

HR Excellence in Research Award: Four year report

Edinburgh Napier University received the HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission in December 2010 and retained it in 2012. As part of our award we are reporting here on our progress over the last four years against our Concordat Action plans.

1. How the review was undertaken

The internal review was led by the Researcher Developer within Academic Professional Development working closely with staff in Research Strategy and Practice within the Office of the Vice Principal (Academic) and in Human Resources and Development (HRD). The review also gathered input from other staff across the university. Focus groups were undertaken to allow direct input to the review process from the research community. Feedback submitted from researchers to Academic Professional Development about recent development events was also considered alongside data from our 2013 CROS and PIRLS surveys. The HR Excellence in Research Award has been discussed regularly at the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) which formally monitors research activity and quality within the university. Draft documentation was submitted to RKEC for comment and approval in November 2014.

2. Key achievements and progress

Our progress against our original action plan was documented as part of our two year review in 2012 and our action plan was also updated at that time. Our progress within the last two years is captured in our updated 2012-2014 action plan which is available online. Specific progress against each Concordat Principle over the four years of the award is described here.

Principle 1: Our Human Resources policies and procedures for recruitment and selection were reviewed in 2010 to align with the Concordat principles, and online training support was developed in 2011. In 2012 unconscious bias workshops have been established by Human Resources and Development (HRD). We have policies in place to reduce the risk of redundancies for staff and where a role is made redundant, use a redeployment register to support staff affected. Our commitment to recognising and valuing our staff and their contribution to delivering our University Strategy has been recognised by Investors in People Scotland, through our achievement of Bronze status in 2010 and our progression to Silver status in 2013.

Principle 2: We have enhanced induction procedures for staff to include a new online learning module that includes specific information for researchers. University level induction events also highlight the Researcher Development programme to new staff. In 2013 the University approved new Values and Behaviours and these now underpin our strategic activities and are integrated into our University induction processes. Our Professional Development Review (PDR) process was reviewed in 2013 by HRD, and we have high uptake of PDR with 91% of our 2013 CROS respondents indicating they had received an annual review (compared to the 2013 CROS UK average of 60%). We have now adopted the use of HRConnect to monitor uptake of both training events and engagement with the annual PDR process for staff. In 2014, we have revised our promotion and progression criteria to include a clear research path towards professorship. Our new University Strategy 2020 has an aim of developing a vibrant strategic research culture, and as part of that in AY2013/14 we have funded over 25 full time PhD scholarships as well as providing internal funding opportunities for Career Research Staff (CRS) and Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Outcomes from funds distributed in AY13/14 have included preparation of research journal articles, delivery of research seminars and conference presentations based on the funded activities. The Strategy 2020 and its research aims are being supported by the current creation of a new Research and Innovation Office (RIO) which will bring together all relevant staff into one strategic unit to help us achieve our research aspirations and to better support our researchers across the university.

Principle 3: We have continued to develop web resources to support the career and professional development of researchers underpinned by our use of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and other Vitae resources in our website, materials and event mapping. Staff are offered one-to-one meetings to discuss career development plans at the beginning of their employment. One third of our new research staff have had a one-to-one meeting during AY2013/14 and 81% of our contract researchers have either attended Researcher Development or other training events over the course of this award. We have increased our mentoring capacity through the creation of a Staff Educational Development Association (SEDA) recognised award 'Edinburgh Napier Mentoring and Coaching Award'. 34 staff have participated in the programme since 2012, mentoring over 70 colleagues in relation to their academic goals and interests. Research around the impact of the programme (which was presented at a QAA conference in 2013) indicates benefits for both mentors and mentees on:

Employee engagement: *"I feel really inspired by my mentor and I look forward to coming to work because I feel supported in my learning".*

Productivity: *"It pushed me to do things which I may have otherwise procrastinated over."*

From AY 2012/2013 support for Innovation and Enterprise activities has been provided through Bright Red Triangle and through the Commercial Services office, both of whom support our researchers to consider business start-up ideas. Edinburgh Napier has also led the creation and establishment of the Business Innovation Exchange (BIE) programme to help make its academic expertise more readily available and accessible to the business base. The BIE is a unique, collaborative partnership between Edinburgh Napier, Queen Margaret and St Andrews universities, providing easy access to university expertise. The BIE programme supports the Scottish Government's drive to increase innovation within SMEs and over its first 30 months of operation had stimulated an additional £7m of business investment in research and technology development. In recognition of our work to support start-ups and small businesses by our staff and students, in June 2014 we were one of only 20 UK Business Schools to receive the Small Business Charter.

Principle 4: During 2011 the University approved 'A strategic approach to effective researcher development' which established a co-ordinated, cross-university approach to training and professional development for all our researchers. Within this strategy was the appointment of a full-time Researcher Developer role in December 2011, indicating the commitment the University has towards researcher development. We established a coordinated, comprehensive Researcher Development programme in 2012 and have evaluated the programme annually. New initiatives since 2012 have included residential writing retreats, research funding support, a 'Shut up and write' group, and increased access to teaching support for researchers, which was identified in our 2013 CROS survey. Development of support for supervisors has included our three-day 'Supervising Research Degrees' SEDA accredited award established in 2012. 25 supervisors have now undertaken the course and feedback from participants illustrates the impact on their supervisory practice:

"The chance to reflect with others and discuss common experiences has helped me to develop and increase my confidence as a supervisor"

"Invaluable, essential experience in preparation for supervising research degrees"

In 2013 we ran a cross-institutional programme of events for experienced supervisors in collaboration with two other universities. While participant numbers were small, 100% of participants strongly agreed that they had 'benefited from the input of participants from different universities' highlighting the success of cross-institutional support. We have increased our links with colleagues in Corporate Learning and Development to provide Leadership and management support to researcher leaders, including individual coaching and mentoring, identification of leadership development opportunities such as Aurora, and bespoke training for specific groups. We have increased our support for researchers involved in public engagement through our funding of the Beltane PE network since 2013. We have had four staff members successfully obtain a Beltane Fellowship and in 2013 RKEC approved a new Public Engagement strategy for the University. We have worked with our Marketing, Brand, and Communication team to provide training for researchers to engage with broad audiences through TV, radio or newspaper interviews and in 2014 we published an Impact case study magazine to highlight the work undertaken by our researchers.

Principle 5: Since our initial gap analysis of training and development in 2011, we have promoted the use of Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to support individual career development, which has led to high levels of awareness and understanding of this resource (2013 CROS data indicated 36% of respondents understood the RDF,

compared to the UK average of 15%). In 2013 we revised our Code of Practice on Research Integrity which highlights good research practices and the responsibilities for researchers to conduct themselves with integrity. We have increased training in this area since 2012 and from our 2013 CROS data this has led to increased awareness of research integrity issues. In 2013 we established a 'Researcher-Led Initiatives fund' which supports researchers who are pro-actively identifying their own development needs, and applications to this fund have since increased during 2014, with four bids being successful this year.

Principle 6: Our Equality Impact Assessment procedures were developed in 2010 and have been updated in 2013, along with our Equality and Diversity Statement. We completed an Equal pay audit in 2013 and revised our Equality Outcomes Scheme for 2013-2015. Since 2013 we have committed to go beyond our statutory requirements by annually reporting on our Equality Outcomes Scheme. We achieved high levels of engagement with Equality and Diversity training to support our REF submission (over 95% of our target audience for these events attended), and several early career researchers were submitted towards REF. Since 2013, we have supported increased uptake of development events aimed at part-time researchers by providing strategic funding for places at sector-wide events. Since 2009 we have achieved 'Two ticks' and the 'See me' award in 2011, recognising our commitment to fair employment for staff with disabilities or mental health issues. In November 2014 we submitted an application for an institutional Bronze Athena Swan Award with a developed action plan that aims to remove barriers towards gender equality. In support of this we have engaged with the Aurora Leadership Development initiative for women for the first time in 2014. We continue to provide financial support and host Equate Scotland at our Merchiston Campus which houses our Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries.

Principle 7: We have used CROS and PIRLS data to review the researcher development programme in 2013 and we continue to use these surveys and our own staff engagement survey to monitor progress and implementation of our Concordat action plans. In 2012 membership of RKEC was expanded to include Contract Research Staff as an additional mechanism to ensure appropriate representation of staff views at institutional level, and Contract Research Staff have contributed items to RKEC's agenda illustrating the success of this route for engagement. Communication of committee decisions has also been widened by the use of a central SharePoint site. We continue to benchmark our activity against sector developments through both ScotHERD and Vitae events, including participation at 'Every Researcher Counts' events and the Vitae annual conferences by both research and professional services staff, including our Diversity Partner, the Researcher Developer, and members of our Athena Swan team. During the development of the University Strategy 2020 consultation activities included 'Campus conversations' with the Principal and University Leadership team, allowing staff from all areas of the University to input into the strategic review process. The creation of the Research and innovation Office to lead research across the University has arisen from this process and will embed researcher development and the review of Concordat progress within this new structure.

3. Strategies for 2014-2020

The development of our new University Strategy 2020 has research as one of its main themes. To support this, the University reviewed the research support infrastructure during AY13/14 which is leading to the creation of a new Research and Innovation Office to be established in January 2015. The Research and Innovation Office will bring together strategic and support functions to help underpin our research ambitions and will support the strategic aims to increase our research capacity. Central to the new University Strategy 2020 and the Academic Strategy 2014-2020 is the commitment to:

"Staff development activity and mentoring that supports researcher development from early career researchers to experienced researchers"
Academic Strategy 2014-2020

We have developed a new HR Badge of Excellence Action Plan 2014-16 that sets out our priorities and strategies to build on our progress and which aligns with the University Strategy 2020 and the Academic Strategy 2014-2020. The Action Plan 2014-16 can be viewed online at:

<http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/hr/development/acprofdev/RD/Pages/CAP.aspx>

In this current progress review and in the previously updated action plan from 2012 we have identified that some actions are on-going as these are now actions that fall into our continued 'business as usual'. We believe this represents significant progress, with activities moving from initiatives to standard practice. The actions that fall into this group will be subject to regular review to ensure that they remain relevant and driven by the needs of our research community.

We will continue to run PRES, CROS, and PIRLS in 2015, benchmarking against previous surveys and the sector allowing us to measure progress. Our progress against the new Action Plan 2014-16 will be monitored by the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, and will be considered through review of our Athena Swan initiatives as well.

A brief summary of our actions and next steps is provided here.

Principle 1: We are developing web recruitment which will continue to ensure our job vacancies are advertised widely. We will use European recruitment portals to highlight our opportunities to recruit excellent researchers. We will expand our one-to-one development opportunities for researchers to include meetings to help researchers identify options as they approach the last six months of any research contract.

Principle 2: We are implementing new progression criteria in which research is one of the four routes to promotion to Associate Professorships. The University Academic Strategy 2014-2020 also has staff development as one of the key areas of the research strand.

Principle 3: We will support researchers to remain adaptable to changes in the global market by supporting researchers to develop other skills. The Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (Pg.Cert TLHE) and our Higher Education Academy (HEA) accredited fellowship scheme will be promoted to research staff as routes to support and evidence teaching activities.

Principle 4: We will expand mentoring capacity for researchers through the continued development of a mentoring programme at Edinburgh Napier University. We will continue to develop and review the researcher development programme on an annual basis. We will work with emerging research leaders to help support their development.

Principle 5: We will work to facilitate and support researchers to identify external opportunities for professional recognition. Researcher-led initiatives will be continued with an aim to increase applications to this fund.

Principle 6: Our Athena Swan action plan developed as part of our submission for a Bronze award will be used to address equality issues for our research community, and specific departments will develop plans to support future departmental applications for silver Athena Swan status. We will continue to review pay through an equal pay audit, and selection and progression to ensure equality of opportunity.

Principle 7: As part of the University restructuring process we will ensure that all relevant committees have representation from our research community. We will carry out PRES, CROS, and PIRLS in 2015 and use them to identify progress and areas for development. Regular review of our progress against our Action Plan 2014-16 will be carried out by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

4. Success measures

Our success will be measured against specific actions as outlined in our Action Plan 2014-2016. Some general indicators of success for the next four year cycle will include:

- Creation of an effective Research and Innovation Office
- Increased uptake of our researcher development programme by academics new to research
- Evidence of progress in PRES, CROS, and PIRLS 2015 data
- Continued engagement with an annual PDR by research staff
- Increased numbers of staff holding external research funding
- Increased publication quality and quantity towards REF2020 submission
- Increased research student numbers
- Increased completion rate for PhD students
- Increased integration of our research activity into our teaching activity
- Increased visibility of research as part of the redevelopment project of the University website
- Increased external recognition of our staff through professional awards, memberships