

HR Excellence in Research review: 2012 2-Year Action Plan, Updated September 2014

Action	Owner	Target	Progress at September 2014
Consider suitable indicators of widespread engagement with research staff development and periodic reporting by Schools.	PVC (Research)	July 2013	Done – There is now regular reporting on researcher development at every meeting of the Research Committee; researcher representatives from each School carry out continuous two-way reporting from and to the Researcher Development Working Group; the papers of the RDWG are circulated to all Associate Deans Research and Directors of Research Institutes, for information. Furthermore, Research Representation is integrated in Strategic Planning: All staff were invited to consultation meetings with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor about the new strategic plan 2015-20. Research representatives are present on the working groups taking forward the University’s strategy 2015-20 and developing it into objectives and KPIs.
Introduce a mechanism for research staff to propose researcher development ideas and for Research Institute Management Groups to address researcher development.	Directors of RIs	July 2013	Done – The renewed involvement of researchers from all Schools in the RDWG from 2013/14 provides a mechanism for development ideas to be proposed, actioned and evaluated. RDWG researcher representatives from each of the Schools played an important role in our 2014 Excellence in Research conference, presenting outlines of research in their Schools in both Pecha Kucha and poster session formats. They will continue to play a fundamentally important role in researcher development across the University. The dissemination of agendas and notes from RDWG meetings to the Research Institute Directors and the Associate Deans Research provides the two-way communication required.
Consider establishing a research staff association or other suitable mechanism for research staff community engagement, e.g. research staff fora, within Research Institutes and/or the Doctoral College, based on demand.	HR; Directors of RIs; Director of Research Degrees	July 2013	Done – In 2012 the Doctoral College was established as a hub for the University’s research community, including research students, supervisors and research staff. It has overseen the expansion of the Generic Training for Researchers programme into the new Researcher Development Programme, which research staff can attend, and it provides supervisor and examiner training for research and academic staff. As well as providing support to research students via initiatives like the small awards under the Santander partnership in 2013, the Doctoral College has promoted researchers voices throughout and beyond the University with initiatives including a photography competition that resulted in the publication <i>Vision and Voice 2013 – the next generation of researchers</i> . While there is no demand for a separate research staff association at present, the Doctoral College objective of providing a forum for social interaction between research students and staff goes some way to addressing the institution of a research staff association. In addition, expanded researcher involvement in RDWG and its range of activity means that is the forum currently delivering some of the usual activities and benefits of a research staff association, and we will use RDWG to monitor demand for a research staff association or other appropriate mechanism, as noted in our 2014-18 Action Plan.
Establish an annual update from HR Development on participation by research staff in centrally provided personal, professional	HR Development	April 2013	Done - Research Grants and HR Development jointly report to the Research Committee on an annual basis on participation by researchers at training and development events.

and career development.			
Participate in CROS 2013.	Research Committee	Next CROS	Done - The University's CROS 2013 return rate of 34.4% was higher than the national average of 26.1% and higher than the 2010 and 2011 rates. Hertfordshire's responses were more positive than the national average in 12 cases and 94%, of respondents agreed that the institution treated them equally in access to training and development.
Run a research staff career development workshop or conference in 2013/14.	HR Development	June 2014	Done - The University's inaugural Excellence in Research conference was held to introduce our renewed researcher development provision for researchers at all levels, raise awareness of the importance of and opportunities for researcher development at the University, and fulfil a commitment to a researchers' conference. The conference attracted one of the largest attendance figures for an internal research event at the University: around 100 Research staff attended from the University staff of 2,650, approximately 8% of whom are on a research contract. Presenters and delegates ranged from PhD students to Professors, Associate Deans Research and Research Institute Directors. The conference was opened by the Vice-Chancellor. Participant comments included "Nice to have senior management there to confirm that UH values researchers". The conference covered the external context for researcher development—evaluation showed that the staff is now aware of these external UK initiatives—researcher development at the University, including the use of the RDF by individual researchers and in appraisal and mentoring contexts, the Research Handbook and HR Development Training Opportunities. The 'New to Research' webpage content informed the introductory talk at the September 2014 Excellence in Research conference . A Pecha Kucha showcased research activity in the Schools; participants commented it was a 'great format which most speakers handled well'. Workshops addressed Mentoring ('I liked the shared experience'), Career Progression, which was rated 100% good to excellent and 'Social Media', rated 93% good to excellent: 'The social media session was useful, interesting and cutting-edge'. 84% of respondents found the conference beneficial and would attend further related conferences. Slides and films of the presentations are available on the intranet for use in further researcher development. We used the Bristol on-line survey for Conference evaluation.
Establish a research staff mentoring scheme.	PVC Research Management Group	January 2013	Done - The Research Staff Mentoring Scheme was piloted from December 2012 to provide early career research staff with support, guidance and advice from senior research staff. Mentors were offered training and support from HR Development. There were seven mentoring partnerships set up (two from the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Research Institute, SSAHRI, and five from the Health and Human Sciences Research Institute, HHSRI). The pilot will be used to inform the development of this aspect in 2014/15. To support the growth of researcher development through mentoring at the University, a Mentoring Best Practice workshop was held as part of the Excellence in Research conference in September 2014. Mentoring was promoted as a supportive process to help 'socialise' new members of staff as well as a developmental process where a more experienced person shares their knowledge with a less experienced colleague. In addition, our Women in STEMM network entails mentoring.
Establish an annual Research Staff Skills Development Initiative / Fund for	PVC Research Management Group	January 2013	Done – A pilot Research Staff Skills Development Fund was launched in December 2012 to distribute individual and group funding awards for personal, professional and career development. 13 awards were made (5 to STRI, 6 to HHSRI and 2 to SSAHRI). The 2014/15 round will be administered by researchers from the Researcher Development Working Group and distributed via the Schools.

researcher led development.			
Human Resources, Equality Office and Athena SWAN Working Group to brief Research Committee and agree guidance (Athena SWAN and Project Juno).	HR, Equality Office, Athena SWAN Working Group	June 2013	Done - The University joined the Athena SWAN charter in 2012 and applied for the Athena SWAN Bronze institutional award in April 2013, with reapplications in November 2013 and November 2014 (pending) along with 5 school bids (ENT, COM, LMS, HSW, and PAM). There has been a great deal of learning along the way and members of our main SAT have attended Athena SWAN panels as observers and participants and we will continue to encourage members of the University and also the STEMM School SATs to attend these panels and Athena SWAN national events.

Key:

CROS: Careers in Research Online Survey

HR: Human Resources Department

PVC (Research): Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and International

RDWG: Researcher Development Working Group

RIs: Research Institutes

ENT: School of Engineering and Technology

COM: School of Computer Science

LMS: School of Life and Medical Sciences

HSW: School of Health and Social Work

PAM: Physics, Astronomy and Mathematics

SAT: Self-Assessment Team

STEMM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics

STRI: Science and Technology Research Institute

HHSRI: Health and Human Sciences Research Institute

SSAHRI: Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities Research Institute