# HR Excellence in Research – Revised Gap Analysis and Action Plan - Oxford Brookes University

**Six-year review, May 2018**

Time frames and success measures for actions are stated clearly whenever possible.

Actions that form a key element of our strategy for the next 2 years (see supporting statement) are highlighted in blue.

Actions that are complete are highlighted in brown.

New actions are highlighted in purple.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action related to Concordat clause number</th>
<th>Background to, and description of, action defined in 2016 gap analysis and action plan. Action (A) Leads / date by (L/D) Success measures (S)</th>
<th>Progress since 2016 review and comments</th>
<th>Strategy going forward for next 2 years: Action (A), with timeline Lead or leads (L) Success measures (S) – NB these are ‘SMART’ whenever practicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.1 3 5.2                               | The Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2015/16-2020/21 has been developed and agreed [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/strategy-2020/research-and-knowledge-exchange-strategy](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/strategy-2020/research-and-knowledge-exchange-strategy) L: Implementation of strategy overseen by PVCR | The implementation of the Strategy, overseen by the PVCR, is ongoing. In recognition of the expansion of our training and provision for researchers, and of the importance of this group of staff to the University and their key contribution to our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy 2015-2021, the PVCR agreed central funding to appoint a 0.5FTE Researcher Development Co-ordinator (RDC), Jennie Cripps, who took up post in March 2018. | Action 10  
A: Review and action planning for update of strategy to be considered at an RKEC Away Day to which research leads, ECR representatives and Professors from all Faculties will be invited, October 2018, working towards review and update of the strategy in 2021.  
L: Linda King, PVCR  
| 1.2 1.4                                 | The University’s recruitment and selection policy and procedure will be reviewed and updated every 2 years. L/D: HR to carry out reviews. First review 2017. | The University’s recruitment and selection policy and procedure was reviewed and updated as planned. This included detailed analysis of data regarding gender and ethnicity of successful and unsuccessful applicants as part of our institutional Athena SWAN application, which revealed no indication of bias (see action 7). As an example, when considering data in FHLS, analysis of data for the years between 2011-12 and 2016-17 show that there was no bias in shortlisting or acceptances by gender or ethnicity at any grade in any year (Fisher’s exact tests, P>0.3 in all cases). There was no bias in offers by gender or ethnicity (Fisher’s exact tests, P>0.03 in all cases) except for researchers in 2012 and 2017 when significantly greater proportions of women were made offers (Fisher’s exact test, P<0.05 in both cases).  
Two-yearly review of the policy and annual monitoring of recruitment data are now embedded practice. | Action complete. |
| 1.2 1.4                                 | All members of all interview panels at the university must first attend recruitment and selection training and a training refresher course every 3 years which includes extensive guidance on Equality and Diversity. Since 2015, initial recruitment and selection training and the refresher course include unconscious bias training. | Mandatory initial and refresher training for recruitment and selection is embedded practice. Compliance is monitored and enforced. | Action complete. |
| Action 1 | A: We will apply for the Race Equality Charter Mark in December 2020. | L: Professor Anne-Marie Kilday, PVC staff experience, head of SAT. | S: Award of the Race Equality Charter Mark. |
| 1.2 | We will continue to produce an annual EDI report and to conduct regular equal pay audits. | Elaine Dagnall, HR / ongoing. |
| 6.3 | We will continue to monitor compliance and ensure that all panel members receive training. | L/D: Alison Cross, Director of HR / ongoing) |
| 7.5 | The chair of the panel is responsible for giving individual feedback to all unsuccessful internal candidates, and external applicants if requested. |
| 1.3 | Central research funds will continue to provide bridging funds while applications for research grants are being processed. | Linda King, PVCR / ongoing |
| 2.1 | All applications in the past three years (4 in 2015/16; 6 in 2016/17; 4 in 2017/18) have been approved. |
| 2.2 | This practice is embedded. |
| 2.6 | In 2014, the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences developed a policy document and procedures to advise managers of research teams regarding performance management, including career development guidance, and supervision of those who work in their teams. | Linda King, PVCR and ADRKe's / December 2017 |
| 3.1 | The document has been reviewed and updated as planned. |
| 3.6 | This practice is embedded. |
| 3.9 | Updated Action 2 |
| 5.4 | A: Publication of the document to all Faculties, beginning of academic year, October 2018. Research managers canvassed through an email call about their experience of the document, beginning of academic year, October 2020 |
| 5.6 | L: Linda King, PVC and ADRKe's |
| 2.3 | In 2014, it was determined that not all newly-appointed research-active staff were being identified by HR in order that they could be invited to attend the 'Your First Three Years' programme for newly-appointed research-active |
| 3.3 | While in 2016, improved practice resulted in a positive effect, we have continued to improve the mechanisms by which we identify staff to be invited to the programme, and encourage and |
| 3.6 | Action 11 |
| 4.12 | A: We will continue to monitor attendance, beginning June 2018 after the second run of the 'induction' session, and annually in June thereafter. Non-attenders will be sent
We reviewed mechanisms by which newly-appointed research-active staff are identified and have improved the mechanisms through which they are invited to attend the ‘Your First Three Years’ programme. This has resulted in an improvement in take-up rates from 42% of those eligible in 2012-13 to 48% in 2013-14 and 2014-15 (we realised that there was an error in our data presented in our 2016 action plan where we claimed a 72% attendance rate in 2014-15).

In 2015-16, take up rates were 21 out of 80 invited = 27%; in 2016-17, 36 out of 93 invited = 39%.

We feel confident that we are now identifying and inviting the right people. We now wish to concentrate on understanding the barriers to staff attending so that we can address these in future.

After extensive consultation with researchers, we planned a new, more comprehensive researcher development matrix, based on and mapped against the Vitae researcher development framework; and the ‘Your First Three Years’ programme (described above) will be integrated into this. This will sit within the new Academic Development Framework (which also covers teaching and leadership).

Updated Action 3a
A: Run focus groups with researchers to gather feedback on relevance and ease of navigation of webpages during November-December 2018. Revise and update as required for launch in October 2019.
Further focus groups in November-December 2019 to review re-launched pages. Review baseline footfall on webpages during academic year 2017/18 and 2018/19 and compare with footfall on revised webpages during 2019/2020 in October 2020.
L: Jennie Cripps, Researcher Development Co-ordinator
S: Focus group participants report that all issues highlighted in original focus group feedback have been satisfactorily addressed (NB as feedback will be qualitative, it is not possible to state quantifiable targets for this action). We see an increase footfall on revised webpages in comparison to baseline.

Updated Action 3b
A: Researcher awareness of training resources available will be reviewed through response to questions in University staff survey 2018 and CROS 2019 that reflect training and its impact
L: Professor Susan Brooks, Director of Researcher Development
S: Improved response to relevant CROS and staff survey questions in comparison to 2017 results.
Action 3c
A: Launch of a new ‘academic development framework’ linking research with teaching & learning and leadership.
L/D: Professor Linda King, PVCR and Rhona Sharpe, Director of OCSLD / ongoing from September 2018; launch September 2019
S: Academic development framework launched

We launched a new centrally-funded research excellence awards (sabbatical) scheme open to all research-active staff who are eligible for inclusion in the next REF, which also forms part of the researcher development matrix.

Action 3d
A: Run an annual call for applications for research excellence awards
L/D: Linda King, PVCR / November annually
S: Between 5 and 10 awards made annually

Academic Development Framework launched in 2017 ahead of plan
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/OCSLD/Your-development/Career-development/Academic-Development-Framework/
This includes the Researcher Development Matrix tailored to each career stage
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/research-support/

Research Excellence Awards launched 2016. 23 awards made
32 Research Excellence Awards made in 2017

>90% reported that they were encouraged to engage in development (82%); >90% had undertaken training in research techniques (82%); >80% training in ethical research conduct (70%); >45% in interdisciplinary research (36%) and >55% in public engagement (45%).

Action complete

Updated Action 3d
A: Run an annual call in November for applications for research excellence awards
L: Linda King, PVCR
S: Between 20 and 30 awards made annually

New Action 3e
A: Run focus groups with early career researchers to gather views on strengths and any gaps in our researcher training and support in order to revise and improve provision.
Focus groups during June-September 2018; improved provision rolled out during academic years 2018/19 and 2019/20; feedback gathered through forms distributed at the end of any revised/new sessions.

L: Susan Brooks, Director of Researcher Development
S: Revised programme includes new provision that satisfies any gaps identified in analysis, and >80% attendees/participants in new or revised sessions report that the session meets their needs.

Action complete

2.4 The university will continue to implement its redeployment policy
http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/handbook/recruitment/related_policies_procedures/redeployment/ to support researchers at the end of fixed term contracts.
(Alison Cross, Director of HR / ongoing)
Redeployment policy is still actively promoted. This practice is now embedded.
Action complete

3.1 Having received re-accreditation of Investors in People (iIP) Gold in December 2013, and, as a result, embedded best practice, we made the decision to focus on researcher-specific agendas, including HR Excellence in Research Award and Staff Experience Strategy and action plan published March 2017
https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/staff-experience/
Action complete
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action 4a</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A:</strong> Deliver a programme of annual promotion roadshows including, for the first time, 'successful researcher stories' highlighting part-time and female non-STEMM 'stories'.</td>
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<td><strong>L/D:</strong> Susan Brooks, Research Training Co-ordinator and Linda King, PVC / starting January 2017</td>
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<td><strong>S:</strong> Increase in proportion of female part time and non-STEMM readers and professors in Athena SWAN analysis in comparison to 2011/12 and 2014/15 data (see action 7).</td>
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<td><strong>Action 4b</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A:</strong> Develop a ‘parent, carer, academic’ role models booklet.</td>
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<td><strong>L/D:</strong> Simonetta Manfredi, Director, Centre for Diversity Policy Research &amp; Practice / ongoing for publication in May 2017</td>
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<td><strong>S:</strong> Publication of booklet, launch event</td>
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<td>All of the above to be integrated into the new researcher development matrix (action 3).</td>
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<td><strong>Action 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A:</strong> Develop and implement a communication plan to promote the use of the mentoring scheme for promotion advice as part of the researcher development matrix (action 3).</td>
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<td><strong>L/D:</strong> Susan Brooks, Research Training Co-ordinator / throughout academic year 2016-17</td>
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<td><strong>Updated Action 4b</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A:</strong> Develop a web microsite to host the 'parent, carer, academic' videos and link to research webpages and Athena SWAN webpages, beginning May 2018; microsite launched September 2018. Analyse characteristics - such as gender, full time or part time status and ethnicity -- of those who apply for and gain promotion and measure against 2018 baseline; end of academic year, September 2019 and annually thereafter.</td>
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<td><strong>L:</strong> Mieke Tyrell, Research Administrator, Centre for Diversity Policy Research (microsite); Alison Cross, Director of HR, (staff analysis).</td>
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<td><strong>S:</strong> Microsite is live. Analysis indicates improved levels of applications for promotion from women, part-time staff and BME staff in comparison to 2018 baseline and that these staff groups are equally likely to have their applications approved.</td>
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<td><strong>Updated Action 5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Action 5a</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A:</strong> Develop on-line application forms/process for mentees and mentors This to include specific categories highlighting mentoring for promotion, and database of mentor skills including mentoring for promotion, and different formats have been developed to be used for a variety of training and development purposes.</td>
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<td><strong>Our newly appointed Researcher Development Co-ordinator, Jennie Cripps, has taken over curation of the new research webpages, including the training events calendar where these events will be advertised.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>A university-wide research staff mentoring scheme was developed and launched in April 2013</strong></td>
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<td><a href="https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/mentoring">https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/mentoring</a></td>
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<td>5.3</td>
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<td>7.2</td>
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<td><strong>Action 6</strong></td>
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<td>**CROS 2017 responses again indicated a positive picture. 82% of respondents agreed with the statement ‘You are encouraged to engage in personal and career development’; 36% of respondents reported having undertaken more than 6 days of training to enhance career development in the previous year; and 64% of respondents reported that they were ‘satisfied with the facilities and services provided by the university’. However, disappointingly, CROS participation rate fell to 18% in 2017. We investigated the reasons for this. One cause appeared to be ‘survey fatigue’. However, we also saw reduced promotion of the survey because of a failure in our communication strategy. This was discussed at University and Faculty RKECs during 2017 and actions to address this in 2019 agreed.</td>
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<td><strong>Updated Action 6</strong></td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<td><strong>Development Co-ordinator,</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Action 5b</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This practice is now embedded engage newly appointed researchers undertaking the ‘Your First Three years’ programme (see Action 12).

6.1-6.10

The university was awarded institutional Athena SWAN ‘Bronze’ in 2012. The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences (FHLS) achieved Departmental ‘Silver’ in April 2014, the first of our four faculties to do so.

**Action 7**

A: Continued participation in Athena SWAN and achievement of the following awards:

L/D: Institutional award self assessment team headed by Linda King, PVCR / application in April 2016
S: Retention of Institutional ‘Bronze’ award under new charter.

L/D: FHLS steering group headed by Susan Brooks, Research Training Coordinator / ongoing for application in April 2018
S: Retention of Departmental ‘Silver’ award

L/D: The Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment (TDE) self assessment team led by Sean Wellington, Associate Dean Strategy and Development / ongoing for application in November 2016
S: Award of Departmental ‘Bronze’

L/D: Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS) and Business self assessment teams to be established during 2016/17 for application in 2018/19
S: Award of Departmental ‘Bronze’

We achieved a ‘Bronze’ Athena SWAN Institutional award under new, expanded charter in Nov 2016. [https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/athena-swan/](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/athena-swan/)

FHLS submitted their application for renewal of an Athena SWAN Departmental ‘Silver’ award, again under the new charter, in April 2018.

TDE achieved Athena SWAN Departmental ‘Bronze’ under the original charter in November 2016.

Self-assessment teams are established in our remaining Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Business.

**Updated Action 7**

Continued participation in Athena SWAN and achievement of the following awards:

L: Institutional award self assessment team headed by Linda King, PVCR.
S: Retention of Institutional ‘Bronze’ award under new charter.

A: FHLS apply for renewal of their award in April 2022; if ‘Silver’ is achieved in 2018, FHLS will apply for ‘Gold’ in 2022.
L: FHLS steering group headed by Astrid Schloerscheidt, PVC/Dean FHLS
S: Retention of Departmental ‘Silver’ award in November 2018; award of ‘Gold’ in 2022.

A: TDE application for renewal of Departmental ‘Bronze’ under the new charter, November 2020.
L: TDE self assessment team led by Sean Wellington, AD Strategy & Development
S: Retention of Departmental ‘Bronze’

A: HSS application for Departmental ‘Bronze’ under the new charter, November 2019
L: HSS self assessment team led by Michelle Montgomery, AD Strategy & Development
S: Award of Departmental ‘Bronze’

A: Business application for Departmental ‘Bronze’ under the new charter, April 2019
L: Business self assessment team led by Andrew Halford, AD Strategy & Development
S: Award of Departmental ‘Bronze’

**6.9**

In 2014 we reported that we had a new ‘Dignity and Respect at Work’ policy. [http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/handbook/problems/dignity_respect_policy.html](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/handbook/problems/dignity_respect_policy.html) and that all Bullying & Harassment advisers receive training. No further action was required at that time.

**Action 8a**

A: Develop a policy and guidance on supporting trans* staff and students.
L/D: Jane Butcher, EDI adviser / by December 2016

Our Dignity and Respect at Work policy was reviewed and re-launched in 2017 as our Policy and Procedure on Harassment and Bullying. [https://www.brookes.ac.uk/documents/regulations/current/other/e23-policy-and-procedure-on-harassment-and-bullying/](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/documents/regulations/current/other/e23-policy-and-procedure-on-harassment-and-bullying/)

In 2017, we invested in the training of Staff Harassment Advisers in each Faculty who will act as a conduit to support and advise individuals who wish to raise concerns.

Trans policy adopted May 2017 [https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-groups/transgender/](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-groups/transgender/)

No further action is required at this time.

Action complete
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S: Policy and guidance notes published</th>
<th>Training and development for staff on gender identity and transgender issues embedded; for example: Trans inclusion was the theme of the University celebrations of 2017 LGBT History month; this included a Trans Awareness Workshop. Trans Equality Awareness Workshops ran in February 2017 for approx 30 staff in key influencing and student-facing roles across Faculties and Directorates. Trans Awareness cascaded in HSS Staff Away Day, May 2017. Trans Policy introduced in Brookes Leadership Programme, June 2017.</th>
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</table>

**Action 8b**  
**A:** Develop an action plan to embed training and development for staff on gender identity and transgender issues.  
**L/D:** Jane Butcher, EDI adviser / action plan by December 2016, training embedded by December 2018  
**S:** Clear evidence within training materials of gender identity and transgender issues

| S: Training and development for staff on gender identity and transgender issues embedded; for example: Trans inclusion was the theme of the University celebrations of 2017 LGBT History month; this included a Trans Awareness Workshop. Trans Equality Awareness Workshops ran in February 2017 for approx 30 staff in key influencing and student-facing roles across Faculties and Directorates. Trans Awareness cascaded in HSS Staff Away Day, May 2017. Trans Policy introduced in Brookes Leadership Programme, June 2017. |
|---|---|

7.4 | **A range of senior university staff will regularly attend Vitae events that assist in realising the potential of researchers.**  
(Linda King, PVCR / ongoing)  
The university Research Training Co-ordinator will continue to be an active member of the SE hub and participate in meetings and training events.  
(Susan Brooks, Research Training Co-ordinator / ongoing) |

| Susan Brooks, a member of the HR Excellence in Research working group, now Director of Researcher Development, and other University staff continue to attend Vitae and other regional and national researcher development events. For example, SB attended and presented workshops at the 2016 and 2017 Vitae annual conferences and has submitted workshop proposals for the 2018 conference. She was elected Vitae regional Representative for the SE Region in 2017 and organised the Vitae SE region meeting at Oxford Brookes University in March 2018. She is active in SERD (South East Researcher Developers) Forum. In 2017 she received promotion to Professor in recognition of her work to support researcher development. This practice is now embedded. |

**Action complete**

7.5 | **Action 9**  
**A:** Introduce an annual analysis of research allocations within the workload plan (WLP) model to identify if there are any biases by protected characteristics. If biases are identified, put a corrective action plan into place  
**L/D:** Alison Cross, Director of HR / December annually  
**S:** Data analysis for next REF reveals no evidence of bias. |

| WLP audit planned underway in preparation for the next REF. Project to replace WLP database underway to improve monitoring. |

| **Abbreviations:**  
ADRKE – Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange  
CROS – Careers in Research Online Survey  
ECR – Early career researcher  
EDI – Equality, diversity and inclusion  
FHLS – Faculty of Health & Life Sciences  
HSS – (Faculty of) Humanities and Social Sciences  
HR – Human Resources  
LGBT – Lesbian gay bisexual and transgender  
OCSLD – Oxford Centre for Staff Learning Development |
PVC – Pro Vice Chancellor
PVCR – Pro Vice Chancellor for Research & Global Partnerships
RDC – Research Degrees Committee
REF – Research Excellence Framework
RKEC – Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee
SAT – Self assessment team
SE – South east
SERD – South east researcher developers
STEMM – Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine
TDE – (Faculty of) Technology, Design and Environment
UREC – University Research Ethics Committee
WLP – Workload plan