HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH: UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

TWO YEAR SELF-ASSESSMENT

The University of Strathclyde was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award by the European Commission in September 2011. Recipients of this award are required to undertake a two year internal self-assessment of progress on the implementation/action plan. This report summarises the internal review of progress on implementing the HR Excellence in Research Action Plan 2011. A list of acronyms used and web links referred to in this report is provided at the end of this document.

1   How was the internal review undertaken?
Review of progress against the original action plan was led in mid-2013 by Organisational and Staff Development Unit (OSDU), which is part of the Human Resources Directorate, following a three-stage process:

1.1   The first stage involved consultation with colleagues in the University including members of staff in Research & Knowledge Exchange Services (RKES), the Equality & Diversity Unit, others in the Human Resources Directorate, and members of the Researcher Development Group (RDG). This consultation included consideration of the Action Plan 2011 and preparation of the Action Plan 2013-15. A Research Staff Forum for research staff across all faculties (facilitated by OSDU) provided an opportunity to consult with researchers on their perceptions of the impacts of the various initiatives underway and highlighted in the action plan.

1.2   The University has taken part in the 2013 Careers in Research On-line Survey (CROS) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders (PIRLS) and the findings from those also informed the review, particularly in developing future actions.

1.3   The report on the current action plan and the Action Plan 2013-15 was approved by RDG[1] at its meeting on 7 October 2013. Final approval was given by the Associate Deputy Principal (Research and Knowledge Exchange), acting on behalf of the Convener of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), and the Vice Principal on behalf of the Staff Committee.

2   Key achievements and progress against original action plan
Full details of progress against the original action plan are provided in the updated document appended to this report. The key achievements are outlined below.

Principles 1 & 2 (Recruitment & Selection, Recognition & Value)

2.1   The University's Recruitment Practice Guide provides guidance for managers involved in the recruitment and selection of staff. CROS 2013 results were positive about the provision of information to those involved in recruitment and 90% of respondents reported that they had a job description: this represents an increase of more than 40% on 2011. Those who received details of qualifications and specialist research skills required were slightly higher than national levels.

2.2   An employee engagement strategy has been developed and is currently in the implementation phase. The University has recently established a set of core organisational values in consultation with all staff, to be formally launched soon. A significant percentage of our research staff agreed that the organisational values represent their experience at Strathclyde. Researchers' engagement with the CROS and PIRLS surveys has also increased from 2011 (CROS 17.5%, PIRLS 16.8%): in 2013, the CROS response rate was 24.9% and PIRLS 29.6%.

2.3   The Strathclyde Programme in Research and Leadership (SPIRAL) was developed in 2012 specifically to support a broad range of researcher career stages. This staff development programme is intended to support the strategic ambitions of the University by enhancing and strengthening leadership skill and knowledge. The programme, which was designed in partnership with research and other academic staff, includes 30 development activities, including a master class series and

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[1] RDG is convened by the Associate Deputy Principal (KE). Membership includes the Vice-Deans (Research), the Director of RKES, the Manager of OSDU, and representatives of the researcher community

one-to-one tailored tools (e.g., 360 degree feedback, psychometric tools and coaching/mentoring). The engagement and feedback from research staff has surpassed expectation for the programme in 2012/13: 93% of the PIRLS 2013 respondents indicated that they were aware of the SPIRAL programme.

2.4 CROS 2013 results indicated that 76.1% of research staff participated in the annual Accountability and Development Review (ADR) process, significantly more than the national level for similar review processes of 59.3%. In terms of usefulness, 57.4% of research staff rated the scheme useful/very useful compared to the national level of 44%; 62.2% of research staff rated the process as useful in helping them identify strengths and achievements, significantly more than the national level of 45.3%; 51.3% rated the process useful in leading to training or other CPD opportunities.

2.5 Seventy three percent of CROS 2013 respondents agreed that they feel integrated into the institution's research community, an increase from 44.5% in 2009.

Principles 3, 4 & 5 (Support, Career Development and Researchers' Responsibilities)

2.6 In partnership with the research community, the Researcher Development Programme (RDP) was reviewed and revised in 2012-13. Further, the RDP handbook 2013-14 and other promotional material maps the development portfolio to the UK Researcher Development Framework (RDF) domains to maximise its usability and applicability for postgraduate research students and research staff.

2.7 Similarly, extensive consultation with the research community was undertaken to inform the development of the Researcher Development Projects and the Research Development Strategy and Operational Plan 2011-15.

2.8 Induction specifically for researchers is delivered three times a year. In addition, researcher Induction web pages and guidelines are available online to support those joining the University throughout the year. The CROS 2013 results showed that 53% of research staff found the institution-wide induction process useful/very useful, which is significantly higher than the national level (33.4%). This central induction is in addition to locally organised onboarding activity.

2.9 The Strathclyde Researcher Career Pathway website was launched in April 2011. The Pathway is the development framework which underpins the online development tool 'My CPD'. Launched in May 2012, My CPD was developed by researchers, Information Services and Human Resources to support researchers with their career and personal development.

2.10 'Pathways to Research Enterprise: Enterprise Academy' was developed in 2011 as a fully funded, intensive skills development programme focusing on enterprise. This initiative was nationally recognised when the Academy was shortlisted in 2012 for a THE award in the category "Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers".

2.11 Mentoring@Strathclyde was launched in February 2012. The scheme was developed for early career research staff and has now been extended to include mid- to late career research leaders and academic staff (i.e. the SPIRAL audience). A mentoring scheme handbook and dedicated webpages provide supporting resources.

2.12 The University is the first in the UK to offer researchers a Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Academic Studies which allows specialisation in Researcher Development (as an alternative to the traditional "Academic Practice" curriculum). A third pathway is currently being developed to support specialisation in Knowledge Exchange.

2.13 An innovative new development programme in Public Engagement, 'Becoming an Engaging Researcher', has been created as part of the RDP, and is delivered in partnership by a team from across the University in collaboration with Glasgow Science Centre

2.14 CROS 2013 results showed that the research development initiatives are having a positive impact: 90% of researchers reported that they were encouraged to engage in both personal and career

development. In particular, the University is performing above the national average in terms of researchers undertaking training in Knowledge Exchange (29% compared to 14.2% nationally) and Leadership and Management (24% compared to 19% nationally). Eighty five percent would encourage other researchers to participate in the RDP.

Principle 6 (Diversity & Equality)

2.15 The Equality Outcomes Scheme includes an integrated action plan. All staff in the University have been invited to undertake an on-line equality and diversity course. Eighty eight percent of the CROS 2013 respondents agreed that the University has demonstrated a commitment to equality and diversity.

2.16 The Athena SWAN Bronze award was gained by the University in August 2011 and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering obtained Athena SWAN Silver in September 2013. Other submissions for Silver are currently being prepared.

Principle 7 (Implementation & Review)

2.17 The University's Researcher Development Strategy and Operational Plan 2011-2015 includes an action to attain and retain the HR Excellence in Research Award to support the implementation of the Concordat principles. There are regular formal mechanisms for monitoring progress on researcher development activities, the Concordat/HR Excellence in Research and the Athena SWAN action plan.

2.18 The RDG, a sub-group of RKEC, plays a key role in leading implementation of the HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan, raising issues to be addressed by faculties, departments or the Professional Services, as appropriate. RDP also receives regular reports on progress. Reports are also made regularly to RKEC and the Staff Committee.

2.19 RDG also receives results of CROS, PIRLS and PRES, so is able to evaluate progress on actions in terms of the experience of researchers in the University.

3   Next steps and 2 year action plan (September 2013 to September 2015):

Principles 1 & 2 (Recruitment & Selection, Recognition & Value):

3.1   The Researcher Development Strategy and the HR Strategy (HR Activity Plan 2013) will build on recognition of the importance of researchers, as set out in the Concordat.

3.2   To ensure that all research staff has a valued voice and have an opportunity to be involved in central and local decision making, we will review how consistent this is across the University and implement agreed recommendations upon the review.

Principles 3, 4 & 5 (Support, Career Development and Researchers' Responsibilities):

3.3   Development of a Best Practice Guidance for the Management of Research Staff by June 2014.

3.4   Induction support will include; communication of programmes and provision available to Research staff, training on the management of the professional development of researchers, coaching conversational skills and Best Practice Guidance.

3.5   In further support of research leaders and academic staffs' own development, the University is designing a CPD framework which will map career stages with guidance and recommended development activities, both internal and external.

3.5   OSDU will review and enhance our communication plan so as to increase researchers' awareness and understanding of relevant support and initiatives.

3.6   OSDU will facilitate a cross faculty forum for all staff active in research twice per year in order to ensure that researchers are involved in developments and decisions which may affect them.

<u>Principle 6 (Diversity & Equality):</u>

3.7 The University will implement the Athena SWAN action plan, encouraging and supporting the STEM departments to apply for Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditation, and strongly signalling our commitment to the advancement of the careers of women.

3.8 The University will continue to utilise Vitae resources of 'Every Researcher Counts' equality and diversity materials as well as offering be-spoke training to relevant departments on equality and diversity topics.

<u>Principle 7 (Implementation and Review):</u>

3.9 Production and review of the annual 'Staff Equality Monitoring Report' and the 'Equal Pay Statement and Analysis' helps to inform practice.

3.10 RDG, RKEC and Staff Committee will continue to receive regular updates on progress on staff related matters and action plan.

<u>Broad Success Indicators:</u>

3.10 Our success will be measured in terms of timely achievement of the actions set out in the Action Plan. In addition, our success measures include the following:

- evidence of participation in and improved results from PRES, CROS and PIRLS results when compared with previous years
- retention of institutional Athena SWAN Bronze in April 2014
- applications submitted or in progress for all STEM departments by April 2014
- gaining more departmental Athena SWAN Awards
- increased participation in events within the RDP and SPIRAL
- increased uptake and enhanced evaluation of the impact of Mentoring@Strathclyde
- increased uptake of Equality & Diversity training
- increased uptake and enhanced evaluation of the impact of annual ADR by research staff
- increased redeployment of research staff.

HR/RKES
September 2013