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**THE RESEARCH
CAREERS INITIATIVE**

Final Report
1997–2002



Universities UK



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Preface

This is the final report of the Research Careers Initiative which was established some five years ago to monitor the implementation of the research careers concordat of 1996. Over the past six years the initiative has played a key role in ensuring that the important contribution of contract researchers is more widely recognised and in identifying and encouraging good practice in their career management. This report - and its three predecessors - provides a record of what has been achieved. I would like to record my appreciation of the contributions made by members of the strategy group and also Dr Tony Bruce (Universities UK) for his contribution to the production of the final report.

Since the last report was issued some two years ago there has been consistent progress in promoting good practice within institutions and there has been a concerted effort by funding bodies (including the charities as well as public providers) and the higher education sector to improve the conditions and terms of employment of contract research staff. These efforts have been facilitated by our success in securing the active support of Government which has been reflected in recent science white papers and the outcome of the 2002 spending review.

The report provides evidence of the initiative's success in addressing its three original objectives - changing the culture in which contract research staff worked so that they were seen as central to the pursuit of good science research; to provide them with a viable career structure; and to secure adjustment to national funding systems. At the same time we recognise that more needs to be done fully to meet these objectives, particularly in ensuring that good practice is fully embedded across institutions.

For this reason we have recommended that the work of the initiative continues and that it should become the responsibility of the new 'fundings' forum' which the Government is establishing. We have proposed that the forum should establish a sub group on research careers to ensure that there is a continuing focus of activity in this area. We also believe that in order to consolidate and build on the progress that has been made it would be timely to review the concordat signed in 1996 and consider adopting a new agreement that would reinforce the process of change and help to ensure that the best researchers continue to seek employment in academic research.

Professor Sir Gareth Roberts FRS
CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH CAREERS INITIATIVE

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this final report of the Research Careers Initiative, a project which has been of great interest to me and which has had a productive and successful life.

The agreement of the research careers Concordat in 1996 was a breakthrough and a landmark. Before then, there was no focus on career development issues for contract research staff. After the Concordat was established, university employers and funding agencies agreed standards, expectations, and responsibilities for the proper management and development of the many researchers in universities on fixed-term contracts.

The Research Careers Initiative – the RCI – was subsequently established in 1997 to monitor the Concordat's progress and encourage and disseminate good practice.

It has continued to stimulate and encourage initiatives throughout the UK, with support from the Funding and Research Councils, the Higher Education Staff Development Agency, the OST, unions, and institutions themselves.

The Government has encouraged the RCI approach, both in the 2000 White Paper: "Excellence and Opportunity" and, more recently in its response to the "Roberts' Review : SET for Success".

How much progress have we made in the years since the RCI was set up?

First, national and institutional policies for research staff are unquestionably far clearer and stronger than ever they were five or six years ago. This framework has been an essential prerequisite for all that followed. Another key advance has been the development of good practice models for staff appraisal, in-service training, personal transferable skills and career guidance. Development of monitoring and evaluation systems to push forward a process of continuous improvement in training and personnel policies has been another important step.

Yet I know that, in spite of all this, there is still some disappointment that improvements are not yet taking effect in all the areas we might like to see - in greater security of employment for more staff, greater clarity of career paths, and more take-up of the excellent provision that is available. Isolated from wider national and institutional developments, the day-to-day experience of many individual research staff has, too often, not changed substantially for the better.

But a recent policy initiative may now act as a catalyst for more rapid change. The Funding Councils have begun to link improvement in the management of people to receipt of funding. That is a powerful incentive for reform. It has the potential to reach down to the depths of any library or laboratory. It also means that efforts to improve research careers are rightly set in the wider context of institutional staff policy.

The second change which should make a difference are the Fixed Term Regulations, which came into effect in October 2002, and are designed to protect employees on fixed-term contracts (FTCs) from being treated less favourably than comparable employees on indefinite contracts. FTCs are particularly prevalent in university research and one of the effects of the new regulations should be to cut down on the number of FTCs awarded.

So where do we go from here? The work of the RCI must now move on but it is vital that the existing momentum is not lost. The Government proposed a new funders' forum in its science strategy report, "Investing in Innovation", and the RCI has recommended that this group should also address careers in research, not only of contract researchers, but also of research students, and new lecturing staff.

A wide range of issues still needs to be addressed, in particular that research staff should have greater security of employment and be treated as an integral part of the institutions in which they work; and also ensuring that women and minority groups are not disproportionately disadvantaged through being employed on short-term contracts. We also need to maximise the two-way flow of researchers between the UK and the rest of the EU.

Finally, I should like to thank all the people who gave freely of their time and energy over the past few years to the development of the RCI, and to all those institutions involved in the expansion of the reforms. I congratulate them all on the notable progress which has been achieved.

Lord Sainsbury of Turville

MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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Executive Summary

RCI Recommendations

- 1 Contract research staff (CRS) form a major and growing part of the higher education workforce. In 1996, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (now Universities UK), the Research Councils, the British Academy and the Royal Society recognised that as the number of CRS had grown, so had the problems and tensions relating to their employment and career development. These bodies therefore agreed a Concordat on Contract Research Staff Career Management: a framework for the career management of contract research staff. The Research Careers Initiative (RCI) was established in the following year to monitor the implementation of the Concordat and to identify, encourage and disseminate best practice.
- 2 Since the RCI was set up, progress against the Concordat aims has been reported on a regular basis. The first report was published in October 1998, along with data charting progress reports from working groups on career guidance and staff training, and a guide to best practice in employing CRS. The second report in May 2000 highlighted a selection of initiatives developed by individual higher education institutions (HEIs). A third report published in September 2001 reported the significant progress that had been achieved since the establishment of the Concordat. This report presents an update of progress since September 2001 and also summarises the RCI's overall achievements since it was first established.
- 3 The report is in three sections. Section A introduces the Concordat and RCI in more detail. Section B provides an overview of achievements since 1997. The report concludes with a series of recommendations (which are also reproduced as part of this Summary) in section C.
- 4 It is particularly important to acknowledge that a major achievement of the RCI has been its key role in raising awareness of all those involved of the need to change the culture surrounding research staff employment in universities. RCI has also played an active role in providing the means by which institutions have been able to take forward these improvements.
- 5 Over the past 18 months, further initiatives have added considerable momentum to meeting the RCI objectives. These activities are documented in more detail in the main report and include examples from the universities themselves, Government, Funding Councils, the Research Councils, and the major charitable trusts.
- 6 The RCI monitoring process has encouraged the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop and to promulgate employment policies, codes of conduct, and good practice models relating to CRS, particularly in provision of staff appraisal, training, and career guidance. Dissemination of relevant information to CRS has also

improved. Initiatives, such as the Contract Research On-line Survey (CROS), which compile and analyse data from CRS using web-based systems are currently being piloted with a view to extending coverage on a national basis.

- 7 Through the Office of Science and Technology, Government has been closely involved in RCI work, from provision of the secretariat (with Universities UK) to provision of support towards activities and conferences to share developments across the wider community. Government also recently responded positively to the findings of the Roberts' Review by making an additional investment of £100m a year by 2005 - 06 to meet its recommendations.
- 8 The Funding Councils have recently introduced a requirement for HEIs to have satisfactory Human Resource strategies for CRS in place.
- 9 The Research Councils continue to develop and monitor career development of research staff supported on their research grants. The major charitable bodies also undertake such responsibilities. For example, the Wellcome Trust introduced a new scheme to support the careers of technologists in 2001 which allows universities to attract and retain strategically important research technologists or analysts. In response to the Governments' 2002 Spending Review, the Trust announced a number of new initiatives to provide increased flexibility for research scientists, including "Value in People" awards.
- 10 These developments have been complemented by the introduction of the Fixed-Term Regulations that came into force on 1 October 2002. The Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) and campus unions, including the Association of University Teachers (AUT), have developed and agreed guidelines to facilitate effective implementation. The RCI believes that the Fixed-Term Regulations are an important development for research careers, and it can be assumed that research staff in all institutions will benefit from their implementation.
- 11 The Concordat and the RCI continue to add considerable value to the wider agenda of improving human resource management in the higher education sector. However, as RCI-related initiatives continue to be implemented, the work of the Concordat and RCI as currently constituted will have diminishing returns for the effort expended. Progress-to-date must be built on and it is vital that existing momentum is not lost.
- 12 In addition, there is still work to be done to ensure that women and minority groups are not disproportionately disadvantaged through being employed on short-term contracts. It is important not to lose sight of this aspect in wider monitoring activities.

13 **The RCI recommendations below provide a framework within which its achievements can be consolidated and developed as part of the wider context of career development for university research and teaching personnel as well as taking wider considerations into account.**

14 **Recommendations to Government:**

- the Concordat has provided a new focus on career development issues associated with contract research staff (CRS) during the past five years and a major impact of the Research Careers Initiative has been to ensure that its aims and objectives are subsumed within the human resource policies of institutions. Progress needs to continue to be monitored and the strategy group therefore **recommends** that a successor body with a wider responsibility should take forward the initiative's objectives as part of a broader remit addressing careers in research, including those of research students and new lecturing staff as well as contract research staff;
- the Government's strategy for the science, engineering and technology base, "Investing in Innovation", has proposed the introduction of a funders' forum. We **recommend** that the work and objectives of the RCI become the responsibility of this Group;
- the initiative recognises that the funders' forum will cover a wide range of issues, and it is important that it does not lose sight of contract research staff career needs. It therefore **recommends** that a sub-group be set-up as part of the funders' forum to oversee research career development issues and monitor progress, particularly the impact of the Fixed-Term Regulations and the implementation of "Investing in Innovation";
- it is important that the interests of contract research staff themselves should be represented on such a sub-group. We **recommend** that Universities UK, as the main representative of CRS employers, and the AUT, as the major representative body for CRS, should be included as members;
- the RCI also **recommends** that this new Group should consider the need for a new Concordat. September 2003 marks the tenth anniversary of the publication of the Government's White Paper "Realising Our Potential", and it is suggested that the launch of a new Concordat might coincide with this anniversary.

15 **Recommendations to Research Funders**

The RCI Strategy Group **recommends** that:

- all funders of research should review procedures and practices to ensure that these do not prevent employing institutions from meeting both the spirit and letter of the Fixed-Term regulations;
- the Funding Councils should explore the potential to extend their framework of quality standards (that currently only apply to postgraduate research degree programmes) to aid the career development of contract research staff and to ensure the quality of research supervision;
- the Research Councils should work in conjunction with CROS to develop an online form that incorporates the needs of both parties and that analyses of the results are used to ensure supervision of the CRS are of the highest standards;
- the other funders of research should continue to enhance and monitor the career development of their contract research staff, and should consider using the framework of quality standards developed by the Funding Councils and the Research Councils to aid them with this work;
- the opportunities for additional training for Research Council-supported postdoctoral researchers on short-term contracts provided by the 2002 spending review should be made available to all postdoctoral researchers on short-term contracts.

Section A

Introduction

- 1 This is the final report of the Research Careers Initiative (RCI), which was established some six years ago to improve the position of staff employed by universities on short-term contracts. Such staff form a significant part of the higher education workforce and, as a result of the impact of the initiative, are seen as a valuable resource in their own right. This report comments on the progress made since 1997 and lists the achievements and highlights resulting from the work of the Research Careers Initiative. It then makes recommendations for the future.
- 2 In 1996, Universities UK (then the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals), the Research Councils, the British Academy and the Royal Society recognised that as the number of staff on short-term contracts increased, a number of important issues arose relating to their employment and careers. These bodies agreed a 'Concordat to provide a framework for the career management of contract research staff in universities and colleges' (annex A). The RCI was established in the following year to monitor the implementation of the concordat and to identify, encourage and disseminate best practice. A summary of the concordat's history is at annex D.
- 3 The initiative had three purposes. One was to change the culture in which contract research staff worked so that they were seen as central to the pursuit of good science research. The second purpose was to provide contract research staff with a viable career structure. The third purpose was to secure adjustment to national funding systems so that change could be enabled. In particular, funding agencies were encouraged to play a stronger role. For example, in the RCI report, published in 2000, it was clearly stated that "People are among, if not the most important outputs of research, and the dual support system should reward the development of researchers who meet the needs of academia, industry, and the wider economy. However, the funding systems have offered academics no incentive to attend to the development of their research staff, howsoever these may be supported, whether from Research Council grants, an institution's general income, or some other source. This has been a missing ingredient for too long." (Research Careers Initiative Report, 2000, *recommendation 4*).
- 4 Progress against the Concordat aims has been monitored and reported on a regular basis in three successive reports of the RCI. The first of these was published in October 1998 along with data charting progress, reports from working groups on career guidance and staff training, and a guide to best practice in employing contract research staff. The second report, in May 2000, highlighted a selection of initiatives developed by individual higher education institutions as part of the programme of

work on the Research Careers Initiative. A third report, published in September 2001, provided further evidence of the significant progress that had been achieved since the concordat was issued.

- 5 Since 2000, the initiative has been overseen by a strategy group which is chaired by Sir Gareth Roberts and supported by the Minister for Science. (Its membership is given at annex B.) The group has been effective in securing active Government support for the initiative. This has been reflected in the White Paper on "Excellence and Opportunity" (2000) and, more recently, through the Government's response to the "Roberts' Review: SET for success" contained within its strategy for science, engineering and technology, "Investing in Innovation" (2002).
- 6 Since the Concordat was agreed and the RCI established to monitor progress in contract research staff (CRS) development, there has been a steady improvement in the conditions and terms of employment for contract research staff employment. The monitoring process has encouraged higher education institutions (HEIs) actively to develop and to promulgate employment policies and codes of conduct relating to conditions of employment of contract staff. Institutions have expanded the flow of relevant information to staff employed on short-term contracts and training provision has increased. The RCI has played a key role in raising awareness in the sector and in providing guidance in the means by which institutions have been able to take forward these improvements. There is no doubt that the initiative has successfully conveyed to institutions its view of the need to change the culture surrounding staff employment in universities.
- 7 The influence of the work of the initiative has been reinforced by two important external developments that will have a substantial impact on the changing status of staff employed on fixed-term contracts. The first was the introduction of the fixed-term employment regulations, which apply across Europe and came into force on 1 October 2002. The Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) and the campus unions, including the Association of University Teachers (AUT), have developed and agreed guidelines to facilitate the effective implementation of the regulations. The strategy group believes that they will have a major impact on research careers by improving employment rights and giving access to compensation for redundancy.
- 8 The impact of these statutory changes will be reinforced in England by the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) human resource management initiative which, as described below, provides dedicated funds for institutions that have satisfactory human resource strategies in place. Acceptable strategies will need to include appropriate plans in respect of staff employed on a fixed-term basis.

These developments will accelerate the process of change and place short-term contract staff on a new footing. But the strategy group recognises that there is more work to be done, particularly in relation to national funding arrangements and the position of women and ethnic minorities on short-term contracts. Although the RCI in its present form is coming to an end, a national overview of progress needs to be maintained and later in the report the strategy group recommends how this might be done.

- 9 The strategy group has noted that the initiative continues to add considerable value to the wider agenda of improving human resource management in the higher education sector. The specific projects, networks and databases developed through the initiative should continue to be supported and developed where appropriate by those now responsible for them. However, as the Funding Councils and others have concluded, the agenda has evolved and staff on short-term contracts need to be seen and treated as an integral part of the wider human resources of the institution.

Section B

Progress in Improving Research Careers

- 10 The following sections describe how the RCI has made an impact, firstly at institutional level and then in Government and the national funding agencies.

The Role of Higher Education Institutions

- 11 Higher education institutions (HEIs) have developed good practice models in the provision of staff appraisal, in-service training, personal transferable skills, and career guidance for staff employed on short-term contracts. There are now named Research Careers Initiative co-ordinators in about 100 HEIs who have been appointed with the aim of driving a process of continuous improvement in training and personnel policies. Such achievements reflect considerable commitment from senior management, personnel professionals, and research staff themselves.
- 12 An important dimension of these improvements is the level of pay for staff on short-term contracts compared with other staff. In 2001 UCEA produced guidelines entitled "Role Analysis and Job Evaluation: Guidance for Higher Education Institutions". Both the employers' and unions' sides of the Joint Working Group on job evaluation (with the exception of the AUT) recommended that HEIs should adopt a role analysis/job evaluation system for all staff, so that relativities across different occupational and job groups can be assessed effectively and to help ensure that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is applied. Institutions are presently considering the various schemes available for this purpose.
- 13 HEIs have been working in several areas with the aim of improving the career prospects of contract research staff. Areas of improvement include appraisal, career guidance and structure, networking and training. As was stated in the previous RCI reports, institutional co-ordinators continue to confirm that that their universities have undertaken at least some of the following activities:
 - establishment of a Research Careers Initiative working group to review institutional policy and monitor the implementation of the concordat;
 - improvement of communication with contract research staff through establishing web sites, email databases and dedicated handbooks;
 - improvement to the induction process, to ensure that all staff are aware of institutional policy from the start of their employment with a university;
 - introduction of a new appraisal systems for contract research staff;
 - development of codes of good practice and workshops to develop the management skills of principal investigators;

- establishing contract research staff fora that meet regularly to share information and discuss issues of concern;
 - surveys of contract staff to inform institutional policy development.
- 14 Additionally, a web site (<http://www.cvs.ac.uk>) has been developed to enable contract researchers to place their cvs in an online database that can be accessed by potential employers. The service, which is free to contract research staff, aims to help smooth their career progression and advertise their talents to a wide audience
- 15 **Contract Research On-Line Survey (CROS):** CROS has been set up with support from HEFCE and the Office of Science and Technology to collect information on CRS experiences directly from the CRS themselves. The system will provide a fully integrated Web environment for the design, delivery and administration of online surveys to CRS in a range of HEIs, to collect the same key items of data captured by the Research Council CRS questionnaire, along with other information relevant to CRS.
- 16 The first project pilot built on successful on-line surveys at Bristol and Leeds Universities which ran from 1 June 2001 until April 2002. The second pilot, with active participation of 45 HEIs throughout the UK and an overall return rate of just below 30%, has recently been concluded.

Role of Government

- 17 The Office of Science and Technology (OST) was responsible for implementing the postgraduate training, research careers, and women-in-science policies in the White Paper "Realising Our Potential" (1993). The OST has worked with the Research Councils and Learned Societies to implement and develop policy.
- 18 Its work has included:
- implementing the MRes proposals in the 1993 White Paper;
 - advising on increases in the number of Royal Society University Research Fellows;
 - advising the level of Research Training Support Grant paid to Research Council PhDs;
 - encouraging and contributing to the funding of a 1997 Research Council career path survey of former postgraduates. It worked directly with the University of Sheffield to pilot a web-based survey of postgraduate study intentions for three years from 1999. As the Roberts' report notes, this shed light on the attitude of undergraduates to postgraduate study and appropriate stipend levels;
 - brokering the Research Careers Concordat between the funding agencies and university representative bodies in the mid 1990s, and playing a lead part alongside Universities UK in the RCI.

- 19 OST has also funded the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services to produce a suite of careers guidance projects. In particular, it has led to the creation of over 50 case studies of research staff following their careers since earlier fixed-term employment. Full details are available through the HESDA website at www.shef.ac.uk/hesda/nation/crs.html
- 20 The Promoting SET for Women unit was set up in 1995 in OST to tackle women's under-representation in the science, engineering and technology (SET) community. The unit aims to improve the recruitment, retention and progression of women throughout SET education and employment and to increase their involvement in shaping SET policy.
- 21 On the 28 April 2003, the Government launched a new "Strategy for women in science, engineering and technology"¹, in response to the recommendations made by Baroness Susan Greenfield's report "SET Fair", which was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and published in November 2002.² The Strategy builds on recent mainstream policies to secure gender equality, such as the new Employment Act, with new measures aimed at tackling the specific problems of women in SET-related careers. The cornerstone of the new Strategy is the establishment of a dedicated resource centre to co-ordinate the activities of existing organisations involved in women in SET issues and to support innovative pilot schemes, such as for mentoring, networking, speaker's bursaries and mobility needs. The new centre will initially hold funds for SET returners on a pump-priming basis, to help potential SET returners who have taken an extended career break. An independent implementation panel is also proposed to oversee and monitor the progress of the new Strategy.
- 22 The Athena Project is a UK-wide initiative set up in 1999 by the UK HE funding councils, Universities UK and OST to encourage the advancement of women in HE SET careers. To achieve this, Athena works with HE institutions to develop, share, encourage and disseminate good practice and to:
- increase the number of women working in SET (as postgraduates, researchers, and lecturers through to professors); and
 - improve the career development of women in SET (their recruitment, retention, participation, progression and promotion).
- 23 As the applicants for academic positions are largely from CRS, Athena's work has frequently addressed some of the problems of the group. Further details of Athena's work can be found at <http://www.etechnology.co.uk/campaigns/athena.asp>

1 A Strategy for women in science, engineering and technology (OST April 2003)
http://www2.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/research/the_greenfield_response.htm

2 Greenfield report: "SET Fair", November 2002. http://www2.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/research/the_greenfield_rev.htm

- 24 Commissioned by the Treasury, the recently published Roberts' Review "SET for success: The supply of people with science, technology, engineering and mathematic skills", drew heavily on the framework established by the concordat and the work of the RCI. Roberts identified problems with the quality of some of those taking up employment as postdoctoral researchers and then as permanent members of academic staff. A key concern is that this system does not always appear to be an attractive career path for many of the brightest PhD graduates. In turn there is a real risk of harming the UK's research base and particularly in the recruitment and retention of university staff.
- 25 The review considered that contract research posts should generally be seen as being transitional, rather than that of semi-permanent status; people usually should not be employed on a series of short-term research contracts for a long period of time, particularly within a single institution. Building on findings published in the interim reports of the Research Careers Initiative, the Roberts' Review recommended three career paths for postdoctoral researchers:
- the industrial career path - contract research, especially that funded by business is likely to include more applied work than that in a PhD, thus providing a better preparation for a corporate research career. At the same time the current dominant aspirations and training provision amongst contract research staff are focused on a career within the higher education sector. The industrial route would require awareness-raising by institutions and potential employers, and extra training in skills relevant to potential` employers, including the provision of supervisory and managerial experience. Those choosing to follow this path would probably be employed on short-term contracts for a limited period and then move into employment in industry.
 - the academic career path - although a research-active teaching role is the desired career objective of many (though by no means all) postdoctoral researchers, only a minority actually achieve it. Improved appraisals and career advice early on in a researcher's career should be aimed at identifying those with the potential for an academic career. To facilitate the progress of those so identified may require institutions to underwrite their salaries in order to recruit or retain them. The basis of employment should remain the short-term contract in order to match the needs of research funders and encourage the mobility of potential academics. To support action by individual universities the Government has provided funds to create 1,000 new academic fellowships (200 a year, each lasting five years) to provide more stable and attractive routes into academia. These prestigious fellowships will be developed by the Research Councils, in collaboration with organisers of similar existing fellowships, such as the Wellcome Trust and The Royal Society.

- the research associate - some contract researchers will want to continue with a research career and do not want to become academics. This path would typically apply to those who have developed specialist knowledge of specific research equipment or methodologies and provide an ongoing support/enabling function within a research group. Here the emphasis would be on the provision of permanent contracts underwritten by research income received by university departments. This may mean switching individuals between research projects if a particular line of funding were to cease.
- 26 The Roberts' Review concluded that contract research should not become a permanent career option, but a preparation for a range of careers that reflect the skills possessed by these staff. It also concluded that to achieve this vision would require better training and development, an improved range of salaries and a clearer career progression for staff employed on short-term research term contracts. The Government has provided an additional investment of £100 million a year by 2005-06 to meet the recurrent cost of the recommendations of the Roberts' Review. This includes additional funding to raise the salaries of Research Council post-doctoral researchers by an average of £4,000 by 2005-06, funding to improve the training opportunities available to postdoctoral researchers as well as funding to the Research Councils for contract researchers' training.

Research Funders

- 27 The Research Councils have endeavoured to develop and monitor the career development of the research staff supported on their research grants. In particular, researchers have been invited to return questionnaires about their employment experience to the Councils towards the end of the grant. Analysis of these returns shows steady improvement over time against key indicators (see also annex C for examples of survey questions and emerging trends). In a related development (funded by the OST & HEFCE) an on-line survey (CROS) has been created to collect information on their experiences from contact research staff themselves.
- 28 Each Research Council has a number of training and other initiatives aimed at research staff. For example, the Biological and Biotechnological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) has the Training and Accreditation Programme for Postgraduate Supervisors (TAPPS). TAPPS is a pilot programme at the Institute for Animal Health that is designed to help senior research workers to become competent as postgraduate research supervisors, by providing peer group support and discussion, as well as any relevant training. Successful participants in TAPPS will become accredited as 'postgraduate supervisors' by the BBSRC.

- 29 A one-stop gateway to web-based information and advice on research supervision is being developed in association with TAPPS. The gateway is designed to be useful to all supervisors (new and experienced), policy makers and training personnel, irrespective of their involvement with TAPPS or their field of study.
- 30 The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) has invested in the establishment of a set of career development training tools to provide an effective source of career guidance to contract researchers. The Research Council contracted the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) and Department of Education and Professional Development, University College, London, to organise and run four residential career development schools. The schools took place during 2000 at University College, Manchester and Strathclyde Universities, and The University of Wales, Cardiff. They were piloted for 150 contract researchers using the specially commissioned tutored exercises developed by the contractors. The initiative showed real potential and scope for providing effective career guidance and a training package available on CD-ROM was published in early 2003 for use by HEIs.
- 31 EPSRC also has a scheme known as Research Assistants Industrial Secondments (RAIS). The aim of RAIS is to encourage the transfer of knowledge gained by research assistants working on existing EPSRC research grants and to provide training in an industrial environment. The EPSRC can provide further funding for the individual(s) to be seconded to a company for up to a year after the end of the original research project.

Charities

- 32 Charity support for research activities has increased significantly since 1996. Much of that support is for short-term contract posts. The RCI includes representatives from the research charities both on the strategy group and among its membership.
- 33 The RCI has taken account of the approaches adopted by this sector for contract research staff. A key to the mission of the Wellcome Trust, for example, is to meet the training and career development needs of researchers and ensure that academic biomedical research remains an attractive and competitive career option for the most creative and innovative minds. To achieve this aim the Trust provides a portfolio of personal award schemes for basic and clinical scientists, historians of medicine and other researchers within the Trust's sphere of interest. These awards are available at all stages of an academic research career, from PhD training studentships through to senior and principal research fellowships.

- 34 Pay scales for postdoctoral researchers funded by the Trust are based on university levels and scales, but since October 1989, all scientific postdoctoral researchers with salaries funded by the Trust have received an enhancement premium worth between 8-16% of their basic salary. Furthermore in October 1999, the Trust granted a salary enhancement of 30% above the basic university pay scale for many of its research fellows at UK universities.
- 35 The Trust introduced a new scheme to support the careers of technologists in 2001. This scheme allows universities to attract and retain strategically important research technologists or analysts. The scheme provides support for up to five years, after which time the applicant takes up a post in the institution which is guaranteed for at least a further five years. The Trust also announced in response to the Governments' 2002 Spending Review a number of new initiatives to provide increased flexibility for research scientists, including "Value in People" awards. These awards will be made to selected universities where they can be used flexibly to nurture promising young people with an interest in clinical or basic research. The awards will help promising young scientists to progress to a stage where they can independently apply to the Trust and other funding bodies for their own support.
- 36 To help guide future policies and practices of funding bodies and higher education institutions, in July 2001 the Trust hosted a one-off conference (and co-sponsored two others) designed to encourage people to discuss and develop innovative solutions for the difficulties faced by UK academic researchers.

The Higher Education Funding Councils

- 37 The Funding Councils have worked together on a number of projects relevant to the objectives of the Research Careers Initiative.
- 38 The three Funding Councils commissioned a three stage project to determine the role of threshold standards and conditionality of funding in improving the quality of research degree programmes. Although the main aim of this project is to increase quality it will also have a significant effect on the career development of contract research staff if funding is linked to a minimum standard training framework. The first stage of this project was to review good practice and identify indicators that could form the basis of threshold standards. The report (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk>) on this stage includes a framework of recommended standards covering the research environment, selection, induction, progress and examination of students, supervisory arrangements and skills development, together with institutional arrangements for quality assurance, procedures and regulations. Phases two and

three of the project will further develop these threshold standards, systems for assessment and monitoring, and the funding models needed to support such a system. Implementation of the recommendations of the recent review of research, the Research Councils' drive to improve completion rates and institutional recognition of the need to provide a broader range of training to suit individual needs has seen the quality of research degree programmes and - as a consequence - the careers of contract research staff, improve over the last few years.

- 39 A major development which has implications for management of contract research staff is the requirement introduced by HEFCE that all HEIs must include an effective human resources strategy as part of forward look. Without this strategy, institutions will not receive full support from the Funding Council. The Government provided £330 million in 2000-2003 to improve the management of human resources (HR) within higher education in England. The aim was to assist recruitment and retention of staff and to modernise the systems used to manage human resources in institutions. HEFCE allocated funds in proportion to institutions' total core funding, and on condition of the submission of HR strategies. The strategies, according to HEFCE, demonstrate improved human resource management practices across the sector. The key impact has been to link HR strategies more explicitly to corporate strategies. This has produced better targeted training and development, as well as market related pay mechanisms, the latter addressing some of the concerns of the Roberts' Review 2002. The pressure for improvements in equal opportunities generally is addressing issues relevant to woman /ethnic minorities, who are highly represented among the contract researcher population.
- 40 Recognition of the need to address the issue of contract researchers was a feature of strategies submitted to HEFCE by institutions with significant numbers of such staff, as was supportive reference to the work and recommendations of the Research Careers Initiative. It was also clear from the strategies that a desire to increase research capability in some institutions has led to plans for programmes on developing research skills, or in some cases the offer of assistance from a research support unit that will be set up for this purpose. Institutions with large numbers of contract researchers are planning to offer them tailored programmes, including induction and help with proposal writing and grant applications, as well as career support. Others have opened the door for research staff to join programmes available for other staff in the institution.

- 41 A project on contract research staff led by the University of Sheffield, in collaboration with the Universities of Manchester and Loughborough, was funded by the HEFCE good management practice fund (2000-02). Developed in direct response to the Research Careers Initiative, its main aims were:
- to improve motivation and fulfilment of contract research staff;
 - to improve management of staff on short-term contracts by grant holders in their role as research manager;
 - to secure significant financial and non-financial benefits for higher education and the wider economy.
- 42 Extensive consultations with staff on short-term contracts and their managers during the project revealed, for example, the need to: raise issues relating to contract research staff higher up the agenda of senior university management and the need to recognise the contribution some of these staff make to the 'research vitality' of their units/departments nationally and internationally.
- 43 The project has produced a number of deliverables that will be disseminated widely throughout the Higher Education sector including:
- a project website;
 - policy recommendations;
 - career management and development tools to assist CRS and grant holders;
 - the development of a framework for good management practice. This includes an induction process which encompasses: Staff Review Meeting and Planning of development; Regular Staff Review Meetings (implementing / monitoring of project and personal development) using Research Career Builder & Employment Skills Handbooks for skills development and for recording achievement; Research Employability, and, Pre-end of Contract Review to flag up major skills gaps to concentrate on in last few months and exit data, including next destination and reason for leaving for tracking purposes.
- 44 In 1995, Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) introduced a Contract Research Staff Initiative, with the aim of promoting good practice in the career development and management of contract research staff. The initiative has resulted in the production of training materials, and assisted in the dissemination of best practice. In association with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Wellcome Trust, the Carnegie Trust and the Scottish Executive, SHEFC has also published the report of a major study into the career destinations of contract research

staff in Scottish universities and higher education colleges. The study provides a solid basis for debate about the experiences, aspirations and conditions of employment of contract research staff and is very useful in helping institutions to develop their policies for the management and development of contract research staff.

- 45 From 2002-03, SHEFC has introduced a new condition of grant on human resource policies and management, which will be attached to its core funding for teaching and research. The condition of grant will cover all staff, including contract research staff. It will require institutions to establish and monitor objectives for their management of human resources, evaluate progress, operate effective staff equal opportunities policies and monitor their impact, use external benchmarks, performance indicators and reports to develop an action plan for improvement, commit appropriate resources to training and development and establish clear links between the plan and the institution's corporate objectives. SHEFC has allocated £500,000 to assist with the implementation of this new condition.
- 46 SHEFC has been concerned for some time about the lack of information about the career development of contract researchers employed in Scottish HEIs. As part of a wider initiative on the training and career guidance needs in this growing section of the academic population, the Council appointed a team from the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, to carry out a survey of academic research careers in Scotland.

Section C

Recommendations to Government

- 47 The Concordat has provided a new focus on career development issues associated with contract research staff during the past five years and a major impact of the Research Careers Initiative has been to ensure that its aims and objectives are subsumed within the human resource policies of institutions. Progress needs to continue to be monitored and the strategy group therefore **recommends** that a successor body with a wider responsibility should take forward the initiative's objectives as part of a broader remit addressing careers in research, including research students and new lecturing staff as well as contract research staff.
- 48 The Government's strategy for the science, engineering and technology base, "Investing in Innovation", has proposed the introduction of a funders' forum. We **recommend** that the work and objectives of the Research Careers Initiative become the responsibility of this Group.
- 49 The initiative recognises that the funders' forum will cover a wide range of issues, and it is important that it does not lose sight of contract research staff career needs. It therefore **recommends** that a sub-group be set-up as part of the funders' forum to oversee research career development issues and monitor progress, particularly the impact of the Fixed-Term Regulations and the implementation of "Investing in Innovation", the Government's strategy for science, engineering and technology.
- 50 It is important that the interests of the employers and contract research staff themselves should be represented on such a sub-group. We **recommend** that Universities UK, as the main representative of CRS employers, and the AUT, as the major representative body for CRS, should be included as members.
- 51 The RCI also **recommends** that the new Group should consider the need for a new Concordat. September 2003 marks the tenth anniversary of the publication of the Government's White Paper "Realising Our Potential", and it is suggested that the launch of a new Concordat might coincide with this anniversary.

Recommendations to Research Funders

- 52 The RCI Strategy Group **recommends** that:
- all funders of research should review procedures and practices to ensure that these do not prevent employing institutions from meeting both the spirit and letter of the Fixed-Term regulations;

- the Funding Councils should explore the potential to extend their framework of quality standards (that currently only apply to postgraduate research degree programmes) to aid the career development of contract research staff and to ensure the quality of research supervision;
- the Research Councils should work in conjunction with CROS to develop an online form that incorporates the needs of both parties and that analyses of the results are used to ensure supervision of the CRS are of the highest standard;
- the other funders of research should continue to enhance and monitor the career development of their contract research staff, and should consider using the framework of quality standards developed by the Funding Councils and the Research Councils to aid them with this work;
- the opportunities for additional training for Research Council-supported postdoctoral researchers on short-term contracts provided by the 2002 spending review should be made available to all postdoctoral researchers on short-term contracts.

Annex A

A Concordat to Provide a Framework for the Career Management of Contract Research Staff in Universities and Colleges

- 1 This Concordat sets standards for the career management and conditions of employment of researchers employed by universities and colleges on fixed-term or similar contracts and funded through research grants or analogous schemes.
- 2 The research funding bodies signatory to this Concordat will expect the universities and colleges to comply with the standards in paragraph 17, and will work closely with them to encourage, enable, and review the implementation of those standards.
- 3 The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP) recognise the importance of establishing good management practice for contract research staff, and commend the standards to their members.
- 4 The arrangements for reviewing the Concordat are at paragraph 35.

Background

- 5 Much research in universities and colleges is funded on a fixed-term basis by companies, research charities, the European Union, Government Departments and the Research Councils. In turn, the universities employ staff, generally known as “contract research staff”, through fixed-term or similar contracts to carry out the research.
- 6 The parties to this Concordat recognise that fixed-term grants will continue to play a major part in the funding and prosecution of research in universities and colleges. Contract research staff make a significant contribution to that research. They can bring fresh ideas, expertise and knowledge, and enable universities and colleges to respond flexibly to the opportunities and the needs expressed by funding bodies.
- 7 The parties to this Concordat accept that:
 - those recruited to work as contract research staff should be able to benefit from the experience and use the period of employment to test out their suitability for further research inside or outside academia and to acquire a wider range of competencies and experience;
 - some may have the potential to become research leaders or to obtain a longer-term university or college post which combines teaching and research;

- some may be employed by a university or college over the medium to long-term to work on a succession of research projects;
 - many have an important role to play deploying their expertise and skills in a variety of employment, not only research and development, in industry, commerce, and the wider public sector.
- 8 However, the parties recognise that:
- an established career in academia or, exclusively, academic research, is realistic for only a minority;
 - these limited opportunities and the insecurity arising from a succession of fixed-term contracts create tensions which have been compounded by the demands of other priorities on scarce resources, resulting in less investment in the career management and development of contract research staff than might otherwise have been the case;
 - the result has been that some talented and trained staff may have been unnecessarily lost from research; others have moved from contract to contract for the want of informed guidance; and morale and overall productivity also suffer.
- 9 Accordingly, the challenge which is presented is to manage the tensions better, and to ensure appropriate investment in career management.

“Realising our Potential”

- 10 The universities and colleges, as the employers, are responsible for the management of all of their staff. This includes terms and conditions of employment, staff development, and the proportions of established staff and contract research staff.
- 11 The Research Councils have an explicit responsibility for the production of trained people to meet the needs of research user communities in the universities and colleges, industry, commerce, and the wider public sector. The Councils also have an interest in contract research staff because the achievement of their missions through research conducted in the universities and colleges depends critically on the supply and development of well trained, talented and motivated research staff within the universities. The Royal Society and other funding bodies have similar interests. In addition, the provision of grants, fellowships and other forms of research support by the funding bodies, and the terms and conditions on which the funds for those are given, influence directly the management of contract research staff by the university and college employers.

- 12 The White Paper “Realising Our Potential: A Strategy for Science, Engineering and Technology” recognised that more effective career management of contract research staff, which enabled men and women with a talent for research to look forward to rewarding and satisfying careers in academia, industry, commerce and the wider public sector, would require action from the universities and colleges and the funding bodies. It asked the Research Councils to work with university and college representatives with two objectives in view:
- I more effective career management and development of contract research staff by the university and college employers;
 - II the Research Councils’ grant-making arrangements should help the universities and colleges discharge those responsibilities, and the Councils should look at the scope to put greater emphasis on longer-term or more personal forms of research support.
- 13 This Concordat provides a framework within which the universities, colleges, Research Councils and other funding bodies will work to achieve those objectives.

PRINCIPLES OF THE FRAMEWORK

- 14 The parties to this Concordat agree that the framework for the more effective career management of contract research staff should be based on the following principles:
- I **promoting the active personnel and career management of contract researchers**, recognising the important contribution they make to the success of their employing institutions, including the dissemination of research results and new techniques;
 - II **acceptance by the universities and colleges of the importance of regular review and career guidance** for contract researchers, to ensure that they receive appropriate and timely advice, support, and encouragement to develop their careers and to take responsibility for so doing;
 - III an understanding between the funding bodies and the universities and colleges of their **respective roles and responsibilities** (a) **in meeting the costs** associated with management of these staff, including career guidance and retraining or other appropriate arrangements to realise broader career opportunities upon the expiry of the contract researcher’s fixed-term appointment; (b) **in keeping under review funding levels for personal or longer-term forms of support** in academic research.
- 15 These principles are elaborated in the remainder of the Concordat.

Standards of Personnel Management

- 16 The responsibility for determining the detailed personnel and career management arrangements for contract research staff is for the universities and colleges as the employers.
- 17 However, the funding bodies will wish to be satisfied, as a key condition of providing grants and fellowships to the universities and colleges, that those institutions have in place and apply effective policies ensuring standards for the following aspects of the career management of contract researchers:
 - I **recruitment**, so that the opportunities provided by contract research posts are, as far as possible known and used:
 - to provide research training and continuing development for researchers at an early stage of a research career, which may subsequently be pursued in academia, industry, commerce, or the wider public sector; or
 - for the planned career development of existing contract staff, again with the possibility of that development subsequently taking place in academia, industry, commerce, or the wider public sector; or
 - as “re-entry” routes for researchers who have taken time out from their careers.
 - II **performance management arrangements**, to ensure that research supervisors provide effective research environments for the training and development of researchers. In addition, there should be in place systems of:
 - **supervision**, in order that contract researchers gain the maximum benefit from the training and development opportunities provided by the research environment in which they work;
 - **regular review**, enabling the contract researcher and his or her supervisor - and ultimately the university or college as the employer - to form the best possible assessment of, and feedback on, the individual’s potential, whether for a research career in academia, industry, commerce, the wider public sector or in some other direction;
 - III **rewards and other terms and conditions of service for contract research staff (for example, rates of pay, provisions for leave and sick leave, pensions, access to facilities)** which are in line with those for established staff, thus avoiding the tendency for contract researchers to feel isolated from, and disadvantaged in relation to those groups of employees. A key element is an assurance of **equal opportunities** and the elimination of practices linked to the short-term nature of contracts which indirectly discriminate against women. Maternity leave and pay provisions for contract staff should be in line with the provisions for established staff, subject to the fixed-term period of the employment contract;

- IV **in-service training** in the form of appropriate specialist or general training. Demonstrating and teaching duties should be encouraged within the limits set by grant conditions;
- V **career guidance and development**, for example to inform decisions by contract research staff on a change of career direction if the opportunities are limited or if they do not wish to remain in research or are not suited to such a career, and encouragement of talented researchers with advice on opportunities inside and outside the employing institution.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 18 The management and operation of these policies will generally be for the university and college employers alone.
- 19 The salaries element of grants will provide for pay appropriate to responsibility (grade), merit pay, and pensions. These should be identified in the grant application or will be allowed for in the cash-limiting of the award, enabling the funding bodies to meet them within the framework of cash-limited grants.
- 20 An application for funding for one or more named members of contract research staff should include provision for salary costs which takes account of the research responsibilities within the grant, but also, where relevant, the previous experience and professional contribution of those staff. Such applications may seek provision for promotion during the lifetime of the grant where the possibility is foreseen by the employing institution, the grounds are justified in the application, and the promotion will be made in accordance with the policies and procedures of the employing institution. In other cases, provision may be made from virement within the grant.
- 21 Contract research staff are generally paid on one of two different sets of salary scales according to whether their employment is in a pre-1992 university or in a post-1992 university or higher education college. The funding bodies will provide for salaries on the basis of spine points on the salary scales issued by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) in respect of pre-1992 universities and post-1992 universities and colleges.
- 22 Where a grant application includes provision for named contract research staff, the funding bodies will normally expect to announce funds at the level requested; however, they reserve the right to offer support at an alternative level if considered appropriate to the research responsibilities of the project.

- 23 In the case of unnamed contract research staff, the salaries element will normally provide for an appointment at spine point 6 which is the third point of Research Grade IA or the equivalent in post-1992 universities and colleges. Provision may however be made for an appointment at higher points, including grade ranges II or III (or their equivalent), where the application so requests it and has made explicit, to the funding body's satisfaction, that the research responsibilities would justify such an appointment and that the project would offer the opportunity for the career development of a more experienced individual.
- 24 Provision of paid maternity leave and sick pay to members of contract research staff who fulfil the relevant qualifying conditions of the employing institution is an allowable use of the salaries element of grants.
- 25 As a special initiative which contributes to the wider policy of encouraging the participation of women in research, the Research Councils will provide additional funding (which should be claimed, as necessary, at the end of the grant as an "exceptional item") to provide for any additional final cost on the grant:
- I of making a substitute appointment to compensate for the whole, or part, of a period of paid maternity leave of a member of contract research staff funded by a Research Council, provided always that the direct salary costs of the substitute do not exceed those of the member of staff on paid maternity leave;
 - II of extending the duration of a grant for a period equivalent to the maternity leave taken by a member of contract research staff for which no substitute appointment has been made, so that the project may be completed.
- 26 Where a period of paid sick leave in excess of 3 months is likely to affect the completion of a Research Council funded project, the grant holder may apply to the Research Council to discuss the possibility of funding a temporary appointment to safeguard the work of the project, or an extension to the duration of the grant where the period of leave can be predicted. Any additional payment will be made at the end of the grant, as in paragraph 25.
- 27 The funding bodies will not provide funding to meet the potential redundancy costs of contract research staff whose employment ends on the expiry of the fixed-term contract. However, individual funding bodies may agree to contribute appropriately to contractual redundancy payments at the termination of any open-ended appointments which they had approved.

- 28 Since the dual-support transfer, the Research Councils provide a payment which is a standard percentage addition (40 per cent [since increased]) of the staffing element of the “direct” costs of a research grant. Those funds are intended to meet the “indirect” costs of the research in accordance with the dual support arrangements. They therefore enable institutions to support, among other things, personnel administration and management, and in service training.
- 29 The universities and colleges, on the one hand, and the funding bodies on the other will work to ensure as far as possible that applications are submitted, decisions taken and new grant announcements made so that fair recruitment procedures can be followed by the employing institutions; and that the renewal or extension of existing grants will be as early as possible so that career insecurity is reduced and disruption to the research effort is minimised.

Wider Issues

- 30 To support **career development**, the universities, colleges, and funding bodies will need to work closely together:
- I The funding bodies share a common interest with the universities and colleges in identifying potential research leaders, and ensuring that career openings exist for them in research. Research fellowships offer a good stepping-stone, after an initial period of post-doctoral work, to a more permanent academic post or a research post, which may be in academia, industry, commerce, or the wider public sector. Individual institutions may wish to consider whether to provide such Fellowships as part of their staffing policy, and the funding bodies will develop their own provisions in balance with other forms of research funding providing longer-term support for essential and active research leaders;
 - II university and college employers should keep under review the career opportunities for contract research staff who, whether or not research leaders, have proven their capacity to make a significant contribution over the longer-term to the research aims of the institution, and if so how to fund them. Advice to the individual concerned is likely to depend on his or her potential, on whether the research opportunities require his or her in-depth expertise, and on whether the costs of such support, as reflected in project or programme grants, infrastructure awards or such other individual forms of longer-term support as a funding body may provide, represent good value for money for that body. The funding bodies will consider such cases on that basis and on their merits;

- III many other contract research staff will be well equipped after a doctorate or initial period of post-doctoral research for employment in industry, commerce or the public sector. The Research Councils are exploring a variety of funding mechanisms to encourage such transfer and they will consider further provisions in this area;
 - IV the funding bodies will, with the universities, colleges and other interested parties, consider ways of strengthening the provision of career information and advice for contract research staff and fellows.
- 31 In addition, the funding bodies may be able to provide forms of research support which are not directly relevant to career management of contract research staff, but which do affect the number of such staff in universities and colleges. Examples include fellowships or research grants which enable principal investigators to concentrate on research by funding the costs of replacement teachers, and research studentships rather than research assistantships. Where appropriate, the funding bodies will keep their level of support for such alternatives under review in the light of their individual missions.

Implementation

- 32 The funding bodies will amend with effect from 1 September 1996 their conditions for new grants to reflect the provisions of this Concordat.
- 33 As conditions of grant, the funding bodies will require universities and colleges to provide:
- I contract research staff with a statement, at the beginning of the contract period, of their provisions for career development and management and conditions of employment;
 - II some basic information in grant/fellowship reports on the training and development benefits which have flowed from individual grants and fellowships, and on the destination of contract research staff and fellows after a grant or fellowship.
- 34 Concerns about implementation by an employing institution or a funding body should be addressed initially to that body.

Evaluation of the Concordat

- 35 The parties to this Concordat will meet initially after 18 months and subsequently every two years to review this Concordat and its implementation, taking account of e.g.:
- practice within funding bodies, universities and colleges, including initiatives and examples of good practice;
 - levels of support for the forms of funding identified in paragraphs 30 and 31;
 - information derived from grant/ fellowship final reports and destinations data;
 - the outcome of equal opportunity monitoring of contract research staff appointments, including the proportion and distribution by grade of women;
 - the costs of implementation;
 - the views of employers in industry, commerce, and the wider public sector.

Signatories

- 36 The parties to this Concordat are:

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals

The Standing Conference of Principals

The Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

The Economic and Social Research Council

The Medical Research Council

The Natural Environment Research Council

The Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council

The Royal Society

The British Academy

Annex B

Research Careers Initiative Strategy Group - Membership and Terms of Reference

CHAIRMAN

Professor Sir Gareth Roberts President Wolfson College Oxford and President
of the Science Council

MEMBERS

Dr John Taylor Director General of Research Councils

Sir Howard Newby Chief Executive Higher Education Funding
Council for England

Professor John Sizer former Chief Executive Scottish Higher
Education Funding Council

Dr Mike Dexter Director The Wellcome Trust

Professor Leela Damodaran Director HUSAT Research Institute and
representing the Association of Research
Centres in the Social Sciences

Professor Dame Julia Higgins Imperial College and Chair of Athena Steering
Group

Professor Sir Alan Wilson Vice-Chancellor University of Leeds and
Chairman of Universities UK Research Policy
Sector Group

Malcolm Keight Assistant General Secretary Association of
University Teachers (AUT)

Professor Gus Pennington former Chief Executive HESDA

Annex C

Evidence of Improvement in Contract Research Staff Management

Introduction: the information below is taken from the analyses of Research Councils' "exit surveys" of CRS employed using Research Councils' support below.

It is important that contract researchers evaluate their career prospects on a regular basis and take effective responsibility for their training and preparation for future employment.

The questions below are excerpts from the exit surveys, which have been coupled with the annual combined responses.

Questions 1 and 2 focus on CRS management by the employers (the HEIs).

- Question 1: [% of CRS who claim to have] received a statement of the university's policy in relation to contract research staff

Responses

1997	1999	2001
65%	72%	74%

- Question 2: [% of CRS who claim to have] received regular appraisal of work and personal development

Responses

1997	1999	2001
43%	51%	56%

Questions 3 and 4 explore the responsibility that CRS staff take in developing their careers. The data suggest that although awareness is increasing among CRS staff about opportunities for career development, there is still some work to be done by such individuals so that they can make best use of advice and other available facilities.

- Question 3: [% CRS who] received formal career advice from department or faculty colleagues

Responses

1997	1999	2001
21%	30%	37%

- Question 4: [% of CRS who claim to have] used services of a university career adviser

Responses

	1997	1999	2001
–		14%	19%

Question 5 seeks evidence that provision of relevant training to CRS is improving.

- Question 5: [% of CRS staff who claim to have received advice on] legal and procedural aspects of intellectual property rights

Responses

	1997	1999	2001
	6%	15%	18%

Qualitative indicators also reported improvements in provision of training and legal and procedural aspects of intellectual property rights.

A summary of research career concordat questionnaire returns for the years 1997-2001 and full analysis can be found at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/activities/rci.asp>

Annex D

Historical Background to the Concordat and RCI

1993

The White Paper “Realising Our Potential: A Strategy for Science, Engineering and Technology” recognised that more effective career management of contract research staff would require action from the universities and colleges and the funding bodies. It tasked the Research Councils to work with university and college representatives with two objectives in view:

- more effective career management and development of contract research staff by the university and college employers;
- the Research Councils’ grant-making arrangements should help the universities and colleges discharge those responsibilities, and the Councils should look at the scope to put greater emphasis on longer-term or more personal forms of research support.

1995

A House of Lords Select Committee hearing on CRS examined criticisms of research training and the large increase in the number of non-tenured staff funded from short-term grants, together with the lack of growth in the numbers of established academic staff. It made the following recommendations:

- contract staff should have the same status and rights as established colleagues of equivalent rank;
- universities should have sound policies for the management of contract staff;
- universities should improve counselling, career advice and retraining for contract staff;
- universities should earmark funds to bridge gaps between contracts for contract staff;
- universities should create longer-term fellowships for the most able scientists;
- universities should pay attention to the need for students to be educated through science to careers which may be unrelated to academia;
- better advice should be provided to students regarding careers and university career services should serve contract staff as well as undergraduates.

1996

The 'Concordat to provide a framework for the career management of contract research staff in universities and colleges' was agreed by Universities UK (then CVCP), the Research Councils, the British Academy and the Royal Society.

The Concordat's key commitments were:

- terms and conditions for contract research staff to be in line with those for established staff;
- provision of specialist or general training and career guidance for contract research staff;
- greater continuity of funding and employment where the research justified this.

1997

The Research Careers Initiative was established

Annex E

References

- 1 Copies of previous RCI reports can be found at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/activities/rci.asp>
- 2 SET for Success: The supply of people with science technology, engineering and mathematical skills. The Report of Sir Gareth Roberts' Review (April 2002)
Further details can be found at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/enterprise_and_productivity/research_and_enterprise/ent_res_roberts.cfm
- 3 A summary of research career concordat questionnaire returns and full analysis for the years 1997-2001 can be found at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/activities/rci.asp>
- 4 The Wellcome Trust has co-sponsored a number of high profile conferences on career issues including:
 - Universities UK - 'Supporting and Developing Research Careers'.
 - CRAC - 'Profiting from Postgraduate Talent Conference'.Further details can be found at www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/biosfgcdpinfstucar.
- 5 During 2002, HEFCE, UUK and OST have supported two conferences:
 - "Supporting and Developing Research Careers" - March 2002
 - "Supporting Research Staff: Making a Difference" - July 2002
(see also <http://www.shef.ac.uk/~gmpcrs/conference/conference.htm>)
- 6 Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (section B) - further details of the Academic Research Careers in Scotland (ARCS) survey can be found at <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/ier/shefc/shefcpub.html>.
- 7 Career guidance projects (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services) (section B): details are available through the HESDA website at www.hesda.org.uk/crs/crs.html.
- 8 SET fair: A report on Women in science, engineering and technology from the Baroness Greenfield CBE to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (November 2002) Further details are available at http://www2.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/research/the_greenfield_rev.htm
- 9 'A Strategy for women in science, engineering and technology' – the Government response to the SET Fair report (April 2003). Further details can be found at: <http://www2.set4women.gov.uk/set4women/research/the.greenfield.response.htm>



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