



Funding for
the future of
ageing well

VIVENSA FOUNDATION

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Funder Action Plan

First published: March 2021

Last updated: February 2026

The Concordat and action plan

The [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) ('the Concordat') is an agreement between four key stakeholder groups (funders, institutions, researchers, and managers of researchers) aimed at improving support for researchers and research careers in higher education in the UK. The Concordat sets out a number of obligations, for each of the four stakeholder groups, which must be upheld in order for its aims to be realised. The Vivensa Foundation became a signatory of the Concordat on 11th March 2020, and as such is committed to upholding those responsibilities targeted at the Funder stakeholder group. One such responsibility, for all signatories, is to publish an action plan within 12 months of signing up to the Concordat.

Our action plan, first published in March 2021, is based on the defining principles of the Concordat: environment and culture, employment, and professional and career development. For each of the outlined Funder commitments, it describes the current situation, including policies the Foundation already has in place, as well as the changes the Foundation intends to make. The action plan will be updated as appropriate and published.

Our vision

The Foundation is committed to promoting a dynamic, diverse, and inclusive research system.

There is, however, always more work to be done as illustrated in this action plan. As a funder, the Foundation expects organisations affiliated with its awardees to support their researchers and hold similar values. For the values of the Concordat to be successfully implemented, collaboration between the four stakeholder groups is required.

Reviewing actions

A formal review to assess our progress against these actions first took place in February 2023. Subsequently, the action plan is reviewed annually in February, with the oversight of our [Research Grants Committee](#), and an annual report is completed and provided to the Concordat Strategy Group as per the [Concordat reporting guidance](#).

Table 1 – New and in-progress actions: the below table summarises actions which are either in-progress, or which have been introduced and/or completed since the last action plan update (i.e. since February 2025).

1. Environment and Culture					
Commitments	Summary of actions	Initial deadline	Lead	Result	New deadline
i) Include requirements which promote equitable, inclusive, and positive research cultures and environments, in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies.	Terms and conditions				
	Include the AMRC Anti-bullying & harassment guidelines explicitly in the research grant terms and conditions and as part of all new funding call documents.	February 2022	Director of Research	In progress	February 2027
	Review and revise the research grant terms and conditions so that breaches and misconduct could prevent host institutions (or awardees) from applying for grants in the future.	February 2022	Director of Research	In progress	February 2027
	Grant reporting				
	Introduce a reporting mechanism which requires all researchers employed on the grant to report back independently on their experience of the research culture and whether the plans for support set out in the application were carried out.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	In progress	February 2027
ii) Consider how funding opportunities and policies can accommodate different patterns and ways of working and promote the wellbeing and mental health of researchers.	Policies				
	Review the Terms and Conditions of research grants and include an item stating that the Foundation is supportive of researchers taking compassionate leave or breaks due to ill health. We will also review our stance around parental and sick leave, particularly for research students.	February 2022	Director of Research	In progress	February 2027

2. Employment					
Commitments	Summary of actions	Initial deadline	Lead	Result	New deadline
	Grant reporting				

i) Include requirements which support the improvement of working conditions for researchers, in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies	Introduce a reporting technique where all researchers employed on the grant report back the working conditions including infrastructure and resources.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	In progress	February 2027
	Policies				
	Post-Researchfish, introduce a question(s) into our end-of-grant review forms which allow us to track the careers of those working on / funded through our grants.	April 2025	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	Complete	Monitor (ongoing)
	Update the Foundation's guidance on eligible costs to allow all applicants (including those with permanent contracts) to apply for justified directly allocated salary costs.	June 2025	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	Complete	Monitor (ongoing)
	Introduce an undergraduate research placement scheme, to provide opportunities for undergraduate students to undertake ageing-related research.	May 2025	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	Complete (ongoing)	Monitor (ongoing)

3. Professional and Career development					
Commitments	Summary of actions	Initial deadline	Lead	Result	New deadline
i) Incorporate specific professional development requirements in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies. This should include researchers' engagement in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata per year, and evidence of effective career development planning.	Terms and conditions				
	Review and revise the research grant terms and conditions so that if a grant holder fails to provide the training and support set out in their plans, the Foundation has the option to consider the circumstances and preclude them from applying for further funding for a period of time, if thought appropriate.	February 2022	Director of Research	In progress	February 2027
	Grant reporting				
	Introduce a reporting technique where all researchers (not just the PI) employed on the grant report confidentially on the professional development training, they have been given, and how this compares to what was proposed in the original application.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	In progress	February 2027

Table 2 – Ongoing actions: the below table summarises those actions which were completed prior to the last action plan update (i.e. before February 2025) and which are now monitored on an ongoing basis.

1. Environment and Culture			
Commitments	Summary of actions	Initial deadline	Lead
i) Include requirements which promote equitable, inclusive, and positive research cultures and environments, in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies.	Funding calls		
	The Foundation expects host organisations for its funded researchers to be aligned with these principles. The Foundation asks applicants to give details about their research environment and institutional infrastructure and capacity as well as relevant accreditations (e.g., Athena Swan recognition).	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	The Foundation sets out expectations for managers of researchers and host organisations when advertising new calls.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Include questions in application forms focusing on how host organisations approach equity, diversity, and inclusion.	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Launch the Vivensa Foundation Academy Excellence Awards – a personal award of £120k over three years – with nominees being assessed on criteria that include those aligned to the Concordat principles, for example: leadership in capacity building and/or mentoring; integration of equity, diversity and inclusion in research.	September 2023	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	For future rounds of our Proleptic Post-doctoral Fellowship scheme, ask Heads of Department how they have actively encouraged candidates from under-represented groups to apply for the scheme.	March 2024	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Terms and conditions		
	The Foundation has a research fraud and misconduct item in its research grant terms and conditions ensuring that research is conducted according to best practice and meeting the standards of rigour and integrity set out in the Concordat.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Grant reporting		
	Revise the questions in the periodic Progress Reports to increase the focus on the research environment asking PIs about their contribution to promoting an equitable, inclusive, and positive research culture.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Policies		
	The Foundation has an Equality and Diversity policy which aims to ensure that there is no bias in its systems, processes, behaviours and culture and to recognise, learn and work with our partners to create inclusive communities.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Head of Communities & Governance
Ensure that prior to any event an equality impact assessment is completed using an adapted version of the UKRI template .	April 2021	All Vivensa Foundation Staff	

	Agree and publish a statement on Modern Slavery.	June 2021	Head of Communities & Governance
ii) Consider how funding opportunities and policies can accommodate different patterns and ways of working and promote the wellbeing and mental health of researchers.	Funding opportunities		
	The Foundation offers the option to complete fellowships on a part time basis (rather than simply three years, full time) which allows individuals who have other responsibilities to apply.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Include a question(s) in our application forms regarding the support that will be provided to those working on the grant, and any health / wellbeing support that will be in place for the proposed team.	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Explicitly state in our application forms and guidance documentation that we are supportive of applicants including justified career development / support and/or staff wellbeing costs in their proposed budget.		
	Policies		
The Foundation is supportive of those taking maternity / paternity leave or time out for caring responsibilities and expects the institution the researcher is affiliated with to financially support them during this time.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	
iii) Ensure that funding call requirements and selection processes offer equality of opportunity between different groups of researchers, recognise personal contexts, and promote positive research cultures and	Funding call requirements		
	The Foundation's fellowship grants are open to different groups of researchers and recognises personal contexts.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Ensure that the eligibility and assessment criteria for calls are clear and provide suitable opportunities across the career experience and disciplinary range.	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Host webinars to support applicants in preparation of applications. Record them and make them available online to ensure that they are accessible to a wide audience.	May 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Funding call selection processes		
	As part of the selection process, professionals applying for training fellowships are compared to only those of the same broad professional group.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Develop a strategy to start gathering and tracking data in support of monitoring and strengthening diversity.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Continue efforts to broaden the pool of reviewers with respect to career-stage and protected characteristics.	October 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
Give due consideration, where feasible, to family and caring responsibilities in setting timelines and deadlines for funding calls.	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	

working conditions.			
---------------------	--	--	--

2.	Employment		
Commitments	Summary of actions	Initial deadline	Lead
i) Include requirements which support the improvement of working conditions for researchers, in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies.	Funding calls		
	There are questions in the application form relating to the credentials of the department (e.g., Athena Swan) which is taken into consideration when scoring.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Build into the funding criteria clear expectations regarding working conditions (including positive leadership and management of researchers/staff employed on the grant).	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Terms and conditions		
	The Foundation requires the host organisation to ensure that a safe working environment is provided for all individuals associated with the project.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	The Foundation requires the host organisation to ensure that the Grant Project is conducted in a competent and safe manner and that any researcher associated with it is properly advised, forewarned of any risk to health.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	The Foundation requires that there be adequate evidence that the appropriate infrastructure and resources will be made available to the Principal Investigator for the purpose of the project.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Grant reporting		
	Principal Investigators are required to write Progress Reports which ask them to describe the aims of the project in the forthcoming year and if they need any additional support to help them meet these aims.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Consider modifying Progress Reports to be replaced by, or supplemented with, meetings (in person, by telephone, by video-conference).	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Revise the questions in the Progress Reports to have an increased focus on working conditions and culture.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Policies		
	The Foundation works closely with institutions and awardees to ensure that they are supported through the impact of external shocks beyond their control, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that they have the correct measures in place to complete work safely.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Become an accredited Living Wage funder and thus require that all posts wholly or partly funded by the Foundation are being paid at the real living wage wherever possible.	May 2023	Head of Communities & Governance

ii) Review the impact of relevant funding call requirements on researchers' employment, particularly in relation to career progression and lack of job security.	The Foundation has recently launched a new question set in Researchfish to enable the tracking of career progress. N.B. this action has since been rescinded as we have ended our use of Researchfish.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Revise the questions in the Progress Reports to have an increased focus on providing experience which offers a diversity of employment opportunities for ECRs and/or support their career progression.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
iii) Support institutions to develop policies and frameworks to promote sustainable employment arrangements, enhance job security and provide opportunities for career progression.	Consider introducing proleptic appointments for post-doctoral researchers (with success-related employment commitment from host institution).	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Where appropriate, consider allowing post-doctoral researchers without tenure to apply as a PI (with payment of their salary) when accompanied with a letter of support from their host institution.	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
iv) Consider the balance of their relevant funding streams in	The Foundation has a variety of funding schemes including fellowships and studentships which are targeted at Early Career Researchers (ECRs).	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	The Foundation's Fellowships are open to healthcare professionals which helps them move into research.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Review all fellowship opportunities to ascertain if there are any missing groups / opportunities.	March 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team

providing access to research funding and its impact at all career levels.	Widen the scope / remit of our Open Access Fees fund, so that it can also be used to apply for funds for additional conference / meeting attendance to disseminate the findings of our funded research.	April 2024	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
---	---	------------	--------------------------------

3. Professional and Career development			
Commitments	Summary of actions	Initial deadline	Lead
i) Incorporate specific professional development requirements in relevant funding calls, terms and conditions, grant reporting, and policies. This should include researchers' engagement in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata per year, and evidence of effective career	Funding calls		
	The Foundation asks fellowship applicants about the training they will undertake as part of their project and PIs what training and support for career development their research team will receive.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	The Foundation provides opportunities for Fellows who have recently completed their Fellowship to participate on the selection panel for new fellowship applications.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Grant reporting		
	Review the questions in Progress Reports, with a view to ensuring they have appropriate focus on actions and achievements resulting from plans for professional development that were set out in the application.	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Policies		
The Foundation hosts an annual event for ECRs, providing them with the opportunity to present their research to one another, and to engage in workshops focussed on aspects of personal/professional development.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team	

development planning.			
ii) Embed the Concordat Principles and researcher development into research assessment strategies and processes.	The Foundation asks both fellowship applicants and their supervisors to outline the training to be undertaken during the period of fellowship.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	The Foundation's strategic framework encourages multidisciplinary connections to be made which will encourage networking and facilitate career development.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Incorporate professional development of all researchers associated with the project as a fundamental element of the assessment criteria in new calls.	April 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Introduce a mechanism to enable early career researchers to observe Research Grants Committee meetings where applications are being considered.	May 2023	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
iii) Acknowledge that a large proportion of the researchers they fund will move on to careers beyond academia and consider how they can encourage and support this within their remit.	The Foundation's funding mechanisms encourage researchers to make connections with other sectors beyond academia, providing increased diversity of opportunity.	Ongoing as of March 2021	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Investigate how the Foundation's fellowships can provide opportunities (e.g. secondments) to gain experience in sectors beyond academia (e.g. industrial placements).	February 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Consider the content of the Early Career Researchers' seminar programme and feature "non-standard" career development examples.	January 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Feature Success Stories on the website showcasing previous Vivensa Foundation's award holders who have developed careers outside research.	March 2022	Vivensa Foundation Grants Team
	Through the Vivensa Academy , introduce a mechanism for ageing-related researchers to apply for funding to undertake secondments in / collaborate with community-led organisations, increasing their exposure to sectors beyond academia.	December 2024	Head of Communities & Governance