to the CROS/RA surveys are aware of support for their welfare	<p>Metric achieved but action on-going</p> <p>CROS 2019 survey: 64% have sufficient awareness; 31% know it exists but don't know the detail</p> <p>RA 2020 survey 72% aware or have some awareness of support during COVID; 62% said wellbeing negatively affected by COVID. A range of actions in short term are being put in place in response.</p> <p>More 'dignity at work ambassadors' have recently been trained and the dignity at work policy is under revision.</p> <p>Training in dignity at work is being offered to all managers</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-publicise the role and confidentiality of dignity at work ambassadors when new policy complete 	Dec 2020	HR	15 ambassadors have been appointed	The role of the ambassadors has been promoted as part of dignity at work training, and will be continued to be promoted in these trainings.
	<p>Recognition of researchers by Professional support teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure Researchers feel better recognised and valued by Professional support teams and promote the support and services available to researchers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Publish lead contacts/contract research champions in HR and Research Office and ensure the support advice is integrated between these two departments o A comprehensive list of FAQs developed with clear signposting as to where to go for advice. o Events to be run to raise awareness of concordat and support available to researchers (see first action in this action plan). 	Nov 2018	HR, IT and Research Office Research Office and HR	65% of respondents to the CROS/RA survey feel valued by the RVC	<p>CROS survey 2019 79% agree that they are appreciated as a post-doc/Fellow/contract researcher at the RVC</p> <p>Next benchmark will be upcoming CEDAR survey</p> <p>FAQs developed and on intranet and circulated. This is very much a live document and will be reviewed and updated on at least an annual basis – more frequently if necessary</p> <p>The RA is continuing to work with various support departments to highlight researcher needs.</p>

	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 the Action Plan.	After Research Concordat Working group meeting (every 6 months)	RCWG	Updates of progress against the action plan are clearly detailed on our website.	Updated in December 2019 and September 2020
	Review - Work to increase engagement in future CROS and PIRLS surveys using the learning from how the RA survey was promoted. - RCWG to review action plan in light of Equality and Diversity.	Leading up to the next CROS Survey Each RCWG meeting	RCWG RCWG	Achieve a >40% response rate in our next CROS survey	Achieved 44 respondents (58% of contract researchers) in the 2019 survey. 45 respondents (57%) in College run 2020 survey
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Employment	Recruitment Process - Recruitment data for researchers will be monitored for bias.	June – annually	RCWG	Where trends or concerns are identified they will be addressed as part of the E+D local action plans.	In our statistics for 2018-19 for researcher recruitment we found an increase in the number of BAME applicants. This has been a consistent trend in the past few years and we are investigating. The data for gender and for disability are also monitored, and all data can be found on the RVC website: https://www.rvc.ac.uk/about/our-people/human-resources/equality/equality-training-and-information#panel-equality-monitoring-information
	Minimise bias in recruitment decisions - Promote new recruitment training for those with some experience but no previous/recent training.	June 2019	HR	A trained panel member on each recruitment board and 70% of panel members trained by July 2019	Achieved We have trained 323 people via a refresher course. Our policy is now that all panel members should be trained.

	<p>Enhance induction and probation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring the line manager induction process on line (see section 4iii for further detail and measures) 	Dec 2018	RA and VPRI	60% positive response regarding College induction in CROS/RA surveys	<p>CROS 2019 survey 44% said Institution wide induction useful/v useful; 69% said local induction useful.</p> <p>2020 survey: 74% positive re PI/group; 88% Department; 60% positive HR/College</p> <p>The local induction on-line system is ready for user acceptance testing. The delay was due to technical and capacity issues.</p>
	<p>Enhance induction and probation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bi-monthly 'meet the RA' coffee sessions will be run and new starters invited to meet the RA and key College Research leads. 	June 2020	RA	Increased understanding of ECR of College, Concordat, Vitae	<p>Meet the RA coffee sessions have begun – we are working to increase attendance</p> <p>RA and HR to investigating aligning a campus tour with RA coffee sessions.</p>
	<p>Recognition of teaching in Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further development of the TLIHE course to enhance the relevance of one to one project supervision and teaching. - Investigate the nature of the teaching that researchers are doing; follow up with those who are teaching to see if they feel valued and if not what would change this 	<p>September 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p>	<p>VPRI/VP T/ Vet Ed Dept RA</p>	<p>Course evaluation shows improved relevance for contract researchers</p> <p>CROS 2021 shows 66% (of those who express an opinion) feel valued for their teaching activity</p>	<p>Enhancement to the course to be implemented shortly</p> <p>CROS survey indicated that some still felt undervalued for their contribution to teaching. Focus groups were held in which it was unofficial supervision rather than teaching that people felt least valued for- We have clarified expectations of Contract Researchers and PIs when researchers are supporting teaching in the laboratory and are including this in training for PIs.</p> <p>2020 survey showed improvement with regards to informal supervision (71% positive)- but less satisfaction around formal teaching (61%)</p>

	Supporting Principal Investigators in management skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revisit the support to PIs to ensure themes coming through from Research surveys are better highlighted - Review our development offering to PIs 	July 2020	RCWG HR	80% of PIs who participate in supervision, management and leadership development activities would recommend them to colleagues	<p>A session has been added to the experienced supervisor/PI training course – covering current themes for contract researchers</p> <p>PIRLS 2019: 61% have done development in the last 2 years in supervision, management or leadership (22 respondents) 92% of those who commented said they would recommend this to others A new training course for managers called 'resolving issues' is now available to help managers to manage performance and behaviours informally.</p>
	Involvement in RVC Decision making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RA to publicise when a committee is coming up and ask for any issues that researchers wish to raise; feedback to be circulated on what was discussed of relevance to researchers 	December 2019 and then ongoing	RA	CROS 2021 survey response re feeling involved in decisions 60%	Email went out ahead of the latest committees soliciting views on agenda items; this practice will be continued.
Principle	Aims and Actions	Timescale	Accountable	Measurement of completion or success	Progress
Professional and Career Development	Enhance awareness that researchers are encouraged to engage in a minimum of 10 days of professional development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set out RVC expectations in line with revised concordat expressing release time for development of ECRs and ideas for taking development forward 	April 2020 and ongoing	HR	2021 CROS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous improvement towards the aspirational target of 10 plus days of development as reported in the CROS survey 	Guidelines have been circulated to researchers and their managers as part of the 2020 appraisal round.

	<p>Supporting contract researchers in applying for Research Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a workshop specifically for contract researchers interested in writing fellowships. 	July 2019	VPRI/RO	50% of CROS/RA survey respondents feel supported in grant writing	<p>Achieved CROS 2019: 65% are positive about support for writing and submitting a grant proposal Two training events targeted specifically at contract researchers have taken place and were well received. In addition, several speakers referred to funding strategies as part of the Careers event 'Shaping Successful Scientists'. In 2020, a number of face-to-face meetings were held between ECR and Associate Dean of Research to support Fellowship/Grant application writing</p>
	<p>Enhancing the range of development on offer to researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up a mentoring scheme for researchers 	June 2020	HR	Feedback following participation in the first cohort is positive.	The mentoring scheme for researchers has now been launched and we are in the process of matching applicants.
	<p>Career development communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A quarterly newsletter for contract researchers will be trialled. It will cover career development opportunities, funding opportunities, points of contact within HR, Research Office and Researcher Association. 	Nov 2018	RA	Increasing engagement with the RA newsletter email CTR (click through rates) and more than 50% of survey respondents find the newsletter useful	A quarterly newsletter was produced All these activities have now been moved to the Facebook group
	<p>Researcher Alumnus network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will implement a new process to capture next destinations of alumni in order to build our Alumnus network and promote its utilization by contract researchers. 	Jan 2019	HR/RA/VPRI	The alumnus network will grow to 25 researchers by 2020 and be seen as a useful resource by contract researchers	<p>There are currently 12 alumni. We are reviewing the value of this network as the latest CROS showed limited use of the alumni. We are investigating moving it onto a social media platform. A Facebook group has been set up for Contract researchers- we hope those currently on it will remain on it when they leave.</p>

	<p>Improvement of Probation and Appraisal system to support development and career aspirations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring the induction/ probation system on-line to enable reminders, monitoring; linking probation directly to the on-line appraisal process so the transition is seamless 	Jan 2019	HR	<p>2017/2018 Appraisal rates achieve a target of 60% with sustained or improved completion rates in future years. A 75% completion rate of on-line induction/probation forms by July 2020</p>	<p>Appraisal rate target achieved for 2017-18 – 68% Appraisal rate target achieved for 2018-19 over 70% CROS 2019: 64% have participated in appraisal/review in the past 2 years- others were in probation Overall usefulness of appraisal: 71% said useful/very useful On-line induction project has been delayed to due technical IT issues.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of a guidance document for PIs and researchers covering induction, probation, appraisal and feedback at the end of contract 	Jan 2020	HR (& RO)	Achieved	<p>This has been incorporated into the FAQs for researchers.</p>