**Action Plan for continued improvement against Concordat Key Principles - September 2014 - September 2017**

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| **Key Principles with defined Actions** | **Issue to be addressed** | **Success criteria** | **Responsibility for Action** | **Timeline** |
| **Principle 1. Recruitment and**  **Selection** |  |  |  |  |
| Devise approaches and strategies for increasing the diversity of recruitment panels . | Recruitment and progression panels should reflect diversity as well as a range of experience and expertise | Demonstrable increase in diversity of panels | Associate Director HR (ED) and Equality  & Diversity Committee | March 2015 |
| Extend recruitment and selection training to all panel members (currently just Chairs) | Recruitment & selections panels should have received relevant recent training. |  | Associate Director HR (Schools of  Study) | In place by January  2015. Rolling programme for training. Monitor annually. |
| Review 'Managers and Leaders' resources to ensure advice on all aspects of recruitment practice are current and reflect best practice | Continued best practice in recruitment | Maintenance of excellent responses on recruitment practice in both CROS and PIRLS surveys | Associate Director HR (Schools of  Study) | April 2015, then review annually |
| Join Euraxess and utilise their services | Provides access to a complete range of information and support services to researchers wishing to pursue their research careers in Europe | Euraxess resources are used by Aston's researchers.  All research staff posts advertised through Euraxess (currently only those with EC grants).  Demonstrable increase in recruitment from Europe and elsewhere. | Associate Director HR (Schools of  Study) | December 2014. Monitor impact annually |

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| **Principle 2. Recognition and Value** |  |  |  |  |
| Review of the leadership and management training for research managers | Research managers aware of, and understand, their responsibilities for the management of researchers. | Addresses issues raised in PIRLS 2013. Updated and relevant training programme / opportunities. Uptake positive and feedback confirms relevance. | Associate Director HR (OD) and Staff & Graduate Development | Initiated September  2014. Review completed and programmes and opportunities implemented March  2015. Update in response to CROS and PIRLS 2015 and 2017. |
| ECR Development programme reviewed annually, and updated in line with ECR Committee requests, CROS survey feedback | Early career researchers views are valued through their significant input into defining the training opportunities made available to them | Positive feedback from varied sources, including CROS survey, on appropriateness of the training provided. | Staff & Graduate Development | Initial review January 2015. Annual review thereafter. |
| Development of case studies of researcher profiles from amongst Aston's research staff | Career paths for research staff highlighted and showcased | Case studies available on the web. Case studies used in recruitment and induction materials. | Staff & Graduate Development and  ECR Committee | June 2015. Case studies refreshed annually. |
| **Principle 3 & 4. Support and Career**  **Development** |  |  |  | Updates produced as required between  2014-2017 |
| Investigate provision in other employment sectors (to be defined) and consider adoption of best practice from elsewhere | Career Development which is comparable to, and competitive with, other employment sectors | Ability to demonstrate to researchers that Aston's offering of career development is comparable.  Information shared at recruitment stage and for established staff. | Associate Director HR (OD) | Completion of  review - March 2015  Incorporation into development programmes and opportunities - October 2015 |

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| Review and evaluate training content of the ECR Development programme to ensure currency and relevance. | Training and development interventions are fit for purpose | CROS survey shows all key areas of activity defined as being essential for researcher development are being provided and well received. Researchers indicate that the content is having a positive impact. | Associate Director HR (OD) | Initial review January 2015. Annual review thereafter. |
| Evaluate effectiveness of the initial training needs analysis (component of the ECR Development programme) | Development of training, skills and competencies to carry out the funded project | Map HERA research staff role profiles with existing training provision. Update mapping of training provision against Researcher Development Framework. | Staff & Graduate Development | June 2015 |
| Map HERA research staff role profiles with existing training provision. | Development of training, skills and competencies to carry out the funded project | Revised training provision if gaps identified | Staff & Graduate Development | March 2015 |
| Consider how to offer training and placements to broaden awareness of other sectors | Broaden awareness of other sectors to assist with career transitions | Opportunities are available. Example case studies prepared. | Staff & Graduate Development | June 2015 |
| Use of Researcher Development Framework Planner trialled and evaluated. Decision taken on its use, and if decision is no, new planning tool sourced or designed. | Career planning for researchers is supported by an effective planning tool. | Planning tool in use and feedback through CROS survey is positive. | Staff & Graduate Development | December 2015 |
| Produce induction pack for new research staff | Improve the induction experience for new staff. | Improvement to scores on induction questions in CROS survey | Staff & Graduate Development | December 2014  Monitor and evaluate annually |
| Review local and institutional induction for research staff | Improve the induction experience for new staff. | Improvement to scores on induction questions in CROS survey | Staff & Graduate Development | Review - June 2015  Implement - October 2015 |

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| Development of a specific career development strategy for researchers | Requirement for a researcher strategy which translates various activities and initiatives into a clearly understood vision for researcher development | Strategy in place, disseminated widely, and understood. | Associate Director HR (OD) and PVC Research | June 2015  Update June 2017 |
| Monitor efficacy of mentoring arrangements within the ECR development programme, and take appropriate actions for improvement. | Availability of mentors in providing support and guidance for CPD | Monitor uptake of mentors by research staff  Compile database of career counsellors and mentors that are qualified to give relevant advice for specific research areas. | Staff & Graduate Development | Annual monitoring of mentoring, with associated update to action plan if needed.  Database compilation - March  2015 |
| Investigate provision of preparatory training for teaching for researchers who do not teach | Initial training in teaching to support possible career choices | Investigation completed, and if appropriate, provision implemented. Uptake by researchers | Staff & Graduate Development | Investigation complete - February  2014. Implement any provision from October 2015. Review in 2017 |
| Establish closer working relationship between Staff & Graduate Development and the Research Support Office | Ensure coherence of development provision for researchers | Researchers perceive provision of development opportunities as  'seamless. They are clear where to obtain information on development provision. The two departments can clearly articulate each others role in researcher development. | Associate Director HR (OD) and Head of the Research Support Office | January 2015. Kept under review |
| Produce a Researcher Development Handbook | Ensure coherence of development provision for researchers | Researcher Development Handbook is produced. Researchers report that it is a valuable resource. | Staff & Graduate Development and  ECR Committee | December 2014. Review annually |
| **Principle 5. Researchers**  **Responsibilities** |  |  |  |  |

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| Invite ECR Committee and representative established research managers to consider how to assess/judge whether researchers are taking responsibility for a number of defined areas. Then to initiate a plan to make the assessment. | Researchers should develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought. Researchers should develop their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge. Researchers should conduct and disseminate research in an honest and ethical manner | Evidence available of researchers developing these attributes. | Associate Director HR (OD) & PVC Research | June 2015 |
| **Principle 6. Diversity and Equality** |  |  |  |  |
| Devise approaches and strategies to improve the progression of research staff to academic posts | Improvement to progression rates for research staff into academic roles | Improvement in progression | Associate Director (ED) and Equality & Diversity Committee & Athena Swan groups | March 2015 |
| Review flexible working practices for research staff | Respond flexibly to requests for changes to working patterns | Review procedures for capturing and holding data, including consideration of how systems can be better integrated | Associate Director (ED) and Equality & Diversity Committee & Athena Swan groups | June 2015  Monitor effectiveness - June  2016 |
| Devise approaches and strategies for increasing the diversity of recruitment panels . | Diversity reflected in selection and evaluation committees | Demonstrable increase in diversity of panels | Associate Director HR (ED) and Equality  & Diversity Committee | June 2015 |
| Review all HR policies in the light of Aston's new ethical framework to ensure no direct or indirect disadvantage to researchers | Ensure policies do not directly or indirectly disadvantage such groups | Policies removed and amended if necessary. Research staff are re informed of the review and its outcomes. | All Associate Directors in HR | Initiate immediately. Complete first scan by December 2014. Policy reviews in  2017 |
| Apply for Athena Swan Silver for the University and for School of Life and Health Sciences, and Athena Swan Gold for the School of Engineering & Applied Science | Participation in schemes such as Athena Swan Charter, the Juno project, and other initiatives. | Athena Swan applications submitted and achieved. | Associate Director (ED) and Equality & Diversity Committee & Athena Swan groups | Applications for Silver submitted by April 2015. Application for Gold submitted by April  2016 |

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| Consider relevant schemes for the two non STEM Schools of Study to demonstrate commitment to equality of opportunity | Participation in schemes such as Athena Swan Charter, the Juno project, and other initiatives. | Relevant scheme identified, applications made and achieved | Associate Director HR (ED) & Equality and Diversity Committee | Identify schemes - January 2015  Applications submitted as determined by scheme rules |
| Utilise Vitae's Every Researcher Counts resources for equality and diversity to develop workshops for researchers and principal investigators | Positive steps to promote equality | Increase in understanding of equality and diversity issues demonstrate through improved scores in CROS and PIRLs. | Associate Director HR (ED) | June 2015 |
| **Principle 7. Implementation and**  **Review** |  |  |  |  |
| Present reports to Research Committee on progress with Action Plan | Undertake regular review of progress in implementing the principles of the Concordat | Evidence that reports are received and acted upon. | Associate Director HR (OD) & PVC Research | Biannually, between  2014 - 2017 |
| Make additions and amendments to the Action Plan as new evidence and information becomes available | Action Plans to retain relevance in a changing environment | Evidence that Action Plans are updated and acted upon | Associate Director HR (OD) | Updates produced as required between  2014-2017 |
| Undertake regular review of progress in implementing the Principles of the Concordat | Research Committee responsible for monitoring | Reports to Research committee Amendments to Action Plan when issue are identified. | Associate Director HR (OD) & PVC Research | Annually - 2015,  2016, 2017 |
| Use of the Careers in Research Online  Survey(CROS) | Capture of relevant information to inform researcher development | CROS repeated annually and data utilized to inform development activity. | Associate Director HR (OD) | Summer 2015  Summer 2017 |
| Use of the Principal Investigators and  Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) | Capture of relevant information to inform researcher development | PRLS repeated and data to inform development activity. | Associate Director HR (OD) | Summer 2015  Summer 2017 |
| Monitor data for a broad range of indicators for researchers related to recruitment, retention and progression | Monitor equality and diversity indicators for researchers | Reports from Equality & Diversity Committee presented annually to Research Committee | Associate Director HR (ED) & Equality and Diversity Committee | Annually - 2015,  2016, 2017 |

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| **ACRONYMS** |  |  |  |  |
| CPD - Continuing Professional  Development | HERA - Higher Education Role Analysis | PIRLS - Principal investigator and  Research Leaders Survey |  |  |
| CROS - Careers in Researchers Online  Survey | HR - Human Resources | PRP - Performance Related Pay |  |  |
| ED - Equality and Diversity | OD - Organisational Development |  |  |  |
| HEA - Higher Education Academy | PDR - Performance Development  Review |  |  |  |
|  | PI - Principal Investigator |  |  |  |