**HR Excellence in Research: Action Plan 2015-17**

The University of Stirling received the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2011, and retained it in 2013. This document and the associated report form the basis of the four-year review process which reviews our progress over the past two years and sets out our plans to further support the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Retention of the HR Excellence Award is part of the University’s Research Strategy 2015-21.

The University established the role of Dean during 2014-15. The Deans support our Deputy Principals and have responsibility for taking forward key University strategic objectives. There are five Deans with responsibility for Internationalisation; Equality & Diversity; Student Affairs; Research Impact, and Research Enhancement. The Dean of Research Impact and Dean of Research Enhancement work closely with the

Deputy Principal for Research and Director of Research & Enterprise to lead the ongoing development of the University’s research profile. The Dean of Equality and Diversity works with the Deputy Principal for Education and Students, who has responsibility for Equality and Diversity across the University.

This action plan provides an update on our 2012 action plan, and sets our new and on-going actions for 2015-17. All relevant documents, including the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, are available at [http://www.research.stir.ac.uk/supporting/infostaff/concordat.php](http://www.research.stir.ac.uk/supporting/info-staff/concordat.php)

A glossary of terms and abbreviations is provided at the end of the document.

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# Actions relating to Principle 1: Recruitment & Selection

*Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.*

| **2013 Actions**  | **2015 Progress**  |
| --- | --- |
| Review of recruitment procedures and actions conducted.  | **Complete:**The guidance for recruitment has been updated; [http://www.stir.ac.uk/hrservices/recruitment/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/hr-services/recruitment/)  to provide clarity and additional guidance in specific areas, *e.g.* forms for shortlisting and interviews and guidance on making salary offers.  |
| Register of trained recruiters to be developed and disseminated.  | **Complete:** HROD maintain a record of all staff who have engaged with the Recruitment and Selection online module, which must be completed prior to taking part in a recruitment panel. Our TalentLink (online recruitment system) guides are located on the Recruitment section of our website: [here](http://www.stir.ac.uk/hr-od/recruitment/preparingtorecruit/talentlinkguidance/)  When Talent Link was originally set up, formal training was provided across Schools/Services.  |
| Unconscious bias training to be received by all individuals involved in recruitment.  | **Complete:** Unconscious bias training was run in 2013-14, and continued in 2014-15. This training was delivered to the Senior Management Team of the University and was then offered to all staff involved in recruitment and selection.   |
| Investigate the cause of the change in satisfaction levels of researchers and investigate potential initiatives to support career progression – which may include terms and conditions review.  | **Complete:** REO share CROS and PIRLS survey data with OD, and will work together on future surveys. REO and OD work collaboratively regarding any highlighted issues in these surveys as appropriate. PRES, CROS and PIRLS results are disseminated appropriately across the institution and used to inform policy/activity.  |
| Recruit a further cohort of Impact Fellowships and Studentships.  | **Complete:** To date, 27 Impact Fellows have been recruited over three rounds. We have recruited 68 students under the Impact scheme to date, incorporating international, collaborative and partnership studentships.  |

| **Examples of continuing actions that are now part of regular business**. |
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| * There are templates for academic roles within our online recruitment system, Talentlink. These are being further developed for research posts and will then be added to Talentlink.

 * REO and OD work together to share survey (CROS, PIRLS, and Institutional staff survey) data and discuss question sets. Reports arising from these surveys are disseminated across the institution and any issues highlighted and appropriate actions considered.
* Unconscious Bias training is now a regular part of the Organisational Development Training Programme.

 * TalentLink training is offered to any new members of staff and HROD offer individual or team based training on an informal basis. Whilst TalentLink training is optional, it is usually carried out for those involved in the recruitment process.

 * HROD maintain a record of all staff who have engaged with, and completed, the online training regarding Recruitment & Selection.

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| **New Actions 2015-17**  |   |
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| **Action**  | **Responsibility**  |
| Future recruitment has been secured in the University’s Research Investment Fund and it is set out the in the University’s Research Strategy 2015-21 that the Impact Fellowships will have an annual recruitment round.  | **Lead:** REO and Dean of Research Impact **Timescale:** annual programme of recruitment and support, new Fellows to be in post October each year. **Success measures:** Impact Fellows and recruited each AY (up to 5 per AY).   |
| The University has committed to support PhD studentships as part of the 2015-21 Research Strategy, with a stated aim of increasing the number of University-funded research postgraduates: we aim to recruit to 30 centrally funded studentships annually (5 collaborative, 5 fully-funded, 10 partnership, 10 international).  | Director REO and Head of SGS **Timescale:** University funded PGRs to double from 2014 levels by 2021 **Success measure:** studentships advertised and students enrolled from October 2016, and annually thereafter.  |

# Actions relating to Principle 2: Recognition & Value

*Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation’s human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.*

| **2013 Actions**  | **2015 Progress**  |
| --- | --- |
| Maintain consideration of issues relating to research staff at a strategic level.  | **Complete:** There is now a research representative on the University Research Committee.  |
| To continue the Researcher’s Forum and enhance its success in researcher engagement.  | **Complete:** Researchers’ Forum was revised in AY 2014-15 following consultation with research staff, and a new structure set up and publicised. RF now meets twice per year. The Deputy Principal for Research and the Director of Research & Enterprise attend both meetings.  |
| Continue to consider applications for providing funds to bridge contracts as appropriate.  | **Complete:** As of August 2014, a proportion of any overheads earned on all new research income will be allocated to Divisional Discretionary Funds. Budgets allocated will be identified to individual PIs and must be made available for those who earn them. These funds may be used to bridge contracts. This will be reviewed in August 2016 by the Research Accountant (Finance Office).  |
| The University will run the Staff Survey again in future and aims to extract research responses as a population and identify any action to be taken forward.  | **Complete:** Staff Survey was run in 2015, and will run again in 2017. A report on the results of the 2015 survey was produced by HROD and has been circulated.  |
| Develop strategy (Gender Equality Initiative) to promote careers for women in science at Stirling  | **Complete:** The University has developed and successfully delivered a Gender Equality Initiative (GEI). This comprises a bespoke women’s career development programme (Stepping Stones) and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education’s Aurora women’s leadership programme. Over two years the University has supported a total of 44 women to complete the Aurora programme - one of the highest levels of participation in the UK. As part of the GEI, frequent networking opportunities are held for women across the University. The University of Stirling received the award of ‘highly commended’ at the Times Higher Education (THE) Leadership and Management Awards (THELMA) in the Outstanding Contribution to Leadership Development category for our Gender Equality Initiative.  |

| **Examples of continuing actions that are now part of regular business**. |
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| * To continue to improve availability of web-resources for researchers on the website. Development of web-based information and resources is ongoing. REO is revising and updating webpages to achieve improved functionality, organisation and content.

 * The SGS website remains under review and is updated regularly. In 2014-15 the University undertook a significant investment in systems development to support research students. The new tailored web-based support system, Research Compass, provides online mechanisms for progress monitoring, but also for skills and training needs analysis and links through to the skills development programme for research students.

 * Delivery of training for female academics on the promotion process and preparing for promotion. HROD has run university-wide, School specific and women-only promotions session. Growing from this, there will be a new Promotions Programme set up. This will be a rolling programme of events, and this will link with Achieving Success.
* The work of the GEI, and the various mentoring schemes in which we participate/run, will continue as a regular part of our staff development programmes.
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| **New Actions 2015-17**  |   |
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| **Action**  | **Responsibility**  |
| Increase engagement with the Researchers’ Forum  | Work will continue to raise the profile of the RF. Postgraduate Research students will be actively encouraged to participate. During 2015-16 the Dean of Research Impact will lead one Forum event, and the Dean of Research Enhancement will lead another. We aim to have an increase in attendance in comparison with 2014-15 (18 individuals attended in total in 2014-15). We also intended to formally include PGRs in the RF. **Lead:** RDPO **Timescale:** RF meetings for 2015-16 set for November 2015 and April 2016. **Success measure:** increase in research staff attending RF events; inclusion of PGRs. |
| Creation of a Promotions Programme  | A new Promotions Programme to be created by HROD. This will run each academic year, with the programme being released in October of each year. The Promotions Programme will link with AS (University review process for all staff). **Lead:** HROD **Timescale**: first sessions to be run by Summer 2016. **Success measures:** participants in the programme successfully apply for promotion. |

# Actions relating to Principles 3 & 4: Support & Career Development

*Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment. The importance of researchers’ personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.*

| **2013 Actions**  | **2015 Progress**  |
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| Coaching in self-promotion piloted and training delivered.   | **Complete and continuing:** 10 women undertook a pilot coaching programme starting in January 2015 which included tools such as 360 feedback development activity as well as MBTI type psychometric instrument. Coaching commenced in April 2015, and many are currently still in process (Sept 2015). This programme will be continued and made available more widely across the UoS.  |
| Strategy (Gender Equality Initiative) established and implemented Networks/forum initiated   | **Complete:** GEI set-up and events have been held. **Gender Equality Forum** (GEF) has been set up (mixed gender) and this group holds regular events, some of these are run as female-only to meet AS criteria. **The Equality Action Forum (EAF**) was formed in October 2013 to drive forward the University’s equality activities. This group is composed of the University’s Equality Champions, who were established in December 2012 within each School and service area. EAF meetings take a focus on one particular topic (e.g. myth busting and best practice re family friendly leave) thus enabling the Equality Champions to take this knowledge back to their Schools/departments.  |
| To continue and grow researcher engagement with elements of the postgraduate certificate and with the module for postgraduate research students.  | **Reprioritised:** The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) has been revised and updated to form the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCLTHE). See ‘new actions’.  |
| Maintain the provision of a fund to provide feewaivers.  | **Complete:** All funds are fully utilised.  |
| Review of induction for research staff and implementation of improvements.  | **Complete:** REO and OD worked together to deliver a new induction event for research staff, held in March 2014. This event was repeated in March 2015 and took into account feedback received from the 2014 event. The event aims to give headline information to new staff and to showcase the support available for staff. This centrally organised induction event for new members of research staff is now part of the regular programme of development activities.  |
| To include the views of research staff within the review of Achieving Success (AS) and ensure that any improved appraisal system research staff appropriately.  | **Complete:** Achieving Success (review process for all staff) was reviewed, and a range of actions has resulted, including: a set of ‘refresher’ courses for reviewers and reviewees; the AS forms themselves have been updated, leadership and development programmes launched. Outcomes * Creation of a ‘refresher’ programme. This is for both reviewers and reviewees. For reviewers the aim is to develop reviewer skills in the process and also core to this in interpersonal skills development (i.e. effective feedback conversations, coaching conversations, performance management conversations).
* review of the AS forms. One of the strengths of the forms is the ability to flex the content and tailor it to the school/dept. The Development Plan part of the form has been updated to become more comprehensive. The objective setting part of the form has been refined to make explicit the ‘reflections (i.e. looking back over the past year), and then the forward looking toward the objectives for the forthcoming year.
* Revision of [AS website](http://www.stir.ac.uk/hr-od/learning-and-development/achieving-success/) and associated content material.

Regular Achieving Success events for both reviewers and reviewees have taken place over 2013/2014 and these will continue. There is an emphasis on reviewers undertaking the interpersonal skills training as well as leadership development.  |
| To monitor, maintain and update provision for researchers from the Careers Development Centre.  | **Complete:** Resources to be reviewed annually. There are a range of relevant items, *e.g.* researcher area of CDC website [www.stir.ac.uk/careers/researcher](http://www.stir.ac.uk/careers/researchers) , workshops, drop-in sessions. We continue to support the career development of researchers through specific career sessions for researchers, one to one support and allowing access to all career management tools available in the Career Development Centre at Stirling. CDC and the RDPO meet annually to discuss provision.  |

| **Examples of continuing actions that are now part of regular business**. |
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| * It is a stated aim of the University’s Research Strategy 2015-21 to develop and support our researchers. This is led by the DP Research, with support from RDPO, SGSPO and HROD. We continue to review and develop training opportunities for research students, staff and their managers to meet researcher needs. REO, SGS, HR OD & AD and Information Services meet regularly to consider appropriate training and how to provide effective training provision. The SGS and RDP skills development programmes are reviewed annually. In 2013-14 239 PGR students registered for one or more of the 36 available training sessions delivered via SGS compared to 195 registrations in the previous year. The Researcher Development Programme also saw an increase in numbers of staff participating from 121 to 152 between 2013-14 and 2014-15, with 51 sessions being available in 2014-15. In addition to in-house provision, SGS and the RDP actively promote training and development opportunities available outwith the University, e.g. Summer Schools run by doctoral training centres/partnerships, Voice of Young Science Media and Peer Reviewing workshops. Consistent effort is made to ensure the highest impact, in terms of meeting PGR and research staff’s training needs. We aim to see an increase in staff and PGRs engaging in training opportunities each year, and maintaining/improving awareness of, and satisfaction with, provision (as evidenced via CROS and PIRLS and evaluation data).

* The University will continue to implement the Vitae Researchers Development Statement and Framework. All items in the [Researcher Development Programme](http://www.stir.ac.uk/research/support-for-researchers/researcherdevelopment/) and the [Stirling Graduate School provision](http://www.stir.ac.uk/graduateschool/current-pg-students/skills-development/) are mapped to the [Vitae RDF](https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework) (which consists of 4 domains, each of which is divided into three sub-domains). A key feature of Research Compass is the skills needs analysis function. Research students are required to consider their skills gaps using a questionnaire based on the Vitae RDF. Notional skills values are attributed to each subdomain for each student and a skills matrix is generated. The courses on the skills development programme, which are mapped to the RDF subdomains, are linked through to the skills matrix thus enabling the student to identify opportunities to address their skills gaps.

 * Evaluation of mentoring programmes is currently taking place. There are approx. 50 formal mentoring partnerships across the University. These consist of Women Leadership Mentoring Partnership, New Academic Staff mentoring Partnerships (local schools), maternity mentoring (a pilot scheme in one Academic School), also general Mentoring University Mentoring Partnerships – open to all staff - for example we have a Senior Academic who is currently being mentored by our Principal. We actively support mentoring via regular centrally-funded training and, in one school are piloting a Mentoring Partner (a senior academic who is taking on direct ownership of supporting mentoring across her school). Evaluation of mentoring will be completed by December 2015
* Implementation of new training support for managers (including research leaders). Now rebranded as ‘Management Essentials’ and a separate stream of training for Leadership (values, vision etc). These will form part of the wider OD programme for staff.
* Continue participation in Scottish Crucible and other programmes working in partnership. Involvement in the 2014 and 2015 Crucible programme. The new Research Strategy 2015-21 states that we will aim to enhance participation in national programmes such as Scottish Crucible. Over the past 4 Scottish Crucible events (2012-2015) Stirling has had a total of 15 participants, which represents 12.2% of participants.

 * The University’s Learning and Teaching Conference 2015 was well received. Attendance was 50% higher than the previous conference (EduFair) and there had been significantly more paper and poster submissions than in previous years. Attendees consisted of academic and support staff, graduate and undergraduate students. The theme of the Conference in 2016 (20th April) will be Student Transitions, capitalising on the “transitions” work taking place under the auspices of the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes. Alongside this has been a call for bids for funded projects around the theme of student transitions, from the Stirling Enhancement of Learning Fund (SELF), which is open to all who are engaged in enhancing the student learning experience. The conference will run each April.
* CDC are involved with Making the Most of Masters (MMM), which supports taught postgraduate students to collaborate with external organisations i.e. prospective employers, to undertake work based/related projects in lieu of the traditional university-based dissertation. Originally funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) from 2011 to 2014, MMM is now embedded within the University. In the last two academic years, almost 100 students completed masters dissertations with employers. These were over the Schools of Natural Sciences; Arts & Humanities and Management covering 20 masters programmes (MSc, LLM and M Res) with new programmes coming on board each year. MMM at Stirling has hosted an annual Employer Engagement event for our students since its inception. Last years’ event “Energy, Environment and Conservation: Your Place in Their Future” focussed on programmes from all of the above schools that were relevant to the topic.
* The University of Stirling will host the “MMM Legacy” project supported by the SFC (April 2015 to August 2017), that will extend and expand the reach of the MMM partnership to trial and pilot the MMM approach at three other Scottish universities and Highland & Islands Enterprise.
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| **New Actions 2015-17**  |  |
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| **Action**  | **Responsibility**  |
| Development of Research Compass in ongoing. Feedback suggests that the 63 RDF descriptors are not being fully engaged with, and SGS will be working with colleagues in schools (RPG directors) to further consider and enhance the mechanisms to enable students to manage their skills analysis. Future ambition is to improve the support and training provided with respect to the skills analysis and the RDF and highlight the importance of career planning, both to research students and supervisory teams.   | **Lead**: SGSPO **Timescale:** by August 2017 to have reconsidered the mechanisms in place via COMPASS and the training for PGRs and supervisors to manage skills analysis. **Success measure:** PGRs and supervisors are engaged with skills analysis. |
| Provision of skills analysis system for research staff. This will require consultation with research staff to assess their needs and requirements. Existing university systems will be considered as a potential means of providing skills analysis.  | **Lead**: RDPO **Timescale:** by August 2017 to have skills analysis system available for research staff **Success measure:** system in place, and staff are engaged with it.  |
| REO and SGS are working to ensure the effectiveness of Supervisor Training. REO and SGS jointly purchased the Epigeum module in 2014-15 and will run a series of face-to-face sessions to accompany it in 2015-16 and beyond. In relation to this, we will explore how staff can get experience of student supervision in advance of being a lead PhD supervisor.  | **Lead:** SGSPO **Timescale:** Launch of Epigeum and associated sessions by Spring 2016. **Success measure:** staff participate in available training and positive feedback received. |
| Stirling Crucible – this was first run in 2014-15 (with 17 participants), and will be repeated, as per the University’s Research Strategy, in 2016.  | **Lead:** RDPO **Timescale:** Stirling Crucible to run in AY 2016-17, with sessions being held April/May/June. **Success measures:** To recruit a full cohort for 2016-17 and plan for additional Stirling Crucible events to facilitate continued networking of the Stirling Crucible cohort(s).  |
| Apply for HEA accreditation for the PgCert Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCLTHE). The PGCLTHE will form the credit-bearing pathway for recognition with the HEA (AFHEA and FHEA), within the Stirling Framework Evidencing Learning and Teaching Enhancement (SFELTE). An application to the HEA for accreditation of this Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework has been made (May 2015). In addition to a planned increase in the availability of CPD in learning and teaching within the CPD framework, there will also be an Experience Pathway, for seeking recognition with the HEA (AFHEA, FHEA, SFHEA).  | **Lead:** HR Academic Development **Timescale:** Accreditation achieved by end of 2015, PGCLTHE to run subsequently. **Success measure:** accreditation achieved, cohort recruited and successfully completed PGCLTHE.  |
| Monitoring of Achieving Success using ‘Performance for All’ software. It is very robust in approach and a cost-benefit analysis as well as cultural fit review for this tool would need to be undertaken. This would require a communication and implementation plan to be in place in advance of the effective use of ‘Performance for All’. In the interim, our support for Achieving Success has been enhanced (see p8 above).   | **Lead:** HR OD **Timescale:** Performance for All to be in place and utilised by August 2017. **Success measure:** communication & implementation plan in place, software used and data produced to facilitate monitoring of the AS process.  |
| Explore the possibility of introducing probation for research-only staff in line with current academic probation arrangements. At present, research-only staff have performance discussions with the Line Manager via the AS process. Whilst this process focusses on development, the University is keen to bolster the support mechanisms available to ensure newly appointed researchers understand at an early stage their key deliverables and objectives and have a formal means to discuss progress, issues and matters of support and/or development needs during their first few months. This action would involve a scoping exercise, following which a report would be presented to URC, with any recommendations being formally signed-off by the University’s Strategy & Policy Group | **Lead:** Head of HR Systems & Services, with support from REO **Timescale**: Report presented to URC by June 2017 **Success measure:** report produced, and recommendations implemented to ensure that researchonly staff are fully supported.  |
| Raising awareness amongst PGR of available online personality assessments, consider appropriateness of Confidence Building course (Lift Off) to run for PGRs and research staff in a modified form  | **Lead:** Deputy Head Careers and Employability & SGSPO **Timescale:** by summer 2016 **Success measure:** PGR engaged with this, and provision available for research staff, if deemed useful. |

# Actions relating to Principle 5: Researchers’ Responsibilities

*Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.*

| **2013 Actions**  | **2015 Progress**  |
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| Update and disseminate the Code of Good Research Practice.  | **Incomplete and reprioritised:** The Code of Good Research Practice (CoGRP) is being revised, as per our previous action plan. In order to create a more user-friendly resource, the CoGRP will be restructured into a web-based format. In 2014-15 the Code of Practice for Research Students was re-written to become the Code of Practice: Research Degrees. The CoGRP will be cross referenced in the Code for Research Degrees in due course. **Lead:** RPO **Timescale:** revision of CoGRP complete by August 2017. **Success measure:** revised CoGRP available online.  |
| Implementation of new training support for managers (including research leaders).  | **Complete:** Management Essentials Programme created by OD and rolled out 2014-15.  |
| The importance of researcher career development to be stressed in research supervisor/manager training.  | **Re-prioritised:** Formal training for supervisors of doctoral students last took place in session 2011-12. A new suite of training for supervisors will be delivered through a blended learning programme. The University has invested in the Epigeum Doctoral supervision module that will form the basis of a blended training programme for all supervisors of research students. The supporting materials/training events will state the importance of career development, and will signpost relevant resources and materials. **Lead:** SGSPO **Timescale:** Launch of Epigeum and associated sessions by Spring 2016 **Success measure:** staff participate in available training and provide positive feedback. |
| Develop and implement tools to allow research students to carry out training needs analysis.  | **Complete**: In 2014-15 the University undertook a significant investment in systems development to support research students. The new tailored web-based support system, Research Compass, provides online mechanisms for progress monitoring but also for skills and training needs analysis and links through to the skills development programme for research students.  |
| Evaluate and implement tools to allow research staff to carry out training needs analysis.  | **Complete:** The University investigated the Vitae PDP tool, and ran a short test of this with members of staff. The feedback obtained indicated that the Vitae PDP tool was not suitable. As per actions under Principles 3&4, an alternative skills analysis tool for research staff will be considered.  |

| **Examples of continuing actions that are now part of regular business**  |
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| * Researchers’ Forum was reconfigured following consultation with research staff. The RDPO will continue to work to increase engagement by researchers with RF activities.

 * REO, SGS and HROD & AD all provide training that is available to PGRs, ECRs and other staff involved in research. This is publicised in a variety of ways to the various groups of staff/students. Each year, uptake and feedback is reviewed and informs the development of the programmes for the following year.

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| **New Actions 2015-17**  |  |
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| **Action**  | **Responsibility**  |
| Results of the CROS survey 2015 have illustrated that awareness is high for certain external initiatives, such as Athena SWAN, but low for others. The RDPO will aim to raise awareness of these, including Vitae and the HR Excellence in Research Award.  | **Lead:** RDPO **Timescale:** RF events in Nov 2016 and April 2017. **Success measure:** increased numbers of research staff attending RF events; increased awareness of external initiatives, as assessed via CROS/PIRLS 2017.  |
| From 2015-16, research students will be actively encouraged to participate in the Researchers’ Forum  | **Lead:** SGSPO & RDPO **Timescale:** RF events in November 2015 and April 2016.  |
|  | **Success measure:** PGRs attend RF Events in 2015-16 and 2016-17  |
| To work with the Dean for Research Enhancement to provide guidance and support around effective research grant peer review systems.  | **Lead:** Dean, Research Enhancement **Timescale:** review to be complete by Autumn 2016 **Success measure:** Support available re. peer review in for form of guidance and/or training.  |
| To consider increasing support for mid- and late-career researchers, including mentoring of new PIs.  | **Lead:** RDPO **Timescale:** review of current provision by February 2017 **Success measure:** Have increased support via the RDP for more senior researchers by October 2017.  |

# Actions relating to Principle 6: Diversity & Equality

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

| **2013 Actions**  | **2015 Progress**  |
| --- | --- |
| Implement and monitor progress against the new equality outcomes.   | **Complete:** Equality Mainstreaming Progress Report and Annual Employee Equality Report both published on [www.stir.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/equalityoutcomes](http://www.stir.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/equalityoutcomes)  We have revised Equality & Diversity webpages <http://www.stir.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/>which provide a link to all relevant activities.  |
| To continue to ensure that all staff are conversant with diversity training through online modules and where possible face to face development activities.  | **Complete:** All new staff are expected to participate in online E&D training. All online provision has been updated and enhanced in session 2014-15. Currently, over 300 members of staff have completed this module. Additional training has also been put in place associated with our commitments to equality and diversity including unconscious bias training, equality impact assessment training and promotions processes. The Equality Action Forum (EAF) was formed in October 2013 to drive forward the University’s equality activities. This group is composed of the University’s Equality Champions, who were established in December 2012 within each School and Service area. EAF meetings take a focus on one particular topic (e.g. myth busting and best practice re family friendly leave) thus enabling the Equality Champions to take this knowledge back to their Schools/departments.  |
| Continue to support the Daphne Jackson Trust through promotion of its funding schemes.  | **Complete:** The Daphne Jackson Trust funding schemes will continue to be publicised by the REO. |
| Review options to promote flexible working and policy development.  | **Complete**: The UoS has a strong culture and practise of informal flexible working (including compressed hours, job sharing, and different starting times). This is in addition to the formal policies in place which align with the statutory requirements. Results from the Staff Survey 2015 were very positive regarding flexible working (81% felt they could talk openly to their manager about flexible working) and also in CROS 2015 (79% felt they were treated equally with other types of staff regarding requests for flexible working). A review of flexible working was carried out in response to the changes in legislation to widen the scope to all staff now being eligible to formally request a flexible working arrangement. It is understood that a significant proportion of staff have flexible working patterns and arrangements that are agreed locally between the employee and their line manager, therefore no reference is made to HR, and as such, there are no formal records.Since 30 June 2014, all employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working. The Flexible Working policy has been revised and updated to reflect this change and an EQIA completed. The EQIA includes a recommendation for HROD to provide management awareness/training.  |
| Increase participation in Diversity in the Workplace training to 75% by December 2013 and 90% by December 2014.   | **Reprioritised:** Consultation with the HE sector has revealed that, nationally, uptake is very low for this activity. The targets set originally are now thought to be unrealistic. E&D training will be incorporated into a new programme of face-to-face inductions for all new staff, and uptake for training in this area will be monitored. **Lead:** HR OD **Timescale:** ongoing. Programme released in October each year. **Success measures:** increase number of staff completing E&D training.  |
| Implement the equality outcomes action plan.  | **Complete:** Equality Mainstreaming Progress Report and Annual Employee Equality Report both published on [www.stir.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/equalityoutcomes](http://www.stir.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/equalityoutcomes)   |
| To continue to follow the equality guidelines and safeguards as set out in the REF Code of Practice in preparing the University’s REF Submission.  | **Complete**: The University conducted an Equality Impact Assessment on the REF Code of Practice and followed the guidelines set out in the Code. Additionally, before the commencement of the decision making process, bespoke equality and diversity briefing materials were developed and delivered to all decision makers, as well as a number of awareness raising sessions delivered to staff.   |
| To continue to analyse equality demographics of the REF submission at key milestones.  | **Complete**: Demographic screenings were undertaken at various key stages of the REF preparation process. The first was undertaken at the time of agreeing the institutional threshold for inclusion of eligible staff. Another was undertaken of the recommendations on inclusion which were being presented for decision. The final demographic screening was undertaken post-submission.   |
| To conduct a formal review of the REF decision making process upon completion.  | **Complete**: Upon completion, an Equality Impact Assessment Post-Submission Report was completed. This reviewed the original Equality Impact Assessment of the REF Code of Practice and followed up on the completion of the key actions that were to be undertaken during the decision-making process. This document has been shared with the national REF Team and Higher Education Funding Councils.  |

| **Examples of continuing actions that are now part of regular business**  |
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| * The next update report on Equality Outcomes will be produced in 2017. This work is led by the Dean of Equality & Diversity.

* There is a commitment to, and scrutiny of, equality and diversity at the highest strategic levels. The position of Dean for Equality & Diversity was created in Summer 2014 to provide senior level leadership to take forward the University’s ambitious equality and diversity agenda. The University’s Equality Steering Group (ESG) meets regularly throughout the year to advise upon and monitor the implementation of the University’s equality and diversity action plan on behalf of the University Court. An Athena SWAN Self-Assessment Panel, which reports to the ESG, coordinates and monitors all aspects of the University’s work associated with Athena SWAN. The review of regulations and code of practice were taken as an ideal opportunity to consider the equality and diversity implications of policies for research students. For example, the new research degree policies align with developments in HR policies in terms of maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave.

 * Development of OneStirling, which outlines the University’s commitment to equality and diversity in every area of activity [www.stir.ac.uk/onestirling.](http://www.stir.ac.uk/onestirling) The following activities were promoted under OneStirling: Japanese Week, Challenging Everyday Sexism Event (17 March 2014), Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival (October 2014), Women in Politics: Reflections on the Referendum and Beyond (March 2015); ScienceGrrls (University of Stirling Sciences Fair, February & September 2015); Generation W – Celebrating Women in Business (March 2015); International Festival (March 2015); first ever Women in Sport Conference (October 2014).

 * In 2014-15 The EAF meetings focussed on raising awareness of best practice and support in equality matters and driving forwards the University’s equality activities. The following myth-busting and best practice sessions took place: Bullying and Harassment, disclosing a disability, family friendly leave, e.g. maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave and flexible working. Planned sessions for 2015-16 include Hate Crime, Promoting E & D, Embedding E & D in the Curriculum and Religion on Campus.
* The University was awarded an Athena SWAN Bronze Award in September 2013. Arising from this, divisional groups were set up to facilitate the drafting of departmental applications. Departmental submissions were made in Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015. The University has signed up to the revised Athena SWAN Charter (March 2015). The Athena SWAN action plan is monitored regularly by the Institutional Athena SWAN Group (IASG which replaces ASSAP and the Athena SWAN Chairs Group). The University intends to submit an application for a Silver Institutional Award in Autumn 2016. In 2014-15, the University submitted three departmental applications, with one more planned for November 2015.
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| **New Actions 2015-17**  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action**  | **Responsibility**  |
| To continue to promote and advance Athena SWAN across the institution. An institutional application will be made for a Silver Award in Autumn 2016 and we aim to submit divisional applications in non-STEM subjects during 2015-16.  | **Lead:** Chair IASG **Timescale:** Silver application to be submitted November 2016, non-STEM applications to be made by end 2016. **Success measure:** application successful.  |
| To investigate feasibility of running face-to-face induction for all staff which includes Diversity in the Workplace training.  | **Lead:** HR OD **Timescale:** investigation complete by Autumn 2016.  |

# Actions relating to Principle 7: Implementation & Review

*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.*

| **2013 Actions**  | **2015 Progress**  |
| --- | --- |
| The University will participate in future CROS, PRES and PIRLS exercises and use these to inform the support offered.  | **Complete:** The University participated in PRES, CROS and PIRLS in 2011, 2013 and 2015. The results from these surveys are used to inform future actions regarding support for researchers at the University of Stirling. The University uses feedback from surveys, focus groups and other sources to inform its actions regarding support for researchers at the University of Stirling. The University has an ongoing commitment to gathering and considering research student and research staff feedback.We have participated in PRES in 2013 and 2015 and achieved response rates (44% and 48% respectively) above the sector averages (42% and 40% respectively). Survey results from PRES 2013 informed an enhancement plan which culminated in the development of the Research Compass system, which supports the research student journey and includes skills development. The results from PRES 2015 have been shared with Schools who have been asked to respond with examples of good practice and plans for improvements. An overall institution enhancement plan will be developed from discussions with stakeholder groups.  |
| Continued involvement in national discussions regarding Researcher Concordat issues.  | **Complete:** The University of Stirling is represented at relevant national committees and events regarding researcher development and has hosted a number of events, e.g. the Vitae Regional Meeting (Spring 2015).  |

| **Examples of continuing actions that are now part of regular business**  |
| --- |
| The University will continue to review and revise its action plan at least annually to deliver the Researcher’s Concordat and this will be considered by the Research Committee and Researchers Forum. The HREiRWG will continue to monitor progress against this action plan, with meetings twice per AY. The HREiRWG will, from 2015-16 onwards, be chaired by a member of URC and updates on HREiR will be a regular item on the agenda. |

| **New Actions 2015-17**  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Action**  | **Responsibility**  |
| Our response rates for CROS in 2013 and 2015 were lower than for PRES (29% and 16% respectively) although national figures in 2013 were comparable (26% response rate, 2015 figures not available to date) and for PIRLS 2013 and 2015 the response rates were 29% and 20% respectively; the national response rate in 2013 was 28%, 2015 figures not available to date. We will aim to increase these response rates in future surveys.  | **Lead:** RDPO **Timescale:** improved response rates (target is 25%) for CROS and PIRLS 2017.  |

| **Glossary** |  |
| --- | --- |
| AD | Academic Development (team within HR) |
| AFHEA  | Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy  |
| AS  | Achieving Success (review process for all staff)  |
| AY  | Academic Year  |
| CDC  | Career Development Centre  |
| CoGRP  | Code of Good Research Practice  |
| CPD  | Continuing Professional Development  |
| DP Research  | Deputy Principal for Research  |
| E&D  | Equality & Diversity  |
| EAF  | Equality Action Forum  |
| ECR  | Early Career Researcher  |
| EQIA  | Equality Impact Assessment  |
| FHEA  | Fellow of the Higher Education Academy  |
| GEI  | Gender Equality Initiative  |
| HEA  | Higher Education Academy  |
| HR  | Human Resources  |
| HROD  | Human Resources & Organisational Development  |
| IASG  | Institutional Athena SWAN Group  |
| MMM  | Making the Most of Masters ([www.stir.ac.uk/mmm)](http://www.stir.ac.uk/mmm)  |
| OD  | Organisational Development (team within HR)  |
| PDP  | Personal Development Planning  |
| PGCLTHE  | Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education  |
| PGR  | Postgraduate Research students  |
| QAA Scotland  | Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Scotland <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/scotland>  |
| RDF  | Researcher Development Framework  |
| RDP  | Researcher Development Programme ([http://www.stir.ac.uk/research/support-forresearchers/researcherdevelopment/)](http://www.stir.ac.uk/research/support-for-researchers/researcherdevelopment/)  |
| RDPO  | Researcher Development Policy Officer  |
| REF  | Research Excellence Framework  |
| REO  | Research & Enterprise Office  |
| RF  | Researchers Forum  |
| RPG Director  | Research Postgraduate Director  |
| RPO  | Research Policy Officer  |
| SELF  | Stirling Enhancement of Learning Fund  |
| SFC  | Scottish Funding Council  |
| SFHEA  | Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy  |
| SGS  | Stirling Graduate School  |
| SGSPO  | Stirling Graduate School Policy Officer  |
| THE  | Times Higher Education  |
| UoS  | University of Stirling  |
| URC  | University Research Committee  |