

## **The University of Portsmouth Four Year Internal Evaluation Report for the Human Resources Excellence in Research Award**

The University of Portsmouth is a member of the University Alliance mission group and has approximately 120 contract research staff. The University conducted a gap analysis against the principles of The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers in 2012 and based on this was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award in May, 2013. Since then, the University has continued to document and monitor progress against the Concordat principles and successfully renewed the HR excellence award at the two-year milestone in 2015.

Over the last four years the University has undergone transformational change, with a new University strategy and launch of a new Research and Innovation Strategy (2015-2020) and People Strategy (2016-2020). These documents reaffirm the institution's commitment to developing and supporting its researchers' and specifically commit the institution to "promote opportunities and develop skills for early and mid-career researchers", "nurture our postgraduate researchers to become the next generation of research and innovation leaders" and to "provide an infrastructure that improves the capacity and capability of our researchers". These strategic ambitions ensure a continued focus and prioritisation on implementing the concordat principles and complement the aims of the concordat. This report summarises the progress made since gaining the HR Excellence in Research Award (2013-2017) and presents a strategy to ensure robust progress over the upcoming 4-year period (2017-2021).

### **1. Internal evaluation process**

The self-audit process has been led by the Concordat Implementation Group (CIG). The chair of the CIG is a member of the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC). The URIC is led the PVC Research and Innovation, who is also a member of the University Executive Board and has formally endorsed the self-audit process, evaluation and action plan. The CIG group is chaired by the Staff Development Coordinator (Research) and key members on this committee are researcher representatives from each of the five faculties. These are nominated by their respective Associate Dean (Research) or elected from the research staff community in their faculty. To ensure input and representation from PIs we have put in place a new role of PI researcher development champion who is nominated by the PVC Research and Innovation and links the CIG to the Readers' and Professors' Forum. Other members are the Researcher Development Coordinator for the Graduate School, a representative from employability, the Equality and Diversity manager and the Deputy Director HR.

The researcher representatives and the Staff Development Coordinator (Research) (SDCR) have liaised with the broader research community during the audit process. To support the community in directly inputting their views into the audit process the January 2017 Researchers' Network lunch was dedicated to gathering feedback on key areas of the Concordat action plan (PDR, mentoring, researcher development activities, induction). This feedback was reflected on by the CIG at their January 2017 meeting and incorporated into this report and used to build the strategy going forward. Data and written responses from CROS, PIRLS and PRES have also been taken into consideration, CROS and PIRLS 2017 surveys are currently underway across the institution.

### **2. Key achievements and progress (May 2013-May 2017)**

#### **2.1. Principle 1 + 2: Recruitment and Selection and Recognition and Value**

*2.1.a Employment conditions:* Staff who are coming to the end of a fixed term contract have access to improved and more detailed information on obtaining a new role. Significant improvements have been made in communicating expectations for researchers at different career stages and in the provision of career guidance through researcher development workshops. Research staff have access to career coaching, with 24 research staff accessing coaching between March 2015-April 2017.

*2.1.b Training for recruitment:* Training for interviewers has been updated and is now modular. For recruitment and selection of PGRS the graduate school has introduced an online version of its training "best practice in selection and admission of PGRS" to enable more staff to gain access to training more easily.

*2.1.c Promotion criteria:* The criteria for promotion to Reader and Professor have been updated and include research, teaching and innovation routes to promotion. All routes require candidates to demonstrate their contribution to leadership and citizenship, for examples by mentoring and supporting the career development of others. Workshops explaining the criteria and application process for promotion to Reader and Professor are part of the Researcher Development Programme. Steps are being taken to evaluate the effectiveness of these especially with regards to supporting and encouraging strong applications from female candidates. Workshops are well attended and for 2015-16 18 applications were received for promotion to professor (13 male; 5 female) with a 50% success rate (7 male; 2 female). For promotion to Reader 25 applications were received (15 male; 10 female) 44% were successful (7 male; 4 female).

*2.1.d Appraisal and performance management:* Uptake of PDRs for research staff has been a key issue. Monitoring uptake via CROS has taken place since 2013 with additional internal monitoring first through surveys to research staff and now via HR sending reminders and monitoring returns from HoD requiring information on the PDR status of named research staff. This has improved PDR uptake from eligible research staff. Our data for 2016 shows 80% of eligible research staff had had a PDR compared to 68% in 2014. Uptake will continue to be monitored closely as the institution begins trialling an online PDR system from October 2017. Research staff have been selected as a key pilot group for the online trial. A member of research staff as well as the SDCR have been members of the HR working group that has reviewed and revised the PDR process, this has supported research staff in feeding their views into the working group.

## 2.2. Principle 3 & 4: Support and Career Development

*2.2.a Researcher development training:* In September 2014 we achieved a major goal of our original action plan by establishing a Researcher Development Programme (RDP). This programme is targeted to research staff and academic staff but is open to all staff in the University. As of Feb 2017 1400 RDP workshop places had been attended by university staff. 56% of research staff attended at least one RDP session during 2014-15, for 2015-16 the figure was slightly lower at 39%, possibly because the programme was no longer new. Further we note that a number of research staff that did not attend workshops did sign up and attend coaching or attended a Researcher' Network lunch suggesting they were accessing support and development opportunities. Staff with a broad range of job roles including teaching fellow, technical specialist, scientific officer and librarian have attended workshops within the RDP indicating that the RDP is reaching out to staff interested in developing skills as a researcher even if they are not currently in a role that clearly identifies them as a researcher.

*2.2.b Mentoring:* Ensuring that research staff have access to a mentor was a key target over the time period of this report. An audit with the SDCR and ADRs took place in late 2014 and identified areas of local good practice but revealed that provision for mentoring was patchy across the institution. To ensure access to mentoring in January 2017 an institution-wide online mentor matching using the SUMAC system was introduced. Uptake of SUMAC by research staff is being monitored and UoP specific questions on mentoring have been included in CROS and PIRLS since 2015. To address the need for skills to support good mentoring practice a mentoring skills workshop has been included in the RDP since the 2015-16 academic year and with the launch of SUMAC guidelines for mentoring for research and innovation have been developed and made available to researchers. CROS 2015 indicates that 52% of research staff have been offered a mentor.

### 2.3. Principle 5: Researchers' Aware of Their Responsibilities

*2.3.a Researchers encouraged to take responsibility for their career:* The University's Researchers' Network is coordinated by the SDCR with support from ~15 volunteer Researchers' Network Champions drawn from the researcher community, as described in the linked case study. The community has a Google+ community of over 220 members and holds a network lunch each term. Lunch events have a theme and are designed to support researchers in connecting and learning from each other, and support them in reaching out to build skills and take responsibility for their own development and career choices.

*2.3.b Responsibility for ethics and impact:* Online ethics resources and ethics review documents have been modified to emphasize researcher responsibilities of the Concordat for Research Integrity. Researchers' responsibility to generate and translate the impact of their research have been signposted and emphasized over a number of impact and engagement workshop sessions run both in specific departments/units and as part of the RDP.

### 2.4. Principle 6: Diversity & Equality

*2.4.a Athena SWAN:* The University continues to progress towards its Equality and Diversity targets and in April 2014 gained the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award. 10 departments hold the departmental Bronze awards and in November 2017 the university will be submitting for Athena SWAN Bronze (extended principles). The University is developing a business case for the joining the ECU Race charter and there are staff forums to champion and highlight LGBT, Disability, Women's and Multicultural issues.

*2.4.b Leadership programmes for Women:* The University is committed to ensuring that all members of staff are receiving support to gain skills and progress their career but recognises the continued challenges facing women in attaining senior roles. To support leadership development for female staff members the University has sponsored 10-20 places each year on the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education Aurora programme. 36 members of research and academic staff have attended Aurora and a committee of former Aurora attendees is now active in organising networking events for women on Campus. From 2017 the University is also running springboard as an in-house programme to further support development opportunities for potential women leaders. 64 women are booked to attend 2016-17 and a further 64 for 2017-18.

*2.4.c Highlight on equality and diversity:* To highlight aspects of equality and diversity that are relevant to the research community the Researchers' Network hosted a lunch event dedicated to this topic. This was well attended and the audience included research staff as well as PIs. Case studies from the Vitae 'every researcher counts' resource were incorporated to prompt discussion.

## 2.5. Principle 7: Implementation & Review

*2.5.a Providing opportunities for researcher feedback:* To ensure researchers can have their views heard and provide feedback we promote CROS, PIRLS and PRES within the institution. PGRS forum feedback sessions are held regularly by the Graduate School and the Researchers' Network hold lunch events to collect feedback (see linked case study).

*2.5.b Using feedback from researchers:* Feedback from researchers is reflected on by the CIG and used to plan priorities going forward. By including Researchers' Network Champion as CIG members there is a direct link between implementation of the concordat and the researcher community in the planning and review stages.

### **3. Next steps and focus of the strategy for the next four years (2017-2021)**

Over the next four years a key focus is to continue to build on the measures put in place to implement the concordat principles by continuing to evolve the provision for researchers and move towards joining up support and tailoring provision for staff that are involved or want to be engagement in research and innovation activities. Following our Researchers' Network feedback event and discussion with Researchers' Network Champions, four priorities have been identified with will be the focus over the next 2 years.

*3.1 Develop guide for PIs (Principle 1 + 2):* To enable PIs to play a more active role in supporting their researchers we will develop a guide for PIs that outlines the opportunities and development events available for researchers in the institution. This will support PIs in working with their research staff to highlight opportunities for their development and build PIs awareness of their role in supporting their staff.

*3.2 Introduce induction communication for research and innovation (Principle 3, 4 & 5):* All staff are encouraged and expected to attend a university-wide induction event that includes information on researcher development. In response to researcher feedback a further induction communication for incoming research staff that details the support and development available will be developed and piloted.

*3.3 Mentoring (Principle 3, 4 & 5):* Continue to monitor uptake of mentoring via CROS and SUMAC and support mentoring uptake and skills development via researcher development and the Researchers' Network.

*3.4 Implementation and review (Principle 6 & 7):* Continue to support and develop the Researchers' Network and include network champions on the CIG.

### **4. Measures of success**

- Induction communication in place for 2017-18 academic year. Delivered to 100% of incoming research staff.
- Continue to build engagement and increase attendance at Researchers' Network networking events by 50%.
- PIs of research staff to receive guide to supporting their researchers by March 2018.
- Mentoring offered to 100% of research staff, with uptake over 80%
- Continue to use the CROS survey as a means to gather feedback and data from research staff, alongside opportunities through the Researchers' Network to gain feedback from the researcher community. Continue the use of PIRLS and internal staff surveys planned for November 2017 and 2019 to gather staff feedback.