

# Concordat to support the career development of researchers

## What is HEFCE doing to support concordat implementation?

HEFCE and the other UK higher education funding bodies allocate government funding primarily as a formula driven block grant, recognising the autonomy of the institutions that they fund. Unlike other public funding sources such as the research councils, they do not generally allocate project or programme grants with specific conditions attached. The conditions that are attached to the HEFCE block grant allocation are correspondingly high level. In addition to the block grant HEFCE supports change within HEIs through some fixed-term targeted funding to support specific aims, and by providing advice and guidance through sharing good practice. An example of this is the Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative where some £300 million was made available to support HR management in England. A recent review of this policy initiative concluded that :

“The concerted and co-ordinated strategy pursued by HEFCE, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the sector at large has, for the most part, enabled the system wide improvements that were identified as necessary in 2001. Individually, institutions have put significant effort and resources into the modernisation of HRM.”<sup>1</sup>

We have a number of measures in place to encourage HEIs to act in ways that reflect the concordat including:

- HEFCE co-funds the Research Concordat Implementation Coordinator post [Concordat principles 1-7]
- HEIs must meet the QAA code of practice in order to receive and continue to receive HEFCE funding for postgraduate students [principles 2, 4- 7]
- Research assessment panels (previously RAE and in the future REF) consider the quality of the research environment, including training and skills provision, as a core element in assessing research quality [principles 2, 4 and 6]
- HEFCE membership and support for various committees and steering groups considering related issues eg PRES, CROS, various Vitae initiatives [principles 1-7]
- HEFCE representatives emphasise the importance of good practice in research career management at external presentations [principles 1-7]

---

<sup>1</sup> *Evaluation of the impact of public policy and investments in human resource management in higher education since 2001A* report to HEFCE by Oakleigh Consulting Ltd, June 2009

- HEFCE funds the Equality Challenges Unit and supporting projects looking into research careers including:
  - Work placements and transition to work
  - RAE2008 equality evaluation
  - Governing bodies and equality
  - Equality bill
  - HESA staff data
  - Athena SWAN Charter [principles 1-4, 6 and 7]
  
- HEFCE funds various good practice and management projects via the Leadership Governance and Management fund including:
  - A study to determine the need, and opportunities, for developing a professional framework for the management of research (University of Bristol)
  - Establishing and meeting the leadership and development needs of principal investigators (University of Leicester)
  - UK panel for research integrity in health and biomedical sciences (St George's Hospital Medical School)

HEFCE's LGM panel will continue to recognise the strategic importance of the concordat in assessing future funding applications in related areas [principles 1-4, 6 and 7]
  
- HEFCE co-funds the Clinical Senior Lectureship Awards as part of its commitment to building an expert research workforce to support clinical research and education in the context of established clinical training pathways. A condition of these awards is that staff are made permanent when funding ceases [principles 1, 5 and 6]
  
- HEFCE monitors HESA data relating to postgraduate research students and equalities data [principle 6]
  
- HEFCE will be emphasising the concordat in its 2009 Workforce framework [principles 1-7].

HEFCE will continue to undertake the actions above, and related actions in future, working with the Research Concordat Implementation Coordinator to promote the concordat. We understand that further work will be led by the Coordinator and we will be happy to support this.