



TOWARDS HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH:

Action Plan 2020 - 2022

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Key:

New action	
Ongoing action	

HR Excellence in Research 2020-2022 Action Plan

Introduction to the 2020-2022 Action Plan

The University of the West of Scotland first achieved the HR Excellence in Research Award in June 2016. Since then we have been aiming to improve our research environment through the delivery of the [2016-2018](#) and 2018-2020 action plan (updated June 2020). The updated 2018-2020 action plan, this forward looking 2020-2022 action plan and the associated four year review report form the basis of our four year review submission, setting out our plans to further support our commitment to the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#). For actions completed within both the 2016-2018 and the 2018-2020 plan the approach continues and this allows the 2020-2022 to focus on new actions around identified issues that need to be addressed.

This action plan has been established as a result of on-going reviews via the Concordat Implementation Steering Group, Focus Groups that were held with academic staff, consultation with support staff and consideration to good HR practice. For further information please contact researchservices@uws.ac.uk

A. Recruitment and Selection

Principle 1

Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

Point	Key	Actions to be addressed	Success Criteria	Responsibility for Action	Target Completion Date
1.2 1.4		As part of full Employee Lifecycle Review, continue to improve and standardise recruitment and selection processes and procedures. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall review of processes and guidance to enhance experience, ensure consistency and attract diverse and talented staff • Review of interview panel compositions to ensure diversity and reduce risks of unintended bias • Refreshed recruitment guidance & training for interview panel members • Monitored completion of unconscious bias awareness module by interview panel members 	Monitoring of application and appointment data Revised guidance and training in place 90% of recruitment panel members completed training 95% of recruitment panel members completed online module	P&OD	September 2021

			Induction perceived as useful in future CROS/ all staff surveys		
1.1		Continue to promote UWS participation in the HR Excellence in Research Award and the Concordat to support the career development of researchers.	The HR Excellence award continues to be promoted through recruitment web pages and at events, particularly those organised by the Staff Forum for Research. At least 40% awareness of HR Excellence in Research in Future CROS Surveys.	P&OD UWS Academy Research Services Doctoral College	On-going

B. Recognition and Value

Principle 2

Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.

Point	Key	Actions to be addressed.	Success Criteria	Lead	Target Completion Date
2.1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review how we get feedback from staff to inform further development in reward and recognition following little engagement in CROS and PIRLs 2019 and no cross UWS staff survey. Assess whether further arrangements are necessary to ensure that all employees have the opportunity and confidence to offer their views on HR Excellence Action Plan 	Agreed Staff survey plan which considers CEDARS being run on a bi-annual cycle or asks same key questions. Process to get additional staff input into HR Excellence Action Plan reviews.	P&OD in consultation with Steering Group & Staff Forum for rResearch	March 2021
2.2		As part of full Employee Lifecycle Review, provide clarity on procedures for and use of fixed term versus open ended contracts	Revised guidance available	P&OD	September 2021
2.4		A process to allocate budget to allow for continuation of projects affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic is under development with first projects expected to receive funding in August 2020	Support of research staff through extension to contracts.	Research Services	On-going
2.4		In response to the Covid-19 pandemic new funding will be allocated to support no cost extensions and provide bridging funding to extend staff contracts and support research staff retention, maintaining capacity where projects and groups have been impacted by the crises.	Response to open call and number of applications approved (jobs protected). Number of research projects supported	Vice Principal (RIE)	Call in 2020 and if funds allow further call in 2021
2.6		Continue to review and improve My Contribution (performance management process) and associated procedures for reward and recognition	Simplified procedure, form and revised guidance.	P&OD	Annual review

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			Performance management, reward and recognition procedures perceived positively in future CROS/ all staff surveys		
2.3		Implement a best practice guide for management of research staff to enhance research managers and leaders. Communicate the guide through advertising and organising training, to support skills and knowledge of research managers and leaders.	PI masterclass – October 2020 Guide in production	UWS Academy with P&OD with Research Services & research staff	Launch in September 2021.
2.4		Continue to support the Early Career Researcher Forum, now renamed as the Staff forum for Research.	Evidence of an active supported community organising their own events and activities. Active participation in the Concordat Steering Group.	Research Services UWS Academy	
2.3		Refreshed programme of management and leadership training for AY2020-21 to enhance capability will include the importance of personal and career development for all staff, including researchers	Evidence of programme content and % of managers completing	P&OD	AY 2020-21 and on-going
2.3		Creation of training and resources for new PIs. We intend to create a new session and resources to support PIs/Research Leaders. This will cover relevant topics (finance, recruitment, governance) and “case studies”/advice from experienced PIs on a range of issues/pitfalls to avoid.	Peer support and tips from experienced PIs Introduction of new post-award team revised processes. Online resources	Vice Principal (RIE) Lead with Research Services & Finance Department	Masterclass September 2020 Launch of resources September 2020

C. Support and Career Development

Principle 3

Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.

Point	Key	Actions to be addressed.	Success Criteria	Lead	Target Completion Date
3.2		At UWS we consider all researcher equal at UWS and therefore all webinars, courses or resources are open to all researchers Ensure that funds are set aside for researcher development and places are reserved for research staff on fixed term contracts on all flagship academic staff development programmes including: Grant Accelerator UWS Crucible (commitment to rerun in 2021) Women in Leadership	Participation rates from research staff in line with demand. Range of participants in programmes available	UWS Academy Research Services P&OD	Completed and ongoing.

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		UWS Academy organises regular sessions aligned with the RDF for PGRs and research staff PgCAP Module Research in Academic Practice is available to all staff as a standalone non-credited CPD module	Increase number of attendees Increase number of staff taking the module as CPD		
3.6 5.3		Develop Academic writing support: provisions offered by UWS Academy and expand courses on offer from one (Journal paper writing) to include grant writing and job applications e.g. lectureships for postdocs – the series will be called Write-along as it provides support along the process Use research findings from the UWS Academy Power Hour of Writing sessions (Advance HE Good practice grant) to understand what other provisions can support early career researchers with their writing	Take up – attendance on courses Statistics from PURE on published outputs	UWS Academy	AY 2020-2021
3.1 3.6		Review and develop supervisor training and we aim to implement a shadow scheme for early career researchers to get credit for supervisor duties and introduce them to being a PGR supervisor	Scheme in operation launched Uptake 10+ staff in pilot phase.	UWS Academy Doctoral College	July 2021
3.2		Taking account of consultation feedback, review the current induction process and create an integrated framework accessible online which brings together information about the University in general, about specific roles and areas, and adds researcher development content to the existing online academic induction	Online resources available	P&OD UWS Academy	Completed and ongoing AY 2020-2021
3.1 3.2 3.6		Work towards including the Vitae Researcher Development Framework into research practice through reflection and its role in annual reviews (in collaboration with P&OD)	Mapping all UWS Academy researcher development provision to the Vitae RDF Mapping P&OD and other department provision to Vitae RDF	UWS Academy P&OD, Doctoral College, Research Services	AY2020-2021 AY 2021-2022
3.6		Design career development resources for early career researchers (in particular post doctoral research staff).	Development of existing resources from Careers Services	UWS Academy with Careers Service	Completed and ongoing.

C. Support and Career Development

Principle 4

The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.

Point	Key	Issues to be addressed.	Success criteria	Lead	Target Completion Date
4.10 4.13 4.14		Concordat Steering Group to lead a workshop in 2020 to review mentoring provision post Covid-19 lockdown and map out actions to develop and improve provision.	Actions completed to improve access to mentoring	UWS Concordat Steering Group	September 2021
4.11 4.12		Deliver an optional module within the PG CAP called Academic Research in Practice. This module is designed to support participants to develop a sustainable research portfolio. Participants will be introduced to a range of topics to promote engagement in research activity including, good practice in research degree supervision, effective practice in writing funding proposals and writing for, publications as well as ethics and integrity in research in higher education. The module will be fully evaluated after its first delivery. Part of this evaluation will be the number of participants who sign up for this over other option modules. UWS Academy Launch January 20	Stephanie how many opted for this in AY 19/20 please	UWS Academy	Completed and ongoing
4.10		Support existing Staff Forum for Research/network to provide engagement and representation opportunities for research staff. Allocation of annual budget to support the activities in line with annual plan.	Annual Report of activities Response of Steering group to annual reports	Chair Research Staff Forum Research Services UWS Academy	Completed and continuing
4.10		Review research staff/early career researcher representation access to information and opportunities to engage with UWS external networks including research pools and to develop leadership skills through participation in appropriate UWS committees and Leadership groups.	Creation of short life working group. Report of groups review and recommendations endorse by Concordat Steering Group sent forward to the UWS Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee.	Concordat Steering Group (working group) with Senate Office and Schools	AY 2020-2021
4.11		Creation of training and support and resources for students and staff on fixed term contracts looking at fellowships, matching them with appropriate mentor by agreement.	Mentoring support and tips from experienced PIs and where possible previous participants. Online resources	Research Service and UWS Academy	AY 2020/21

D. Researchers' Responsibilities

Principle 5

Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

Point	Key	Actions Planned	Measures of Success	Lead	Target Completion Date
5.1		Review of how research success is celebrated at UWS and how researchers can raise their profile on the back of their research success.	New recommendations translating into actions following short life working group formed from Concordat Steering Group and Staff Forum for Research representatives	Concordat Steering Group	October 2021
5.2		Wellcome Trust Style Culture Café is an opportunity for our early career researchers to talk about the challenges faced in research culture, reflect on what a better culture would look like and propose solutions for how UWS and other parts of the system and the participants themselves can change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input to delivery of HR Excellence Action Plan 2020-2022 Opportunity to submit solutions to Welcome Trust 	UWS Academy Research Services	October 2020
5.6		Training for reviewees on My Contribution (performance management and development process) offered to all staff including researchers, as well as to reviewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing materials available online Training sessions scheduled, advertised & delivered 	P&OD	July 2020 and on-going
5.4 5.5		Career management and employability workshops and online resources continue to be available and this plan under Principal 3 has made a commitment to develop bespoke resources for PI's (Line Managers) of research staff to support their personal and career development.	Workshops Resources	UWS Academy Careers Service	Completed and continuing in AY20-21 with new resources planned.
5.1 5.2 5.4		UWS Crucible 2022 – future leaders programme for early career researchers The UWS Crucible Participants of AY19/20, have the opportunity to apply for seed-funding in September 2020. A new cohort will be recruited by competition in AY21/22.	Cohort of 30 ECR selected by competitive process Range of interdisciplinary ideas pitched to Senior Management Team for seed funding	Research Services	Completed and Continuing April 2022

E. Diversity and Equality

Principle 6

Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

Point	Key	Actions Planned	Success Criteria	Lead	Target Completion Date
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6.1 6.3		Ensure schools & departments achieve targets for completion of core online training (i.e. Inclusion Essentials and Unconscious Bias modules for new staff, for people managers and those involved in recruitment and/ or other staff-related decision-making processes).	80% of target groups, 95% of those involved in recruitment – monitored by EDI Committee	P&OD	On-going
6.3 1.2		Continue to include equality and unconscious bias awareness as core content in development programmes for current and aspiring leaders and managers.	Regular reporting on completion at local level, monitored by EDI Committee	P&OD	On-going
6.1 6.3 6.8		Actively promote and monitor completion of other equality-related training (e.g. Gender Matters, Understanding Race Bias, Understanding Equality Impact Assessment, Inclusive Leadership, The Effective Bystander, Disability Confident).	Regular promotion to staff through e-Bulletin and online Training Portal and regular reporting on uptake – monitored by EDI Committee	P&OD	On-going
6.10		Athena Swan Institutional Bronze resubmission in 2021/22 – all institutions offered extensions due to COVID19 situation / Schools to submit at this point	Bronze awards at UW / School Level	Athena Swan SAT / School SATs	November 2021 or April 2022
6.8		New UWS Gender Steering Group will review longer term impact of Covid-19 on the careers of primary caregivers (mainly females) and put actions in place to mitigate disproportionate impact	Impacts identified and actions agreed to mitigate	P&OD/ Gender Steering Group	AY2020-21
6.1 6.10		Continue to deliver on Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Plan and publish next PSED and Equality Mainstreaming report	Detailed in Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Plan – published externally	P&OD	April 2021/ On-going

F. Implementation and Review

Principle 7

The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

		Actions Planned	Measures of Success	Lead	Target Completion Date
7.1		Integration of the activities will be managed through the Concordat Implementation Steering Group with the expectation that much of the activities will be led by appropriate teams in the University.	Progress of action plan	Concordat Steering Group	On-going
7.1		Concordat Implementation Steering Group to meet 2 times per year to monitor progress. The costs of Concordat implementation will be met you the appropriate School, P&OD, Research Services and Enterprise Services budget.	Progress of actions plan. Action Tracker to monitor progress with issues/delays raised at Steering group	Concordat Steering Group	On-going
7.1		Following the Covid-19 lock down the Staff Forum for Research is establishing MS Team space for collaboration and sharing information. A private channel where the forum can feed communications in the form or suggestions and/or issues to the office of the Vice Principal (RIE) will be offered. Leaders of the Staff Forum for Research will be engaged through the MS Team and the Concordat Steering Group to engage all members of the forum in an online ideas centre. The forum will also be engaged in the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) or equivalent – results used to help inform the support and training offered.	Active Staff Forum for Research with annual plan. Number of events Attendance at Events Engagement with and representation on	Chair/Co-Chair Research Staff Forum	Reviewed annually.
6.10 7.5		Continue to monitor progress against identified actions contained in Athena Swan Action Plan	Successful applications for accreditation Athena Swan	Athena Swan Self Assessment Team	Completed and on-going.
7.1		Mappign this action plan to the 2019 Concordat and paper making recommendations with any additional actions required to the UWS Research& Enterprise Committee to all UWS to progress to sign up formally to the 2019 Concordat.	Issues if any are identified and addressed. Decision endorsed by REAC.	Vice Principal (RIE)	October 2020

Glossary of terms

Acronym	Description
APDF	Academic Professional Development Framework
ARMA	Association for Research Managers and Administrators
Athena Swan	National scheme, recognises a commitment to supporting and advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine
AURORA	Leadership Foundation for Higher Education: women only leadership programme
bHeard	UWS staff Engagement Survey
CEDARS	Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CPL	Continuous Professional Learning
CROS	Careers in Research Online Survey gathers the views of research staff in UK higher education institutions
ED&I	Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity
HEA	Higher Education Academy, national body championing teaching quality
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IP	Intellectual Property
ITDS	Information Technology & Digital Services, department at University of the West of Scotland
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
P&OD	People and Organisational Development, department at University of the West of Scotland
PDP	Personal Development Plan PDR/ P&DR Performance and Development Review
PIRLS	Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey gathers views of staff in UK higher education institutions
PURE	PURE is a web based information management and repository system
RDF	Research Development Framework for professional development produced by Vitae
RDP	Researcher Development Programme
R&E	Research and Enterprise
REAC	Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee at University of the West of Scotland
REGS	Regulations
ScotHERD	Scotland and Northern Ireland researcher development practitioner group
STARS	Staff Appreciation and Recognition Scheme at University of the West of Scotland
STEMM	Science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine UEC University Executive Group
VITAE	International programme led and managed by CRAC, a not-for-profit registered UK charity