## RVC Concordat Action Plan and Implementation Strategy 2018 – 2020- progress update October 2019

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				
	- Offer termly Researcher events- include concordat awareness and support for researchers from the RVC	By March 2020	HR and Research Office	70% have heard of 'concordat to support the career development of researchers' in the next CROS survey	NEW
	- Continue to include information on the Concordat and the latest themes from this Action Plan in the 'Experienced supervisor' training sessions	Ongoing	HR		
	- 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	
	Enhance confidence and increase awareness of underrepresented role models in our research staff				
	- Set up a series of female and BAME STEM talks in liaison with internal research seminars	July 2020	RA and EDC	Monitoring of Athena SWAN action plan and achievement of the Silver award	The first seminar has taken place.
	Publicising support for welfare				
	<ul> <li>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'</li> </ul>	Nov 2018		65% of respondents to the CROS/RA surveys are aware of support for their welfare	Metric achieved but action on-going CROS survey:
					64% have sufficient awareness; 31% know it exists but don't know the detail
	ambassadors, and the Researcher Association.				More 'dignity at work ambassadors' have recently been trained and the dignity at work policy is under revision.

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	Publicising support for welfare Cont'd				
	- Re-publicise the role and confidentiality of dignity at work advisors when new policy complete	Dec 2020			NEW
	Recognition of researchers by Professional support teams				
	- Ensure Researchers feel better	Nov 2018	HR, IT and	65% of respondents to the CROS/RA	Achieved and on-going
	recognised and valued by Professional support teams and promote the		Research Office	survey feel valued by the RVC	CROS survey 2019
	support and services available to researchers.				79% agree that they are appreciated as a post-doc/Fellow/contract researcher at the RVC
	<ul> <li>Publish lead contacts/contract research champions in HR and Research Office and ensure the support advice is integrated between these two departments</li> </ul>				
	<ul> <li>A comprehensive list of FAQs developed with clear signposting as to where to go for advice.</li> </ul>				FAQs developed and on intranet and circulated
	<ul> <li>Events to be run to raise awareness of concordat and support available to researchers (see first action in this action plan).</li> </ul>		Research Office and HR		The RA is continuing to work with various support departments to highlight researcher needs.
	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.	Ongoing	RCWG	Updates of progress against the action plan are clearly detailed on our website.	Last update was longer than 6 months- next update in 6 months.

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	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	Achieve a >40% response rate in our next CROS survey	Achieved  44 respondents (58% of contract researchers) in the 2019 survey.  NEW
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.	Ongoing In our statistics for 2018-19 for researcher recruitment we found a lower proportion of BAME applicants were shortlisted as a proportion of those who applied- we are currently investigating this in more detail. The data for gender and for disability are also monitored- see the Annual Equality Report on the RVC website.
	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 172 people via a refresher course. Our policy is now that all panel members should be trained.
	- 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	CROS survey 44% said Institution wide induction useful/v useful; 69% said local induction useful.  The local induction on-line system is ready for user acceptance testing.

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	Enhance induction and probation Cont'd				
	<ul> <li>Bi-monthly 'meet the RA' coffee sessions will be run and new starters invited to meet the RA and key College Research leads.</li> </ul>				Meet the RA coffee sessions have begun  – we are working to increase attendance
	Recognition of teaching in Research				
	- Further development of the TLiHE course to enhance the relevance of	September 2019	VPRI/VPT/Vet Ed Dept	Course evaluation shows improved relevance for contract researchers	Enhancement to the course to be implemented shortly
	one to one project supervision and teaching.				CROS survey indicated that some still felt undervalued for their contribution to teaching.
	- Investigate the nature of the teaching	December	RA	CROS 2021 shows 66% (of those who	NEW
	that researchers are doing; follow up with those who are teaching to see if they feel valued and if not what would change this	2019		express an opinion) feel valued for their teaching activity	Focus groups have recently been held
	Supporting Principal Investigators in management skills				
	<ul> <li>Revisit the support to PIs to ensure themes coming through from Research surveys are better highlighted</li> </ul>	July 2020	RCWG	80% of PIs who participate in supervision, management and leadership development activities would recommend them to colleagues	A session has been added to the experienced supervisor/PI training course –covering current themes for contract researchers
	- Review our development offering to		HR		PIRLS 2019:
	PIs				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

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	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%	NEW Email went out ahead of the latest committees- limited response.
Professional and Career Development	Enhance awareness that researchers are encouraged to engage in a minimum of 10 days of professional development  - 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	Continuous improvement towards the aspirational target of 10 plus days of development as reported in the CROS survey	NEW
	Supporting contract researchers in applying for Research Funding  - 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	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'.
	Enhancing the range of development on offer to researchers  - Set up a mentoring scheme for researchers	June 2020	HR	Feedback following participation in the first cohort is positive.	NEW

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	- 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 is produced- we are now working on improving the engagement with the newsletter
	- 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	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.
	Improvement of Probation and Appraisal system to support development and career aspirations  - 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	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	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- a small minority were not invited.  Overall usefulness of appraisal: 71% said useful/very useful
	- Creation of a guidance document for PIs and researchers covering induction, probation, appraisal and feedback at the end of contract		HR (& RO)		On-line induction project has been delayed.  This has been incorporated into the FAQs for researchers.