BU Code of Practice for the Employment and Development of Research Staff

August 2015

Introduction

Purpose of this document

This document provides guidance on the University's expectations for the recruitment, support, management and development of research staff in line with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Section 1 addresses the responsibilities, including those of researchers themselves, for implementing and delivering University policy. Sections 2 to 5 cover the remaining key principles of the Concordat.

Definition of Research Staff

For the purposes of this document 'research staff' are defined those whose primary employment function is research. This includes pre-and post-doctoral staff on fixed-term and open-ended contracts funded through limited period grants, named fellowships and sometimes institutional funds. These staff have titles such as Research Assistant, Researcher, Research Fellow or Research Associate.

The importance of research staff

Research is critical to Bournemouth University (BU)'s national and international reputation and increasingly the basis of its academic and financial success. It is critical to the fruition of BU2018 and is a key component of Fusion.

BU recognises the major contribution made by research staff in supporting the delivery of high quality research aligned to the societal agenda, and also the role of research staff in increasing the sustainability of research. BU is committed to attracting the very best research staff, helping them to develop their careers and providing them with a supportive and positive working environment. In recognition of achievements to date and a commitment to furthering this agenda, BU was awarded the prestigious European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award in January 2013.

1.0 Responsibilities for implementation and delivery of this Code of Practice

1.1 University governance

The University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (URKEC) has strategic oversight of all training and development programmes for research staff. Operational management of these programmes is the combined responsibility of the Graduate School, Organisational Development (OD) and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO). Development plans, activities and their impact are reported annually to the University Leadership Team and the Finance and Resources Committee.

1.2 Professional Services

RKEO, supported by OD, is responsible for the design and implementation of development opportunities aimed specifically at research staff. RKEO is responsible for sending this Code of Practice, plus information on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and BU's action plan, to all new research staff joining BU and their line managers.

Human Resources (HR) and OD are responsible for reviewing and enhancing where appropriate and possible within contractual terms the Career Development Framework and associated development

opportunities and supporting procedures in order to maximise the effectiveness of the institution's research workforce.

1.3 Executive Deans

Executive Deans are responsible for communicating the strategic importance of the Concordat's principles to all relevant stakeholders within the Faculty. As a member of the University Leadership Team, Executive Deans are responsible for considering institutional policy and practice and developing institution-wide responses to research staff issues.

1.4 Deputy Deans (Research and Professional Practice) / equivalent

Deputy Deans take a lead role in working with senior academic colleagues and RKEO to implement the Concordat's principles and ensure excellence in research.

1.5 Faculty Directors of Operations

Directors of Operations work with senior academic staff across the Faculty to ensure effective allocation of resources and implementation of processes that affect the recruitment and deployment of research staff within the Faculty.

1.6 Line Managers

Line managers support and develop research staff to be excellent researchers, and proactively assist them in making informed decisions about their career steps.

In accordance with good management practice, line managers are expected to provide day-to-day support and guidance to the research staff for whom they are responsible. In addition, they have a specific responsibility for conducting an annual and interim performance appraisal review with these staff where development needs associated with achievement of objectives can be explored and a Personal and Professional Development Plan (PPDP) agreed that identifies engagement with development opportunities to address needs. The professoriate also plays a key role in leading, team building and contributing to the mentoring of research staff.

In the period between appointing a new member of research staff and their first day at BU, line managers are expected to identify an appropriate colleague, either within their Faculty or from another, who can provide informal mentoring support. Line managers are to inform OD of any allocated mentors.

1.7 Mentors

The aim of mentoring is to provide support to the researcher independent of day-to-day line management and for the development of research-related knowledge, skills, expertise and networks. Mentoring may address specific areas of practice such as bid-writing or writing for publication, etc. and should be reviewed by the mentee and their line manager regularly and, as a minimum, annually as part of the performance appraisal process as mentoring needs will naturally evolve and change over time. In addition OD have a database of mentors who are able to provide support to research staff.

All mentors will receive a Mentoring Handbook from OD that sets out guidelines for establishing, developing and maintaining effective mentoring relationships within a research context. A companion version of this handbook will also be provided to mentees. In addition, OD will also offer mentors access to the Mentor Network that meets regularly to share good practice, as well as other opportunities such as attendance at coaching and mentoring masterclasses that provide essential underpinning knowledge for effective practice. BU has also developed a Foundation Programme in Coaching and Mentoring Practice (FPCMP) that mentors may choose to access and that will provide them with an opportunity to evaluate and improve their practice and to join the BU Mentor Database. A Women's Academic Network (WAN) also exists that can support the career development of female research staff specifically.

1.8 Appraisers

All research staff are annually appraised and the appraiser works with the researcher to discuss and agree a Personal and Professional Development Plan (PPDP) and the associated support to meet their career aspirations, development needs and to support them in developing their academic identity.

1.9 Research Staff

Principle 5.1 of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) states: *"Researchers are employed to advance knowledge and should exercise and develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought throughout their careers."*
While line managers have a specific responsibility to carry out regular performance appraisal reviews with their staff, the process of identifying continuing professional development (CPD) and career development needs and the means by which to address these is recognised as a continuous one in which the individual researcher should take an equal role. A self-assessment tool aligned with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework has been developed specifically to assist this process of PPDP. The tool helps the researcher identify their areas of strength as well as development needs and signposts them to a range of development opportunities that also align with the RDF domains (see Sections 3.4 and 5.2 below)
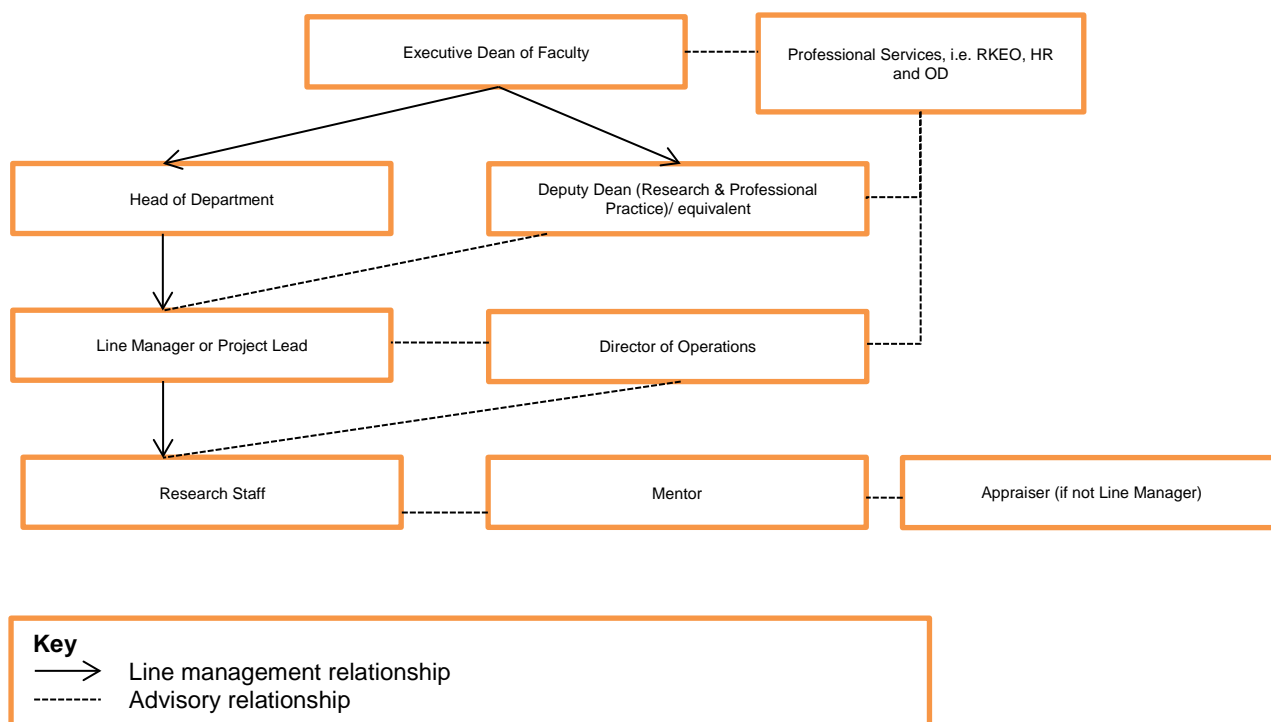
1.10 Responsibility structure

Figure 1: Responsibility structure chart for the implementation and delivery of BU policy

1.11 Responsibility matrix

✓   primary responsibility for implementation
✓✓   primary responsibility for delivery
(✓)   responsibility for supporting delivery

Responsibility ⇨ Aspect ⇩	Executive Dean	Head of Department	Deputy Dean (Research & PP)	Director of Ops	Line Manager	Mentor	Research Staff	Professional Services	Appraiser (If not line manager)
1. Appointment		✓		(✓)	✓✓			(✓)	
2. Fixed-term contracts		✓		(✓)	✓✓			(✓)	
3. Pay and promotion		✓		(✓)	✓✓			(✓)	
4.i Induction to Faculty	✓	✓✓	✓✓		✓✓	(✓)	✓✓	(✓)	
4.ii Induction to project	✓				✓✓				
4.iii Induction to BU	✓				✓✓			(✓)	
5. Probation					✓				
6. Performance Appraisal and Interim Review thereof	✓				✓✓			(✓)	✓
7. Mentoring	✓					✓✓		(✓)	
8. Equality and diversity	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	

Table 1: Summary matrix of roles and responsibilities for the implementation and delivery of this Code of Practice

2.0 Recruitment, selection and employment

2.1 Appointment

Appointments of research staff are made in accordance with the University Recruitment and Selection Strategy.

Research staff are employed on appropriate terms and conditions of service.

Research staff have the same opportunities as all staff in accordance with the BU Policy on Dignity, Diversity and Equality.

2.2 Induction

Within the first few weeks of their employment, research staff will receive an effective induction to their Faculty and their project(s). Local induction is the overall responsibility of the Executive Dean of the Faculty and the relevant line manager, and an Induction Checklist is provided by OD to facilitate part of this process.

Information for new staff is available from the Working at BU section of the BU Staff Intranet. All new staff are also invited to attend the New Staff Induction Event, coordinated by OD. BU expects all new staff to attend this event as it provides an important introduction to the University. RKEO run a termly academic/research induction event to which all new research staff are invited.

2.3 Fixed-term contracts

BU abides by the provisions of the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations (2002) and is committed to ensuring the proper use of fixed-term contracts. The University's *Code of Practice – Use of Fixed-Term Contracts* provides clear guidelines as to when it is appropriate to use a fixed-term contract. Where an appointment on, or an extension to, a fixed term contract is sought this should be fair and justifiable on objective grounds and is reviewed by HR. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the University will transfer fixed-term staff to established status after four years.

In line with the Code of Practice – Redundancy, whenever possible, the University will consider measures to minimise or avoid compulsory redundancies.

BU operates a Bridging Fund Scheme to provide additional stability to fixed-term researchers by providing bridging funding, where feasible, for the continuation of employment for a short-term (maximum three months) between research grants. The guidelines provide details of eligibility and how and when researchers can apply for bridging funding.

Line managers should keep research staff informed about the state of funding for their projects and the likelihood of future funding or employment at the end of their present appointment.

In cases where a fixed-term contract is ending individuals can indicate whether they wish to be considered for alternative employment opportunities in the University. Every effort will be made to seek alternative employment for the individual. Staff can request to be added to the jobs vacancies list by contacting the IT Service Desk via email - itservicedesk@bournemouth.ac.uk.

2.4 Probation

As with all new members of staff, new research staff are subject to a probation period with a mid-point review and a final review. These meetings provide new staff and line managers with the opportunity to discuss progress and identify any areas where further training or development would be beneficial. More information on the probation process at BU can be found here.

Further details are available from BU's Guide to Induction and Probation for Managers

2.5 Representation on academic committees

The URKEC membership includes a research staff member to ensure that the view of research staff is represented when discussing BU's strategic and operational research policy and activity.

The Research Concordat Steering Group (RCSG) membership includes a number of research staff representatives to ensure that research staff contribute to the monitoring and implementation of improvements planned as part of BU's Research Concordat Action Plan.

BU hosts a [Research Staff Association](#) to provide research staff with a forum to discuss issues affecting them. These views will be taken forward to the URKEC and RCSG meetings by the research staff representatives.

2.6 Representation on Professional and Support Committees

The Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Forum will act as a forum for the purpose of information for and consultation with employees at BU. To find your ICE Representative follow this [link](#).

2.7 Access to BU's Staff Benefits and Community

All of BU's Staff Benefits and Community information can be found on our [Staff Intranet Staff Benefits and Community](#) pages.

3.0 Job design

3.1 Job descriptions

All jobs at the University have a job description. Job descriptions are graded according the Hay job evaluation method.

3.2 Appraisal and Performance Review

Upon successful completion of probation (Section 2.4), all staff, including research staff, are contractually required to participate in BU's performance appraisal process The objectives agreed at the end of probation are those discussed at the first review meeting.

Full details are available from the [Appraisal and PPDP](#) Staff Intranet pages.

3.3 Promotion

Research staff have opportunities to apply for promotion as and when vacancies arise.

3.4 Documentation of achievements

The BU Performance Appraisal Scheme provides a formal opportunity for the recognition and recording of achievements. Research staff enrolled on the BRAD programme (Section 5.2) can use the [My Academic Development Needs: Self Assessment (MADNSA)](#) to identify strengths and skill gaps, and record progress and achievements. This is based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

4.0 Reward and recognition

4.1 Salary and grading

Research staff are paid on the BU National Single Spine scale and are entitled to pay progression on the same basis as other staff. Salary scale revisions are applied to all staff, including research staff.

All posts are graded using the Hay job evaluation scheme and the grading of role profiles is undertaken only by trained staff in HR. This ensures fairness to all staff and ensures a consistent and transparent approach to pay and grading according to the requirements of the post.

Research staff are eligible to be considered for honoraria in the same way as other staff (Section 4.3).

4.2 Re-grading due to changes in responsibilities

Job descriptions should be reviewed by line managers and post-holders on an annual basis as part of the formal performance appraisal, to ensure that they are accurate and reflect the main responsibilities being undertaken. Where there is a significant change in responsibilities that result in a updated job description, the document should be sent to HR for job evaluation.

4.3 Reward and recognition

The University has five values that include 'Excellence' and 'Achievement'. In support of these, a range of formal (including monetary) and informal reward and recognition mechanisms exist that apply equally to all staff groups, subject to the selection criteria. These include annual and interim performance appraisal where achievements can be explicitly valued and documented; annual promotion rounds; and the annual Vice-Chancellor's Staff Awards where positive role models are identified, promoted and celebrated.

5.0 Development and guidance

5.1 Opportunities for Continuing Professional Development

In line with the principles of its Staff Development Policy BU aims to make provision for the development needs of all staff groups. The University's Staff Intranet is updated regularly by OD and sets out the main opportunities available to staff identifying target audiences. The identification and evaluation of individual development needs is part of the performance appraisal process (Section 3.2), however, as identified in Section 1.8, line managers, appraisers and research staff are equally responsible for highlighting and addressing development needs as they arise.

Development opportunities specifically designed to meet the needs of research staff include:
- Bournemouth Researcher/ Academic Development (BRAD): BRAD is an annual programme of workshops and online modules available to researchers. It is based on Vitae's Researcher Development Framework and provides professional and personal development in four key areas: 1) knowledge and intellectual abilities; 2) personal effectiveness; 3). Further details are available from the BRAD section on the Staff Intranet.
- Grants Academy: The Grants Academy was launched in April 2012 as a cohort-based initiative to provide researchers with the skills required to design, structure and write a competitive, fundable research proposal. Grants Academy members have access to a unique suite of support, including external bid writing advice and support.   Further details are available from the Grants Academy section on the BU Staff Intranet.
- EU Academic Development Scheme (EUADS): The EUADS provides a development opportunity each year for a small cohort of researchers to increase knowledge and skills in European research funding, culminating in a submission to an EU funding call. Further details are available from the EUADS section on the BU Research Blog.

5.2 Mandatory Development

Research staff are required to undertake specific mandatory development as part of the requirements of their role. This includes: 1) research ethics (development and assessment undertaken via an online module); 2) equality and diversity (by means of an online module that all staff new to BU, irrespective of staff group, are expected to complete); and 3) for those research staff involved in the supervision of postgraduate research students mandatory initial and refresher development in PhD supervision is required.

5.3 Access to careers advice and guidance

Research staff, along with all other staff, have access to careers support and guidance provided by the University's Careers and Employability Service, including information on a wide variety of research career pathways and one-to-one meetings with qualified Careers Advisers. Careers guidance on developing a research/ academic career can also be provided by RKEO and OD on request. In addition, mentoring arrangements put in place for staff by their Faculty can provide informal support for career development.

6.0 Fusion and how research staff are expected to contribute

6.1 BU2018 strategy and Fusion

At the heart of the BU Strategic Plan (BU2018, 2012-18) is the Fusion of research, education and professional practice, creating a unique academic experience where the sum is greater than the component parts. The full BU2018 strategy is available from the BU Staff Intranet.

6.2 How research staff are expected to contribute

BU recognises the critical role that research staff have in achieving Fusion by delivering high-quality research aligned to the societal agenda. BU's research in society-relevant themes will increasingly allow for academic collaboration within the BU academic community and with other institutions, both domestic and overseas. Research staff are expected to contribute to the achievement of Fusion by 1) undertaking high-quality research; 2) ensuring research is informed and influenced by societal need; 3) engaging, networking and collaborating with external partners, individuals and organisations; and 4) disseminating research to ensure it is informing and influencing society. There is an expectation that the research will be disseminated within the University's educational programmes as part of the Fusion model.

6.3 Inclusivity of research staff in University life

Research staff are welcomed as active members of the University and can contribute to the strategic and operational management of the University through participation in various committees and forums (Section 2.5). Research staff are encouraged to play a full part in the life of their Faculty, research group and/or research theme. They are invited to attend Faculty Academic Board meetings.

7.0 Acknowledgements

In developing this Code of Practice BU has based the structure on the template created by the League of European Research Universities (LERU). Although not a member of LERU, BU recognises this template as a best practice model in the sector. The LERU Model Code of Practice for Research Employment has been developed by LERU through a process of extensive consultation with and among LERU members. It has been endorsed by the LERU Rectors' Assembly as a Model Code and represents an aspiration to which LERU universities are working and of which many elements have already been implemented in LERU universities. It complements the key codes and charters in the sector including the European Charter for Researchers, the European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and the UK Concordat on the Career Development of Researchers.

We have also looked to the policy documentation from the following institutions:
- University of Leeds 'Guidance on the Employment of Researchers'
- University of Cambridge 'Research staff Employment and Career Management'
- University of Cambridge 'Code of Practice for Research Development'
- University of Bath 'Code of Practice for the Employment of Research Staff'
- University of Oxford 'Code of Practice for the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff'
- University of St Andrews 'Code of Practice for the Employment and Management of Research Staff'