The University of Edinburgh received the HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission in September 2010. As a holder of this award we are required to undertake a two-year internal review of our progress in achieving the actions set out in our Concordat Implementation Plan from 2010. This report summarises this internal review.

How was the internal review undertaken?

The internal review comprised a three-stage process overseen by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD):

1. An internal review of progress against the original action plan was led in early 2012 by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). This involved consultation with many colleagues around the University, including those from Colleges and Schools, IAD, HR, Edinburgh Research and Innovation, and the University Careers Service. The University had taken part in both the CROS and PIRLS surveys in 2011 and the data from both those informed this review.

An annual networking event for Research Staff Society organisers and committee members, held by IAD provided an opportunity to consult with researchers on their perceptions of the effects of the various initiatives underway and highlighted in the action plan. There is awareness of a number of developments for researchers in the University. However, there appears to be little awareness of the HR Excellence Award itself.

2. A full report of the internal review of the action plan was submitted to, and discussed by, the Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) at its February 2012 meeting. This committee’s membership includes the College Deans of Research Training, the Director of HR, and College representation comprising senior academics, PIs, research staff and PhD students as well as staff development and academic services representatives. Following the Researcher Experience Committee discussions, there were subsequent discussions of the action plan review at College level, for example at the College of Science & Engineering Research Training committee. A meeting of the HR Executive was dedicated to this topic and there was a briefing at the IAD Advisory Group meeting.

All this feedback has been built into the updated action plan (link at end of document).

3. Following these University-wide discussions, IAD worked closely with University HR Services (UHRS) colleagues in pulling together the summary of progress to date and the updated action plan.

Key achievements and progress against original action plan

Full details of progress against the original action plan are provided in the updated document available to view online and linked to at the end of this report. A summary of highlights is provided here.

A key achievement for the University underpinning all its work in supporting researcher development has been the establishment of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD).

The principles upon which the IAD was established are:

- Supporting College/University strategic priorities in teaching, learning and researcher development
- Working closely and collaboratively with Schools and support services to develop support and encourage the identification and sharing of good practice
- Providing clearer routes to support and information (for students and staff)
- Considering the full continuum of audience requirements and make connections between them.

This development has integrated researcher development activities into the work of the Institute for Academic Development and provided a sustainable future in this area.

Key progress against Principles 1 & 2 has been the development of new redeployment guidance for recruiters, a Talent Register and new career transition support workshops, to support staff at risk of
redundancy. In addition a substantially modernised Redundancy Avoidance Policy was developed in partnership with trade unions and other stakeholders and implemented in April 2011. This followed the repeal of the Commissioners’ Ordinance, an action completed from the original action plan. In addition, a key development is a new eRecruitment system - developed over the last two years and due to launch in October 2012 - which will enhance the experience of internal and external applicants for research posts. The University has also agreed a new Annual Review Policy Statement for all staff.

The collection of evidence from the CROS and PIRLS surveys in 2011 at Edinburgh provided key evidence of achievement: there has been a significant increase in the number of research staff having an annual review or appraisal meeting (53% in 2011 compared with 29% in 2009). Data from research staff, reporting their perceptions of being treated fairly and the recognition they feel, also demonstrate an improving picture.

Key progress against Principles 3 & 4 includes the updating of the Researcher Development web pages, providing better signposting and new guidance materials for research staff and their managers/PIs. The Researcher Development webpages now reference the language and the developments of the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), and the mapping to the RDF domains of the courses and workshops offered to all research staff and postgraduate students by IAD has been completed. Extensive new sections have been added for ‘Independent Fellows’ and for PIs and Research Leaders aiming to bring together into one place key information and links to support and advice, and raise awareness of the support available in the University.

There has been a Task Group of the Senate Researcher Experience Committee working during 2011-12 focusing on ‘Research Staff Management and PI support’. It has made a number of recommendations about induction, training and development support, awareness raising and better targeting of information for PIs and those about to take on PI roles. Both our CROS and PIRLS data informed the work of this Task Group. One of the recommendations has been the development of a 4-day Research Leader Programme for new and aspiring PIs. It has been piloted successfully in one School and events have now run or are planned in several other Schools.

Key progress against Principle 5 has been through the launch of our MyCareer web based portal. MyCareer offers a practical self-managed mechanism for recording career and professional development activity, tailored specifically to the research community at Edinburgh, focusing on their needs and priorities and encouraging career management. It was developed in close consultation with and the active involvement of research staff at the University.

The IAD continues to offer support and advice to the University’s Research Staff Societies, promoting and inputting to their events and organising networking and collaborations between them.

Progress against Principle 6 has included development and agreement of a new University Equality & Diversity Strategy incorporating a new, integrated action plan in 2011. A new set of web-based support materials for all staff has also been developed. There is online information, advice and guidance on Equality & Diversity issues, including e-learning modules on Equality & Diversity and Equality Impact Assessment. A new skills development workshop on Developing an Understanding of Equality, Diversity and Internationalisation has also been introduced into the Learning and Development programme organised by University HR Services.

In addition, the University has demonstrated a significant commitment to the Athena SWAN charter – establishing a University network, setting challenging strategic targets and achieving further Athena SWAN awards, including the second departmental Gold award in the UK – by our School of Chemistry in 2012.

In terms of monitoring progress (Principle 7), there are regular formal mechanisms for reporting on researcher development strategies and activities to University committees, in particular the Senate Researcher Experience Committee described above. The University continues to take part in the CROS and PIRLS surveys.

Updated actions and next steps to Sept 2014

We have developed an updated action plan that sets out the focus of our strategy for the next two years. This incorporates continuing action from the original plan and further action that builds on our progress to date and also aligns with the University’s new Strategic Plan 2012-16. Progress will be monitored by the Senate Researcher Experience Committee. The full details of our updated action plan, including time lines and responsibilities, are provided in the document available to view online at:
A brief summary of updated actions and next steps is provided here.

**Principles 1 & 2:**
The new University People Strategy being developed in 2012-13 will build in recognition of the importance of researchers, as set out in the Concordat. The new e-learning modules on Recruitment, Selection and the Law, and Annual Review will be available and promoted to all PIs and research leaders by Dec 2012 and are part of developing knowledge and understanding of the value and importance of recruitment, and of good recruitment practice amongst staff. The take-up of these will be monitored throughout 2013. The University Strategic Plan 2012-16 has annual review as a KPI. The University will continue to take part in CROS and PIRLS - running next in 2013.

**Principles 3 & 4:**
We will continue to make RDF linkages and consider the use of the Vitae online RDF planner. A key strategic initiative in 2012 has been the creation of 100 Chancellor’s Fellowships by the University. A structured suite of induction, orientation and professional development is currently being designed. The full programme of activities will run throughout 2013 and be reviewed in by Dec 2013 in line with the University’s probation, annual review and promotion processes. The results of the pilot and analysis will be used inform the implementation of best practice and enhanced support for research staff (and other academic staff). In addition we are continuing to develop and review support for PIs. This includes a focus on those who are new and aspiring to the role and on new lecturing staff taking up a position at Edinburgh. By Mar 2013 we will have completed the development of extensive web pages, tailored training programmes, and new modules in our Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice. These developments are helping in raising awareness amongst new academic staff of the responsibilities they have in supporting researcher careers, and promoting the culture of shared responsibility amongst research staff and PIs.

**Principle 5:**
The University’s Researcher-Led Fund Initiative continues to encourage and support researchers in devising, organising and providing local training and development activities with a career development focus. Many successful projects have been supported with a number developing into self-sustaining enterprises. We will continue to promote this initiative for researchers taking responsibility for their own development. IAD will continue to support and advise the University’s Research Staff Societies and further opportunities for developments will be sought. The RDF will be promoted though linking our training and development courses to the framework and researchers will be encouraged to make use of it in reviewing and planning their skills development. This is on-going throughout 2012-13 and beyond.

**Principle 6:**
By Jul 2014 the University will increase the number of Schools achieving Athena SWAN (or equivalent) awards for women in science, engineering and technology, with the involvement of researchers, signalling our commitment to the advancement of the careers of women. We will also establish a mentoring pilot and develop a framework and programme for academic staff in addition to the existing Research Staff Mentoring Programme, by September 2013.

**Principle 7:**
IAD will continue to provide updates and monitoring information to appropriate University strategic committees, e.g. REC. It will also contribute to the work of Task Groups in support of researcher development, with the 2013 Task Group focusing on researcher career support already scheduled. UHRS will develop the monitoring of Annual Review by Jul 2013 to provide analysis on implementation for research staff, including reference to equality characteristics. The University will continue to use CROS and PIRLS data to monitor progress and improve researcher experience.

**Broad Success Indicators**
Our success will be measured in terms of timely achievement of the actions set out in the Action Plan—many of which include specific deliverables. In addition, our success measures include the following:
• Evidence of progress/improvement in CROS and PIRLS data when compared with previous years
• Increase take-up of appraisal/annual review
• The further embedding of the RDF in our courses and workshops
• The extent of the roll-out of our PI development programme
• The roll-out of the Chancellor's Fellows development support to wider groups
• Applications to the Researcher-led Fund
• A review of the RDF planner and decision on implementation
• The achievement of Athena Swan Awards.