

UK mechanism for demonstrating sector-wide and institutional alignment with the European Charter and Code

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The following sets out the process by which higher education institutions (HEIs) within the UK will demonstrate that they are individually, and that the UK Higher Education sector is collectively, aligned with and implementing the *European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* (the Charter and Code).

European Human Resources Strategy

Over the last few years UK organisations have worked closely with the Commission to build the principles of the Charter and Code into its long standing agenda for the good management of researchers in UK higher education institutions. The *UK HE Sector Gap Analysis* published in November 2006 identified the very wide set of practice and policy which support the Charter and Code aims.

The UK Action Plan was developed as part of the European Charter and Code network actions earlier in 2009 and highlights the substantial set of activities being undertaken in UK HEIs.

The European Commission has accepted that implementation of the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* (The Concordat) may be considered equivalent to the *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*, alongside the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for research degree programmes. The QAA Code of Practice is a standard part of institutional audit process. In effect this means that implementation of the Charter and Code for research staff will largely be delivered within the UK through the mechanism of The Concordat. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that robust mechanisms are in place to ensure that the UK process meets the aims of the European *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating the Charter & Code*.

The Commission describes the *Human Resources Strategy* as “a support tool” and goes on to say “It is thus voluntary.”¹ The UK is keen to reflect this in the mechanism by which the UK meets the principles of the Charter and Code. The UK therefore welcomes the statement that

“All initiatives which comply with the key features and the institutional requirements in the implementation steps mentioned above may be considered as equivalent to the “HR Strategy for Researchers”, provided that they serve the same purposes with respect to the Charter & Code. Such measures can therefore also be acknowledged as a Human Resources Strategy for Researchers by the European Commission.”

¹ Human Resources Strategy, Information Note, p2.

The Commission states² that

“The underlying characteristics of this mechanism therefore are:

- Implementation by individual institutions on a voluntary basis;
- Based on institutional self-assessment with full respect for the autonomy of the institutions
- Simple and light, non-bureaucratic and flexible, recognizing the variety of situations across institutions
- Transparency, providing easy, publicly accessible information on the actions by undersigning institutions to implement the Charter and Code principles.”

The *Human Resources Strategy* sets out a five stage process for implementing the Charter and Code:

- An internal analysis by the research institution, involving all key institutional players, to compare institutional practices against the Charter and Code principles;
- The publication of planned actions for improvements in compliance (what, by when, by whom) through a Human Resources Strategy for Researchers incorporating the Charter & Code;
- The acknowledgement of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers by the European Commission;
- The implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers" by the institution, which through its internal quality assurance mechanism also carries out a self-assessment at least every second year on the basis of which it may update its Human Resources Strategy as necessary;
- An external evaluation, which takes place periodically, but no later than every 4th year.

The role of the survey of HEI Strategies in the UK action plan

We know that UK HEIs received good feedback from the QAA following a Special Review of practice in 2005.

In relation to research staff, the UK has proposed that in the first instance a survey will be conducted of HEIs within the UK to establish the current engagement with the Concordat and, through that, with the Charter and Code. The *HEI Strategies survey* (see Annex I). In particular, questions 12.1 to 12.3 address the specific requirements under parts 1 and 2 of the *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*.

12.1) Has your institution undertaken, or does it plan to undertake, a self-audit or internal analysis to examine how far your policy and practice align with the principles set out in the Concordat?

- A self-audit/internal analysis has been completed
- A self-audit/internal analysis is underway
- A self-audit/internal analysis is planned
- There is no plan to conduct a self-audit/internal analysis

² Ibid.

The self-audit or internal analysis can form the basis of an implementation plan for your institution. This will then enable institutions to publish biennial assessments of their progress, as envisaged in the European *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*. Institutions must have completed their internal analysis before their commitment to the European Charter and Code can be acknowledged.

12.2) Has your institution published, or does it plan to publish, its self-audit or internal analysis?

- A self-audit/internal analysis has been published (link to document)
- The self-audit/internal analysis will be published
- There is no plan to publish the self-audit/internal analysis.

12.3) Has your institution published, or does it plan to publish, its implementation strategy?

- Implementation strategy has been published (link to document)
- Implementation strategy will be published
- There is no plan to publish the implementation strategy.

Institutions must have completed and published their Implementation strategy / Action Plan before their commitment to the European Charter and Code can be acknowledged. The links you provide to your Implementation strategy will be published on the Concordat website (www.researchconcordat.ac.uk).

Question 12.1 sets out the requirement, under stage 1 of the implementation steps of the *Human Resources Strategy*, that institutions complete an internal analysis before their commitment is acknowledged. Similarly, question 12.3 requires that they provide a link to where their Implementation Plan is published, as required under stage 2 of the implementation steps of the *Human Resources Strategy*. The *Human Resources Strategy* clearly states that once stages 1 and 2 are met, stage 3 (The acknowledgement of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers by the European Commission) will follow.

Attention is drawn to the plan to publish the links that HEIs provide to their Implementation Strategies on the website of the Concordat (www.researchconcordat.ac.uk). This goes beyond the requirements of the *Human Resources Strategy* but will enable the Commission and other interested parties to easily and quickly review the strategies that have been published.

The *HEI Strategies survey* will therefore provide the mechanism for demonstrating that UK institutions have delivered on the first stages of the *Human Resources Strategy*. The *HEI Strategies survey* does not, in its present form, attempt to provide a mechanism for delivering stages 4 and 5, which represent the means by which the effectiveness of these strategies are tested.

Measuring the effectiveness of compliance with the Charter and Code

The *Human Resources Strategy* requires that HEIs implement the *Strategy* following publication of the Implementation Strategy. At least every two years, HEIs should use their internal quality assurance mechanisms to conduct a self-assessment exercise and, where necessary, update its Implementation Strategy.

The UK welcomes this recognition of the autonomy and self-regulation of institutions. However, with the UK there will also be a series of nation-wide approaches to demonstrating implementation of the Charter and Code through the biennial benchmarking processes for the Concordat. These will include re-running a revised *HEI Strategies Survey* that will:

- Check that HEIs have conducted their own internal assessment of their progress against their Implementation Strategies within the two year period;
- Ask what progress has been made in implementing the Concordat and meeting its aims;
- Ask what revisions have been made to the Implementation Strategy in light of that internal audit.

In addition, other benchmarking projects such as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) will enable HEIs individually, and the UK sector generally, to test the effectiveness of these measures and so help inform future activity. The results of CROS 2009 were published in September 2009 and are available at the CROS website (<http://www.cros.ac.uk/>).

The Research Concordat Strategy Group is already committed to publishing major reports on the progress of the Concordat every two years. By means of these reports, the Strategy Group will make sure that the UK conducts a thorough, rigorous and robust external evaluation of the efforts of the UK higher education sector to deliver the principles of the Concordat and the Charter and Code at least every four years.

The first major report by the Concordat Strategy Group is due in 2011.

Annex I: DRAFT survey to examine HEI strategies for implementing the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

December 09

It is now more than a year since the launch of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The Concordat provides a single, unambiguous statement of the expectations and responsibilities of researchers, their managers, employers and funders. It will also demonstrate internationally the high standards of management and support that can be expected by research staff working in the UK.

Primary responsibility for implementing the principles of the Concordat rests with Higher Education Institutions and other employers of research staff. This responsibility is shared with the signatories of the Concordat: principally the funders of research. The research staff themselves have responsibility for their own personal and career development (Principle 5). However, it is through the actions of institutions that the greatest impact will be felt. The Concordat has been widely circulated within all UK higher education institutions and it is important that each organisation considers how best to promote the principles.

The survey is principally concerned with the policies that institutions have put in place. It is one of several projects, others of which will look at research staff, research managers, the role of funders and the use of fixed term contracts. Some projects will focus on policy while others will concentrate on practice and how these policies are being delivered. Between them, these projects will provide a picture of the sector that will illustrate the current level of implementation and provide a base from which to measure progress.

This survey has been designed with the following aims:

1. To establish how far institutions have progressed in implementing the principles of the Concordat as of 2009;
2. To provide a baseline against which to measure progress in the future;
3. To enable institutions to form a picture of their own response to the Concordat and the extent to which they are meeting the career development needs of research staff;
4. To help institutions form an action plan for promoting the career development of research staff;
5. To demonstrate to the European Commission that the UK higher education sector is working in alignment with the *European Charter for Researchers* and the *Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers* (the Charter and Code) and so allow institutions to use the Charter and Code logo and be listed on the Euraxess website.³

The survey does not attempt to measure the *impact* that policies are having or to capture progress on the ground. Actual implementation and practice will be considered through other means. This survey

³ Details on the links between the European Charter and Code, the Concordat and this survey are available in Appendix II.

seeks to review the *policies and procedures* of institutions and the strategic approach from the top levels of management. This survey will begin the process by which the UK higher education sector will demonstrate that it is meeting the principles of the Concordat and is aligned with the European Charter and Code.

The majority of the survey looks at new initiatives and policies. However, this is a long term agenda, following from the 1996 Concordat, the SET for Success report and subsequent 'Roberts funding'. It is recognised that many institutions have been addressing the issue of research staff career development for many years and there is room to note where existing policies meet the Concordat principles.

Please take some time to complete the following questions providing as much detail as possible about your institution's approach to the career development of researchers and efforts to implement the principles of the Concordat. The information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence. Information will only be published in aggregated form or anonymously, unless an institution has given explicit permission for the contents to be shared. This will provide a summary of progress both as evidence for the Commission and to inform further implementation activities across the sector.

Completed surveys should be submitted by 26 February 2010. Analysis will take place from March and a report will be produced in the Spring of 2010. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Thomas Papworth, the Research Concordat Implementation Coordinator, by telephoning 020 7419 5472 or emailing thomas.papworth@universitiesuk.ac.uk.

Section 1: Institutional information

- 1) Name of institution⁴

- 2) How many research staff does your institution employ?
(The Concordat defines "research staff" as individuals whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who are employed for this purpose. In practice this means research-only academic staff, and those on teaching and research contracts, who are not lecturers or above.)
 - Fewer than 100
 - 100-500
 - 500-1000
 - More than 1000

Section 2: Leadership

- 3) Which of the following has lead responsibility for ensuring that the institution implements the principles of the Concordat?
[Check boxed – single answer only]
 - Vice Chancellor / Principal
 - Pro-Vice Chancellor / Vice Principal

⁴ The information contained within this survey will be anonymised or used in aggregate form. No institution will be publicly linked to a response unless the institution has given its explicit permission in advance.

- Human Resources
- Staff development
- Research Grant Office
- Research committee
- Staffing/HR committee
- Resources committee
- Specific Concordat committee
- Other

If other please give details

- 4) Which of the following have direct responsibility for implementing the Concordat across different parts of your institution?

[Check boxed – multiple answers]

- VC
- PVC
- Human Resources
- Staff development
- Research Grant Office
- Careers Advisory Service
- Finance Department
- Research committee
- Staffing/HR committee
- Resources committee
- Specific Concordat committee
- Other

If other please give details

- 5) To what extent is the governing body involved in leading or monitoring the implementation of the Concordat?
- 6) What mechanisms have been put in place to coordinate the response across your institution?
- 7) What mechanisms have been put in place to enable your institution to monitor its implementation of the Concordat?
- 8) Please give name and contact details of the primary contact for communications related to the Concordat implementation.
- 9) Please give name and contact details of the person who completed this survey.

Section 3: Policy statements

10) Does your institution have a strategy for managing and supporting research staff? (This could be free-standing or contained within an institutional HR or Research Strategy)

(Tick Box R=no; A=currently being drawn up; G=yes)

If yes:

- When was it written?
- Is this publically available? (Tick Box Y/N)
- Where is the strategy published? (if online, please provide URL)

11) Has your institution undertaken, or does it plan to undertake, a self-audit or internal analysis to examine how far your policy and practice align with the principles set out in the Concordat?

- A self-audit/internal analysis has been completed
- A self-audit/internal analysis is underway
- A self-audit/internal analysis is planned
- There is no plan to conduct a self-audit/internal analysis

The self-audit or internal analysis can form the basis of an implementation plan for your institution. This will then enable institutions to publish biennial assessments of their progress, as envisaged in the European *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*⁵. Institutions must have completed their internal analysis before their commitment to the European Charter and Code can be acknowledged.

12) Has your institution published, or does it plan to publish, its self-audit or internal analysis?

- A self-audit/internal analysis has been published (link to document)
- The self-audit/internal analysis will be published
- There is no plan to publish the self-audit/internal analysis
- Not applicable (there is no self-audit/gap analysis and there are no plans for it)

13) Does your institution have a specific strategy for the implementation of the Concordat?

(Tick Box R=no; A=currently being drawn up; G=yes)

If yes:

- When was it written?
- Is this publically available? (Tick Box Y/N)
- Where is this document published (if online, please provide URL)

⁵ The *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers* was launched by European Research Commissioner Potočník at the French Presidency Conference on "Young researchers in Europe" in Rennes on 20 November 2008. The higher education sector within the UK will demonstrate its alignment with this and the wider European strategy for researchers through implementation of the Concordat. See Annex I.

14) Has your institution published, or does it plan to publish, its implementation strategy?

- Implementation strategy has been published (link to document)
- Implementation strategy will be published
- There is no plan to publish the implementation strategy
- Not applicable (there is no implementation strategy and there are no plans for it)

Institutions must have completed and published their Implementation strategy / Action Plan before their commitment to the European Charter and Code can be acknowledged. The links you provide to your Implementation strategy will be published on the Concordat website (www.researchconcordat.ac.uk).

Section 4: Implementing the 7 principles of the Concordat

The questions in this section of the survey are designed to examine how your institution meets each of the seven Concordat Principles. This may be as a result of existing practice or due to changes implemented as a response to the launch of the Concordat in 2008.

Principle 1: Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

Principle 2: Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.

Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.

Principle 4: The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.

Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to proactively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

Principle 6: Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

Principle 7: The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

15) How does strategy at your institution ensure that the seven principles of the Concordat shape practice amongst research staff, their managers and others with responsibility for research staff?

16) In what way have policies changed in light of the Concordat?

17) What do you think the key challenges are for your institution in implementing the principles of the Concordat?

Section 5: Awareness raising

This section seeks to capture activities within your institution to highlight the Concordat.

18) Which of the following activities has your institution undertaken to raise awareness among research staff, support staff, research managers and the leadership of your institution:

- Sent the Concordat to research staff
- Sent the Concordat to line managers of research staff (e.g. principal investigators)
- Sent the Concordat to HR / staff development / careers personnel
- Sent the Vitae briefing for researchers to research staff
- Sent the Vitae briefing for line managers of researchers to research managers / PIs
- Sent the Vitae briefing for HR Specialists to HR staff
- Sent the Vitae briefing for staff developers to development staff
- Sent the Vitae briefing for career specialists to careers staff
- Held a combined launch event for research staff and their line managers / PIs
- Held a launch event for research staff
- Held a launch event for line managers of researchers / PIs
- Profiled the Concordat on your institution's internal and external web pages
- The Concordat is highlighted during staff induction
- The Concordat is highlighted during relevant training activities for research staff
- The Concordat is highlighted during relevant training activities for research managers/ PIs
- The Concordat is highlighted during relevant training activities for HR / staff development / careers personnel
- Research staff are represented on the group responsible for implementation
- PIs/line managers are represented on the group responsible for implementation
- Other

If you ticked other please give further details.

19) What information is available on your website that specifically addresses the Concordat and your institution's response to it? (For example, a specific portal for research staff, relevant policies, lists of training and development opportunities). Please provide the URLs.

Section 6: UK implementation

20) What activities from organisations such as UUK, Funding Councils, RCUK, other funders and Vitae would be helpful to your institution in its implementation of the Concordat?

21) Has your institution provided any entries on the Vitae Database of Practice (<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/34837/Database-of-practice.html>) that relate to strategic or practical ways of implementing the Concordat's principles? If so, please provide practice number.

Section 7: Intellectual property and co-authorship

The European Charter for Researchers sets out a series of “General Principles and Requirements applicable to Employers”. These include requirements relating to intellectual property rights and co-authorship. Though not included within the Concordat, the Concordat Strategy Group has been charged with ensuring that UK institutions are aligned with all relevant European Union initiatives.

- 22) The Charter states that “*Policies and practices should specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial organisations, as possibly provided for under specific collaboration agreements or other types of agreement.*”

To what extent does policy in your institution meet this requirement?

(Tick Box R=requirement not met; A=requirement partially met; G=requirement met fully)

Please provide links to any policy documents in which these rights are enshrined.

- 23) To what extent has your institution “develop[ed] strategies, practices and procedures to provide researchers, including those at the beginning of their research careers, with the necessary framework conditions so that they can enjoy the right to be recognised and listed and/or quoted, in the context of their actual contributions, as co-authors of papers, patents, etc, or to publish their own research results independently from their supervisor(s)”?

(Tick Box R= not; A= partially; G= fully)

Please provide links to any policy documents in which these rights are enshrined.