

A Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

Cambridge AWiSE

Report of a meeting held on 8th May 2007
at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge.



Summary

In May 2007, following reports that the Concordat for Career Management of Contract Research Staff was being revised, Cambridge AWiSE organised a networking meeting for Contract Research Staff.

Sarah Botcherby from Cambridge University Personnel Division spoke about the employment rights of Contract Research Staff, the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 and the Concordat. Women were given the opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences relating to short-term contracts and the chance discuss what they would like to see in a revised Concordat. Their comments are summarised in this document and will be used to enable Cambridge AWiSE to respond to the Concordat consultation document.

In summary:

- Many CRS are simply unaware of the Concordat and their employment rights. All the relevant information is available though the Personal Division website. This information, and its relevance, needs to be publicised better and more widely.
- Different sorts of information should be used to inform CRS. For example, emails, flyers, posters, departmental intranets etc. Information should be sent to CRS at different stages of their career rather than just at the start. An example flyer is attached below and could be mass distributed, for example, through the University Newsletter.
- PI's should also be made more aware of the Concordat and the employment rights of their CRS through training courses.
- There should be more consultation between PI's and CRS regarding maternity cover and extensions to grants to cover leave.
- If a CRS/Fellow supervises a Ph.D. student, the University should provide alternative supervision for the period of maternity leave or a period of extended sick leave.
- Personal Division and Staff Development should publicise the benefits of CRS training and appraisal to both CRS and PI's.
- CRS should be encouraged to take advantage of the training already available to them through Staff Development. This training should be undertaken throughout a CRS contract and not just at the end.

20 women (and one man) attended this meeting. Feedback was good with most participants enjoying the meeting and feeling as though it met their expectations.

“Very interesting discussion, I was totally unaware of the Concordat before this meeting.”

“Very interesting for me, lots to learn and a new way to look at it.”

“Very good to have contact with women who have already had flexible working, maternity leave etc. There aren't many in my department.”

Tuesday 8th May 2007 20:00-22:00
Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge

The Concordat for Career Management of Contract Research Staff

The Concordat came into force in 1996 and set the standards for career management of Contract Research Staff. The Concordat contains special initiatives to contribute to the wider policy of encouraging the participation of women in research. It is currently being revised in light of new legislation.

Come along and find out what this means for you and voice your opinions and experiences relating to short-term contracts and research careers. We will be writing up the outcomes of this meeting as a report to feed into discussion about how the Concordat might be revised.

This is your chance to get your voice heard!

There will be plenty of time for discussion and networking.

Free, but please register at: info@camawise.org.uk

We would like to thank The Biochemical Society and
The Institute of Physics for sponsoring this event.

www.camawise.org.uk

Background

In 1996, the UK Research Councils, the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (now Universities UK), the Standing Committee of Principals and several other bodies signed a '**Concordat on Contract Research Staff Career Management**'.

The Concordat set standards for career management and conditions of employment for contract research staff (CRS). Its signatories recognised that fixed term grants played a major role in the funding of research in Universities and Colleges and that this situation would continue in the future. They also recognised that CRS made a significant contribution to this research. They agreed that funding bodies have responsibility to produce trained people to meet the needs of the research user community. They also accepted that CRS should benefit from their experience, they should gain skills and have the opportunity to test whether they are suitable for a research career in either academia or industry. However, they realised that limited opportunities and the insecurity resulting from employment on a series of fixed term contracts caused tensions and, as a result, talented and highly trained staff left research and the morale and productivity of others suffered.

The Concordat sets out several principles for effective career management of CRS:

Recruitment - that opportunities are publicised widely, training is offered and there are re-entry routes for researchers who have had career breaks.

Supervision and regular review - to ensure opportunities for training are known and that suitability for a research career can be assessed.

Terms and conditions of employment - in line with established staff.

In service training - both specialist and general.

Career guidance and development - looking at opportunities both within academia and outside.

The Concordat also contains special initiatives to contribute to the wider policy of encouraging the participation of women in research: the salaries element of a grant can be used to pay maternity leave and additional funding can be claimed to pay for maternity cover or to extend the period of the grant so that the project can be completed.

The Revised Concordat

The Concordat is currently being revised in light of recent changes in legislation. John Bothwell, from the National PostDoc Association, is part of the Concordat Working Group. He says that the new Concordat will contain information on how CRS careers can best be supported based on the following principles:

1. Researchers are important, so employers should support their career development.
2. Employers should promote transparent career structures with clear guidance about progression. Researchers' independence should be fostered by embedding a clear progression of responsibility and accountability into these career structures.
3. Employers should provide PI's, HR Staff and researchers with appropriate career development training.
4. Employers and funders should try to make sure that adequate and flexible funds are made available.

5. Employers should ensure that their recruitment and selection procedures attract applicants from the full range of the research community and should select, without prejudice, the highest quality applicants.
6. Researchers should take appropriate responsibility for their own career development by engaging with all this.
7. Funders will keep an eye out for how the effectiveness of the Concordat may be measured.

Research Councils UK state that: 'The main benefit of the revised Concordat would be to provide a single, unambiguous statement of the expectations and responsibilities of research funders and institutions with respect to the management of researchers. The Concordat would also demonstrate internationally - including to researchers considering coming to work in the UK - the high standards of management and support that can be expected by UK researchers. The proposed code of practice would provide details of effective practice for the support and management of research staff. The Code would also provide a single reference point for institutions seeking to meet the expectations of a number of different funders within the UK as well as the European Commission.'

There will be a period of consultation over the summer. We hope this Cambridge AWiSE Concordat meeting allows contract research staff the chance to voice their opinions and experiences relating to short-term contracts, discuss what they would like to see in a revamped Concordat and enable Cambridge AWiSE to be in a position to respond to the consultation document. John Bothwell has raised the important point of how best to get the information contained in the Concordat to CRS. We will try to address this in our meeting.

A link to the research careers initiative and the concordat can be found on the Universities UK web site at: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/activities/rci.asp>.

A statement of principles for the revised concordat can be found at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/careermanagement.htm>,

The Research Councils research careers and diversity strategy can be downloaded at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/strategy.htm>

The European Charter and Code specifies the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of researchers. The following document identifies actions that might need to be taken to align the UK with its broad principles: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/internationalconnections/gapanalysis.htm>.

(Comment - Draft concordat published on RCUK website in July 2007. This will be followed by a period of consultation ending on 30th September 2007. Esther Haines will attend the Consultation Meeting in London on 23rd July 2007. A subset of the Cambridge AWiSE Steering Group will meet on the 5th September to draft a response to the Consultation document. Initial views of the Concordat are that it contains lots of good principles but no teeth, there is no specific mention of maternity cover/grant extension so its unclear who would pay for this).

Meeting Summary

Concordat Meeting 8th May 2007 Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge

1. Welcome and introduction by Jenny Koenig (Chair, Cambridge AWiSE).

Jenny welcomed everyone attending our meeting, described the aims of Cambridge AWiSE and the MentorSET women's mentoring scheme. She thanked the Institute of Physics and the Biochemical Society for sponsoring this event.

She then went on outline the aims of this meeting:

- to discuss the Career Management of Contract Research Staff
- how the Concordat is functioning now
- what we would like to see in the revised Concordat
- what could be done to help women stay in research.

She then asked Sarah Botcherby from Cambridge University Personnel Division to speak about the employment rights of CRS.

2. Sarah Botcherby (University Personnel Division).

The University Personnel Division website contains a huge amount of information relevant to CRS including their Terms and Conditions of Employment (these can also be found in their Contract), pay grades, information on the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 and links to the **Career Management Scheme for CRS**. This scheme was setup in 2003 to meet the conditions of the Concordat and the Research Careers Initiative.

The **University of Cambridge Career Management Scheme** meets the requirement of the Concordat. It recognises that "Contract Research Staff are a highly qualified, skilled and experienced workforce and it is in the best interests of the University to retain and utilise their expertise". However, due to the nature of the majority of research projects, many CRS contracts will be terminated at the end of their project. When the funding stream is secure and long term, the Head of the Institution should consider changing a fixed term contract into an open-ended contract.

The **University Career Management Scheme** aims to help CRS take responsibility for their future career throughout their period of employment. CRS are encouraged to:

1. Participate in the training available through the Staff Development Office.
2. Undertake on the job training, be involved in the preparation of research grants and, where their work is substantial, should be included as co-applicants.
3. Attend conferences, present their research and make new contacts.
4. Publish their work and be given authorship on papers they contribute to.
5. Teach or demonstrate (if acceptable to the funding body).

CRS have access to the same University facilities and services as equivalent permanent staff. CRS are also entitled to an **appraisal** every two years. Appraisal is not intended to replace regular meetings to discuss work and career progress, rather to assist staff in the development of their careers. The discussions should include realistic career options outside of research or other work in universities so that a decision to pursue a university research career is made consciously rather than by default.

Fixed Term Grants

According to the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, fixed term staff should be treated the same as permanent members of staff and have the same employment rights.

The legislation does still allow the use of fixed term contracts but employers must be able to show objective justification for their use. For example:

- An identified task.
- A period of training.
- Cover for someone else who is leave.
- During a period of reorganisation.
- As a result of limited funding - this is the most likely reason why fixed term contract are used in research (so length of tenure matches the funding available).

Employers must also be able to show objective justification when a contract is extended.

Redundancy

As a result of the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, CRS on fixed term grants are entitled to redundancy payments at the end of their grant provided they have completed at least two years of continuous service. Around 6 months before the end of a contract, the Principal Investigator is reminded by Personnel to talk to their CRS regarding their future plans and the possibility of redundancy if no additional sources of funding are available. If no additional sources of funding are found, a redundancy consultation process must occur. The process is:

1. A written invitation to a consultation meeting. This must be done at least four months prior to the end of a contract.
2. A Consultation Meeting with Personnel to discuss redundancy and redeployment assistance available. Personnel can help drafting CV's and will support applications within the University. The University Careers Service provides access to specialist Careers Advisors who are able to help investigate other avenues outside the University. During the last six months of their contact, CRS are allowed time off for job interviews and job hunting.
3. CRS have the right to appeal if they believe they have been treated unfairly.

Redundancy payments will be made if a member of CRS has been employed continuously for more than 2 years. Payments are ~£310 for each year of continuous service (depending on age and length of service). The DTI website has a ready reckoner to help work out their entitlement. Payments are automatic (but delayed 28 days in case an additional source of funding is found). Redundancy payments are factored into the grant overhead. A CRS member will only get redundancy payments for continuous service with no breaks in employment. The University will not bridge periods between contracts but Departments may.

The Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 limits the use of successive short-term contracts past four years unless an objective justification for their use can be made. Given that each contract has time limited funding, it is generally possible to have fixed term contracts for more than four years. Personnel run training courses for PI's to keep them informed of the law and any changes that may occur.

Comment:

Some PI's still believe that CRS can't be employed for more than four years on fixed term contracts and are unhappy to apply for grants on their behalf. Personnel should ensure that the rules are made clearer.

Personnel are looking at use of open-ended contracts. PI's and CRS still need to bring in the grants to fund the work and there may be a greater expectation that employment is permanent but this isn't necessarily the case.

Roberts Review

In March 2001, Sir Gareth Roberts was asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State at the Department of Trade and Industry and at the Department for Education and Skills to undertake a review into the supply of science and engineering skills in the UK. The review was commissioned as part of the Government's productivity and innovation strategy. The review found that most CRS do not have long term careers as research scientists within academia and that CRS are generally <35-40 years old. He found that CRS follow three career pathways:

1. CRS spend a short time on fixed term contracts and then move to other positions in academia such as lectureships. Only 20% of CRS go on to be PI's (and these may still be on fixed term contracts).
2. CRS move to industry after short time as CRS.
3. Only a very, very small number of CRS manage a career as a PI on succession of fixed term contracts.

Roberts, therefore, emphasised that developing transferable skills was extremely important. His aim was that CRS leave research voluntarily with the correct skills to enable them to succeed in different careers. The report states that CRS MUST take responsibility for their career management, with help from their PI's.

Comment:

The Research Careers Initiative is good but researchers need more opportunities and time for training and development of their transferable skills all the way through their career not just at the end. More needs to be done to encourage PI's to think about the career development of their CRS and provide and allow the time for CRS to undertake training.

Appraisal

CRS are entitled to appraisal every two years as part of their career management review (this happens in some areas of the University but not in others currently). Guidelines are available from personnel. The Personnel Division run training courses for both the appraisers and appraisees. Appraisers are generally the PI but CRS can ask for someone different. Appraisal reports must be looked at and appropriate action taken.

If CRS would like to be appraised they should ask their PI, if nothing happens, CRS should contact The Personnel Division.

Maternity Leave

Maternity leave entitlement for CRS is identical to that for permanent staff. Women who are pregnant and wish to take maternity leave must notify Personnel by the 15th

week before their expected due date. Whilst pregnant, women are entitled to time off with pay to attend antenatal appointments, including classes. As a result of a recent change in the law, women are now entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks maternity leave or adoption leave following adoption of a child under 5, regardless of their length of service. This consists of 18 weeks at full pay, 21 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay (if entitled) and up to 13 weeks of unpaid leave. Women are also allowed **10 keeping in touch days** to come into work during their maternity leave without losing their maternity entitlement. The salaries element of a grant from a signatory to the Concordat can be used to pay for maternity leave and additional funding can be claimed to pay for maternity cover or to extend the grant. The University also allows graduated return to work over a period of one year.

As a result of the Concordat, Research Councils will in addition, provide additional funds to pay for either:

1. Cover during maternity leave.
2. Additional time at the end of a grant, extending the grant at the end for a period equivalent to the paid maternity leave taken.

Comment:

Experience shows that this is open to abuse. Money claimed for maternity cover can be used to keep someone else employed but not actually working on the relevant contract. Must ensure that decision on what to do about maternity cover is made in consultation with PI and CRS prior to maternity leave starting. New Maternity leave entitlements came into force in April and women are now entitled to 9 months paid maternity leave and can be off for a year in total. Not sure whether the Research Councils have taken this into account yet and will extend a research grant by the whole nine months.

If a CRS/Fellow supervises a Ph.D. student, it is very important that the University provides alternative supervision for the period of maternity leave or a period of extended sick leave. The current situation is not fair on either the student or the CRS/Fellow.

Flexible Working - all employees who have 26 weeks service at the date of application and have children under 6 years of age, have a statutory right to apply to work flexibly. The University flexible working policy is very broad and much more extensive than regulations require. There is no eligibility requirement but the request has to be acceptable to the Department and the person requesting flexible working must be able to show need.

Parental Leave - all employees with a year's service have a right to parental leave.

Experience and Comments

Chair Esther Haines, Cambridge AWiSE Steering Group, Cambridge University Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Initiative.

All meeting participants and those who had previously expressed an interest in the subject were emailed after the meeting:

Thank you all for coming to our Cambridge AWiSE meeting on the Concordat or expressing an interest in the subject. I hope those of you who came found the meeting useful and informative. I am about to start writing up the meeting and wondered if you had any further comments on the subject. In particular:

1. In your experience, do you think the Concordat is functioning acceptably with respect to career development?
2. Do you think the provision for dealing with maternity leave and other breaks in employment is sufficient and appropriate?
3. Are women disproportionately disadvantaged by contract careers? If so, why, and what could be done?

I would be really grateful to hear your opinions on these questions, ideas on how you think a research career should be managed and any advice and experiences you wish to share.

Thank you very much for your time.

The following responses are a summary of the comments relating to these questions made during the meeting and by email correspondence.

In your experience, so you think the Concordat is functioning acceptably with respect to career development?

1. The Concordat, The Research Careers Initiative and the University Career Management Scheme all appear to provide a reasonable framework for the management of CRS. However, in reality, most CRS and PI's don't really know what their entitlements actually are.

One simple solution would be to better publicise the information already available:

- With the contract of employment (although at the beginning of a job, there is such a mass of paperwork, the information may get forgotten).
- Circulated with maternity information when the CRS first contacts Personnel at 15 weeks. This would give the CRS and PI time to discuss whether to apply for maternity cover or money to extend the grant at the end of the contract.
- Distribution after six months, when the CRS is established in the post along with information outlining all the training that is available.
- At University induction courses, these are run twice a year.
- On each Departmental intranet.
- Through posters and regular mass leafleting. A draft of a possible leaflet is included here. The University could easily do this, perhaps as an insert in the newsletter.

2. The reality is that no one is very good at stressing that only around 10-20% of CRS will go on to a permanent academic career. If this is made clearer and earlier, CRS may take better advantage of all the training that is available to them. This also requires that PI's encourage their CRS to develop well-documented transferable skills.
3. I think enormous progress has been made within recent years as a result of Robert's money being made available. Lesson: money talks. One of the problems is that, even though both the Research Councils and the University have as their official policy that CRS must have career development courses etc available to them, many PIs still will not allow CRS time off to attend courses. A development that should help here is that the Research Councils (well, I know the BBRSC, but since they all use the JES system I assume the others as well) are going to require proposals to employ anyone at above the basic starting rate for a post-doc to include a career development plan for the researcher in the proposal. I think also that a lot of careers advice is often simply irrelevant to many women. More attention needs to be paid to what Hewlett and Luce call 'arc of a career'. Are recruitment materials attractive to women - is the emphasis all on huge rewards for long hours (or for a scientific career, any rewards at all in return for long hours)? More work still needs to be done to ensure that careers advice is suitable for a diverse staff group.

Do you think the provision for dealing with maternity leave and other breaks in employment is sufficient and appropriate?

1. Under the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, fixed Term staff have to be employed with the same conditions as permanent staff (unless there are good business reasons for a difference, I think the example on the DTI website is along the lines of 'If you are employing someone for three months you probably wouldn't want to buy him/her a company car'). The University of Cambridge has quite good maternity / adoption leave provisions, including a graduated return scheme. (And its paternity leave provision is still better than that of many employers who only pay statutory paternity pay). The issue really is: who is going to pay? In theory, under full economic costing, the overhead component of grants could include provision for maternity leave / maternity leave cover / extension of contract. (This would be on an institutional basis, not per grant.) In practice, I think that full-economic costing has not been in place long enough for it to be anything other than a disaster if the Research Councils were to stop paying for maternity leave. I think it would also be good for a new Concordat to emphasise the importance of managing maternity leave well, both what individual staff members can do and what PIs can do. (For example look at the Institute of Physics Best Practice in Career Break Management, http://www.iop.org/activity/diversity/Career_Breaks/file_2130.pdf).
2. Encouraging flexible working would be good, too.

Are women disproportionately disadvantaged by contract research careers? If so, why and what could be done?

1. In some respects women are at an advantage in being able to continue working as contract researchers at older ages. Many senior scientists and managers think of contract positions as "training posts" through which we should pass on the way to something better. Because, they are not seen as "proper" jobs, men above a certain age (who are perceived as needing a real career) are no longer selected for them, whilst women can still get employed, because we'll "make do". This has certainly happened to my husband and myself. In my field (epidemiology) there is a real need for teams of professionals to work together for long periods of time under a PI. We can't all aspire to be independent PIs (nor would we all want to be) but we are never-the-less crucial to the work. Currently the only way we can be funded, is as contract researchers but the short-termism and lack of recognition we get from the University is a big disincentive, frustrating both the researchers and the PIs who try to motivate and reward them. I have been a contract researcher for 22 years now, I'm definitely not still in training and I manage a team of about 30 RAs and technicians. I love my job but it is frustrating that the University barely recognise my existence and I still can't apply for grants as the sole PI, because my own contract doesn't always last longer than the grant I wish to apply for.
2. Yes.
 - a. There is anecdotal evidence that women in their thirties may be at a disadvantage when applying for jobs as they are perceived as being likely to want to take time off to have children. The issue here is not so much how the time-off will be paid for but the disruption to the project - if the team does not get the papers out they may all be out of a job. This can be a particular problem when the PI is also in a fixed-term position (e.g. Royal Society University Research Fellow).
 - b. Even though women can take maternity leave, possibly have the contract extended, and, where applicable, make use of graduated return schemes, they may find it very hard to find another position when their contract finishes. They may find that their contract is not renewed or they may find that they cannot negotiate a suitably flexible working arrangement on a new contract.
 - c. Women may be more likely to be employed on fixed term contracts. This may be from choice, as they want to continue to do science but, because of family responsibilities, they don't want to take on either the responsibility of leading their own group or the multiple responsibilities for research, leading a group, teaching and general administration simultaneously. It may also be a result of circumstances if it is the only job a woman can find in the same geographical area as her partner's. Because they are generally not building-up reputations as independent researchers they usually eventually reach a point where they have to leave, either because their PI wants to replace them with someone cheaper or because the money runs out. Even women who have built up a reputation as an independent researcher may have to leave if funding in their area dries up.
 - d. The operation of unconscious bias. Most people hold unconscious beliefs about the roles of men and women. Such models are not, in themselves, bad things but a cognitive necessity for operating in a social world. Unfortunately, if care is not taken, they can also lead us to make poor judgments. In general, men and women hold the same unconscious beliefs about gender roles. In one of the classic studies, the same CV was sent to academic psychologists with either a male name or a female name on it. Both men and women were more likely to evaluate the CV with

a male name more positively - not by a large amount but still significantly. Simulations have shown that even a bias far too small to be likely to be measurable can lead to significant segregation at the higher levels of an eight-level hierarchy starting from an even split. The effect of unconscious bias in a situation in which people are applying to have a job at all rather than for promotion is likely to be particularly disadvantageous. Note that unconscious bias can operate both ways: selectors can perceive a woman as a less suitable candidate and women can perceive themselves as a less suitable candidate. Remedies: ensure all staff responsible for selection, appraisal, careers advice, transferable skills training are familiar with the concept of unconscious bias, ensure all staff have access to unbiased advice - through mentoring, peer mentoring, appropriate careers advice. Various specific ideas are in Virginia Valian's book, 'Why so Slow: the Advancement of Women' (especially Chapter 14), from Virginia Valian's website (<http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/psych/faculty/valian/valian.htm>) Gender Equity Project and Tutorials for Change, resources at the University of Michigan's STRIDE site, and in the report 'Beyond Bias and Barriers' (http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11741).

General Comments

1. The system of having research done almost entirely by people (regardless of gender) on fixed-term contracts is wasteful of human, financial and capital resources.
2. So far, attempts to recover the investment lost when women leave science to have children have focused on encouraging women on career breaks to return to scientific careers. It is a far more effective use of resources to provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that women do not leave in the first place. This is borne out by the experience of companies such as Pfizer.
3. Within science, there is a blatantly sexist assumption that having children is no barrier to men but that women who have children cannot pursue scientific careers, despite evidence that given appropriate support at critical points in their careers women with children can achieve at the highest levels. The Research Councils and the Universities combine to produce a system, which is institutionally sexist.
4. The most important area for the new Concordat to address is how to encourage sufficiently flexible working arrangements and career paths combined with sufficient stability to retain women within scientific careers.

Cambridge Association for Women in Science and Engineering
June 2007.

What is the Concordat?

Contract Research Staff or Principal Investigator?

What you need to know and how you can find out more!

The Concordat came into force in 1996 and set standards for career management of Contract Research Staff. Its signatories recognised that fixed term grants play a major role in the funding of research and that this situation will continue. They also recognised that CRS make a significant contribution to research, should benefit from their experience and gain skills.

1. **Recruitment** - opportunities are publicised widely, training is offered and there are re-entry routes for researchers who have had career breaks
2. **Supervision and Regular Review** - to ensure training opportunities are known and suitability for a research career can be assessed.
3. **Terms and Conditions of Employment** - in line with established staff.
4. **In Service Training** - both specialist and general training is available.
5. **Career Guidance and Development** - opportunities in academia and outside.

The Concordat also contains special initiatives to encourage the participation of women in research. The salaries element of the grant can be used to pay for maternity leave and additional funding can be claimed to pay for maternity cover or to extend the grant.

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/activities/RCI/downloads/rciconcordat.pdf

What is the University Career Management Scheme for Contract Research Staff?

The University of Cambridge Career Management Scheme recognises that “Contract Research Staff are a highly qualified, skilled and experienced workforce and it is in the best interests of the University to retain and utilise their expertise”. However, due to the nature of the majority of research projects, many CRS contracts will be terminated at the end of their project. The University Career Management Scheme aims to help CRS take responsibility for their future career throughout their period of employment.

CRS are encouraged to:

1. Participate in the training available through the Staff Development Office.
2. Undertake on the job training, be involved in the preparation of research grants and, where their work is substantial, should be included as co-applicants.
3. Attend conferences, present their research and make new contacts.
4. Publish their work and be given authorship on papers they contribute to.
5. Teach or demonstrate (if acceptable to the funding body).

CRS have access to the same University facilities and services as equivalent permanent staff. CRS are also entitled to an **appraisal** every two years. Appraisal is not intended to replace regular meetings to discuss work and career progress, rather to assist staff in the development of their careers. The discussions should include realistic career options outside of research or other work in universities so that a decision to pursue a university research career is made consciously rather than by default.

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/policy/cms.html

What training is available at the University?

The Staff Development web pages detail all the courses available at the University. Courses are available in: Personal Development, Management training, Career Development, Equality and Diversity Training, Communication Skills and Educational Development along with a dedicated Researchers Development Programme.

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/staffdev/

The University Careers Service has targeted services available to CRS.

www.careers.cam.ac.uk/

**Most CRS do not end up with a permanent academic position.
It is in their best interests to develop transferable skills.**

I'm pregnant, what do I need to know?

Women who are pregnant and wish to take maternity leave must notify Personnel by the 15th week before their expected due date. Whilst pregnant, women are entitled to time off with pay to attend antenatal appointments, including classes. As a result of a recent change in the law, women are now entitled to a maximum of 52 weeks maternity leave or adoption leave following adoption of a child under 5, regardless of their length of service. This consists of 18 weeks at full pay, 21 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay (if entitled) and up to 13 weeks of unpaid leave. Women are also allowed **10 keeping in touch days** to come into work during their maternity leave with out losing their maternity entitlement. The salaries element of a grant from a signatory to the Concordat can be used to pay for maternity leave and additional funding can be claimed to pay for maternity cover or to extend the grant.

Flexible Working - all employees who have 26 weeks service at the date of application and have children under 6 years of age, have a statutory right to apply to work flexibly.

Parental Leave - all employees with a year's service have a right to parental leave.

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/policy/maternity.shtml

What should happen at the end of my contract?

CRS who have been employed continuously for more than two years are entitled to redundancy payment if their contracts are not extended. The process is:

1. A written invitation to a consultation meeting. This must be done at least four months prior to the end of a contract.
2. A Consultation Meeting with Personnel to discuss redundancy. Personnel can help drafting CV's and will support applications within the University. The University Careers Service provides access to specialist Careers Advisors who are able to help investigate other avenues outside the University. CRS are also allowed time off for job interviews and job hunting.
3. There is the right to appeal if CRS believe they have been treated unfairly..

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/contracts/
www.dti.gov.uk/employment/redundancy/index.html

Produced by Cambridge Association for Women in Science and Engineering,
WiSETI and Cambridge University Personnel Division.

Cambridge AWiSE response to the Draft Concordat.

Cambridge Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology is a voluntary regional network for women in SET in academia and industry and for women wishing to return to work after a career break. Our networking meetings give women the opportunity to find out information and to make new friends and professional contacts. Our website (www.camawise.org.uk) provides information relevant to women in SET and we provide access to the MentorSET women's mentoring scheme.

In May 2007, following reports that the Concordat for Career Management of Contract Research Staff was being revised, Cambridge AWiSE organised a networking meeting for Contract Research Staff. This meeting gave women (and men) the opportunity to voice their opinions and experiences relating to short-term contracts and the chance to discuss what they would like to see in a revised Concordat. Their comments are summarised in the document attached. We hope that these comments prove useful.

Comments on the Draft Concordat

Cambridge AWiSE strongly supports the general principles of the new Concordat and especially, Principle Six: Diversity and Equality.

Within this, Cambridge AWiSE particularly applauds the commitment to flexible working as the default provision.

However, specific arrangements for maternity leave cover or the ability to extend a research grant at the end of a period of paid maternity leave in the 1996 Concordat are no longer part of the new Concordat. Cambridge AWiSE would like to see this provision re-instated in the new Concordat.

Other Comments:

Recognition and Value

p13: Employers are not encouraged to value and afford equal treatment to all researchers. They are legally obliged to value and afford equal treatment according to the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002.

“... not limit employees to identification with an individual research project of finite duration”.

This would require a reversal of attitudes to CRS and a fundamental change in the way that research is funded. While research is primarily funded through short-term grants, individual researchers will continue to be associated with these grants rather than as an important resource within an organisation or university.

We are, however, very pleased to see this and would hope that more experienced CRS would be able to progress ensuring that the skills they possess are maintained within the organisation and not lost at the end of a grant.

p15: “Where resources allow ...”. This part of the sentence should be removed as resources will always be limited! Including this rider gives organisations' an ‘excuse’ not to attempt to financially support researchers between grants.

p17: In our experience, promotion opportunities are not transparent and we are very pleased that this paragraph forms part of the Concordat.

p18: Research managers/PI should already be actively managing their CRS as part of their responsibility as CRS supervisors. They, however, should not necessarily have to give careers advice (potentially only ever having worked in academia themselves!). They should, however, be able to direct their research staff to the appropriate people within the Careers Service and Staff Development Departments.

Support and Career Development

p21: The point of this paragraph is not immediately clear, please clarify.

p23: We believe this paragraph should start: “All employers will ensure that their staff can access”.

p24: Please clarify this paragraph, and perhaps combine with p28.

p25: We would like the emphasis of this paragraph to change to make it the researchers responsibility to decide on the transferable skills they wish to develop. This should be in agreement with, and supported by, their research manager/PI (who should be aware of the training courses and teaching opportunities available to their CRS). In our experience it is, however, often difficult for CRS to get permission from PI's to attend training courses. The benefit of this training should be stressed more strongly within academic departments.

p28: Appraisal schemes should be in place already. Appraisers should be up-to-date with support schemes/training opportunities available to their CRS. There should be a clear way of reporting problems/suggestions for improvements and employers should be obliged to respond.

Researchers Responsibility

p34: Research Managers/PI's should be approachable, support the career development of their CRS and receive up-to-date information from Staff Development and the Careers Service detailing the sources of support available to their CRS.

CRS should be encouraged to take advantage of networking and mentoring opportunities both within their institution and within their local community.

Diversity and Equality

Cambridge AWiSE applauds the principles outlined in this section, particularly that flexible working should be the default provision. However, Cambridge AWiSE is disappointed that the specific provision for maternity cover or the extension of a grant after a period of paid maternity leave is not included in the new draft Concordat. Cambridge AWiSE would like to see this section re-instated.

p37: Taking a period of maternity leave/extended sick leave will, of course, always be disruptive while research is carried out on short-term contracts. While this remains the case there are no simple ways of solving this. However, most women give a significant period of notice before going on leave and in large research groups better team management could greatly reduce this disruption.

Monitoring and Review

Cambridge AWiSE has a major problem with this section, what is it that is to be monitored? Many CRS on their first contract have no firm intention of remaining in an academic career or of remaining in a particular institution. Institutions therefore have to support:

- Those who will go into permanent academic careers (10-20%)
- Those who wish to remain in academic research but do not wish to take permanent academic posts (small unknown %).
- The majority who will have to leave the sector.

p46: We understand that the Concordat is a voluntary agreement but this paragraph gives the document even less “teeth”. We would like to see this removed or amended.

p47: What is the measure of “attractiveness” of a research career?