

# Every Researcher Counts

## Briefing for senior managers and human resources specialists

### About this briefing

**This briefing provides information for senior managers and human resources specialists in higher education institutions. It is part of the Every Researcher Counts project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), supported by the other UK Funding Bodies and managed by Vitae to promote equality and diversity in research careers, as an important part of their implementation strategies for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.**

Further information at

[www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts)

### Overview

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers has clear expectations for institutions 'to enhance the research workforce and thereby sustain research excellence in the UK, bringing benefits to the health, economy and wellbeing of our nation'. The Concordat 'sets out a vision of working practices, roles and responsibilities that will ensure the continued provision of well-trained, talented and motivated researchers that is essential to the continuation of our research excellence'.

Principle 6 of the Concordat states that 'Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and management of researchers'. Many of the challenges relating to equality and diversity are systemic within higher education, particularly in relation to research staff. The demanding nature of research work can often have a detrimental and disproportionate effect on the performance and career progression of certain groups, particularly women, black and minority ethnic and disabled researchers.

Equality and diversity, and good staff management within the research environment are an important part of successful research excellence, recognised by funders and institutions. Guidance for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) recognises the importance of the Concordat and equality and diversity in creating an excellent research environment and research outcomes.

#### **Benefits of embedding equality and diversity for research staff**

- Enable researchers to improve their research outputs
- Retain the research talent and expertise within your institution
- Enhance your institution's international reputation and attract talented researchers
- Improve the research environment and contribute to your institutional Research Excellence Framework profile

## Policies, implementation and review

Every researcher counts in achieving research excellence. The Research Excellence Framework, the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the Vitae Researcher Development Framework all highlight the importance of equality and diversity for research staff. To achieve this, institutions need to take a holistic approach to creating policies and championing them throughout the institution. Institutions can make good use of UK and institutional surveys and data to review the research workforce and address any underlying issues. The challenging but important task is to drive the implementation of these policies to ensure they are embedded throughout research practice.

### Areas to consider

- Ensure that institutional policies or statements relating to research staff meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Consider what your policies mean in practice for research staff with protected characteristics
- Provide opportunities for principal investigators and research staff to be involved in influencing the policies and activity relating to equality and diversity
- Ensure the equality and diversity aspects of policies are communicated effectively, especially to those with responsibility for implementation, such as principal investigators and research leaders
- Reinforce the importance of demonstrating equality and diversity in the Research Excellence Framework and the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
- Benchmark progress by comparing your institutional results with sector surveys such as the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) and the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS), and providing targeted information to principal investigators
- Work towards achieving recognition for equality and diversity good practice through awards such as Athena SWAN, HR Excellence in Research and Investors in People

**“It requires senior leadership and buy-in and it takes resource. It cannot be delivered without these two elements. At Cardiff, the Positive Working Environment (PWE) initiative over the past five years has been key.”**

**Professor Terry Threadgold, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Staff and Diversity, Cardiff University**

## Recruitment and selection

Recruiting from the widest pool of talent and considering equality and diversity at all stages of the process will ensure that your institution will attract and retain the highest calibre researchers for the benefit of your research outputs.

### Areas to consider

- Review recruitment processes to ensure equality and diversity considerations are embedded throughout
- Consider how best to support research staff requiring different types of support and how these can be built into flexible terms and conditions of employment
- Encourage staff at all levels to challenge expectations about what sort of people are needed for certain types of roles and how jobs have to be done
- Ensure that staff who are involved in interviewing are aware of equality and diversity policies and issues and, where appropriate, have received training
- Regularly review recruitment data to identify any issues relating to equality and diversity

### Acting on robust data, University of Leeds

The University of Leeds has implemented detailed equality monitoring forms, including asking applicants questions on caring responsibilities, religion/belief and sexual orientation as part of their new e-recruitment project. Applicants are asked to complete an on-line form as part of submitting their applications. The e-recruitment system allows for considerable reporting, including generating tabled reports on applicants, short listed candidates and successful interviewees by protected characteristics. This data will be presented to all faculties on an annual basis as part of the integrated planning exercise, for comment and action where appropriate.

**“Using recruitment and selection data is an important way for managers in institutions to review what is happening in practice and identify if there are any issues relating to equality and diversity. Using this data provides the evidence to take action.”**

**Patrick Johnson, Head of Equality and Diversity, University of Manchester**

## Recognition and value

The Concordat highlights the importance of achieving research excellence and creating a culture where all research staff are valued as individuals and acknowledged for their research outputs and wider contributions.

### Areas to consider

- Ensure terms and conditions of employment, job descriptions and roles and responsibilities for research staff are fair and sufficiently flexible to acknowledge wider contributions and accommodate the needs of researchers with specific requirements
- Review opportunities, initiatives and budgets for specific requirements, such as flexible working conditions, bridging funds and maternity/paternity cover
- Review the application of appraisal processes and promotion criteria to ensure that equality and diversity is recognised so that research staff are valued for their contributions. Ensure that equality related circumstances are considered in decision-making processes
- Ensure that recognition and promotion processes are fair, consistent and transparent, and understood and applied appropriately for research staff

### Stellar HE, Imperial College

The “Stellar HE strategic development leadership programme”, supported by HEFCE’s Leadership, Governance and Management fund, is targeted at managerial and research staff with the aim of increasing the representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) professionals at senior management and academic levels in higher education. It also aims to provide equal access to promotion and professional development, improve staff motivation and achieve better retention of talent.

The programme addresses the distinct but often subtle challenges and variations to the unwritten rules and models for success that BME leaders face and must master as visible minorities operating in a majority HE context.

## Support and career development

Promote a culture where the development of all researchers is recognised as part of research excellence. Policies on equality and diversity provide a reference against which to review researcher development opportunities and participation rates by research staff, to enhance their career development, ensuring that provision is tailored to the needs of your researchers. For example, the responsibility for equality in development could be incorporated into job descriptions, staff appraisal and promotion criteria for principal investigators. Provision must be inclusive to meet the needs of all research staff.

### Areas to consider

- Review whether your career structures and pathways are appropriate for all researchers
- Review your institutional support structures for enhancing the career development of research staff so that these reflect models of good practice in creating an inclusive environment
- Ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the importance of equality and diversity in researcher career development, i.e. human resources specialists, staff developers, careers specialists, principal investigators
- Review the emphasis of equality and diversity in the provision of professional development opportunities for researchers
- Demonstrate institutional good practice in equality and diversity in terms of committee structures, membership and responsibilities
- Ensure that equality and diversity aspects of career development for research staff are part of the remit of appropriate committees

### Vitae Researcher Development Framework

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and encourages them to aspire to excellence. Institutions should use the Researcher Development Statement to review their career development support for researchers, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. Institutions should also encourage all researchers and principal investigators to use the framework to support their career development, and consider their contribution to creating an inclusive environment and equality of opportunity.

The framework highlights the importance of providing institutional and individual leadership in equality and diversity. Senior managers and principal investigators should aspire to 'act as a role model when dealing with diversity and difference, educate, advise and guide less experienced researchers, set an example locally, nationally and internationally and help shape departmental/institutional policy and implementation'.

Vitae Researcher Development Framework [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

Vitae Researcher Development Statement [www.vitae.ac.uk/rds](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rds)

## Researchers' responsibilities

The Concordat makes it clear that researchers share the responsibility for ensuring their development. This responsibility also applies to equality and diversity. Researchers should be encouraged to be proactive in ensuring that provision is accessible to them, raising any equality and diversity issues. In order to fulfil their responsibilities, researchers need to know what the policies are, where to get help and support, and have the opportunity to influence policies and activities relating to equality and diversity, particularly through access to, or representation on, institutional and departmental committees.

### Areas to consider

- Clearly communicate your institution's commitment to equality and diversity to research staff using equality statements, reviews and evidence through the results of CROS and PIRLS
- Provide guidance on how to access equality and diversity expertise and whom researchers can contact
- Ensure research staff are aware of their responsibility to raise issues and that mechanisms are in place for researchers to provide feedback on equality and diversity and opportunities for common groups to meet
- Ensure all eligible researchers are encouraged and empowered to apply for vacancies and opportunities for promotion

### Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)

The 2011 CROS results revealed that the majority of research staff believe that their institution is committed to equality and diversity (52% agreed and 33% strongly agreed). However, they were less informed about the substance of institutional policies. Respondents were generally aware of the existence of equality and diversity policies and processes, with 49% of respondents stating they had some understanding, while 46% knew they existed but didn't know the detail.

When asked if they felt fairly treated in relation to opportunities to participate in decision-making processes compared to other staff, 51% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked whether all staff are treated fairly with regard to participation in decision-making processes, regardless of ethnic background, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or age, 68% agreed or strongly agreed, while 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. [www.vitae.ac.uk/cros](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cros)

## Every Researcher Counts

Vitae was commissioned by HEFCE and supported by the other UK Funding Bodies to lead on a project to raise awareness of equality and diversity for research staff within higher education.

As part of the project, a suite of flexible resources for staff developers and principal investigators has been developed to ensure that, in relation to research staff, equality and diversity issues are understood, visible and prioritised in higher education institutions (HEIs).

The resources include adaptable training sessions and supplementary guides on:

- Team management: Important conversations
- Career conversations
- Using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- Flexible working
- Incorporating equality and diversity into existing workshops

The resources provide HEIs with a flexible set of activities and reference materials which can be embedded in existing staff development programmes to support institutional equality and diversity policies.

You can find downloadable versions of all these resources, stakeholder briefings on the Equality Act 2010 and further information about the Every Researcher Counts project on the Vitae website

[www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts)

# The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination law consolidating and streamlining it into a single act. The Act recognises that different treatment is necessary to ensure equality and recognises nine protected characteristics.

When a member of research staff is treated less favourably than other staff because of one of the protected characteristics, they are not being treated fairly and a case for discrimination could be made. With the exception of marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, research staff are also protected from discrimination if they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

'Diversity recognises that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued.'

'Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination. There are two main types of equality encompassed in equal opportunities: equality of treatment, concerned with treating everyone the same, and equality of outcome, focusing on policies that either have an equal impact on different groups or intend the same outcomes for different groups' [extract from ECU definitions]

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Disability (including carers of disabled people)
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) briefing 'Equality Act 2010: Implications for higher education institutions' draws out the implications of the Act. [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/equality-act-2010-briefing.pdf/view](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/equality-act-2010-briefing.pdf/view)

ECU also produces an annual statistical report. [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2011](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2011)

Equality Challenge Unit works to further and support equality and diversity in UK higher education and is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE and the UK Funding Bodies.



## Useful links

- **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** [www.researchconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk)
- **Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland** [www.delni.gov.uk/](http://www.delni.gov.uk/)
- **Equality Act 2010** [www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/equality-act-2010](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/equality-act-2010)
- **Equality Challenge Unit** [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)
- **Higher Education Funding Council for England** [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)
- **Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** [www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk)
- **Research Excellence Framework** [www.hefce.ac.uk/ref](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/ref)
- **Scottish Funding Council** [www.sfc.ac.uk](http://www.sfc.ac.uk)
- **Vitae** [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)

- **AthenaSWAN Charter** [www.athenaswan.org.uk](http://www.athenaswan.org.uk)
- **Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)** [www.vitae.ac.uk/cros](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cros)
- **Leadership development for principal investigators** [www.vitae.ac.uk/pi](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pi)
- **Every Researcher Counts project and resources** [www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts)
- **Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS)** [www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls)
- **Stonewall** [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)
- **Vitae Researcher Development Framework** [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)



Vitae is the UK organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of researchers in UK higher education institutions, working directly with institutions, policy makers and funders. Vitae leads on the UK implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers by providing information, raising awareness and facilitating the sharing of strategies and practice.

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



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