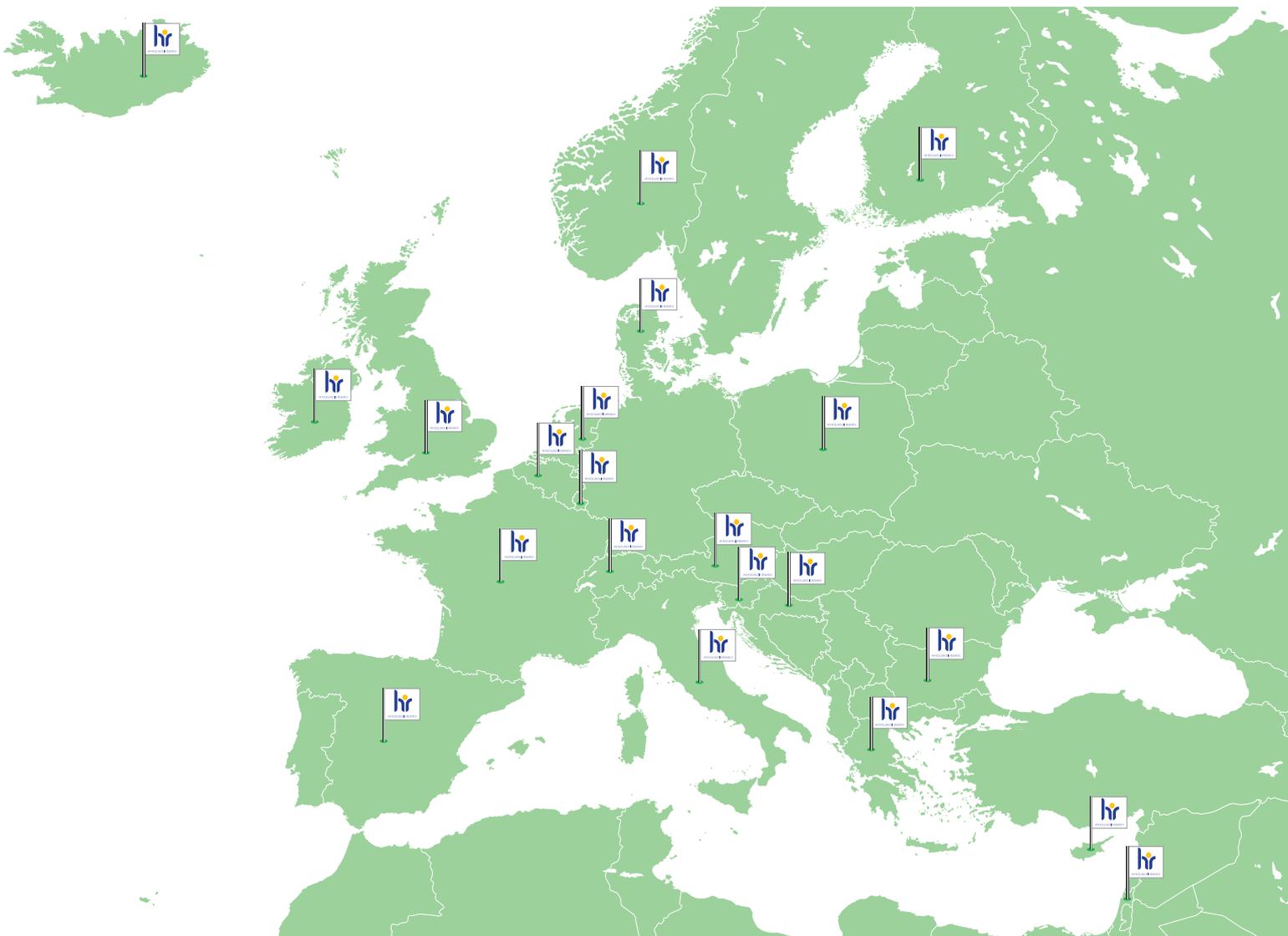


# HR Strategies for Researchers:

A review of the HR Excellence in Research Award  
implementation activities across Europe



## **'HR Strategies for Researchers: A review of the HR Excellence in Research Award implementation activities across Europe'**

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## Executive summary

In 2005 the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code) was launched during the UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It sets out principles that describe the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as those of employers and funders of researchers. This was in recognition that 'sufficient and well-developed human resources in R&D are the cornerstone of advancement in scientific knowledge, technological progress, enhancing the quality of life, ensuring the welfare of European citizens and contributing to Europe's competitiveness'<sup>1</sup>.

The research workforce is highly skilled and makes a substantial contribution to society and the economy. For the higher education sector to continue to attract high quality human capital it is vital that it is seen to offer excellent human resources management (HRM) and strong routes for progression and career development. Therefore ensuring that researchers are well managed and able to fulfil their potential is an important aim of higher education policy. This has been increasingly recognised at policy level, both at European level and in the individual member states.

This report explores how research institutions and funders across Europe are approaching the researcher HRM, particularly in response to the European Commission's initiative to provide the HR Excellence in Research Award for organisations demonstrating their practical commitment to the principles set out in the Charter and Code.

### Purpose and approach

Organisations gain the HR Excellence in Research Award for setting out their progress and plans for implementing the principles of the European Charter and Code. In the UK, institutions map their policies and practice to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers<sup>2</sup>, which was developed to align to the principles of the European Charter and Code<sup>3</sup>. Given the growing significance of researcher HRM, it seemed timely to undertake a wide-reaching review of implementation plans across Europe. The review aimed to compare UK and non-UK implementation strategies and highlight themes, strengths and gaps. In particular the review explored the extent of commonality in implementation across Europe. The seven principles of the Concordat were used as the framework for the review as this formed the mapping basis for the majority of plans included in the exercise.

This review has used institutional submissions to the HR Excellence in Research Award, which were all available on the EURAXESS website<sup>4</sup> at the time of the review in October 2012. The analysis was of published organisation implementation plans and associated public documentation, which provide detailed data on institutional policy and practice and can be scrutinised without making demands on institutions.

The review has sought to surface the strategies that UK institutions use to develop their practice in the light of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and to compare these with the approach taken by equivalent non-UK European institutions, which were guided by the European Charter and Code. The review is based on the documentation available at October 2012 for 61 institutions in the UK that had gained the award and 48 non-UK European institutions. The data was analysed using the data analysis software Nvivo.

In addition, discussions at a range of Vitae events, particularly during 2012, focused on the evaluation of the implementation plans and the potential for a common framework for internal and external reviews. An additional purpose of this review was to explore the feasibility of developing an evidence-based framework for use in future evaluations.

The methodology is discussed in Appendix 1. The main limitation is related to the nature of the dataset utilised. Organisations submit documentation at a particular historical point and this documentation is inevitably a summary of their practice rather than a systematic representation of it. It is therefore likely that a wider range of practice exists in the institutions than has been captured in this review. Furthermore it is also important to recognise that the organisations which hold the HR Excellence in Research Award are unlikely to be typical as they have actively engaged with a process designed to support the development of practice in researcher HRM. This is particularly true in the non-UK institutions as they represent a far smaller proportion of institutions within their national contexts.

### Key findings from the review

There is strong evidence of a high degree of implementation of all the Concordat principles across all of the organisations which have been awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award. While there are some differences between UK and EU institutions, the evidence suggests that within the organisations examined the Concordat and European Charter and Code have driven practice and transformed the nature of researcher HRM.

A number of cross-cutting themes emerge from the analysis and are described in the report. Firstly it is clear from the data that there is strong evidence of organisational engagement with the Concordat and European Charter and Code. Within the organisations that hold the Award there is both a depth and breadth of practice around researcher HRM. A second finding is that the level of engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award varies considerably by nation, with the Award far more popular in the UK than across the rest of Europe. The current high engagement with the process in the UK can be attributed to HR practice being well embedded in institutions, the legacy of funding from RCUK for improving career development for research staff and the leadership and support for implementation provided by Vitae.

We have also found qualitative differences between the UK and non-UK institutions although, given national and organisational differences, there is actually a high degree of consistency across all of the institutions holding the Award. In general, however, the non-UK institutions produced less evidence across the seven principles identified. The categories where the non-UK organisations provided more evidence was in compliance with law and having a code of conduct for researchers. Other key areas of difference included the areas of researcher responsibilities, employer responsibilities, the different legal frameworks and issues relating to researcher mobility.

The review also found that although there was a high degree of consistency in the monitoring of implementation, the level of evaluation tends to be highest where institutions were able to draw on a national infrastructure for evaluation, as they can in the UK. There is room to extend the range of evaluation methodologies that are used in this area.

### Organisational responses to each of the Concordat principles

Principles 1 and 2 of the Concordat are concerned with the formal process of HRM: recruitment; employment contracts; management, recognition and reward. The overwhelming majority of organisations in the sample have shown strong evidence of top level leadership in these areas. However the analysis also demonstrates that implementing these changes is often more complex, and evidence of the commitment to on-going monitoring of these processes is often more patchy.

<sup>1</sup> The European Charter for Researchers. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers Available from [http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/brochure\\_rights/am509774CEE\\_EN\\_E4.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/brochure_rights/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf) [Accessed 26th March 2013].

<sup>2</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat)

<sup>3</sup> Universities UK and Research Councils UK (n.d.) The European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers: A UK HE Sector Gap Analysis. Available from: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/gapanalysis.pdf> [Accessed 24th November 2012].

<sup>4</sup> The Euraxess website is available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/strategy4ResearcherOrgs>.

Principles 3 and 4 are concerned with support and career development. In general these principles were interpreted by organisations as requiring the establishment of professional development programmes. Organisations under review utilised a range of different programmes that encompassed training, advice and guidance, and mentoring. Some organisations had also sought to increase the capabilities of the managers of researchers and to monitor implementation in this area.

Principle 5 is concerned with supporting researchers to take greater professional responsibility for their work and career. This area contains one of the key differences in emphasis between UK and non-UK institutions. While the Charter and Code and the Concordat do cover the same issues, the Charter and Code views this as individual responsibility while the Concordat places strong emphasis on encouraging organisations to provide a facilitative environment for researchers to exercise their responsibilities. Additionally, in the UK issues such as ethics and research integrity are addressed in the Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Research Degree Programmes<sup>5</sup> and are likely to be addressed via contractual arrangements rather than in the HR Excellence in Research action plans. Consequently practice is different with non-UK institutions tending to emphasise issues such as professional responsibility, professional attitude, good scientific practice, rules on co-authorship publishing, the importance of research freedom, the need for engagement with the public, and the importance of behaving in a safe manner. On the other hand, UK institutions tend to try to drive researchers' practice by involving them in institutional decision making and research staff associations and by providing mechanisms for researchers to increase their experience, competencies and profiles.

Principle 6 is concerned with equality and diversity. In general there is a high level of engagement with equality and diversity issues across all organisations. However non-UK organisations tended to focus on gender and disability while UK organisations tended to define equality and diversity more broadly and in line with UK law. It is worth noting that there are significant legal differences across member states in terms of equality and diversity, including the way these issues are monitored. Non-UK institutions generally seek to monitor their diversity and to develop policies both to increase their diversity and to meet their legal obligations in this area. In the UK institutions also seek external recognition for their activities in this area through mechanisms such as the Athena SWAN award.

Finally, principle 7 is concerned with the area of implementation and review. Most institutions have set up processes to manage and monitor the implementation of new policy in this area. The majority have also developed a mechanism to collect data on researchers' experiences. A minority of institutions have also developed mechanisms to enable them to benchmark their practice against the practice of others.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The review suggests that there is a high degree of implementation of all of the principles in the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers across all of the organisations which have been awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award. While there are some differences between UK and non-UK organisational approaches, the evidence suggests that the Concordat and Charter and Code have driven practice and transformed the nature of researcher HRM. It also suggests that those institutions that have been reviewed two years after gaining the Award have deepened their practice and continued to innovate and improve their researcher HRM.

The review also found that the level of engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award varies considerably by nation, with the Award far more evident in the UK than across the rest of Europe and that there are also some differences between UK and non-UK organisational approaches.

Recommendations are as follows:

- **The European Commission, member states and other relevant organisations should consider ways to widen take-up of the HR Excellence in Research process across Europe.** It is clear that for those organisations which have engaged in this process, real progress in implementation of effective HRM for researchers is evident. The current high engagement with the process in the UK can be attributed to HR practice being well embedded in institutions, the legacy of funding from RCUK for improving career development for research staff and the leadership and support for implementation provided by Vitae. The EC and member states should recognise the resources required to implement real change in this area.
- **Vitae should undertake further work with the European Commission, member states and relevant organisations to explore whether the evidence-based framework set out in Appendix 2 could be developed into a framework to underpin the internal and external review process.**
- **Organisations with the HR Excellence in Research Award should publish as fully as possible their implementation plans and success indicators.** Some documentation considered as part of this review lacked detail, possibly suggesting a lack of rigour in the process undertaken by the organisation in question. Given that published information should inform researchers about the working conditions and opportunities at the respective organisation, it is imperative to publish robust and full plans.
- **Relevant organisations should reflect further on the areas where there was less consistent evidence of implementation and identify any further actions needed.** Actions include: establishing research staff associations, developing an institutional policy on researchers' responsibilities, seeking external recognition for equality and diversity, informal benchmarking and sharing good practice, and seeking other external recognition for effective HRM for researchers.
- **Relevant organisations should reflect further on whether more should be done to support researchers' responsibilities.** There was least evidence of implementation against this principle of the Concordat which includes involving researchers in institutional committees and structures, supporting research staff associations and facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profiles beyond the institution.
- **The national level surveys<sup>6</sup> run in the UK were well referenced in monitoring progress and benchmarking. Vitae should work with relevant organisations to consider extending the surveys to run on an international basis.** This would also enable wider monitoring across Europe and enable researchers to highlight issues and concerns that may not currently be visible through the organisationally-led public implementation plans. The surveys were identified in the UK 'Three-year review of the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'<sup>7</sup> as part of an important virtual circle of reinforcing initiatives of improving HEI practice, measuring it through the surveys and identifying further action via the HR Excellence in Research process.
- **It would be useful to have opportunities for organisations with the Award to share practice, particularly where the review highlights differences in approaches.** These areas include employer and researcher responsibilities, specialist development and careers support for researchers, the equality and diversity agenda, and training for research staff to take on supervisory/management roles.

<sup>5</sup> QAA (2012). UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Gloucester: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Available from: [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) [www.vitae.ac.uk/cros](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cros) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) [www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls)

<sup>7</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat)

# Introduction

## European Charter and Code

The Charter and Code were adopted by the European Commission in 2005. The Charter provides a framework for the HRM of researchers and sets out the general principles and requirements which specify the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers as well as those of employers and funders. The Charter and Code contain 40 principles which aim to ensure that the nature of the relationship between researchers and employers or funders leads to successful performance in generating, transferring, sharing and disseminating knowledge related to the career development of researchers. The Charter and Code also promote open and transparent recruitment and appraisal procedures.

## HR Excellence in Research Award

The European Commission has been keen to promote the concrete implementation of the principles of the Charter and Code. As a result, the HR Excellence in Research Award was developed to recognise organisations with a commitment to improving their HR practices for researchers.

There are five stages to undergo in order to gain the Award:

- conduct an internal analysis
- publish an action plan or implementation strategy
- this is then acknowledged by the European Commission via the HR Excellence in Research badge
- after two years a self-assessment is carried out
- at least every four years there is an external assessment.<sup>8</sup>

The HR Excellence in Research badge is awarded to research institutions and funding organisations that have been acknowledged by the European Commission for having made significant progress in implementing the Charter and Code. The logo can be displayed on the organisation's website to demonstrate their commitment to fair and transparent researcher HRM. Funding organisations can also use the logo to increase their visibility. The first European organisations received the HR Excellence in Research Award in March 2010.

In the UK, a UK-wide process enables HEIs to gain the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award. The UK process incorporates both the QAA Quality Code for Research Degree Programmes and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers to enable institutions that have published Concordat implementation plans to gain the HR Excellence in Research Award. The UK approach includes on-going national evaluation and benchmarking.

A particularly distinctive element of the UK process is the involvement of Vitae, which works closely with the Concordat Strategy Group to manage the Award and support institutions' engagement with it.

## UK context

Successive UK governments have made a connection between high quality university research and economic growth. Research remains critically important both in terms of these economic arguments and in terms of broader ambitions to advance knowledge, develop societies and discover truth. It is important to remember in all discussions about the value of research that it is undertaken by a specialised workforce of researchers. This research workforce can be managed well or badly, and the skills of researchers can be developed and utilised effectively or otherwise.

Current UK practice in researcher HRM has been influenced by more than a decade of policy and initiatives in this area. In 1996 the first 'Concordat'<sup>9</sup> was created to provide a framework for the career management of contract research staff. There followed the creation of the Research Careers Initiative (RCI), which was established in 1997 under the Chairmanship of Professor Sir Gareth Roberts, to monitor progress towards meeting the commitments of the 1996 Concordat and to identify and encourage good practice in the career management and development of contract research staff<sup>10</sup>. This initiative was given greater policy support (and funding) following the publication of SET for Success in 2002<sup>11</sup>. There is now a considerable history of government and research funders working with HEIs to develop the human capital of research staff and postgraduate researchers, and to improve the practice of HRM for the research workforce. An important milestone in this process was the launch of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers<sup>12</sup> (Concordat) in 2008, which provided UK HE with a strong statement of the principles that should underpin researcher HRM. Vitae was launched alongside the Concordat and has played a major role in leading the implementation.

## Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The Concordat<sup>13</sup> aims to increase the attractiveness and sustainability of careers in UK higher education by providing an unambiguous statement of the expectations and responsibilities of researchers and their managers, employers and funders. It has seven principles:

- Principle 1: Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.
- Principle 2: Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.
- Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.
- Principle 4: The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.
- Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

<sup>8</sup> Vitae (2010). Higher Education Institutions' Strategic Responses to the Concordat. Available from: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Concordat-HEIstrategicresponses-Sept-2010.pdf> [Accessed 24th November 2012].

<sup>9</sup> Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (1996). A Concordat to Provide a Framework for the Career Management of Contract Research Staff in Universities and Colleges. London: CVCP.

<sup>10</sup> DTI (2003). The Research Careers Initiative. London: Department for Trade and Industry.

<sup>11</sup> Roberts, G. (2002). SET for Success: The Supply of People with Science, Engineering and Technology Skills. London: HM Treasury.

<sup>12</sup> RCUK (2008). The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Swindon: Research Councils UK (RCUK).

<sup>13</sup> ibid

- Principle 6: Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.
- Principle 7: The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

The Concordat aligns closely with the broader European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (Charter and Code). Indeed a detailed analysis of the Charter and Code was undertaken as part of the revision of the Concordat to ensure that it was possible to map the two onto one another effectively<sup>14</sup>.

In the UK the Concordat has been crucial in realising the ambitions of the policy agenda around researchers' careers. This can be demonstrated by the large number of research institutions and funders that are signatories to the Concordat and the widespread recognition of its importance. For example Daley argues that the Concordat can support the building of bridges between different professional groups around the development of research capacity and human capital<sup>15</sup>. In 2009, BIS launched the UK Action Plan for researcher mobility and careers within the European Research Area<sup>16</sup>, also highlighting the importance of the Concordat.

A clear process for evaluating the Concordat was put into place soon after its launch and managed by the Research Concordat Strategy Group (RCSG). The RCSG initially agreed six benchmarking projects, which focused on institutional approaches, the experiences of research staff, the view of principal investigators, understanding the research cohort, reviewing the use of fixed-term contracts and the funders' response to the Concordat.<sup>17</sup> This evaluation approach has continued to be developed through implementation and evaluation activities<sup>18</sup> which have generally found evidence that there is an improving picture of implementation and development across the seven principles.

Most recently a Vitae three-year review of the implementation of the Concordat argued that it was having a significant impact across the sector.<sup>19</sup> The review highlighted a large number of areas in which the HRM of researchers had changed positively since the launch of the Concordat. However, it flagged some concerns about the consistency of implementation between institutions and the extent to which researchers themselves are driving their own career development. The review also highlighted the importance of national and European initiatives in sustaining institutional momentum in this area. It particularly identified the HR Excellence in Research Award as a positive influence on practice as well as a focus for institutional strategies around researcher HRM.

This report will further explore these reviews of implementation using data gathered through the HR Excellence in Research Award to examine the details of HEI practice in this area.

## Purpose of the review

Given the high levels of engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award in the UK, and a range of discussions at conferences and events about future strategy for the Award, Vitae decided to undertake a wide-reaching review of implementation plans across Europe. The review aimed to compare UK and non-UK implementation strategies and highlight themes, strengths and gaps. In particular the review explored the extent of commonality in implementation across Europe. The issue of comparability was important to explore given that UK organisations are using the Concordat as a framework while those outside the UK are using the European Charter and Code. The seven principles of the Concordat were used as the framework for the review as this was the format for the majority of plans included in the exercise.

In addition, various discussions on the evaluation and review of the implementation plans have raised the potential for a common framework against which internal and external reviews could take place. This was discussed at a range of Vitae events and a series of draft indicators were produced by the Vitae Research Staff Development Advisory Group. An additional purpose of this review was to explore the feasibility of developing an evidence-based framework for use in future evaluations.

## Key findings from the review

This section presents a summary of the main findings of the review. Further detail relating to each of the principles can be found in subsequent sections. The key overall finding is that there is considerable evidence of a high degree of implementation of all of the principles of the Concordat across all of the organisations which have been awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award. While there are some important differences between UK and non-UK holders of the Award, there is strong evidence to suggest that the Concordat and Charter and Code have driven practice and transformed the nature of researcher HRM in the organisations under review.

This section begins with a brief overview of practice that has been identified in each of the Concordat principles, before moving on to explore some cross-cutting themes.

### Organisational responses to each of the principles

Principles 1 and 2 of the Concordat are concerned with the formal process of HRM: recruitment; employment contracts; management, recognition and reward. The overwhelming majority of organisations in the sample have shown strong evidence of top level leadership in these areas. However the analysis also demonstrates that implementing these changes is often more complex and evidence of the commitment to ongoing monitoring of these processes is often more patchy.

Principles 3 and 4 are concerned with support and career development. In general these principles were interpreted by organisations as requiring the establishment of professional development programmes. Organisations reviewed were creating a range of different programmes that encompassed training, advice and guidance and mentoring. Some organisations had also sought to increase the capabilities of the managers of researchers and to monitor the implementation in this area.

<sup>14</sup> Universities UK and Research Councils UK (n.d.) The European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers: A UK HE Sector Gap Analysis. Available from: [www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/gapanalysis.pdf](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/gapanalysis.pdf) [Accessed 24th November 2012].

<sup>15</sup> Daley, R.A. (2010). Building bridges on shifting sands: the challenges facing research managers and administrators in supporting researchers. In: Hooley, T., Kent, R. and Williams, S. Hard Times? Building and Sustaining Research Capacity in UK Universities, ARMA Occasional Paper 5: 29-34.

<sup>16</sup> BIS (2009). UK National Action Plan: On researcher mobility and careers within the European Research Area. Available from [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migrated/publications/r/researcher-uk-national-action-plan.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/migrated/publications/r/researcher-uk-national-action-plan.pdf) [Accessed 26th March 2013].

<sup>17</sup> See Vitae (2012) Implementation: knowledge Building. Available from: [www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/520161/Implementation-knowledge-building.html](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/520161/Implementation-knowledge-building.html) [Accessed 24th November 2012].

<sup>18</sup> See Vitae (2012). Measures of Progress for the Concordat. Available from [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-Review-of-progress-of-the-Concordat-implementation-programme-2012.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-Review-of-progress-of-the-Concordat-implementation-programme-2012.pdf) [Accessed 24th November 2012].

<sup>19</sup> Mellors-Bourne, R. (2012). Three-year review of the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Cambridge: Careers Research & Advisory Centre (CRAC).

Principle 5 is concerned with supporting researchers to take greater professional responsibility for their work and career. This area contains one of the key differences in emphasis between UK and non-UK plans. While the same content appears in both the Charter and Code and the Concordat, the Charter and Code views this area through the lens of individual responsibility while the Concordat emphasises encouraging organisations to provide a facilitative environment for researchers to exercise their responsibilities. Additionally, in the UK issues such as ethics and research integrity are addressed in the Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Research Degree Programmes<sup>20</sup> and likely to be addressed via contractual arrangements rather than in the HR Excellence in Research action plans. Consequently practice is different with non-UK institutions tending to emphasise issues such as professional responsibility, professional attitude, good scientific practice, rules on co-authorship publishing, the importance of research freedom, the need for engagement with the public, and the importance of behaving in a safe manner. On the other hand UK institutions tend to try to drive researchers' practice by involving them in institutional decision making, research staff associations and providing mechanisms for researchers to increase their experience, competencies and profiles.

Principle 6 is concerned with equality and diversity. In general there is a high level of engagement with equality and diversity issues across all organisations. However non-UK organisations tended to focus on gender and disability while UK organisations tended to define equality and diversity more broadly and in line with UK law. It is worth noting that there are significant legal differences across member states in terms of equality and diversity including monitoring. Institutions are generally seeking to monitor their diversity and to develop policies both to increase their diversity and to meet their legal obligations in this area. In the UK institutions are also seeking external recognition for their activities in this area through mechanisms such as the Athena SWAN award.

Finally, principle 7 is concerned with the area of implementation and review. Most institutions have set up processes to manage and monitor the implementation of new policy in this area. The majority have also developed a mechanism to collect data on researchers' experiences. A minority of institutions have also developed mechanisms to enable them to benchmark their practice against the practice of others.

## Cross-cutting themes

A number of cross-cutting themes emerge from the analysis. The key themes identified are: evidence of organisational engagement with the Concordat and Charter and Code; variable national levels of engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award; differences between the UK and non-UK institutions; monitoring, evaluation and review. Each of these themes will be discussed in the following sections.

## Evidence of organisational engagement with the Concordat and Charter and Code

There is very strong evidence in all the documentation submitted for the HR Excellence in Research Award that all participating organisations have reviewed and taken action against all seven of the Concordat principles. The codebook for the review (Appendix 2) provides a consolidated list of practices that have been adopted across the sample. It is clear that not all organisations have developed practice in all possible areas identified by the codebook, but all have taken some action against each of the principles. Some organisations may have existing practice in place that was not mentioned in their implementation plans and documentation.

In fact practice reported across all of the institutions was remarkably consistent. There were only five areas in which less than 50% of institutions mentioned that particular practice. These areas were: establishing research staff associations, developing an institutional policy on researchers' responsibilities, seeking external recognition for equality and diversity, taking part in informal benchmarking and sharing of good practice, and dealing with legal compliance issues. The lack of comment could be explained by new areas of development, optional extras or may simply be issues that were too obvious for some institutions to report. Overall there is strong evidence of consistency and institutional engagement with all areas of the Concordat.

In the case of the non-UK participants in the review, the organisations holding the HR Excellence in Research Award make up a relatively small proportion of European institutions and cannot necessarily be said to represent broader practice. They therefore provide a useful set of case studies of practice that can be used to engage other institutions in the Award and more generally in practice development around researcher HRM.

In contrast the UK organisations holding the Award make up a far higher proportion of UK HE. Furthermore the practices that are described in these submissions ally closely with those adopted by a wider range of UK HEIs and other organisations in response to the Roberts<sup>21</sup> agenda, the Concordat and related policies and drivers. While it is likely that this dataset contains some of the institutions that are most enthusiastically engaged with the Concordat, the range of practice broadly echoes that described in other research on practice in this area.<sup>22</sup> It is therefore possible to see these results as providing promising evidence of the implementation of the Concordat and Charter and Code.

## Variable national levels of engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award

The review clearly indicates a variable level of national engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award. The review was undertaken in October 2012. At this point, after the 61 UK institutions, the levels of engagement dropped off sharply with only Belgium, Croatia and Norway having five or more organisations holding the Award. While this finding does not necessarily mean that the quality of researcher HRM is any lower outside of the UK, it does at least raise a question about the level of awareness of the Award and by extension the Charter and Code across Europe as a whole.

In the UK it is clear that the HR Excellence in Research Award has reached a sufficient level of brand recognition with higher education organisations to ensure a high level of engagement. The fact that the UK has been able to achieve this is undoubtedly a result of the high profile of the Award, the funding that has been associated with it in recent years and the existence of the central infrastructure and community of practice that has been created by Vitae and RCUK.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Add link Roberts, G. (2002). SET for Success: The Supply of People with Science, Engineering and Technology Skills. London: HM Treasury.

<sup>22</sup> For example see Haynes, K. (2011). Analysis of university responses on career development and transferable skills training and changes in 2010/11. Available from: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/researchcareers/2011analysis.pdf> [Accessed 25th November 2012].

## Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

While there are a number of differences in emphasis between the published versions of the Concordat and the Charter and Code, it is also important to note that these do actually carry through into some notable differences in practice. However, given the different policies, levels of development of researcher HRM, higher education systems and broader policy and economic environments, the level of consistency between all participants within the dataset is remarkable.

In general, however, the non-UK organisations produced consistently less evidence across all seven principles identified. The only specific categories where the non-UK participants provided more evidence than their UK counterparts were in the areas of compliance with the law and having a code of conduct for researchers. The Concordat only relates to one legal jurisdiction so has less emphasis on working across legal boundaries.

Key areas where there seemed to be more substantive difference were as follows.

- **Researcher responsibilities.** The European Charter emphasises the responsibilities of the researcher more strongly than the Concordat, with corresponding emphasis on the machinery that exists to define these responsibilities such as providing a code of ethics or knowledge of legal and contractual issues or professional conduct and protocols around intellectual property and publication. These areas are likely to be covered during induction processes in UK organisations and therefore may not have been highlighted as areas for action in the HR Excellence in Research action plans.
- **Employer responsibilities.** Although the Concordat sets out employer responsibilities, there are important differences of emphasis with the European Charter and Code devoting more space to the recognition of international experience and qualifications, the health and safety of research premises, working conditions and social security arrangements. The Concordat also emphasises what the organisation can do to engage and support the researcher to meet their responsibilities, whereas the Charter and Code places more emphasis on the individual's responsibilities.
- **Legal issues.** Since the European Charter and Code operates across multiple jurisdictions, it invites organisations to consider issues of compliance with EU and nation state law. This is clearly not an issue within the Concordat, which operates within a single legal jurisdiction. A UK gap analysis and mapping exercise revealed that the UK has no legal compliance issues with respect to the European Charter and Code. UK organisations were therefore unlikely to discuss this in their plans as it is not perceived as a live issue.
- **Mobility issues.** The Charter and Code has a stronger focus on expanding European researcher mobility than the Concordat. This is reflected in frequent discussion by non-UK organisations on making online recruitment processes available in English and through the EURAXESS website.

## Monitoring, evaluation and review

While there was strong evidence of investment in the monitoring of the implementation of the Concordat and Charter and Code, there was less evidence of systematic evaluation of the impact of implementation. Where this existed, it generally focused on identifying the researcher experience and was frequently driven by the existence of national evaluation infrastructure such as the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS). This nationally-led practice was most in evidence in the UK due to the aforementioned surveys. To strengthen the drivers further, the Research Excellence Framework, which assesses research quality in UK institutions to allocate funding, now also includes reference to the Concordat<sup>23</sup>. There was very limited evidence of undertaking broader institutional evaluations which might, for example, have explored the costs and benefits of the institutions' practices around researcher HRM.

The process of reviewing practice after initial implementation seems to be an important indicator of innovative and developing practice. In the UK ten universities retained the HR Excellence in Research Award following their two-year review in January 2013<sup>24</sup>. These universities provided a wider range of evidence for their implementation than average and demonstrated a commitment to continue to develop this practice in the future. They demonstrated a consistently wide set of evidence across all seven categories and were substantially above average in the categories of recognition and value, equality and diversity and implementation and review. For many of the organisations participating in the review there is a strong record of consistent energy and investment in researcher HRM.

<sup>23</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/ref](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/ref)

<sup>24</sup> Included: Aston University, Cardiff University, Heriot-Watt University, Newcastle University, Queen Margaret University, University of Edinburgh, University of Exeter, University of Reading, University of Salford, University of York

# Principle 1: Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection is of central importance to both the Concordat and Charter and Code. This was reflected in the level of detail provided by organisations when applying for the HR Excellence in Research Award.

Five key themes were identified in institutions' responses to this principle. These were: reviewing recruitment processes; increasing the number of positions that are openly advertised; training staff on recruitment panels, monitoring and reporting on recruitment; taking action to reduce or reframe the way that fixed-term contracts operate. In general, implementation was high across all of these themes although only around half of the organisations had engaged with monitoring and reporting on recruitment and addressing fixed-term contracts.

Table 1 below gives a summary of the total number of universities and research institutes and research funders who made reference to the five themes.

**Table 1: Review against Codes for Principle 1: Recruitment and Selection**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Reviewed recruitment processes</b>			
Universities and research institutes	92 (90%)	3 (3%)	95 (93%)
Research funders	7 (100%)	0	7 (100%)
<b>Training staff on recruitment panels</b>			
Universities and research institutes	55 (54%)	12 (12%)	67 (66%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Increased the number of positions that are openly advertised</b>			
Universities and research institutes	56 (55%)	15 (15%)	71 (70%)
Research funders	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	7 (100%)
<b>Monitor and report on recruitment</b>			
Universities and research institutes	44 (43%)	9 (9%)	53 (52%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)
<b>Action taken addressing fixed-term contracts</b>			
Universities and research institutes	47 (46%)	14 (14%)	61 (60%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)

## Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

The Charter and Code emphasises slightly different issues to the Concordat in the area of recruitment and selection. The most important difference is the strong focus on European researcher mobility. Non-UK European institutions tended to include discussion of activities such as recognising other nations' qualifications, recognition of mobility experience through valuing gaps in CVs, promoting jobs internationally especially through the EURAXESS website and the provision of job adverts and recruitment websites in English as well as the native language. Much of this focus was not apparent in the UK institutions' plans.

## Reviewed recruitment processes

Almost all universities or research institutes had reviewed (90%) or were in the process of reviewing (3%) recruitment processes, this included all UK universities.

Practice in this area included having published guidelines for the whole recruitment process, with grade profiles and job descriptions for all researcher jobs on the HR website, consulting with unions when making changes and promoting equality of opportunity. A number of institutions had or were in the process of creating an e-recruitment platform.

All of the research funders indicated that they had reviewed recruitment processes although this involved applicants seeking funding and was not always related to individual recruitment. All mentioned that they used experts and some kind of external review process and included minimum requirements and criteria in all adverts.

Examples of practice include:

- Bath Spa University which publishes a full suite of grade profiles or role descriptors for all types of staff on its website. It has also created recruitment guidelines to help managers to recruit effectively and promote equality of opportunity throughout the recruitment process.
- Medical University Graz: their internal analysis revealed a weakness in their recruitment practices. Subsequently they developed new recruitment guidelines through the examination of job applications, structured interviews with applicants, decision matrices according to weighted criteria, specialisation area and personality tests as well as case studies to examine leadership competences and the handling of equal opportunity. Following the review all relevant job adverts were published in English and placed on the EURAXESS website.

## Training staff on recruitment panels

A total of 54% said that further training in this area had been implemented and a further 12% are in the process of training staff on recruitment panels. Institutions were typically encouraging staff to involve at least three people in selection panels, including a representative from HR, having a gender balance on panels and creating a policy/guideline for recruitment panels to adhere to, including external experts as well as training all staff involved in the process. Three of the research funders indicated that they had implemented staff training for recruitment panels.

Examples of practice in this area include:

- The Copenhagen Business School which has assessment committee guidelines which stipulate that an external representative should be included as member of the panel.
- The University of Surrey provide training for all staff involved in recruitment and monitor the training of participants. Staff are referred to the Code of Practice on recruitment and HR provide support throughout the process.

## Increased the number of positions that are openly advertised

55% of universities and research institutes said they had increased the number of positions that were openly advertised and another 15% were in the process of working towards this. In the UK practice involved increasing the number of job adverts advertised externally and through academic journals/professional journals and www.jobs.ac.uk. A number of institutions (six UK and 25 European) mentioned using the EURAXESS website. Outside the UK most practice involved widening access by making job adverts available in English, making all job adverts available externally on both the institutional and EURAXESS website and advertising in relevant journals/ professional magazines. 86% of research funders had already increased the level of open advertising and 14% were in the process of doing so.

Examples of practice in this area include:

- The Institute of Public Finance publish vacancies in the Official Gazette of Croatia, on the Institute's Internet pages, in daily newspapers and on the Euraxess website to encourage wider recruitment.
- St Andrews University have completed a number of measures to attract the best researchers to the institution. Their strategic plan states its aim is to appoint, develop, reward and retain excellent and internationally competitive researchers. Their recruitment guidelines specify that selection committees must reflect the diversity of applicants. In addition researcher posts are graded using the HERA job evaluation scheme to ensure that they offer competitive salaries to attract the best staff.

## Monitor and report on recruitment

Of the 102 universities and research institutes reviewed 43% said they monitored and reported on recruitment and 9% had plans to develop this. Most monitoring tended to be focused on equality and none of the organisations mentioned specifically monitored researchers' recruitment except the University of Sheffield. 43% of research funders already monitor and report on recruitment and 14% plan to do this in the future.

Examples of practice in this area include:

- The Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) has recently completed a thorough reform of its selection procedure, by restructuring the existing selection panels and creating a specific panel for interdisciplinary research. They also intend to continue to monitor and evaluate the adaptations and use the results to make further developments.
- The University of Manchester: recruitment procedure is discussed on an annual basis as part of the Faculties and Professional Support Services performance review. Recruitment procedure is also discussed at the Equality and Diversity Forum, of which the trade unions are members. Measure of success: changes in the make-up of the University population, including increases in the numbers of women and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BMEs).

## Action taken addressing fixed-term contracts

46% of universities and research institutes said they had taken action and a further 14 were planning to take action to reduce or reframe fixed-term contracts. Good practice in this area involved confirming that all researchers on fixed contracts had the same rights as permanent contract holders, posts only being advertised as fixed term if necessary and extra support being provided in career development and redundancy/redeployment, and bridging loans when research contracts end. Similarly one research funder had reviewed the impact of fixed-term contracts on researchers' careers and two more were currently looking at this area.

Examples of practice include:

- The University of Aberdeen recently changed its policy on the use of fixed-term contracts so that they are only used in limited and justifiable circumstances; researchers employed on fixed-term contracts are treated equally to other staff. The institution's surveys of researchers on fixed-term contracts demonstrate that researchers believe that they are treated equally to other staff.
- The University of Exeter jointly agreed a strategy with the trade unions in 2009 which aims to achieve a significant reduction in its reliance on fixed term contracts; open-ended contracts should be the normal employment arrangement at the University; and fixed-term contracts should only be used in specifically defined circumstances as defined in the agreement.

## Principle 2: Recognition and value

Recognising and valuing researchers is clearly an important feature of the Concordat and European Charter and Code but a slightly different emphasis is given to each. Three key themes were identified around institutions' responses to this principle from the Concordat. These were: developing, reviewing and implementing appraisal procedures; monitoring staff satisfaction and engagement; and reviewing pay and progression of researchers. In general there was strong evidence of implementation across this principle, although there were a large number of institutions who did not monitor staff satisfaction and engagement.

**Table 2: Review against Codes for Principle 2: Recognition and Value**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Developing, reviewing and implementing appraisal procedures</b>			
Universities and research institutes	80 (78%)	11 (11%)	91 (89%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)
<b>Monitoring staff satisfaction and engagement</b>			
Universities and research institutes	57 (56%)	1(1%)	58 (57%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Reviewed pay and progression of researchers</b>			
Universities and research institutes	102 (100%)	0	102 (100%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	0	5 (71%)

## Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

Most UK HEIs mentioned the importance of appraisal but also described activities beyond this to foster staff engagement. For the Charter and Code the main area for recognising researchers was through the more fundamental level of providing appropriate working conditions and social security support; there appeared to be little engagement outside activities of the Charter and Code. All institutions with implementation plans across Europe placed a great deal of importance on the pay and conditions of researchers, although the Greek submission did raise concerns about deteriorating pay and conditions for all academic staff as a result of the financial issues in Greece at the time of the review.

## Developing, reviewing and implementing appraisal procedures

A total of 78% of universities and research institutes mentioned having an appraisal system in place and 11% said they were developing appraisal systems. The majority of appraisals are generic for all staff and not specifically tailored to researchers, but often involve an element of training and professional development for the researcher. Only one research funding organisation mentioned having a policy on staff appraisals. One area of concern for HEIs was that researcher participation in appraisals was perceived as being low. In the UK this has often been highlighted by the CROS survey, which this has led HEIs such as the University of Central Lancashire to actively set targets to increase researcher engagement in appraisals.

Examples of practice include:

- The University of Central Lancashire uses Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to support all researchers and to provide a framework for appraisers.<sup>25</sup> Training is also provided for all appraisers and annual appraisals and regular performance review meetings are compulsory for all staff.
- In 2011 the University of Strathclyde combined their appraisal and development processes into a new Accountability and Development Review (ADR) scheme. The new ADR aims to ensure that all researchers participate in a formal performance management review on an annual basis; it promotes researchers' personal and career development and lifelong learning. New reviewers of the ADR are offered training in providing strategies for setting and agreeing objectives, providing feedback and identifying appropriate development support. The ADR process is supported by the University of Strathclyde Researcher Development Programme, which was developed in conjunction with Vitae's Researcher Development Framework.

## Monitoring staff satisfaction and engagement

56% of universities and research institutes mentioned activities to monitor staff satisfaction and engagement and one institution had plans to develop more monitoring. Three research funders had also developed practice in this area. There are a number of different approaches to staff satisfaction: some organisations see it as part of the appraisal system, some hold regular surveys, others engage with staff at a departmental level or committee level and others hold annual meetings. The main approaches in the UK were participation in the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)<sup>26</sup> and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS)<sup>27</sup> and an annual employee survey or staff symposia; outside the UK the main mechanism was an annual staff survey or staff event.

Examples of practice include:

- IKERBASQUE (Basque Foundation for Science) gathers the opinion annually of all the researchers that have applied to their calls for papers. The objective of this survey is to monitor the satisfaction of the applicants and to drive improvements in their HR strategy. The survey specifically requests information relating to the recruitment process (procedure, conditions, information, communication).
- At the University of Newcastle research staff opinion is sought via the CROS survey and reports and recommendations are made via university committees. Research staff are also consulted directly through a mailing list and through their representatives on the Research Staff Working Party.

## Reviewed pay and progression of researchers

All the HEIs across Europe had undertaken some kind of review of the pay and progression of researchers. Only one research funder mentioned promoting an appropriate level of pay for researchers. In the UK almost all HEIs mentioned adhering to the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) scheme or role profile in determining pay and progression. When HERA was not used, one approach was to use a library of generic research roles (based on the National Library of Academic Role Profiles) to structure posts at the appropriate level. Non-UK HEIs had also all reviewed pay and progression although not all were in a position to increase salaries.

Examples of practice include:

- City University where a full review of research staff terms and conditions has been undertaken in consultation with the staff union (UCU). The review sought to provide greater clarity in the employment experience of this group of staff. An aim of this process has been to achieve consistency with the terms and conditions of academic staff.
- Edinburgh Napier University adopted the HERA guidelines for grading structure through negotiation with unions and key stakeholders. They also produce clear guidelines and criteria for promotion and progression as well as publishing pay scales of academic staff and senior staff on their website. The HR department also offers annual role re-grading opportunities for all staff including research staff.

## Principles 3 and 4: Support and career development

Support and career development was a major issue for most of the HEIs that received the HR Excellence for Research Award. It was less clearly articulated by research funders who are less directly involved with the progression of individual researchers in most cases.

Six key themes were identified around institutions' responses to this principle. These were: supporting the induction of new staff; providing support for career and professional development; offering access to careers advice and guidance; mentoring, supporting principal investigators/managers to increase their understanding of career development; putting processes in place to monitor and measure the take-up of career and professional development. There was strong evidence of implementation across all of these themes although as with other principles there were a minority of institutions that did not address the specific monitoring of this principle.

**Table 3: Review against Codes for Principles 3 and 4: Support and Career Development**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Induction of new staff</b>			
Universities and research institutes	68 (67%)	16 (16%)	84 (82%)
Research funders	4 (57%)	1 (14%)	5 (71%)
<b>Offering a career and professional development programme for research staff</b>			
Universities and research institutes	86 (84%)	16 (16%)	102 (100%)
Research funders	6 (85%)	1 (14%)	7 (100%)
<b>Offering access to careers advice and guidance</b>			
Universities and research institutes	63 (62%)	37 (36%)	100 (98%)
Research funders	0	2 (29%)	2 (29%)
<b>Mentoring activities</b>			
Universities and research institutes	54 (53%)	20 (20%)	74 (73%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)
<b>Supporting PIs/managers to increase their understanding of career development</b>			
Universities and research institutes	55 (54%)	23 (23%)	78 (76%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Measure the take-up of career and professional development</b>			
Universities and research institutes	46 (45%)	18 (18%)	64 (63%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)

<sup>25</sup> See Vitae (2012) Research Development Framework. Available from: [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf) [Accessed 24th November 2012].

<sup>26</sup> For further information about CROS visit [www.vitae.ac.uk/cros](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cros)

<sup>27</sup> For further information about PIRLS visit [www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls)

## Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

Although the career development of researchers was clearly of central importance to all European institutions, there were some differences. In the UK induction programmes are beginning to be developed specifically tailored to researchers' needs whereas in the non-UK institutions the normal practice was for inductions to be aimed at all staff rather than being designed specifically for researchers. The UK institutions also had in place specific programmes for the development of researchers, informed by the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. Comparably, in non-UK institutions, beyond the developing of teaching skills, the emphasis was usually on generic training offered to all staff. In the UK most HEIs offer some kind of professional careers advice to researchers, whereas outside the UK it tended to be provided by supervisors or mentors. Mentoring activities using a third party were also well developed in the UK, whereas across the rest of Europe nearly all mentoring involved supervisors and was less prevalent.

### Induction of new staff

Two thirds (67%) of HEIs had an induction programme for staff and 16% were in the process of implementing one. Four of the research funders held some form of induction for researchers and another funder was in the process of implementing. Thirteen organisations from the UK had either developed or were developing a specific induction programme for researchers or creating a dedicated web page for this. Most organisations held a central induction and/or a departmental induction scheme which was compulsory for all staff.

Examples of practice include:

- The University of Liverpool has developed an online induction for new research staff. This provides new starters with an institutional overview, including information about the university, its history and its plans for the future. There is information on health and safety as well as the key areas of the university that support researchers. Built into the programme is guidance on the importance and process of induction locally.
- The University of Salzburg has established a specialised researchers' training scheme, consisting of a 'Welcome Day', a number of seminars introducing new employees to relevant topics such as basic knowledge on University-law, the acquisition of external research funds and good teaching practice.

### Providing support for career and professional development

All HEIs were either in the process of developing (16%) or had already developed (84%) a career development programme for researchers. Thirty six UK HEIs mentioned a specific programme for researchers and most of these related their programme to the Researcher Development Framework and to Vitae. In the rest of Europe there is a stronger emphasis on treating all staff equally so career development is offered to researchers in the same way as other staff.

All research funding organisations were either implementing (15%) or had already developed (85%) a funding mechanism for the professional development of researchers. Funding organisations differed in the approach taken to the provision of career and professional development. Some sponsored schemes or programmes to support researchers' career development, others provided a specific training bursary or imperative as part of their funding package, while others sought to use research funding to encourage the employers of researchers to build progression pathways that supported career and professional development.

Examples of practice include:

- Queen Mary offers many opportunities for career development. The Learning Institute organises activities and workshops that are tailored to meet the specific needs of research staff across the College. The programme seeks to empower researchers to improve their current working experiences and make informed career plans and choices. Consultancy and support is also offered in the form of individual and group sessions for research staff who would like to pursue a career in research and those who are considering careers outside academia and/or research.
- The University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) have a centrally-organised continuing education programme, which is offered each semester, comprising various courses and workshops to improve key skills in academic work and teaching, research methods and interpersonal and management skills. All BOKU employees have equal access to the training programme. The HEI also offers a range of internal curricula to develop and professionalise teaching, project management and leadership within the institution. An e-learning centre provides support to all teachers. In line with the 'blended learning' concept, the virtual learning environment complements the traditional teaching and learning methods.

### Offering access to careers advice and guidance

Just under two thirds (62%) of HEIs were offering access to career guidance or were intending to implement it (36%). Two research funders were also in the process of developing a careers advice service for researchers. In the UK ten universities mentioned specific tailored careers guidance for researchers from the careers service. At Cardiff University they had used Roberts funding to fund careers advice for researchers and were maintaining this provision while exploring sustainable ways of delivery once the funding had ended. In Europe most but not all of careers advice was delivered as part of a broader mentoring process by supervisors and not by trained careers advisers.

Examples of practice include:

- De Montfort University initially used Roberts funding to fund independent careers advice for research staff from the career development centre. This has since been core funded by the University as part of the Directorate of Student and Academic Services.
- At the University of Aston the remit of the University's Careers Service has been widened to include the provision of careers advice tailored to research staff.

### Mentoring activities

Fifty three percent of HEIs had developed mentoring activities and 20% were in the process of doing so. This included all UK institutions however the majority of mentoring was carried out by research supervisors or line managers. Five of the research funding organisations have developed some kind of mentoring for researchers and one other is in the process of developing this. In the UK the majority of mentoring was carried out by the direct supervisor or PI with 16 institutions mentioning a mentoring scheme separate to direct management responsibilities. Examples of practice in this area include:

- The Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb (INANTRO): young researchers are appointed with mentors, who are responsible for monitoring their mentee's development and scientific career; the mentors are chosen by the INANTRO's Scientific Council.
- The University of St Andrews and Dundee University are running a joint Early Career Academic Mentoring Scheme, which ensures that researchers are supported in developing their careers through a variety of possible career paths. The two universities run a successful cross-institutional mentoring scheme.

## Supporting PIs/managers to increase their understanding of career development

Fifty four percent of the HEIS had developed some kind of support for managers of researchers and 18% were developing support. Three funding organisations mentioned some kind of support and they were all non-UK organisations.

Examples of practice include:

- The Foundation for Polish Science supports researchers through the MISTRZ programme whereby distinguished scholars combine research with training and mentoring younger staff. The careers of their trainees are one of the assessment criteria in that programme. Candidates' experience in supervision and team management are taken into account in all the programmes addressed at senior researchers. The Foundation has also created a special programme dedicated to developing those skills.
- Kings College, University of London: King's already requires that all academics responsible for supervising postgraduate researchers undergo regular training to ensure that they are familiar with current developments in policy, procedure and best practice with regard to research degree supervision. A similar workshop will be offered to academics responsible for line managing research staff (Principal Investigators). The Researcher Development Unit in conjunction with Human Resources and the Academic Schools will develop a programme of training to include information on: recruitment and selection procedures, policies pertaining to the use of fixed-term contracts, pay, grading and promotion, appraisal and support for researchers, including information on personal, professional and career development.

## Measuring the take-up of career and professional development

Just under half (45%) of universities and research institutes had some kind of monitoring of career development in place and (18%) were in the process of developing this. In most cases the monitoring is completed by HR, is included in appraisals and used to inform future training activities. Five funding organisations mentioned already having a monitoring approach and one was intending to implement this.

Examples of practice include:

- At the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA) each doctoral candidate or postdoctoral fellow benefits from personalised support to develop his or her professional objectives. Each INRA research centre has a local HR office that can assist doctoral candidates and postdoctoral fellows with this approach and, if necessary identify the most appropriate interlocutors (Division Head, INRA careers office); all training is monitored by committees. In addition a system exists to monitor junior researchers during their first year of employment.
- Heriot-Watt University have introduced a new electronic booking database system, which has improved the flexibility offered to researchers in managing and recording their career development activities. This data is being analysed and provides a clearer picture of researcher development across the University. The new reporting system is expected to lead to a better understanding of the development needs of researchers and to an improved service to researchers.

## Principle 5: Researchers' responsibilities

Although both the European Charter and Code and the Concordat include discussion of researcher responsibilities, this is the widest area of divergence both in terms of the focus of the frameworks and the practice that was reported in submissions for the HR Excellence in Research Award. The European Charter and Code has a sharper focus on individual researcher responsibilities whereas the Concordat emphasises how the organisation can empower the researcher to take control of their development and career. This is demonstrated by the principles in the Charter and Code, which deal with issues such as professional responsibility, professional attitude, good scientific practice, rules on co-authorship publishing, the importance of research freedom and the need for engagement with the public. The Charter and Code is far more explicit about the requirement of researchers to behave in a safe manner and to comply with health and safety requirements. Interestingly both at a European level and in the UK two new Concordats on research integrity deal with a number of similar researcher responsibility issues<sup>28</sup>.

Five key themes were identified around institutions' responses to this principle. These were: facilitating staff to take on a wider role; establishing research staff associations; including research staff in institutional committees and structures; developing a policy on researcher responsibilities; and facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profiles. This was the principle where the level of implementation was lowest, although much of this is accounted for by the differences in emphasis between the Concordat and Charter and Code discussed above. Only a minority of institutions had developed research staff associations, just under half had policies on researcher responsibilities and a large number did not evidence practice around supporting researchers to build their profile and experience or inclusion of researchers in institutional decision making. This may therefore be a key area for emphasis in future initiatives concerning researcher HRM.

**Table 4: Review against Codes for Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Facilitating staff to take on a wider role e.g. teaching &amp; supervision</b>			
Universities and research institutes	62 (61%)	10 (10%)	72 (71%)
Research funders	0	1 (14%)	1 (14%)
<b>Research staff associations</b>			
Universities and research institutes	20 (20%)	2 (2%)	22 (22%)
Research funders	0	0	0
<b>Research staff included in institutional committees and structures</b>			
Universities and research institutes	54 (53%)	9 (9%)	63 (62%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Policy on researcher responsibilities</b>			
Universities and research institutes	47 (46%)	2 (2%)	49 (48%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	2 (29%)
<b>Facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profile beyond the institution</b>			
Universities and research institutes	49 (48%)	10 (10%)	59 (58%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	2 (29%)

<sup>28</sup> European Science Foundation (ESF) (2011). European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Strasbourg: ESF. And Universities UK (2012). The Concordat to Support Research Integrity. London: Universities UK.

## Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

Non-UK European institutions tend to emphasise the responsibilities of the researcher more strongly than the Concordat with corresponding emphasis on the mechanism that exists to define these responsibilities. Both UK and non-UK institutions clearly value training but there is little mention of developing supervisory or management roles for research staff from either group. There is evidence of wider staff engagement in the UK through the development of research staff associations and a greater focus on involving research staff in decision making than in non-UK institutions. Furthermore there is little attention to monitoring in this area in non-UK institutions. However, far more non-UK institutions have developed specific policy on researcher responsibilities.

## Facilitating staff to take on a wider role e.g. teaching and supervision

61% of the universities and research institutes indicated that they supported researchers to take on wider teaching roles and 10% were intending to implement this. In both the UK and non-UK institutions the vast majority of extra responsibilities involved teaching and not supervision. In the UK 20 institutions mentioned some kind of postgraduate teaching qualification accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Interestingly a small number of institutions also reported that doctoral researchers were struggling to complete their research due to their excessive teaching commitments.

Examples of practice include:

- At the University of Aberdeen the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) provides advice and support for all aspects of research, learning, teaching and assessment. The Centre brings together researcher development and the Centre for Learning and Teaching. As part of a range of resources to support academic practice, the CAD offers courses and workshops that help to prepare research staff for teaching roles covering areas such as small group teaching, assessment, teaching methods and personal development planning. To prepare for an academic role, research staff may undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Learning and Teaching. The Programme is validated by the University of Aberdeen and accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).
- Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) uses its Center for the Promotion of Teaching to provide workshops for improving teaching skills (all new faculty members have to attend at least one workshop during their first semester). There is an Online Teaching Evaluation Survey at the end of each semester. The institution also recognises excellent teaching through an annual award process. Recently, a significant excellence in teaching prize was established.

## Facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profile beyond the institution

Almost half (48%) of the universities and research institutes were developing researchers in this way and a further 10% said they intended to implement this. Good practice usually concerned disseminating research or professional development of researchers, and included presenting and attending conferences and exchange visits (particularly in non-UK institutions). Only one of the research funders, The Austrian Science Foundation, mentioned offering funding for this kind of activity and they did this by providing travel allowances for researchers as funding. One further funder was developing this kind of practice. Other practice in this area included:

- Goldsmiths University is a centre for the EU Lifelong Learning Erasmus programme, which aims to widen the student and staff experience through foreign exchange. There is an Enterprise Office which promotes researcher involvement in knowledge exchange schemes and wider activities combining the university, commercial and public sectors.

- At the Institute of Public Finance in Croatia researchers are encouraged to participate in and attend international conferences; as well as attending workshops and seminars all researchers are encouraged to exchange scientific knowledge and information.

## Research staff associations

Twenty UK universities mentioned having a research staff association with a further two institutions developing them. Some institutions have developed online forums for researchers such as the University of Reading which has established a networking website for research staff as well as a research staff committee and association. The Vitae Research Staff Conference is held annually to facilitate and support this. No European universities, institutes or funding organisations mentioned having developed or supported research staff associations. This may be because it was not stipulated in the Charter and Code and was therefore not reported in documentation submitted for the HR Excellence in Research Award. Even so, it is likely that the activities of both Vitae and the UK Research Staff Association have stimulated the development of research staff associations in the UK.<sup>29</sup>

## Practice in this area includes:

- The University of Glasgow supports researchers in developing a sense of community through funding staff associations, peer support networks, seminars, conferences and networking lunches.
- Plymouth University has created a number of staff associations to foster engagement between researchers and the wider university. Researchers have forums for discussion – Research Staff Forum (instigated in 2008), Early Career Academics Forum (instigated in 2010), the two staff forums merged in 2011 into the current Researcher Forum, which is open to all research staff, early career academics and staff supporting researchers. The Postgraduate Research Students Forum (instigated in 2005) operates via the Postgraduate Society. Each Forum reports to the Research and Innovation Committee and Graduate Committee through their representatives.

## Research staff included in institutional committees and structures

Just over half of the HEIs (53%) mentioned involving researchers in wider university management structures and 9% were in the process of implementing this. Three funding organisations mentioned involving researchers in decision making. This was more common in UK institutions although some UK HEIs stressed that responses to their CROS survey had revealed uneven researcher representation and they were taking steps to address this. Outside the UK there was less discussion of involvement of researchers in institutional structures and little monitoring.

Examples of typical practice in this area includes:

- At the Institute of Education (IOE), University of London, all research staff are eligible to participate in all committees with many having places reserved for research staff. The Research Careers Advisory Committee (RCAC) focuses on research staff concerns.
- The Research Council of Norway encourages researcher involvement and wider staff involvement in institutional decision making. Employee participation is enshrined in national law in Norway.

<sup>29</sup> See Vitae (2012). UK Research Staff Association. Available from: [www.vitae.ac.uk/ukrsa](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/ukrsa) [Accessed 25th November 2012].

## Policy on researcher responsibilities

Just under a half (47) of the universities and research institutes had a policy on researcher responsibilities and two were developing one. One research funder mentioned having a policy and one funder was developing a policy. One non-UK institution mentioned the Concordat on research integrity, which is a very recent development. Typical practice in this area includes:

- The University of Crete has created a rule book for researcher responsibilities which includes a web page for information and guides documenting rights and responsibilities of researchers.
- At the University of Edinburgh the Code of Good practice has been replaced with the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Code.

## Principle 6: Diversity and equality

The Concordat and Charter and Code both see promoting and monitoring of equality and diversity as being central to their activities. In UK institutions this is a clearly enshrined national priority which covers all areas of equality. Outside the UK the equality and diversity focus is on equality issues relating to gender and disability and as a framework for preventing discriminatory behaviour amongst staff. Although there is evidence that some organisations monitor and have policies covering a range of equality issues, this was not reflected in all of the documentation. A number of non-UK organisations had identified gender balance as an issue and taken action to remedy this, for example through the provision of flexible working.

Three key themes were identified in relation to institutions' responses to this principle. These were: monitoring equality and diversity; equality and diversity policies; seeking external recognition. There was strong evidence of implementation across this principle although not all institutions had sought external accreditation for their activities in this area.

**Table 5: Review against Codes for Principle 6: Diversity and Equality**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Monitoring equality and diversity</b>			
Universities and research institutes	78 (76%)	8 (8%)	86 (84%)
Research funders	4 (57%)	0	4 (57%)
<b>Equality and diversity policies</b>			
Universities and research institutes	78 (64%)	4 (4%)	82 (80%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)
<b>Seeking external recognition</b>			
Universities and research institutes	40 (39%)	10 (10%)	50 (49%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)

## Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

Both the UK and non-UK organisations had a clear interest in equality issues and well developed policies on this area. In addition the surveys of staff mentioned in the HR Excellence submissions generally indicated that most staff believed that their institutions promoted and believed in equality and diversity. However the main difference was that UK organisations had to publish detailed policies and monitoring on a wide range of protected characteristics<sup>30</sup>, whereas in other European countries the focus tended to be on gender and disability only. There was little evidence from outside the UK of institutions seeking any kind of external recognition or participating in any other kind of equality programme or initiative.

## Monitoring equality and diversity

76% of HEIs mentioned having some kind of equality monitoring in place and 8% were developing this. In the UK it was mentioned by all institutions, unsurprisingly as it is compulsory and part of UK law. All institutions mentioned that they had a strong commitment to equality and this was embedded in all their practice. Non-UK organisations more typically only monitored gender and disability with a few also monitoring ethnicity. A number of HEI staff surveys found that staff believed their institution did not discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender, age, ethnic, national or social origin. However, some organisations mentioned small numbers of female staff in senior research positions. Four of the research funders mentioned monitoring equality in some way and one was in the process of carrying this out. The organisations that monitor for equality purposes do so at the point of providing funding as it would be problematic for them to monitor staff they do not employ. They only discuss monitoring gender and disability and have little to report on monitoring ethnicity.

Examples of practice include:

- City University offers strong evidence in this area through its policies and procedures for monitoring equality and diversity as well as a single equality scheme and an equality and diversity strategy. They use evidence from the CROS survey to find out whether their research staff believe the university is committed to equality and diversity. According to the most recent survey their staff overwhelmingly believe this to be the case.
- The University of Salzburg monitors equality and diversity through its own policies and has put in place procedures to monitor and evaluate schemes to improve diversity; it has a Council on Discrimination which meets to discuss these issues.

## Equality and diversity policies

The figures for equality and diversity policies were very similar to those for monitoring with 76% of HEIs mentioning having implemented and 4% of HEIs being in the process of implementing. Again all UK institutions had policies on equality. In non-UK European countries the level of detail varied greatly with some institutions citing national and local policies e.g. the Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health mentioned the National Gender Equality Act, the Constitution, the Elimination of Discrimination Act, the University Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics, while others stated that they did not discriminate since it was enshrined in their laws and policies. Five research funders had a policy and a further one mentioned developing a policy. Focus tended to be on offering equality of opportunity, receiving funding and in the recruitment process.

## Seeking external recognition

Seeking external recognition for equality was mentioned by 39% of HEIs and a further 10% had this in development. In the UK, practice centred around the Athena SWAN initiative. Only one research funder mentioned seeking external recognition for its equality and diversity practice and this was FWO, which had been involved in the creation of a European Alliance for Research Career Development (EARCD), looking specifically at raising women's level of participation in research. Practice in this area includes:

- In 2010 Queen Mary, University of London, successfully renewed its Bronze Athena SWAN Award for excellence in recruiting and advancing the careers of women in science, engineering and technology (SET).
- Cardiff University achieved a bronze award for the institution as a whole under the 2009 Athena SWAN scheme. The judges were particularly impressed by the Positive Working Environment initiative and were pleased to see that the University's flexible working policies go beyond the legal requirements. They also expressed special interest in the Women Professors' Group and the Innovation Network. The University's Athena SWAN Steering Group continues to meet and monitor progress; many of the STEM departments are now seeking awards at departmental level.

<sup>30</sup> www.ecu.ac.uk/law/equality-act

## Principle 7: Implementation and review

All the European institutions examined are committed to developing their approach to implementation and review. Every institution had created some kind of working/implementation group involving senior staff representatives. However, the level of detail provided varies considerably. In some cases all that is reported is a commitment to review practice without any detail as to how this is to be achieved. In other cases organisations describe current practice, identify issues, give detail of who is responsible for further development and provide a timetable of when it will be reviewed and achieved. As with other discussion in this review, this variation in reported practice could be related to the level of detail that has been published, rather than what has actually happened.

Six key themes were identified concerning institutions' responses to this principle. These were: monitoring the implementation; collecting and using data on researchers' experience; informal benchmarking and sharing of good practice; seeking external recognition; publishing implementation plans and progress reports; and legal compliance. There was strong evidence of implementation across this principle although many institutions had not engaged with sharing practice or external benchmarking.

**Table 6: Review against Codes for Principle 7: Implementation and Review**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Monitoring the implementation of the Concordat/European Charter</b>			
Universities and research institutes	98 (96%)	1 (1%)	99 (97%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	0	5 (71%)
<b>Publishing implementation plans and progress reports</b>			
Universities and research institutes	75 (73%)	21 (21%)	96 (94%)
Research funders	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	7 (100%)
<b>Collecting and using data on researchers experiences</b>			
Universities and research institutes	81 (79%)	5 (5%)	86 (84%)
Research funders	3 (42%)	0	3 (42%)
<b>Informal benchmarking and sharing of good practice</b>			
Universities and research institutes	28 (27%)	2 (2%)	30 (29%)
Research funders	3 (42%)	0	3 (42%)
<b>External recognition and input</b>			
Universities and research institutes	18 (18%)	0	18 (18%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)
<b>Legal compliance</b>			
Universities and research institutes	45 (44%)	0	45 (44%)
Research funders	6 (85%)	0	6 (85%)

### Differences between UK and non-UK institutions

Both UK and non-UK HEIs demonstrated a strong level of commitment to the process of implementation and review. Overall there was clear evidence that the practice of researcher HRM was being transformed across all organisations that had engaged with the HR Excellence in Research Award. A key difference between UK and non-UK institutions was the higher level of surveying of and consultation with researchers which was reported in the UK. Central to this is the existence of a national infrastructure for evaluation through CROS, PIRLS, PRES and other national level research. In non-UK institutions only institutional staff surveys were mentioned as a way of undertaking this kind of evaluation. Another major difference is the discussion of legal compliance issues, which is covered in further detail below.

### Monitoring the implementation of the Concordat/European Charter and Code

96% of the universities and research institutes reviewed mentioned monitoring the implementation of the Charter and Code and 1% said they were in the process of doing this; it is likely that the other 3% have set up some kind of monitoring which they have not mentioned in the documentation. In the UK all organisations mentioned monitoring and reviewing the implementation. A number also mentioned continuing to use CROS and PIRLS to aid monitoring.

However, there was not a uniform approach to monitoring; all organisations formed some kind of implementation/working group e.g. Concordat Implementation Group (CIG). In general these working groups report to senior personnel within institutions and engage with key stakeholders. The make-up of the groups and the level of monitoring varied, with some organisations having much larger implementation/working groups involving all departments and some having more limited approaches. There were marked differences in the level of consulting with some organisations monitoring all researchers and some cascading monitoring to senior staff who would report issues from their staff; this could also be a reflection of the size of institution and number of research staff, as the research institutes tended to be much smaller than the universities.

The detail of the gap analysis also varied with some presenting detailed percentages on numbers of staff who agreed that the organisation was meeting the principles and others just showing the gaps identified from the analysis. For funding organisations five explicitly mentioned monitoring the implementation of the Concordat or Charter and Code. All research funders mentioned that in order to monitor fully they had to contact the organisations receiving the funding to fully monitor the process. Self-assessment of the measures would be monitored every second year and their HR strategies updated accordingly, identifying new measures and committing to holding an external evaluation every four years. Part of the process involved identifying which internal group or level would be responsible for monitoring, the funder or the organisation receiving the funding.

Examples of practice include:

- The University of York has established a Concordat Steering Group comprising institutional senior leaders, which provides direction and authority to an implementation group which seeks to drive and review the implementation of the Concordat.

### Publishing implementation plans and progress reports

Nearly all the universities and research institutes under review mentioned that they had either published (73%) or were in the process of publishing (21%) all documentation relating to their implementation of the Concordat and Charter and Code. This included all UK based institutions. However as noted earlier there was a level of inconsistency in the quality and level of publishing, with some only publishing the implementation plan. All organisations had published the original implementation plan documentation (a requirement of the HR Excellence in Research Award) and made a commitment to continue to further develop researchers' careers and publish the results.

All the research funders reviewed mentioned that they had either published (29%) or were in the process of publishing (71%) all documentation relating to the HR Excellence submission. All institutions had published their implementation plans and of the 71% who indicated they had not published all of their documentation, this related to progress reports that they were in the process of publishing as part of the ongoing process of review. There was inconsistency in the quality and level of publishing. Good practice in this area included making all documentation available on the institution's website including, a copy of the Concordat/Charter and Code, the declaration of support, internal analysis, gap analysis, action plan and further internal and external evaluations, and where possible a short summary of each, all linked to the EURAXESS website.

## Collecting and using data on researchers' experiences

79% of universities and research institutes had gathered views on researchers' experiences through a survey and 5% said they were in the process of doing this. This indicates that most institutions used a bottom-up process of implementing the Charter, where all research staff were surveyed first. A number of UK institutions mentioned either using or intending to use the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) (32) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey PIRLS (22) surveys in the future. The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) was also mentioned by two UK universities as being used for monitoring. The majority of UK institutions mentioned an annual staff survey. Three of the research funders mentioned gathering views of researchers but none expressed plans to do so in the future. This is a reflection of the fact that these funders often do not employ staff but provide funding to organisations that do. Examples of practice in this area include:

- The University of Huddersfield is committed to becoming a research intensive institution by 2020 and aims to use the Concordat to demonstrate exemplary levels of support for researchers well before then. To achieve this they have been implementing the principles of the Concordat as a framework of good practice for the management of all researchers and their careers, including research-only employees on short contracts, part-time staff and all other research active academic staff. In support of the Research Strategy 2011-2020 a university-wide gap analysis was conducted over a period of eighteen months with the support of the University Research Group, the Research and Enterprise Directorate and the Staff Development section of HR. The meetings with these stakeholders have involved researchers, senior academic staff, service heads and research administrators, as well as support staff with expertise in skills development and training. Detailed information from 118 research staff has been collected through participation in the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2011, which has also produced essential benchmarking data.
- The Institute of Economics, Zagreb (EIZ), used the results of the staff survey to create a ten-year development strategy entitled EIZ 2021: A Framework for Development, which was framed around the Charter and published on their website.

## Informal benchmarking and sharing of good practice

27% of the universities and research institutes mentioned some kind of informal benchmarking and a further 2% indicated they would seek to benchmark in the future. In this context eight UK organisations mentioned being part of a Vitae Hub network. Three of the research funders indicated that they had created informal benchmarking to share good practice.

Examples of practice include:

- The University of Cambridge engages with many external organisations which support researchers, including Vitae, the League of European Research Universities and the European Commission's HR Strategy Group, as well as with employers. The University aims to support their own researchers and also to help influence the wider national, EU and international environments.
- In Italy in 2008 the University of Camerino started what later became the Camerino Group; this is composed of ten Italian universities: University di Camerino, Foggia, Palermo, Padova, Udine, Ferrara, Urbino, Verona, Scuola Superiore di Sant'Anna di Pisa, Piemonte Orientale-Vercelli, all concerned with promoting the Charter and sharing good practice.

## External recognition and input

Only 18% of universities and research institutes and one of the research funders mentioned seeking external recognition. Two institutions mentioned seeking recognition through the Times Higher Award in the UK (Manchester University, Queen Mary University of London), and two organisations mentioned being included in the Vitae database of practice. The University of Aberdeen mentioned the Concordat in relation to gaining their Investors in People Award.

Examples of practice include:

- The University of Strathclyde will continue to engage with Vitae nationally and with the Scotland and NI Hub, and the Universities Scotland Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Researcher Training Sub-Committee.
- The Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) demonstrated good promotion of the Charter and seeking external recognition through the Belgium trade unions by organising a debate with the Flemish Government, employer federations and the Flanders Research Foundation (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen – FWO). The title of the debate was 'Male/female researcher wanted, career lacking stability' ("Onderzoeker gezocht m/v, loopbaan onzeker"). The starting point for the debate stemmed from two items from the European Charter for Researchers to be guaranteed by employers: employment contracts providing greater stability and the guarantee of a fair salary and equitable social security entitlements.

## Legal compliance issues

44% of research institutes and universities mentioned legal compliance issues and six research funders included this. These consisted almost entirely of non-UK institutions; legal compliance is a principle of the Charter and Code but was not included in the Concordat. The UK is a single legal jurisdiction and an earlier gap analysis and mapping revealed no legal issues for the UK. However outside of the UK a small number of organisations include legal compliance as a concern.

Some examples of issues related to this area are:

- Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health indicated that they were attempting to define the status of postgraduate researcher to the Ministry in Croatia.
- French law no. 94-665 of 4/08/1994, the so-called Toubon Law relative to use of the French language – Article 11 – requires the organisation of competitive examinations in the French language.
- University of Crete, many research grants are subject to programme-specific requirements, which means that the Research Committee cannot make general rules. This legal formalism, coupled with cutbacks in educational and research resources, means there are limited options for reform at institutional level. In addition, recognition of the research profession within Greek universities does not correspond to the EC descriptors for researchers.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The review suggests that there is a high degree of implementation of all of the principles in the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers across all of the organisations which have been awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award. While there are some differences between UK and non-UK organisational approaches, the evidence suggests that the Concordat and Charter and Code have driven practice and transformed the nature of researcher HRM. It also suggests that those institutions that have been reviewed two-years after gaining the Award have deepened their practice and continued to innovate and improve their researcher HRM.

Additionally the review found that the level of engagement with the HR Excellence in Research Award varies considerably by nation, with the Award far more evident in the UK than across the rest of Europe, and that there are some differences between UK and non-UK institutions.

Recommendations include:

- **The European Commission, member states and other relevant organisations should consider ways to widen take up of the HR Excellence in Research process across Europe.** It is clear that for those organisations which have engaged, real progress in implementation of good HRM for researchers is evident. The current high engagement with the process in the UK can be attributed to that HR practice was already well embedded in institutions, the legacy of funding from RCUK for improving career development for research staff and the leadership and support for implementation provided by Vitae. The EC and members states should recognise the resources required to implement real change in this area
- **Vitae should undertake further work with the European Commission, member states and relevant organisations to explore whether the evidence-based framework set out in Appendix 2 could be developed into a framework to underpin the internal and external review process**
- **Organisations with the HR Excellence in Research Award should publish as fully as possible their implementation plans and success indicators.** Some documentation considered as part of this review lacked detail which could also suggest a lack of rigour in the process undertaken by the organisation. Given the published information should inform researchers about the working conditions and opportunities at the respective organisation, it is imperative to publish robust and full plans
- **Relevant organisations should reflect further on the areas where there was less consistent evidence of implementation and identify any further actions needed,** these include: establishing research staff associations, developing an institutional policy on researchers' responsibilities, seeking external recognition for equality and diversity, informal benchmarking and sharing good practice and seeking other external recognition for good HRM for researchers
- **Relevant organisations should reflect further on whether more should be done to support researchers' responsibilities;** there was least evidence of implementation against this principle of the Concordat. This includes involving researchers in institutional committees and structures, supporting research staff associations and facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profiles beyond the institution
- **The national level surveys<sup>31</sup> run in the UK were well referenced in monitoring progress and benchmarking. Vitae should work with relevant organisations to consider extending the surveys to run on an international basis.** This would also enable wider monitoring across Europe and enable researchers to highlight issues and concerns that may not currently be visible through the organisationally-led public implementation plans. The surveys were identified in the UK 'Three-year review of the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers'<sup>32</sup> as part of an important virtual circle of reinforcing initiatives of improving HEI practice, measuring it through the surveys and identifying further action via the HR Excellence in Research process.
- **It would be useful to have opportunities for organisations with the Award to share practice,** particularly where the review highlights there are differences in approaches. These include employer and researcher responsibilities, specialist development and careers support for researchers, the equality and diversity agenda and training for research staff to take on supervisory/ management roles

<sup>31</sup> CROS, PIRLS etc details in full

<sup>32</sup> [www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/concordat)

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## Appendix 1: Review Approach

This review has used institutional submissions to the HR Excellence in Research Award to explore the implementation of the Concordat and European Charter and Code for researchers. These submissions offer detailed data on institutional policy and practice and can be scrutinised without making demands on institutions. The review has sought to surface the strategies that UK institutions have used to develop their practice in the light of the Concordat and to compare these with the approach that has been taken by equivalent non-UK European institutions.

The review is based on the public documentation provided by 61 institutions in the UK that have gained the award and 48 non-UK European institutions. This has proved to be a rich dataset that is able to provide considerable information about how effectively institutions have embedded the principles of effective researcher HRM that are contained within the Concordat and Charter and Code. The research has also used this data to help identify areas where further support and resources may be needed and to make further recommendations that might inform future evaluation of the Concordat.

### The sample

Data was gathered from the EURAXESS website in October 2012 on 61 UK universities, research councils and research institutions and 51 similar organisations from Europe, who currently hold the HR Excellence in Research Award. Of the HR Excellence Award holders, three were discounted due to missing or incomplete documentation<sup>33</sup> so 48 non-UK organisations were included in the review.

The 48 European organisations reviewed included six research funders, 12 research institutes and 30 universities. The UK institutions reviewed included 58 universities, two research institutes and one research funder. The organisations which have received the Award are diverse. Table a provides a breakdown of UK HEIs by Mission Group and demonstrates that a wide range of different types of institution are included in the sample although the research intensive universities are particularly strongly represented.

**Table a: UK Institutions by Mission Group**

UK Institutions by Mission Group	Number of Institutions
Russell Group	21
1994 Group	11
University Alliance	8
Million +	4
Other Universities	14
Research Institutes	2
Research Funders	1

Table b provides a breakdown of the sample by the number of researchers employed by each institution.

**Table b: UK Institutions by Number of Researchers Employed**

UK Institutions by Researchers Employed (Excluding SFC)	Number of Institutions
0-500	12
501-1000	14
1001-2000	18
2001-5000	13
5000+	3
Total	60

A total of 144 documents were reviewed for the analysis. Although most institutions had combined all their submission documents into one document, some had chosen to publish a series of documents. Key documents that were analysed included gap analyses, mapping documents, benchmarking documents, implementations plans/action plans, key policies and updating/progress documents. This included a number of two-year reviews of organisations who initially achieved the Award in 2010 and were renewing in 2012. The majority of organisations which hold the HR Excellence Award have published all relevant documents although a small number of UK institutions have only made their implementation plan available, so reducing the data available for analysis.

### Analysis approach

The data were analysed using the data analysis software Nvivo. Nvivo was chosen as it was developed by researchers to support the detailed analysis of large amounts of qualitative data from varied sources.<sup>34</sup> The review involved three stages which were: developing the codebook; coding the data; and analysis and reporting.

### Developing the codebook

An initial codebook was devised based on the seven principles of the Concordat. Further breakdown analysis was added through a short initial review of key documents<sup>35</sup> and discussions with experts within the Vitae team.

The draft codebook was tested on eleven pilot institutions (ten universities and one research institute). Following the pilot, the codebook was revised to ensure that codes accurately reflected the practices revealed in the data. This led to the addition of new codes. The codebook was then discussed with Vitae and final changes made. It was decided from the initial review that the codebook would combine principles three and four as they covered overlapping areas. The full codebook is available as Appendix 2.

<sup>33</sup> University of Primorska, Bern University of Applied Sciences and the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies.

<sup>34</sup> For example Gibbs, G. (2002). *Qualitative Data Analysis: Explorations with NVivo (Understanding Social Research)*. Buckingham: Open University Press.; Hutchison, A. J., Johnston, L. H., & Breckon, J. D. (2009). Using QSR NVivo to facilitate the development of a grounded theory project: an account of a worked example. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13(4): 283-302; and Lewis, R.B. (2004). NVivo 2.0 and ATLAS.ti 5.0: A comparative review of two popular qualitative Data-Analysis programs. *Field Methods*, 16(4): 439-464.

<sup>35</sup> Mellors-Bourne, R. (2012). *Three-year Review of the Implementation of the Principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*. Cambridge: CRAC. Available from [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-Concordat-three-year-review-report-April-2012.pdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Vitae-Concordat-three-year-review-report-April-2012.pdf) [Accessed 7th October 2012]; Vitae (2012). *Additional universities gain the European Commission recognition for researcher development*. Available from: [www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/375-569771/Additional-universities-gain-the-European-Commission-recognition-for-researcher-development.html](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/375-569771/Additional-universities-gain-the-European-Commission-recognition-for-researcher-development.html) [Accessed 5 October 2012]; Vitae (2012). *Review of the UK implementation of the HR Excellence in Research Awards process, benefits to institutions and next steps*. Available from [www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/UK%20HR%20Exc%20in%20Res%20Award%20review%20and%20benefits%20June%202012.pdf.544381.download](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/UK%20HR%20Exc%20in%20Res%20Award%20review%20and%20benefits%20June%202012.pdf.544381.download) [Accessed 7th October 2012]; and Vitae (2012). *Exploring the HR Excellence in Research strategy and external evaluation process*. Paper for IEG meeting, June 2012. Unpublished.

## Coding the data

Once the codebook had been created and reviewed, the full dataset was analysed. During this process the codebook was amended where further codes were required to analyse the data. Codes were also created to identify whether an activity had been implemented or was in the process of implementation. One of the challenges of this dataset was that data were created at historically different points. This meant that some HEIs made commitments to implement actions at a time that had passed by the time of the review. However, regardless of when an action plan stated that an action would be completed, the activity was marked as in the process of implementation, as there was no way of verifying whether this plan had actually been put into practice. Research funders were analysed separately from universities and research institutes as they have a different employment relationship with researchers and consequently their responses were framed differently.

## Analysis and reporting

Following the coding, data were analysed to identify themes and key issues in the implementation. UK and non-UK institutions were contrasted. Findings were reviewed by the authors, amended and written up into a report.

## Discussion of the methodology

The methodology chosen proved effective in the comparison of two similar but separate datasets. Using Nvivo allowed for the analysis of the same data in different ways to explore how different kinds of institutions and different sized organisations compared. Using Nvivo also allowed for the quantification of data both through the coding approach described and through focused keyword searches, e.g. "Athena SWAN", to check the accuracy of the findings.

The main limitation of the methodology relates to the nature of the dataset utilised. Organisations submit documentation at a particular historical point and this documentation is inevitably a summary of their practice rather than a systematic representation of it. It is therefore likely that a wider range of practice exists in the institutions than has been captured in this review. Furthermore it is important to recognise that the organisations which hold the HR Excellence in Research Award are unlikely to be typical as they have actively engaged with a process designed to support the development of practice in researcher HRM. This is particularly true in the non-UK institutions as they represent a far smaller proportion of institutions within their national contexts.

An additional limitation is the fact that this study has been conducted from a UK perspective, with HR practice for researchers being viewed largely through the lens of the Concordat. This raises some methodological questions as the European institutions are being reviewed against a framework that is comparable, but not identical to the one which they are reporting to. To partially address this, practice from Europe was identified against each principle and key differences were noted.

A strength of the current approach is that it creates a methodology that can easily be replicated in future years to view progress in implementation against each of the codes. As the codes have been derived from the practice reported in the sector, it may even be appropriate to perceive them as a series of indicators and ask institutions to report on them more explicitly as part of the HR Excellence in Research Award.

## Appendix 2: Codebook for HR Excellence Review and potential framework for future review

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### 1 Recruitment and selection

Reviewed recruitment processes  
Training staff on recruitment panels  
Increased the number of positions that are openly advertised  
Monitor and report on recruitment  
Taken action to reduce or reframe the way that fixed-term contracts operate

### 2 Recognition and value

Developing, reviewing and implementing appraisal procedures  
Monitoring staff satisfaction and engagement  
Reviewed pay and progression of researchers

### 3 and 4 Support and career development

Induction of new staff  
Offering a career and professional development programme for research staff  
Offering access to careers advice and guidance  
Mentoring activities  
Supporting PIs/managers to increase their understanding of career development  
Process in place to internally monitor and measure the take-up of career and professional development

### 5 Researchers' responsibilities

Facilitating staff to take on a wider role e.g. teaching & supervision  
Research staff associations  
Research staff included in institutional committees and structures  
Policy on researcher responsibilities  
Facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profile beyond the institution e.g. international conferences; internships etc.

### 6 Diversity and equality

Monitoring equality and diversity  
Equality and diversity policies  
Seeking external recognition

### 7 Implementation and review

Monitoring the implementation of the Concordat/European Charter and Code  
Publishing implementation plans and progress reports  
Collecting and using data on researchers' experiences  
Informal benchmarking and sharing of good practice  
Seeking external recognition  
Legal compliance issues

## Appendix 3: List of organisations analysed

Based on listings on the EURAXESS website of organisations with the HR Excellence in Research Award at October 2012.

### AUSTRIA

- Austrian Science Fund (FWF)
- Medizinische Universität Graz - Medical University Graz
- University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU)
- University of Salzburg

### BELGIUM

- Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO)
- Université Catholique de Louvain
- Université de Liège
- Université de Mons
- University of Hasselt
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

### BULGARIA

- Varna Free University

### CROATIA

- Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb (INANTRO)
- Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health
- Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies
- Institute for Social Research
- Institute of Physics (IP)
- Institute of Public Finance
- Juraj Dobrila University of Pula
- Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek
- The Institute of Economics, Zagreb (EIZ)
- University of Dubrovnik
- University of Rijeka
- University of Zadar

### CYPRUS

- University of Cyprus

### DENMARK

- Copenhagen Business School

### FINLAND

- Aalto University

### FRANCE

- Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique - INRA

### GREECE

- Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH)
- University of Crete (UoC)

### ICELAND

- University of Reykjavik

### INTERNATIONAL

- European Science Foundation (ESF)

### IRELAND

- University College Dublin (UCD)

### ISRAEL

- Technion - Israel Institute of Technology

### ITALY

- Università degli Studi di Padova
- University of Camerino
- University of Foggia
- University of Palermo

### LUXEMBOURG

- CRP Santé

### NETHERLANDS

- Wageningen University & Research Centre

### NORWAY

- NTNU
- Research Council of Norway
- University of Oslo
- University of Tromsø
- Vestfold University College (HIVE)

### POLAND

- Foundation for Polish Science

### SLOVENIA

- International School for Social and Business Studies
- University of Maribor
- University of Primorska

### SPAIN

- IKERBASQUE - Basque Foundation for Science
- IMDEA Water Institute

### SWITZERLAND

- Bern University of Applied Sciences
- Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale (HES-SO)
- School of Teacher Education at the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland

## UNITED KINGDOM:

- Aberystwyth University
- Aston University
- Bangor University
- Bath Spa University
- Brunel University
- Cardiff University
- City University London
- De Montfort University
- Durham University
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Edinburgh University
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Heriot-Watt University
- Institute of Cancer Research
- Institute of Education
- King's College London
- Lancaster University
- Liverpool John Moores University
- London School of Economics
- Loughborough University
- Newcastle University
- Oxford Brookes University
- Plymouth University
- Queen Margaret University Edinburgh
- Queen Mary University of London
- Queen's University Belfast
- Royal Veterinary College
- Salford University
- School of Oriental and African Studies
- Scottish Funding Council
- Swansea University
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Bath
- University of Birmingham
- University of Brighton
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- University of Central Lancashire
- University of Dundee
- University of East Anglia
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Huddersfield
- University of Hull
- University of Leeds
- University of Leicester
- University of Liverpool
- University of Manchester
- University of Nottingham
- University of Oxford
- University of Reading
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey
- University of West England
- University of Wolverhampton
- University of York

# Appendix 4: Codebook data across the seven principles

## 1 Recruitment and selection

**Table 1: Review against Codes for Principle 1: Recruitment and Selection**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Reviewed recruitment processes</b>			
Universities and research institutes	92 (90%)	3 (3%)	95 (93%)
Research funders	7 (100%)	0	7 (100%)
<b>Training staff on recruitment panels</b>			
Universities and research institutes	55 (54%)	12 (12%)	67 (66%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Increased the number of positions that are openly advertised</b>			
Universities and research institutes	56 (55%)	15 (15%)	71 (70%)
Research funders	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	7 (100%)
<b>Monitor and report on recruitment</b>			
Universities and research institutes	44 (43%)	9 (9%)	53 (52%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)
<b>Action taken addressing fixed-term contracts</b>			
Universities and research institutes	47 (46%)	14 (14%)	61 (60%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	2 (29%)	3 (43%)

## 2 Recognition and value

**Table 2: Review against Codes for Principle 2: Recognition and Value**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Developing, reviewing and implementing appraisal procedures</b>			
Universities and research institutes	80 (78%)	11 (11%)	91 (89%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)
<b>Monitoring staff satisfaction and engagement</b>			
Universities and research institutes	57 (56%)	1 (1%)	58 (57%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Reviewed pay and progression of researchers</b>			
Universities and research institutes	102 (100%)	0	102 (100%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	0	5 (71%)

## 3 and 4 Support and career development

**Table 3: Review against Codes for Principles 3 and 4: Support and Career Development**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Induction of new staff</b>			
Universities and research institutes	68 (67%)	16 (16%)	84 (82%)
Research funders	4 (57%)	1 (14%)	5 (71%)
<b>Offering a career and professional development programme for research staff</b>			
Universities and research institutes	86 (84%)	16 (16%)	102 (100%)
Research funders	6 (85%)	1 (14%)	7 (100%)
<b>Offering access to careers advice and guidance</b>			
Universities and research institutes	63 (62%)	37 (36%)	100 (98%)
Research funders	0	2 (29%)	2 (29%)
<b>Mentoring activities</b>			
Universities and research institutes	54 (53%)	20 (20%)	74 (73%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)
<b>Supporting PIs/managers to increase their understanding of career development</b>			
Universities and research institutes	55 (54%)	23 (23%)	78 (76%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Measuring the take-up of career and professional development</b>			
Universities and research institutes	46 (45%)	18 (18%)	64 (63%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)

## 5 Researchers' responsibilities

**Table 4: Review against Codes for Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Facilitating staff to take on a wider role e.g. teaching &amp; supervision</b>			
Universities and research institutes	62 (61%)	10 (10%)	72 (71%)
Research funders	0	1 (14%)	1 (14%)
<b>Research staff association</b>			
Universities and research institutes	20 (20%)	2 (2%)	22 (22%)
Research funders	0	0	0
<b>Research staff included in institutional committees and structures</b>			
Universities and research institutes	54 (53%)	9 (9%)	63 (62%)
Research funders	3 (43%)	0	3 (43%)
<b>Policy on researcher responsibilities</b>			
Universities and research institutes	47 (46%)	2 (2%)	49 (48%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	2 (29%)
<b>Facilitating researchers to gain experience and build their profile beyond the institution</b>			
Universities and research institutes	49 (48%)	10 (10%)	59 (58%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	2 (29%)

## 6 Diversity and equality

**Table 5: Review against Codes for Principle 6: Diversity and Equality**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Monitoring equality and diversity</b>			
Universities and research institutes	78 (76%)	8 (8%)	86 (84%)
Research funders	4 (57%)	0	4 (57%)
<b>Equality and diversity policies</b>			
Universities and research institutes	78 (64%)	4 (4%)	82 (80%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	6 (86%)
<b>Seeking external recognition</b>			
Universities and research institutes	40 (39%)	10 (10%)	50 (49%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)

## 7 Implementation and review

**Table 6: Review against Codes for Principle 7: Implementation and Review**

	Implemented	Planned	Total
<b>Monitoring the implementation of the Concordat/European Charter and Code</b>			
Universities and research institutes	98 (96%)	1 (1%)	99 (97%)
Research funders	5 (71%)	0	5 (71%)
<b>Publishing implementation plans and progress reports</b>			
Universities and research institutes	75 (73%)	21 (21%)	96 (94%)
Research funders	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	7 (100%)
<b>Collecting and using data on researchers' experiences</b>			
Universities and research institutes	81 (79%)	5 (5%)	86 (84%)
Research funders	3 (42%)	0	3 (42%)
<b>Informal benchmarking and sharing of good practice</b>			
Universities and research institutes	28 (27%)	2 (2%)	30 (29%)
Research funders	3 (42%)	0	3 (42%)
<b>External recognition and input</b>			
Universities and research institutes	18 (18%)	0	18 (18%)
Research funders	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)
<b>Legal compliance</b>			
Universities and research institutes	45 (44%)	0	45 (44%)
Research funders	6 (85%)	0	6 (85%)



Vitae champions the professional and career development of postgraduate researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. Vitae works in partnership with higher education institutions, research organisations, funders, and national organisations to meet society's need for high-level skills and innovation and produce world-class researchers.

Vitae is a network based organisation, consisting of a central team based in Cambridge and a series of 8 regional Hubs throughout the UK and international networks. Vitae works with higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed professional and career development in the research environment. It undertakes activities such as:

Vitae aims:

- Build human capital by influencing the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development
- Enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers
- Empower researchers to make an impact in their careers
- Evidence the impact of professional and career development support for researchers

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK), UK HE funding bodies and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities.

Further information on Vitae's activities with HEIs, researchers and employers may be found on its website, [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk).