

Reading our updated action plan – 2016

The following action plan was submitted in 2016 as evidence that we were implementing the action plan we revised in 2014 as part of our two-year review for the HR Excellence in Research award.

The first column of the plan states which principle(s) of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers the action is designed to address. The seven principles are outlined on pages 28.

The second column indicates within what broad policy area, funding stream or activity the specific action is.

The third column restates the action which we stated in our original action plan and the deadline by which we stated we would have completed the action is in brackets.

The fourth column gives an update through 2014 as to where we were with the action.

The fifth column outlines our revised 2014 action plan covering activities between 2014 and 2016.

The final column indicates what progress we made against our revised 2014 action plan.

Scottish Funding Council (SFC) updated action plan - 2016

Principle	Activity/Policy/Funding	Original action plan (deadline)	2014 update	2014 action plan	2016 Update
1-7	Activities specifically to support implementation of the Concordat	Gaining the HR Excellence in Research Award as sign to sector of importance of agenda (early 2012) Further collaborative activity to share good practice among Scottish and UK institutions (ongoing)	Complete. In May 2012, SFC awarded HR Excellence in Research Award. We wrote to all Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEI) Principals to urge them to apply. On track, and ongoing. We have worked with the sector to enhance the link between SFC and research training practitioners across Scotland, resulting in a refreshed partnership between Universities Scotland Research Training Sub-Committee (RTSC) and SFC.	Submit successful two year review demonstrating progress and highlighting future priorities. Further collaborative activity to share good practice among Scottish and UK institutions. 11 Scottish HE institutions currently hold the HR Excellence in Research Award. We will work to ensure they maintain the award and for an increase in the numbers who join the award scheme (Summer 2016).	Complete. In mid-2014 conducted an internal review of our progress in achieving the actions set out in our original action plan. On the basis of this review we were successful in retaining the award. Ongoing. We continue to work with the sector to enhance the link between SFC and researcher training practitioners across Scotland through our participation in Universities Scotland's Research Training Sub-Committee (RTSC). For example, SFC presented at and participated in the RTSC's annual policy forum in January 2016. The number of Scottish HE institutions has been maintained at 11.
1-5	Co-funding and support for Research Pooling	Aligned with both the Scottish Government's policy and the UK Research Council's focus on quality and scale, SFC will continue to work	On track and ongoing. We have continued to fund pools and their wide range of innovative training and development opportunities both to the staff and students within them. For example, as provided by the Scottish	SFC will make available funding of up to £150k per annum for up to 5 years after the end of the original funding for each 'successful' research pool. This additional funding will be targeted at the maintenance of shared people resource. Sustaining central	Complete. SFC have made funding available as planned to those pools who have reached the end of their original funding.

		<p>towards collaborative, quality driven and multi-institutional HE provision where appropriate (ongoing).</p>	<p>Universities Physics Alliance Graduate School.</p> <p>Earlier funding cuts to the pools, which took place in 10-11 were restored on the condition that the funds are used centrally (by each pool) to facilitate early career researchers' exchanges with business and industry, both within Scotland and internationally.</p> <p>The pools have served as the central academic core for the development of some of the Innovation Centres.</p> <p>We have also provided funding for the first UK Fraunhofer Centre at the University of Strathclyde, the world's first International Max-Planck Partnership amongst five Scottish universities and the European Union Innovative Medicines Initiative European Lead Factory for Drug Discovery. All of these are being delivered in a collaborative manner with partners both in and out of Scotland, leading to enhanced transnational research opportunities.</p>	<p>administration and coordination support positions will enable the continued collaborative benefit of clustering research in a pool and continued central support to graduate training, Knowledge Exchange (KE) activity, international development and similar.</p>	<p>We continue to monitor and evaluate the investments we have made in the first UK Fraunhofer Centre, the International Max-Planck Partnership and the Innovative Medicines Initiative to ensure they are being delivered collaboratively across a range of partners, ensuring further research opportunities are available to Scottish researchers.</p>
1-5	<u>Signatory to other Concordats</u>		<p>Since May 2012, SFC has become a signatory of both the Research Integrity Concordat and the Concordat for Public Engagement</p>	<p>We will continue to promote the Concordats to the sector (ongoing, with specific developments aligned with Outcome Agreements by</p>	<p>On track. SFC remains a signatory of both the Research Integrity Concordat and the Concordat for Public Engagement.</p>

			<p>with Research, having been involved in the development of both. Both complement the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. They do this through ensuring that research integrity and public engagement are recognised and valued by the sector; that researchers are equipped and supported to maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research and to undertake public engagement; and that researchers share responsibility for developing the skills required for their own personal and career development and lifelong learning.</p> <p>We required universities to include a statement of commitment to the Research Integrity Concordat in their latest Outcome Agreement.</p> <p>We have also funded the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, which is the only organisation that is exclusively focused on supporting the strategic embedding of public engagement within the UK HE sector.</p>	<p>August 2014).</p>	<p>Completed. Through our outcome agreement process, we now ask all Scottish HE institutions for a statement of assurance that their institution has in place processes and structures to implement the principles and commitments in the Research Integrity Concordat.</p> <p>On track. In March 2016, SFC agreed further funding for the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, given its strong track record of engaging the Scotland's HE sector.</p>
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		<p>UK REF Steering Group to develop and implement the REF and consider whether links between the Concordat and REF can be strengthened (ongoing).</p> <p>The REF Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP) has been established from 2012 until 2014, to provide advice to the REF team, REF panel chairs and the UK funding bodies on the implementation and evaluation of the REF equality and diversity measures (Sept 2014).</p>	<p>On track. Changes were implemented to the REF process to ensure fairness in the process of submission. For example, the adoption of a tariff of automatic output submission discounts for early career researchers, and those who had periods of parental leave and other absences. SFC was represented in both the Secretariat and in the Panel.</p>		<p>Ongoing. In December 2015 the UK government launched a UK-wide review of university research funding, including future REF exercises. SFC will continue to work with other UK funding bodies to develop and implement future REF exercises.</p>
	Supervision of postgraduate research students (PGRs)	Explore with sector further work in this area, including collaborative provision (Discussion to be	Postponed. In mid-2013 the sector decided that the initiative which they had been developing around collaborative skills provision for PGRs should not be taken forward. A report highlighting possible	SFC remains open to conversations with the sector to develop collaborative skills provision for PGRs. Explore with sector through Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum further work in this	In AY15/16 SFC announced a budget of over £34m and maintained this budget for AY16/17 to support the research postgraduate grant (RPG) demonstrating our ongoing

		initiated by December 2012, with potential action, if appropriate, agreed in early 2013).	elements of the initiative which could be taken forward was discussed by the Universities Scotland Research Knowledge Exchange Committee (US RKEC). The Stratified Medicine Innovation Centre has designed postgraduate provision which will be collaboratively delivered by staff from the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Strathclyde. This development should be built on.	area, including collaborative provision (discussion to be initiated late 2014, with potential action, if appropriate, agreed by mid 2015).	commitment to Scotland's postgraduate research community. On track. Building on the Stratified Medicine Innovation Centre experience, all 8 Innovation Centres now have collaborative postgraduate provision in place.
2	Institutional HR practice	Explore relationship building with HE HR Community of Practice (Discussion to be initiated by mid-2013, with potential action, if appropriate, agreed by December 2013).	Amended and ongoing. The introduction of Outcome Agreements has facilitated enhanced conversations between SFC and individual institutions. Where appropriate, these conversations have included HR practices.	We will continue to use Outcome Agreements as the primary manner in which we will discuss matters of HR practice where appropriate and in relation to early career researchers(refreshed expectations published in Outcome Agreement guidance by September each year).	On track and ongoing. Outcome agreements continue to be the primary manner in which we discuss HR practice where appropriate with universities.
3	Putting Learners at the Centre: Post-16 Educational reform.	SFC to continue on postgraduate work stream of reform and KE reform, as well as monitoring uptake of postdoctoral and early career exchanges (Ongoing <i>*Postgraduate Reform discussions, with actions</i>	KE reform On track and ongoing. SFC has worked in partnership with the Enterprise agencies and HE sector to reform the KE landscape in Scotland with an in principle investment of £110M in core funding for Innovation Centres (ICs) from 2013 to 2018. Other funding is available for capital equipment and PG Taught (PGT) places. Currently eight ICs in areas of strategic and	KE reform SFC will continue to reform the KE landscape, enhancing collaborative models of engagement with industry where appropriate and most efficient (ongoing, including the following actions:) We will monitor the IC programme through a 6-monthly review cycle to ensure that industry engagement is ongoing. The next	KE reform On track and ongoing. After extensive consultation with the sector, SFC introduced the University Innovation Fund (UIF) which incentivises Scottish universities to work collaboratively to design and adopt innovative new approaches to exploiting the research base that will lead to a significant positive change in Scotland's already good economic

		<p><i>agreed, by end of 2012</i> <i>*KE Reform: discussions in mid 2012)</i></p> <p>.</p>	<p>economic importance to Scotland have been approved for funding. We are also currently implementing the Innovation Scotland Policy Forum.</p> <p>In addition we have made available 250 taught postgraduate places to support the development of academia/industry links in ICs and the skills and training needs of industry relevant to ICs. Most ICs also have budgets to support PhD places.</p> <p>Postgraduate reform Delayed. The Scottish Government is currently reviewing postgraduate provision with an aim to help more students, offer more flexibility for both learners and universities and align funding with strategic objectives.</p> <p>Postdoctoral and early career researcher exchanges (PECRE) We have continued to provide funding of £250k/year to pools for these exchanges. Monitoring of pools' use of PECRE and Pools' Engagement in European Research funds has led to us introducing</p>	<p>set of reviews for all 8 funded ICs is due by November 2014.</p> <p>The Innovation Scotland Forum will meet again in December 2014.</p> <p>Postgraduate Reform Outcomes of the review are expected in Summer 2014. Appropriate action for SFC to be decided by end of 2014.</p> <p>PECRE SFC will continue to monitor the use of this funding to ensure impact (final reports due October 2014).</p>	<p>performance. The UIF will be introduced for AY 2016-17 to replace the Knowledge Exchange Grant and Knowledge Transfer Grant.</p> <p>The IC programme includes a community of 8 collaborative centres that are monitored on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The Innovation Scotland Forum continues to advise on the implementation of a more collaborative, pan-Scotland approach to KE among other key areas of focus.</p> <p>Postgraduate reform Outcomes of the MacGregor review reported in December 2015. SFC awaits further guidance on any arising actions.</p> <p>PECRE Since AY 2011-12 SFC has allocated £250k pa of ring-fenced funding. Reports to July 2015 show that a total of 222 ECRs have visited laboratories across Europe, North America, India and China.</p>
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			<p>more flexibility between the two funding streams.</p> <p>In line with other funders, SFC is proposing to move to an online reporting system to replace traditional reporting for strategic projects. It is hoped that this will lead to a reporting system that is more efficient and effective, readily allows identification of the outcomes from investments and Increases our ability to learn from the success or failure of investments and so improve decision-making on future funding to maximise impact achieved in and by the sectors.</p>	<p>We will be testing the new system over the middle months of 2014 and – if successful – will plan for a roll-out by the end of 2014.</p>	<p>In addition to the personal benefits for the individuals and their research, exchanges also contributed to new/ strengthened collaborations, raising pools' international profile and led to journal and conference papers, invited lectures and further grant applications.</p> <p>Following the pilot of the new reporting system, SFC decided to implement an in-house solution to creating a more efficient and effective monitoring log of its strategic investments which includes all KE/innovation projects.</p>
		Continued work and further alignment with other public sector agencies tasked with delivery of reform agenda, specifically Scottish Enterprise, HIE and	Ongoing. There has been significant improvement in the links between SFC and other agencies, with the development of Innovation Centres a key example of an enhanced relationship with Scottish Enterprise.	Ongoing including the development of Skills Investment Plans in areas where there might be the potential to develop areas aligned with researcher development activity (2014).	Ongoing. We continue to work increasingly closely with other agencies (SE, HIE and SDS), specifically around the areas of entrepreneurship and innovation as can be evidenced by initiatives such as Enterprise Campus and the Innovation Centres.

		Skills Development Scotland to enhance the opportunities available for researchers (Ongoing).			
	Clinical Academics ScotChem SPIRIT studentships Technology Innovation Centre	Continued support for studentship programmes which offer innovative training pathways equipping students for a diverse, mobile, global research environment (Ongoing).	On track and ongoing. <u>Making Most of Masters</u> (MMM) Funding given to this programme in which masters students used a work placement as the basis for their dissertation. This project won the Times Higher Education Awards for Outstanding Employer Engagement in 2013. Work has already begun to embed the work of this project within core resource through a 'nodal network' proposed by the University of Aberdeen. <u>Innovation Centres</u> One of the criteria of the innovation centres is '...to provide an environment that supports the development of the next generation of business innovators, academics and entrepreneurs in Scotland and a culture change towards greater and more effective	Continued support for studentship programmes which offer innovative training pathways equipping students for a diverse, mobile, global research environment (Ongoing, with specific actions as outlined below:) We will work with MMM to ensure the impact of the initiative is not lost (Proposal for next stage to be developed by end of August 2014). <u>Innovation Centres</u> From 2014 we will allocate PGT places to 5 Innovation Centres for those offering innovative learning opportunities meeting industry need. We will monitor the uptake of these places through the 6 monthly reviews of the ICs (starting November 2014).	On track and ongoing. <u>Making Most of Masters</u> (MMM) Further funding was awarded for a co-ordinator post from 2014-15 to 2016-17 based at University of Stirling, who now manage the project, with new partners including Universities of Dundee and Abertay Dundee, University West of Scotland and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. University of Strathclyde and Napier University Edinburgh have recently signed up to the project. Further benefits of the project have included placements for undergraduate and PhD students. From September 2015, we allocated funding for around 215 TPG places across all <u>8 Innovation Centres</u> . The programmes on offer by the ICs include close industry engagement, often in the form of placement with an industrial partner from the Innovation Centre. In addition several ICs have

			<p>university/industry collaboration.'</p> <p><u>Accelerated Growth of Energy Skills Programmes</u> SFC allocated funding to Heriot-Watt for accelerated growth of energy skills programmes including an additional 40 energy and related postgraduate programme scholarships in 2012-13.</p>	<p>Final monitoring report to be submitted by September 2014, after which we will continue to discuss development of the programme with Heriot-Watt.</p> <p>SFC has commenced discussions with the Enterprise Agencies and the sector on approaches to developing entrepreneurial skills (ongoing, with potential action identified by the end of 2014).</p>	<p>established industry-specific doctoral training programmes. We continue to monitor these places through the IC programme's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF).</p> <p>Project came to an end in September 2014. SFC continues to work with the sector and Skills Development Scotland to support the energy sector.</p> <p>On track and ongoing. With respect to entrepreneurship skills training, SFC funded the initiative, Enterprise Campus, in 2014. This is a joint initiative between the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Strathclyde to support postgraduate students from any Scottish university who want to set up their own business. In addition, SFC presented at and participated in the RTSC's annual policy forum in January 2016 which focused on 'Creating an Entrepreneurial Research Culture in Scottish HEIs'.</p>
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	<p>Research & Knowledge Transfer Committee - Skills Committee Joint Working Group: High Level Skills for Postgraduates</p>	<p>Continue to work with sector to develop further employability focused collaborative skills provision for PGRs (Ongoing with focus of activity in mid-2012).</p> <p>SFC has identified an opportunity for investment to integrate employer demand in the energy sector with educational provision at multiple levels across Further and Higher Education (March 2012).</p> <p>Work with institutions to increase recognition and use of the Researcher Development Framework (Ongoing).</p>	<p>On hold. In mid-2013 the sector decided that the initiative which they had been developing around collaborative skills provision for PGRs should not be taken forward. A report highlighting possible elements of the initiative which could be taken forward was discussed by the US RKEC.</p> <p>SFC funded the Energy Skills Partnership for three years which was then renewed until AY16-17 to develop links between colleges and universities through articulation for provision linked to the skill demands of the energy sector.</p> <p>SFC provided funding to the University of Strathclyde for ring-fenced Energy Industry Doctorate places (PhD) in 2013-14. This was awarded to Strathclyde, as the lead institution of Energy Technology Partnership, to distribute the funds amongst other institutions in the partnership.</p>	<p>SFC remains open to conversations with the sector to develop further employability focused collaborative skills provision for PGRs (ongoing, with specific discussion at Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum in late 2014, with action, if appropriate, agreed by mid-2015).</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	<p>This remains on hold. We continue to be open to conversations with the sector to develop further employability focused collaborative skills provision for PGRs.</p> <p>Ongoing. SFC continues to support the development of energy skills in Scotland. For example, in 2015, SFC contributed up to £450,000 to the research pool, Energy Technology Partnership. One of the expected outcomes of this funding is to support the energy sector with the skills it need, thus building on the successful Energy Industry Doctoral programme among other initiatives.</p>
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2, 3 and 4	Graduate Schools	Continued and further partnership and funding for collaborative skills and training provision for postgraduate students (Ongoing).	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>We are evaluating the mid-term review of the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences (SGSSS). We believe this design of support for postgraduate students to be driving up the standard of training for all students, regardless of Research Council affiliation, and importantly to all students in social sciences in partner institutions even when they are not supported by a Research Council. Over the past two years the School has enhanced its governance structures to ensure it is better delivering its purpose. The learning from this investment was used in our discussions with the sector during AY 12-13 to develop the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities (SGSAH).</p> <p>Similarly to the SGSSS, the SGSAH aims to equip students with key skills for future employment and to increase engagement with creative and digital industries. It also aims to enhance institutional collaboration in the delivery of training, leading to effectiveness and efficiency gains and an enhanced learning experience for students. This initiative helped to secure funding for Arts and Humanities Research</p>	<p>Continued and further partnership and funding for collaborative skills and training provision for postgraduate students (Ongoing with specific actions defined below).</p> <p>Through the mid-term review, work to maximise investment in SGSSS (by end of 2014) and secure appropriate sustainability of SGSSS beyond SFC funding (by 2015).</p> <p>Work to maximise investment and ensure appropriate sustainability of SGSAH (by 2018).</p>	<p>On track and ongoing. SFC's continued funding for the SGSSS allows them to share training and co-supervision opportunities amongst the Scottish HE sector. This is of benefit both to the studentship holders but also to those academic staff involved in those training and co-supervision opportunities.</p> <p>Liaison between the SGSSS and SGSAH has also occurred bringing about further partnership working to contribute to collaborative skills and training provision for postgraduate students.</p> <p>SFC's continued funding for the SGSAH has seen an extremely successful start to the initiative. This includes delivering over 600 training places to students from every Scottish member HEI in arts and humanities.</p>
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			Council studentships across eight partner institutions. We have agreed to fund the school from 2013-14 to 2018-19.		
3 and 4	Research Postgraduate Grant (RPG)	We will begin a process of reviewing the underlying model for the distribution of the RPG in advance of the Research Excellence Framework in 2014 (December 2014).		On track.	On track and ongoing. The Research Postgraduate Grant (RPG) is provided to universities to invest in the environment for high quality research training and development, and enhance the contribution of postgraduate research students to the research base in Scotland. The investment by SFC in the RPG is a continuous, explicit recognition of the significant role played by research students in the continued development of Scotland's high-quality research base.
	Working with Vitae, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland, Vitae, HEA and the HE sector	Discussions with Vitae, Research Councils UK (RCUK) and other HE funding bodies over future partnership (Mid 2012). In line with the recommendations	Complete. In July 2012 we agreed to fund Vitae from AY12-13 to 14-15 alongside the Research councils and other UK HE funding bodies. Vitae has moved to a membership model. We will continue to work with them to ensure sustainability past the end of our contract. Delayed. The development of the Innovation Centres offers enhanced links between business and universities but SFC has initiated no specific conversations on work placements and secondments for staff have taken place.	Work with Vitae to ensure outcomes approach for Scotland (2014) and ensure sustainability of Vitae (March 2015). Continue to ensure Innovation Centres offer innovative career pathways and to develop these opportunities where appropriate (ongoing, monitoring through the 6 monthly reviews commencing November 2014).	On track and ongoing. In Summer 2015, we agreed to fund Vitae from AY15/16 to AY17/18 alongside the Research Councils and UK HE Funding Bodies. From September 2015, we allocated funding for 215 TPG places across all 8 Innovation Centres. The programmes on offer by the ICs include close industry engagement, often in the form of placement with an industrial

		<p>of the 2011 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS), SFC to explore working with the sector on developing work placements and secondments for staff (Discussion to be initiated by mid-2013, with potential action, if appropriate, agreed by December 2013).</p>		<p>We intend to introduce Skills Innovation Vouchers (IV). Building on the current IV scheme and linking universities with Scottish SMES, this scheme would require a quality placement to be delivered by the industry partner (December 2014).</p> <p>In line with the recommendations of the 2013 CROS, SFC to explore working with the sector on developing work placements and secondments for staff (Discussion to be initiated at Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum in late 2014, with potential</p>	<p>partner from the Innovation Centre. In addition several ICs have established industry-specific doctoral training programmes. We continue to monitor these places through the IC programme's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF).</p> <p>The Student Placement Innovation Voucher scheme was launched in February 2015 and aims to build on the success of the original SFC Standard Innovation Voucher project and be led by the same company, offering valuable business skills and experience to the student whilst they are hosted at the company premises for the duration of the project.</p> <p>On hold though discussions continue between the sector and various partners in terms of developing work placements and secondments for staff.</p>
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3,4 and 5	<p>Scottish Crucible Programme</p> <p>Knowledge Transfer Scotland</p> <p>KE Step Change Scotland</p> <p>Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE)</p>	Continued support for collaborative leadership and development programmes (Ongoing).	<p>On track and ongoing.</p> <p>Crucible We have continued our support with funding of £270k from AY12/13 through to AY14/15.</p> <p>Converge Challenge We have provided funding for three academic years until 2014-15 for this initiative, which offers students and staff from all Scottish Universities and Research Institutes the chance to exploit the commercial potential of their inventions.</p> <p>SIE SFC has recently agreed 3 more years of funding for SIE. This is partially expected to enable them to generate additional income from other sources. Recent reporting from SIE highlighted that activities are run to give postgraduate</p>	<p>Continued support for collaborative leadership and development programmes (Ongoing with specific action as outlined below):</p> <p>Develop Outcome Agreement with SIE to ensure maximum impact of their activities (August 2014).</p>	<p>On track and ongoing.</p> <p>We have continued our support for Scottish Crucible with £225k from AY15/16 through to AY17/18. The expected outcome of the funding is to mould future generations of research leaders who are inspired to be more ambitious, creative and innovative in their research and interdisciplinary collaborations.</p> <p>We have continued our support for Converge Challenge with funding of £899k from AY15/16 through to AY17/18. Converge Challenge is the only business plan competition for staff and students of all of Scotland's universities working in any discipline. It has been operating since 2010 and has been a nationwide competition open to all of Scotland's universities since AY 2012-13.</p> <p>SFC, along with Scottish Enterprise provided SIE with funding to ensure that 2014-15 was another strong year for SIE with 180 SIE workshops in Scottish Institutions and over 6000 student attendees. SIE also awarded over £115,000 to help students develop their business</p>

			<p>research students a chance to apply their problem solving skills and ingenuity to current societal issues.</p> <p>Mentoring In May 2013 we co-funded Mentoring Scotland, a one day conference with representation from 18 Scottish HEIs focused on sharing good practice on mentoring and developing multi-institutional collaboration.</p> <p>In December 2013, we agreed to fund Sumac (a multi-institutional data management system for mentoring and coaching) for AYs 13/14 – 15/16, subject to review. The funding will help to develop a sustainable system to support collaborative workforce/student skills development across Scotland.</p>	<p>Using the mid-term review in early 2015, work with sector to maximise impact of Sumac, ensuring sustainability by AY 15/16.</p>	<p>ideas through their competitions.</p> <p>SUMAC continues to upgrade its platform to make it more user-friendly. The platform showcased as an exhibitor at the 2015 Vitae Researcher Development International conference. SUMAC is currently drawing up a business plan for 2016-2020 which will look at income generation elements to support longer term income generation.</p>
5	Strategic Dialogue Meetings (SDMs) with individual institutions	The delivery of 'Putting Learners at the Centre' requires working in direct partnership with staff and students in universities enabling individuals to share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal	Ongoing and refreshed. SFC started a new round of SDMs in February 2014. These meetings build mutual understanding and relationships between universities and the SFC. SFC Board members meet with both staff and students to discuss how the university is supporting them.	Over the next three years each university will be visited by SFC executive and Board members (May 2017).	On track and ongoing. SFC continues to hold strategic dialogue meetings (SDMs) with each institution. The most recent round began in February 2014 with a new three-year cycle of meetings.

		and career development, and lifelong learning (Ongoing with key milestones to be achieved in 2012-2013).			
6		Update on progress with Principle 6	<p><i>Current status:</i> since we wrote our action plan there has been enhanced prominence and understanding of Principle 6 of the Concordat, as demonstrated by the wealth of equality and diversity related activity, much of which has been focused on tackling gender inequality, which we hope in time will enhance equality related outcomes. There are a number of activities from our original action plan specifically focused on this principle which have been delayed due to the development of other activities focused on tackling the same issue. We are currently reviewing the impact of all our equality and diversity related funding with a view to enhancing its impact. This is due for completion by November 2015.</p> <p><i>Update:</i> under the Scottish specific duties of the Equality Act 2010, SFC and all universities were required to publish Equality Outcomes by the end of April 2013.</p> <p>Following the SFC restructure at the end of 2012, equality related activity was shifted to embedding equality related outcomes within the Outcome Agreements, with responsibility delegated to Outcome Agreement Managers.</p> <p>Through our core funding, the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) has produced guidance to the sector on</p>	Ongoing and on track.	In 2015, SFC published its Mainstreaming Equalities report in which we outlined our ambition to deepen our understanding and action on equality with equality considerations to be central to policy development, decision making and delivery in order to realise the potential of staff, students and supporting equality in college and university careers. For more details, see row below under SFC Equality and Diversity Plan.

			<p>developing their Equality Outcomes and on embedding them within their Outcome Agreements.</p> <p>This additional activity and shift in resource has resulted in some delays but also much additional activity to that we identified to enhance E&D in our original action plan.</p> <p>Given that CROS 2013 indicates that ‘in many areas the rate of progress has slowed and a plateau may have been reached...different efforts may need to be made for there to be substantial further change in the future’, we are currently discussing how to make the maximum impact and this is referred to throughout the revised action plan as ‘Ensure enhanced impact and alignment of SFC funded equality and diversity related activity (November 2015)’.</p>		
6	SFC Equality and Diversity Action Plan	Targets for retention, articulation and widening access to	<p>We are currently reviewing the impact of our funding for and activity around E&D with the aim of realigning our E&D strategy to fit better with the duties of the Equality Act 2010, the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland quality assurance processes and Outcome Agreements.</p> <p>Ongoing. Achieved with ongoing enhancements as the Outcome Agreement process improves and develops. The introduction of</p>	<p>Ensure enhanced impact and alignment of SFC funded equality and diversity related activity (November 2015).</p> <p>Targets for retention, articulation and widening access to be included within institutional Outcome Agreements (Guidance published in</p>	<p>In 2015, SFC published its Mainstreaming Equalities report in which we outlined our ambition to deepen our understanding and action on equality with equality considerations to be central to policy development, decision making and delivery in order to realise the potential of staff, students and supporting equality in college and university careers.</p> <p>SFC continues to include ambitious targets for retention, articulation and widening access in its Outcome Agreements with Scottish colleges</p>

	<p>Improved understanding of under representation of certain groups within research</p>	<p>be included within institutional Outcome Agreements (July each year starting 2012).</p> <p>Using ECU Statistical Report and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data to generate improved understanding of under representation among staff and students with reference to ethnicity and disability (December 2012)</p> <p>Working with institutions to further understand the impact and potential impact of our funding for strategic initiatives,</p>	<p>Outcome Agreements has resulted in a better understanding of institutional ambitions in these areas and ultimately we hope for a broader range of people accessing university from both school and college, enabling a more effective pathway into a research career.</p> <p>Ongoing. Having initially conducted such an analysis in 2012, we are currently conducting a similar analysis of staff and will compare results.</p> <p>Amended. We are currently reviewing the impact of our funding for and activity around E&D with the aim of realigning our E&D strategy to fit better with the duties of the Equality Act 2010, the QAA Scotland quality assurance</p>	<p>August each year).</p> <p>We will analyse together with the Scottish analysis of CROS and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) and develop our response in appropriate areas (Initial analysis Sept 2014, actions confirmed, if appropriate, by the end of 2014).</p> <p>Ensure enhanced impact and alignment of SFC funded equality and diversity related activity (November 2015).</p>	<p>and universities. In March 2016, a 'Blueprint for Fairness', the final report from Scottish Government's Commission on Widening Access, was published. The report set out a range of actions aimed at ensuring a student's background is not a barrier to taking up a place at university. SFC will work with other stakeholders to implement the report's 34 recommendations.</p> <p>Delayed. Due to changes in staffing no specific actions were confirmed from the Scottish analysis.</p> <p>We have continued our funding of ECU from 2016-2018 for a 3-year programme of work to support universities and colleges in Scotland.</p>
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		on different underrepresented groups in research (December 2012).	processes and Outcome Agreements.		
	Every Researcher Counts (ERC)	Working with institutions to promote and implement materials developed in ERC project (Mid 2012).	Ongoing. Through our support for Vitae we have supported the ERC project. This includes contributing to the Advisory Board and facilitating a Train the Trainer event.	Key note at ERC Scotland conference (June 2014). Continue to work with institutions to promote and implement materials developed in ERC project (ongoing, largely through RTSC).	Complete. Funding for this project has come to an end. Online course materials have ensured learning is embedded within UK research community.
	Gender inequality in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)	Working with ECU and other funders and potential funders, to establish a sustainable future for the Charter (September 2013).	Ongoing. In addition to core funding for ECU, we provided funding for AY 13/14 and 14/15 to support the Charter in Scotland. In June 2013 SFC hosted a workshop run by ECU focused on enhancing institutional and departmental applications in Scotland. Athena Swan has moved to a membership model to aid sustainability. Alongside other developments	Ensure enhanced impact and alignment of SFC funded equality and diversity related activity (November 2015).	SFC continues to support our universities' take up of Athena Swan through our Outcome Agreement discussions. ECU has published an updated toolkit for embedding equality in outcome agreements to support HEIs to meet the enhanced SFC requirements on E&D, including conducting an equality impact assessment (EIA) of the outcome agreement.

			<p>across the UK, SFC has played a significant role in enhancing take up of Athena Swan through our strong support of the Charter within our Outcome Agreement discussions. With Research Institutes now eligible to join the Charter, since April 2012, five new Scottish members have joined the Charter and nine new institutional bronze awards have been awarded to Scottish institutions. Amongst four of the bronze institutional members, there have been 12 departmental bronze awards, four departmental silvers and one departmental gold.</p> <p>There has been a strong presence at the Scottish Aurora programme with participants attending from 12 Scottish universities, as well as seven participants from SFC.</p> <p>SFC sits on the Steering Group of Equate Scotland. Following a significant period in which we were unable to attend, we now have a new member attending.</p>	<p>We will use the on-going evaluation of the Aurora programme and conduct our own review among our internal participants, to decide on how best to support the programme in future, with the intention to expand (November 2014).</p> <p>Better align our work with colleges and universities on this issue. We will scope out an action plan to tackle gender inequality aligning actions between the sectors where appropriate (first stage focused on governing bodies to be developed</p>	<p>SFC continues to play a significant role in enhancing take up of Athena Swan through our strong support of the expanded Charter within our Outcome Agreement discussions. 11 Scottish HEIs hold an institutional Bronze award, one Scottish HEI holds an institutional Silver award and one Scottish research institute holds an institutional Bronze award. In addition to this, Scottish HEIs hold 40 departmental bronze awards, 1 departmental gold award and 11 departmental silver awards.</p> <p>There continues to be a strong presence at the Scottish Aurora programme with participants attending from a number of Scottish universities, as well as seven participants from SFC in 14/15 and a further 6 supported in 15/16.</p> <p>On track. SFC published its interim Gender Action Plan in 2016.</p>
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		<p>Working with ECU on development of similar schemes for other under-represented groups (December 2013).</p>	<p>Ongoing. ECU is currently running a trial awards round for its new gender equality mark. This aims to address gender inequalities and imbalance in the arts, humanities and social sciences, in particular the underrepresentation of women in senior roles. The charter mark utilises the experience and methodology of the Athena Swan. The Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow are two of the thirty institutions taking part (The pilot is due for completion in October 2014).</p> <p>ECU is also recruiting for members for its pilot to develop a race equality charter mark. (The pilot is due to complete in June 2015).</p> <p>Delayed and ongoing.</p> <p>Ongoing. Partially achieved with ongoing enhancements as the Outcome Agreement process improves and develops. The introduction of Outcome Agreements has resulted in a better understanding of institutional ambitions in this area, but there is additional work to ensure</p>	<p>by October 2014).</p> <p>Following each pilot we will consider what role we may plan in supporting the new Charters to tackle under-representation of certain groups in research (End of 2015).</p> <p>Ensure enhanced impact and alignment of SFC funded equality and diversity related activity (November 2015).</p> <p>Ongoing (monitoring through self-evaluations in October each year, statistical returns and Outcome Agreement dialogue throughout the year and refreshed expectations published in Outcome Agreement guidance by September each year),</p>	<p>SFC actively encourages Scottish HEIs to take up of Athena Swan charter awards through our strong support of the expanded Charter within our Outcome Agreement discussions.</p> <p>SFC actively encourages Scottish HEIs to apply for the Race Equality Charter mark through our strong support of this within our Outcome Agreement discussions.</p>
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		<p>Identify how data collection and monitoring of both SFC formulaic research grants and strategic research funding can be enhanced, to facilitate potential development of gender focused outcomes for both types of grant (September 2013).</p> <p>SFC to consider how the issues noted regarding male and female participation and retention across the sector can be addressed through the Outcome Agreements (September 2012).</p>	<p>consistency of outcome for all students and staff.</p> <p>Amended. Our focus has been on working with universities to identify their gender related equality outcomes and to embed gender equality within Outcome Agreements.</p> <p>Complete.</p>	<p>Ensure enhanced impact and alignment of SFC funded equality and diversity related activity (November 2015).</p> <p>Ongoing.</p>	
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		<p>Development and implementation of SFC Occupational Segregation Strategy Development (June 2012).</p> <p>Through all this work, and initially through Athena Swan and Every Researcher Counts, SFC will seek to work with the sector to drive the shift in research culture that is required to ensure that every individual with the potential and desire to be an excellent researcher is recognised and adequately supported to realise that potential (Ongoing).</p>			
	REF Equality and Diversity Panel and Group(EDAG) and Equalities	SFC to provide Secretariat support to EDAP through 2012 (September	On track, with SFC Board representation on the EDAP ensuring continuity with policy at SFC.		

	and Diversity Advisory Panel (EDAP)	2012). EDAP to give advice to SFC which will promote equality and diversity within universities through the REF (September 2014).			
7	Data collection	Work (in partnership with HESA, RCUK, other funding bodies) to improve data collection on researcher careers (Ongoing). Work (in partnership with institutions) to encourage wider participation in	Ongoing. The HESA staff record has been updated from AY12/13. There are now additional fields to help improve our understanding of researchers and their careers, these include more protected characteristics covered, institutional staff identification numbers, staff with zero full-time equivalence, current academic subject area, reasons for leaving and destinations as well as early career researchers and research assistants. In May 2014 SFC agreed to fund a Scottish level analysis of both the 2013 CROS and PIRLS results. Through this we hope to identify and evidence Scottish strengths	Continue to work (in partnership with HESA, RCUK, other funding bodies) to improve data collection on researcher careers (Ongoing) and consider how to use the data more effectively (November 2015). Discuss Scottish level analysis with key stakeholders and use results to target areas for improvement, amending action plan where appropriate (December 2014).	In 2015, SFC published its Mainstreaming Equalities report in which we outlined our ambition to deepen our understanding and action on equality with equality considerations to be central to policy development, decision making and delivery in order to realise the potential of staff, students and supporting equality in college and university careers. A large element of this going forward will consider how to use the data we hold more effectively. We also continue to work with HESA and ECU to ensure data collection on researcher careers continues to improve.

		<p>surveys tracking progress in implementation (eg. CROS and PIRLS) (Ongoing).</p> <p>In line with CROS 2011 recommendations to institutions, SFC to explore further analysis of CROS and PIRLS results at a Scottish level (September 2013).</p>	<p>and weaknesses. This will help to promote the Scottish researcher environment and experience and lead to improved awareness of Scottish wide areas for improvement which can then be targeted by SFC, Universities Scotland and individual Scottish institutions.</p>		
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The Concordat's key principles:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
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.
3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.
4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.
6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.
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.