

The University of Surrey Two Year Internal Evaluation Report for HR Excellence in Research

1. How was internal evaluation undertaken?

The internal evaluation to measure the progress against the original action plan began in 2012 and was overseen by the HR Excellence in Research Steering Group (which met every quarter). The Steering Group was comprised of representatives from Human Resources, Student Care Services, The Researcher Development Programme, Research and Enterprise Services, Staff Development, Registry, Library, Careers and academic representatives from the four Faculties within the University. The Steering Group is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation.

The internal evaluation involved reviewing the progress made against the original action plan. This identified areas of best practice together with areas which require further review or for future development. As a result, a number of additional actions were identified to help to maximise the support available in the career development of researchers. The University took part in Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), Principal Investigators and Research Leaders (PIRLS) in 2013 (and 2011). Outcomes from these surveys together with direct input from the Early Career Researcher Representatives group and qualitative data collected via individual interviews with ECRs were used to inform the creation of the revised Action Plan.

2. Key Achievements and the progress against the original action plan

Principle 1: Recruitment and selection

- Human Resources reviewed their recruitment process and implemented "SurreyRecruit" a new e-recruitment system.
- All postdoctoral researchers are subject to the same terms and conditions of employment as other professional staff and are therefore covered by the same management and career development processes and procedures.
- As of Autumn 2013, all academics who wish to recruit doctoral researchers are required to have attended a 'Best Practice in Doctoral Admissions' Masterclass session to ensure good practice and equality in doctoral admissions.
- An "Induction for New Managers" course has been developed to assist staff in general management including recruitment and promotion processes.
- The status of temporary research staff with contracts of 4 years or longer are amended to permanent status.
- Having achieved Athena Swan Bronze status, the University is using the Athena Swan bronze award logo on our new recruitment system.

Principle 2: Recognition and Value

- The new Surrey Recruitment website has increased the visibility of redeployment opportunities and, for the first time, enables researchers seeking redeployment to upload their CVs.
- An established Learning and Development Programme provides opportunities for researchers to increase personal and professional skills to aid them in the development of their careers.
- A refreshed Learning & Development booklet detailing the full range of opportunities available is sent to every member of staff and is supported by a new learning and development website signposting specific skills areas.
- Rigorous monitoring of annual appraisal returns is enabling us to identify line managers who are not giving researchers access to this important discussion. This is being followed up to ensure all researchers have the opportunity to access the resources available and generate a professional development action plan. A training needs analysis is in place for all researchers (separate versions operate for PGRs and postdoctoral researchers) enabling us to identify the specific needs of the individual and tailor each programme accordingly.

Principles 3 & 4: Support and Career Development

- *Researcher Development Framework (RDF)*: All provision for researchers has been mapped against the RDF, which is used as a basis for the professional development action plans (described above).
- *Researcher Development Activities*: The activities of various groups that provide support for researchers (The Researcher Development Programme (RDP), Staff Development and Department for Higher Education) have been reviewed, and a new central website has been created to better highlight all available activities. The number of workshops delivered specifically for ECRs has increased by 46% over the past two years, with a 68% increase in up take.
- *Careers Management Support*: Over the past two years there has been a 50% increase in uptake of careers management support in both one-to-one career coaching and in careers management workshops. *Quality of Researcher Development*: Qualitative reports and feedback indicate a high level of quality and usefulness of researcher development and career management support for researchers. The University of Surrey was nationally recognised for the quality of its ECR support with a Times Higher Award shortlisting for Excellence in support of Early Career Researchers.
- *Business Facing Skills*: The University of Surrey is known for its close links with industry and has a unique infrastructure that helps to facilitate the development of business skills and the understanding of employer perspectives. This includes an 'Entrepreneur in Residence' and Associate Dean for Entrepreneurship and Innovation who, together with the RDP, have created an Employer's Connections Network. This network offers a suite of opportunities for researchers including workshops, networking events, job shadowing opportunities and short placements. The network currently consists of 95 people from a range of businesses who are interested in interacting with, mentoring and/or working with Surrey researchers.
- *Mentoring*: Several specific mentoring schemes have been instituted for researchers at various levels of their careers. Mentoring relationships have been set up with members of our Executive Board for Academic Heads of Department who have attended the recent Leadership Programme and a programme of mentoring for female academics taking part in a women's leadership programme is being piloted. Furthermore, another mentoring scheme has been created targeting researchers at the very earliest level, in their final year of a taught programme, prior to starting a research degree. This programme pairing potential researchers with current PGRs aims to smooth the transition into research.
- *Investment*: The University was successful in its bid to EPSRC for a small equipment grant (£500k). This enabled individual researchers to bid for items of equipment <£10K and to take part in a research bid. As part of the bid every researcher used the online tool "Action Planner" to help them to tailor a personal development plan and will write a case study on the impact the equipment they gained from this bid has on their research.

Principle 5: Researchers' responsibilities

- Creation of an online tool "Action Planner" that researchers can use to help them create an individualised personal development action plan based on the RDF.
- New ethics website developed providing clearer guidance for researchers on the University's ethical standards and the ethical standards which apply to academic activities.
- The principles of the Concordat for Research Integrity are embedded into compulsory training for PGRs and new supervisors.

Principle 6: Equality and diversity

- Equality & Diversity plans embedded within the University Strategy and HR Strategy.
- Developed an in-house Equality Analysis package to investigate the impact of research practices on staff groups.
- All new staff are invited to undertake an on-line Equality & Diversity course.
- Achieved an Athena SWAN University Bronze Award in November 2012, submitted an application for Juno Practitioner Award and started a programme for Athena SWAN Departmental Award submissions.

Principle 7: Implementation and Review

- The HR Excellence in Research Steering Group normally met quarterly to review the action plan and identify and share good practice across the Faculties within the University of Surrey.

- In 2012, the ECR Representative Group was formed which meets quarterly to provide input into the University's researcher development activities and advises on issues of researcher support.
- In summer 2012, leading up to the HR Excellence review, a series of interviews with researchers was carried out to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of changes in researcher support provision, and to inform future action plans.
- The University has participated in CROS, PRES and PIRLS during 2013 to identify areas requiring further support in the career development of researchers.
- Library Learning and Support are part of the Vitae South East Hub Trainers' Consortium sharing good practice across networks.

Next steps and the focus of the strategy for the next two years, including success measures.

Principle 1: Recruitment and selection

- HR, E&D and the unions will be working collaboratively in 2014 to undertake an Equality Pay Audit.
- HR and the unions are working together to further develop the Temporary Employee Policy which has a large focus on the employment of research staff.

Principle 2: Recognition and Value

- HR, Staff Development and Researcher Development will be working collaboratively to offer a new researcher specific induction to help researchers develop their skills as effectively as possible.
- Learning and Development will be increasing the leadership and management training available, particularly focusing on the skills of managing researchers and research leadership. This will include increased opportunities for mentoring.

Principles 3 & 4: Support and Careers Development

There has been a great deal of growth and development of high quality professional skills and careers support for researchers over the past two years. Over the next two years, we plan to build on this success and focus on enhancing the research culture to increase participation and integration of ECRs into the broader researcher community, and encourage greater uptake of the available opportunities.

- Building on University initiatives to enhance creativity, multi-disciplinary collaboration and business partnerships, we will create more opportunities for researchers to engage with each other, those from other disciplines and employers beyond academia.
- We recognise the need for researchers to be more involved in their departments and in the University, so will be ensuring that researchers have a voice in policies that affect them, by including more researchers on strategy committees and meetings.
- We recognise the key role that line managers and senior academic staff play in supporting the development of ECRs. Therefore, we will be ensuring that researchers are actively encouraged to participate in career development by making this an explicit expectation of the University and the departments in which they work.

Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities

- The University will ensure that all incoming researchers are aware of their responsibilities according to the principles of the Concordant for Research Integrity.
- ECRs play an important role in research impact, knowledge exchange, public engagement and influencing policy. We will help ECRs to understand the importance of this role and increase the recognition of ECRs and their contribution to these activities.

Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

- E&D will be working collaboratively with Staff Development in 2014 to ensure that effective and targeted equality training is undertaken by all researchers.

- E&D will be working collaboratively with HR to review the take-up of flexible working by staff involved in research.

Principle 7: Implementation and Review

- Analysis of PIRLS 2013 to be completed and fed into action plan.
- Ensure HR Excellence action plan is aligned to other University action plans (such as Research Integrity and Athena SWAN) to enable strategic alignment.