

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers Annual Report

This is the University of Lincoln annual report on the revised Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (also known as Vitae Concordat).

The University of Lincoln became a signatory of the Vitae Concordat in February 2020. The Vitae Concordat has three defining principles:

- 1) Environment and Culture,
- 2) Employment and
- 3) Professional and career development.

For each of these Principles, the Concordat outlines the key responsibilities of the four main stakeholder groups: researchers, manager of researchers, institutions and funders, in order to improve the employment and support for researchers and research careers in HE.

The University of Lincoln's key objectives for the first year as signatory of the Vitae Concordat were:

- to achieve the HR in Excellence Award by submitting a joint Action Plan for both the HR in Excellence Award and the Vitae Concordat;
- to complete a Gap Analysis regarding research support activity at institutional level,
- to communicate the benefits of the Vitae Concordat to the wide university community and;
- to increase researcher engagement with Vitae Concordat activities.

Research and Enterprise and HR set-up a working group in early 2020. This group has been supported by a larger consultative group formed by researchers at different stages of their career. The consultation group, which currently has 24 members, was heavily involved in the activity described below:

- A survey regarding environment and culture, employment and professional and career development run in August 2020; 83 responses were received; responses from the survey informed our Action Plan;
- A gap analysis regarding environment and culture, employment and professional and career development was conducted. The gap analysis, publicly available on the corporate website, has informed our Action Plan;

- A researcher consultation group was established and met four times during 2020; their contribution was crucial in designing and distributing the survey, increasing awareness of the Vitae Concordat and shaping the Action Plan;
- A section about both the HR in Excellence Award and the Vitae Concordat signatory obligations was added to the corporate website and information about our commitment to the Concordat as a signatory was widely publicised via HR Line, Staff News and PGR-targeted communications.
- The HR in Excellence Award was achieved in December 2020;

We are delighted to confirm that these objectives were achieved during the first year after signing the Vitae Concordat. A detailed account of all the activity can be seen in Appendix 1 below.

The plan for the forthcoming year is to make operational the activity identified in the Action Plan, with the help of both the joint Research and Enterprise and HR working group and the larger, researcher-focused, consultation group.

Key objectives are:

- to increase engagement of researchers to the consultation group up to 30 members;
- running the CEDARS survey (a national survey which would allow us to benchmark against others in the sector) in the summer of 2021. The aim is to increase response rate to up to at least 100 responses;
- increase training offering for early career researchers.

We will also continue working through the different actions identified in the Action Plan: <https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/researchatlincoln/concordatforresearchers/>

Appendix 1	Annual Report – The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers – Detailed activity
Environment and Culture	Four meetings of the researcher’s consultation forum on 27.7.20, 14.08.20, 2.09.20, 9.12.20; Next meeting organised for 25.01.2021. Managers of researchers are encouraging participation and requests have been circulated for additional academics, in particular ECRs to participate in the group. Engagement going forwards to be discussed with the group.
	Established working groups across the University continue to feed into wider policy development. Staff support networks coordinated by JEDI are encouraging participation.
	Website with information about the Concordat: https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/researchatlincoln/concordatforresearchers/
	Survey on research culture run in the Summer 2020 – 83 responses received, and responses fed into action plan.
	Information on the Vitae Concordat has been included in the PGR induction and Academic induction checklist.
	Update to College Research Committees and wider University community to communicate achievement of HR in Excellence Award.
	One Community pledge has been published and principles being embedded into policies and procedures.
	The University’s anonymous reporting system has been implemented and promoted. Further work to consider how to embed into processes and ensure understanding of the purpose and procedure by all employees.
	Regular updates of the University’s wellbeing initiatives are being communicated, including information of the provision of Mental Health First Aiders.
	Email comms have been sent to PGRs containing an overview of the Concordat, signatory responsibilities, and expectations of researchers to ensure career development is a shared responsibility with institutions.
	The Wellbeing and mental health lens on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework is now promoted within the PGR induction to encourage researchers to identify how wellbeing and mental health supports career and professional development,
	PGR Charter has been published on the Doctoral School website and is shared via Doctoral School PGR induction: https://doctoralschool.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/post-graduate-research-student-charter/
	Research Code of Practice was updated in Nov 20 to include reference to the Concordat
Employment	Recruitment and Selection training re-design is underway and includes information regarding the recruitment of researchers.
	Interim appraisal discussion/review of current objectives in 2020/21 to help appraisers support their appraisees to prioritise their key objectives and outputs.
	The commitment to the Concordat and HR Excellence in Research Award action plan has been published on the University’s website. The achievement of the award and further information will be communicated to ensure all researchers and managers of researchers are aware of their responsibilities and the expectations of the University in relation to the Concordat.
	A short-term research only vacancy cover process has been created to attempt to cover gaps of employment contracts for externally funded projects where there is either not enough time left before the end date of a project for external recruitment or cover is required while external recruitment is ongoing.
	Information on the Vitae Concordat has been included in Academic induction checklists, so that managers of researchers and researchers are informed of guidance that is specific to role requirements.
	Doctoral School PGR induction is now mandatory for all PGRs

	School/College PGR admin offices encouraged to regularly review the Supervisor Register to ensure all supervisors' training has taken place and is up to date. Training for new supervisors is now offered by the Doctoral School every two months and refresher training is offered locally at school/college level.
Professional and Career Development	Awareness of the Concordat is being raised through training workshops including management development and the induction event.
	A workshop titled Inclusive Leadership has had the first pilot and another one planned for early February.
	Completion rates of mandatory training continue to be reviewed and reported back to SLT.
	Unconscious Bias training had been delivered to all staff who are part of the REF process.
	Academics are encouraged to participate in the Research Development programme.
	PGRs complete a self-evaluation form at enrolment which is reviewed each year at the same time as the Researcher Development Needs Analysis Annual Report. The Doctoral School record PGR Researcher Development Programme attendance, which is available for PGRs to request to build portfolios.
	Doctoral School has promoted the Horizon pathway programme and industry talks to PGRs provided by Careers and Employability team. Information on these schemes are included in the PGR induction.
	Life beyond PhD events and Enterprise Summer School planned for July 2021.
	Regular email comms sent to the researcher community promoting the Researcher Development Programme and Academic Development Programme to encourage participation, as well as other external training and development opportunities.
	Research First week took place in November 2020 and included sessions on knowledge transfer partnerships, industry engagement, developing external partnerships, Productivity Programme and Innovate UK. The next Research First week will take place in May 2021.
	The Lincoln Institute of Advanced Studies (LIAS) have delivered two online public facing professorial inaugural lectures since November 2020, and are currently in the process of organising one per month throughout 2021. These events allow opportunities for networking and public engagement.