

## University of Dundee HR Excellence in Research Award - Four Year Internal Review Report 25 September 2015

**Introduction and background:** The University of Dundee received the HR Excellence in Research Award in September 2011 and retained it in 2013. This report and associated action plan outline our internal evaluation and provide an update on activities carried out to progress and achieve the deliverables detailed in previous action plans. Following the most recent review of the plan, further tasks have been identified and form the basis of an updated action plan.

Details of our implementation of the Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers can be found at: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/policiesprocedures/researchstaff/researchconcordat/>

The University's vision is to *become Scotland's leading University and to be celebrated internationally for the impact of our research* [www.dundee.ac.uk/transform](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/transform). In November 2014, the University was shortlisted for the Times Higher Award for Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers for its Cross Institutional Early Career Mentoring Scheme that it runs with the University of St Andrews.

**Processes of internal evaluation:** These are now embedded in the University infrastructure and include continuation of the Concordat Steering Group, with a remit to promote the implementation of the Concordat Principles throughout the organisation, including supporting personal and career development opportunities for researchers. The Steering Group, chaired by the Vice-Principal for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Wider Impact, with research academic and researcher representatives from Research Staff Associations (RSAs), Organisational and Professional Development (OPD), HR and the Careers Service, reviews progress and reports to University Committees of Court and Senate: Human Resources Committee (HRC) and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). The Researcher Development and Projects Officer (RDPO) and an HR Officer ensure that issues raised, and decisions taken by the Group, influence training provision and HR Policy. Shared membership between the University Concordat Steering Group, local Concordat Working Group(s), RSAs, and research staff representation from School committees ensures communication of Steering Group activities to researchers.

The evaluation included careful review of progress against previous action plans and input from key stakeholders across the University (including HR, OPD, Revealing Research, Careers Service, Research and Innovation Services, The Enterprise Gym (TEG), Centre for the enhancement of Academic Skills, Teaching, Learning and Employability (CASTLE) and Equality & Diversity). Data from CROS, feedback from the researcher development workshop programme within OPD, along with discussions at meetings of the Concordat Working Group shaped priority areas focused on in this review and action plan.

RSAs and representatives' inputs to the action plan were received via the Concordat Steering Group and the Working Group. Progress reports were requested from research academics and research staff. These reports were discussed at the Concordat Steering Group meeting in April 2015.

Consultation with researchers about their awareness of the Concordat and the progress made is provided through representation on the Steering Group, the RSAs, and via the surveys. Opportunities provided by local level induction and training on the University's Objective Setting and Review (OSaR) process are taken, to promote and engage in discussion with researchers about the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Vitae briefings for the various stakeholder groups are used.

A draft of the internal evaluation report was shared with Vitae at the end of August 2015 for comment and feedback. The revised action plan covering 2015 to 2017 focuses on further tasks planned and carries forward those still in progress from the previous plan. The action plan can be viewed [www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/hrexcellenceinresearch](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/hrexcellenceinresearch).

### Key achievements and progress against original action plan and two-year review

#### Progress against Principles 1 and 2: Recruitment and Selection; Recognition and value:

Progress is demonstrated by the ethos of the University of Dundee as supported by the University's vision, HR Strategy, and Research Strategy. The University has an ongoing commitment to maintain high standards in recruitment and selection, and a comprehensive level of support is provided to recruiting managers throughout the various stages of the process including training on the e-recruitment system, I-Grasp.

The corporate Welcome event has been highly successful and has received very positive feedback. It provides an opportunity for new staff to meet the Principal, the University Secretary and colleagues from other parts of the University, and helps to create a sense of belonging and being part of the wider University community, which is especially important for our research staff to ensure that they feel integrated beyond their immediate work environment. Local inductions take place within the Schools, however there is a commitment to further enhance mechanisms to ensure that provision at this level is consistent and robust and aligns with the University aim of valuing people.

The HR for Managers workshops are now a regular feature on the OPD programme allowing new and existing managers to develop their skills and knowledge in a supportive environment. Topics that are covered include recruitment and selection, conducting appraisal reviews and guiding managers on the management of staff on fixed-term contracts, including exploring redeployment and providing training opportunities.

A new promotion procedure for academic and research staff was agreed and implemented in 2014. The University was committed to ensuring the process was fair and transparent and that promotion criteria reflected the University's vision and values. Briefings and individual sessions were held in support of the launch and these were well attended.

The University's appraisal process, OSaR, is an integral part of supporting researchers and providing an opportunity to discuss training and career development. The OSaR documentation was recently revised and now provides a much greater emphasis on the career development aspects of the process.

**Progress against Principles 3 and 4: Support and Career Development:** Training and development opportunities available through OPD for research staff are continually updated and expanded to offer a programme of support and development activities. These are advertised online (including via Twitter), in monthly email bulletins, via RSAs, and mapped to the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). The number of new workshops rises annually in response to demand, feedback from RSAs and following the recruitment of the RDPO, which has enhanced the focus on research staff support and allowed wider access to, and promotion of, national initiatives in addition to improved partnerships with academics, researchers and other units on local initiatives. Engagement levels of researchers are steady, at ~ 25 % for the last three years. From 2014, all researchers have access to Lynda.com, with instructive video tutorials and training.

The increased focus on researcher development following employment of the RDPO enabled the development of a new Researcher Development Policy in response to the results of the 'CROS' section in the 2013 staff survey in May 2014 to provide clarity and to set out the expectations and entitlements for researchers, supervisors and line managers alike <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/main/research/researcherdevelopment/researcherdevelopmentpolicy/>. In 2014 a new researcher development web page was created to promote the various local and national researcher development training initiatives. This resource highlights training opportunities across the organisation for researchers with signposting to areas of interest e.g. RSAs, new employees and careers.

Details of the mentoring scheme for early career academics with the University of St Andrews can be found at [www.dundee.ac.uk/opd/otheropportunities/menteringscheme](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/opd/otheropportunities/menteringscheme) - the University of Dundee signed up to SUMAC, a new online mentoring administration system. The Cross-Institutional Mentoring Scheme was re-launched in 2013, with unprecedented levels of engagement - approximately 47 partnerships per year.

In 2013 a new integrated leadership development portfolio of activities was developed, with engagement at three development levels. Deans were an integral part of the Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) and our emerging leaders for the future, including research staff and

academics, were part of the Developing Leaders Programme (DLP). Each development level was tailored for staff needs.

**Progress against Principles 5: Researchers' Responsibilities:** In 2015, the University has been developing a series of short films on Research Integrity to complement existing provision. This online resource comprises 6 videos with associated support materials. It has been developed in conjunction with the University's Research Governance & Policy Sub-committee and an external consultant. Researchers will be encouraged to complete this package as part of their annual review.

In 2015, due to the high level of competition for places on the prestigious Scottish Crucible programme, OPD offered research staff the opportunity to submit draft applications to an independent external consultant for constructive feedback. A new Head of Enterprise and Entrepreneurial Strategy was appointed in June 2014 and is the key contact for Enterprise Campus North. External opportunities such as Converge Challenge, are now advertised via the Enterprise Gym. Since 2011, the University has run a highly successful enterprise programme called Venture, which included a series of workshops and one-to-one mentoring sessions. £25,000 of seed funding has been awarded to researchers to progress business ideas. Support for further national opportunities, funding (both venture capital and enterprise fellowships), work premises, expert business, intellectual property, and patenting advice has also been made available as appropriate. [www.dundee.ac.uk/opd/otheropportunities/venture](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/opd/otheropportunities/venture). Careers seminars hosted by Research Staff Associations continue on a regular basis e.g. <http://rsa.lifesci.dundee.ac.uk/index.html>

The *Stories in Science – Postdoctoral Careers Pathways* resource was launched in February 2014 with the aim of developing new ways of representing women in scientific careers and empowering research staff across the UK to take charge of their careers in science. The project was driven by researchers at the University of Dundee, working in partnership with academics and consultants to realise this ambitious resource. [www.postdoc-pathways.lifesci.dundee.ac.uk](http://www.postdoc-pathways.lifesci.dundee.ac.uk)

**Progress against Principles 6: Diversity and Equality:** The University demonstrates a strong commitment to equality and diversity in the culture and committee structure of the University. An Equality Outcomes Plan (2013 – 2017) Implementation Group was established to ensure the Outcomes Plan and actions are delivered. Unconscious Bias training for senior management was piloted in 2014 to complement the existing mandatory online training module.

The University is committed to the Athena SWAN Charter. In 2012, an Athena SWAN Project Coordinator was appointed to collate evidence to demonstrate its commitment to advancing the careers of women at the Institute. In April 2013, the University was awarded an Institutional Bronze Award from the Athena SWAN Charter recognising excellence in championing employment of women in science and technology, engineering, maths and medicine. The award runs until 2016.

Three areas across the University have been awarded departmental Athena SWAN Bronze Awards: College of Medicine Dentistry and Nursing (CMDN) - November 2014; Centre for Anatomy and Human Identification (CAHID) – April 2015 and College of Life Sciences – April 2015. In April 2015, the School of Computing and the School of Engineering, Physics and Mathematics applied for Silver and Bronze Athena SWAN awards respectively. (Awards decisions pending announcement by 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015).

In September 2015, the University signed up to the expanded Athena SWAN charter, which focuses on supporting all staff of all genders and in any subject area who are employed by the University.

**Progress against Principle 7: Implementation and Review:** Progress is monitored and reviewed via the Concordat Steering Group, which reports to University Committees of Court and Senate: Human HRC and RKEC. The University's 2013 Staff Engagement Survey included CROS type questions and the University took part in CROS 2015 with the results currently being evaluated.

## **Strategy and success measures beyond 2015**

**Strategies to support Principles 1 and 2:** Investment in a key new post within HR to focus specifically on resourcing will allow recruitment strategies to be developed, focusing specifically on attracting, recruiting and retaining the best researchers and in providing a high level of support to researchers relocating to Dundee. Induction material and Welcome handbooks will be updated as part of this work.

The University has embarked on a process of transformational change and as part of this, a 'Culture and Communications' workstream has been formed to facilitate change. Outcomes from this workstream include the development of a set of behaviours which align with the University's values. This framework will be rolled out to staff across the institution.

**Strategies to support Principle 3 and 4:** The programme of training and development opportunities for research staff will continue to be offered and enhanced in light of feedback and identified institutional need following the 2015 surveys. In 2016, all researchers and research managers will receive a letter from the Vice-Principal for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Wider Impact and Director of HR to promote the University's support to researchers' career development. Furthermore, the University will work towards a Researcher Development Strategy led by the Vice-Principal for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Wider Impact.

**Strategies to support Principle 5:** With the new University structures in place from 1 August, the RSAs will be reconfigured to reflect the new Schools and this will be reviewed in 2016. A series of short films on Research Integrity is being developed to complement face-to face provision. This new resource will be completed with case studies and piloted in 2016.

**Strategies to support Principle 6:** The University will apply for Athena SWAN Bronze renewal in November 2016. School of Medicine and School of Life Sciences will apply for Silver Award in 2016 and we await the announcement in October 2015 of applications in April 2015 by our School of Computing (Silver) and School of Physics, Engineering and Mathematics (Bronze).

We will execute the action plans for both Athena SWAN and the Equality Outcomes Plan, in order to provide new plans going forwards.

**Strategies to support Principle 7:** Continue to monitor and respond to researcher opinion and maintain links with other HEIs. It is the University's intention to run the Staff Survey in 2015 and to participate in CROS 2017. Survey results will be used to inform improvements in researcher development support. The internal and external evaluation processes provide a good opportunity to establish and review ongoing support for the career development of researchers.

The new Vice-Principal for Research, Knowledge Exchange and Wider Impact will lead a review of the Concordat Steering Group and appointment of new members to represent the 9 new Schools. There will continue to be research staff representatives on management committees in the new School structure and the appointment of new Associate Deans for Research in each School will help facilitate this process. Following a period of significant organisational and cultural change, the 'One Dundee' approach supported by School and University committee structures will facilitate communication between Schools, between Schools and the University, and between academic and professional support staff enabling the opportunity for better working together to facilitate best practice Concordat activities.

**Broad Success Indicators:** Our success is measured in the timely achievement of the actions set out in the Action Plan, many of which include specific deliverables and a flexibility to refocus. HRC, which meets three times per year, are updated on progress. Broad measures include:

- Evidence of improvement in CROS and University staff surveys when compared with previous surveys
- Increase in uptake of Objective Setting and Review (OSaR)
- Achievement of Athena SWAN Awards
- Achievement of Race Equality Charter Mark status
- Implementation of People strategy
- Continue to build on the development programme for our leaders, including research leaders, measuring impact of the programme