

HR Excellence in Research Award 4 Year Review

In September 2012 UEA received the 'HR Excellence in Research' award by the European Commission. In 2014, a two-year internal assessment of progress against the original 2012 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers Action Plan, was carried out and an amended action plan for 2014-2016 was put in place. All Key Documents and information can be found at: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/research>. In 2016, the University of East Anglia (UEA) will undergo an external assessment of progress made at the four year point of the review process.

1. About University of East Anglia- Research Strategies and Structure

1.1 UEA's Corporate Strategy – UEA's new corporate strategic plan 'Vision 2030' incorporates the essential theme of 'Research Success' – a clear strategy to 'increase the volume and impact of our research' while 'most importantly (continuing) to recruit, develop, support and celebrate our world class researchers and academics'. There are currently approximately 400 research staff (RS) at the University, a growth of 27% over the past four years, with a further growth expected in both our UK and international campuses over the next few years.

1.2 University Structures and Committees - The implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers is led by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise (PVC-RE), who provides regular updates to the Executive Committee. The PVC-RE chairs the Research Staff Working Group (RSWG), who meet at least once every academic semester to review the implementation of the Concordat in order to '*maximise the career potential, satisfaction and productivity of research personnel*'. The RSWG membership consists of up to 14 members of research staff from across all four Faculties and the neighbouring Norwich Bioscience Institutes (NBI), 4 Research Staff Co-ordinators (RSCs (one representing each Faculty)), the Director of the Research and Enterprise Division (REN), and representatives from Human Resources (HR), the Careers Service (CCEN), Equality and Diversity (E&D) and the Centre for Staff and Educational Development (CSED). The research staff representatives on the RSWG are self-nominating but frequently hold additional positions of responsibility in their respective Schools e.g. Chair of the Research Staff Forum or research staff representative on the School board. The RSWG is responsible for ensuring that the seven principles of the Concordat are met, as set out in the 'Action Plan to Support the Implementation of 'The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers''. The RSWG review progress achieved against the original (2012-2014) action plan, as well as the (2014-2016 updated action plan).

2. The Review Process

2.1 Internal evaluations at UEA - The internal evaluations were managed by the Staff Development Officer for Researchers (SDO-R) and a PGR and Research Staff Careers Adviser, with feedback from the PVC-RE and the RSWG. Evaluations included a review of the 2012-2014 and 2014-2016 action plans, with additional input from HR, RED, CSED, and Associate Deans for Research (ADRs) with regards to University policies and practices that impact upon research staff. Since 2012, 19 RSCs have been appointed in Schools (or Research Clusters), to help support the University in enacting the local 'Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff'. RSCs provide an annual report that aids the RSWG in monitoring progress achieved against the HR Excellence Action plan.

2.2 How the views of Researchers were taken into account-The RSWG led the University's participation in the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS 2013) and the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS 2013) to gather critical data and inform of progress with respect to the 2012-14 action plan. These surveys were repeated in 2015 for comparison of progress achieved in the 2014-2016 action plan. 57%

of research staff responded in the UEA CROS 2015 survey, representing a 12% increase on the 45% response rate of 2013, and far exceeding the sector average.

In addition, the SDO-R, working alongside RSCs, held a series of School-level focus groups with researchers, in order to ascertain the issues that were pertinent to the needs of researchers across the University. The PVC-RE also held Research review meetings in each School during 2015, at which research staff were actively invited to share their experiences.

2.3 How the review links with other monitoring mechanisms and processes

The University's commitment to Athena SWAN reflects Principle 6 'Diversity and Equality' of the Concordat. The University's Head of Equality and Diversity works closely with the RSWG to ensure the action points that arise from the HR Excellence review process align with our Athena Swan submissions. As Chair of the RSWG, the PVC-RE reports back to the University's Executive team to ensure that the HR Excellence award action plan responds to the 'UEA2030 Vision'.

3. Implementing the Concordat at UEA

UEA has put into effect a number of actions to align institutional policies and practice with the Concordat Principles. The UEA 'HR Excellence /Concordat Implementation Action Plan 2016-2020' provides full evidence of current compliance and best practice, and details all actions going forward, including measures of success. Highlights are summarised below:

Principle 1: Recruitment, Selection & Retention of researchers

UEA enacts clear Recruitment and Selection Guidelines. Each recruitment advert and associated documentation is checked by HR prior to publication to ensure that the essential and desirable criteria required are clearly identified as appropriate for the role. In 2014, online training for those undertaking recruitment and selection was developed and it has become mandatory for all staff to complete an online training module on 'Diversity in the Workplace' (training refreshed bi-annually). UEA CROS 2015 results revealed an increase in the proportion of respondents being employed on open-ended (permanent) contracts (42.2% respondents compared with 18.8% respondents in CROS 2013), demonstrating our institutional commitment to the Fixed-Term Employment Regulations 2002, where external funding constraints allow.

2016-2020: Human Resources will continue to review research staff job adverts to ensure that they promote diversity and are transparent with respect to the personal and transferable skills required by the post-holder, with an objective to increase the UEA CROS respondents reporting they are provided with these details during the application process to ~90% (CROS 2015 = 71%), making it comparable to other application information types. CROS 2017 response data and HR records will be used to monitor the number of research staff moving to open-ended contracts. The HR Manager will provide an annual report (starting from September 2017) to the RSWG detailing the number of research staff who have applied for, and the numbers who have been successful in achieving, promotion within the role (including discretionary awards, ex-gratia payments and regrading), and the numbers who have been successful in securing externally advertised Lectureship positions / higher level postdoctoral positions at UEA i.e. promotion outside of the current role.

Principle 2: Recognition and Value

In 2014 the RSWG led the revision of the UEA 'Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff, to ensure that the guidelines echo the Concordat Principle on Recognition and Value. The Code includes recommendations for induction and annual review (appraisal). RSCs aided the development and implementation of new research staff induction guidelines at Faculty level, with further tailoring to suit individual Schools. The appraisal guidelines were revised in 2015 to explicitly include the need to discuss a researcher's career, their aspirations and what development is required to enable the individual to progress. Furthermore, in 2015 UEA adopted a minimum entitlement of two days per annum for engagement in training and development activities for all research staff. Data from CROS 2015 showed an improving picture of research staff perceptions of recognition, and perceptions of being treated fairly, including a significant proportion of respondents (75%) reporting they are encouraged to engage in personal and career development activities (representing an increase from 68% in 2013). There are many examples of good

practice at School or Faculty level including publicising and rewarding research staff contributions through research symposia e.g. Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Research Festival, and news bulletins; and representation on School committees e.g. School Board, Athena SWAN etc.

2016-2020: The RSWG led by the PVC-RE will recommend to the Research Executive ways to better integrate research staff into the UEA research community (e.g. by organising a cross-discipline 'Research Day'). Pilot initiatives will be delivered in 2017-18 and reviewed using direct feedback from research staff e.g. via School-level focus groups and CROS data. The University will consider specific ways to help research staff feel more valued for their contributions to supervising / managing staff and supervising research students, with an objective of increasing the proportion of RS reporting (according to CROS data) to feel recognised for this responsibility to ~70% (CROS2015 =51% and 57% respectively), making it comparable to existing levels of other tested contributions.

Principles 3 & 4: Support and Career Development

UEA is committed to supporting the training and career development of all members of research staff, regardless of contract type. Appraisal guidelines were revised in 2015, with appraisal training including specific directions for the managers of RS to ensure that the training and career development needs of the RS that they manage are adequately addressed. The new guidelines were rolled out across Faculties and a new HR template developed to allow accurate recording and monitoring of research staff appraisals at School level. CROS 2015 revealed that participation of research staff in the appraisal process has increased significantly (2015=74% vs 2013=47%), including a significant increase (14%) in the proportion of researchers being invited to appraisal. The proportion of respondents rating the appraisal process as 'useful' in all the tested ways has also improved (2015=60% vs 2013=32%).

In 2015 the University introduced a recommended minimum of 2 days per annum for engagement with training and development opportunities for RS. The Norwich Medical School are leading good practice by agreeing that research staff should undertake a minimum of 5 days per annum of training and development activities and have allocated a minimum of £200 per person per annum towards training costs irrespective of how the researcher is funded.

In September 2013, UEA appointed an additional fulltime Careers Advisor post (doubling previous capacity) to support RS and PGR students, and in May 2016 the Careers Service successfully piloted a week long programme, 'New Horizons' aimed at raising awareness among researchers of the wider variety of career paths available to them. CSED led training and development provision for researchers continues to be mapped against the RDF and now includes workshops on research funding including the Research Excellence Framework (REF), knowledge exchange and impact, Intellectual property and public engagement and enterprise.

2016-2020: The uptake and usefulness of research staff appraisal (irrespective of length of contract), including the actions resulting from training and career-related discussions will be monitored by HR working with Heads of Schools, evidenced using the HR system and CROS and reported to the RSWG. UEA will aim for a minimum 80% rate of participation in appraisal by research staff by the end of the 2017 appraisal round, with an increase in the proportion of CROS2017 respondents reporting that appraisal has been 'useful' in 'helping to focus on career aspirations and how these are met by the current role' to ~70% (2015=55%). The Careers Service will explicitly promote the support available to research staff and review the effectiveness of this marketing (using the service CRM 'Careerhub') on research staff engagement with one-to-one careers guidance and careers events (with a target of 15% and 30% of the RS cohort engaging with each respective service element by August 2018). CSED will continue to provide established development opportunities for RS and develop new activities when required to meet future needs, and aim to increase in engagement across all tested training and development activities reported by RS employed by the University for ≤1yr, as indicated by CROS2017 results. From 2017, CSED will aim for all courses to achieve an overall training satisfaction score of 3.7 or more (out of 5). The RSCs will work with the School Athena SWAN committees and Head of Equality and Diversity to monitor the uptake and usefulness of mentoring schemes for research staff, with an aim to increase the proportion of CROS respondents indicating they have undertaken mentoring (2015=15%) and to decrease the proportion saying they would like to (CROS 2015=38.5%).

Principle 5: Researchers share responsibility for their own personal and career development

In 2015-16 CSED worked closely with REN to develop the programme of research and enterprise related training, introducing new courses on 'Effective knowledge Exchange and Impact' and an 'Introduction to Knowledge Transfer Partnerships'. In 2015 UEA successfully piloted the i-Teams programme. I-Teams enables Early Career Researchers to gain experience of liaising with industry to identify new opportunities for the development of commercial projects from real-life research. Research staff engaged with both the pilot and follow-up run of the programme in 2016.

2016-2020: CSED will maintain close contact with RSCs, REN and CCEN to ensure UEA offers a diverse range of training provision, that continues to meet researcher needs. The RSWG will monitor feedback from researchers around the usefulness of appraisal in 'identifying and leading to action around training and development opportunities', with an aim to increase percentage of CROS respondents rating appraisal process as 'useful' in this regard to at least 70% (CROS2015=51%).

Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

The University runs an Equality and Diversity Awareness course, together with other related training through CSED. A mandatory E&D training module was also introduced in 2013 for all members of staff. The University joined the Athena SWAN Charter in October 2011 and submitted a successful Bronze application in April 2012 and retained its Bronze Renewal award in April 2016. Across the UEA Faculties, Schools and Departments, there are now nine Bronze Awards, as well as a Silver award for the Norwich Medical School. Individual schools are also developing their own Equality and Diversity webpages with a focus on initiatives that are available locally. In May 2015 the charter was expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), and in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women. Progress achieved is available (<http://www.uea.ac.uk/equality/Equality+and+Diversity>). All Faculties of the University are now fully engaged with the Athena SWAN process following its expansion in May 2015.

2016-2020: The RSWG will monitor uptake of (and feedback from) research staff attending training/ peer support groups related to improving health and well-being at work. HR will review and update if necessary the 'Policy on the management of work-related stress', and a new guidance for managers will be introduced by December 2017. The Head of Equality and Diversity will work with Heads of School, with the aim that all Schools gain a minimum Athena SWAN bronze award, with some aiming for Silver, by November 2019. This will be overseen by the UEA Athena SWAN Central Strategic Group, chaired by the PVC-RE.

Principle 7: Implementation and Review

The RSWG, chaired by the PVC-RE, enabled UEA's participation in CROS 2015. Evidence from CROS, the annual RSC reports, and School-level research review meetings led by the PVC-RE, have allowed the RSWG to monitor progress made against our HR Excellence in Research Action plan.

2016-2020: In October 2016 the PVC-RE proposed a change to the remit, membership and upward reporting line of the RSWG, to ensure that the experiences and opinions of research staff are routinely taken into account when developing university-wide policies or procedures that impact upon research staff. The RSWG was subsequently replaced by the Research Staff Advisory Network (RSAN). Based on a core membership of research staff representatives from across the four Faculties, and chaired by the PVC-RE, RSAN will develop recommendations and /or papers to report (via the PVC-RE) to the University's Research Executive or the Athena SWAN Central Strategic Group as appropriate for action.