

2020-2021 Annual Report on Oxford Brookes University's Institutional Commitments to

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Report on Progress in the last 12 months:

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (Sep 2019) is an agreement between stakeholders to improve the employment and support for researchers and researcher careers in higher education in the UK. Oxford Brookes University became an official signatory in May 2020.

An email was circulated to all Researchers and all Line Managers of Researchers in May 2020, informing them that the University had become a signatory, explaining the purpose of the Concordat and providing an overview of the three defining Principles.

A new Concordat web page (<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers/>) was established on the Researcher Development web pages, to raise the profile of the Concordat on the University web site.

Our Institutional Commitment to the Concordat is embedded in the University's mandatory Research & KE training programme for research-active staff of all levels, as part of First Three Years EXPLORE@Brookes (e.g. University Research Induction, Managing an External Research Grant).

The Director of Researcher Development and Researcher Development Co-ordinator ran a workshop at the University Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) Away Day in January 2021. This was an opportunity to highlight the Concordat responsibilities of Researchers and their Managers, and to generate suggestions around the three Concordat Principles from Research Leaders, Managers, Researchers and Professional Services staff who support research, which will inform future University Research & KE training for Researchers and Managers of Researchers.

Over the course of the last 12 months, an extensive gap analysis has been carried out against each of the Institutional Commitments outlined in the Concordat. There has been wide consultation. All current Researchers across the University were invited to attend a focus group, to help identify gaps and shape actions. Every individual named in the plan, with an action against their name, was given the opportunity to shape their actions, to ensure they were both ambitious, and realistic and achievable. A Concordat Working Group was formed, with representation from Researchers in each of the 4 Faculties and key support from Researcher Development, the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD), the Careers Centre, HR, and central Research Support (RBDO).

The draft gap analysis and action plan was reviewed and agreed by the Concordat Working Group in January 2021. All current Researchers and all current Line Managers of Researchers (both groups defined as stakeholders by the Concordat) were given the opportunity to feed into the gap analysis and action plan agreed by the Concordat Working Group, by email, before the final version was submitted to University RKEC in February 2021 for approval.

The full gap analysis and action plan will be published internally. The action plan and annual report will be published externally, as part of our signatory responsibilities, within 12 months of signing up to the Concordat, by April 2021, following approval by University RKEC.

Strategic Objectives – Linked to the 7 Concordat Signatory Responsibilities:

1. Raise the visibility of the Concordat and champion its Principles within Oxford Brookes University at all levels

As outlined above, the Concordat forms part of core University Research & KE training for new research-active staff of all levels (e.g. Induction and Managing grants). Visibility of the Concordat has also been raised for all Researchers by the establishment of the University Concordat web pages. The Principles of the Concordat were championed at the recent University RKEC Away Day, January 2021.

Additional actions are proposed in the new Institutional Concordat action plan. Measures include:

- Produce and circulate a short training video explaining what the Concordat means for Researchers and their Line Managers, to be rolled out to all existing and established staff and embedded on the University Concordat web pages;
- Concordat to form part of proposed future University Research & KE training tailored to Line Managers/Principal Investigators;
- Review and revise the University "Code of Practice for the Career Management and Development of Researchers" in line with the 2019 revised Concordat Principles.
- Link Concordat to annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) for Researchers.

2. Ensure progress is reviewed and reported on annually

A senior manager champion has been identified; Professor Susan Brooks, Director of Researcher Development. An associated group with relevant representation from across the organisation has been put in place. Membership of this group is outlined below:

Concordat Working Group:

Dr Adam Baimel - Early Career Research Fellow - HLS rep
Prof. Susan Brooks - Director of Researcher Development
Dr Juliet Carpenter - Senior Research Fellow - TDE rep
Ben Cooper - HR Business Partnership Manager
Jennie Cripps - Researcher Development Co-ordinator
Dr Heather Griffiths - Postdoctoral Research Assistant - OBBS rep
Dr Jo Moyle - Careers Consultant
Dr Dan O'Gorman - Vice Chancellor's Research Fellow - HSS rep
Prof. Jackie Potter - Head of OCSLD & Deputy Director of HR
Sarah Taylor - Director of Research Support.

This group will take responsibility for annual review of progress towards achieving our Institutional Concordat actions and report this formally to University RKEC.

Following approval of the Institutional Concordat action plan at University RKEC, the Researcher Development Co-ordinator will take responsibility for taking forward the actions outlined in the plan with named individuals, ask individuals to report back, collate information on progress, and convene the Concordat Working Group to review progress on the implementation of the plan in a year's time.

3. Ensure that Researchers are formally represented in developing and monitoring organisational efforts to implement the Concordat Principles

Researchers across all areas of the University have been involved every step of the way in developing an Institutional action plan to implement the Concordat Principles. All Researchers were actively encouraged to participate in a focus group which shaped the gap analysis and formed the basis for actions. There is representation from Researchers in different disciplines, from all 4 Faculties, on the Concordat Working Group, which is responsible for approving the draft gap analysis and action plan and annual monitoring of the implementation of the plan. All Researchers were consulted on the draft action plan agreed by the Concordat Working Group and given the opportunity to shape this before submission of the paper to University RKEC. Researchers are also formally represented at Faculty and University RKEC and representatives were consulted on future training around the three Concordat Principles as part of the University RKEC Away Day in January 2021.

4. Undertake a gap analysis to compare institutional policies and practice against the Concordat Principles

A gap analysis has been undertaken, to review current University policies and practice against each of the Institutional Commitments outlined in the Concordat. This has been submitted to University RKEC for review and approval in February 2021.

5. Draw up and publish an action plan within a year of signing the Concordat

An action plan has been drawn up and submitted to University RKEC, February 2021, for formal review and approval. Once approved by the Committee, it will be published on the externally-facing web pages within 12 months of signing the Concordat, by April 2021.

6. Set up processes for systematically and regularly gathering the views of our Researchers, to inform and improve the organisation's approach to and progress on implementing the Concordat

Current mechanisms exist for direct consultation with Researchers (e.g. at University-wide level via the Researcher Development Co-ordinator; via formal Committees - Faculty and University RKEC). The action plan sets out measures to enhance communication using existing mechanisms. The University also systematically gathers the formal views of its Researchers through participation in the national Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) every two years and will take part in its predecessor, the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) going forward.

7. Produce an annual report to the Institution's governing body or equivalent authority (to include strategic objectives, measures of success, implementation plan and progress), which subsequently is publicly available

This annual report will be submitted for review and approval by University RKEC, which reports to the Board of Governors. It will be subsequently posted on an externally-facing Concordat web page.

In future years, i.e. when 12 months has passed, the Concordat Working Group will review and report annually on progress towards implementing the Institutional action plan. Measures of success are indicated against individual actions laid out in the Institutional Concordat action plan and will form part of the review. All annual reports will be published externally, following approval at University RKEC.

Jennie Cripps, Researcher Development Co-ordinator – 1st Feb 2021

Annual Report reviewed and approved by Concordat Working Group – 3rd Feb 2021

Annual Report reviewed and approved by University RKEC – 9th Feb 2021.