Acronyms:
AU: Aberystwyth University
ARCG: Aberystwyth Research Concordat Group
RBI: Department of Research, Business & Innovation

CTG: Concordat Task Group / **ARCG**: Aberystwyth Researcher Concordat Group
HR: Human Resources
CDSAP: Centre for the Development of Staff and Academic Practice
Comms**: Communications Department**

1. Concordat Monitoring and Review		
AIM	**ACTION**	**Update December 2014**
1.1 To build on the evolution of the Aberystwyth Researcher Concordat Group and encourage more researchers to join the group.	Timetable three meetings per annum, and re-invite the researcher community to join and contribute, including targeted invitations.	Meetings have not been held as regularly as planned due to staffing changes and University restructure, including a merger of the office leading on this initiative in 2013.. However, meetings were held on the following dates: 11 March 2013 23 January 2014 15 October 2014 26 November 2014 4 December 2014
1.2 To improve internal evaluation of Aberystwyth's implementation of the Concordat.	- To run the CROS survey in Spring 2013 with a targeted response rate of 50%. - To increase researcher representation on the ACRG. - To run an annual short climate survey of all researchers. - To follow up areas of concern from the CROS survey with	Response rate increased from 12.6% to 19% (n=38). The survey was promoted with email communication from the PVC Research and the Director of Research, Business & Innovation with follow up emails. We recruited three additional researcher members, however retaining them on the group has proved more difficult. Following the University restructure, we are requesting that all Institutes nominate a member of the group, with the aim of including them in meetings from January 2015. Feedback from the previous two CROS surveys indicated some concern about discrimination, therefore as part of the evidence gathering process for two recent successful ECU Athena SWAN applications, Aberystwyth University ran two focus groups with female members of staff (which included PGR students and postdoctoral researchers). Following ethics review and approval, the groups were

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	focus groups.	held in early 2014. The aim of the groups was to further our institutional understanding of the barriers and facilitators to researcher development and career progression in female staff in the sciences. The focus group data added to the outcomes of an online questionnaire distributed to undergraduate, postgraduate, post-doctoral researchers and academic staff in the science departments. The outcomes of the questionnaire and focus groups were used to support the Athena SWAN submissions in April 2014, with key points for action incorporated into the submission action plans. Analysis of the outcomes is ongoing, and will further inform developments for/with women in science in the coming year. On the basis of the experience with Athena SWAN a similar process will be adopted for the University Gender Equality Chartermark award, the process has been clearly identified in the award action plan for 2014.
		Other consultations that included representatives from the researcher community were the Dignity and Respect at Work (DARAW) consultation sessions facilitated by the Equalities Advisor (lead) and Deputy Director of HR during August to December 2013 across the University and to all campuses. Participants included a mix of academics, professional and support staff including equality champions and representatives from the trades unions. Feedback from these sessions has fed into a review and updating of the University's DARAW Policy.
	• To include information about the action plan and assessment in the new induction pack.	As the survey and focus groups for Athena submission were undertaken during 2013 and '14 as well as the CROS survey, it was decided that survey fatigue would prevent a quality of participation. An informal discussion with the Director of Research, Business & Innovation nine researchers from across the University's disciplines was held on 11 November to ascertain awareness of the Concordat and the action plan, and to feed into the strategy for the next 2 years. Completed. Link to induction pack: http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/humanresources/pdfs/researcher-induction-pack-high-def-final-(english).pdf

2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION		
AIM	ACTION	Update December 2014
2.1 To ensure that recruitment and promotion panels are trained on the use of the new e-recruiter system in order to recruit excellent staff within an open and transparent process.	HR to lead the training required for recruitment panels on the e-recruiter system.	Delays in the implementation to the E-recruitment system to ensure that it is synchronised and compatible with the new HR Payroll system (launched August 2014). Back Office role-out is imminent and recruitment panels will be trained in the use of the new system in Spring 2015. Two Training sessions on Recruitment & Selection were run by HR in 2014, and 25 bespoke sessions with individuals or departments were also run.

3. RECOGNITION AND VALUE		
AIM	ACTION	Update December 2014
3.1 To ensure all researchers feel valued and are part of a community at Aberystwyth University.	In conjunction with the development of a Graduate School, to develop a researcher group that includes a social aspect.	The AU Graduate School was established in August 2013 with its own space, which has provided a communal networking space for PG researchers. The Graduate School Website is http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/grad-school/
	To encourage researchers to attend existing University events such as the Research Café by communicating directly to the researcher community via email and, to communicate directly to PIs for them to encourage their researchers to attend.	Research Business & Innovation events are communicated via the Weekly News Bulletin and via an 'all research staff' email, and events targeted at PGRs are communicated via the Graduate School and a dedicated email distribution list. Other events organised for the researcher community include: - Top Tips for Managing your Research Grant, aimed at all PIs and CIs - REF, Impact and University CRIS (PURE) training (196 attendees) - Grants Factory (22 ECRs selected) - Welsh Crucible (promotion event, supporting applicants and 5 AU mid-career researchers attended 3 x 2day workshops in both 2013 and 2014) - Research Ethics training - HPC training - Enterprise training events (36 run in 2013-14) - Climate Change Consortium for Wales lecture series (>1000 attendees over the series) - Funder visits e.g. UKRO visit (68 attendees), JSPS (27 attendees)
3.2 To improve communications	Develop a website that	Researcher Development Concordat web-page set up with links to AU staff development

between the University and the Researcher community.	communicates to researchers and provides information on development opportunities and events.	and Vitae. This is hosted on the Research, Business & Innovation website: http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/research/aber-research/researcher-development/
	To provide an email distribution list to the Research Office and CDSAP of researchers and to regularly update this list.	Email communications are also used for opportunities such as Welsh Crucible. Targeted email groups are now arranged via HR who implemented PoblAberPeople, the HR self service module on the University's Agresso Business World, in August 2014.
3.3 To ensure all PIs and line managers are aware of the Concordat and their responsibilities.	To continue to run the 'Top Tips for Managing Your Research Grant' training, which includes the Concordat and its requirements, four times per annum.	Research Office (commence next phase March '13) 28 November 2012 3 December 2012 5 December 2012 6 December 2012 14 December 2012 3 January 2013 25 June 2013 18 September 2013 15 April 2014 02 December 2014
	To develop a more in-depth course for PIs and line managers in 'Managing Research Staff' in 2013-14.	Research Office and CDSAP (Feb '14). A Meeting of the course development group was held on 10 March 2014. This was not progressed further, but at the October ARCG meeting it was agreed to work with the University's CPD co-ordinator to develop a generic training course for managing staff, and for members of the ARCG to adapt this to be specific for a researcher/PI audience. This will be in the next action plan. HR also run the following training programmes for all managers across the University: • Recruitment & Selection Training • Requirements of the UKBA for NON EEA applicants • Dignity and Respect at Work • Drug and Alcohol Policy • Sickness Absence Management • Pobl Aber People – for managers and administrators • Compendium Training on HR policies and Procedures • Family Friendly policies • Matching and Slotting training • Managing performance at work

| 3.4 Provide a clear and equitable academic promotion criteria and process. | Revised promotions process for SL/Readers and Professorial staff introduced. | A Revised process was implemented and is now in its fourth year of operation (2014/15). Processes are in place for academic promotion; for non academic staff and researchers there is an Accelerated Increments Contribution Points Scheme (AICP). http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/reward-and-recognition/

The Academic Promotions round for 2013 opened with staff being requested to indicate their intention to submit an application for Senior Lecturer, Reader or Chair by 3rd April 2013. The process of assigning a mentor was then undertaken and this culminated in completed applications having to be submitted by no later than 16 September 2013.

The Promotions Panels met on 25th November 2013 and in total considered 42 applications from 35 employees. A number of employees submitted applications for two levels of promotion and each application was considered on merit for each level of promotion.

The quality of applications has improved each year as has the success rate, which increased from 64% to 86% in 2013. The gender split was m:f 74.28%:25.72%, and the success rate equitable.

In November 2013, a review of the process was undertaken within HR to identify lessons learnt and potential improvements that could be made to the process. As a result of this meeting, the following process improvements were identified:-

• To agree a timescale for 2014 that was more realistic to achieve when factoring in other HR commitments such as the AICP process which ran in parallel for 2013;
• To improve the use and design of Sharepoint for voting on applications;
• To amend the appeal process. This was not updated at the time that the new Academic Promotions process was reviewed in 2011 and is therefore out of kilter with the new process;
• To review whether references add sufficient value to the process and if so to reduce the number of references required in any event for Senior Lecturer and Reader down to 2;
• To review the process of giving feedback to applicants and as part of that review to review who provides that feedback;
• To review and combine documentation, where possible, within the process for 2014;

Review of the AICP process (non-academic staff)

Following a review of the process by the AICP panel earlier in 2014, the following changes |

were implemented to the application process:-

- All applicants to complete the same AICP application form;
- Where the application is not submitted by the applicant themselves, it must be clearly stated on the form who completed the form on their behalf;
- A minimum and maximum indicative word limits will be added to the sections on the form;
- The application form will be reformatted to provide separate boxes for each of the awarding criteria. This would
  - focus the application specifically to providing relevant information and
  - make it easier and fairer for the awarding panel to decide on their score;
- All forms should be returned to the originator if they are not fully signed and dated.

The window for receipt of applications for 2014 opened on 1 September 2014 and will close on 28 November 2014.

4. SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT		
AIM	**ACTION**	**Update December 2014**
4.1 To provide planned and structured process through an HEA accredited CPD framework for academic development that will provide a career development route for all academic roles.	• Establish Aberystwyth-Bangor CPD project group to facilitate inter-institutional review, development and implementation. • Commence accreditation discussions with the HEA.	A Project Group has been established. AU is represented by the Chair of the ARCG. Meetings were held on 20.02.13, 21.8.14. A proposed researcher development programme has been developed. An action in the next plan will be its implementation. Approval secured from HEA, in August 2014.
4.2 Ensure effective induction for all research staff.	1. Continue to invite new research staff to the University's induction programme and develop a bespoke induction for research staff. 2. Develop an induction pack for researchers	All new academic appointments receive a one to one induction meeting with a Research Development Officer. Optional Research inductions are also available following on from the University's 'corporate' induction event in March or October. A weekly induction is available to all new staff via the HR department. This covers institutional structure, decision making, SDPR process, probation, health and safety and annual leave recording. This was completed in February 2013. Hard copies were sent to all existing research staff and made available to new starters via the Research Business & Innovation and HR websites (http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/research/aber-research/researcher-development/,

	and provide retrospectively to existing research staff and provide for all new staff.	http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/staff-induction/) and as a hard copy in the induction meetings with RDOs. This document is undergoing an update and the new version should be available, subject to welsh language translation, before Christmas 2014.
4.3 Provide a comprehensive career development programme for all researchers.	Ensure that the Early Researcher Development Programme is linked to the Researcher Development Framework.	Completed. The Handbook is available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/grad-school/docs-handbooks/#d.en.87990 A review of the Probation and Staff Development & Performance Review processes was also undertaken in August 2014 with the outcome that the documentation for both processes would be merged, and the probation periods would be standardised to 12 and 24 months, the latter for academic staff in their first role and therefore includes completion of the PGCTHE.
	Develop a comprehensive Development Programme for all career research grades. Develop in conjunction with Bangor University.	Outline programme has been developed with Bangor. Due to changes at both institutions and committee restructures, this has been delayed, but a draft programme has been developed and the next action plan will include its implementation.
4.4 Ensure effective support for researchers through the development of coaching and mentoring support.	To consider the development of a coaching and mentoring policy and process to support the CPD Framework.	This is being undertaken in conjunction with Bangor University. A joint Coaching and Mentoring Policy has been developed. Ultimately, its implementation (in the next action plan) will encourage mentoring across both Universities. One aspect of mentoring that has been implemented is in relation to post REF2014 submission, that all staff now produce a 3 year Personal Research Plan (PERP) and those who were not submitted are allocated a mentor. The plans and mentorship are monitored by the Institute Directors of Research and the University's Research bi-annual Monitoring meetings with Institutes and Departments.
4.5 Provide career advice and support for research staff.	Become EURAXESS Service Centre	Completed Summer 2013 - http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/research/aber-research/euraxess/
4.6 Ensure that research managers have the skills and confidence to effectively lead and manage teams.	Ensure PIs are included within University initiatives and the University's leadership and management programmes.	All CDSAP Courses are available to researchers, including the Effective Leadership Module, now in its 7th year. Researchers have attended this programme. The annual Welsh Crucible Research Leadership Programme is also open to all mid-career academics and places are gained through a nationally (Wales) run competitive process. Over the past 4 years 20 Cruciblees have attended from Aberystwyth.

5. RESEARCHER RESPONSIBILITIES

AIM	ACTION	Update December 2014
5.1 The University's expectations are clearly communicated and researchers are aware of their responsibilities.	Ensure that these are communicated at recruitment, induction and in the Staff Performance and Development Reviews.	All new staff are invited to a 'corporate' induction event in March or October with an optional research induction session that follows. A weekly induction is available to all new staff via the HR department. This covers institutional structure, decision making, SDPR process, probation, health and safety and annual leave recording. Other initiatives such as the Researcher Induction Handbook, The Research Development Officers meeting with new academics, Top Tips for Managing Your Research Grant training, Personal Research Plans, Project Initiation Management File Meetings (PIMF), End of Project Life Meetings, all contribute to a significant improvement in communication of researcher responsibilities.

6. DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY

AIM	ACTION	Update December 2014
6.1 Ensure that diversity and equality is promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers in the University.	Consider the impact of the removal of a 'normal' retirement age on grant applications and employment beyond normal retirement age to ensure fair decisions.	All staff, regardless of age, have the same opportunities at AU, including applying for research grants.
	Ensure diversity and equality issues are reinforced within the CPD Framework.	AU work to is the HEA accredited framework for recognition on CPD in teaching and supporting learning. The Student Support department run a series of sessions on equality, diversity and disability and, of course, all of AU's CPD provision is sensitive to these issues.
	Apply for the Athena SWAN Bronze award in 2012.	Completed. Awarded in September 2014. The University was also awarded the GEM Award in 2014. The University also received two ticks accreditation for the 12th consecutive year in June 2014

	Promote Athena SWAN awareness and develop departmental awards in SET Departments.	The University appointed two seconded Diversity Champions in 2013 from the researcher community, who help to support the Athena Swan application. A Director of Ethics and Equality was appointed in August 2014. As part of the evidence gathering process for two recent successful ECU Athena SWAN applications, Aberystwyth University ran two focus groups with female members of staff (which included PGR students and postdoctoral researchers) and a promotional campaign was run across the University with posters. There was also a competition for the best photograph that captured the essence of Athena Swan. http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/equality/athena-swan/
6.2 Promote the work and material of Vitae's Equality and Diversity Champion's network.	Recruit a researcher onto the ARCG, and as part of a career development opportunity, to work with the Equalities Officer to promote the work of the Vitae Equality and Diversity Champions network.	The University appointed two Diversity Champions in 2013, one was already a research representative on the ARCG. The University's Equality and Diversity Advisor, who left AU in Spring 2014, was an active promoter of the work of the Vitae Equality and Diversity Champions network. This role has been adopted by the newly appointed Director of Ethics and Equality.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW		
AIM	**ACTION**	**Update December 2014**
7.1 Implement and monitor progress of the Concordat Action Plan with relevant stakeholders.	Ensure that the ARCG monitor the progress of the Concordat Action Plan and communicate progress to the Research Committee on an annual basis. Hold consultation exercises on an annual basis regarding the Action Plan with researchers.	Progress monitored at each meeting. Was not communicated to the Research Committee due to a University Committee overhaul. From 2013/14, all minutes will be submitted to the Research Committee. As mentioned above, various focus groups have been held in relation to Athena Swan and Gem. Specifically in relation to this Concordat , an informal discussion was held by the Director of Research, Business & Innovation (ARCG Chair) and nine researchers on 11 November 2014, which provided valuable input into the action plan for 2014-16
	Ensure consultation with PVC Research, Enterprise and Engagement and also, the University Executive to address the requirements of the University Research Strategy.	Regular consultation between the Chair of the ARCG and the PVCR. The requirements of Researcher Development will be included in the development of a revised research strategy in 2015.
	Review outcomes of the 2013 Researcher Development Survey.	This was communicated to the ARCG, and the key areas of concerns: communication, 'valuing individuals' contribution and system problems have been taken into account for the next phase of this plan.