

28 February 2023

FAO Chair of the Concordat Strategy Group

Letter of Commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers


I, Prof. Michael Burton, Director and CEO of the Armagh Observatory & Planetarium (AOP) confirm our commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

AOP fully supports the principles of this revised Concordat and we intend to uphold our obligations and responsibilities as a signatory.

The Armagh Observatory & Planetarium is one of the longest running research organisations in the UK. It was founded in 1790 by Archbishop Robinson and has performed front-line Astronomy research ever since. In 1968, the Armagh Observatory founded the Armagh Planetarium, which is now a treasured education and outreach institution in Northern Ireland. In 2016 the two organisations were merged creating a unique institution delivering international research together with research-informed outreach and public engagement. AOP employs 7 permanent research staff, several post-doctoral research assistants and fellows as well as a dozen PhD students. We routinely avail of grants from UKRI, the Royal Society and Royal Astronomical Society for which adhering to the concordat to support the career development of researchers is a matter of funds eligibility. AOP is an Institute of Physics JUNO practitioner and is currently applying for JUNO champion status, thus having already embedded many equality and diversity principles and mechanisms to support the career training and development of its researchers.

We agree to work collectively and engage with initiatives to address systemic challenges in progressing towards a UK research system where researchers work in healthy and supportive environments. We agree that researchers should be recognised and valued for their contributions in research and beyond, supported in their professional and career development, and equipped and empowered to succeed in their chosen careers.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Michael G. Burton
Director and CE