

## **University of Exeter - Concordat Implementation Plan**

The University of Exeter has been committed to the Researcher Careers Initiative (1998) and subsequent Concordats to support the Career development of Researchers (most recently 2008), and has put in place many supporting policies and practices against the principles of the Concordat. Reviews of policy and practice take place annually.

We have conducted a review of our policies and practices against the principles of the Concordat and noted how our current provision is already meeting many of the expectations contained within the Concordat (Appendix A) and has enabled us to identify the areas that we intend to work on to build on these successes.

### Concordat Implementation Plan

1. Review of Fixed Term Contracts for research staff – The University made an agreement in 2009 with the Unions regarding it aims to achieve a significant reduction in its reliance on fixed term contracts; that open-ended contracts should be the normal employment arrangement at the University; and that fixed term contracts will only be used in specifically defined circumstances which are specified in the Agreement. (May 2010)
2. Proposed “*development lifecycle*” for research staff covering specific points in their career from induction, appraisal, development plan from first year, second year and beyond, academic and non-academic career routes, funding grants and publications etc – from good researcher to leader of research (September 2010)
3. Restructuring of University into larger academic Colleges provides an opportunity to engage more fully with the community by offering a selection of events in a more context specific way. (from September 2010)
4. Awareness and promotion of Concordat principles for PIs/Heads – induction, web, other development activities and communication routes. (Continual)
5. Work alongside PIs – ensure best practice in appraisals, support and career guidance. (Continual)
6. Disseminate activities and developments to support concordat implementation. (Continual)
7. Coaching scheme – develop coaching skills of researchers who may then volunteer to join internal coaching network subject to satisfactory assessment resulting in lead coaching of others. (September 2010)
8. Provide reports to Career Research Staff Strategy Group to help support the monitoring of progress of implementation plan and also monitoring through Dual Assurance(Research) (Biannually)

## APPENDIX A

### **Concordat summary of current provision at University of Exeter**

#### A. Recruitment & Selection

The University has a clear recruitment and selection procedure and guidelines aimed at ensuring that the best possible candidates are appointed to research positions. All staff employed on research only contracts i.e. within the Research Job Family, have the same employment rights as any other employee. All staff who are involved in the recruitment process are expected to undertake training and follow University policy and procedures.

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/working/prospective/vacancies/>

Terms and conditions were revised to be applicable to all staff irrespective of contract

[http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/personnel/employment\\_handbook.shtml](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/personnel/employment_handbook.shtml)

#### B. Recognition & Value

The University recognises the important contribution of researchers and has a code of practice to ensure that all researchers are recognised for their contribution. It is expected that all researchers partake in an annual appraisal process – which must be completed in order to qualify for the merit award which recognises outstanding contributions.

<http://services.exeter.ac.uk/learninganddevelopment/pdr/index.shtml>

In 2006 the University implemented the Framework Agreement. Our local agreement, based on national principles, negotiated with our recognised unions defines Research staff as being part of the Research job family which contains; staff employed as Associate Research Fellows, Research Fellows and Senior Research Fellows and Associate Professors progressing through the Research route.

[http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/personnel/academic\\_paths/academic\\_progression\\_research.shtml](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/personnel/academic_paths/academic_progression_research.shtml)

There is a mechanism within the Framework Agreement to move from one job family to another. This clause states that; Staff may transfer from one academic job family to another by mutual agreement between the University and the member of staff. This is another form of development. It is also possible for some researchers to be appointed on Research only contracts in order to establish their research and then to progress on to Teaching and Research contracts

More about Academic career Academic Role Profiles and Career Paths can be found at

[http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/personnel/academic\\_paths/academic\\_paths\\_introduction.shtml](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/personnel/academic_paths/academic_paths_introduction.shtml)

#### C. Support & Career Development

The University recognises that researchers need to develop themselves in order to remain competitive in both internal and external job markets. Researchers are expected to complete the University induction process which is enhanced by local induction to their area. As with all staff, they are also invited to attend a welcome lunch hosted by the Vice-Chancellor

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/induction>

A dedicated website brings together the information most relevant to the researcher and encourages participation in development

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/research/>

Researchers are also communicated with directly via an email list to promote opportunities and updates applicable to them.

Research staff have access to support, guidance and development opportunities via Staff Learning &

Development which are available for all staff. In addition, there are also some bespoke development activities which are tailored specifically to research staff only.

<http://services.exeter.ac.uk/learninganddevelopment/>

<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/research/support/>

A code of practice expects that researchers will engage in some form of development opportunities

In addition, academic areas also offer varied development opportunities for researchers.

Research staff are also represented on committee meetings with their Academic School.

For those employed on Fixed Term Contracts, a process is in place whereby the employee is offered a meeting before the end of the contract with their line manager – typically their Principal Investigator - to discuss their future and to raise awareness of support available to assist in the securing of future employment. Academic areas work with the researcher to secure future employment in the research field where possible. Researchers are also made aware of other vacancies at the University. If the researcher chooses to leave academia, then professional services support staff are able to offer assistance: staff development & careers in particular: assessing skills, possible careers, CV, interview support etc.

The University also has an exit review process to capture data which will help to ensure the University maintains high standards in relation to the employment of researchers.

A significant investment has taken place in bespoke Development Centre for Research Staff since 2008 delivering a tailored report for the individual identifying strengths and areas for development.

The University of Exeter has also participated in the CROS survey for researchers on three occasions (the latest being 2009) and also the CROS Research leaders survey.

#### D. Researchers' Responsibilities

Researchers are encouraged to identify their own development needs as well as recognising opportunities that will support them in their future career. Researchers are encouraged to broaden their skills by engaging in some form of learning and development as well as being encouraged to engaged with teaching (training is available for this) to support a career move to lectureship position.

#### E. Diversity & Equality

The University is committed to a policy of equality and diversity. The Protection of Dignity at Work supports the important role that staff and students play in creating an environment where harassment of any form is unacceptable.

<http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/eo/>

#### F. Implementation & Review

The University regularly review policies and practices primarily through the Career Research Staff Strategy Group chaired by DVC(Research) as well as at organisational level through Dual Assurance(Research) and Dual Assurance(Human Resources) for linkages with HR and Research policy and practice.