

LJMU Research Concordat Implementation Summary and Action Plan



Background

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) endorses the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and is committed to further embedding the principles of the Concordat as evidenced by a number of strands of ongoing work.

Initial mapping of the Concordat principles to current University policies/practices has provided an institutional understanding of how the University is currently meeting the principles of the Concordat which is summarised below (How Are We Doing). This exercise identified a number of broad areas for action involving signposting and reinforcing existing policies and procedures which complement and align with the Concordat.

To take this work forward a Concordat Task Group (CTG) comprising representation from Human Resources (HR) and the University's Research Support Office (RSO) and Academic Enhancement Unit (AEU) has been established. The CTG is chaired by the Director of Research and reports directly to the University's Research Strategy Committee (see Appendix 1 for membership of the CTG and University's Research Strategy Committee). The remit of the CTG has been to undertake a gap analysis of provision to support the Concordat and to consult with relevant stakeholders across the University to inform the development of an action plan to further embed the Concordat principles.

How Are We Doing

	Concordat Principles
The University's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures (see http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/personnel/87114.htm) were reviewed and updated in September 2011. All research posts, regardless of length of contract, are treated in an identical manner to all staff posts.	1
Pay grades for all research staff are transparent and determined according to the requirements of the post	1
The University's Strategic Plan (2012-2017) identifies research and supporting researchers as a core strategic aim	2, 3, 4
The University operates an institutional Research Strategy Committee with embedding the principles of the Concordat within its terms of reference	2
The University's management structure includes a Pro Vice Chancellor	2

with responsibility for Research, an institutional Director of Research (heading up the University's Research Support Office) and 2 research intensive schools operate with school Directors of Research to inform and embed good practice across the University	
The University's Research Support Office WebPages provide advice and support for all research staff and students http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/Research/index.htm	3
The University's Research Support Office disseminates research-related information – skill developments; funding and collaborative opportunities – through a dedicated electronic research bulletin	3, 4
On an annual basis the Research Support Office through the Director of Research operates an Early Career Fellowship Fund to support and foster collaborative research	3, 4
The University offers a range of management and leadership development opportunities which are accessible to all staff as appropriate http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/CSD/95387.htm	2, 3, 4
The University's Code of Practice for Research was reviewed in September 2010 and updated in line with the principles from The UK Research Integrity Office http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/102121.htm	2, 5
The University's WebPages and internal/external publications regularly celebrate the successes of individual researchers across the institution	2
The University provides a range of career/skills development opportunities targeted specifically at early careers researchers for example Being an Effective Researcher; Collaboration; Writing Skills; Grants training	3, 4, 5
The University is an active member of the UK Vitae North West Hub providing regional and collaborative skills development and networking opportunities for research staff and students	3, 4, 5
The University operates a standard personal development and review system – all staff regardless of length of contract are expected to engage with the annual review process and in personal development planning http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/CSD/115928.htm	5
The University's Research Strategy Committee has approved the institutional Research Excellence Framework Code of Practice	6
Academic appointments and promotions to Readership and Chairs are routinely monitored and reported in terms of equality and diversity.	6
The University holds Chartered membership of the Athena Swann Charter which recognises and celebrates good employment practices for women working in Science, Engineering and Technology	6
The University has established a Concordat Task Group and implemented engagement with early career researchers through stakeholder workshops	7

Work Already Undertaken

- September 2010 – Mapping of Concordat principles to current University policies
- May 2011 - Establishment of Concordat Task Group

- May 2011 - Gap analysis utilising the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) undertaken highlighting a number of areas for improvement, particularly:
 - Local induction practices
 - Understanding of the University strategic aims for research and how individual staff fit into the University strategic plan
 - Development of, and engagement with, an institutional/local research community
 - Understanding of national policies and initiatives to support research staff such as the Concordat and the work of Vitae UK.

- November 2011 and January 2012 - University-wide stakeholder workshops hosted adding depth to the outcome from the preceding gap-analysis. Early career researchers from across the University were invited to attend – within LJMU this group comprised staff employed as fixed term research staff eg research assistants, post-doctoral researchers and also newly appointed academic staff starting their first academic role. The November workshop explored stakeholder understanding of the Concordat principles and sought to gain a stakeholder perspective on “what it is like to be an early career researcher at LJMU”. The second workshop was more specific in that it focussed on the role of Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR) in supporting the career pathways of researchers which was identified as a key determinant in the first workshop. Key areas emerging from the two stakeholder workshops were as follows:
 - Development of staff inductions to include information relating to research – strategy, expectations, responsibilities
 - Research staff engagement with PDPR – is research activity recognised and supported through PDPR particularly in areas where research staff are not managed by research-active staff
 - Mentoring of research staff
 - Recognition of, and support for, research through the workload allocation model
 - Improving communication and University-wide understanding of the broader internal and external research environment
 - University research networks / research staff associations

- October 2011 - Establishment of University Research Strategy Committee whose terms of reference refer explicitly to the Concordat (see Appendix 1)

Action Plan

This work is being undertaken within a time of positive change across the University. In September 2012 Professor Nigel Weatherill was appointed Vice-Chancellor and a series of institutional level changes with regards to research have followed, in particular the imminent launch of the University Strategy (2012 – 2017) which clearly identifies research at the forefront of the institutions ambitions. This is complemented by the formation of a University Research Strategy Committee to *“lead on the development of an ambitious institutional research strategy to conduct world-leading*

research and to oversee the implementation of this, setting out a clear ambition for the performance of research excellence and thus enhancing the professional reputation of the University”

Approval and Review

The Concordat implementation and associated action plan has been developed by the University’s Concordat Task Group in consultation with stakeholders from across the University.

Agreement for the action plan has subsequently been sought and obtained from the following institutional leads:

- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Academic Enhancement
- Director of Research

Institutional approval has been sought and granted through the University’s Research Strategy Committee (Chaired by the PVC for Academic Enhancement, Research and Regional Development) – **15 February 2012**

The action plan and targets will be reviewed 6 monthly through the CTG and reported to the University Research Strategy Committee. It has been agreed that the membership of the CTG be expanded to include representatives from relevant stakeholder groups – contract researchers and post-doctoral researchers and that due to the positive feedback received following stakeholder workshops it is proposed that these continue throughout the implementation phase to provide a feedback loop between CTG and the University’s early career researchers. Stakeholder feedback will also be evaluated through the annual Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)

Aim / Action	Institutional Lead	Review / Completion Date	Relevant Concordat Principles
<p>Aim – Deployment of the University-wide approach to local induction and PDPR practices for research staff</p> <p>Action – Development of a researcher induction programme / guide for use at School/Faculty level highlighting areas such as institutional and local research strategy and the individuals role within that strategy, support and career development opportunities including appraisal</p>	Deans	6 monthly review of progress. Full implementation by September 2012	1, 3 and 4
<p>Aim – improved communication and institutional awareness of University’s strategic aims</p> <p>Actions: Development of researcher induction programme / guide Updating Research Support Office WebPages Promotion of the new University Strategic Plan (2012-17)</p>	Research Support Office	Activities ongoing with annual review of progress	2
<p>Aim – Raise institutional awareness of external policies and initiatives to support researchers eg Concordat; Researcher Development Framework, UK Vitae</p> <p>Actions: Updating Research Support Office WebPages Development of researcher induction programme/guide Dissemination through University research bulletin; staff magazine and training/networking events</p>	Corporate Communications and Research Support Office	Activities ongoing with annual review of progress	2 and 5
<p>Aim – Support researchers career development through effective and consistent engagement with University’s personal development and performance review (PDPR)</p> <p>Actions: University-wide audit of existing PDPR practice and experience Qualitative study to evaluate research staff experience of PDPR Develop bespoke training for staff conducting PDPRs with research-active staff</p>	Academic Enhancement Unit	Feb/March 2012 May 2012 Report June 2012	3,4 and 5
<p>Aim – Establish a more comprehensive understanding of the professional development needs of research staff</p> <p>Actions: Identification of developmental needs through PDPR Mapping research staff developmental provision to UK Vitae Researcher Development Framework</p>	Academic Enhancement Unit	September 2012	3, 4 and 5

<p>Aim – Improve consultation with research staff Action – Institutional level engagement with CROS</p>	Academic Enhancement Unit and Research Support Office	Annual engagement with national CROS survey commencing 2013	2
<p>Aim – Improve internal communication and networking opportunities for research staff Action – Support establishment of a Research Staff Association/Network</p>	Academic Enhancement Unit and Research Support Office	September 2012	3, 4 and 5
<p>Aim – Ensure procedures and technical criteria for the conferment of Readers/Professors is objective and free of bias Action – Conduct equality impact assessment</p>	Human Resources	Ongoing annually	6
<p>Aim – Build on current recognition of equality and diversity in relation to female staff Action: Achieve Bronze level membership of Athena SWAN Charter</p>	Human Resources	December 2012	6
<p>Aim – Implementation of the recommendations made in the LJMU Equality Survey – Professoriate (2010) which was established to gain a better understanding of the under-representation of female professors within the University Actions: Improve communication of work-life balance initiatives through the Human Resources WebPages Implement role of senior mentors to provide support and guidance to female researchers Improve communication of the Professorial Pay Enhancement Panel and the senior mentor scheme through Faculty road-shows</p>	Human Resources	December 2012	6

Appendix 1 – Relevant Committee Membership and Terms of Reference

Concordat Task Group

Reports to: University Research Strategy Committee

Membership:

Director of Research (Chair)
Head of Research Programme Development
Manager – Human Resources
Manager – Academic Enhancement Unit
Stakeholder Representatives X2

Terms of Reference:

To oversee the development and implementation of a coherent and robust action plan that will further embed the principles of the Research Concordat across Liverpool John Moores University

University Research Strategy Committee

Reports to: Vice Chancellor and Senior Management Group

Membership:

Vice Chancellor (ex officio)
Pro Vice Chancellor (ARR) – Chair
Director of Research
1 research-active Professor to represent each Faculty (APS, ECL, HASS, SCI, TAE)
In attendance: Director of Commercial and International, Head of Development Funding, Senior Finance Manager
External advisors to be invited as appropriate

Terms of Reference:

The Research Committee will be responsible for leading the development of an ambitious institutional research strategy to conduct world-leading research and for over-seeing the implementation of this. In doing so, it will set out a clear ambition for the performance of research excellence and thus enhance the professional reputation of the University. It will do this by:

- Facilitating the pursuit and delivery of the very highest quality research
- Encouraging a culture in which excellent research and staff scholarship impact upon the student experience
- ***Putting the support for scholarship and the development of people at the heart of the University's research strategy, including postgraduate***

research students and early career researchers, and ensure adherence to the Research Concordat.

- Ensuring that appropriate resources (e.g., RCIF, QR, HEIF etc.) are being used to deliver a sustainable, physical and intellectual infrastructure to support, conduct and disseminate our research. This will focus particularly on capacity building to achieve a critical mass of activities, targeted growth in PGR numbers and further growth in research income
- Advising VC on budgets and strategic investment to support research, including star appointments
- Developing policy guidance for faculties to attract and appoint good research staff and funded Fellowships
- Raising the profile of research within and beyond the University by supporting high stakes activity at institutional level. This will include vibrant faculty / research unit seminar programmes of both internal and external speakers, VC sponsored inaugural lectures, public lectures, LJMU – hosted conferences and research committee visits to schools and research centres
- Promoting internal and external collaborations, including the forging of strong links to RCUK and other funders, industry and charities, etc
- Preparing for and being responsible for the submission to REF2014 (with relevant input from faculty deans and HR)
- Monitoring and assessing the impact (defined so that it is inclusive of academic, economic, societal, quality of life and cultural impact) of our research through a suite of key performance indicators (e.g. grants awarded, citations etc.). These will be benchmarked with sector performance.
- Developing and ensuring that research governance policies and regulations safeguard the integrity of research across the Institution.
- Developing and implementing grant application policy (cf. Research Councils demand management requirements)

Appendix 2 – Glossary of Terms

AEU – Academic Enhancement Unit

APS – Faculty of Arts and Professional Studies

ARR – Academic Enhancement, Research and Regional Development

CROS – Careers in Research Online Survey

CTG – Concordat Task Group

ECL – Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure

EIA – Equality Impact Assessment

HASS – Faculty of Health and Social Sciences

HEIF – Higher Education Innovation Fund

HR – Human Resources

LJMU – Liverpool John Moores University

PDPR – Personal Development and Performance Review

PGR – Postgraduate Research

PVC – Pro Vice Chancellor

QR – Quality-related Research

RCIF – Research Capital and Infrastructure Fund

RCUK – Research Councils UK

REF – Research Excellence Framework

RSO – Research Support Office

SCI – Faculty of Science

SWAN – Scientific Women’s Academic Network

TAE – Faculty of Technology and Environment

VC – Vice Chancellor