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Thomas Papworth  
Research Concordat Implementation Coordinator  
Universities UK

11 November 2009

Dear Tom

The British Heart Foundation is pleased to respond to Sir Ivor's letter to Funders about implementation of the Concordat. Taking the bullet points in that letter in turn:

- The BHF has clear guidelines for grant applicants on the pay and grade of researchers, which conform to the aims of the Concordat.
- We support continuity of employment by providing research grants and fellowships at all levels (from PhD studentships to personal chairs) for clinical and non-clinical scientists, and expect the best researchers to use these schemes to enable continued funding from BHF until they are successful in finding tenured employment within an HEI. We are currently analysing the results of a survey of BHF-funded PhD students and Fellows to determine their attitudes and concerns about academic careers, and will be happy to share the outcome report with the signatories to the Concordat.
- We take into account the quality of skills training provided by HEIs when awarding PhD studentships. We have a Career Re-entry Fellowship scheme to assist non-clinical scientists to return to research after a career break. We provide funds with each grant to support researchers' attendance at external scientific conferences. We employ a Science Communications team who liaise with BHF-funded researchers to help them publicise their results for a lay audience.

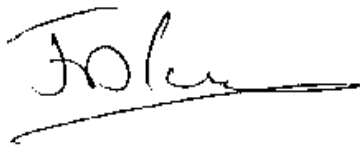
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- We do not yet explicitly require HEIs accepting BHF grants to adopt the principles of the Concordat, but we are considering including this requirement within the terms and conditions of our awards.
- We encourage HEIs to develop good practice and its adoption, particularly at our quinquennial site visits to each of the cadre of around 30 BHF chair holders across the UK. At site visits we expect senior faculty to present the HEI's overall future cardiovascular strategy, including their specific plans for salary and infrastructure support for the chair holder and his team, and these plans influence the level of support that the BHF will provide. In addition, for new chair holders we normally expect the HEI to provide at least one senior lecturer's salary support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Pearson', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Professor Jeremy Pearson, PhD FMedSci HonFRCP  
Associate Medical Director (Research)

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