At the University of Hertfordshire, we interpret our researcher community to mean all staff and students who do research. This includes staff who have research as part of their role responsibility or are research active, including staff returned to the REF, staff represented on our Research Information System, academic staff with research and scholarship in their contracts, of which there are c. 800, and staff on research contracts, of which there are 200+. It also includes what are termed ‘hidden researchers’, who combine research with other roles within the University, for example as librarians or technicians.

**PROCESS:** Our [Researcher Development Working Group (RDWG)](link) exists to promote researcher development in response to feedback from the Career Researchers Online Survey (CROS), the Principal Investigator and Research Leader Survey (PIRLS) and the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) process to ensure quality and compliance with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. The RDWG represents and informs researchers across the University through its structure, membership, quarterly meetings and activities. The RDWG Chair (an academic) and Project Coordinator (People Development Manager) share responsibility for running the group. An Early Career Researcher from each of our ten academic Schools sits on the RDWG to communicate from and to researchers at all levels. Additional RDWG members represent the central departments of the University: The Research Office; Careers, Employment & Enterprise (CEE); the Research Development Programme; the Equality Office, and Health and Safety. RDWG agendas and minutes are circulated to the Director of the Doctoral College, the Head of Research Grants, the Associate Deans Research in the ten Schools, and the six [Research Theme](link) Champions.

The University of Hertfordshire achieved the HREiR award in December 2010. Our 4-year Action Plan of 2014 focussed on the period from January 2015 to December 2016 because we wanted to set actions for the second half of the four-year block which responded to the mid-term 2-year review integral to Vitae’s HREiR process. In March 2016, our Project Coordinator undertook a gap analysis of our 4-year Action Plan noting that most actions were completed, while continuous actions, and items for which more information was required were carried into our 6-year action plan. In June 2016, our Research Office delivered a detailed analysis of the University’s CROS and PIRLS results, for which response rates were 26.5% and 23.7% respectively (slightly lower than the national averages of 28% and 25%). The results were discussed by a focus group with representatives from RDWG (Chair), the Research Office (Head of Research Grants), and Planning, Development and Change (Head of Leadership and Organisational Development) and then examined by the RDWG in October 2016. Actions arising from CROS and PIRLS were integrated into the 6-year Action Plan. This and the updated 4-year action plan were discussed at the University’s Research Committee in October 2016. Our 6-year report, the updated 4-year Action Plan, and 6-year Action Plan were discussed at the PVC Research and Enterprise Management Group (PRMG) in November 2016, then sent to Vitae for feedback prior to publication in December 2016. Following external assessment and the University’s successful retention of the HREiR award, we revised our documents to include a prefatory statement about our research community and further emphasised SMART targets, for publication in April 2017.

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS BY CONCORDAT PRINCIPLE**

**Principle 1 Recruitment, Selection and Retention: Role Titles, Induction, Participation, End of Contract Mentoring**
- Human Resources harmonised its use of role titles in recruitment materials and the Research Committee reviewed the University’s Policies and Regulations for approved titles HR01 (formerly PER/B/1) which were then published on the intranet. Following an audit of the effectiveness of local induction in 2014/15, HR analysed the data to highlight and disseminate via our intranet evidence of good local induction practices and flag areas for enhancement. HR and RDWG have worked with research managers, inclusively defined, to understand the barriers that prevent researchers taking up training opportunities and identify ameliorating actions, including scheduling shorter, ½ day, research training sessions. HR continues to monitor the numbers of staff on fixed term contracts and provides mentoring when staff near the end of their contracts, in accordance with an Athena SWAN action.

**Principle 2 Recognition and Value; Principle 3 Support; Principle 4 Personal and Career Development; Principle 5 Researchers’ Responsibility and Engagement: ResDev16, the University’s Second Biennial Researcher Development Conference**
- Several Concordat Principles are engaged through our [ResDev16](link) conference, hosted jointly with our [Doctoral College](link). Like the first conference we hosted, in September 2014, ResDev16 sought to promote understanding and awareness of the value and practice of researcher development and the development opportunities for researchers available within the University and externally, through organizations such as [Vitae](link). Dr Helen Barefoot, Deputy Director for the [Learning & Teaching Innovation Centre](link) talked about the importance of Research-Informed Teaching and Research-Rich Teaching: 90% of respondents rated this ‘good’ or ‘excellent’. The Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre hosts a toolkit about this on our intranet. This topic was further examined in one of four parallel workshops; the others addressed ‘Setting Up a Mentoring Scheme’, ‘Career Progression’ and ‘Ways to Raise Your Research Profile’. ResDev16 adopted the 3-Minute Thesis (3MT®) format to showcase 8 doctoral projects competing for a £1000 prize. The 3-minute format was also used to introduce staff research in our ten Schools, and six research [theme](link) ‘champions’ spoke about the potential for interdisciplinary research. A lunchtime poster session enabled more coverage of the University’s diverse research.

Over 150 delegates participated in ResDev16, nearly 50% more than in 2014. Responses were overwhelmingly positive, with the #ResDev16 twitterfeed reflecting live feedback and a feedback survey demonstrating that 92.9% of respondents thought that the conference was beneficial, 87% said it met their expectations and 89.3% would attend a future
University researcher development conference. Respondents valued the 3-minute research snapshots and networking with ‘people from other areas of the university’. A 14% response rate (28 responses) was split between research students (40.7%) and staff (59.3%).

**Principle 2 Recognition and Value; Principle 3 Support; Principle 4 Personal and Career Development: Public Engagement with Research Conference and Research Innovation Showcase** - In July 2016, we held our second Public Engagement with Research Conference, an internal conference to share current public engagement projects and to share good practice in public engagement. Alongside the conference, we ran a Research Innovation Showcase to demonstrate to an internal and external audience research-led innovations in science, engineering, health, creative arts and the humanities. To support these events, we produced twelve short videos of current researchers talking about their research which have on-going value both for public engagement and development.

**Principle 3 Support; Principle 4 Personal & Career Development; Principle 5 Researchers’ Responsibility & Engagement: Skill Up, Researcher-Led Research Skills Award** - To support the personal, professional and career development of our research staff, consistent with the University’s commitment to the Concordat and Vitae’s Researcher Development Framework, the RDWG runs an annual researcher-led research skills development award scheme, Skill Up! All staff are eligible, and ECR applications are particularly encouraged. Awards of up to £500 per School are made to individuals or groups to support wide spectrum of development, such as: organising a workshop or conference with a developmental element; covering or contributing to training course fees or group training activities; travel for networking; attending skills enhancement courses; business collaboration activities; undertaking community engagement/outreach, volunteering, and career coaching and advice. Awards are not made to support conference attendance, or for development that is already available through the University’s Researcher Development Programme.

As well as developing the award winners, Skill Up! offers a developmental opportunity for the ECR School representatives who run the scheme, and is a useful way for applicants to input into the development offering, whether or not their applications are successful in winning scheme funding. For example, in 2016 CRIPACC (Centre for Research in Primary and Community Care) made two concurrent applications to the scheme, each for workshops which would benefit a group of colleagues. Because both were needs-based, timely and fundable, one achieved Skill Up! funding and the other was funded from the HR Development budget and opened to a wider group of participants. For the applicant, the process of applying clarified the needs of a group of colleagues and the potential benefits of the workshops. RDWG has discussed the advantages of regularly allocating some budget to this mode of development.

**Principle 3 Support; Principle 4 Personal and Career Development: Researcher Development Workshops** - A coordinated programme of researcher development is delivered jointly by HR Development, the Research Office, and the Doctoral College through its Researcher Development Programme for staff and PGR students. In addition, the University of Hertfordshire’s ten Schools and research centres and groups provide local researcher development on a needs basis. In the last two years (2014-15 and 2015-16), the University recorded 318 research training events involving 1870 participants, which equate to 709 individual staff members. Our training provision is consistently rated ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ by respondents to our follow-up surveys. For example, in May 2015, 100% of respondents (40% of participants) rated the content and format of our ‘Engaging Researcher’ workshop as excellent. The following month (June 2015) 100% of our ‘Applying for Horizon 2020’ workshop respondents (response rate 75%) rated the content, format, quality and facilities of the course as good or excellent, and agreed that the length and pace of the session was about right. One respondent summarized it as ‘a very timely session which provided everything I need to know to get an application started’. In the same month, 100% of the 7 respondents who evaluated our ‘Responsible Research’ workshop rated it and the facilities as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, with 85% rating the format and quality as highly. This group particularly valued the practical group work elements as enhancing their understanding of health and safety. Similarly, our ‘Introduction to Research Impact’ session in October 2015 scored ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ for all aspects with one respondent particularly valuing the opportunity of ‘working with others who had a better understanding of Impact and had time to listen and suggest ideas to me’. Sessions on the University’s Research Information System in February and June 2016 were rated ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ across all aspects (content, format, quality of presentations, facilities). In June 2016, we hosted a Vitae regional meeting on Mentoring, presenting our approach to mentoring and coaching and the skills required. Participants were invited to take part in a coaching taster session. Feedback was very positive: ‘I found the day very rewarding and really appreciate all the work that went into arranging and planning such a great session’.

Social Media Academy (SMA) - An example of new training and methods that we have introduced in 2015/16, is our Social Media Academy. This innovative programme promotes the use of social media in communicating research to a wide audience. All twenty places were filled within 24 hours and there was a waiting list. SMA involved four face-to-face sessions connected by intervening online engagement with the tutor through the messaging and collaboration platform Slack. This successful programme produced developed its ‘graduates’ from novices into social media users who understand its effective use and potential. Two researchers who had undertaken the SMA presented about social media at the Researcher Development Conference in September 2016 and were rated good to excellent by 75% of respondents.

Business and Commercial Development - Awareness of commercial opportunities was raised through quarterly networking lunches, as well as the popular ‘Sunset Soiree and Research/Commercial Mixer’ which attracted 41 attendees. Two new workshops delivered were ‘Publish and be Damned’ and ‘Impact through Research Commercialisation’. They were designed for researchers interested in commercialising their research. Both workshops were popular additions and
were extremely well received, with one participant summarising the events as ‘An excellent training and development opportunity [which I] would highly recommend especially to early careers researchers, [and] PhD students’.

**Principle 6 Diversity and Equality: Race Equality Charter Mark, Athena SWAN and Trans Awareness** - The University of Hertfordshire is one of only 8 institutions to have been awarded Bronze in the Race Equality Charter mark pilot (see our Race Equality Charter application and Action Plan). The University of Hertfordshire, and 4 of our STEMM Schools, received the Athena SWAN Bronze award in November 2014 in recognition of work in recruiting, retaining and promoting women. Working with the Charter has helped the University engage with staff and students, identify issues affecting women in STEMM, develop ways to increase women's representation and support career development. The University and its STEMM Schools are ensuring that their Athena SWAN action plans are being implemented so that we can continue to reflect on, and improve, current practices. Two items from the 4-year HREiR action plan relate specifically to Athena SWAN and continue into the 6-year action plan. To support the University’s activities related to Athena SWAN, schools using the post-May 2015 application process must think about the issues affecting trans staff and students. We delivered a series of half-day workshops by Gendered Intelligence to raise awareness of trans equality.

**Principle 7 Progress Review: CROS & PIRLS** - For CROS, it is positive that 87% of respondents feel able to access training and development activity, 85% have had an appraisal - which is significantly better than the sector average – and that nearly 90% agree that they take ownership of their career development. It is concerning that only 64% feel they are encouraged to engage in personal career development and that the use of the Vitae Researcher Development Framework remains low across the sector. Equality and Diversity is the topic UH respondents have undertaken the most training in (65%), closely followed by Teaching and Lecturing (62%): both averages are around double the national and UA averages. The highest percentage of respondents have spent between 0-3 days on training and CPD activities; although this appears low when taken in the context of a 12-month period, it is in line with national and University Alliance averages.

PIRLS responses indicate that staff are aware of most leadership training and support provision at the university. We are pleased to report that 149 research staff participated in supervisor training in the last two years. However, despite reasonable levels of awareness, the proportion of staff participating in the available leadership and training provision is low. More positively 88% of UH 2015 respondents have participated in staff appraisal during the past two years. The most useful aspects of appraisal are seen as reviewing personal progress and identifying strengths and achievements.

**NEXT STEPS:** The internal evaluation of progress against the 4-year action plan identified ten continuing actions. Although we have progressed since the period represented in the CROS and PIRLS results (May 2015), the surveys have enabled us to identify further actions for our revised action plan, which is now extensive across all principles. This plan, published on the UH Concordat and HREiR webpage, will be continuously reviewed as a standing item on the RDWG agenda and will guide our work in the next two years. Some overarching objectives and actions are indicated here; please refer to the Action Plan for objectives, actions, success measures, timescales, and owners of the actions.

CROS and PIRLS showed that we need to continue our work raising awareness within the University about national researcher development initiatives such as Vitae, the Concordat and HREiR. We will do this through the introduction of a Research Induction in Spring 2017 which will inform researchers about Vitae, Concordat, HREiR, Athena SWAN and other relevant national initiatives. We will continue the two-way communication undertaken by the RDWG through its quarterly meetings, annual Skill Up! funding and biennial conference and we will liaise further with ADRs at annual meetings and at the termly Research Committee meetings. Results from the next CROS and PIRLS surveys will confirm our success.

The surveys showed that respondents sought greater recognition for researchers, along the lines of the VC’s Award for Excellence in Research. The University’s new People Board, instituted to support delivery of the People aspect of the strategic plan, includes the RDWG Chair and the People Development Manager thereby ensuring representation of researchers’ views, achievements and needs. We can enhance ‘soft’ recognition of researchers, and ECRs particularly, by running further annual rounds of Skill Up! the Researcher-Led Researcher Development award; continuing to run the biennial ResDev conference as an event open to all researchers in the University and to consider the potential of a development series comprising several shorter sessions over several days at both campuses. We will consider partnering with the Doctoral College again to assist in raising awareness of common issues such as the expansion of Athena SWAN. The introduction of the University’s Research Newsletter allows the institution-wide dissemination of news about our researchers’ achievements. We will seek feedback from our RDWG ECRs on whether researchers in their Schools feel better recognized and will scrutinize CROS and PIRLS results for evidence of our success in this and cascade results.

A range of new initiatives in the University impacts positively on researchers and researcher development: digital capabilities profiles, allowing staff to evaluate their existing capabilities and providing training, where needed; the new Virtual Learning Environment, which will require extensive support for staff to use to ensure sound practices to enhance student learning; the Career Pathways four part programme will support and inform staff on formal career pathways and informal routes, and how frameworks and pathways can be used to map career development and assess training needs. We have set ambitious targets to increase the proportion of BME and female staff at grades UH9 and above by 5% by 2020. Attendance on development programmes such as Aurora, Future Leaders should support this target along with supporting the development of ECRs by sharing the knowledge and skills of experienced research staff, through growing our mentoring practice, and by increasing the mentoring provision in the Schools for the four types of mentoring we have identified - induction, role, peer and programme mentors.