

HR Excellence in Research Report 2014

The University of Glasgow (UofG) launched its Concordat implementation plan in 2010, with a successful ‘2 year’ review in 2012. This plan should be seen as one strand of activity in achieving the University’s overall strategic plan, which sets out a clear commitment *to providing a supportive environment for ambitious researchers, delivering a training and development programme that enables them to become the leaders of the future*. UofG is currently undertaking a consultation to develop a new strategic plan, with researchers being encouraged to provide input to this process.

Another important stream of activity being undertaken by Schools / Research Institutes (RIs) is the preparation and implementation of Athena SWAN action plans. Whilst our Concordat implementation plan highlights important University-level policies or initiatives, much of the work being done at local level (e.g. mentoring / career development support) is, in fact, steered and monitored through Schools and often linked to Athena SWAN activity. When considering Athena SWAN, UofG takes the approach that what constitutes ‘good practice’ for women is ‘good practice’ for all and therefore schemes such as mentoring are open to all, rather than restricted to women. To avoid duplication of efforts, researcher development staff and HR staff are fully engaged with Athena SWAN SATs to support them in providing tailored initiatives for research staff. Through a combination of central and devolved efforts, we aim to embed provision and support for early career researchers (ECRs) at all levels, to ensure that it is sustainable, well-communicated and accessible to all.

Process for internal review

Implementation of the Concordat implementation plan is overseen by the Researcher Development Committee (RDC), which is responsible for professional and career development opportunities for researchers at all career stages and is chaired by the VP (Research). RDC reports to the Research Planning and Strategy Committee (RPSC) and annually to the HR Committee, who ensure alignment with other activities, such as the Research Excellence Framework (REF) or Athena SWAN. Both RDC and RPSC have research staff representation, to ensure researchers are involved in the process of making strategic decisions on the University’s research environment, including Concordat implementation and review. The internal review process was led by a Concordat working group¹, reporting to RDC.

1. **Monitoring of progress with 2012-14 actions:** RDC receives a report on progress with Concordat implementation each academic year, alongside relevant HR or survey data (including [2013 CROS / PIRLS](#) results and the 2014 UofG ‘all-staff’ survey, which compared research-only results with other staff groups).

2. **Ongoing consultation:** Research staff consultation is carried out through two research staff events (the annual conference, in March/April, and the research staff forum in August). Support, funding and promotion is available for researcher societies and where such groups exist, they have been a useful consultation channel. Engagement with Athena SWAN SATs (which also include research staff representation) facilitated a flow of information and ideas between Schools and the central functions in the University.

3. Key stages in development of new action plan

Draft strategy and updated action plan prepared by Concordat Implementation Group and discussed at Researcher Development Committee and HR Operations Group.	Oct 2014
Wider consultation on draft plan through: -Presentation and discussion at College Research & KE committees -Email survey, asking for feedback on draft plans (made available on web for 4 weeks) -Informal ‘coffee’ meetings with research staff at local level (50 participants) -Discussion with PIs and research administrators at local level	Nov 2014
Final plan approved by RDC and noted by University Senate.	Dec 2014

¹ This working group (which met three times over 2013/14) includes the VP (Research), HR director, the HR Manager with responsibility for ECRs, the University Researcher Development Manager and a representative from the Staff Development Service and met twice a year.

Key achievements and Progress against Concordat Principles (2010-14)

1 Recruitment and Selection

Progress and new developments in this area have become embedded in the University's policies for Recruitment and for Equality and Diversity.

2 Value and Recognition

Our Research Staff Conference² is an annual focal point for ECRs, acting as a platform for the University to communicate its support for researchers. Researcher-led initiatives (such as societies and knowledge exchange projects) are showcased in the workshops, stalls and conference packs, acknowledging and celebrating the essential contribution ECRs make to the University. Examples of good practice include the inclusion of ECR profiles in the 'world changers' exhibition on the streets of Glasgow as part of the Commonwealth Games celebration and invitations to ECRs to participate in awards dinners and high profile external 'impact' events, alongside senior management.

The 2013 CROS survey demonstrated that, whilst the majority of respondents felt valued for their contribution to grant applications and publications, there were some areas where researchers did not feel valued and there is still further work to be done to build a culture of celebrating success at all levels. The introduction of tailored performance and development record (P&DR) forms for researchers in 2013 was intended as one means of improving recognition of the variety of roles undertaken by research staff.

3 to 5 Support and Career Development and Researchers' Responsibilities

UofG is proud of its commitment to developing innovative professional development solutions for its ECR population and has been shortlisted for a THE Award in this category four times over the past five years, most recently in leading a Scotland-wide enterprise initiative aimed at researchers in arts and humanities.³ During the time period, key achievements include:

- Introduction of tailored P&DR form for ECRs, with a web-link to a 'one stop shop' for ECR training, both internally and externally available, which is framed around the four domains of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.⁴
- Inclusion in the Code of Practice for the Management of Researchers of a requirement to undertake at least three days of transferable skills training each year.⁵ This expectation has been disseminated to PIs and researchers through a variety of mechanisms, including the P&DR guidance and process, workshops and induction checklists.
- Promotions workshops piloted in Schools (linked to Athena SWAN).
- Growth in participation in the annual research staff conference from 60 registrations in its first year to nearly 200 in 2014.
- Introduction of targeted emails to research staff, six months prior to the end of their contract, notifying them of support available from the University's careers service. 13 careers workshops were delivered during 2013/14 by the University's Careers Adviser for researchers (122 attendees, including 3 workshops taking place at the Garscube campus, tailored to the disciplines based there) and 138 research staff took up the opportunity of 1:1 40 minute careers appointments.
- Research integrity workshops introduced for new research staff (from October 2014) and a practice sharing event was hosted by UofG (August 2014) to share institutional approaches to training in this area, with over 50 participants, from several Scottish HEIs. Feedback to date on these workshops has been extremely positive, with a full review planned for summer 2015.
- Examples of activities undertaken at School level (in some cases linked with Athena SWAN but open to both genders) include:
 - Mentoring scheme for postdoctoral and junior academic staff (over 70 partnerships formed in first year, with full training for mentors / mentees).
 - Establishment of an informal mentoring culture is a key part of Athena SWAN action plans. Good practice in this area (e.g. School coffee mornings or postdoc groups) is being shared across the University.
- *Developing as a Teacher* programme launched in 2013, for staff undertaking teaching but not in a formal lecturing role and not participating in PGCap (teaching and supervision) programme.

² <http://www.gla.ac.uk/research/officeoftheviceprincipalforresearchenterprise/researcherdevelopment/>

³ <http://www.acreativeenlightenment.co.uk/>

⁴ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/humanresources/staffdevelopment/learningcoursesandresources/researcherdevelopment/>

⁵ http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_300012_en.pdf

- Launch of the Innovation Platform, providing ECRs with support for early-stage businesses, through access to makerspace, funding and workshops.⁶

Our implementation plan highlights the responsibilities of PIs and managers in developing their researchers. In the 2013 UofG PIRLS survey, 'providing career development advice' and 'developing research staff' were ranked as being in the top four most important activities for PIs. Both the academic promotions criteria and academic P&DR forms explicitly highlight PI responsibilities for staff management. Supervisor training is also mandatory within each Graduate School (every five years).

Since it was established in 2008, 131 members of staff have undertaken the University's Principal Investigator programme. With strong support from University senior management and involving presentations from role models and academic leaders from across the University, this programme helps to set expectations and embed good practice in the management of researchers. Due to its success and popularity, a new Research Leaders programme (for mid-career researchers) will be launched in 2014/15.

All researchers at UofG currently undertake P&DR. As the 2013 CROS survey revealed that only around half found it to be a useful process, we have since implemented a suite of measures to address this perception, including comprehensive training for reviewers and reviewees, production of a tailored form for researchers and guidance on completion. Initial feedback (gathered from postdoc coffee meetings) suggests that researchers are finding the guidance notes helpful. In the 2013 PIRLS survey, 86% of respondents agreed that conducting appraisals is an important activity (compared with an 83% Russell Group average) and 70% felt confident in doing this (compared with a 67% Russell Group average).

6 Diversity and Equality

UofG now holds five departmental Athena SWAN awards and an institutional bronze award, with the School of Law successfully participating in the Gender Equality Charter Mark pilot exercise in 2014. Led by the University's Gender Equality Champion, 16 of the University's 18 STEM-related Schools / RIs are in the process of preparing Athena SWAN submissions. A series of events and an online resource bank have been developed to ensure that good practice (such as support for those seeking promotion, or research staff representation on committees) is promoted. As new Schools or RIs take up the challenge of Athena SWAN, we are seeking to align the Concordat and Athena SWAN strategies more closely, offering tailored researcher development and careers support where appropriate to each School / RI. All new staff are required to undertake quality and diversity (E&D) training and several optional courses / resources are offered through the Staff Development Service and Equality and Diversity Unit to support this agenda (e.g. working cross-culturally).

7 Implementation and review

Since the launch of the Concordat, the University has continued to disseminate information regarding its commitment to implementation, with the Code of Practice for Research Staff playing a key role in the communication of expectations for PIs and researchers. The letter of appointment sent to new research and teaching staff provides a link to the University's Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff. Glasgow contributes to national case studies and regularly participates in events to share practice on ECR support (including the Vitae conference and policy forum, Universities Scotland / SFC committees, ScotHERD, Russell Group working parties and other informal groups).

Systems embedded to help us evaluate the success of our institutional strategy also facilitate the monitoring of progress against our Concordat action plan:

- Participation in induction and P&DR are monitored by HR.
- E&D statistics are reviewed annually by RDC in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity unit.
- Results from CROS and PIRLS are shared across the University to inform future policy and strategy and provide feedback on specific areas of Concordat implementation. These are also compared with the results from all-staff surveys.
- RDC, the HR Committee and the Research Planning and Strategy Committee receive an annual report on researcher development activity, including evaluation from the annual research staff conference and staff development workshops.

⁶ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/students/researcherdevelopment/innovationplatform/>

Next steps and future strategy

1 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment panels to undertake training in equality and diversity. *Success measures: evaluation of courses, with longer term success being measured as part of Athena SWAN commitment.*

2 Value and Recognition

We intend to increase research staff representation on key decision-making committees and support the development of ECR societies at a local level. As part of the University's wider research impact strategy, we plan to produce web-based case studies, highlighting where the work of ECRs has contributed to REF case studies. *Success measures: number of committees with representation, number of Schools / RIs with representation, feedback from representatives, number of research staff groups established and their membership, sustainability, visibility and impact.*

3 to 5 Support and Career Development and Researchers' Responsibilities

Around 50% of respondents to CROS 2013 reported participation in at least three days of CPD a year and we hope to see that figure increase, aiming towards a transition to five days a year becoming the norm, over the next four years. Mentor contributions will be celebrated with the introduction of a 'mentor of the year' award in 2015. *Success measures: completed PDP sections in P&DR forms, CROS results, hits on web pages outlining CPD opportunities, evaluation of mentoring programme, applications for researcher-led funding.*

6 Diversity and Equality

Work in this area will be led by Schools participating in the Athena SWAN and Gender Equality Mark, with central oversight by the Equality and Diversity Unit. *Success measures: Additional Athena SWAN / GEM awards, participation in E&D training, CROS results.*

6 Implementation and review

Implementation strategies and oversight will remain as for the 2010-14 action plan, with dissemination and awareness-raising activity embedded in committee functions and HR processes. The RDC annual report draws together key strands of activity from across the University.