

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

Four-year review, May 2016

Time frames and success measures for actions are stated clearly whenever possible. Where time frames and/or success measures are not stated it is because this is not possible for that particular action at this time.

Actions that form a key element of our strategy for the next 4 years (see supporting statement) are highlighted in green

| Action related to Concordat clause number | Description of action defined in 2014 gap analysis and action plan (leads / date by) | Progress since 2014 review and comments | Strategy going forward: Action (A); Leads / date by (L/D); and success measures (S), if appropriate |
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| 1.1 5.2 | The Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy 2010 - 2015 http://www.brookes.ac.uk/about/strategy/development/docs/rkts2010-15.pdf will be reviewed and updated in 2015. (Chair of RKEC / 2015 onwards) | 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/ | L: Implementation of strategy overseen by PVCr |
| 1.2 1.4 | The University's recruitment and selection policy and procedure will be reviewed and updated by end of August 2014 and two-yearly thereafter. (Alison Cross, Director of HR / ongoing) | 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 (see action 7). Two-yearly review of the policy and annual monitoring of recruitment data are now embedded practice | L/D: HR to carry out reviews. First review 2017. |
| 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. We will continue to monitor compliance and ensure that all panel members receive training. (Alison Cross, Director of HR / ongoing) The chair of the panel is responsible for giving individual feedback to all unsuccessful internal candidates, and external applicants if requested. | Since 2015, initial recruitment and selection training and the refresher course include unconscious bias training. This practice is embedded. | |
| 1.2 6.3 7.5 | We will continue to produce an annual Equality & Diversity report based on data collected at a reference point of 31 st July each year and act on any issues that are highlighted. The report will be published in October / November each year. (Elaine Dagnall, HR / ongoing) | Annual reports have been produced. These can be viewed at https://www.brookes.ac.uk/staff/human-resources/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/edi-at-brookes/ This practice is embedded. A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser, Jane Butcher, has been appointed. We are embedding and developing practice and policies in order to work towards application for the Race Equality Charter Mark. | Action 1 A: We will apply for the Race Equality Charter Mark in 2019 L/D: Anne-Marie Kilday, PVC staff experience, head of SAT / by December 2019). S: Award of the Race Equality Charter Mark. |
| due 1.3 | We will continue with our practice that when fixed-term post jobs are advertised, justification for why it is a fixed-term post is included. (Alison Cross, Director of HR / ongoing) | This practice is embedded. | |
| 1.3 2.1 2.2 | Central research funds will continue to be used as bridging funds while applications for research grants are | This practice is embedded. | L: Linda King, PVCr |

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| 2.4 | being processed. (Alistair Fitt, PVCR / ongoing) | | |
| 2.3 2.6 3.1 5.4 | <p>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. In 2014 it was being piloted in FHLS.</p> <p>Review effectiveness of document through focus group feedback and revise if necessary. (Linda King, Associate Dean FHLS / December 2014)</p> <p>Once piloted within FHLS it will be rolled out to the rest of the university. (Chair RKEC / first quarter 2015 onwards)</p> <p>Review effectiveness. (Chair RKEC / December 2017)</p> | The document has been developed, approved by RKEC, piloted in FHLS and revised as planned. It is currently being trialled by the rest of the university. | <p>Action 2</p> <p>A: The document will be reviewed and revised in response to feedback from users in the faculties. As the document was developed within a STEM subject area, special emphasis will be placed on ensuring that it is fit for purpose in non-STEM research areas.</p> <p>L/D: Linda King, PVCR and ADRKs / December 2017</p> <p>S: Publication of revised document</p> |
| 2.3 3.3 3.6 4.11 | <p>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 staff http://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/research-support/training-events/.</p> <p>HR to review mechanisms by which newly-appointed research-active staff are identified. (Claire Morris, HR / December 2014)</p> <p>Success will be measured by improved take-up of 'Your First Three Years' programme in 2014-15 academic year and reviewed in July 2015. (Susan Brooks, RTC)</p> | <p>We have 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 and 48% in 2013-14 to 72% in 2014-15.</p> <p>This practice is embedded.</p> | |
| 3.3 3.6 3.7 4.11 4.12 | New action to develop an integrated development framework supporting all stages of researcher/academic careers. | After extensive consultation with researchers, we have 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) | <p>Action 3</p> <p>A: Develop new web pages to package and promote the new researcher development matrix</p> <p>L/D: Linda King, PVCR and Susan Brooks, RTC / launch in November 2016.</p> <p>S: Web pages go live</p> <p>A: Researcher awareness of training resources available will be reviewed through response to questions in CROS and staff survey that reflect training and its impact</p> <p>L/D: Susan Brooks, RTC / September 2018)</p> <p>S: Improved response to relevant CROS and staff survey questions in comparison to 2015 results.</p> <p>A: Launch of a new 'academic development framework' linking research with teaching & learning and leadership.</p> <p>L/D: Linda King, PVCR and Rhona Sharpe, Director of OCSLD / ongoing from September 2018; launch September 2019</p> <p>S: Academic development framework launched</p> |

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| | | We have 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 . | 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 |
| 2.3 3.3 4.11 | A research leadership course will continue to be run annually. Dates vary (Alistair Fitt, PVCr / ongoing). | This has been superseded by the new researcher development matrix (see action 3 above) which has a strong research leadership element. | |
| 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) | This practice is embedded via our redeployment register. | |
| 3.1 | The university will seek re-accreditation of Investors in People (IiP) Gold in December 2013 | We received re-accreditation in 2013 as planned. Having successfully held IiP Gold since 2013 and, as a result, embedded best practice, we have made the decision to focus now on researcher-specific agendas, including HR Excellence in Research Award and Athena SWAN. IiP has been replaced by a Staff Experience Steering Group, chaired by Anne-Marie Kilday, PVC Staff Experience. This will develop and monitor a programme of action to enhance the staff experience Action completed. | |
| 3.2 3.4 3.5 | Success of awareness-raising of careers provision, through clearer 'signposting' on university webpages, will be measured by attendance at careers events during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years and reviewed in July 2015. (Susan Brooks, RTC & Jo Moyle, Careers Service) | We have a dedicated careers page for researchers at http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/careers/researchers/ . We have offered an annual programme of careers provision for researchers and reviewed levels of uptake and feedback from participants. We have seen an improvement in attendance figures. Average attendance at events increased by 158% in 2014-15 compared to 2012-13, representing 118 participants attending 25 hours of bespoke training. In 2013-14, as a result of review of careers provision for researchers, an enhanced programme of events was offered. As part of this offering, a very successful university-wide 'researcher careers pathways' event ran in January 2014 and again in January 2016. It will continue as a two-yearly event. Action completed. | |
| 2.6 3.2 3.5 5.5 6.3 6.4 6.8 | New action to support researcher / academic career development. | We have instigated a new programme of 'promotion roadshows' to communicate promotion pathways for all research-active staff more clearly and showcase different career pathways for researchers. Success is evidenced by an increase in applications for promotion to principal | Action 4 A: Deliver a programme of annual promotion roadshows including, for the first time, 'successful researcher stories' highlighting part-time and female non-STEMM 'stories'. L/D: Susan Brooks, RTC and Linda King, PVCr / starting January 2017 |

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| | | <p>lecturer, reader or professor from 33 applications in 2014-15 to 41 in 2015-16.</p> <p>Through Athena SWAN (see action 20) we have identified that some part-time research-active staff are being lost from the career 'pipeline' and are less successful than full-time colleagues in applying for promotion to senior lecturer, reader or professor. Furthermore, female staff in non-STEMM subjects are less successful than expected in promotion to professor than STEMM colleagues.</p> | <p>S: Increase in proportion of female part time and non-STEMM readers and professors in Athena SWAN analysis in comparison to 2011/12 to 2014/15 data (see action 7).</p> <p>A: Develop a 'parent, carer, academic' role models booklet.</p> <p>L/D: Simonetta Manfredi, Director, Centre for Diversity Policy Research & Practice / ongoing for publication in May 2017</p> <p>S: Publication of booklet, launch event</p> <p>All of the above to be integrated into the new researcher development matrix (action 3).</p> |
| 3.8 4.14 5.4 7.1 | <p>A university-wide research staff mentoring scheme was developed and launched in April 2013</p> <p>https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/mentoring.</p> <p>Scheme to be reviewed annually every April through participant feedback. (Susan Brooks, RTC / ongoing)</p> | <p>There were 39 mentor-mentee matches in the launch year 2013-14; 31 in 2014-15 and 23 in 2015-16. The fall-off in uptake may reflect an initial need for mentoring being met followed by a more steady state of new mentees coming forward, but at this early stage in the scheme's history this is not possible to evidence.</p> <p>An in-depth evaluation of the scheme was carried out in April 2015 and was overwhelmingly positive. For example, participants reported an average score of 7.8/10 (where 1 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely') when evaluating the extent to which their goals had been achieved.</p> <p>The scheme, and its annual review, is now embedded and is part of the new university Research and Knowledge Exchange strategy 2015/6-2020/21, but we have identified that there is a need to raise awareness of it, and access to it, particularly to support those working towards an application for promotion, amongst researchers. For example, in 2015-16 there were no requests from mentees specifically wishing to be mentored for promotion specifically, although informal mentoring for promotion did take place.</p> | <p>Action 5</p> <p>A: 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).</p> <p>L/D: Susan Brooks, RTC / throughout academic year 2016-17</p> <p>S: Mentees specifically request mentoring to support an application for promotion (see also action 4).</p> |
| 3.9 | <p>Faculty Learning and Development plans will continue to be reviewed and updated annually by September each year. (Faculty leads for staff development / ongoing)</p> | <p>This has happened as planned and is embedded practice.</p> | |
| 4.13 7.2 | <p>In 2011 and 2013, we took part in CROS but there was a disappointingly low level of research staff participation (16%).</p> <p>Review how we encourage participation and attempt to achieve a more representative sample of views in 2015. (Chair of RKEC, beginning at October 2014 RKEC meeting).</p> <p>Success will be measured by improved participation in CROS 2015.</p> <p>Take part, for the first time, in PIRLS. (Jill Organ, Graduate College / 2015)</p> | <p>We saw improved participation in CROS 2015 from 16% in 2011 and 2013 to 30% in 2015. Results were positive. For example, 79% of respondents agreed with the statement 'You are encouraged to engage in personal and career development' compared to 75% sector average; 40% of respondents reported having undertaken more than 6 days of training to enhance career development in the previous year compared to 21% sector average; and 76% of respondents reported that they were 'satisfied with the facilities and services provided by the university' (no sector comparison provided).</p> | <p>Action 6</p> <p>A: Deliver CROS in 2017 with a target participation rate of at least 30%</p> <p>L/D: Chair of RKEC and Jill Organ, Graduate College / beginning October 2016 RKEC meeting</p> <p>S: 30% or higher participation rate in CROS 2017</p> |

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| | | We made the decision not to take part in PIRLS and instead evaluated staff feedback through the university staff survey 2016. Analysis was integrated with that undertaken for our institutional application for Athena SWAN (see action 7). | |
| 5.1 5.3 | We will continue to review the university's Code of Practice for Academic Integrity http://www.brookes.ac.uk/res/policy/academic_integrity.pdf on a regular basis. (Alistair Fitt, PVCRC / ongoing) | The Code of Practice for Academic Integrity was reviewed, updated and agreed by RKEC in February 2016 http://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/policies-and-codes-of-practice/ . Two-yearly review is now embedded practice | |
| 5.3 | Our commitment to public accountability and open access is overseen by the university Research Ethics Committee (UREC). We will continue to monitor compliance in terms of 'chasing' annual reports from those engaged in UREC-approved projects and reminding them of the importance of their public engagement obligations. We reported that in 2014 that we had a new Data Management Policy http://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/policies-and-codes-of-practice/ and a Position Paper on Open Access https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/open_access/index.html/ and at that time no further action was required. | This practice is now embedded. | |
| 6.4 6.10 | The university was awarded institutional Athena SWAN 'bronze' in 2012. We will re-apply for institutional 'bronze' status. (Linda King, Associate Dean FHLS / April 2016) FHLS are working to achieve departmental 'silver' status (Linda King, Associate Dean FHLS / application planned Nov 2014) TDE are working to achieve departmental 'bronze' status. (Georgia Butina-Watson, Head of Department of Planning, TDE / application March 2014) | We have applied for institutional 'bronze' status under the new Athena SWAN charter, April 2016. FHLS were awarded departmental 'silver' in 2015. TDE were unsuccessful in their application for departmental 'bronze' in 2014 and are working towards re-application in November 2016. | 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, PVCRC / application in April 2016 S: Retention of Institutional 'bronze' award under new charter (achieved Nov 2016) L/D: FHLS steering group headed by Susan Brooks, RTC / ongoing for application in April 2018 S: Retention of departmental 'silver' award L/D: 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 and Business self assessment teams to be established during 2016/17 for application in 2018/19 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/ and that all Bullying & | This practice is now embedded. | Action 8 A: Develop a policy and guidance on supporting trans* staff and students. L/D: Jane Butcher, EDI adviser / by December 2016 S: Policy and guidance notes published |

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| | Harassment advisers receive training. No further action was required at that time. | | 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 |
| 7.1 7.2 | Compliance with the Concordat and implementation / progress with this Action Plan will continue to be a standing item in university RKEC agendas and will be formally reviewed annually at the February RKEC meeting. (Chair of RKEC / ongoing) | This practice is now embedded. | |
| 7.4 | A range of senior university staff will regularly attend Vitae events that assist in realising the potential of researchers. (Alistair Fitt, 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, RTC / ongoing) | Susan Brooks, RTC, and other members of senior university staff as appropriate, regularly attend, and present at, Vitae events (for example, the annual conference, 'connections' events) and will continue to do so. This practice is now embedded. | |
| 7.5 | Equality impact assessment was a requirement for the REF2014 process and was thus completed. No further action was required at that time. | We will comply with whatever process is required for the next REF. | Action 9 A: Introduce an annual analysis of research allocations within the 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 |

Abbreviations:

ADRKE – Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange

BME – Black and minority ethnic

CROS – Careers in Research Online Survey

EDI – Equality, diversity and inclusion

FHLS – Faculty of Health & Life Sciences

HR – Human Resources

OCSLD – Oxford Centre for Staff Learning Development

PIRLS – Principle Investigators and Research Leads Survey

PVCR – Pro Vice Chancellor for Research & Global Partnerships

RBDO – Research and Business Development Office

REF – Research Excellence Framework

RKEC – Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee

RTC – Research Training Co-ordinator

SAT – Self assessment team (for Athena SWAN)

STEM – Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine

TDE – (Faculty of) Technology, Design and Environment

UREC – University Research Ethics Committee