

## Implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

### Response by the Wellcome Trust

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1. The Wellcome Trust is the largest charity in the UK. It funds innovative biomedical research, in the UK and internationally, spending over £600 million each year to support the brightest scientists with the best ideas. The Wellcome Trust supports public debate about biomedical research and its impact on health and wellbeing.
2. We welcome the Concordat as we have long recognised the need to support the careers of researchers and, in many respects, have led the way in the development of funding policy and practice in the area. As a signatory, in addition to complying with the basic requirement that “The Wellcome Trust expects organisations that hold Wellcome Trust grants to adopt the principles of the revised Concordat for the management of their researchers”<sup>1</sup>, the Trust has numerous policies and practices which are fully consistent with the Concordat.
3. Some key examples are listed below with reference to the most relevant Concordat principles:
  - a. Principle 1 – We offer a comprehensive range of prestigious studentship and fellowship awards that provide training and career support for basic and clinical scientists, dentists and veterinarians. The awards are tough to get – competition is fierce – but there are many opportunities for talented researchers.
  - b. Principle 1 – The Wellcome Trust provides the holders of our non-clinical research fellowships with significant salary supplements which are awarded in addition to the fellows’ basic pay as set by their employing institutions (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Managing-a-grant/Finance-and-employment/WTD004092.htm>).
  - c. Principle 2 - Value in People awards were launched by the Trust in July 2002 and provide Trust-funded universities with funds to help with the recruitment, career progression and retention of key staff by providing a salary for new recruits until a post or fellowship becomes available or bridging funding for researchers on fixed-term contracts, for example (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-science/Grants/Other-initiatives/WTD004452.htm>).
  - d. Principles 3 & 4 – The principal applicant/fellow and each researcher employed on a grant is automatically provided with a standard travel to meetings allowance of between £1,000 and £2,000 *per annum* to attend scientific meetings (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-science/Application-information/WTD004084.htm>).
  - e. Principles 3 & 4 – Funds provided on Trust grants may be used flexibly to cover the costs of formal transferable skills and personal development training courses for our postdoctoral researchers and fellows.
  - f. Principles 3 & 4 – Free communication and engagement training is available for all Wellcome research grantholders and their group members (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Education-resources/Researcher-support/index.htm>).

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/About-us/Policy/Policy-and-position-statements/WTX049387.htm>

- g. Principle 5 – The Trust holds regular meetings of its fellows where career development is discussed in detail amongst other topics. In addition, Trust staff often visit universities to talk about the issues that prospective candidates should consider before making an application.
- h. Principle 5 - The use of a preliminary application stage for all our personal awards mean that candidates benefit from early advice on whether they are competitive and suitable to make a full application for a fellowship.
- i. Principle 6 - Time (full- or part-time) spent outside a research environment is taken into consideration when assessing eligibility to apply for support for all Wellcome Trust fellowship schemes.
- j. Principle 6 – The Trust offers a Research Career Re-Entry Fellowship scheme to those who want to return to high-quality research after a break of at least two years (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-science/Grants/Fellowships-and-personal-awards/Basic-biomedical-fellowships/WTD004380.htm>).
- k. Principle 6 – Funds may be requested for the full- or part-time salary costs of fellows or staff that carry out the research and once awards are made, individuals can also change the full- or part-time basis of their employment. The Trust will supplement grants by the actual costs incurred in meeting the salary of those on maternity/paternity/sick leave (less any recoverable statutory pay). In all these situations, the tenure of the award can be extended as appropriate.
- l. Principle 7 – Our End of Grant Reports request information on the principal applicant/fellow and all staff employed on Trust grants. This includes their current posts, how the grant has contributed to their professional development and any training provided to other researchers.
- m. Principle 7 – We have developed a longitudinal prospective study to track Trust award holders' careers over time. The “Wellcome Trust Career Tracker” will allow us to gain a better understanding of the career progression and career choices that award holders make; this will help to inform the Trust's provision of research and career support over time (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-science/Career-paths/WTDV026334.htm>).

4. These examples illustrate that providing a high-quality experience for researchers, as well as supporting excellence in research has driven the development of Trust funding schemes and policies. One of our current Strategic Aims is focussed on developing people to foster a research community that can advance and use knowledge. Going forwards we envisage that funding the brightest scientists with the best ideas will remain at the heart of Trust funding schemes and policies.