

Concordat Implementation Group

17 January 2019, 15:00–16:30
H/G17, Heslington Hall

MINUTES

Attendees: Deborah Smith (Chair), Anna Alessi, Steve Ashby, Nick Barraclough, Francina Clayton, Karen Clegg, Ana Duarte, Anna Einarsdottir, Namrata Ganneri, Helen Goodwill (minutes), Anna Grey, Pep Mateos Gonzalez, Anna Reader, Liz Rylott, Helen Weatherly, Stephanie Prady

Apologies: Ana Duarte, Corrine Howie, Alex Metcalf, Paul Walton

1. Approve [minutes](#) from the last meeting held on 5 September 2018 (*Encl.1*)

The minutes from the last meeting were approved with no amendments.

2. Review outstanding actions from the minutes

All outstanding actions relating to the Concordat (18/19-1 and 18/19-2) have now been completed and the Research Staff Conference action (18/19-3) will be discussed under agenda item 5.

3. Review of the York Concordat Consultation: submission and process

There have been responses from the following:

- [UoY response](#)
- [Biology Postdoc Society response](#)
- The RSLOs are aware of group submissions from Biology, Electronic Engineering, Health Sciences, Physics, Psychology, Environment and History.
- The number of responses from individual researchers is not known

DS expressed her thanks to the Research Staff Liaison Officers, to everyone in the Concordat Implementation Group and to Karen Clegg who have all been instrumental in the review process.

18/19-4 Action: KC to produce a list of the research associations who were known to submit a response and to share if approval is given.

DS wanted to know what appear to be the key issues from what members of the group have already seen.

Liz Rylott, Biology: There are questions around promotion. A lot of Biology postdocs do not know if they are eligible and some have reported being promoted but not receiving additional pay. The 20% time allocation for the development of independence was seen as ridiculous and was actually very ill-defined in the Concordat.

Stephanie Prady, Health Sciences: has concerns about which funders are signatories - will certain postdocs be disadvantaged depending on who their funder is?

Francinca Clayton, RSLO for Sciences: believes that mobility is an issue; not all postdocs are able to move around and consideration should be given to those people and the option to stay in one place. If a researcher's contract is short then they do not receive relocation expenses but mobility is seen as cv-enhancing. Discussion moved onto rolling contracts, particularly repeat rolling contracts. Should there be a system put in place that helps to anchor and nurture these employees? There are practical issues for them around mortgages etc and being on repeated rolling contracts can be limiting and restrictive. It was confirmed that after 6 years of being on a rolling contract, an individual would end up on an open contract (*not* a permanent post). There also needs to be recognition that not everyone is going to move into a permanent academic post.

Anna Einarsdottir, York Management School: whilst there are definitely resources available for postdocs, they are not always obvious so it is down to PIs to push these and to provide support. YMS is responding to training and funding requests positively on an individual, ad hoc basis but there is nothing formal in place.

Nick Barraclough said that, to his knowledge, no one in Psychology has yet been refused support; staff go to the research committee with their request and are treated the same as any other member of staff. Externally they would go via their PIs. In summary, it seems that the issue is not about money but rather to do with communication, training and PI issues (hence the PI principle).

It was agreed that there needs to be transparency and more information around career opportunities for postdocs. In order to provide this, the University needs more information on career destinations. Biology is currently the only department that undertakes exit interviews with their researchers. How do we help/encourage departments to gather and record this information? It would be beneficial for departments to understand where their staff are going and would also link to Athena SWAN applications. HR and the Alumni Office would need to be involved.

18/19-5 Recommendation/Action: Consider under Athena SWAN working group and recommend to faculties as best practice.

Corrine Howie from HR is currently looking at the issues of fixed-term contracts on behalf of N8.

18/19-6 Action: Update to be given at next meeting on 25 April 2019.

What next?

A Writing Group for the revised Concordat has been formed (the Group includes two representatives from Researchers14) and will be meeting on 21 January 2019. The revised Concordat is due out at the end of March.

4. Identify a process for engaging staff with the new revised Concordat - expected release date end of March

The revised Concordat should come back with an Executive Summary and we will need to look at priorities, timeline and resources which are all part of the bigger picture. The information will need to be communicated across the University via the faculty executive groups. It was queried whether, going forward, York will act independently from other institutions (Russell Group / N8). Response was that while we will not be led by these other institutions, we may well be informed by them.

5. Review the draft proposals for the faculty facing Research Staff Conferences: 16 May Social Science and Arts and Humanities (Enc. 4) and Faculty of Science, 27 June for the Sciences - (Enc. 5)

There was acknowledgement that we may struggle to get decent numbers at the Arts and Humanities/Social Sciences conference. In order to attract as many attendees as possible, we need to ensure that there is a robust communications plan in place as well as interesting and engaging content.

A suggestion was made that there could be a competitive element to the conference whereby researchers receive

training, give a talk and then prizes are awarded (University of York prize for Excellent Communication of Research). Anyone should be able to apply but could also be nominated by their PI. DS suggested that a small working group should be put in place to work on the event. Liz Rylott and Helen Weatherley said that they would be happy to join the group.

18/19-7 Action: Members of the Concordat Implementation Group to let Karen know if they would be happy to be part of this new working group.

6. Training Event for Postdocs and ECRs looking to develop a Fellowship Application - [Enc. 6](#)

This event will be called *Preparing for Fellowship Success* and will be a 1.5 day retreat held at the Mercure Hotel in York. Eight or nine candidates will attend the retreat in order to be supported and mentored through the process of writing their grant application. At the moment, there are 42 internal expressions of interest for enterprise fellowships and there will be 4 fellowships offered this year (1 X Chem, 1 x CFH, 2 x open).

Liz Rylott mentioned that Biology is running a very similar event.

Action 18/19-8: KC to get hold of the programme from Jane Hill to see if there is anything that we should be replicating.

7. AOB

Stephanie Prady queried whether Health Sciences should make a new departmental action plan as theirs has now run out or whether it would be better to wait until the revised Concordat is published. The consensus was that it would be best to wait.

Date	of	next	meeting:
13 May, 10.30 - 12,	Berrick Saul	007	