

PROGRESS UPDATE ON ACTION PLAN 2017-2019 NOVEMBER 2021

This final progress update on the Action Plan for 2017-2021 has been simplified for ease of use and length of document. The final reporting on the Action Plan 2017-21 uses the same progress report format submitted for the six year review in 2019 but only includes narrative progress updates on the outstanding, partly or incomplete actions from the six year review progress report and simply confirms completion for all other actions that were marked as complete previously on the 2019 progress report. For narrative details on those previously completed actions, please refer to the 2019 progress report. The newly updated progress narratives are marked in yellow highlight for the progress headline and those from previous six-year review in green highlight.

THEME A INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS

A1 *Extend existing research component of new staff induction using new reference resources, ensuring that all staff are aware of structure and diversity of support available* [Concordat Principles: 2, 4, 5]

Tasks Clarify internal definition of 'ECR' and ensure that HR records capture ECR data

Using HR new starters records, ensure that all new ECRs are reached via Induction and follow up with School to ensure ECR attendance

Date May-21

Measures Improve attendance of new ECRs starting new contract

Progress **COMPLETE**

A formal internal definition of 'ECR' was proposed and agreed by Research & Innovation Committee. This is now use for all HR-related support, by Research & Innovation Services, and in all elements of the Researcher Development Programme.

ECRs are now flagged as a category on our HR system as part of HESA returns which allows aligning with new initiatives such as the ECR Forum and ensuring the communications linked with ECR matters, CEDARS, etc, is properly targeted.

School Associate Deans (Research & Innovation) receive a quarterly report on attendance at the Researcher Development Programme sessions and have reviewed their research staff base as part of this internal review.

Task Development of reference resources to be placed on the website to supplement existing induction programme

Progress **COMPLETE** Dec-17

Task Obtain feedback on accessibility and utility of the resources using questionnaire distributed to induction attendees

Progress **COMPLETE** May-19

A2	<i>Evaluation of new support resources</i> [Concordat Principles: 2, 4, 5]
<u>Task</u>	Quantitative analysis of user statistics Follow-up with questionnaire respondents to measure usability of resources
<u>Progress</u>	COMPLETE Dec-18
A3	<i>Develop a new web hub and resources so that staff know what is available that specifically targets their needs</i> [Concordat Principles: 2, 4, 5]
<u>Task</u>	Develop new web hub and resources linked to researcher development organised by level indicators and type of support (Theme B, first action) and ensure that all ECRs can easily access resources and support
<u>Progress</u>	COMPLETE Dec-17
A4	<i>Provide guidance documents for revised PDPR process using level indicators and support type</i> [Concordat Principles: 2, 4, 5]
<u>Tasks</u>	Develop guidance documents for revised PDPR process, ensuring alignment with RDF. Guidance to include the need to identify research development activity for all research staff; Develop guidance on developing needs analysis for research using level indicators and support type
<u>Progress</u>	COMPLETE Dec-17
A5	<i>Establish central forum for research staff development to disseminate information linked to institutional Concordat implementation and national Concordat policy</i> [Concordat Principles: 2, 4, 7]
<u>Tasks</u>	Re-purpose TURN (Teesside University Research Network) events Communicate information about the forum to all staff
<u>Progress</u>	COMPLETE Sept-18
A6	<i>Maintain/enhance participation in regional and national networks</i> [Concordat Principle: 7]
<u>Tasks</u>	Continued Vitae membership Maintain and participate in regional networks (NECGRD; NERDS) Participate in national networks (Vitae; UKCGE; ARMA) Share and disseminate good practice
<u>Progress</u>	COMPLETE May-19; November-21
	<i>The University continues and maintains all previously reported networks and memberships.</i>

THEME B RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (DIVERSITY)

B1 *Enable targeted support for needs analysis as priority in PDPR use*
[Concordat Principles: 3, 4, 5, 6]

Tasks Design level indicators (linked to RDF)
Determine support types linked to level indicators
Create resources for needs analysis to use with PDPR

Progress **COMPLETE** Dec-18

B2 *Ensure that indicators and types are being used to maximise uptake of development opportunities*
[Concordat Principles: 3, 4, 5, 6]

Task Provide training and support for staff to effectively use indicators and support types

Progress **COMPLETE** May-19

B3 *Link mentoring duties to meeting KPI-8 targets*
[Concordat Principles: 2, 6]

Task Develop formal processes to ensure that senior staff in departments have an effective framework to fulfil mentoring duties

Progress **COMPLETE** Sept-18

Task Evaluate impact of clear role descriptors and criteria on mentoring

Progress **COMPLETE** May-19

B4 *All staff with responsibilities for recruitment and management of research staff are appropriately supported about the requirements of the role* [Concordat Principles: 1, 2, 6]

Task Ensure that all staff with responsibilities for management of research staff are briefed about requirements linked to development of research staff

Progress **COMPLETE** Sept-18

THEME C RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT (AVAILABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY)

C1 *Use Theme B indicators and types to develop and enhance a more structured programme of research staff development using a blended-learning approach*
[Concordat Principles: 2, 3, 4]

Tasks Design structured programme of research staff development through a blended learning approach

Specify distinctive ECR route through staff development programme, linked with use of indicators and types at Theme B

Roll out programme to develop enhancements based on participant evaluations

Progress **COMPLETE** Sept-18

C2 *Ensure that all staff have access to development opportunities that suits their working pattern and work load*
[Concordat Principles: 2, 5, 6]

Task Design e-learning resources to support blended and flexible approach to research staff development and the PDRP process

Date May-21

Progress **COMPLETE – (previously a TASK CHANGE in May 2019 report)**

During the design phase and initial roll-out of the development programme, the proposal to develop e-learning resources to complement the traditional delivery was explored. The major challenge for delivery within the Action Plan period was a review of the institution's VLE. For this reason, in May 2019 the implementation of ECR-specific e-learning options was postponed until the VLE hosting/delivery had been finalised at institutional level and until there is sufficient evaluation of the development programme to gauge ECR interest.

However, the effect of campus closures due to Covid-19 necessitated that the University's entire RDP programme be taken online quickly and as a result, the RDP offer was provided entirely using online e-learning from April 2020. This continues to be the principal mode of training delivery. An entire suite of both one-off and multi-session courses is now available in the form of webinars and online discussion groups with a full archive of all online delivery available for download at staff convenience. It is anticipated that the e-learning offer will run alongside a more traditional offer on the RDP once campus operations return to normal. Researcher development options now include use of the Adobe Articulate platform to further extend the e-learning options to web-based, non-archival, content.

C3 **Ensure that Theme B indicators and types are effective in providing targeted support through training programme**
[Concordat Principles: 2, 5]

Task Monitor and test effectiveness of structured programme of research development through lens of Theme B indicators and types

Date Nov-21

Measures Qualitative analysis with participants demonstrating link between effective use of indicators/types and programme uptake

Progress **COMPLETE**

At the six year review in May 2019, progress had been hard to determine within the period because it was too early in the life of the RDP to have sufficient evaluative data.

It was proposed that linking of the RDP programme to a distinct set of indicators for use in PDPR and in dissemination of information about the programme would be more useful for the institution's researcher demographic. Further evaluation to properly assess the way in which the indicator/types influence programme uptake and the usefulness of the provision to staff of different levels of experience showed that it was important to fully embed research indicators into the PDPR process for ECRs. For the process for 2021/2, the initial implementation has been to include a bespoke planning tool for ECRs to be used as part of the PDPR process and discussion between staff member and their appropriate line manager. The idea behind this is that objectives for development are discussed in order that appropriate research workload time is assigned for CPD with the plan submitted as part of this process and then reviewed by central department staff for evaluation, especially to inform the development and offer of the RDP where training and support requirements have been identified by staff. Additionally, new initiatives at local level are addressing the need for a review more frequently across the year.

The long term development of this (for the Action Plan 2021-25) is to make this entire process (PDPR, CPD needs, assignment of appropriate workload, review and evaluation of objectives) fully online, the system for which is currently in development by HR staff as part of an online PDPR application and review process.

CEDARS responses show that 79% of respondents found career development review as part of the PDPR process either "Very Useful" or "Useful".

C4 **Increase the pool of research staff mentors**
[Concordat Principles: 2, 4, 5]

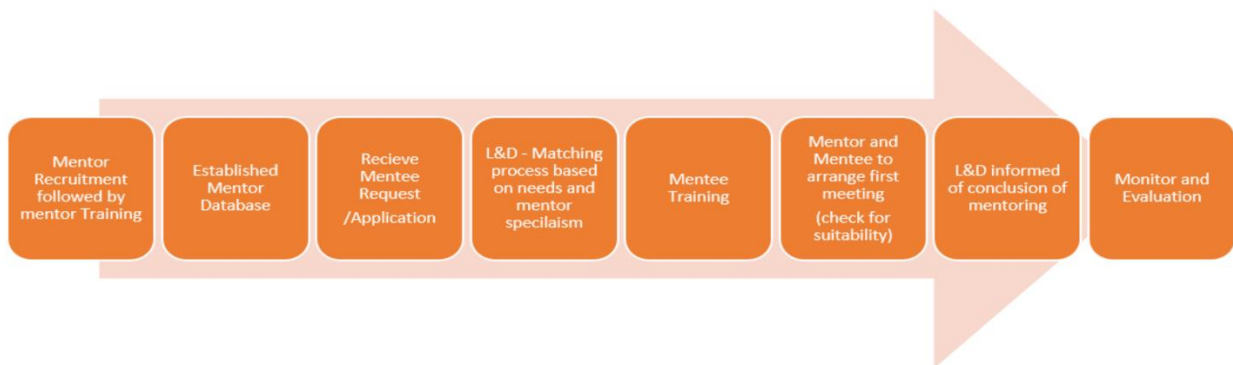
Task Increase the number of mentors specifically for research development as part of the University's formal mentoring programme

Date Nov-21

Measures Each department will have two to four members of research staff formally linked to the institutional mentoring programme depending on department size

Progress PARTLY COMPLETE

At the time of the May 2019 six-year review, this aspect of the 2017-2019 Action Plan was rolled forward into the 2019-2021 period due to delays in the roll out of the institutional mentoring scheme. Unfortunately, due to campus closure from March 2020 due to Covid-19, further delays beset the roll-out and the implementation really only began once campus re-opened with partial operational status. The institutional mentoring scheme is now up and running now, albeit in its infancy. Following initial plans pre-Covid, a recruit drive for mentors has commenced and the processes and development opportunities for mentors and mentees has been established. All staff whether a mentor or mentee can apply to access the scheme and information. The expectation is that mentoring has been identified with line managers during the PDPR process to establish the development needs and engagement commitment requirements with the mentee's line manager. The process for the institutional scheme is shown by this graphic:



Bearing in mind that the new scheme is still relatively new, statistics show that, as of October 2021 there are:

- *44 registered mentors from across the University*
 - *23 female and 21 male*
 - *19 Academics, 12 of whom are research staff*
- *5 mentee requests pending with 2 allocated and mentor relationships initiated.*

The initial work on this institutional scheme now needs to be extended to link up School/Departmental ECR mentees with mentors with appropriate monitoring via PDPR process.

We had originally planned to include some further data on perceptions of participation as mentors and mentees (as in the CROS2019 survey) but CEDARS questions do not include a specific question on mentoring.

THEME D CAREERS INNOVATION AND RESOURCES

D1 *Ensure that all career advisers are able to target advice to researcher need*
[Concordat Principles: 3, 4, 5]

Tasks Develop resources to ensure that all career advisers are trained and supported to target advice appropriate for the various stages of the researcher journey, including a 'researcher journey map'

Adapt career skills assessment tools for use by research staff to inform interventions and/or support needs by CS and to inform content of new training materials

Progress **COMPLETE Dec-18**

D2 *Improve School-specific and resource-efficient support*
[Concordat Principles: 3, 4, 5]

Tasks Liaise with Principal Lecturers (Staffing and Resources) to target researcher development within the School
Signpost staff to relevant e-learning resources

Date May-21

Measures Records of needs via PL meetings (changed to PDPR)
Quantitative and qualitative data on uptake and value. Demonstrable evidence of researcher engagement with careers advice via referrals.
Benchmark against CROS q.23

Progress **COMPLETE (TASK CHANGE in May 2019 Action Plan update)**

The Careers Service senior management explored the scope of this action early in the period of the Action Plan and liaison with PLs in Schools was not considered to be the best option for improving support in this area. As an alternative, staff agreed a system for improving one-to-one support based on numbers of staff using the service which involves ensuring better communication of support and information with ECRs and that the one-to-one support offered is shared effectively. This has already been piloted via the informal ECR group, where support offered was taken up via referral. expected The ECR Forum has provided other opportunities for this to be offered further.

There are now several elements of the RDP aimed at specifically at careers support and available via the webinar/e-learning archive. In particular, an eight week long programme aimed at ECRs, with an application process linked to PDPR CPD needs is offered.

CEDARS responses show that 55.1% of respondents "Agreed Strongly" or "Agreed" that they were aware of the support provided for career development. However, only 16.3% had pursued this in discussion with a careers' specialist.

D3 ***Targeted participation in partnership opportunities for career development***
[Concordat Principles: 3, 4, 5]

Task Develop links between career innovation and new partnership programmes with the National Horizon Centre (NHC), Launchpad (spin-out development), the Forge (via DAE) and other new opportunities as they arise

Progress **COMPLETE** May-19

THEME E HR POLICY REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION

E1 *Implementation of revised Personal Development Plan & Review (PDPR) process* [Concordat Principles: 2, 5, 6]

Task Integrate Personal Development Plan and Review (PDPR) with RDF for staff with research activity or development needs

Progress **COMPLETE** Sept-17

Task Train PDPR reviewers

Progress **COMPLETE** May-18

E2 *Review all relevant HR policies* [Concordat Principles: 1, 6]

Date for eight year review 2021

Measures Rolling updates of policies, confirm status at 2-year internal review, capturing data on numbers of researchers appointed, Flexible Working and other applications made by research staff

Progress **COMPLETE**

Data included in main report and informing new Action Plan 2021-25, including scope for specific HR policy interventions in new Action Plan.

E3 *Ensure staff are appraised of any changes to HR policies that impact on their role in supporting research staff* [Concordat Principles: 1, 6, 7]

Task Changes to HR policies that affect Concordat goals are monitored and reported to the Concordat Working Group and that research staff are briefed

Date For 2021 review

Measures Working Group report

Progress **COMPLETE**

Any changes are communicated via standard HR updates. A new Central Communications Hub has also been launched (April 2019) to improve internal communications. Important updates relevant specifically to research staff are also disseminated via Research & Innovation Services distribution lists via the Head of Research Systems and Data. Since 2017, HR have been formally recording and monitoring all applications for Flexible Working made locally at the central level. Scope for specific HR policy interventions in new Action Plan has been determined by policy review.

E4 ***Gain Athena-Swan Bronze Award***
[Concordat Principle: 6]

Progress **COMPLETE** May-19

E5 ***Expand Working Group membership and SMT reporting***
[Concordat Principles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

Tasks Nominate at least two ECRs to membership of Group
Appoint Director of Research & Innovation Services to Group

Progress **COMPLETE** Dec-17

Note that Working Group has been discontinued and absorbed into new Research Culture and People sub-Committee

E6 ***Improve ECR experience evaluation mechanisms***
[Concordat Principles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

Task Run CROS surveys during period

Date for eight year review 2021

Measures CROS results

Progress **CEDARS ran internally instead of CROS**

Task Establish School-based engagement with ECRs through quarterly 'drop-in' session as a formal feedback mechanism to Working Group

Date for eight year review 2021

Measures Reports from drop-ins inform actions within period as well as final review evaluations and benchmarking progress. Engage each ECR in person at least once during period; new ECRs targeted at Induction

Progress **ECR Forum was established instead of using a drop-in format and position that we have now taken is that more formal mechanisms are best done via proper governance structures, so via new RCPSC and ECR Committee in new Action Plan.**