HR Excellence in Research Award September 2016
Progress Report - 6 Year Evaluation and Review

Overview
The University of Edinburgh received the HR Excellence in Research Award in September 2010 and retained it through a two year internal review in 2012 and a four year external review in 2014. This document, and the associated action plan, outline our six year internal review process and progress to date in supporting and implementing the principles detailed in the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

How was the six year internal review undertaken?
Internal evaluation of progress against our action plan is now embedded within core practices. Overall responsibility for reviewing and evaluating progress sits with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), working closely and collaboratively with University HR Services (UHRS). For the six year review, IAD and UHRS have reviewed and evidenced progress against our 2014 action plan. As for previous submissions, updates on progress have been made to the University Senatus Researcher Experience Committee (REC). This committee has strategic overview of the researcher experience and support at Edinburgh, covering the full career range from doctoral candidate to Principal Investigator. The HR Excellence in Research Award forms part of a larger package of University strategies and implementation mechanisms which positively impact the career and professional development support and opportunities for our researchers. As such the award is considered alongside Athena SWAN Charter action plan, the Race Equality Charter submission, the University People Strategy 2012-16 and draft University Strategic Plan 2016–2021. Over the last 12 months we have reviewed the entire plan as follows:

- An internal evaluation of progress against the 2014 action plan was undertaken. This involved consultation with colleagues from Colleges, Schools, UHRS and the Careers Service. In addition, IAD carried out a gap analysis of researcher development activities, benchmarking University of Edinburgh provision with other UK institutions. The findings have been communicated to relevant colleagues and have helped inform researcher development planning at IAD.
- The views of researchers were taken into account through engagement with the 2015 CROS and PIRLS surveys, through regular networking events with research staff associations (run by the IAD) and through REC membership which includes research staff and PhD students, the Director of HR, senior academics and PIs.
- A draft of the internal evaluation and action plan was submitted to REC for review and comment. In addition, for this review, the draft was also submitted to the University Research Policy Group (RPG) which is responsible for overseeing, directing and monitoring research strategy, policy and integrity matters.

Key achievements and progress against the 2014 action plan
Full details of progress against the four year review actions are provided in the updated action plan document. A summary of highlights from the last two years is provided here:
Key achievements and progress against Principles 1&2
- The IAD has completed a re-write of the Code of Practice for the Management and Career Development of research staff (http://edin.ac/2clxov6) in consultation with research staff societies, the Assistant Principal Researcher Development and Vice-Principal People and Culture and with colleagues in UHRS and Careers. The shorter Code provides guidance for the researcher and PI on having effective conversations at all stages of the research project. The IAD are ensuring effective dissemination to relevant stakeholders.
- The University has seen a substantial improvement in the number of researchers who have participated in appraisal at the University in the last two years (from 59% in 2013 to 75% in 2015, CROS 2015). This focus on improving completion rates has progressed to include best practice support through an online appraisal training workshop, the development of an online toolkit and the completion of the first phase of an annual review project, undertaken by UHRS, which focused on consistency and fairness of practice in annual reviews. Improvement in the reported 'satisfaction' with annual review has also increased, with 64% of the 2015 CROS respondents rating staff appraisal scheme as 'Very Useful / Useful', a notable increase from 2013 at 44%.
- Dedicated support is now available to new staff through a relocation service. In August 2016, 274 people had registered on the system and used the service for relocation and/or removals.
- To ensure staff are aware of best practice in grading/re-grading, reward and recognition, new Exemplars of Excellence have been developed which focus on best practice in promotions generally and in relation to interdisciplinary and knowledge exchange.
Key achievements and progress against Principles 3&4
   The IAD has worked with key stakeholders across the University to develop a coherent, overarching framework for CPD for learning and teaching, mapped against the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). This framework is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and is now in place with some Schools running tailored versions.

- A project on understanding the usage of the RDF at Edinburgh has been carried out by an IAD researcher development intern. The 10-week project produced a number of recommendations which will be taken forward to encourage the recording of professional development, ensuring webpages reference the language and developments of the RDF and courses are mapped to the RDF domains.
- The IAD and UHRS have mapped all their courses to the Leadership Management and Development Framework (LMDF) to allow staff to identify the most appropriate and available development option at each stage of a leadership and management career. Further mapping has also been done in the LMDF to the new Online Toolkit, to make it easier for all staff to plan their development. In August 2016, 1145 staff had accessed the Online Toolkit.
- Dedicated IAD webpages now exist for research staff; the Research Leader Programme, the university wide induction event 'Get Connected', and writing retreats, including a 'facilitator's guide'.

Key achievements and progress against Principle 5

- The IAD are working with Schools to increase support offered to research staff. The appointment of a postdoc champion in Chemistry is a positive step in this area, and the College of Science and Engineering is exploring ways of implementing this approach across all Schools.
- Research staff societies from Edinburgh have worked closely with other societies in Scotland to run the 'Scottish Biomedical Postdoctoral Conference'. IAD promoted the event to researcher development contacts, ensuring the event was advertised to more researchers. 101 delegates attended with 98% stating it was useful.

Key achievements and progress against Principle 6

- Institutional Athena SWAN silver achieved in 2015, and continued development of actions and support in this area, for renewal of institutional sliver in April 2018.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) revised and simplified and further promoted at senior level, to help mainstream equality and diversity across the University. The University's approach to EqIAs has been commended as a model of good practice by the Equality Challenge Unit and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions.

Key achievements and progress against Principle 7

- The IAD have included the RPG in the reporting and updating of areas of work. This Committee plays a key role formulating the University's REF submission strategy and policy.
- A new Equality & Diversity Coordinator in the IAD has been appointed to update IAD on E&D work and report on areas of IAD activity that could support E&D in the University.

Strategy and Success Measures beyond 2016

We have developed an updated action plan that sets out the focus of our strategy for the next two years, aligned with the draft Strategic Plan (2016-2021) and Strategic Vision 2025. The plan identifies areas where actions are now completed and in progress. IAD and UHRS will monitor progress, reporting to REC and the RPG. A brief summary of the strategy and actions is provided here:

Strategies to support Principles 1&2: Recruitment, Selection, Recognition and Value

Our previous action plan identified a range of measures designed to improve the clarity and transparency of routes to recruitment and progression. Over the last two years, these measures have been successfully implemented. Annual review figures continue to increase and there is an ongoing focus on enhancing the quality of review conversations. Specific activities for 2016-18 will include:

- Continue to take steps to effectively disseminate the revised Code of Practice to all relevant stakeholders and facilitate ways to implement and use the principles. Review the Code on an annual basis.
- Support the effective roll out and monitoring of Phase 2 of the Annual Review Project (supporting quality conversations), to trial and embed the tools in 3 pilot areas starting November 2016.
- Continue to review our advertising strategy and identify routes to better promote the HR Excellence in Research Award when recruiting researchers.

Strategies to support Principles 3&4: Career Development

The University commitment to support the personal, professional and career development needs of researchers is implemented through a variety of established mechanisms, services and activities. Specific activities for 2016-18 will include:

- Provide more support for mentors as part of Mentoring Connections, develop materials and videos to raise awareness and support staff. UHRS to survey participants in 2016/17 to measure satisfaction levels.
- Focus on supporting career progression for academic leadership roles across the University though a project led by UHRS. UHRS plan to launch webpages with guidance on this by January 2017 and run the Introduction to Academic Leadership course for at least 35 relevant staff.

- Promote and monitor take up of the online toolkit developed by UHRS to support staff (particularly in leadership and management roles) to address situations they may face in the workplace. Take up is monitored each month, with the target set as 10% of staff to access.
- Continue to strengthen communication of opportunities and support for researchers, through the roll out of a new IAD brochure for research staff and reviewing information on webpages.

Strategies to support Principle 5: Researchers Responsibilities

The University continues to take a proactive approach to improving frameworks and support structures for researchers, in order to encourage greater engagement in their own development. Examples of this include the established role of the IAD as a central point of contact and sharing of practice for Research Staff Societies and the roll out of the revised Code of Practice. Specific activities for 2016-18 will include:

- Continue to work with Schools/Colleges to overcome challenges in supporting the development and engagement of ECRs. This can include sharing practice, presenting at and facilitating events to explore different options.
- Continue to strengthen links between REC and RPG and to make sure that relevant information is shared with both committees, thus ensuring a joined up approach to overcoming challenges.

Strategies to support Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

The University has an ongoing commitment to E&D and this is at core of the draft Strategic Plan 2016-2021 and is also evidenced by the award of Institutional Athena SWAN silver in 2015. Specific activities for 2016-2018 include:

- Continue to support departmental submissions for Athena SWAN, and aim for 2018 renewal of institutional silver.
- Review and update the University Equality Outcomes Action Plan in 2017.
- Continue to support and work on innovative projects which support E&D at the University, such as Equal Bite and the Dangerous Women Project.

Strategies to support Principle 7: Implementation and Review

The IAD and UHRS, in consultation with other central services, Colleges, Schools and researchers, lead on regular review of activities. Implementation of activity is embedded in core practice and linked to other institutional initiatives. Reviews are endorsed by REC and RPG and published online. Researchers are consulted through Societies and results monitored and benchmarked against best practice through CROS/PIRLS. Specific activities for 2016-2018 include:

- Running CROS and PIRLS in 2017.
- Strengthening communication links with RPG and ensuring they are updated, alongside REC, on areas of work that are relevant and timely.
- Through the new Equality & Diversity Coordinator role, IAD will ensure they promote and support E&D in the IAD and report back on activity, in order to meet the University's statutory equality duties.

Broad Success Indicators

Our success will be measured in terms of timely achievement of actions set out in the Action Plan, many of which include specific deliverables. More broadly, our success indicators include the following:

- Evidence of progress/improvement in CROS / PIRLS data when compared with previous years, aiming to increase completion rates by 10%, and against the University Strategic Plan 2016-21,
- Continue increased take-up of appraisal/annual review measured in CROS and PIRLS and through internal measures, with an aim to increase the annual review completion to a 98% average across all College and Support Groups, and promote 'quality conversations' in annual reviews through the Annual Review Project.
- Increase visibility and use of RDF by our academic research community through our website and courses. This will be measured through CROS & PIRLS response to question about 'understanding of RDF' in CROS 2017, from 18% in 2015 to 25% in 2017, and via web analytics.
- Further development of the RLP and PI development programme in the University to ensure all colleges in the University are involved and benefiting from programme.
- Sustained interest and applications to the Researcher-led Fund and Academic Researcher-Led Networking fund.
- Ensure continued implementation of Athena SWAN principles across the institution and on-going success at departmental level. Aim for renewal of Athena SWAN Charter Silver Institution award in April 2018.
- Achievement of relevant University Strategic Plan KPIs.

University of Edinburgh Strategy Documents:

University People Strategy 2012-2016: http://edin.ac/1iK86Ux
University Strategic Plan 2016-2021: http://edin.ac/2d06qj1
University Strategic Vision 2025: http://edin.ac/1hrYy6d