

## Scottish Funding Council

### HR Excellence in Research Action Plan 2018-20

The following action plan covers the period 2018-20. The actions within this plan have been developed in line with updates to SFC's strategic plan 2015-18 and our recent outcome-focused approach.

Delegated authority for the actions detailed in this plan lies with the Director of Research and Innovation at the Scottish Funding Council. The team within the Research and Innovation Directorate will be responsible for implementing the majority of these actions. However, many of these actions will include working closely with the team that manage the SFC's Outcome Agreement process.

Principle <sup>1</sup>	Activity/Policy/ Funding	2018 – 20 Future Actions <sup>2</sup>	Success Measures	Deadline
1-7	Activities specifically to support implementation of the Concordat <sup>3</sup>	<i>Submit 6-year review of HR Excellence in Research Award demonstrating progress and highlighting future actions</i>	Successful review to maintain HR Excellence badge for further two years.	7 September 2018
		Future collaborative activity to share good practice among Scottish and UK institutions	Maintain and increase year on year the number of Scottish institutions holding HR Excellence in Research Award and Athena Swan and Race Equality Charters.	Review annually as part of Outcome Agreement process. Draft Outcome Agreements received in February of every year and final Outcome Agreements in April of every year.
			Good practice is implemented and embedded within Scottish institutions' policies	Annual outcome agreement submission date (April of each year).
1-5	Co-funding and support for Research Pooling & other Collaborative Initiatives	Aligned with both the Scottish Government's policy and the UK Research Councils' focus on quality and scale, SFC will continue to work towards	Funding for research pools, Innovation Centres, pan-Scotland Graduate Schools and other collaborative strategic investments will continue to be monitored and	Annual monitoring and evaluation reports are received every Autumn.

<sup>1</sup> The seven Concordat principles are detailed at page 7.

<sup>2</sup> New and revised actions are shown in italics.

<sup>3</sup> The recommendations of the 17/18 review of the Concordat to Support the Career development of Researchers will be published in autumn 2018. SFC will work with key stakeholders, including Scottish HEIs, to support the implementation of the revised Concordat once finalised.

		collaborative, quality driven and multi-institutional HE provision where appropriate.	evaluated to ensure best possible outcomes achieved.	
		<i>Use the SFC's review of the Research Pooling initiative to examine the support provided to researchers through this initiative and identify future opportunities.</i>		Autumn 2019
1-5	Signatory to Other Concordats	Continue to encourage good practice and support the Research Integrity Concordat and the Concordat for Public Engagement with Research.	Institutions to confirm their compliance with the Research Integrity Concordat and share their plans and ambitions for public engagement through the Outcome Agreement process.	Ongoing. Reviewed annually as part of Outcome Agreement process. (April 2018 and 2019).
1	Research Excellence Grant (REG)	Provide QR funding to Scottish institutions.	Scotland's universities maintain their record of success in research, as evidenced in the 2014 REF (77% of research in Scotland's universities was assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent).	Ongoing. Indicative funding allocations announced December of each year and final allocations announced by May each year.
		Ensure that supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers remains a key principle behind REG <i>and this is</i>	More <i>explicit</i> links to career development of researchers in discussions on maintaining research excellence and in Outcome Agreements.	Revision and publication of University Outcome Agreement guidance by September 2018. Progress to be

		<i>communicated effectively through the Outcome Agreement process.</i>		monitored annually as part of Outcome Agreement process. Final Outcome Agreements submitted by April of each year.
			Scottish institutions demonstrate hard goals with regard to improving equality of opportunity for their researchers including stretching targets for Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter accreditation.	Annual outcome agreement submission date (April of each year).
2	Institutional HR Practice	Continue to use Outcome Agreements as the primary vehicle in which we discuss matters of HR practice where appropriate with institutions.	Good practice is implemented and embedded within Scottish institutions' policies.	Reviewed annually as part of Outcome Agreement process. Final Outcome Agreements submitted by April of each year.
3 and 4	Research Postgraduate Grant (RPG)	Continue to provide universities with funding to invest in the environment for high quality research training and development.	Monitor numbers through annual reporting procedures.	Ongoing. Scottish institutions submit data to Higher Education Statistical Data (HESA) each Autumn.
	Post graduate and early career researcher exchanges (PECRE) <sup>4</sup>	<i>Consider opportunities to continue to support research pools for these exchanges and</i>	Monitor numbers through annual reporting procedures	Annual monitoring and evaluation reports are submitted every

<sup>4</sup> Future funding is to be confirmed.

		<i>ensure learning is embedded within networks.</i>		September.
3, 4 and 5	Scottish Crucible Programme	Continue to support collaborative leadership and development programmes.	Monitor numbers through annual reporting procedures	Annual monitoring and evaluation report due every September.
	Enterprise and entrepreneurship education	Continue to explore with the Enterprise Agencies and the HE/FE sector innovative approaches to developing entrepreneurial skills.	Annual increase of the number of researchers with enterprise/entrepreneurship skills	Annual monitoring and evaluation report due every September.
		<i>Provide funding to universities through the University Innovation Fund (UIF) to support institutions make a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted to staff.</i>	UIF institutional plans and UIF monitoring and evaluation framework indicate positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted to staff.	Annual UIF plan submitted as part of the Outcome Agreement process and reflective report submitted each October. UIF monitoring and evaluation framework to be developed over AY2018-19.
5	Strategic Dialogue Meetings (SDMs) with individual institutions	Continue to hold SDMs with individual institutions to build mutual understanding and relationships between institutions (staff and students) and SFC.	Enhanced understanding through discussions with both staff and students on how the university is supporting their development.	Ongoing. In line with 3-year cycle of Outcome Agreements.

6	Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity	<i>Equality and diversity is maintained as a priority area for development over the lifetime of SFC's next strategic plan<sup>5</sup>. Ambitions and strategic actions to be informed by robust evidence, including that provided through the 2018 review of Tapping All Our Talents: Women in STEM.</i>	SFC's published Equality Outcomes 2015 are implemented and monitored.	SFC's next Strategic Plan to be published in 2019.  Equality Mainstreaming Report to be published April 2019.
		Targets for retention, articulation and widening access to be included within institutional Outcome Agreements.	Targets are exceeded.	Ongoing. Annual outcome agreement submission date (April of each year).
		<i>Fund Advance HE to roll out 3-year programme of work to support universities and colleges in Scotland in this area, including provision of equality and diversity support in respect to the REF 2021 exercise.</i>	Good practice is implemented and embedded within Scottish institutions' policies	Advance HE annual monitoring and evaluating reports received in September of each year.

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<sup>5</sup> Following the establishment of a national Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board for Scotland in November 2017, the SFC agreed to extend its three-year Strategic Plan for 2015-18 by one further year (2018-19).

		<i>Contribute to the work of the REF 2021 Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel to ensure appropriate steps are taken to ensure equality and diversity issues are considered in future REF discussions/decisions and recommendations from REF 2014 EDAP report are implemented.</i>	Enhanced measures to support equality and diversity in next REF exercise, building on the success seen in REF2014.	Ongoing. SFC will continue to work with other UK funding bodies to develop and implement future REF2021 exercise.
7	Improved Data Collection	Work in partnership with HESA, RCUK, Advance HE and other funding bodies to improve data collection on researcher careers.	Improved understanding of how to use the data collected by SFC and partners more effectively.	Ongoing. In line with 3-year cycle of Outcome Agreements.
		Working in partnership with Vitae, Universities Scotland et al, encourage increased participation in the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) from Scottish institutions.	Larger number of Scottish institutions take part, and use the results of, CROS and PIRLS.	Ongoing. Date of next survey tbc.

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.