|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Institution** | Bangor University |
| **Reporting period** | January 2023-January 2024 |
| **Date approved by governing body** | 15 February 2024 |
| **Date published online** | 21 February 2024 |
| **Web address of annual report** | https://www.bangor.ac.uk/humanresources/concordat.php.en |
| **Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage** | <https://my.bangor.ac.uk/humanresources/staffdevelopment/>  researcherdevelopment/index.php.en  (note our Researcher Development Pages are on our intranet and not accessible from outside the University) |
| **Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development** | Dr Alison Wiggett (a.wiggett@bangor.ac.uk) |
| **Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via** [**CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk**](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk) | 21 February 2024 |

## Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Universities and Research Institutes

|  |
| --- |
| **Statement on how the organisation creates, maintains and embeds a research culture that upholds a positive and inclusive environment for researchers at all stages of their careers *(max 500 words)***  Our commitment to creating a positive and inclusive research culture is embedded in our University’s Strategy 2030 - an ambitious values-led strategy outlining our direction of travel for the next decade. Research Excellence is one of the four pillars which the Strategy is founded on. The University Research and Impact strategy lays the foundations for growth and demonstrates the significant weight that Bangor University places on its research and impact activities. Three College Research Deans have been established to provide College-specific strategic direction, drive delivery against strategic research targets, support College research staff and encourage interdisciplinary research.  Our Concordat commitment and Action Plan (AP) sits alongside, and is aligned to, our commitment to a number of other agreements/initiatives that support the development of an inclusive research culture and working environments such as the Athena Swan Charter, the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and our recent commitment to implementing the DORA principles. “Creating and Sustaining inclusive and supportive research practices” is one of the priority areas of our Athena Swan Silver Action plan and looks, for example, to increase the proportion of women on Teaching & Research Contracts, increase the proportions of outputs and case studies by women in REF and support especially female ECRs to put themselves forward for Future Leaders Funds and other schemes. We were awarded the Athena Swan Silver status in January 2024.  The Researcher Development & Concordat Group (RDCG), established in 2015, provides a forum to discuss and recommend actions to support researcher development and ensure that the University fulfils the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat and in so doing, achieves the related objectives of the University’s Research and Impact Strategy. The group brings together key support staff as well as academic representatives from across the University (see below). The Chair of the RDCG reports to the University’s Research Committee, chaired by PVC Research.  Bangor University has taken an inclusive approach to defining the audience of the Concordat – our commitment covers research-only staff, staff on Teaching & Research contracts and post-graduate research students. The action plan therefore covers the development and support of researchers at all career stages and was developed jointly by individuals/groups/departments supporting research and researchers at Bangor. Responsibility for Researcher development sits within Staff Development in Human Resources (HR) and includes joint working with the Doctoral School which provides support and training for PGRs and supervisors and the Integrated Impact and Research Support Service (IRIS). This Unit supports all academics and researchers with funding applications, financial management of grant portfolios, guidance on REF and Impact, Open Access, research data management, technology transfer, working with businesses, assistance with Intellectual Property and contracts, major projects and collaborative opportunities*.*  The holistic view taken by the University ensures that the research culture is owned across the University both on a strategic and operational level. |
| **Provide a short summary of the institution’s strategic objectives and implementation plans for delivering each of the three pillars of the Concordat (environment and culture, employment, and professional development of researchers) for your key stakeholder groups together with your measures for evaluating progress and success *(max 600 words)*** |
| **Environment and culture**  Building an inclusive, supportive and fair research culture and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into our research-related policies and practices is a priority in our 2022-25 Concordat action plan. Our Staff Survey 2022 showed that Employee engagement (a measure across a number of engagement-related questions) was 68% for research staff and 60% for academic staff. Our CEDARS 2023 results showed that 80% of respondents were aware of the Concordat (46% indicating they had some understanding of it and a further 34% indicating they had heard of it).  **Employment**  The key objectives of the current Concordat AP around ensuring researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contribution focus on two areas of support for staff on research fixed-term contracts. Firstly, implementing and reviewing the launch and take up of BU’s Bridging Support Scheme which aims to encourage the retention of experienced and skilled staff and sustain research teams and expertise; avoid the break in employment and career which might otherwise be faced by research staff; and maximise the opportunity for such staff to produce high-quality outputs and/or research impact at the end of funded contracts/grants.  Secondly, BU’s Anti-Casualisation Group (a joint HR and UCU group) is working towards an overall aim to reduce the number of staff on fixed-term contracts to provide security of employment and has developed a new draft fixed-term contract policy, which will be implemented following Privy Council approval of the University’s Supplemental Charter*.*  **Professional Development of Researchers**  Our Concordat AP 2022-25 identified two key objectives under our commitment to supporting and champion continuous professional and career development. Firstly, the support and development of midcareer researchers is key to identifying and developing future research leaders. We are achieving this via our continued participation in the Welsh Crucible programme and the development of our Research Leadership programme. Secondly, we continue to implement 10 days CPD with a focus on developing and sustaining a comprehensive Researcher Development programme and communicating responsibilities of PIs/managers of researchers with regards to supporting and developing research staff.  **Implementation plan**  Below we provide a summary of the areas/actions from our Concordat Action Plan 2022-25 that we have implemented, or started implementing, over the last 12 months. We also highlight some areas of the AP that we will be working on over the next 12 months.  BU has recently (1st January 2024) appointed a new Chair of the Researcher Development & Concordat Group who will lead on the implementation of the action plan going forward. The Chair will become more involved on a University-wide basis with the wider discussions around research culture rather than focussing on researcher development per se.  BU’s Integrated Research & Impact Support (IRIS) services has been able to significantly grow over the last year. New roles created include four Research and Impact Development Managers each covering different areas: research funding, commercialisation, knowledge exchange and impact, and research governance and researcher development. |
| **Summary of actions taken, and evaluation of progress made, in the current reporting period to implement your plan to support the three pillars in respect of each of your key stakeholder groups [Institution; Academic Managers of Researchers (Deans, Heads of Schools/Departments/PIs); Researchers]** |
| **Environment and**  **Culture *(max 600 words)*** |
| **Institution**  A number of key “Environment and culture” actions have been implemented over the last year, including:   * BU has signed up to Dora (Declaration on Research Assessment); a Responsible Metrics Task and End group has been established and has created a Policy Statement on the Responsible use of Metrics. The work was undertaken on an institutional level consisting of academic and professional services colleagues. Current work is focusing on promoting the principles and developing guidance and training for managers and all staff (ECI5a). * BU's Equality Impact Assessment for REF 2021 and the REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel's final report were reviewed by the University’s Athena Swan panel and EDI considerations are being embedded from the very beginning of the current REF cycle (ECI6e). * BU’s Dignity at Work and Study Policy has been revised and updated in line with new Higher Education sector guidance on dealing with bullying and harassment (ECI3a). HR has also developed a webpage where staff can report instances of all types of harassment that they have experienced or witnessed (a separate webpage is available for students to report harassment) (ECI3b). Reporting can be done anonymously. The new policy and “report and support” form were communicated to all managers and staff by the staff bulletin and are incorporated in the Bangor Manager Development Programme (ECI3c). * An in-person training session as well as an online training module for those organising fieldtrips and those going on field trips have been developed. These ensure that EDI considerations are embedded in the risk assessment and due diligence processes of fieldtrips. (ECI3d) * We continue to work towards ensuring all relevant staff are aware of the Concordat and our commitment to the Concordat. New research staff are sent a Welcome email with a link to the concordat and information on the researcher development support available (ECI1a). HR/IRIS have developed a joint information session for researchers on the Concordat and BU Researcher Development Programme (ECI1d). Two Concordat focus groups took place, one with PIs and one with ECRs. To ensure a range of voices/opinions were heard we invited a randomly selected group of ECRs to take part in the focus group (ECI6b). BU took part in CEDARS 2023 (ECI6a).   **Academic Managers of Researchers**  Key to implementing the “managers of researcher” actions is to close current gaps in our data regarding how we identify this key stakeholder group (ECI1b) - staff data is held in HR; data on grant capture and associated externally funded research posts is held in IRIS. The implementation of a new HR/Payroll System (iTrent) is currently ongoing and we are working on linking up our data to be able to identify and better support PIs/Research Managers, in particular those new to line-management responsibilities (ECM1, ECM3, ECM4).  **Researchers**  Researchers continue to contribute to /feed into the development and implementation of our Concordat action plan. Two researchers from each College sit on the University’s Researcher Development & Concordat Group which meets 4 times a year. The School of Medical & Health Sciences\* ECR network organised its annual ECR conference in May 2023 (ECR1b) that included a presentation by the School’s Wellbeing Champion who is an early career researcher (ECR1b, ECR3a).  \* Schools have since been restructured and are now the School of Health Sciences and the North Wales Medical School. |
| **Employment *(max 600 words)*** |
| **Institution**  The majority of actions under the “Employment” Concordat principle are institution-level actions that aim to ensure researchers are recruited in fair and equitable ways, and their work is recognised and rewarded.  A number of key actions have been implemented including:   * BU’s Bridging support scheme was launched in January 2023 (EI6b). We are monitoring interest and uptake of the scheme. It will however take time for the scheme to embed in our processes – the funding in the bridging period is to be managed within the existing budget of the relevant academic School. It is therefore necessary to include consideration of this in planning rounds. * BU’s Anti-Casualisation Group (a joint HR and UCU group) has developed a new draft fixed-term contract policy, which will be implemented following Privy Council approval. The fixed-term contract policy is underpinned by the fixed- term workers regulations, which provide a list of objective justifications for the use of fixed term contracts, including a second set of tightened objective justifications where a member of staff has been employed for four years or more. This will enable managers to give greater consideration to transfer research staff onto permanent contracts (EI6a). * BU’s work on implementing the Workload Allocation Model (WAM) for academic staff continues (EI5a, EI5b). This project aims to achieve workload equity, transparency and fairness. Following phase 1 of the WAM pilot that included four academic Schools, the current phase 2 of the pilot incorporates all academic Schools. * Promotions were frozen in 20/21 and 21/22 as criteria were being reviewed. Promotions re-opened in December 2022.The next promotion and regrading round will open on the 1st February 2024. Staff on Research-only contracts will now also be able to apply for promotion via the academic promotion route rather than following the job evaluation process (ECI3a).   **Academic Managers of Researchers**  As above, implementation of actions in relation to managers of researchers/PIs are dependent on the implementation of the new iTrent system (which is ongoing) that will allow us to better define and target this group.  **Researchers**  Our AP includes the following researcher-focused action under “employment” – to ensure Researchers are provided with the relevant information at School Induction and project level induction to be able to work in accordance with institutional policies, procedures and employment legislation, as well as the requirements of their funder (ER1a). This is ongoing and linked to policies, procedures and regulations being reviewed (see ECI2). |
| **Professional development *(max 600 words)*** |
| BU’s Research and Impact Strategy recognises the importance of professional development, in particular in regard to *a.* the development and support of early-career researchers, *b.* staff training and mentoring in relation to grants, publication strategies, and career development, and *c*. the importance of supporting mid-career researchers in integrating and developing their research into wider research groupings.  A number of key “Professional development” actions have been implemented over the last year, including:   * Made in Wales: Researcher Career Stories. These sessions were jointly organised by the Wales Concordat Network. ECRs from across Wales were invited to a series of on-line career events during the 2022/23 academic year. The purpose of these events was to give ECRs an insight into career options alongside the “traditional” academic route. The invited speakers all started their careers at a Welsh University and have since gone on to have successful careers in other sectors. These events celebrated individual career stories as well as showcasing the ways in which Welsh HEIs contribute to the development of a highly skilled and talented workforce for Wales, the UK and beyond. Two of nine contributing speakers were Bangor Alumni. Approximately 150 ECRs joined across the three sessions (PCDI5a). * A joint (online) Researcher Leadership Programme with Aberystwyth was piloted in 21/22 and offered again in 22/23. 29 participants completed the programme (14 from Bangor). Feedback was positive with 90% of respondents rating the programme overall as "good" or “excellent”. For 23/24 the programme was further developed and opened up to participants from other Universities across Wales. This year’s “Welsh Universities Research Leadership Programme” has 35 participants, 7 from Bangor. The programme aims to enhance leadership capabilities, by ensuring staff have the skills, abilities, and confidence to lead and manage research and research teams effectively. It also aims to improve Research and Leadership development opportunities for Researchers in Wales by building strong, sustainable research communities across Wales (PCDI4a, PCDI4d). * BU is part of the Welsh Crucible - an award-winning personal, professional and leadership development programme for early and mid-career researchers that facilitates and promotes research-inspired innovation and cross-disciplinary collaboration in Wales. It is funded by partner institutions (Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Cardiff Met, Swansea and University of South Wales) and HEFCW. Three Bangor researchers were selected for the 2023 programme. Bangor has committed to again be part of the 2024 programme; the call for applications is currently open (PCDI4b, PCDI4d). * Training and development sessions for researchers continue to be offered via BU’s Research Leadership programme.   **Academic Managers of Researchers**  As mentioned above, PIs were invited to take part in a Concordat focus group (ECI6b). The point was raised that engaging in CPD also helps with developing research culture as taking part in training/development opportunities enables engagement with colleagues. Other actions around raising awareness of responsibilities of research manager by allowing time and supporting researchers to engage in CPD ongoing were progressed (PCDM3a). (Also linked to implementation of iTrent in terms of identifying PIs and monitoring training)  **Researchers**  Our AP includes the following researcher-focused action under “Professional Development” – to ensure researchers keep a record of conference and workshop attendance, engagement in mentoring or coaching activities etc. (PCDR1a). The new iTrent system will allow staff to check their training records which will make it much easier for staff to keep track of CPD activities. They will also be able to directly input any external CPD. This action is ongoing.  There are also some good practice examples of School/College level CPD, e.g. a Research Development day was held in CoAHSS in June 2023 that included sessions on impact and engagement, current developments around research and funding, and opportunity for networking. |
| **Comment on any lessons learned from the activities undertaken over this period and any modifications you propose to make to your action plan and measures of success as a result. *(max 500 words)*** |
| The Chair of BU’s Researcher Development and Concordat Group stepped down in October 2023 and a new Chair was appointed on 1st January 2024. Under the new Chair, the RDCG will review the action plan in light of the priorities and key objectives of the new Chair.  As mentioned above some timeframes in the action plan have had to be adjusted due to the timescale of the implementation of iTrent changing.  BU took part in CEDARS 2023 but our response rate was low (n= 76); this was partly due to not having promoted the survey enough and having a number of other surveys running throughout the year. Ahead of CEDARS 2025 we will develop a better communication strategy to ensure broader engagement as well as revisiting the University wide timetable on surveys to avoid survey fatigue. However, the results of the small sample of Bangor researchers is very similar to the UK sector averages, and above the sector average in many areas. |
| **Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period *(max 500 words)*** |
| The key objectives below are those defined in our 2022 HR Excellence in Research award application and 2022-25 Concordat Action Plan. The RDCG under the leadership of the new Chair will undertake a critical review of the Action plan during 2024 (halfway through the award period).  **Environment and Culture**  Continue to build an inclusive, supportive and fair research culture by ensuring shared responsibility for the implementation of the principles of the Concordat across the Institution and embedding EDI into our policies and processes.  Actions will focus on ensuring researchers and academic managers of researchers are aware of the Concordat (EC1a-f), consulted and involved in the continued implementation and review of the action plan via focus groups (ECI6b), Concordat review meetings (ECR1a) and BU participation in CEDARS (ECI6a).  EDI-related actions will focus on ensuring Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken in the development and review of policies relevant to researchers (ECI2a) as well as ensuring researchers and research managers of are up-to-date with Equality and Unconscious Bias training (ECM1a+b), and (all researchers involved in Fieldtrips) complete the “Prevention of Sexual Harassment on Field Trips” training (ECI3d).  **Employment**  BU’s Bridging Support Scheme was implemented to help retain experienced and skilled staff and sustain research teams and expertise. We will continue to ensure researchers and managers of researcher are aware of the support available and monitor the uptake and effectiveness of the scheme to ensure equitable application.(EI6b).  The work with the Trade Unions on the process of transferring research staff from fixed-term to open ended contracts is ongoing (EI6a). As part of the University’s planning round, Schools are being encouraged to move staff to permanent contracts where it is clear that there have been ongoing funding streams, even though the specific grants may vary. We will also be looking at our Research-only career pathways to ensure we follow best practice in the sector.  **Professional and Career Development**  Continue supporting and developing midcareer researchers. This is key to identifying and developing future research leaders. Actions will focus on consulting with mid-career researchers to determine training needs (PCDI1e) and continuing to support research leadership training via Welsh Crucible, Advance HE’s Aurora Programme and the Welsh Universities Research Leadership Programme (PCDI4a-c).  Continue to implement 10 days CPD. Actions to focus on developing and sustaining a comprehensive Researcher Development programme (PCDI1a-g), communicating responsibilities of PIs/managers of researchers with regards to supporting and developing research staff (PCDM3a) and encouraging researcher to record all CPD activities and take ownership of their professional development (PCDR1a). |
| **Please provide a brief statement describing your institution’s approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body *(max 200 words)***  The Report is produced by the University’s Research Concordat Manager and initially approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) who presents to the University Council’s People & Culture Committee. This Group then recommends the approval of this Report to the full Council. |



Signature on behalf of governing body:

Contact for queries: Alison Wiggett (a.wiggett@bangor.ac.uk)

This annual report will be analysed by Universities UK, secretariat for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, to identify good practices, themes for development and information to improve national research culture policy and practice.

If you have any questions, or suggestions on how the reporting process could be improved, please contact the secretariat at [CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

[www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk)