

HR Excellence in Research Award 4 Year Review Report – December 2016

Introduction and Background

Warwick University received the HR Excellence in Research award in 2012 and subsequently undertook a 2 year review in 2014, leading to a modified action plan covering the period up until this 4 year review. As demonstrated in Warwick's 2012 submission documentation and subsequent 2014 review, the University wholeheartedly supports the principles outlined in the Concordat to support the career development of research active staff. Support for this category of staff continues to be demonstrated through investment in research posts and in the wide range of training, development and support offered to employees on research contracts as can be evidenced in **Appendix 1**.

Process for Internal Evaluation

Internal evaluation and monitoring of the HR Excellence in Research Action Plan is undertaken in conjunction with the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) team, the Learning and Development Centre (LDC), Human Resources, Research Impact Services (R&IS), the Research Staff Forum (RSF) and the University Research Committee, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Pam Thomas, with representation from RSF. The Research Committee whose membership consists of academic staff, research staff and senior administrative staff meet termly and report to the University Senate, one of the key strategic committees of the University.

Operational responsibility for monitoring and updating the HR Excellence Action Plan lies with the D&I team and at key review stages (years 2 and 4) plans are discussed, amended and approved through the RSF and the Research Committee. Information is shared with research active and appropriate support staff for input and comment on the submission/reviews. Feedback and responses to questions are provided both electronically and face to face with attendance/discussion at RSF.

Since the submission and award of the HR Excellence in Research award, the Action Plan has continuously been updated with completed actions noted and published on Warwick's webpages. Significant proportions of the plan need to be considered as ongoing, partly due to the nature of fixed-term employment contracts that a number of postdoctoral research staff are employed on. There is recognition that training and development of researchers at Warwick is essential and embedded as a result, not only to equip individuals to progress in their careers, but to ensure that researchers are equipped with critical transferable skills, whether they remain at Warwick or move elsewhere (HE/industrial organisations).

Warwick has a proactive Athena SWAN agenda, which has some synergy with some of the actions identified in the Action Plan for the HR Excellence in Research award work, and which has assisted in many of the key actions being met. Significant and positive progress has been made on the majority of actions (as demonstrated in the 2 Year Review Action Plan - **Appendix 1**), with the remainder partially addressed or due for a complete review and documented accordingly.

Key Achievements and Progress over the Four Year Period

Key achievements have been selected for each principle to outline progress. However **Appendix 1** demonstrates full progress against each principle.

Principle 1: Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers

- Major review undertaken on Recruitment and Selection Process in 2014/15 to streamline and speed up the recruitment process, followed by extensive Chair of Recruitment Panel training in 2015/16 (220 staff with recruiting responsibilities trained over 24 sessions).
- Development Performance Reviews (DPRs) introduced in January 2015 (to replace Annual Reviews), giving staff the opportunity to reflect on past performance but also to look forward to new objectives and learning and development (L&D) needs (Over the two years, 130 reviewees and 177 reviewers trained in 2014-2016 in face to face sessions).

- Each Faculty has a dedicated Research Strategy & Development Manager (x 5 posts) plus Research Support Managers (x 5 posts) and Research Development Officers (x 7 posts).
- Proactive approach to ensure all research staff have a range of available and appropriate L&D packages to assist them to reach their full potential.

Principle 2: Researchers are recognised and valued by the University as an essential part of our human resource.

- Research Active Staff Networks – Between 2012 and 2016, LDC has provided funding to support 30 Research Staff Network initiatives by awarding c.£48.5k of which c.£36k was spent by research active staff network leads. Twelve networks have continued for more than one year. Projects funded encouraged interdisciplinary and collaborative working and in many cases supported networks which fostered links with external partners or other universities, locally, nationally and in some cases internationally. Eleven of the Networks (Receiving £11,430 between them) attracted 52 external collaborators/contributors, including eleven from outside of the UK. 20 of the 30 project proposals and subsequent projects/Networks were submitted or run by women.
- LDC's provision for research staff is currently focussing on five key thematic areas: Leadership Development; Career Development; Research Skills – including academic and bid writing/research data management; Diversity and Inclusion; Impact/Public Engagement/Enterprise & Entrepreneurship to ensure researchers are prepared for future career aspirations.
- Equality and Diversity including Unconscious Bias training (Unconscious Bias Moodle launched in November 2016 has 61 members of staff take Part 1 and 35 members of staff taking Part 2).

*See 2 Year Action Plan (**Appendix 1**) for full list of L&D sessions undertaken.*

Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in the global research environment.

- RSF is used as a mechanism to consult and inform research active staff on the research environment, L&D and career enhancing opportunities. LDC consult with researchers to ensure that the annual L&D strategy meets researcher needs and continue to communicate opportunities via the monthly research active staff e-newsletter.
- A new blended learning approach to coaching and mentoring awareness and training was piloted in July 2016 and launched in January 2017, with a moodle for information/knowledge transfer, followed by practice-based learning sessions to work through examples/scenarios (11 staff involved, 8 research active staff, 5 females).
- In June 2016 the University launched its Academic and Professional Pathways Programme (Higher Education Fellowship recognised), which has been designed to allow staff (and PhD students) with responsibility for teaching and supporting learning in HE to demonstrate their experience in relation to the UK Professional Standards Framework in a way that is most appropriate to their experience and role - (currently 104 staff enrolled on the course).

Principle 4: Recognition of the importance of researchers' personal and career development at all stages of their career.

- All nine STEMM departments have participated in the Athena SWAN Charter sharing best practice with Arts and Social Science departments, who are now eligible to apply for Charter (Warwick has an Institutional Silver award, 3 Silver departments and 9 Bronze Departments, with another 8 departments with results pending).

- Piirus, developed originally in 2011 as 'Research Match', was relaunched in October 2013 to Warwick researchers, followed by researchers at the University of Monash Australia, in April 2014, and other universities in April/May 2014. Piirus.ac.uk is unique in connecting researchers entering new research areas.
- The Warwick Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) is a cross-faculty research unit, with a remit to facilitate interdisciplinary engagement within Warwick and between other higher education institutions and partners around the world. Warwick IAS is the only Institute to offer an established cross-faculty learning and development programme for early career researchers.
- R&IS and departments support preparation and costings of external awards and fellowships to facilitate success.

Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development.

- Leadership in Action is a three day experiential leadership course, which ran at Warwick in June 2015 and November 2016 (total of 48 participants with approximate 50% split between genders). Participants were provided with leadership training offering insights into leadership through practical work-based examples of leadership situations. The course, adapted from a Vitae version, allows participants to gain a real insight into the leadership challenges facing research active staff, an understanding of the leadership and governance structure of the university and offered practical Warwick-centred examples of leadership situations. An impact report was created in November 2016.
- Warwick helped form and has joined a new European Association (June 2016) – the Guild of European Research Intensive Universities. The Guild formally launched in November 2016, focuses on the relationships between research and excellence, education, innovation and capacity building. The Guild brings together universities that have demonstrable excellence in teaching, research and policy formation from across Europe to collaborate on the creation of innovative solutions to some of Europe's most intractable scientific and social challenges.
- Responsibility/opportunity for career development is discussed in Development Performance Reviews.

Principle 6: Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

- In 2016, a consultation took place with key stakeholders (including Trade Unions) on updating and revising the Equality Objectives for 2016-2020 in line with the University and Research Strategy.
- A number of Equality and Diversity training programmes, both online and face to face are held each term and uptake monitored (total of 1898 staff have undertaken the online diversity training in 2015/16).
- A Disability Framework was designed in consultation with individuals/professional services and launched in 2015 to assist all staff who have a disability or have been on long term sick leave to have reasonable adjustments in place to undertake their role.
- The University continues to participate in the Athena SWAN Charter Mark (Gender) and is also working towards a Race Charter Mark submission. Warwick also participates in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (in 2016 rose 117 ranks across all sectors) and is currently working towards a Wellbeing Charter Mark.
- We have a number of Staff Networks, some more proactive than others. These include: LGBT+, BME, Disabled Network, Carers Network and Working Parents Network.

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.

- Progress on the HR Excellence in Research Action Plan has been monitored at regular intervals for some actions and every six months or annually for others. The progress action plan is published on the Diversity and Inclusion web pages and shared with members of the RSF and the Research Committee.

- The Single Equality Scheme was reviewed and revised in May 2016 and renamed the Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The Equality Objectives in line with this policy have also been reviewed for 2016 – 2020 as required by the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010.

Summary of Actions

The Actions Plans (original one in 2013 plus the 2 Year Review 2015) have been updated regularly and published on the HR Excellence in Research webpage. Significant progress has been made against the majority of actions as can be demonstrated in the attached **Appendix 1**. However we are not complacent and understand that processes/procedures evolve over time and need constant review, so even though previous actions have been met, some should be considered ongoing as they are evaluated and reviewed to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

Strategy for the Next Four Years

Warwick's Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) contributes significantly to Warwick's international reputation. IAS fosters innovative collaborations with higher education institutions, attracts world-leading scholars to campus and helps Warwick academics/researchers to develop new and original areas of research. IAS showcases high-quality research produced by a new generation of interdisciplinary researchers, showing original and imaginative contributions to the University's research culture. Working in close collaboration with Warwick's Global Research Priorities, IAS has begun a new programme of activities to bring researchers from all over the world to Warwick, further enhancing Warwick's global research profile. In a similar vein, the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) provides funding to enable innovative teaching and learning projects such as: large-scale initiatives supporting the University's strategy or hosting special workshops, lectures etc. Continue to work collaboratively in providing development opportunities for research active staff.

Within the Business and Regional Engagement team a new Public Engagement Unit is being set up, led by the Public Engagement Manager (in post since January 2016) and will include 3 new roles (due to be in post March 2017). The Unit's aim is to be an enabling and supportive team for all the faculties, focussing on helping researchers develop awareness and understanding of Public Engagement (PE), by improving communication, coordination and evaluation of PE activities.

Warwick's strategy for the next four years is to develop and promote considered approaches to supporting and growing Warwick's research strengths and being responsive to the dynamic environment in which researchers operate. We will provide management support for a range of cross-faculty strategic research initiatives including the Global Research Priorities, the University's European Strategy and the Warwick in California Research strategy.

Warwick's research strategy has five goals:

- To attract, appoint, develop, reward and retain the most able academic, research and support staff;
- To be globally connected, research led university with strong global research priorities programme;
- To make our research stand out on the global stage by maximising the excellence, impact and contribution of each of our disciplines;
- To champion and nurture outstanding interdisciplinary activity that drives research and research-oriented teaching;
- To ensure that staff, students, teaching and research all have a positive impact on society at large.

By linking our goals with the concordat principles we aspire to maintain and improve upon the progress already made since our initial award in 2012. This will be done through ongoing appropriate consultation, development of new initiatives, evaluation, monitoring and reported impact on those initiatives – see new Action Plan – **Appendix 2**. Warwick therefore values this framework as a tool to ensure we meet our obligations to all of our research community.