

University of Surrey HR Excellence in Research 2018-2020 Action Plan

Introduction

The University of Surrey is a research-intensive institution with twenty-two research active departments/schools/centres within three faculties: Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (FEPS), Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences (FHMS) and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). Surrey has undergone transformational change in the last two years, with the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Max Lu. Along with his appointment has been an increased emphasis on research and on researcher support, outlined in a new Research Strategy.

Embodied in the new Research Strategy is the vision for the newly launched Doctoral College (<https://www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college>) tasked with supporting newer researchers, both postgraduate researchers (PGRs) and early career researchers (ECRs), and leading the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) process for the University. The HR Excellence in Research Working Group (HREiR WG) and Doctoral College management team have worked closely with senior management throughout this period of change to align the University's strategy for supporting ECRs with the Principles of the Concordat and to embed the HREiR process within the University's re-developed research support structure.

In consultation with ECRs and other stakeholders, the Doctoral College has formally defined the term ECR very broadly, encompassing all research and teaching-research staff within 10 years of their doctorate, as well as allowing other people to self-identify as ECRs, due to career changes/breaks or a desire to be actively involved in research, despite contracts that do not reflect this activity. With this definition, University of Surrey has approximately 450-500 early career researchers (ECRs), spanning a wide range of disciplines and contract types including fixed-term (FT) research only (linked to specific grant funding), open-ended (OE) research-only, probationary research-teaching, and primary teaching (FT and OE). Of these the largest group are FT research only contracts (~300), followed by probationary lecturers (~130), teaching fellows wishing to remain research active (~45) and ~65 who have self-identified as ECRs but do not fit any of these categories. This HREiR action plans is intended to inclusively support this varied population of ECRs. All HREiR documentation is available on the Doctoral College Website: <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college/hr-excellence>.

Acronyms	
ECR- Early Career Researcher (defined inclusively as stated above)	DC- Doctoral College
HREiR- HR Excellence in Research	URIC- University Research and Innovation Committee
HREiR WG- HR Excellence in Research Working Group	RDP- Researcher Development Programme
SuRSA-Surrey Research Staff Association	CROS- Careers in Research Online Survey
FEPS- Faculty of Engineering and Physical Science	FT- Fixed term
FHMS- Faculty of Health and Medical Science	OE- Open ended
FASS- Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	CSC-Concordat Steering Committee

2018 Action Reference number (related 2016 action)	Action	Success Measures	Update on Progress	Progress & link to new actions if applicable
2018_1 (new)	Embed the use of a recruitment checklist: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently include our commitment to Athena SWAN, the Race Equality Charter Mark, Stonewall and Disability Confident in all adverts and recruitment packs • Actively promote flexible working/job shares unless there is a critical business need preventing this commitment • Ensure adverts and supporting materials are checked for unconscious bias, gender-neutral language <i>etc.</i> • Place adverts in a wider variety of locations, <i>e.g.</i> WISE and WES being defaults for recruitment into science and engineering Introduce target numbers for applications/shortlists for academic posts from under-represented	Faculty targets (embedded in Athena Swan documentation) are met and the gender gap in academic populations begins to close.	<p>Our commitment to the various EDI initiatives is displayed on all our job adverts.</p> <p>The University now has an Inclusive Language Policy which helps with this.</p> <p>Gender balance is actively considered at short-listing stage. Recruitment checklist is in use. Departmental Athena Swan initiatives tracking local data on impact on applications, particularly in areas with disproportionate representation.</p> <p>Some departments have been more successful than others at decreasing the gender gap.</p> <p>Panels are required to have a gender balance or give an explicit reason why this is not possible. For departments with very low female numbers, HR personnel can be on the interview panels to provide greater gender balance.</p>	Mostly Achieved

	<p>groups (e.g. women in engineering, men in healthcare):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish appropriate targets taking into account current population and benchmark data • Require selection panels to show that they have reflected on the gender balance of applicants before shortlisting and to seek further applications if necessary • Actively consider gender balance at short-listing stage. If a single sex shortlist results, re-examine the gap between that group and the best candidate of the opposite sex with a view to inviting to interview if the gap is small <p>Evaluate the viability of anonymous long-listing for academic positions</p>			
2018_2 (new)	<p>Clarify expectations and share best practice for ECR appraisal process by creating a guide for both appraisers and appraisees.</p>	<p>Trial guide within a subset of specific departments and gain feedback. Initial target of at least 30% of responders indicating usefulness of resource.</p>	<p>Small trial completed in 2018. Data not conclusive and requires a bigger piece of work.</p> <p>CROS scores of usefulness of appraisal only 69%.</p>	<p>Not Achieved</p> <p>See Action 2020_2, New Action Plan</p>

		<p>Adjusted guide available to all ECRs, with impact evaluated over the next two years. We will aim to have a 10% increase in positive responses year on year.</p> <p>Note that we will be analysing data in context of new system appraisal system.</p> <p>Increase CROS score on overall usefulness of appraisal from 68% to 75%</p>		
2018_3 (new)	<p>Share best practice and enhance the University's research community and culture, inclusive of all researcher stages.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To do so Doctoral College will create an official statement of Surrey's research community and culture, to be approved by University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC). We will participate in International Postdoc Appreciation Week annually, highlighting best practice across the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statement created and approved by RIC. Annually participate in International Postdoc Appreciation Week (PAW) and collect feedback on impact. Data collected via electronic anonymous survey following the 2017 PAW indicated that 26% respondents felt that PAW achieved its aim to raise the visibility and highlight the valuable contributions of ECRs in the university; while 48% 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statement about ECR importance to research community is embedded at the highest level in the University's new Research and Innovation Strategy. Research Staff Celebrated (previously PAW) completed in academic year 18-19, however, participation rates were low and feedback indicated that this was not necessarily the best way to demonstrate researcher value and recognition. Working with ECR forum to identify better ways to institutionally recognise the contributions of ECRs in 2019-20. Doctoral College Building Researcher Communities 	<p>Mostly Achieved</p> <p>Linked to 2020_4</p>

	<p>University and delivering special events for ECRs.</p> <p>3. Doctoral College will also hold annual competitions for funding to support new initiatives to build departmental or interdisciplinary research culture. These bids will be open to any researcher, including ECRs. Funding will only be provided to initiatives that support newer researchers, PGRs and ECRs.</p>	<p>felt this was partly achieved. Next year we will aim to increase the percentage of those who felt that aims were achieved from 26% to 40%; and those who felt it partly achieved its aims from 48% to 60%.</p> <p>3. Funding competitions delivered with ECRs participating in the calls and in the initiatives themselves and track engagement through trend data on submissions involving ECRs and awards made to ECRs. Aim for at least five submissions to each funding call resulting in at least one ECR funded project a year. Impact of receiving funding will be captured in case studies, which will be shared to encourage greater ECR participation year on year. Faculty and University recognition of ECR award winners.</p>	<p><u>Competition</u> was held and ECRs were among the winning bids. With an ECR on 76% of winning bids (total of 21 funded ECR bids).</p> <p>4. CROS scores for integration into departmental community rose to 78%. However, integration into the Institution community has not improved; new action on induction has been created to address this issue.</p>	
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		<p>4. Overall success measure: Improved CROS scores for feeling integrated into departmental community more generally (currently 70%), aim for 75% in CROS 2019. As well as CROS score for feeling more integrated into the institution's community (currently 57%), aim 65%.</p>		
<p>2018_4 (linked to 2016_4)</p>	<p>Ensure that there is an infrastructure facilitating ECR representation from department level through to faculty level linking into the newly restructured high-level research committees, which now have a clear line of reporting for ECR issues. Investigate other University Committees that ECRs would benefit from involvement in.</p>	<p>ECR representation within each department. Currently 15 of 22 departments are represented. Target is all 22 have representation.</p> <p>An academic 'champion' in each department. This is a new initiative, so we would need to identify 22 champions.</p>	<p>Now 32 reps. Representing all departments/schools/centres with larger departments having 2 reps.</p> <p>Reps infrastructure now well embedded within University wide committees. Chair of ECR forum sits on University Research and Innovation Committee. The Chair and deputy chairs all sit on the HREiR working group.</p> <p>https://www.surrey.ac.uk/researcher-development-programme/researcher-community/ecr-reps</p> <p>ECR champions identified, primarily PGR directors taking on additional responsibility for ECRs. Monitoring how this works.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>See New Actions 2020_15, 2020_16 ensuring this consultation and ECR feedback is maintained.</p>

2018_5 (linked to 2016_6)	Support recognition and value of best practice in managing ECRs by introducing university level awards for best practice in line-managing researchers with nominations from the researcher community.	Best PI award in place and year-on-year growth in nominations made by ECR members of research teams. Target of at least five nominations in the first year, with each faculty represented.	This action has been delayed and there is a University re-think on such awards due to the exclusive nature. Moving forward we will seek to find a mechanism to recognise and reward a broad range of best practice in supporting research staff.	Not Achieved See New Action 2020_3, which will look at the issue of recognition and value in a more systematic way in line with expectation of the 2019 Concordat.
2018_6 (linked to 2016_5 and 2016_10)	Continue to develop professional development training and support for ECRs; including the Researcher Routes programme, short mini development session. All incoming ECRs will be invited to a one-to-one coaching session to introduce them to this offering and provide and individualised professional development action planning session.	<p>Participant feedback indicating increased understanding/knowledge of the content area as well as progress against individually defined aims (where appropriate).</p> <p>Baseline numbers and percentage of invited ECRs engaging will be collected for introductory ECR one to one meetings. Target of 50% of those invited attending a coaching session.</p> <p>To assess impact of sessions a short follow up survey will be administered. Target 60% positive feedback about session, 40% taking specific action based on the session.</p>	<p>We have offered a wide range of professional development training and support, informed by ECR forum, CROS results and focus groups: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college/early-career-researchers.</p> <p>Feedback from sessions, from ECR forum members and focus groups about the content and quality of the programme is overwhelmingly positive (>75% positive).</p> <p>There has been a doubling in our offering and in ECR attendance over this two-year period. 63 ECR coaching one-to-ones have been delivered, which is currently 30% of those invited. However, there are inaccuracies of the list in identifying ECRs. Often there are at least 10% who do not consider themselves to be ECRs on the lists provided. Action 2020_11 to improve HR identification</p>	Mostly achieved Linked to new actions 2020_11

			of ECRs and to better record data on their professional development.	
2018_7 (linked to 2016_10 & 2016_12)	<p>Continue to develop Careers support for ECRs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased relevant online content accessed via the Doctoral College’s virtual learning environment and/or the Employability and Careers Service web pages, Expansion of bespoke resources / workshop / seminar provision delivered under the Careers Smart framework (including investigating best methods to acquire and share various career stories that are relevant, broad-ranging and inspiring for researchers) One-to-one specialist career consultation sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete development and deployment of CareerSmart toolkit within the VLE, establish baseline usage numbers. Create of online “pinboard” area where relevant opportunities are easily accessible for ECRs (and PGRs), establish baseline usage numbers. <p>Target 10% ECRs using online resource in first year after development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase engagement of ECRs with careers provision by 10%. ECR feedback collected about careers support provision to inform updates and new developments. Target 60% positive feedback. 	<p>Restructure of Doctoral College has integrated careers, employability and employer engagement for researchers within the researcher development provision:</p> <p>https://www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college/about-us/careers-employability. The University has invested in increased FTE dedicated to researcher career support provision from 1.0 FTE to 2.5 FTE (all posts filled as of Dec 2019). The offer includes one-to-one career coaching, interview practice sessions, CV checking, online resources, workshops, bespoke sessions, networking events and employability skills development opportunities.</p> <p>In the most recent CROS there was a 7% increase in the Career Development score.</p> <p>The Doctoral College undertook an Early Careers Research Staff Careers Survey in Autumn 2018. It is a</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Linked to Action 2020_7</p>

		<p>CROS target: 10% increase reported engagement with career management.</p>	<p>relatively small sample (~10%). However, data from it has been supplemented with a further focus group. 39% had engaged in the Careers provision, with >70% positive feedback.</p> <p>95 ECRs have engaged in careers support provision over the last two years.</p> <p>Follow-up feedback on the impact of this careers provision was highly positive.</p> <p>For example: <i>'Just got done with my RAEng app and I was poring through all the feedback you had given me in May and June. They were absolutely spot on and I would not have been able to clear the internal review and improve the final proposal without your help. Thank you so so so much!'</i></p> <p><i>'I was successful at interview! Many thanks for your support leading up to the interview. It really did help me with tackling the questions at interview even when I'm not sure I knew the answer.'</i></p>	
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2018_8 (linked to 2016_10 and 2016_12)	<p>Continue to expand engagement of ECRs with mentoring programmes; including the ECR mentoring programme, the employer mentoring programme and first funding mentoring. Also encourage ECRs to act as mentors for more junior colleagues &/or PGRs.</p>	<p>All ECRs offered mentoring and the opportunity to be a mentor during introductory one-to-one coaching sessions (see 20118_6).</p> <p>A 10% increase in uptake of mentoring opportunities year on year.</p> <p>Creation of mentoring case studies that demonstrate impact of mentoring for ECRs. These are to be made available to all ECRs, to help share the variety of ways mentoring can benefit newer researchers.</p>	<p>All researchers have the opportunity to be paired with either a Surrey researcher/academic, a Surrey professional service staff member and/or someone from a different sector (utilising our doctoral alumni and local/national business connections). 93 ECR mentees have been paired with mentors. See HREiR case study.</p> <p>2018 was our largest intake of ECRs so far (38% increase), with a slight drop off in 2019, primarily due to staff turnover. New increased FTE in the careers for researchers' provision should help to better sustain the programme from 2020.</p> <p>Mentoring case studies are being collected and are available on the virtual learning environment.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
2018_9 (linked to 2016_10)	<p>Doctoral College to launch an Alumni programme for former University of Surrey ECRs and PGRs, providing continuing access to Researcher Development, Career support, IT infrastructure and library services during transition period to next career stages.</p>	<p>Doctoral College Alumni programme launched.</p> <p>Establish baseline of ECR engagement with programme. Target initially engage at least 10 ECR alumni and attempt to</p>	<p>Good progress after delay.</p> <p>Launch delayed a year due to restructure and recruiting, but now is actively recruiting https://www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college/alumni.</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Linked to action 2020_9</p>

		<p>double numbers in the next year.</p> <p>Evaluate impact of participation in programme on the transition from Surrey to next career stage.</p>	<p>Now in place, led by new Researcher Employability and Engagement Manager.</p> <p>ECR Alumni participated in most recent employer networking event, as contributors and as participants, with very positive feedback from attendees.</p> <p>Too early for full impact analysis.</p>	
<p>2018_10 (linked to 2016_10 and 2016_13)</p>	<p>Formally allocate a specific amount of protected development time for ECRs, in line with previous RCUK recommendations. Create case studies available on Doctoral College VLE giving examples of how this protected time can be utilised in different ways to develop different skills and specialties.</p>	<p>University policy regarding protected development time for ECRs approved by Research and Innovation Committee and on Doctoral College website.</p> <p>Evidence that ECRs are making use of protected time, creating a baseline measure.</p>	<p>10 days protected development time has been approved at the University Research and Innovation Committee and has not yet been implemented.</p> <p>Delay in embedding into HR policy due to major HR restructure, including new HR Director.</p> <p>Will also need to identify ways of capturing usage and impact.</p> <p>Case studies have been and continue to be collected to provide real examples of how researchers can use development time to move their careers forward and are available on the University's VLE.</p>	<p>Partially Achieved</p> <p>Linked to Action 2020_10</p>

<p>2018_11 (Linked to 2016_11)</p>	<p>Deliver at least three multidisciplinary/intersectoral events, which providing ECRs an opportunity to present their research and network with people outside of their discipline area.</p> <p>Furthermore, provide training to support collaboration and networking skills to support ECRs getting the most out of these events.</p>	<p>At least 3 events delivered in 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic year.</p> <p>Track ECR participation and conduct follow up evaluation to determine impact of participation in such events.</p> <p>Increase CROS score on participation in training on collaboration with a CROS 2019 target of 25% engagement (CROS 2017 score was 19%).</p>	<p>We have delivered a range of events, including: Doctoral College Conference, other networking events, and co-events with Surrey Chambers. We are currently developing more research theme/discipline specific models with departments which have been delivered throughout 2017-8 and 2018-9.</p> <p>We have established a successful Institute of Directors (IoD) student membership programme, which is open to ECRs as well as PGRs. IoD student membership is aimed at people who are 1) interested in potentially being a director one day, 2) interested in gaining business skills and connections or 3) in the process of starting their own business or product; as opposed to full IoD membership which is targeted at those who are already directors. This means that the student membership level is appropriate for ECRs as well as PGRs. See our case study for further details of this programme.</p> <p>CROS engagement scores for collaboration only showed a 1% increase. However, the CROS scores for participation in Public Engagement activities showed a 15% increase.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
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<p>2018_12 (Linked to 2016_11)</p>	<p>Investigate technical solutions to help ECRs better plan and record their professional development activities. This links to other actions which encourage ECRs to participate in a variety of professional and career development activities, as ECRs have reported that one contributing factor to non-participation is lack of formal record and recognition for a wide range of developmental activities. Specifically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will trail InkPath application with a pool of ECRs and collect feedback • We will work with University to develop a new HR system to meet ECR needs. • Based on the two above actions a strategic decision will be made about a new system to support ECR development. • This will be fully reviewed six months after launch. 	<p>InkPath completed and feedback collected.</p> <p>Active participation of the Doctoral College to inform new HR system development in line with ECR needs.</p> <p>Decision made about best way in which to capture ECR professional development, based on ECR feedback.</p> <p>Feedback will continue to be monitored as ECRs start using new system.</p>	<p>Inkpath trial completed. Very low participation rate.</p> <p>There was a plan for a new HR system, which would have potentially filled this need, so the project was delayed. However, it is now unclear if this will go forward or if this will meet the specific needs of research staff. Therefore, this action will have to be carried over and re-evaluated.</p>	<p>Partially Achieved, but needs re-evaluation</p> <p>See action 2020_11</p>
<p>2018_13 (Linked to 2016_13)</p>	<p>Encourage ECR participation in Public Engagement through increased public engagement training offered and introduce University level awards recognising ECR participation in Public</p>	<p>Introduce a suite of Public Engagement training.</p> <p>Establish a baseline of ECR involvement in Public Engagement training and</p>	<p>Training courses have been delivered, which included a high profile positive Public Engagement Day, which brought together a range of researchers involved in PE, staff from the University PE office, along with the</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>See Action 2020_12</p>

	Engagement with the local community and Public Engagement with Research.	<p>support and evaluate effectiveness.</p> <p>Awards established</p> <p>Increase in ECR participation in Public Engagement activities. 2017 CROS has a 38% desired participation in Public Engagement, 2019 target is 45%.</p>	<p>PE officer from the Wellcome Trust. Feedback was very positive, so that this will now be delivered as an annual event.</p> <p>Some Researcher Communities money has gone to ECRs involved in Public Engagement. We have funded ECRs to be involved in Brilliant Club. We have ECRs involved in Bright Club and Pint of Science as well.</p> <p>https://www.surrey.ac.uk/research/impact/public-engagement</p> <p>CROS scores for participation in PE training and development opportunities increased by 15%. CROS scores increased from 38% to 47% desired participation in public engagement.</p>	
2018_14 (Linked to 2016_14 and 2016_15)	<p>Retain University level Athena Swan award and continue to apply for silver and bronze Athena Swan awards increasing coverage across the university, with future ambitions to apply for gold.</p> <p>Achieve a Bronze Race Equality Charter Mark Award</p> <p>Achieve a Top 100 Stonewall Workplace Index</p>	<p>All Departments holding a Bronze Award, with some targeting higher Awards, by the end of 2020</p> <p>We will submit for this in July 2018</p> <p>We will complete our submission in Sept 2018</p>	<p>University Bronze award achieved in April 2017, due for renewal in April 2021 2) Seven departments have Bronze awards, one has Silver. All other departments have started the submission process and will be submitting throughout 2020 and 2021.</p> <p>https://www.surrey.ac.uk/equality-diversity/achievements/athena-swan</p> <p>Race Equality Charter was unsuccessful in 2018 and will be</p>	Partially Achieved

			<p>applying for the RECM again in July 2021.</p> <p>The University was placed 258 in the 2019 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index. We have submitted our application for the 2020 Index, the result is due in January 2020. Our target is for a place in the 100s and then to move into the top 100 in the 2021 Index.</p>	
<p>2018_15 (Linked to 2016_16)</p>	<p>Continue to engage widely with the ECR community through a wide range of avenues; including CROS, the University ECR reps committee, focus groups, Surrey Research Staff Association (SuRSA), quarterly newsletters to all ECRs. Working through these avenues, look to extend our engagement and ensure all ECRs feel they have a voice.</p>	<p>Increase in CROS participation to greater than 30% of ECR population.</p> <p>HREiR WG engagement with SRSA and ECR reps group meetings.</p> <p>Sharing progress with ECR community with specific actions based on ECR feedback included in ECR each newsletter.</p>	<p>We have good engagement with SuRSA and the ECR forum. Both ECR lead groups are supported to put on events for the ECR community. We now have a monthly ECR newsletter sent from the Doctoral College.</p> <p>Unfortunately, our CROS 2019 participation was 24%, which was 1% lower than CROS 2017. It should be noted that there was a major University wide restructure happening at the time, so perhaps it is not surprising that we were unable to increase our participation rates this last year. To supplement and extend the information received from CROS we have also engaged with research staff through short surveys and focus groups to gain feedback on specific topics and initiatives.</p>	<p>Partially Achieved</p> <p>Linked to Action 2020_16</p>

2018_16 (Linked to 2016_18)	Updating and review of action plan in light of ECR feedback at quarterly HREiR WG meeting. Report progress and adjust actions as necessary to respond to ECR needs. Report and action Doctoral College board to support ECRs at University Research and Innovation Committee.	Quarterly HREiR meetings. HREiR report to every Doctoral College Board. Doctoral College Board to provide reports on ECR issues to University Research and Innovation Committee.	HREiR working group meetings have been held and HREiR working group member representative reports into the Doctoral College Board regularly. The Chair of the Doctoral College Board sits on the University Research and Innovation Committee, to ensure ECR issues are addressed there.	Achieved New Action, incorporating 2019 Concordat requirements: 2020_17.
2018_17 (new)	To continue to share best practice through engagement in national and international conferences, workshops and events; as well as through publication.	Two conference presentations on topics relevant to ECR support. At least one publication on a topic relevant to ECR support.	We published a book series, Success in Research, which is aimed at supporting early career researchers as they transition from doctorate to stable employment. This series consists of six books each addressing one of the following topics: Publication , Research Funding , Collaboration , Mentoring , Doctoral Supervision and Doctoral Assessment . The University engages regularly with Vitae, with some members of staff attending the annual conference each year (2 presentations, in this HREiR period) as well as participating in events and consultations. To gain a more international perspective, we also engage with EUA-CDE (4 presentations), which is increasingly addressing ECR issues as well as PGR issues. We also regularly engage with UKCGE (2 presentations) and SRHE (1 presentation).	Achieved Linked to 2020_18.

