



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



HR Excellence in Research Award: Six year review for Cardiff University

Cardiff University HR Excellence in Research Review Group

(July 2016)

1 How we approached the internal evaluation

This evaluation was conducted by a University Working Group, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC). Its membership included, the Training & Development Manager for Research Staff, Chair of the Cardiff University Research Staff Association (CURSA), the Director of Leadership and Organisational Development, the Head of Research Development, a Careers and Employability Business Partner, a College Human Resources Business Partner and a Director of Research from our three academic Colleges. Development included integration of findings from the 2015 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and concurrent University Staff survey which helped to reinforce findings and highlight areas requiring focus. For the purpose of the interim review, we have submitted:

1. An overview of progress against the original Cardiff University Concordat Plan for 2010-2016. This paper outlines where progress has been maintained, initiatives mainstreamed and where developments have continued incrementally.
2. A 2016-2018 forward plan integrating actions from the original Concordat plan, our 2014 HR Excellence plan and our CROS 2015 evaluation. Actions which would previously be coded “amber” in the Concordat plan are presented here. This two year plan outlines significant or recent institutional developments which are relevant to Concordat principles and also highlights key tasks we will focus on in the next two years. These objectives are summarised in Section 5.

2 Key achievements and progress against Concordat Principles

2.1 Principle A: Recruitment and Selection

The CROS 2015 findings suggest that in terms effectiveness of selection procedures, systems are working well, with an increase from 3% to 7.3% in respondents finding new roles via the University’s redeployment pool at the end of a contract, which suggests that this is developing into a helpful resource for some. Induction emerged as an issue to address as over 30% of CROS respondents reported not being offered role or local induction. Several developments are already in place to address this across the University via improved intranet resources, differentiated central programmes and a new, standardised local induction model. Intranet resources for researchers, as proposed in the 2014 action plan, were reviewed and published in 2016. *Our forward plan reflects our intention to monitor effectiveness of these initiatives as they are established and tested over the next two years.*

2.2 Principle A: Recognition and Value

Participation of research staff in annual appraisal increased from 60% in 2013 to 81% amongst CROS respondents. In the University Staff Survey, 67% of researcher respondents reported that they found it helpful in work planning and objective setting. During 2015/16, a new Performance Development Review (PDR) model was implemented, which includes a greater focus on career and development conversations and invites more frequent interim review. Different staff groups now have tailored documentation, relevant to their career pathway. This should strengthen the focus on personal development as well as the relationships between PIs and the research staff they manage, and dialogue about options for development, independence, grading or career options should now be facilitated by the PDR. *This is currently being embedded in University practice so our forward plan will focus on evaluation*

of what PDR delivers for researchers, with CROS/Staff Survey 2017 providing an initial source of information.

Guidance for managers of researchers is ongoing, with leadership and management training for PIs being reviewed for both 2015/16 and 2016/17 programmes. Clarity has been given in new University guidelines, about the role and responsibilities of an academic manager, work plan models and expectations. *Our forward plan will focus on ensuring that this new guidance is fully extended to research staff as well as being reflected in their employee experience.*

The Cardiff University Research Staff Association (CURSA) appointed a new Chair and a new Committee in December 2015. Training for current and aspiring reps. and the new committee was provided early in 2016 and included awareness of the University's Concordat obligations. CURSA now have an intranet space, a virtual community and is growing representation in College project groups. *Our forward plan seeks to increase the researcher voice within key groups which may further influence their experience.*

A new and key project group, "Enhancing Early Career Independence" (EECI) is building synergy between Research and Innovation Services (RIS), College Research Support, CURSA and Researcher Development to align best practice and develop a more strategic approach to career development and profile-building of research staff, fellows and other early career academics. *A number of our original actions and intentions now link to the remit of this group and our forward plan will develop this collaboration to ensure joined-up implementation of recommendations and projects currently awaiting approval.*

2.3 Principle C: Support and Career Development/D: Researchers Responsibilities

Developments are underway within the University to introduce an online data capture system for appraisal (PDR) and related development plans. An enhanced exit information survey will be introduced in late 2016. Progress has continued in terms of giving more definition to the 'research only' career pathway and during the review period, "The Cardiff Academic" was published, setting the framework of roles and accountabilities across the academic community. Work to review the feasibility of a 'promotions' scheme for research staff included an initial scoping study to explore practice in other HEIs and to outline possible approaches; this work will feed into a wider review of University promotion schemes in 2016/7. Options for access to mentoring have developed University-wide and over 150 new mentors been trained during 2015/16, with a new database for seeking/matching being piloted from autumn 2016. RIS continue to support effective approaches to funding application in order to optimise resources for researchers. *Our forward plan reflects our intention to track and evaluate this range of developments in terms of the researcher experience and development opportunity.*

Principle E: Equality and Diversity

We have continued to extend the scope of Athena Swann across the University, with 16 Schools achieving or pursuing awards, 3 Schools considering application and the University aiming for the Race Equality Charter Mark for 2017. The 2015 CROS survey showed that 85% respondents had positive perceptions of fairness and the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity. We noted several comments which suggested that some experiences "on the ground" were variable and this concurs with a wider drive to address unconscious bias across the University. *Our forward plan reflects our intention to maintain and improve on our achievements and the strong E&D culture which the University has built..*

3 Principle F: Implementation and Review

At the time of the 2014 review, the University College structure was new and evolving. Governance now includes a new Executive Board (UEB), appointment of a Dean of Research for each College and the establishment of a Research Excellence Group (REG), chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research (PVCR). We have re-aligned decision-making around Concordat implementation within this new structure, which has brought cohesion to our action planning, as well as reinforcing accountability. As a starting point our 2015 CROS/Staff Survey report and plan was presented to UEB for endorsement. The Board also supported the integration of actions from the Concordat, HR Excellence 2014 and CROS 2015 in order to give coherent direction both to the institution as a whole, and to Colleges for attention at a local level. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) leads the Concordat agenda and will lead the 2018 review, whilst the REG now has oversight of the 2016-18 action plan and priorities, giving further strength to the Concordat mandate.

4 Specific objectives for the next two years (2016-2018)

A Recruitment & Selection/C Support & Career Development

A paper proposing career development support options and investment will be presented to the University Executive Board (UEB) by EEIC Chair – **Nov 2016**

B Recognition and Value

HR Operations to integrate 90 day induction model within CORE HR management system in order to trigger the process for all new staff – **Jan 2017**

Effectiveness of new induction and PDR processes in terms of research staff to be reviewed via participation in CROS 2017, led by Researcher Development and evaluated in conjunction with CURSA – **Nov 2017**

Further work will be undertaken by OSD to develop the Cardiff Academic role expectations specific to research only staff – **May 2018**

DVC to discuss with PVCR how CURSA can be involved in the strategic portfolio via related research committees and agree recommendations – **Nov 2016**

C Support & Career Development

There will be a fundamental review of the academic promotions process by OSD which will include examining how researchers are reflected within it – **by Jan 2018**

RIS to update their checklist of things to consider on applying for funding in order to achieve appropriate costing and build into CAP form guidance – **March 2017**

D Researchers Responsibilities

Evaluation of effectiveness of training and development recording system for research staff by HR/OSD via consultation with CURSA, once sufficient data has been gathered – **March 2018**

E Equality and Diversity

The University's mandatory E&D training will be redeveloped in-house by OSD/ E&D lead - **June 2017**