

**2017 – 2019 HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan: for the implementation of the Principles of the Concordat and other researcher development activity - November 2017**

## INTRODUCTION

New areas for focus in the action plan for AY 2017-18 to AY 2018 -19 are outlined below. These have been discussed by a wide range of people (strategic research leaders, research staff and administrative staff) in the contributing groups in People Services (PS), the REF Management Group, University Research Committee (URC), the Graduate School (GS), the University's Equality and Diversity (E&D) Forum, the Research Directorate, the Schools, the School Associate Deans of Research (ADRs) and the University executive lead – Pro Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal (Research).

The new actions have been developed from the Refreshed University Research Strategy and action plan (Dec 2016); the People Strategy and action plan (Nov 2017); GCU's Equality Outcomes 2017 – 2021; the institutional pulse staff surveys and action plans (Feb 2016) and feedback from the Contract Researcher Online Survey (CROS) 2017, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2017 and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) 2017.

Acronyms:

ADR – School Associate Dean of Research	PS – People Services
E&D – The Equality and Diversity Forum	RCD – Researcher Careers Development Steering Group
GCUL – GCU London School	RIE – Research Innovation and Enterprise Office
GS – The Graduate School	SEBE – School of Engineering and Built Environment
GSBS – Glasgow School for Business and Society	SHLS – School of Health and Life Sciences
PDAR – Performance and Development Annual Review	TEO – The Europe Office
PGRT – Postgraduate Research Tutor	URC – University Research Committee

Note to reviewers: if you require access to documentation only available on the GCU intranet, please feel free to send your request for access to Prof Bonnies Steves, [b.steves@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:b.steves@gcu.ac.uk)

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New actions 2017/18 to 2018/19	Responsibility for new actions	Success measures	Timescale
<b>Concordat Principle 1 : Recruitment, selection and retention of Staff</b>			
1.1 Continue to implement good practice in recruitment and selection of staff.	People services	<p>Policies reviewed annually, updated and published as required. Updates incorporated in training for staff.</p> <p><b>CROS survey for research contract staff on recruitment and selection procedures:</b> CROS2019 survey results maintained at: 90% responders agree that they were provided with the necessary information on recruitment and selection. Results maintained above all three comparative benchmarks (post 92, Scottish and UK).</p>	<p>July 2018 &amp; 2019</p> <p>Oct 2019</p>
1.2 Continue to implement good practice in policies related to the researcher staff experience and working environment – encouraging staff retention.	<p>University Research Committee</p> <p>Research Directorate</p>	<p>Policies reviewed annually, updated and published as required: Particularly,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Code of Good Practice for Researchers</u> updated to include changes to RCUK policy, UKRIO feedback and refreshed recognition of the validity of this policy for all researchers, including research students. Policy refreshed URC Nov 2017.</li> <li>• <u>Researcher Integrity Policy</u> refreshed and related action plan implemented. Policy refreshed URC Nov 2017.</li> <li>• <u>Research Data Management Policy</u> refreshed. Implementation plan developed. Actions undertaken and completed. Policy refreshed URC Nov 2017.</li> </ul> <p>Webpages developed to promote the ‘living’ strategies, policies and processes for researchers and research environment with improved visibility and accessibility by researchers and the public.</p>	<p>Senate -Dec 2017 Actions - July 2018.</p> <p>Mar 2018</p>
1.3 Develop and deliver training ongoing for staff newly involved in the recruitment and selection process and interviews	People Services	Consistent training for staff recruiting and selecting candidates delivered.	July 2018 & July 2019
1.4 Monitor and review research staffing and turnover annually.	University Research	Review of research staffing and annual turnover by School/research area completed as part of the REF stocktake exercises.	Jan 2018

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	Committee	Annual review of new Research Centres completed, including staffing complements and following the procedures laid out in <u>Research Centres Approval and Renewal Process (Aug 2017)</u> . Actions considered and implemented.	July 2018 & 2019
1.5 Implement action plans for University Research Strategy with KPIs and embed new research structures in the university.	University Research Committee	Research Centres/School research groups/Research Directorate depts embedded, working in partnership and delivering on developing GCU's research culture, research environment and the Research Strategy KPIs.  Research committee and working groups, including REF Management Group, REF Impact Group, Research Careers Development Steering Group have refreshed goals and are reviewing information and planning actions effectively.	July 2018 & July 2019
1.6 Develop and embed use of the University's research information management system PURE as one of the main tools for monitoring progress on the KPIs of the new Research Strategy.	RIE and Library	The full range of PURE modules are set up and being utilised by staff.	July 2018
1.7 Develop PGR student employment policy and processes.	People Services	Recruitment process for PGR students employed by the university made transparent, with the majority of students given fractional fte fixed term contracts instead of casual hours contracts.	July 2018
<b>Concordat Principle 2: Researcher Recognition and Value</b>			
2.1 Develop and implement University level and School/Support Department level action plans on institutional survey feedback.	Graduate School and RCD Steering Group	Two university-wide researcher experience action plans developed: one for staff from PIRLS2017 and CROS 2017 combined and one for the PGR students from PRES2017.  Action plans implemented and results communicated.  Action plans reviewed and refreshed 6 mthly by RCD Steering Group.  <b>CROS survey for research contract staff on researcher recognition and value:</b>	Jan 2018  Feb - June 2018  June, Dec 2018 June, Dec 2019  Oct 2019



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		Annual review and analysis of staff feedback completed.	Sept 2019
3.3 Design new elements and deliver ongoing training of experienced supervisors and mentors of new supervisors.	Graduate School in partnership with School researchers	Ongoing provision of over 25 workshops for experienced supervisors and mentors of supervisors delivered per annum.  New 90 minute workshops designed and delivered on current topics. For AY2017/18 new topics include: PRES Action planning; Progression solutions to mid-point examinations; The art of chairing viva examinations; Supporting your student through the viva stage; Supporting the well-being of research students for supervisors; Negotiating skills to enable research relationships for postgraduate research tutors (PGRTs); Latest developments in doctoral supervision at GCU.	April 2016  April 2017
3.4 Monitor mandatory provision for experienced supervisors to attend at least 1 refresher supervision training session from the supervision provision (above) every 2 years.	Graduate School URC, RDC  Registry	Annual review of supervisor uptake completed and considered by Research Degrees Committee and University Research Committee.  Monitoring system automated within the new Research Student and Supervisor Information Management System (SIMS).  100% of experienced supervisors undertake refresher session in review period.	Oct 2018, 2019  June 2019  June 2019
3.5 Identify cohorts of staff at different stages of developing a research career and create programmes for their ongoing researcher development.	Graduate School and Schools	Cohorts of staff at different stages of developing a research career identified, monitored and actions planned for the ongoing development of the cohorts. (Eg Staff developing a doctoral qualification; early career research staff on research contracts; academic staff newly developing research careers and research supervision; Research administrators; Experienced researchers, supervisors and research leaders.)	Development - July 2018  Delivery – AY2018/2019
3.6 Deliver training for all research staff and research students in the UK/GCU policies and processes and good practices essential to researchers.	Graduate School in partnership with relevant Depts.	Particularly new workshops designed and delivered on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Code of Good Practice for Researchers</u> and case studies</li> <li>• <u>Researcher Integrity Policy</u> and UKRIO case studies</li> <li>• <u>Research Data Management Policy</u> and related good practice actions</li> <li>• Use of extended range of modules for PURE, including the REF</li> </ul>	June 2018  June 2019

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		<p>module. PURE = GCU's research information management system.</p> <p>Training on ongoing research policies and processes embedded and delivered on an as and when required basis, either as a group for new staff/students or 1:1, with refresher sessions delivered as needed. Particularly for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in the Open Access policy and process and use of ResearchOnline and the PURE interface as GCU's repository of research outputs.</li> </ul>	
3.7 Develop and deliver focused support for senior staff to attend external staff development events.	Graduate School, RCD Steering Group	<p>Appraisal of specific needs and provision identified/agreed.</p> <p>One day workshops/conferences organised by Graduate School academics and external collaborators to bring UK experts to GCU and other Scottish venues for "train the trainer" staff opportunities.</p> <p>AY2017/18 plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2018 – 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Professional Doctorates, UKCGE. ProfD team/GS staff present papers.</li> <li>• June 2018 – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum on "Supporting and Enhancing Researcher Mental Wellbeing in Scotland". University of Edinburgh. GS staff help organise.</li> </ul>	<p>March 2018</p> <p>March 2018</p> <p>June 2018</p>
<b>Concordat Principle 4: Personal and Career Development</b>			
4.1 Continue to refine and develop the peer-review processes in the Academic Schools.	Schools and Research Centres	<p>The Schools have refined their peer-review process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School of Health and Life Sciences – for example, provides specialist panel input for specific funders drawing on university wide experience, knowledge and know-how, particularly for large scale grants.</li> <li>• School of Engineering and Built Environment – provides formal guidance on the peer-review process arising from the pilot feedback of 2017.</li> </ul>	June 2018

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		Developments of the peer-review processes are based on an annual evaluation from panel members, reviewers and reviewees.	Oct 2018
4.2 Design and deliver research specific induction for new staff.	Graduate School	<p>Checklist of sector good practice for researcher specific induction at University and School/Dept levels developed and implemented.</p> <p>Research Induction delivered to new staff developing a research career. Piloted and then rolled out to all new staff.</p> <p><b>CROS2017 survey for research contract staff on induction programmes:</b> CROS2019 survey responses continue to exceed all Post92, Scottish and UK comparative benchmarks in this area.</p> <p>An improvement in survey indicators compared with 2017 benchmark.</p>	<p>June 2018</p> <p>Sept 2018</p>
4.3 Design and deliver self-reflection tool on developing personal research goals and research career PDP.	Graduate School	<p>Self-reflection tool designed and launched for personal use and for use by research leaders in their mentorship of new researchers.</p> <p><b>CROS2017 survey for research contract staff on career development:</b> CROS2019 survey responses continue to exceed all Post92, Scottish and UK comparative benchmarks in this area.</p> <p>An improvement in survey indicators compared with 2017 benchmark.</p>	Oct 2018
<b>Concordat Principle 5: Researcher's responsibilities</b>			
<p>5.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed the development of personal research work plans into the PDAR process.</li> <li>• Monitor personal development plans as part of annual review.</li> </ul>	Research staff, Schools and Department management, People Services	<p>Explored development of SEBE School guidance into a standard university guidance for research workload allocation and use in the PDAR process. Adapted and used cross university .</p> <p>Explored development of a Research Support Allocation Exercise similar to that of GSBS School Scheme for each Academic School. Adapted and used cross university.</p> <p>Deans, Heads of Dept, Assistant Heads and other PDAR reviewers trained in the development of research work plans within the PDAR</p>	<p>July 2018</p> <p>Implemented for Sept 2018.</p>

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		<p>process.</p> <p>100% of academic-research staff undertake Personal Development Planning and performance reviews which includes research work plan.</p> <p><b>CROS2017 survey for research contract staff on the appraisal scheme:</b> CROS2019 survey responses continue to exceed all Post92, Scottish and UK comparative benchmarks in this area.</p> <p>An improvement in survey indicators compared with 2017 benchmark. Overall agreement with the usefulness of the GCU appraisal scheme maintained or increased over 71% (high value that exceeds comparator benchmarks in 2017 by up to 19 points).</p>	
5.2 Monitor Institutional progress on research plans.	University Research Committee	Annual reports reviewed giving overview of institutional progress on research plans.	Annual review by Autumn 2018 & 2019
5.3 Facilitate opportunities for research staff to develop their networks and contribute to the University research plans.	The Graduate School  School ADRs	<p>Research groups and Research Centres have inclusive membership of academics/research assistants/PGR students/research technicians and ECRs who wish to establish their research profile and collaborate with colleagues.</p> <p>Research group and Research Centre activity – forming, planning, doing and reviewing - is embedded in the research culture across all Schools.</p> <p>Graduate School research-related cross-school network groups are active in sharing best practice, raising enhancement ideas and finding solutions on current research and cross-school operational matters which underpin GCU’s research culture and environment.</p> <p><b>CROS2017 survey for research contract staff on integration into the community:</b></p>	



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		<p>CROS2019 survey responses exceed all Post92, Scottish and UK comparative benchmarks for integration into department's research community, departmental community, GCU's university wide research community and wider disciplinary community.</p> <p>An improvement in survey indicators compared with 2017 benchmark.</p>	
<b>Concordat Principle 6: Diversity and Equality</b>			
<p>6.1 Consolidate existing activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation of GCU's Equality Outcomes 2017-2021.</li> <li>Gather evidence and report on good equality and diversity practice at School and Department level.</li> <li>Continue equality impact assessment of core functions and decisions</li> <li>Continue development of campaigns and communications around dignity and respect.</li> </ul>	<p>People Services</p> <p>School Equality Champions</p>	<p>GCU's Equality Outcomes 2017-2021 realised.</p> <p>Increased visibility of good equality and diversity practice at School and Department level.</p> <p>Practice of equality impact assessment of core functions and decisions embedded.</p> <p>Increased visibility and engagement with GCU's activities on dignity and respect.</p>	<p>Annual review</p>
<p>6.2 Develop and implement a new Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity based on the new REF2021 guidance once published.</p>	<p>REF Management Group</p>	<p>Code of Practice developed and approved ready for REF2021 exercise.</p>	<p>October 2018</p>
<p>6.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation of the GCU wide action plan for Athena Swan</li> <li>Develop and submit School applications for Departmental Awards</li> </ul>	<p>Advancing Gender Equality Group</p>	<p>Athena Swan action plan reviewed and updated 4 x year.</p> <p>Applications for Departmental Awards submitted.</p>	<p>Nov Feb May Sept 2017, 2018, 2019</p> <p>Oct 2018</p>
<p>6.4 Continue roll out of unconscious bias training and further training/development on specific equality and diversity issues (e.g. disability) to support an inclusive learning and working environment.</p>	<p>People services, School E&amp;D champions</p>	<p>Further training/development opportunities offered. Increase in uptake of unconscious bias training.</p>	<p>Summer 2018</p>
<b>Concordat Principle 7: Implementation and Review</b>			

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<p>7.1 Continue participation in CROS, PRES and PIRLS 2019 surveys.</p> <p>Develop and run a GCU pulse survey in 2018 for PRES</p>	<p>The Graduate School Planning Office</p>	<p>CROS, PRES and PIRLS 2019 survey participant uptake increased to at least one of the comparative benchmarking group results.</p> <p>PRES related pulse survey designed, delivered and responses analysed.</p>	<p>Submission July 2019 Outcome Oct 2019</p> <p>Mar 2018</p>
<p>7.2 Review progress of action plan for research staff development biannually.</p>	<p>RCD Steering Group</p>	<p>Research staff development action plan reviewed and new actions added twice a year.</p>	<p>June and Nov 2018 &amp; 2019</p>
<p>7.3 Explore different methodologies for the provision of staff feedback linked to the embedding of GCU Values.</p>	<p>People Services</p>	<p>Methodology chosen, designed and implemented for ongoing review and evaluation of staff embedding of GCU Values in their work.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gcu.ac.uk/peopleservices/gcuvaluesandbehaviours/">https://www.gcu.ac.uk/peopleservices/gcuvaluesandbehaviours/</a>          “The <b>values</b> of integrity, creativity, responsibility and confidence were selected by the staff and students of the University as those we felt represented <b>GCU</b> at its best as the University for the Common Good. A <b>Value</b> on its own is just a word. We want our <b>Values</b> to be lived, to drive and define us.”</p>	<p>July 2018 &amp; July 2019</p>
<p>7.4 Continue collaborations with Vitae, Universities Scotland, Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum, ARMA, SCOTHERD and other HEIs, in researcher staff development</p>	<p>Graduate School</p>	<p>Contributions to steering committees, organisation and delivery of collaborations continued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to the UK Vitae CROS/PIRLS advisory group</li> <li>• Organisation and delivery of the annual Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum (4<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and 5<sup>th</sup> 2019)</li> <li>• Research Administration staff registered for ARMA professional qualifications.</li> <li>• Collaboration with Scottish HEIs, delivering Doctoral Supervision workshop series for experienced supervisors.</li> <li>• Membership of ScotHERD, Universities Scotland Research Training sub-committee</li> <li>• UKCGE Membership and organisation of UKCGE workshops</li> <li>• Staff on secondment to Scottish Graduate School in Social Science as Associate Director of Student Experience</li> </ul>	<p>2017 – 2019</p> <p>3 x year June 2018, 2019</p> <p>2018</p> <p>June 2018, 2019</p> <p>4 x year</p> <p>1 per year</p> <p>2017 - 2019</p>