

## **European Charter and Code: Cardiff University Two Year Review**

### **1 Internal Evaluation**

The internal evaluation was conducted by a University Working Group, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Staff and Diversity. Its membership included the Chair of the Cardiff University Research Staff Association, a Head of School, Director of HR Operations, Director of Staff Development, Head of Careers and Employability, Deputy Director Planning, Assistant Director Research and Commercial Division and Training and Development Manager (Research). The group received input from other parties where appropriate. The review was informed by the results of the 2011 Careers in Research Online Survey and the 2011 and 2012 Research Staff Policy Forums; as well as the results of the 2011 staff survey, which was filtered by staff group. The review will be presented to the University's Executive Board.

### **2 Key Achievements and Progress**

#### **2.1 Recruitment and Selection**

The majority of the Concordat's recommendations in this area were already fully implemented at the time of our initial benchmarking review. For example, person and vacancy specifications clearly identified the skills required for the post, research posts were (and are) only advertised where there is a recorded and justifiable reason, and since the implementation of the National Framework Agreement in 2006 the University has adopted the HERA system of role analysis to ensure that the level of pay or grade for researchers, like all staff, is determined according to the requirements of the post. However, based on feedback in CROS 2009 we identified a need to improve the ways in which we communicate with research staff about University policy in these areas, as well as about rights and responsibilities more generally. Progress has been made in this respect during the last two years, as will be illustrated throughout this report.

In 2012 the University introduced a mandatory online equality and diversity (E&D) module for all members of University staff. This module provides an up-to-date overview of rights and responsibilities with respect to E&D legislation. It is complemented with classroom-based training for managers (in addition to mandatory E&D training for chairs of recruitment panels etc.).

At the time of the 2010 benchmarking exercise, the University had recently revised its fixed-term contract procedures as part of the development of our 'Management of Change Policy'. A briefing note was prepared for research staff on this new policy, which was subsequently adopted as a model for communication to other staff groups within the University. As part of our commitment to transparency, research staff receive an annual update regarding the proportion of researchers employed on fixed-term and ongoing contracts.

We have used our Research Staff Update (published three times a year) and the annual Research Staff Policy Forum to raise awareness of terms and conditions of employment (as well as holding a bespoke session for all new research staff at University Induction). The University's staff newsletter, 'Blas', is used to inform all staff of significant changes, e.g. proposed changes to pension scheme.

Finally, a number of stand-alone workshops have been provided to brief research staff on aspects of their employment – e.g. probation and appraisal, fixed-term contracts, redeployment, work-life balance. A new workshop will be introduced in the 2012/13 programme to explain the re-grading process.

### **2.3 Recognition and Value**

A draft 'Guidelines for PIs' document has been completed, which spells out the University's expectations of all those managing researchers and leading research teams. Following its approval by the PVC for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, these will be published in Autumn 2012 and will be linked formally to the University's Research Governance Framework.

The effects of the University's efforts to improve the participation rates for appraisal are clear: in 2010 57% of Professors had undergone appraisal in the last 24 months. By 2012 this figure had increased to 82%. There was also a 20% increase in the number of Professors who had undergone appraisal in the last 15 months. There was also an increase in the participation in appraisal of researchers (or probation if in the first year of employment): from 67% in 2010 to 78% in 2012. Efforts will continue to improve these rates.

Progress has been made in terms of assessing research managers' performance with respect to leadership and management. The University's Leadership and Management Framework, which stipulates what is expected of all members of staff with a leadership and management role, has now been formally linked to the appraisal process. This means that consideration should be given, on an annual basis, to the leadership and management capabilities of all Principal Investigators.

### **2.3 Support and Career Development**

The University has provided interim funding to sustain until September 2013 the provision of its free programme of training and development for research staff. It is now necessary to ensure the longer term sustainability of this activity. For 2012 this programme, which includes workshops, online training sessions, and one-to-one coaching on over 100 topics, has been redesigned as 'The Cardiff Researcher' programme, setting out the University's expectations about the broader development of researchers and linking the programme more formally with the Vitae Researcher Development Programme. Over a third of the research staff population attends at least one formal transferable skills or career development session in any given year. With regard to supporting those researchers who wish to pursue a career in teaching as well as research, the University now offers some of its places on its Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning to research staff who teach, and the programme has been redesigned to make it more flexible and modular.

The University is currently piloting a workload allocation scheme for all members of academic staff. The suggested workload model for research staff makes explicit that research staff are expected to have time to engage in broader scholarship and CPD, as well as teaching and activities relating to innovation and engagement. During the period of the review, the University also introduced a formal process to enable research staff with an appropriate profile to change from a 'research only' to a 'teaching and research' career pathway.

A session on the responsibilities of the PI has now been incorporated into the Research Leaders programme. This covers career development and the support available to both researchers and research managers. Since its introduction in 2007, 144 research managers have completed this programme, and it received a Times Higher Award in 2010. The forthcoming Guidelines for PIs will complement this provision.

Cardiff University's Research Staff Association was launched at the Research Staff Policy Forum in March 2012. Currently nine Schools have representatives. The chair of CURSA sits on the University's Research Strategy Oversight Group.

## **2.4 Diversity and Equality**

Since the University received its bronze award in 2009, a number of academic Schools have sought individual recognition under the scheme, with the School of Optometry & Vision Sciences and the School of Nursing and Midwifery both achieving silver awards and the School of Chemistry achieving a bronze award. There are now nine Schools in STEM disciplines working towards bronze, silver or gold awards. Additionally, four humanities and social science schools are participating in a pilot for an Athena SWAN scheme for humanities and social science.

## **2. Implementation and Review**

The Pro Vice -Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise has oversight of the implementation of the Concordat. Progress will also be reviewed at the annual Research Staff Policy Forum, which from 2013 onwards will be run by the Cardiff University Research Staff Association, with administrative support provided by the University.

The University participated in CROS 2011, and has made the report of the results publically available: The results have fed in to the revision of the Concordat action plan for 2012-2014. Key findings included:

- A continuing need to improve communication
- Concerns about absence of formal 'promotions' route for research staff
- A wish to be more involved in decision making, both within Academic Schools and at an institutional level
- 70% of respondents were satisfied overall with their work/life balance
- Some dissatisfaction over how respondents thought they were valued and recognised
- Over half of respondents had no clear career development plan and wished to engage in career management training
- Respondents were engaged in wide range of activities within role (not 'just' research)

## **3 Next Steps<sup>1</sup>**

One of the University's priorities over the next year will be to secure the longer term sustainability of the Cardiff Researcher programme of development and careers support for research staff.

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<sup>1</sup> see revised action plan for more detail

As outlined above, the University's recent review of its academic career pathways has resulted in the standardisation of nomenclature for staff on the 'research-only' career pathway; the development of an internal process for changing career pathways which enables staff to change, where appropriate, from research-only to the teaching and research pathway; and clarifying expectations about research staff workloads. Discussions regarding the feasibility of introducing a formal promotions route for research staff were delayed until our new Vice Chancellor was in post (1<sup>st</sup> September 2012). This part of the career pathways project will be carried forward into the next review period (2012-2014).

This academic year Cardiff University has replaced its flat structure of 27 Academic Schools with a College structure. Over the next two years we will work with the three colleges to progress the implementation of the Concordat at Academic School level.

We plan to continue to improve communications with research staff and their managers. Over the review period we will develop a social media strategy to ensure that we use information and communication technologies to best effect in supporting the development of researchers.

The Working Group agreed that CROS will be run again in 2013 to allow the University to measure progress and to benchmark against other universities.

A more detailed action plan is published on our research staff web-pages.

We have identified some actions as 'ongoing'. Although considerable progress may have been made against these actions, they have been identified as areas which will never be fully 'completed' as improvements will always be possible e.g. communication with researchers, reviewing the Cardiff Researcher development programme, and so on.

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