



The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers NTU

Action Plan 2017-19 – development and implementation plan and 2019 review

1. The six-year review in context

Since our successful retention of the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2017, the University has started to build on its strategy [Creating the University of the Future](#) through our NTU2025 strategy process. **The Valuing Ideas** theme of NTU's Strategic Plan is focussed on research and scholarship and with the following ambition: *'We possess strong relationships and robust processes that enable discovery, drive innovation, and change the world, our students, and ourselves. They promote our disciplinary breadth, our intellectual depth, and our commitment to working across boundaries'*. The NTU2025 strategy process was launched in September 2018 with the NTU Colleagues' Strategy Conference and under the **Valuing Ideas** theme has established the **'Changing Lives through Research and Practice'** lens which will focus on aligning our reputation for Research, Innovation and Practice with that of our Teaching and Learning. The creation of a new role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation in October 2018 signalled a further step-change in NTU's ambition for research in support of its strategy.

NTU has recognised three career pathways for academic colleagues - Teaching and Scholarship, Teaching and Practice, and Teaching and Research. The different pathways reflect the varied and valued contribution made by all colleagues to support delivery of our strategic ambitions and help to increase the profile and standing of teaching, research, scholarship and practice activity. The pathways enable us to be open and transparent about the expectations of different academic jobs at NTU. They carry parity of esteem, provide equal opportunities for recognition and progression, and contain the ability for movement between them. The pathways will be underpinned by appropriate professional development support, internal communities and networking opportunities, reward and recognition mechanisms, and effective processes for recruitment, promotion and appraisal.

2. Internal review

The Concordat Management Group (CMG) is the group leading on management of the Concordat Plan and recruited Concordat Champions to ensure stronger links with Schools. The CMG is chaired by The Researcher Development Manager who is also a substantive member of Academic Research Leadership Team, Research Committee and works closely with the Research Office and through working within Organisational Development which is part of HR, has access to and influence with key internal

stakeholders. The Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research was a member of CMG until the end of 2018 and was also on the Athena Swan Group and previously chair of the Self-Assessment Team. The Director of the Research Office is a substantive member of the CMG. HR is represented by a HR Business Partner and linkages are maintained with the Head of Equality Diversity and Inclusion through regular meetings. The Concordat Management Group has met regularly during the period of the two-year plan and provided updates through university committees.

CMG has reviewed the plan and drew heavily on responses to the 2017 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and Principle Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) data and used our engagement at quarterly the Researcher Fora to obtain a more nuanced picture of researchers' views. This has been further informed by Associate Deans for Research through individual meetings and university fora. The Concordat Management Group is overseen by University Research Committee which receives regular updates. A strategic discussion took place at Research Committee at the end of 2018 to discuss progress and ambitions aligned to our strategy and has informed this review and forward plan. The group is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation and membership includes Associate Deans for Research, Strategic Research Theme Leads, Head of the Research Office, Researcher Development Manager/Chair of CMG. Further meetings took place with newly appointed and established Associate Deans for Research following their discussions with researchers in their Schools. Wider discussions on researcher career development and progression have taken place through the NTU2025 strategic planning process particularly around early career researchers and raising the profile of research.

3. Key achievements and progress

Details of progress against each principle has been included within the 2017/19 plan. The following highlights some key aspects of this progress:

- Greater engagement with Schools through the recruitment of School Concordat Champions who report to School Research Committees and provide local context and intelligence. We have seen high attendance and engagement from Champions which has highlighted areas of best practice and local issues in relation to the Concordat principles. Enhanced engagement and support for Researchers via termly Researcher Fora established across all three campuses with researchers informing key themes and agendas. Attendance has increased by 20% and this provides a good platform for engaging Researchers' views and experiences to further inform CMG.
- Improved access to induction for researchers and updates on the research environment through a rolling Researcher Induction launched and incorporated into the quarterly Researcher Forum events. Agenda items have been informed by Researchers and Champions and include REF, Procurement, Publishing and Open Access. These events have taken place quarterly across all three campuses.
- A step change in increased participation in appraisal and development discussions with 99.2% appraisal completions across NTU in 2018 from 60% in 2016, together with new mandatory training for appraisers and the introduction of NTU-wide Individual Research Plans (IRPs) to identify development to support plans. The appraisal conversation is one of the most

significant and important events that an individual will engage with each year and the high levels of completions is an excellent platform for NTU to build performance, recognition and development.

- Enhanced professional development to support researchers and their line managers through the launch of a new [Researcher Development Gateway](#) aligned to the Researcher Development Framework with enhanced resources assessed by subject experts within NTU.
- Improved support for research impact through development of new interdisciplinary research themes and an enhanced programme of internal and external support led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Researcher Development Manager in conjunction with Associate Deans for Research and Director of Research. Additional events and policy impact support has been provided through Nottingham Civic Exchange.

4. Overarching plans for 2019 to 2021 and broad measures of success

The NTU Strategy Board through the Valuing Ideas Programme Board has commissioned activities and milestones to deliver the vision and strategy and is overseen by the University Board of Governors. Lens Strategy boards have been established to review the key strands of the emerging 2025 work to realise our ambitions and further governance structures will oversee the implementation phase.

The main approaches that we are adopting to achieve this ambition are:

- To implement a robust strategy to expand our research excellence and further our capability and capacity to be a valued partner in projects of high commercial and public salience – this includes investing in new academic and professional services roles with researcher and research development responsibilities at their core.
- To develop and nurture the next generation of researchers – which spans our entire researcher base from research students through to Distinguished Professor and including Research Assistants, Research Fellows and Senior Research Fellows. In a related initiative we have also committed to apply for an institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award, under the new expanded framework, by 2019.
- Increased awareness of resources and development available for Researchers through development of a communications plan and creation of an online brochure bringing together researcher development support from across the University. Development of an early career future research leaders programme by December 2019 leading to a strong pipeline of future research leaders.

These institutional commitments, underpinned by relevant investments, evidence our enhanced commitment to further developing all our research active staff and to enhancing our appeal as a university serious about research and where researchers can grow, develop and sustain their careers. Full details can be seen in our 2019-21 action plan.

Principle 1: Recruitment and Selection: Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

Progress update

- A major piece of work was undertaken to support recruitment which looked more broadly than where we advertise. This work considered the NTU brand, current perceptions and what potential researchers value and respond to in advertising and job descriptions. This has led to the launch of the '[I see possibilities](#)' campaign in 2018 and featuring NTU researchers. Pay and reward are benchmarked where roles are hard to fill, and this is only done by exception. In the light of BREXIT, further work is being undertaken to minimise any potential negative impact on recruiting and selecting researchers with the highest potential.
- Development opportunities have been well attended with 92% advocacy and awareness through CROS and PIRLS remains high. However, feedback through Schools and Fora indicates that further work is required to support Early Career Researchers in their roles and wider development.
- Engagement with induction as reported via CROS and PIRLS in 2017 showed an inconsistent picture, with a small percentage of researchers reporting that they were not offered an induction, indicating further work is required to raise awareness of resources and events. Since the results of 2017 CROS and PIRLS were published, a Researcher Induction has been introduced to complement work taking place in Schools. This has been incorporated into the Quarterly Researcher Forum events and provides a rolling induction into key aspects/contacts in the research environment. Feedback has been positive since launch and further evaluation will be seen in the next CROS and PIRLS results later in 2019.

Action To be taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
We will review the Open, Transparent and Merit based Recruitment of Researchers (OTM-R) checklist.	Assessment of current recruitment practice: HR Recruitment Manager to complete a review against the standard and provide a proposal to the Research Concordat Management Group for consideration and discussion.	Full scale review commencing in 2017. HR, Recruitment Manager	This gap analysis will be incorporated in the wider review of recruitment processes being undertaken at NTU resulting in a year on year increase in applications for researcher vacancies by 2019.	
Deliver a bespoke package of career development activity to enhance employment offer for Researchers.	Bespoke annual series comprising three career development workshops on employability for Researchers within the next three years.	February 2019 Researcher Development Manager, supported by Organisational Development, PIs, Associate Deans for Research, Concordat Champions.	Increased engagement of researchers with developmental opportunities. As measured by attendance figures at workshops and meaningful measures such as feedback via focus groups and CROS and PIRLS data.	

Review of applicant numbers for vacant posts.	Pay and reward are benchmarked and reviewed annually to ensure highly competitive rates of pay attract the best staff.	Annually by April. HR, Associate Deans for Research	Monitor effectiveness through average number of applications for vacant posts and through exit interviews. To increase the year-on-year average number of applications per academic vacancy as measured by NTU's HR KPIs from an average of 9 in September 2016.	
HR to monitor Researcher participation in formal Corporate induction across all Schools.	Review consistency of induction process for researchers leading to enhanced engagement and participation.	February 2019 Concordat Management Group (CMG)	As measured by increased participation and satisfaction via CROS/PIRLS survey in induction process across all Schools and by gathering feedback at induction sessions for all attendees.	
Concordat Management Group to review anonymised new starter survey results for Researchers to look for improved developmental opportunities.	Following the launch of the new induction programme for Researchers and Line Managers of Researchers we will obtain feedback on the new induction process.	Review annually in October 2017 and 2018. Concordat Management Group (CMG)	Increasing engagement with induction and measure of positive feedback over the review period as measured by CROS and PIRLS feedback.	

Principle 2: Recognition and Value: Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world class research.

Progress update

- The Vice-Chancellor's Research Awards has been established as an annual award and complements the Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Award. Now in its second year, the award culminates in a celebration event and news coverage to celebrate success. In May 2018, we launched the first ever NTU Annual Team Awards. The Research Award received one of the highest number of nominations. Winners and highly commended teams took part in a major evening celebration. The awards will run annually.
- A major success during the period of this six-year review has been our achievement in appraisal completions. Increased participation in appraisal and development discussion has made a step change from 60% appraisal completions in 2016 to 99.2% appraisal completions across NTU in 2018. This, together with new mandatory training for appraisers has started to show the importance of appraisal. Reward linked to appraisal and delivery of objectives has been part of a transformational piece of work around appraisals and performance and the number of researchers being put forward for awards has grown in the review period. Some of this was reflected in the CROS and PIRLS data (CROS data 77% in 2017 v 43% in 2013 rate appraisal as useful/v useful), though it is anticipated that the additional emphasis on appraisal training (Your responsibilities as an appraiser workshops and mandatory online modules) will further improve perceptions of usefulness in the 2019 surveys and the results from the NTU wide staff survey undertaken in December 2018
- There have not been any conclusive results of Researcher Fora feedback showing any changes in representation on school and institutional committees, school concordat champions are represented on School Research Committees.

- Exit surveys are offered to all leavers, but are undertaken by only a small percentage of researchers and a review of feedback shows a range of reasons for leaving NTU, with remuneration and reward comprising a only a very small percentage. The number of positive comments largely outweigh any less positive comments.

Action to be Taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
Celebrate excellent contribution to research of NTU research staff.	Establish the Vice-Chancellor's Researcher Awards to formally celebrate excellent research.	March 2017 Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, supported by Associate Deans for Research, Concordat Champions.	Establish Annual Researcher Awards with high number of quality applications and all awardees will be honoured publicly.	
Monitor and support Researchers Participation in the annual Appraisal process.	Concordat Management Group to review.	Review annually in October 2017 and 2018 Concordat Management Group, HR	Increase in year on year participation rates of Researchers in the Appraisal process benchmarked against 2016 figures. Increase in overall satisfaction with the Appraisal process as measured by CROS data.	
Work with Schools to identify more opportunities for researchers to present their work and have appropriate representation at School and Institutional level (e.g. School Research Conferences and Committees). Use Researcher Forum meeting network to create discussion and gain feedback.	Increased participation of researchers within the research environment, including appropriate School committee representation.	November 2017 School Concordat Champions	Increase in associated satisfaction levels as monitored by CROS data in relation to 'value' of this group. Increased representation on School committees by 2019, benchmarked against 2016 figures.	
Promote increased number of Researchers being nominated for remuneration awards for eligible staff.	Increased awareness of contribution awards and sources of awards (NTU contribution awards) as part of the NTU appraisal process.	Review annually in April 2017 and 2018. Deans, Concordat Management Group, School Concordat Champions.	Increased number of Researchers being nominated for remuneration awards as benchmarked against 2016 figures.	

Offer all researchers the opportunity to complete exit surveys and develop annual review process by Concordat Management Group.	Feedback on researchers experience at NTU to inform future Concordat Management Group strategy following annual review process.	Review annually in June 2017 and 2018 HR, Concordat Management Group. Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Team Chair.	Annual Concordat Management Group review of data informs Concordat Management Group future strategy	
Concordat Management Group to receive verbal reports from Athena SWAN sub-group.	Reports at CMG.	Review annually in October 2017 and 2018. Via Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research /Athena SAT Chair	Improved alignment to strategy and areas for further development.	

Principle 3: researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment

Progress update

- The Researcher Forum events take place quarterly and has shown a 20% increase in numbers of attendees over the review period. Based on the success of these events in engaging researchers, we introduced a rolling Researcher Induction into them and themed the events based on areas identified by Researchers and with input from Concordat Champions.
- The Researcher Development Gateway underwent a substantial review in 2017/18 to remove older material and alter the balance between text-based material and more engaging audio-visual material. Key content was reviewed by local experts before and after the changes to ensure quality. A demonstration of the new sections/materials was given to the Concordat Management Group and the Researcher Forum Events in Spring 2018, both groups were extremely positive about the changes and revised resources. A further view took place in autumn 2018 and a revised platform with additional new content to complete gaps in the RDF was launched in December 2018. Usage has increased slightly, and it is recognised that further awareness of resources is required across the academy.
- Researcher Development is included with School Plans and mentoring is covered in all of them. Broader Researcher issues identified in the plans have been addressed in the past 18 months through more bespoke training and development including writing for publication, REF Impact and 100-word summaries. Data on mentoring is not readily available, though School Research Plans have made provision for this to happen. An NTU wide platform is being considered to raise the visibility of pairings.

Action to be Taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
Termly Researcher Fora meetings to be developed as a support network for researchers, and as a forum for promotion of appropriate resources.	Enhance NTU culture for networking of researchers.	Termly throughout 2017 and 2018. Reviewed in 2019 for effectiveness and increased engagement. Concordat Management Group.	Termly Researcher Fora meeting agendas developed through researchers' input. Increased attendance at Researcher Fora meetings benchmarked against 2016.	

Utilise School Research Plans and regular Town Hall meeting feedback as a source to support annual review and update of Researcher Development Gateway contents. Focus groups to garner feedback from researchers.	Continual informed development of Researcher Development Gateway as resource for academic and research staff and Doctoral students.	June 2017 and 2018 Organisational Development	Evidence of annual review and resulting enhancement of Researcher Development Gateway.	
Promote the NTU Mentoring Framework in Schools with a view to better supporting career researchers. Schools Associate Deans for Research and Professoriate now have a clearly articulated task of providing mentoring in Schools.	Enhanced opportunity for researchers to share career experiences to inform their own development.	Associate Deans for Research, Organisational Development, HR	Increase in mentoring activity and 'pairings' across all Schools, benchmarked against 2016 levels.	
Develop resources to articulate the possible career pathways for researchers to include guest speakers from Researchers at Town Hall meetings (Career Case Studies) and the typical attributes, knowledge and skills required for these (mapped to Researcher Development Framework).	Career case studies available. Review value of case studies through feedback from researchers.	July 2017 Review 2018 Organisational Development, HR	Launch of career 'Case Studies' as a resource. Review value of case studies through feedback from researchers. <i>Note: on hold during roll out of Career Pathways work .</i>	

Principle 4: The importance of researchers personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.

Progress Update

- We recruited Concordat Champions from Academic Schools in 2017 to be part of the Concordat Management Group. This has increased awareness of aspects of good practice in schools and highlighted areas where that good practice could be adopted elsewhere.
- In September 2017 NTU became a signatory to [Technicians Commitment](#). The Commitment aims to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research, across all disciplines.
- There is a mixed picture concerning awareness of development opportunities and it has been agreed that further work particularly on Early Career Researcher development and the

visibility of it will be a priority in the forward plan.

- 2018 saw the introduction of NTU-wide Individual Research Plans (IRPs) to be used in appraisal to inform plans, align them with school/institutional plans and associated development. CROS data 77% in 2017 (vs 43% in 2013) rated appraisal as useful/v useful. This is expected to rise following the introduction of IRPs and further training for appraisers and progress will be monitored following the 2019 CROS and PIRLS surveys. Participation in appraisal was 99% and this has been part a major strategic driver in support of NTU's University of the Future Strategy.

Action to be Taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
Enhance link from Schools and researchers to Concordat Management Group.	Create and implement a new role of School Concordat Champions to ensure formal links between Concordat Management Group and School researchers.	June 2017 Concordat Management Group, Academic Schools	School Concordat Champions to be in place in 2017 Evidence of regular dissemination of Concordat Management Group activity through regular Researcher Fora meetings, and engagement in appropriate committees at School level.	
Increase awareness of development opportunities	Communications strategy for promotion of career development opportunities, in collaboration with other appropriate NTU stakeholders to be implemented.	Spring 2018 Organisational Development, NTU Research Office, Careers Service, International Office, HR	Greater awareness of finding opportunities via CROS and PIRLS	
Increased engagement with Researcher Development Gateway.	Promote within the annual Appraisal process.	Annual Review. School Concordat Champions, Organisational Development, HR.	Increase in utilisation rates of Researcher Development Gateway resources within NTU's Virtual Learning Environment (NOW Portal), across the review period, benchmarked to 2016 figures.	
Concordat Management Group receiving annual reports on how School Research Plans aim to support researcher development.	School Research Plans to include information on career development activities for researchers.	Linked to annual School Research Plan cycle. Report to Concordat Management Group in June 2017 and June 2018. Associate Deans for Research.	Report to Concordat Management Group in June 2017 and June 2018.	

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Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to proactively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning

Progress Update

- The Researcher Forum events have proved to be a very useful way of engaging with Researchers and the numbers have increased steadily by 20% in the review period. The timing of the last CROS and PIRLS surveys in 2017 did not show the full extent of progress in this area and will be monitored in 2019 surveys. Appraisal completions and the introduction of an Individual Research Plan have increased discussions on development leading to further requests for in-house support or access to resources.

Action to be Taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
Termly Researcher Fora meetings to be held with researchers and their line- managers.	Raising awareness, providing update on latest researcher development initiatives and to tie-in to Appraisal.	Termly throughout 2017 and 2018. Reviewed in 2019 for effectiveness and increased engagement. Concordat Management Group, Organisational Development, HR.	Evidence that research staff have increasing awareness concerning the resources and initiatives available for support of their career development as measured through review of CROS data and increasing attendance at Researcher Fora meetings throughout 2017/18. Concordat Management Group in possession of data/intelligence on the participation of researchers in the Appraisal process and their overall experiences at NTU, through (e.g.) analysis and comparison of CROS data. Participation rates for Appraisal to increase across the review period.	

Principle 6: Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

Progress Update

- Unconscious bias has been developed as part of suite of Essential (Mandatory) Training and CROS and PIRLS shows good awareness of this and other resources available to line managers of researchers. Feedback from workshops is very positive and all interview panels must be chaired by someone with appropriate training. Euraxess is not used for all researcher roles but is available to recruiters and in the light of BREXIT we will review our strategy for recruitment Post BREXIT.

Action to be Taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
Widen the pool of available talent for research employment opportunities.	Use EURAXESS to advertise all relevant roles for researchers.	From March 2017. HR, Concordat Management Group.	All researcher roles advertised on EURAXESS.	
Promote appropriate training, resources and development opportunities for relevant NTU staff (e.g. line managers of researchers, interview panels).	Unconscious bias training for all staff involved in recruitment and selection NTU Interview Panel composition guidance to be promoted.	Initiated in 2016. Review effectiveness in October 2017 and October 2018. HR, Concordat Management Group. Dual membership of committees ensures that monitoring information is shared between Athena SWAN Self- Assessment Team and Concordat Management Group.	Increased awareness of, and participation of NTU staff in relevant training initiatives as measured by comparison of CROS and PIRLS data and appropriate event attendance data.	

Principle 7: The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

Progress Update

- The Concordat Management Group met regularly and engaged fully with School and institutional committees. It has reviewed and discussed reports regarding the consultation on the Concordat and maintained links with Athena SWAN developments and plans. Terms of Reference have been reviewed in 2017 and there is a regular review of actions and barriers through meetings.

Action to be Taken	Deliverable	Owner and Timescale	2019 Success Indicators	Status 2019
NTU Concordat Management Group to continue to meet a minimum of three times each year.	Concordat Management Group to discuss and formulate action plans including NTU's participation in the next CROS and PIRLS exercise.	Throughout 2017/2018 Concordat Management Group.	Regular meetings of Concordat Management Group as evidenced by meetings schedule and minutes.	
Membership, terms of reference and main standing agenda items for the year to be set out during the November 2017 and 2018 meetings.	ToR	November 2017 and 2018	Continued progress of actions and activities in support of the career development of NTU research staff.	
Concordat Management Group to continue to present regular reports to University Research Committee and School Execs. University Research Committee will retain oversight of Concordat Management Group activity, including CROS and PIRLS.	Concordat Management Group to disseminate minutes to appropriate committees.	Following each Concordat Management Group meeting Concordat Management Group.	Concordat Management Group reports tabled and discussed regularly at relevant University committees and fora.	
Concordat Management Group to develop strategies to ensure engagement with and feedback from researchers in Schools through School Concordat Champions.	Concordat Management Group to analyse information and use to inform strategies. Concordat Management Group will retain annual oversight of Concordat- related activities and is empowered to intervene to address any issues identified through active review of	As appropriate throughout 2017/18 Membership of the group ensures research staff requirements are fed into specifications for new HR System and Research Information Management System.	Increased NTU-wide participation in CROS and PIRLS, surveys. Data analysis and reports to inform future developments	

	management information.			
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Guide to the abbreviations used in this document	
Appraisal	The former Performance Development Contribution Review has been recast as the Appraisal process
Athena SWAN	Gender equality initiative managed by the Equality Challenge Unit
CPD	Continuing professional development
CROS	Careers in Research Online Survey
E&D	Equality and Diversity
HR	Human Resources
NTU	Nottingham Trent University
PIRLS	Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey
PI	Principal Investigator
Note: The former Town Hall Meetings were renamed Researcher Forum Events based on feedback from Researchers	

Key Contacts	
Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research; Athena SWAN Self-assessment Chair	Prof. Yvonne Barnett (to end of 2018)
HR	Sarah Bailey
Organisational Development	June Kay and Fiona McKerlie
Concordat Management Group Chair	Fiona McKerlie from January 2017
Former Concordat Group Management Chairs	Prof. Thom Baguley, Dr Stephanie Walker, Prof. Steve Allin
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Dr Angie Pears, Claire Bell

Concordat Champions from 2017	David Brown, Jane Ching, Allan Collins, Dawn Scholey, David Boocock, William Niven, Suvo Mitra, David Kilgour
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For further information on the Concordat at NTU please contact [Fiona Mckerlie](#)