



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



The Concordat
to Support the Career Development of Researchers



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the potential
of researchers

HR Excellence in Research Award External review report

This report is provided as a result of the external review of the institutions which hold the HR Excellence in Research Award, 4 years after gaining the Award. An international peer reviewer team, containing two UK and one international peer reviewers, undertook the review, and this report is the output of that assessment.

This report was then reviewed by at least two members of the UK HR Excellence in Research Award Panel, who reviewed the recommendations of the peer review team in relation to your institution and reviewed consistency of judgements across the peer reviewer teams.

Principles of review

The Peer reviewers were seeking to be convinced that there is sufficient evidence that:

- there are robust mechanisms in place within the institution to regularly and thoughtfully review and reflect on progress and define appropriate strategy and actions
- the institution is making genuine progress against its strategy and where possible that the impact is evident within the researcher community

Institution	University of Portsmouth
Date of review	18 July 2017
Peer reviewer team:	
Peer reviewer name	Peer reviewer job title and institution
Emma Compton-Daw	Academic Development Lead (Research), University of Strathclyde
Julie Reeves	Researcher Development Coordinator, University of Southampton
Erik van Beers	HR Policy Advisor, Tilburg University
Institutional representatives:	
Name of representative	Job title
Prof Pal Ahluwalia	PVC (Research & Innovation)
Nicola Haines	Researcher Development Coordinator
Dr Rhiannon McGeehan	Senior Research Fellow

Is the evidence provided?			
	Y/N	Evidence found in documentation, including highlights	Evidence provided during the call with institutions being reviewed
Shows how internal evaluation was undertaken	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal review was led by the Concordat Implementation Group (CIG), chaired by the Researcher Development Coordinator. The chair is also a member of the University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC) which is led by the PVC Research and Innovation. • There are researcher representatives from each of the five faculties on the CIG – nominated by Associate Dean (Research) or elected by research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • URIC meets quarterly. The minutes from CIG are sent to URIC and the Researcher Development Coordinator has a standing 'Concordat' related report at each meeting.



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		<p>staff. Also a PI Researcher Development Champion, E&D Manager, employability representative, Researcher Development Coordinator from Graduate School and Deputy HR Director.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of events and focus groups were also undertaken and relevant survey results were used. The Researchers' Network was strongly involved in this, both through face-to-face events and through their Google+ online community. 	
Shows how researchers' views were taken into account during the review	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are research staff representatives from each faculty on CIG A key forum for engaging researchers was the Researchers' Network. Within the network each faculty has a Champion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the representatives/Champions are, or have recently been, on fixed-term contracts. As well as a Researchers' Network lunch dedicated to this review, Champions consulted within their faculties and the Google+ community was used to reach those who were not able to attend. There are also Early Careers Forums in some faculties (there is variation between faculties reflecting their different landscapes). Communications with these are ensured by situating representatives within relevant groups.
Indicates how review links with existing QA and other implementation mechanisms (this is not a requirement to retain the award)	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very clear links with Equality & Diversity and Athena SWAN 	
Provides details of key achievements	Y	<p>Key achievements are detailed in the 4 page report and the action plan against Concordat principles.</p> <p>Key achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved information for staff coming to the end of a fixed-term contract on obtaining a new role. 	<p>Key achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Researcher Development Programme Researchers' Network and Google+ community Improvements in both recruitment & selection training and recruitment processes in line with



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career coaching for research staff has been implemented with a good uptake. • New, modular, recruitment and selection training • Promotion criteria for senior staff (to Reader or Professor) includes criteria relating to mentoring and career development of others. They are also considering how to encourage strong applications from female candidates. • There has been a focus on PDR, with an increase in PDR for RS between 2014 and 2016. An online PDR system will be trialled from October 2017 with Research Staff a key pilot group. • A Researcher Development Programme of workshops aimed at research and academic staff was established in September 2014. This appears to have been well received by research staff. • Mentoring has been a focus over the four years with good uptake from research staff. • A researchers' network meets termly to hold lunches focused around career development. There is a related Google+ community that has over 220 members. • The university has gained, and is working towards, Athena SWAN awards and also looking to join the ECU Race Charter. • There is strong support for female leadership programmes, with 36 research and academic staff taking part in Aurora and attendees now organising networking events for women. They will also run Springboard in the future. 	<p>the Concordat, e.g. at least one interview panel member must have completed the new training and panel compositions are reviewed for diversity.</p>
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Shows progress against the original strategy outlined in the original action plan and 2 year review, including indicators and metrics where appropriate (i.e. to what extent is the strategy set out implemented?)	Y/N	Whilst key achievements and highlights are demonstrated, progress across the whole period is unclear for some actions (i.e. there were some blanks in 2-4 year updated action plan) in the documentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review panel were concerned by the lack of progress for some actions and felt that inclusion of more data and metrics would have been helpful. This was explored in the call. <p>From the call, it was clear that excellent progress has been made in many areas, in particular the implementation of the Researcher Development Programme and the Researchers' Network as well as research staff needs being at the forefront of an extensive project to introduce an online appraisal and review system.</p> <p>Research staff needs are considered, prioritised and supported at the University of Portsmouth with the review panel reassured by the call.</p> <p>As detailed in the final comments we would suggest that they are encouraged to complete progress/trends for all actions in future submissions and draw on a greater pool of data/metrics for their updates.</p>
Identifies progress against all Concordat principles	Y/N	See above. Achievements were identified against all Principles, but progress across the period was not always clear.	See above.
New action plan provides clear actions, specific accountability, specific deadlines covering the next, at least, 2 year period.	Y/N	The new action plan is present, however it seemed fairly limited: there are no actions against Principle 1, there are few 'new' actions, actions are often 'passive' and HR do not seem as involved as they did over the first two years.	<p>From the call we were reassured that research staff needs and implementing the Concordat is still high up the University's agenda. They have new Institutional Strategies in place and are continuing to embed these in the culture across the university.</p> <p>As detailed in the final comments below we would, however, like to see a greater involvement of HR across all relevant principles in the future action plan and a greater reliance on data/metrics within success measures.</p>
Report outlines focus of strategy for next, at least, 2 year period, inc. success measures	Y	This is outlined above and reflects the actions in the action plan	

The following were supplied			
Context (paragraph outlining context - confidential)	N		
Original action plan online	Y		
Two year action plan online	Y		
Two year report online	Y		
Four year report online	Y		
New Four year action plan (covering at least 2 years) online	Y		
Case study supplied (optional, not required for review – requested to share practice)	Y		The review panel were very impressed with the case study of the Researchers' Network and online Google+ community. It appears to be a great success and enables the institution to reach out and engage with their research staff. This shows a demonstrable commitment to supporting research staff and listening to their voices in relation to their career development needs.

The peer reviewer team concludes that:	Y/N	Comments (to be completed)
The evidence provided meets the requirements of the four year process		
The evidence provided meets the requirements, but you would like to see the following changes made within 3 months (by 15 December 2017)	Y	<p>Excellent progress has been made over the past 4 years at the University of Portsmouth in supporting research staff and implementing the Concordat Principles. Highlights are the implementation of the Researcher Development Programme (which is well-tailored to research staff needs), the inclusion of careers coaching for research staff and the Researchers' Network. The review panel were impressed with the progress made in these areas by the Institution and in particular the Researcher Development Coordinator.</p> <p>All levels of the university were involved with the process and senior management are engaged and supportive of the process and its principles. It was clear from the call that both the PVC and research staff representative present had had significant input into both the implementation of the activities and the review process itself.</p> <p>However, the peer review team had the following concerns:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Progress was not reported for all actions over the full four years and we would have liked to have seen greater use of metrics/data in the reporting 2) The future action plan does not cover all Concordat Principles and the actions may not show demonstrable progression over the next review period. 3) The involvement of HR in the award appears to have decreased over time. They had a strong presence in the actions and updates over the

	<p>first 2 years, but this appeared to decrease over years 2 – 4 and again in the new action plan.</p>
<p>The evidence provided will meet the requirements ONLY if the following changes are made</p>	
<p>The evidence provided does not meet the requirements and extensive changes are required. You recommend putting on hold until these are addressed</p>	
<p>Peer reviewer summary, comments and recommendations</p>	<p>The peer review team have made the following recommendations and would like these to be addressed within a 3 month period, so by 15 December 2017:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We would <u>not</u> recommend that the 2013 - 2017 year action plan be updated at this point of the review process, but would suggest that the 2017 – 2021 plan <u>is</u> revised to better enable future reporting and that future submissions should include updates on progress of all actions and have a greater reliance on data, have SMART measures, and metrics drawn from multiple sources. For instance relevant HR data around areas such as the number of research staff on fixed-term contracts and if this has remained constant/reduced or increased, how many fixed term contract staff moved to permanent contracts, obtained promotions, etc. over the review period. 2) Future actions should be included for all Concordat Principles and success measures should reflect effectiveness of the action rather than it just having happened 3) A greater engagement by HR in the future actions in all relevant Principles.
<p>The UK panel concludes that:</p>	<p>The UK HR Excellence in Research Panel have subsequently reviewed this external review report along with your institutional four year report and can confirm that there is both evidence that the review process has been followed correctly, and that your institution has met the criteria for retaining the Award. Congratulations.</p> <p>The UK panel discussed the recommendations above and have commented that,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) they are in agreement that you should amend your current plan to include SMARTER success measures in order that you can report more robustly on progress, including metrics, in your next review period 2) whilst institutions do not necessarily need to identify actions to take forwards in all principles they should however consider current practice in all areas to decide if an action is necessary or not, which you have demonstrated that you have done via your gap analysis. Therefore the panel felt that you could cover the recommendation made by the peer review team above by including a note for each principle, i.e. rather than leaving the action column blank, it would be preferable to add a note to say 'No current action identified, see gap analysis.' As you have clearly considered all principles through your gap analysis document.. 3) the panel has asked that you cover this by providing a letter from a senior PVC to reconfirm the commitment of your HR team with regards this agenda. <p>The members of the UK Panel that reviewed your submission and this report were:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Irmela Brach, Policy Officer, European Commission• Dr Fay Couciero, member of the UK Research Staff Association• Dr Rob Daley, Academic Programme Leader, Heriot Watt University• Dr Andy Dixon, Director of Research, University of Chichester and member of the Concordat Strategy Group.
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