

# UNIVERSITY OF KENT ACTION PLAN FOR RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT 2017 - 2021

<b>Existing Strategic Commitments at the University of Kent</b>		Concordat Item
<i>The Research &amp; Innovation Board remains vigilant to research grants complying with the employment principles of the Concordat and challenges applications which do not conform to the expected employment standards, for example contract durations. Research design, research roles and jobholders must be justified on academic merit.</i>		
<b>Research and Innovation Strategy 2016-2020 (extract):</b>		
<b>Objective 1</b> To increase our output of world leading research. At the University/Faculty/School level we will: Make sure our hire, promotion, development and reward arrangements for our staff will be reflective both of our aspirations and the world leading activity of our staff.		1.1, 1.2
<b>Kent People Strategy 2015-2020 (extracts):</b>		
<b>Objective 1.</b> We will take a fresh approach that ensures we can continue to attract and employ the excellent people we need to fulfil our ambitions to be recognised, both nationally and internationally, as a high performing university. To do this we will: 1.1Develop a compelling employer brand that will stand out among our competitors attracting the high calibre people with the attributes we need – both at home and overseas; 1.2Develop and review our Recruitment Strategy and policies increasing our focus on effective search and assessment in key areas and specialisms (e.g. teaching capability and research credentials), and reviewing the impact of our current recruitment practices on equality and responsiveness to operational needs		1.1, 1.2
<b>Objective 3.</b> We will ensure that all our people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential while helping to realise our significant ambitions. To do this we will (extract 3.9): Use accreditation processes such as Athena SWAN, iP and HR Excellence in Research, to address equality issues and embed inclusivity;		1.4
<b>Objective 6.</b> We will contribute to the development of a responsive and agile organisation that equips us to meet the challenges of the future while protecting our core values of equality, fairness, collaboration and respect. To do this we will (extract 6.1): Review our job evaluation and grading arrangements making use of career grades and job families so that we can be more responsive to the changing shape and needs of the organisation;		1.5

<b>Actions required 2017-2021</b>		<b>Institutional Lead</b>	<b>Proposed Timeline</b>	<b>Success Measures</b>	<b>Concordat Item</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Valuing Researchers</b>				
1a	The University recognises the importance of equal treatment for all its employees, and as such is committed to using fixed term contracts when there is an objective and justifiable reason (current for 80% of research staff). RIB actively ensures that this policy is embedded in Schools with appropriate documentation and procedures in place.	RIB Res Serv	Two-year monitoring (surveys in 2019, 2021)	Less than 30% of staff see fixed term as a barrier. 70% aware of development offers. Uptake of development by 40% of people	1.3, 1.5
1b	RDWG will engage support from its members or other researchers and stakeholders in engaging with national developments and initiatives relevant to the benefit of research staff including participation in Vitae conferences	RDWG	quarterly	Promote support for funding one researcher per year to attend the Vitae conference	7.1, 7.4, 7.5
1c	Research Services to ensure that grant funding continues to comply with Concordat principles and will inform the Researcher Development Working Group of any issues.	RIB Res Serv	quarterly from June 2017	Non-compliant proposals rejected (reason for rejection recorded)	7.3
1d	Monitoring of funding expiry dates and notification of end-of-funding to PIs and researchers prompts consultation to ensure staff on fixed term contracts are supported and alternative employment is identified where possible.	Res Serv RDWG	monthly	Survey of SAMs in June 2018 captures leavers' next roles	2.2, 2.4
1e	Analyse biennial Researcher Development survey to inform University practice in supporting Research Staff.	RDWG	April 2019/21	Review of survey in spring 2019	3.3
1f	Work with research councils/funders to ensure the shaping of career development of researchers.	Res Serv	annual	Funder/DTP meeting feedback	3.3
1g	Consider how to enable researchers to develop capabilities that fit the institutional Research and Innovation Strategy and People Strategy, encouraging mobility in research careers	RDWG	annual	New advice in RPD & on-line guidance from November 2017	3.8
1h	Submitted proposal for new staffing dedicated to postdoctoral training. If successful, will enable: (i) benchmarks of approaches at other institutions (ii) review options to promote researchers' value to Kent (Postdocs in publicity and marketing, flyers showcasing their research, economic and societal impact of research roles) more widely.	Grad School	March 2018	Outcome of proposal (July 2017) Outcome of review - March 2018 (subject to proposal outcome)	1.4, 2.6

GLOSSARY: DTP (Doctoral Training Partnership); ECR (early career researcher), KIE (Kent Innovation & Enterprise), KEIN (Kent's Enterprise Network), L&D (HR Learning & Development), Grad School (Graduate School), RDWG (Researcher Development Working Group), Res Serv (Research Services), RIB (Research & Innovation Board), RPD (Appraisal), SAM (School Administration Manager), UELT (Kent's teaching training unit)

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	Actions required 2017-2021	Institutional Lead	Proposed Timeline	Success Measures	Concordat Item
<b>2. Networks for Researchers, Internal Events, Researcher voice</b>					
2a	Use ECR networks to gauge reasons for perception of barriers to accessing development at Kent	Res Serv	April 2018	Capture qualitative feedback from ECR workshops for RDWG	2.1
2b	Expansion of the <a href="#">Early Career Researcher Network</a> provision could include the following support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Getting Recognition: Promotion &amp; Pay at Kent'</li> <li>• Careers information sessions (60-80% of researchers have not used on-line resources, careers advisers, Learned Societies, Research Councils or Vitae as sources of advice) and input from mentors/PIs.</li> <li>• Communicate development pathways and opportunities.</li> <li>• Examine and encourage good practice for career development planning for researchers and links to Kent Personal Development Plans and Vitae RDF (researcher networking events in 2018/19).</li> <li>• Increase awareness on how to develop research capability through (meetings, events and workshops)</li> <li>• Extension on briefing and support in use of the Researcher Development Framework</li> <li>• Research governance and research ethics (including informal briefings in network sessions). The University has a Research &amp; Ethics Governance Officer who provides training to schools and research groups.</li> <li>• We will raise awareness of policies on EDI through provision of information at researcher network meetings</li> <li>• Formalised feedback discussions at sessions as opportunities to feed back to RIB and Executive Group.</li> </ul>	Res Serv & Grad School	October 2017 through to June 2018	Two new workshop topics incorporated into Early Career Researcher programme by June 2018	1.4, 3.1, 3.8, 3.9, 4.10, 4.13, 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 6.4
2c	Submitted proposal for new staffing dedicated to postdoctoral training (see 1h) which, if successful, will enable it to explore dedicated training and support, with an initial proposal for a researcher induction/welcome event.	Grad School	Spring 2018	Outcome of '1h' above. Review in March 2018 (subject to proposal)	3.3, 3.6
2d	Further raise awareness of the Vitae RDF (e.g. through ECR network events) as a basis for considering how to develop their skill set and experience.	RDWG Res Serv	October 2017 to June 2018	Awareness of RDF to increase to 50% in survey in April 2019	3.7
2e	Monitor uptake of the University's KEW-NET mentoring network (on-line system from April 2017) and analyse participation in ECR, KEIN and other networks (including the potential of Vitae's SUMAC scheme matching mentors and mentees across universities) for people to develop external networks and related benefits. Mentoring networks will be reviewed and re-invigorated for all staff (including participating researchers)	RDWG with L&D and Grad School	Spring 2018	Researchers on KEW-NET to grow 10% points annually to 30% by Spring 2020. SUMAC proposal to RDWG (April 2018)	4.10
2f	Review selection/involvement of contract researchers on the Research & Innovation Board (1 current member)	RIB	August 2017	1 researcher attends RIB for 4 in 5 meetings and nominates alternate when not available.	4.13
2g	Develop an electronic ethics review system to simplify, streamline and standardise the process of seeking ethical approval. This will facilitate simpler engagement with issues around the ethical implementation of research.	Res Serv	Spring 2018	System goes live in Spring 2018	5.3
2h	Encourage research staff to engage with entrepreneurial, knowledge exchange initiatives, including Enterprise & Innovation Network events, and innovation funding opportunities (ideas with commercial potential)	RDWG Repts KIE	Autumn 2017	KEIN attendance up by 10% each year (2019 survey data)	5.2
<b>3. Development of research Managers to support researcher development</b>					
3a	Support will be developed and offered for Research Managers/PIs to establish good practice across Faculties/research groups (managing expectations of researchers, including fixed term contracts, equality & diversity, mentoring, developing and allowing consideration of careers within/outside academia): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Leader Training for postdocs in supervisory positions (or with planned future responsibilities).</li> <li>• Promote 'Foundations of management' courses to PIs and postdocs in supervisory positions.</li> <li>• Kent's EDI agenda through available management programmes and e-learning packages</li> <li>• Network events for Research managers/PIs in mentoring on RDF and Career development of researchers</li> </ul>	L&D RDWG	Sept 2017 to July 2018	Develop sessions in the termly Research Administrator and Directors of Research network events delivered by Aug 2018. 1 workshop per year on Research Team Leadership. PIs at 'Foundations' modules	2.3, 3.1, 3.4, 3.7, 6.9
3b	The University ensures that Contracts Officers from Research Services meet with PIs who are starting projects to ensure that they are fully briefed as to their role and responsibilities, both to the external funder, but also to those working on the project. As part of this the resources available at the University for researchers are highlighted and PIs are encouraged to support their researchers in accessing them.	Res Serv	Autumn 2017	Develop a checklist for Research Services to issue to PIs by Spring 2018	3.6

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<b>4.</b>	<b>Signposting Guidance for Researchers (through the <a href="#">Researcher Development Portal</a>)</b>				
4a	Review the broad programme presented through the Researcher Development portal, based on offerings from Graduate School, UELT and L&D in research, transferable skills and career advice. Consider rebadging some events to avoid some researchers being discouraged from attending alongside PhD students (i.e. co-sponsoring certain events between Grad School and the ECR Network). Monitor implementation through RPD feedback and surveys.	RDWG	Annually in June	Formal review conducted in June 2018 and outcomes and action minuted/documentated by RDWG	3.3, 5.4, 5.5
4b	All research staff to be informed (through on-line portal, Twitter or through network meetings) of relevant development opportunities.	RDWG	Monthly	Level of awareness up to 70% by development source (2019 survey)	4.10
4c	Communicate research career pathways and promotion procedures for Researchers to Researchers themselves, PIs, Heads of School and School Administration Managers via the <a href="#">Researcher Development portal</a> Revised guidance for 2016-2017 <a href="https://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/promotion-salary-review/index.html">https://www.kent.ac.uk/hr-staffinformation/promotion-salary-review/index.html</a>	RDWG Faculty Reps	completed	Web page visit trend (analytics) Useful advice experienced by over 50% of staff in 2019 survey	1.4, 2.5
4d	Promote awareness of career switches between research and non-research roles (63% of people do not know of these opportunities and 5% of staff are not clear about opportunities for career progression (2017 survey))	RDWG	Annual from October 2017	Awareness of career switches increased to 50% in 2019 survey	3.4
4e	Improve promotion of induction processes and events to inform researchers and managers and share best practice. Include researcher case studies, cases of alternative career pathways for example researchers moving to Teaching & Research or to Teaching & Scholarship, or Professional roles (through ECR network & Faculties)	RDWG Reps, Res Serv	To Autumn 2019	Case study on website, Oct 2017 Event on careers beyond HE research by October 2019	3.2, 3.3, 3.8
4f	Promote the existing 'Diversity in the Workplace' <a href="#">E-Learning packages</a> through Networks, induction and the portal	RDWG	Twice per year	Take-up up to 60% (2019 survey)	6.8
4g	Submitted proposal for new staffing dedicated to postdoctoral training (see 1h) which, if successful, will support development of easy-to-access resource library including key articles, books and videos, online collection of podcasts or stories about Kent Careers. Include links to Vitae's 'What Researchers Do', RCUK's <a href="#">research careers webpages</a> , other resources (e.g. the 'More than Lucky' report), and stories about barriers encountered by ECRs.	Graduate School	June 2018	Outcome of '1h' proposal above. New resource links on Researcher Development portal by June 2018 (subject to proposal)	2.6, 3.2
4h	Wider communication of development opportunities to researchers and Principal Investigators (targeted emails, campus on-line and researcher development portal), including Public Engagement Fund projects, innovation funding opportunities, Knowledge Exchange (maintain visibility on Researcher Development portal and twitter)	RDWG, Res Serv, KIE	Annual cycle	Links from school/centre websites at 100%, June 2018. Annual page visits on portal: 30,000 by 2019.	3.4, 4.10
<b>5.</b>	<b>Career Development including RPD, mentoring and careers advice</b>				
5a	Monitor contract research staff's uptake of RPD and Identify key schools/faculties where uptake is low, and promote through RDWG bespoke training in line with current RPD support for research managers PIs with RPD training for new researchers and new research managers in faculties on an annual cycle	RDWG, L&D	Mar 2019, 2021	Increase to above 60% uptake in survey in 2019. Number of session attendees per year	2.1,2.6, 3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 4.10
5b	Develop career development advice for research managers, to support career discussions within faculty RPD (appraisal) discussions (also to issue during RPD training) including signposting staff to utilise on-line support material and external training where appropriate	RDWG reps	September 2017	Take-up of on-line support increases to 50% in 2019 survey	2.3, 5.1
5c	Engage with academics in their involvement in coaching, mentoring and researcher development and explore how existing mentoring further supports researchers in career development in key areas	RDWG reps	Sep 2017 to April 2018	Qualitative feedback from network events by April 2018 informs future actions	3.1, 3.7
5d	Faculty research mentorship to be promoted and encouraged; professional mentoring by research managers and peer mentoring by research staff	RDWG reps	Quarterly	Mentoring uptake increases to 80% in 2019 survey (76% in 2017)	3.9, 4.14
5e	Further promote the use of on-line career advice for researchers and RDF guidance through the portal. Monitor uptake of careers advice through Survey (50% awareness of school support 56% awareness of Careers Service, 11% of other support. Overall 46% have useful advice on prospects/careers in 2017).	Careers RDWG	Feb/March 2019 and 2021	Take-up over 60% ,2019 survey Usefulness of advice up to 50% in 2019 survey	2.4,3.2, 3.8
5f	Encouragement of Personal Development Planning monitored through surveys.	RDWG	Annual	Take-up above 60% in 2019 survey	4.14, 5.6
5g	Graduate School has submitted a proposal for new staffing dedicated to postdoctoral training (see 1h) which, if successful, will enable it to develop some PDP templates for researchers.	Graduate School	Spring 2018	Outcome of '1h'. PDP material out late 2018, subject to proposal	4.14




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<b>6.</b>	<b>Equality of Access to Careers and Development (overcome barriers, ensure equality)</b>				
6a	University of Kent's Athena SWAN Working Group has drafted a five year plan for all of its schools to submit applications for Athena SWAN accreditation, with submission deadlines.	Athena SWAN Working Group	November 2017-21	Accreditation of schools in November 2021	6.10
6b	Faculty researcher representatives will review researcher-related data available in schools and faculties (through Athena SWAN reporting) and will inform RDWG for review of equality in career development of researchers.	RDWG	December 2018	Review data from Athena SWAN, identifying action in spring 2019	6.2, 6.3
6c	Across all Faculties under the Athena SWAN initiative there is a plan to monitor diversity balance of promotion candidates and departments now monitor equality (including panel members) at recruitment application, interview and appointment stages. Extend good practice to other faculties.	Athena SWAN Working Group	Spring 2017	Review trends in progression data from Athena SWAN, identifying action in spring 2019	1.4, 6.7
6d	Continue to monitor researcher access to development through the biennial survey (current rates at 32% of contract staff seeing fixed term as a barrier to development, reduced from 37% in 2015)	RDWG	Feb/March 2019, 2021	Less than 32% in survey see fixed-term contract as a barrier	2.1
6e	Monitor available data on protected characteristics and plan improvements supporting the next research excellence (REF) exercise including Athena SWAN trends, to better identify areas of under-representation or lack of progression in relation to the Protected Characteristics.	RIB	December 2018	Improved representation trends in emerging REF data spring 2019	1.4, 6.1, 6.8, 7.5
6f	Review researcher awareness of Equality Diversity & Inclusivity policies (70% aware in 2017), researchers' uptake of parental leave (17% uptake by researchers in 2017) and other Equality Diversity & Inclusivity provisions	RDWG Reps	Mar 2019,2021	Awareness of EDI policies increases to 75% in 2019 survey	6.5, 6.6, 6.8
6g	Monitor the effectiveness of induction through survey feedback	RDWG	Sept 2017	Improved induction satisfaction to 85% in Apr 2019 survey	3.6
<b>7.</b>	<b>Provision of Development (External events and Materials)</b>				
7a	Improve targeting of the researcher community for internal recruitment and development.	Faculty/School	Termly	No. internal recruits in 2018	2.6
7b	Encourage applications for funding available to researchers (Public Engagement with Research Fund (currently 51% awareness); Researcher Development Fund (currently 48% awareness) and the Eastern ARC Training Fund. Develop further small internal research funding schemes accessible to researchers to give experience of designing, leading and managing a project, including supervision of staff (such as student interns). This will build on existing provisions such as the fund for Public Engagement. A number of funds are available to all staff at Kent to develop their research, including researchers: faculty small grants, Faculty research fund (open to fixed-term contract staff in Sciences and Social Sciences), funding for developing collaborations across Europe and with Eastern ARC partners, and funding for Global Challenges and other strategic initiatives. Examine new development of apprenticeship standards relevant to already highly qualified research staff and related to contracted roles as standards become available after 2017	Faculty Reps RDWG RDWG Faculty Reps	May 2017 to May 2019	Number of applications (successful and unsuccessful) by researchers for each available funding pot increasing year on year	3.1, 4.11
7c	Active engagement with Eastern ARC (University of Essex and UEA) and other external stakeholders (including universities of Greenwich and Canterbury Christchurch at Medway) initiatives on shared Researcher Development provision including events, conferences and training including on-line programmes	RDWG, Res Serv	Autumn 2018	Increased number of relevant events conducted compared to 2016	3.4, 7.4
7d	Explore possibilities for researcher mobility between Eastern ARC institutions on joint funded grants. Visits partner institutions to explore synergies (including researcher mobility, employability and development)	Faculty Reps RDWG	Summer 2017	Recommendations reviewed by RDWG/Faculty in January 2018	7.4
7e	Evaluate the effectiveness of training provision in academic practice. Seek evidence that demonstrates impact on career development of research staff. Improve reporting on development events for researchers (annual or termly reports to RDWG) on attendance at development events by Research Services, Graduate School and L&D	Res Serv, Grad School, L&D, UELT	Summer 2018	Funding of Sciences events for Sept 2017. Recommendations reviewed by RDWG in July 2018	4.11, 4.12
7f	Monitor the uptake of generic career development skills and abilities within the RDF framework	RDWG	Sept 2017	Topic take-up in 15-40% range in 2019 survey (7-28% in 2017)	4.11

Summary Matrix of Actions in 2017-21 against items in the ‘Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers’

Kent commitments (themes)	Principle 1					Principle 2						Principle 3									Principle 4					Principle 5						Principle 6										Principle 7				
	A. Recruitment & Selection					B. Recognition & Value						C. Support and Career Development									D. Researchers' Responsibilities					E. Diversity & Equality										F. Implementation & Review										
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.10	4.11	4.12	4.13	4.14	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.9	6.10	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5
Existing Strategic Commitments																																														
1. Valuing Researchers			1	1	1	1		1		1			2					1																							1			1	1	
2. Networks & Researcher voice			1		1					1	1		1		1	1	1	1	2		2				1	1	2		1				1													
3. Research Managers							1			1			1		1	1																														
4. Signposting Guidance			1						1	1	2	2	2					1		2								1	1									1	1							
5. Career Development					2	1	1		1	1	1	1			1		1	2	3	1										1																
6. Equality of Access to Development			2		1											1															1	1	1		1	1	1	2		1					1	
7. Provision (external)										1	1			1							3	1																						2		
Total actions per Concordat principle	0	0	1	5	1	4	1	2	2	1	4	4	3	5	4	1	3	3	5	4	5	3	1	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	3	2

Key:

- No actions relate to this specific Concordat principle 
- One action in this theme relates to the principle 
- Two actions in this theme relate to the principle 
- Three actions in this theme relate to the principle 