

## 1. Overview

The University of Aberdeen received the HR Excellence in Research Award in December 2010 and retained it in 2012 and 2014. As a condition of our award we are required to undertake a six-year internal review against the principles set out in the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the detailed actions set out in our Concordat Implementation Plan. This progress report and accompanying action plan outlines our continued progress to date and our plans for the next 2 years.

In the last 2 years the University of Aberdeen has undergone a significant restructuring process that has seen changes to College and School structures, budget responsibilities and senior management appointments. As a result of these changes and in response to the University's Strategic Plan 2015-2020, each school and professional services have developed operational plans in which many of the actions identify ways in which to support all staff including research staff in particular around career development.

Since 2014 we have made significant progress and can report a number of positive achievements including:

- Launch of institutional Strategic Plan 2015-2020 with commitment to supporting the development of staff and students
- Appointment of a Vice Principal for People Strategy with a remit to develop associated strategy and operational plan; many of the actions align with principles of the Concordat
- Launch and implementation of Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy with many actions identified that align with the principles of the Concordat
- Establishment of Employee Engagement Working Group and development of Employee Engagement Action Plan
- Establishment of Training and Professional Development Group to review, coordinate and share good practice around development support and opportunities for all staff
- EU funded project on Responsible Research and Innovation (NUCLEUS)
- Reviewed and improved recruitment and selection procedures
- Athena SWAN school self-assessment teams with research staff representatives as standard
- Review of Professional Services to ensure targeted, streamlined and efficient support for staff and students

## 2. GOVERNANCE

Concordat implementation and the researcher development strategy is overseen by the new Vice-Principal for People Strategy and through reporting to appropriate committees, steering and working groups (Research Policy and Postgraduate Committees, Gender Equality Steering Group, Employee Engagement working group and the Training and Professional Development Group). This is beneficial as it broadens the reach of Researcher Development team and associated activities and provides multiple routes to engage with and receive feedback from the researcher community.

The University's Research operational plan outlines how it supports implementation of the principles of the Concordat through provision of career development support for staff across the entire academic life-cycle from postgraduate student to senior researchers. It also identifies actions through which research active staff will be enabled to achieve their career ambitions, and how the institution can expand its research capacity and reputation.

## 3. THE REVIEW PROCESS

### 3.1 HOW THE INTERNAL REVIEW WAS UNDERTAKEN

Internal evaluation of the HR Excellence in Research action plan is now embedded within core practices. The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) had overall responsibility for the review process working closely with Human Resources (HR) and the Equality and Diversity team within. The progress was undertaken, in consultation with key stakeholders across the University (Public Engagement with Research, Research & Innovation, Careers Service, academic colleagues and research staff). For the six year review, we have assessed and evidenced progress against our 2014 action plan. The HR Excellence in Research Award forms part of a larger package of University strategies, operational and action plans which positively impact the career and professional development support and opportunities for our researchers. The HR Excellence in Research action plan is considered in the context of our institutional Athena Swan action plan, people strategy operational plan, employee engagement working group action plan and Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy.

The actions within the action plan have been agreed through the Research Policy Committee and VP for People Strategy through the Athena SWAN renewal, Employee engagement and Mental Health and Wellbeing processes.

### 3.2 HOW RESEARCHERS VIEWS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

The views of researchers have been sought and incorporated in a number of ways including the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) 2015 data, through research staff input via Athena Swan working groups and through continued networking with research staff in the Colleges and where possible with the Research Staff Association (RSA).

#### 4. PROGRESS, KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIONS

At the beginning of the Concordat implementation process, the University undertook a gap analysis which informed the action plans for the periods 2010-12 and 2012-14. The initial action plan from 2010, 2012 internal review documents and 2014 external review documents are available [here](#). Full details of progress are provided in the updated action plan document. A summary of highlights from the last two years is provided here:

##### 4.1 PRINCIPLES 1&2: RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, RECOGNITION & VALUE

The work on Principles 1&2 is situated within the wider institutional People Strategy with a focus on supporting individuals to reach their potential and to attract and retain ambitious staff and students to our international institution. The People Strategy and goals complement and support the other aspects of our Strategic Plan and our core activities. They do not stand in isolation from the strategies for Teaching and Learning, and Research and Knowledge Exchange, and the cross-cutting aims of Internationalisation, Digital Transformation, Public Engagement and Development.

- The University has introduced a system of Academic Line Management to ensure the effective general management of staff within a defined group within the University and the provision of academic leadership. The new system allows for bringing line management closer to individual researchers
- Employee Engagement Working Group was established with a remit to develop strategy and action plan to support working practices across the institution including induction, communications and recognition and value
- Introduction of an online recruitment process ensuring effective job descriptions and an open and transparent recruitment process
- Revised probation procedure to include research-only staff and allocation of mentors to all staff in probation to support objective setting and development goals. Formal probation review meetings at the intervals prescribed in the probation procedure (1, 3, 6, 9 and 11 months)

**2016-2018:** Review policies and practices relating to recruitment and selection; induction; annual review and promotions. This will include: enhancing online induction materials and support for line managers; improved support for recruiters and candidates through training and development modules; review promotions process and introduction of blind reviews of promotion applications; reward and recognition activities to be developed by recently appointed HR partner in this area; continued monitoring and review of annual review completion rates (100% by end 2017) and sharing of development needs across professional services.

##### 4.2 PRINCIPLES 3&4: SUPPORT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The wider context for the work on Principles 3&4 is drawn from our institutional Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and companion strategies for People, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Athena SWAN and Teaching and Learning. The remit of the Strategic Plan includes creating an environment and culture where there is an expectation of research excellence and where researchers can thrive.

- An informal institution-wide Training and Professional Development Group was established in 2015 with a remit to share good practice and to collaborate to provide a comprehensive and coherent suite of development courses and opportunities for all University staff and postgraduate research students in a single and easily accessible place. The group has representation across the Professional Services that are involved in the provision of personal and professional development activities. The purpose of the group is to consolidate information relating to training and professional development support available across the University and to make it easier for individuals to find and to plan their activities. Data from CROS and PIRLS identified that this was a gap in awareness/knowledge particularly amongst our research-only staff. Through the TPD group we have created a dedicated Training and Professional Development [webpage](#) that provides information about opportunities and teams
- Centre for Academic Development (CAD) continues to provide a comprehensive open program of development opportunities for postgraduate researchers and research staff. Working in collaboration across professional services colleagues, the CAD has delivered and coordinated the delivery of nearly 300 courses/workshops and engaging with 1813 postgraduate students and 1247 members of staff (research only and academic) in 2015-2016
- Relunched mentoring scheme (HR Staff Development May 2016) with dedicated mentor and mentee training sessions and tutorial videos. Over 165 staff have joined the scheme with 70 live partnerships. Guidelines and tutorial videos were made available online and dedicated training sessions for mentors and mentees (separate sessions) are delivered across the academic year (approximately 3 times each)
- Increased capacity within the Public Engagement with Research Unit (PERU) including a dedicated Life Sciences public engagement coordinator supported by the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund, demonstrating commitment to a holistic approach to support for public engagement activity, while giving dedicated support for the research community working across University priority areas for medical and life science disciplines. This, together with continued partnership building, has allowed PERU to expand its range of tangible and real-life opportunities for researchers to put skills into practice through public engagement and to generate impact. Around 250 researchers have been involved in public engagement activity reaching a considerable external audience in 2016. The number of audience interactions recorded between July 2015

and July 2016 is 32,000 for the research-led events programme alone (175,000 for the University's wider programme of public events)

**2016-2018:** Establish a 'Grants Academy' that will provide tailored support for research-only and academic staff; maintain provision of opportunities for research staff in line with their identified needs; sharing of good practice and coordinating activities through TPD group.

#### **4.3 PRINCIPLE 5: RESEARCHER RESPONSIBILITY**

The work on Principle 5 is situated within the wider institutional People Strategy, Athena SWAN action plan and the Employee engagement strategy that aims at building a sense of community among staff and improving feedback from staff.

- [Enterprising Researchers](#) project (EPSRC-funded) explores and addresses the links between researcher career aspirations, their employability and the skills valued by employers. This initiative provides mini-project scheme, which facilitates short-term collaborations between researchers and local businesses. To date, 10 researchers have successfully completed collaborative projects with local businesses
- Research-only (postdoc) representation on school level Athena SWAN self-assessment teams
- Closer working with schools to identify development needs arising through annual review
- Strengthened the link between Researcher Development and the Research Policy committee

**2016-2018:** Renew and reinvigorate working with the Research Staff Association including facilitating events and activities focused on researcher career development; relaunch of researcher-led initiatives enabling fund with intentions of a 5% increase in applications from research-only staff.

#### **4.4 PRINCIPLE 6: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The wider context for Principle 6 comes from leadership provided by the Vice Principal for People Strategy (with a remit for Equality and Diversity) and activities identified in institutional and school level Athena SWAN action plans and the institutional Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

- Institutional Bronze Award renewal 2015-2016
- School of Psychology and Natural and Computing Science Bronze Awards
- SFC Outcome Agreement further embeds equality and diversity into our activities

**2016-2018:** Deliver the action plans for People Strategy; Mental Health and Wellbeing; institutional Athena SWAN Bronze/Silver Award; school level Bronze/Silver Awards; review and update the University Equality Outcomes Action Plan; continue to support projects which support E&D such as the Senior Female Network and the Esslemont group.

#### **4.5 PRINCIPLE 7: IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW**

Implementation, evaluation and review are embedded within core business of teams working in and around these agendas e.g. HR Excellence, Athena SWAN, and Equality Outcomes. Progress against action plans will be reviewed by appropriate groups/committees in consultation with research staff, in particular through our re-engagement with the RSA.

- The overarching People Strategy is instrumental in embedding implementation and review to respond to the researcher community expectations

**2016-2018:** Continued commitment to running CROS and PIRLS in 2017 – 5% increase for CROS; continue to monitor and respond to researcher expectations; share good practice across internal and external networks.

### **5. SUCCESS INDICATORS**

Progress will be measured against the actions set out in the action plan and monitored by appropriate working groups/committees. More broadly our success indicators will include:

- Achievement of relevant operational plan KPIs
- Evidence of progress/improvement in CROS and PIRLS data and other institutional surveys and review mechanisms – increase response rate by 5% especially for CROS
- Continued increased engagement with annual review (measured through internal measures and CROS/PIRLS) – 100% completion rate at each annual review cycle by 2018 and at least 75% of respondents citing increased value and usefulness of the process
- Development and delivery of professional development activities to support the 'Grants Academy' as it is established in 2017
- Renewal of Institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award and on-going success at school level
- Improved engagement with Researcher-led initiative fund (upon re-launch), 5% increase in applications, in-particular from RS staff.

**DECEMBER 2016**

# HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

## Updated Action Plan - September 2016

### A. Actions Related to Recruitment & Selection and Recognition & Value (Concordat Principles 1 & 2)

Principle 1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

Principle 2. 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.

The work on Principles 1&2 is situated within the wider institutional *People Strategy* with a remit to create an all-embracing supportive environment across the university community. Further context comes from the University’s *Employee engagement strategy* that aims at building a sense of community among staff and improving feedback from staff, and from *Healthy University Framework* that focuses on mental health and wellbeing across the university community.

The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principles 1&2 highlighted in the 4 year review and outlines future actions for 2016-2018. It does not comment on current and ongoing practice outlined in the 4 year review. Such practices continue to take place, unless indicated otherwise.

2014 Actions		Evidence and future actions
<b>A1</b>	Review of <b>recruitment and selection</b> process in order to ensure the best practice in terms of fairness, consistency, transparency, equality and diversity across the recruitment process.	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>A new online recruitment system has been introduced which allows for better transparency and fairness across the recruitment process. All university posts are now advertised and managed through the system.</p> <p>When the contract offer is made candidates are provided with a link to an online induction manual with links to useful information and support services, e.g. mentoring etc.</p> <p>A new <a href="#">recruitment and selection website</a> has also been introduced to provide detailed technical guidance for recruiters, as well as wider information, including general guidelines on immigration and eligibility of work in the UK, guidance on taking notes during interviews and the job evaluation system. The website’s content is ultimately tailored towards equipping recruiters with maximum information necessary for the delivery of the best recruitment and selection practice.</p> <p>A number of training initiatives have been introduced to support recruiters and candidates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online Recruitment and Selection Module – this module is mandatory for anyone who has never been involved in recruitment previously. A mandatory refresher course was introduced for anyone whose original training was more than 3 years ago.</li> <li>• Interview techniques for recruiters (17 members of staff took part in two training sessions in summer-autumn 2016)</li> <li>• Recruitment Techniques and Advertising is now available for those who require additional guidance (6 members of staff have taken this opportunity since the beginning of the academic year 2016)</li> </ul>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<p><b>A2</b></p>	<p>Implementation of a supportive and developmental <b>probation process</b>, in order to provide the appropriate level of support and training for new members of staff.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>A new <a href="#">probation policy</a> was launched in March 2015. All research active staff, including research-only staff, now enter a probationary period of twelve months at the start of the contract. As part of the new policy, mentors are now allocated to probationers where necessary or requested by probationer.</p> <p>New staff members are provided with clarity concerning the required standards, responsibilities and objectives; are given Inductions at local level; provided with training and guidance as necessary. The University undertakes ongoing monitoring of performance; arranges regular one-to-one meetings to ensure a good working relationship and provide feedback on progress; holds formal probation review meetings at the intervals prescribed in the probation procedure – 1, 3, 6, 9 and 11 months; ensures supervision to monitor progress or identify difficulties and provide opportunity for resolution.</p>
<p><b>A3</b></p>	<p>Enhancement of the provision of <b>management information</b> related to working at the University of Aberdeen, so as <b>to better support new research staff</b>.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>An online <a href="#">HR Handbook</a> has been developed and published to provide key information to employees and employers in a more accessible format. It follows the stages of the employment lifecycle and contains guidance and details about recruitment and selection, probation, training, holidays, benefits etc.</p> <p>The new recruitment and selection website (detailed above), together with the <a href="#">Working Here</a> section of the university's main webpage include improved induction information such as <i>New Start Checklist</i> and <i>Relocation Information</i> that have the potential to be linked to via Euraxess main site. There are ongoing discussions with the Vice-Principal for External Affairs around establishing an Aberdeen Euraxess point of contact.</p> <p>An external facing <a href="#">recruitment website</a> for attracting new staff to the university has also been developed and in future will support Euraxess mobility.</p> <p>Induction processes and practices continue to be reviewed and enhanced. A three-stage process for induction has been agreed and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an institutional level induction (health and safety, funding and resources, campus facilities, including a campus tour – monthly sessions provided by HR)</li> <li>• school induction (school specific)</li> <li>• local induction (coordinated by academic line managers)</li> </ul>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		Actions for 2016-18 will further enhance inductions and will provide support and guidance to academic line managers for local level inductions (see below).
<b>A4</b>	Continuing <b>improvement of working conditions</b> across the university, to enhance retention levels among research staff and increase employees' satisfaction with their working environment.	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>An Employee Engagement working group was established (April 2016) with a remit to develop, through consultation an Employee Engagement Strategy to enable staff to feel committed to the goals and values articulated in our strategic plan, motivated to contribute to our success and to enhance their own sense of well-being. One of the working group's objectives within the remit is to improve communication across the university. An internal communications survey was run in November 2016, to understand the best way to communicate with staff. The survey results will be used to draft an updated internal communications strategy. The strategy will be launched in 2017 with an associated action plan with actions which will positively impact the career and professional development support and opportunities for our researchers.</p> <p>A new <a href="#">Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy</a> as part of <i>Healthy University Framework</i> was launched in November 2016. The Framework focuses on mental health and wellbeing across the university community and has an Action Plan 2016-2017. The Strategy has been developed to promote the University's commitment to supporting staff and students to safeguard their own mental health and to providing excellent support services for colleagues and students who have mental health and wellbeing concerns. A free 24-hour confidential helpline for staff was introduced. The highly trained and experienced helpline counsellors can assist sensitively and professionally with life challenges or a crisis.</p> <p>Within the recently adopted system of Academic Line Management (see A9 for more detail), the role of an academic line manager includes, among other things, ensuring that the arrangements for those staff who are line managed comply with legal requirements on matters relating to Health and Safety at Work.</p> <p>The suite of <a href="#">flexible working options</a> currently available to staff was enhanced through the introduction of a <i>Nine Day Fortnight Scheme</i> and a <i>Purchase of Annual Leave Scheme</i>.</p> <p><i>Nine Day Fortnight</i> is a form of compressed working which allows staff to work their total contracted hours over a shorter number of days. The <i>Purchase of Annual Leave Scheme</i> has been introduced as a benefit for staff to increase the degree of flexibility in planned time off.</p> <p>The College of Life Sciences and Medicine (CLSM) launched an Athena Swan related scheme in 2015, whereby financial support is now available for researchers to travel to conferences with their families. Maximum grant per applicant was up to £250 from a total budget of £1500 with priority given to early career researchers. In 2015, six applications were awarded, of which 5 were research-only staff (post-docs). For 2016 this scheme will be managed within schools. The School of</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition (SMMSN) has devolved £1,000 per one year and has awarded 3 applications of which 2 were research-only staff (postdocs). The School of Psychology launched their initiative in August 2016 and the School of Biological Sciences are also planning to continue with this initiative.
<b>A5</b>	Improved <b><u>redeployment</u></b> procedure that aims at providing maximum support and assistance to university's staff members with further employment.	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>Redeployment is kept under review through the JCCRA (Joint Consultative Committee on Redundancy Avoidance). All jobs are currently advertised to the redeployment pool first, before going external. Every redeployment candidate is entitled to two face-to-face sessions where they receive information about redeployment opportunities and procedures. The redeployment/development fund remains in place to support development requirements for redeployment candidates and the outplacement service.</p> <p>Since 2014, 59% of staff at risk of redundancy have been successfully redeployed in 2015, and 58% in 2016. On average, 30% of staff were made redundant, and less than 10% resigned/TUPE for 2014-2016.</p>
<b>A6</b>	<b><u>Framework of Academic Expectations</u></b>	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>An institutional Framework of Academic Expectations (FAE) has been designed to outline expectations and provide career clarity for academic staff by describing the progression of skills, knowledge, contribution and performance across the 3 career tracks (Teaching and Scholarship, Teaching and Research, Research). It is designed to guide the planning and assessment of academic work at the different levels and provide additional guidance for the purposes of annual review and development, promotion, workload modelling and performance management. The FAE draws from the academic role descriptions developed through the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) process and incorporates discipline specific expectations.</p> <p>Schools have been tasked with interpreting the framework in a local context – at either school or discipline level and across career stages, which includes research only staff. When completed, each career track for each discipline will have clear criteria and expectations for career progression.</p> <p>Metrics for descriptors will be published to make promotion process transparent. The FAE will also help research staff to further benefit from the system of academic line management and annual review process.</p> <p>Additionally, a workload allocation model has now been developed for researcher only staff as well (85% research: 15% teaching), which will positively support researcher career progression.</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<p><b>A7</b></p>	<p>The university has a clear and transparent <b>promotion</b> process that recognises the broad range of activities undertaken by research staff. All members of research staff have an equal access to promotion opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Complete and ongoing</b></p> <p>55% of applicants have been successful in promotion to grades 7 or 8 (Aug 2011 – July 2016).</p> <p>Metrics and role descriptors for research career tracks are published to make the promotion process transparent. Applications for promotion are supported by information sessions and one to one guidance from HR as required. Research-only staff can be additionally supported by academic line managers (see section A9).</p>
<p><b>A8</b></p>	<p>Strong commitment to the <b>annual review process</b> that explicitly focuses on researchers' career, their aspirations, and what development is required to enable the individual to progress as well as providing an opportunity to set objectives and receive feedback.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>Training for the annual review is now in place both face to face and via an online module. It is also possible to arrange a live training session on annual review. Four members of staff took this opportunity in the summer term 2016.</p> <p>Training for annual review best practice is also embedded into PI development training through the use of case studies.</p> <p>A new HR partner with remit for reward and recognition has been appointed with a remit to develop and implement pay and benefits strategy and associated policies and procedures. This appointment reaffirms our institutional commitment to recognising and valuing staff activities and progress.</p>
<p><b>A9</b></p>	<p>Leadership and Management support for research-only staff. Introduction of <b>Academic Line Management</b> system whereby all members of research staff have a designated point of contact to provide them with necessary guidance and support in their personal and professional development.</p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>The University has introduced the system of Academic Line Management (ALM) to ensure the effective general management of staff within a defined group within the University and the provision of academic leadership. The new system allows for bringing line management closer to individual researchers (ALMs manage no more than 15 other members of staff). There are 167 ALMs across the institution.</p> <p>A dedicated ALM development programme has been delivered for all new ALMs through Staff Development team. Since its introduction in 2016, 97 managers have participated in training, rising to 117 by early 2017.</p> <p>The Academic Line Manager's responsibilities include:</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing strategic oversight to create a supportive environment for the development and maintenance of a strong culture of excellence in research and teaching as appropriate</li> <li>• Creating a supportive environment for staff training activities and promoting opportunities for career and personal development for staff</li> <li>• Fostering the development of academic staff by annual review, joint with the NHS where appropriate, and other means including capability and performance management, monitoring progress and mentoring as required, with particular regard to probationary staff</li> </ul> <p>Support for research-only staff (postdocs) within the academic line management structure varies at school level. Each school has a layer of academic line managers who are responsible for a group of staff, including research-only (postdocs). However some schools have introduced a specific research-only staff (postdoc) line manager, providing an opportunity to discuss their career development with someone other than their Principal Investigator.</p> <p>Guidance has been made available for PIs who are not Academic Line Managers (ALMs) but have staffing responsibilities. It is expected that PIs with responsibility for staff will have a significant role in supporting the development of researchers, according to principles highlighted in the Concordat.</p> <p>Where there is not a separate PI with staffing responsibility, the ALM will have full responsibility for such key procedures as Recruitment and Selection, Induction, Probation and Continuous Development (annual review, performance management) among others.</p>
A10	Expanded <b><u>Principal Investigator Leadership Development</u></b> to ensure the best annual review practice and to encompass the breath of academic staff's activities.	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>Based on feedback evaluations and information received through annual review and from Directors of Research and Heads of School, PI Development programmes have moved to a case study format to enable discussion, sharing of good practice and to embed complex leadership and management information into realistic situations. Feedback from this new format has been extremely positive. Schools within the new University structure plan to continue these events and have expressed the importance of continuing to collaborate within Colleges.</p> <p>Annual review best practice has been incorporated into PI leadership development programmes. PI development case studies have been employed to highlight how annual review can be used to discuss career aspirations and development plans.</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		PI programmes have been extended to encompass development in the breadth of activities that research active academic staff undertake (e.g., teaching, doctoral supervision).	
<b>A11</b>	A more structured approach to <b>supervisor training</b>	<b>Completed and ongoing</b> As part of the University restructure a professional, single graduate school (moving from three) was proposed. As this new school is established, Supervisor training will continue to be offered but may be delivered in an updated format. Since 2014, each College has delivered supervisor training programmes (total 60 participants).	
<b>Future actions (2016-2018)</b>		<b>Lead and Date</b>	<b>Success measure</b>
<p><b>Recruitment and Selection:</b> Continue to review and enhance recruitment and selection practices for employees (research staff) and employers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and assess all job adverts to reflect options for family friendly and/or flexible working (job share/part-time etc)</li> <li>Develop and deliver training for recruiters and candidates to best support their needs, e.g. unconscious bias training for recruitment panel members (face to face and online modules), interview skills (online); enhance guidance materials around recruitment and selection for managers</li> <li>Review Recruitment and Selection Policy to include mandatory requirement to undertake "Equality and Diversity in recruitment" training and requirement to report quarterly the up-take of this training</li> <li>Undertake a review of recruitment panels and implement appropriate actions as identified, to improve efficiency of recruitment process (e.g., use multiple recruitment panels to limit the use of single large panels). Set up online recruitment system to ensure gender balance on all panels</li> </ul>		<p>Director of HR Services (April 2017).</p> <p>Equality and Diversity Adviser; (March 2017); Staff development team (December 2017); HR (February 2017)</p> <p>Head of Specialist Services (December 2016)</p> <p>Head of Specialist Services (February 2017); Recruitment Services Team Leader (June 2017)</p>	<p>Increase in the number of females applying and being successful at Grade 8 &amp; 9 positions by 5% by April 2019</p> <p>By Jan 2020, recruitment data will show no significant gender imbalance in applications, interviews, job offers. Interview Skills Training course developed and signposted to staff.</p> <p>100% uptake by end 2017</p> <p>Gender balance on recruitment panels</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<p><b>Induction:</b> Continue to review induction processes and procedures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an enhanced Induction check-list for line managers (including academic line managers); online induction manual for new employees (will include research-role specific information also) to ensure an embedded induction process; specific induction sessions for international staff (research-specific where staff are taking on a research-only role)</li> <li>• Develop and deliver induction training for academic line managers to support local-level inductions for research-active staff</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Development Team/Line managers (April, 2017); HR (April 2017)</p> <p>Staff Development Team (Spring 2017)</p>	<p>Checklist and manual developed and made available to line managers and employees. International staff sessions rolled out, expect data to show 50% uptake</p> <p>Induction training developed and delivered to ALMs, 80% uptake by Jan 2018</p>
<p><b>Reward and recognition:</b> Continue to review and enhance policies and practices relating to recognising and valuing the contributions research staff make including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up promotions working group to review effectiveness of the recently revised promotions process and implement new recommendations</li> <li>• Introduce blind review of promotion applications</li> <li>• Increase frequency of promotion workshops and information sessions</li> <li>• Provide Academic Line Managers training on the promotions process</li> </ul>	<p>HR Director (November 2017)</p> <p>HR Director (December 2016)</p> <p>HR partners, Athena SWAN Leads (April and Dec 2017)</p>	<p>Increase (at least by 10%) in responses to CROS survey in questions relating to recognition &amp; value</p> <p>Blind review of promotion applications is in place</p> <p>In the Athena Swan Culture Survey (ASCS)'18 at least 75% of males and 75% of females agreed they have a good understanding of the promotion</p> <p>100% of ALMs attended the training</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR will work closely with academic schools to embed FAE into workload models and within the discipline context for research and teaching</li> <li>• Evaluate the role of probationary mentors; develop and implement Action plans (e.g. including training of probationary mentors)</li> </ul>	<p>Staff Development Partner (November 2017)</p> <p>VP People Strategy (Spring 2018)</p> <p>HR and Athena SWAN) School leads (September 2018)</p>	<p>Publicly available workload models</p> <p>Action plans developed and successfully implemented by September 2018</p> <p>Evaluation undertaken and evidence of recommendations/actions being taken forward</p>
<p><b>Annual Review:</b> Continue to review and enhance practices relating to the annual review process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate effectiveness of the annual review process in place since 2014</li> <li>• Introduce an ‘annual review’ checklist including areas such as, for example, promotion and training needs</li> <li>• Create a database to be used by schools to record their annual review completion rate</li> </ul>	<p>Athena Swan officers/School GESG (Gender and Equality Steering Group; former SAT) leaders; Vice-Principal for People Strategy also as Lead (March 2018)</p> <p>HR Head of Specialist Services (February 2017)</p> <p>HR partners (June 2018)</p>	<p>At least 75% of respondents have found the new annual review process “good or very good” and effective for reflection about career progression</p> <p>Checklist produced/distributed and completed by all reviewers by the end of 2017 annual review round</p> <p>Athena SWAN Culture Survey’18 show that at least 80% of females and males “have usefully discussed promotions and career development at their annual</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OneSource HR module automated annual review process</li> </ul>	HR (end 2018)	<p>review. Database provided to schools and kept up-to date annually at school level</p> <p>OneSource HR module is developed and implemented</p>
<p><b>Employee Engagement:</b> continue to review and enhance policies and practices to ensure staff feel engaged and valued including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review working group activities to include gaining staff viewpoints (establish a staff forum and suggestion boxes)</li> <li>Revise internal communications strategy based on results of an internal communications survey run in November 2016. As part of the new strategy, review opportunities for corporate listening to ensure feedback and its implementation is communicated effectively; incorporate "Getting to know" articles into the e-zine where staff can share their contributions and receive acknowledgement from their peers</li> <li>Operate the full staff survey once every 2 years with a commitment to increase response rates and improve on measures of staff wellbeing and engagement, include questions to correlate with CROS and PIRLS to gain researcher views</li> </ul>	<p>HR (December, 2016); Director of External relations; Communications (January, 2017)</p> <p>Communications (January 2017)</p> <p>HR Specialist Services (March 2017)</p> <p>HR Specialist Services (March 2017)</p>	<p>Engagement with forum and evidence of actions from forum being taken forward; 5% increase in suggestions submitted by end 2017</p> <p>Improvement in survey questions related to internal communications. Evidence of actions from communications survey being taken forward.</p> <p>5-10% improvement in responses to survey questions related to staff morale and wellbeing</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and identify feasible award schemes for teams and individuals to provide better recognition of staff's professional achievements – recruiting of an HR Partner for Reward and Recognition</li> </ul>		HR Partner recruited and taking forward actions related to reward and recognition
<p><b>Improvement of working conditions:</b> Implement actions identified in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment of wellbeing coordinators and mental health champions</li> <li>Provide training and development activities for all staff through online modules and face-to face sessions (certified training)</li> <li>Embed wellbeing awareness into Supervisor training sessions and into researcher development courses where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>Vice-Principal for People Strategy; Equality and Diversity Adviser (December 2016)</p> <p>Head of HR Specialist Services (October 2017)</p> <p>CAD/Graduate School; HR Specialist Services (June 2017)</p>	<p>Evidence of actions being taken forward, reviewed by Employee Engagement working group</p> <p>Training and development activities for all staff are provided through online modules and face-to face sessions</p> <p>Wellbeing awareness is embedded into Supervisor training sessions and into researcher development courses where appropriate</p>

### B. Actions Related to Support and Career Development (Concordat Principles 3 & 4)

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

The wider context for the work on Principles 3&4 is drawn from our institutional Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and companion strategies for People, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Athena SWAN and Teaching and Learning. The remit of the Strategic Plan includes creating an environment and culture where there is an expectation of research excellence and where researchers can thrive.

The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principles 3&4 highlighted in the 4 year review and outlines future actions for 2016-2018. It does not comment on current and ongoing practice outlined in the 4 year review. Such practices continue to take place, unless indicated otherwise.

Focus area	Evidence and actions
------------	----------------------

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<p><b>B1</b></p>	<p>Continuing improvement of <b><u>programme of development opportunities</u></b> to provide more <b><u>bespoke support</u></b> for personal and professional development, including <b><u>consolidation of online information</u></b> about researcher development opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>An informal institution-wide Training and Professional Development Group was established in 2015 with a remit to share good practice and to collaborate to provide a comprehensive and coherent suite of development courses and opportunities for all University staff and postgraduate research students in a single and easily accessible place. The group has representation from the Centre for Academic Development, Staff Development, Human Resources, IT Services, Library, Public Engagement and Business Improvement. The purpose of the group was to make it easier for staff to find out about all of the training and professional development support available across the University and to identify gaps whilst minimising duplication of effort. Data from CROS and PIRLS identified that there was a gap in awareness/knowledge of the breadth of training and development opportunities particularly amongst our research-only staff. Through the TPD group we have created a dedicated Training and Professional Development webpage that provides information about opportunities and teams <a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/training-and-development-1450.php">http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/training-and-development-1450.php</a></p> <p>Through the group our institution-wide course booking system has been updated to remove the requirement for individuals to know about all of the different providers. Instead, the booking system shows all courses across the institution that are available to them.</p> <p>The TPD group developed course booking terms and conditions that also ensure that the providers are committed to Athena SWAN principle and wider equality and diversity principles and to ensuring continuity of service.</p> <p>The group has also committed to a shared planning process with agreed milestones and timeframes to ensure a comprehensive provision whilst avoiding gaps and overlaps.</p> <p>Centre for Academic Development (CAD) continues to provide a comprehensive open program of development opportunities for postgraduate researchers and research staff. Working in collaboration across professional services colleagues, the CAD has delivered and coordinated the delivery of nearly 300 courses/workshops and engaging with 1813 postgraduate students and 1247 members of staff (research only and academic) in 2014-2016.</p> <p>CAD has introduced new courses based on feedback from researchers articulated through surveys, Athena Swan focus groups and informal conversations. Examples include courses on “Project management”, “Research Integrity”, “Presentations skills for non-native speakers”, “Research leadership”, “Building Confidence from within”, “Mid-</p>
------------------	--	--

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		<p>career leadership program". CAD's expanded program of courses aims at better equipping researchers for a changing internal and external environment.</p> <p>Feedback from staff across the University particularly highlighted the need to provide access to project management training and qualifications. In response, the Staff Development team in HR established a partnership with Training ByteSize to offer formal project management training and qualifications to staff and students at reduced prices: <a href="http://www.trainingbytesize.com/the-university-of-aberdeen/">http://www.trainingbytesize.com/the-university-of-aberdeen/</a>. CAD will also offer a Certificate in Applied Project Management (CAPM) program in 2017. Participation in the program is free and allows researchers to apply for a formal accreditation in project management. Any staff at risk of redundancy can apply to the redeployment fund (referred to in progress report 2014) to cover the costs of the CAPM exam.</p> <p>Within the new institutional structure, CAD has been providing more bespoke support to academic schools (related to School level strategic plans). For example, working with the School of Education in 2016-2017, following the School's request for help with improving academic writing and research design. The support package included a series of trainings that covered topics such as writing for impact, writing for publication and REF.</p> <p>CAD has supported the re-branded Qualitative Research Network (formerly Qualitative Research Methods Group) initiative that runs across the university and provides a researcher-led opportunity for support in qualitative research methods. The Network re-launched in November 2016, with a training programme confirmed for the winter-spring term 2017.</p>
B2	Provision of a wider framework of support for <b>Staff Development</b> .	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>The University has established a wider framework of support for research staff, in addition to standalone workshops described in the previous section. This includes leadership and management support through externally accredited development programmes, mentoring and coaching and other bespoke support across the University.</p> <p><b>Mentoring:</b> The University relaunched its staff <a href="#">mentoring scheme</a> in May 2016. Over 165 staff have joined the scheme with 70 live partnerships. Following a pilot of mentoring matching software (developed by University of St Andrews) the institution has adopted the software system (SUMAC) to support management of mentoring across the University. <a href="#">Guidelines and short tutorial videos</a> on the University's mentoring scheme were made available online and dedicated training sessions for mentors and mentees (separate sessions) are delivered across the academic year (approximately 3 times each).</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		<p><b>Coaching:</b> Institutional coaching support is available to all staff including research-only staff across the University. An ILM accredited coaching course is offered each year to staff to become a certified coach – this is run in partnership with the University of St Andrews. Currently the University has 14 trained coaches.</p> <p><b>Research Support:</b> Internal peer review process for funding applications has been improved whereby younger junior researchers receive (mentoring) support from their more experienced colleagues at early stages of grant writing process. Each College has implemented a peer review system for grant submissions.</p> <p>An institution-wide ‘Grants Academy’ (see future actions) will be established to provide a structured framework for supporting research and fellowship grant application development and internal peer review for research active staff. The Grants Academy will be the underpinning infrastructure to support the development and nurturing of the University’s future leaders in research. It will support all stages of the research life cycle from ideas conception, identification of a funding opportunity, through development of a funding application, including stakeholder and beneficiary engagement plans, research delivery, award management and onward implementation of research findings for impact.</p> <p>An <a href="#">Interdisciplinary Research working group</a> has also been established to better equip researchers for the next Research Excellence Framework.</p>
B3	<p>Bespoke <b><u>support for early career researchers</u></b> to build evidence for their career progression.</p>	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>We continue to embed the Catalyst strategy for Researcher Engagement and Development to deliver progressive researcher empowerment whereby the provision of skills and personal development are closely coupled with tangible and real-life opportunities to put skills into practice through public engagement and other channels. This approach develops a relationship with our research community from their induction, through an extensive generic skills programme and follows through to practical experiences. Close joint working with the PERU team continues with coupling training and public engagement activities as described in the Researcher Engagement and Development section of the 2014 review document.</p> <p>Since 2014 we have developed further opportunities for researchers to practically engage in career development activities. The <a href="#">Enterprising Researchers</a> initiative aims to promote local innovation by facilitating short-term collaborations between businesses and academic researchers. Through this EPSRC funded initiative, we invite businesses from all sectors and of all sizes to host a doctoral researcher, or small team of researchers, for a 2-3 week project. From market discovery to product development, these projects allow enterprises to leverage the skills of</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		<p>postgraduate researchers to address specific business needs. Benefits for our researchers include: applying academic research skills to address real world problems; developing leadership and project management skills; networking out with the University community; enhancing career prospects and broadening horizons beyond academia. To date, 10 researchers have successfully completed collaborative projects with local businesses.</p> <p>There are a number of factors, including strategic priorities and professional services review that have led to the suspension of Researcher-led and Public engagement enabling funds for this session, while we review how to best align these opportunities with key agendas including REF, the Concordat revision and Athena SWAN.</p>
<p><b>B4</b></p>	<p>Provision of opportunities for <b><u>Researchers' Public Engagement</u></b>.</p>	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>The dedicated Public Engagement with Research Unit (PERU) at the University of Aberdeen has grown to a team of 3.7 FTE, one of which is a dedicated Life Sciences public engagement coordinator supported by the University's recently secured <a href="#">Institutional Strategic Support Fund</a> from the Wellcome Trust. Maintaining this post within the central PERU team reaffirms Aberdeen's commitment to a holistic approach to support for public engagement activity, while giving dedicated support for the research community working across University priority areas for medical and life science disciplines. This, together with partnership building generally, has allowed PERU to expand its range of tangible and real-life opportunities for researchers to put skills into practice through public engagement and to generate impact.</p> <p>Recent examples include European Researchers' Night in Aberdeen (which the University of Aberdeen coordinates right across Scotland), British Science Week (one of the UK's largest programmes) and Festival of Social Science (for which the University of Aberdeen is a regional hub).</p> <p>Over the past year, around 250 researchers have been involved in public engagement activity reaching a considerable external audience. The number of audience interactions recorded between July 2015 and July 2016 is 32,000 for the research-led events programme alone (175,000 for the University's wider programme of public events).</p> <p>The PERU team played a major role in securing the EU Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) project NUCLEUS and are a work package leader. This major (€4M) international project seeks to identify and embed institutional support for research integrity, open access, public engagement and equality good practice and exposes Aberdeen's research community to the latest developments in RRI especially within the European context, and as the evolving concept of the "3 O's" of Open Innovation, Open Science and Open to the World is becoming established. Moving</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		<p>forward the PERU team will embed the principles of RRI into their activities and will share good practice across Professional Services teams.</p> <p>Another development has been the PERU team's involvement in the "intention to submit" and "internal peer review" process for all University research grants. This ensures that researchers get the best support for their stakeholder engagement plans, and emphasises the self-reflection elements of individual researchers' career paths. This support includes Fellowship applications.</p> <p>The PERU have supported over 40 grants over the reporting period, many of which have been successful. A major EU award on new generation MRI imaging was co-developed with the unit, in terms of its impact and dissemination plans.</p>	
<b>B5</b>	Implementation of a <u>model for evaluation and impact of development activities</u> .	<p><b>Incomplete and reprioritised</b></p> <p>We have been unable to action this item while developing the Athena Swan, Employee Engagement and Mental Health and Wellbeing action plans. However moving forward we will keep this action as a focus.</p>	
<b>Future actions (2016-2018)</b>		<b>Lead and Date</b>	<b>Success measure</b>
Provision provided by CAD will be reviewed to align with expectations around REF and TEF, STERN report and the merger of the Research Councils with Innovative UK (UK RI).		CAD (Review from July 2017 but ongoing as required)	More bespoke support provided. Data gathered from CROS and PIRLS reflect improved percentage of satisfaction by at least 5%
Development of an online module on research integrity that will complement our existing research ethics and governance module.		CAD (March 2017)	Number of participants undertaking the course in the first instance, expected 50% uptake by Jan 2018
To collate and share information about development needs from annual review summaries and survey data.		CAD/TPD Group (review dates September annually)	Evidence provided as part of review of annual review process
Establish a 'Grants Academy' to provide holistic support for research active staff in the preparation of funding applications and in the delivery of project outcomes, impact and dissemination.		VP Research and Knowledge (end 2017)	Data related to research staff's engagement in Grants Academy support, increase in value of grants, increase in income per FTE (plans are

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

As plans for the grants Academy develop and the schools identify their individual needs the CAD training and development provision will reflect these changes and actions.	CAD/ Research & Innovation (ongoing through 2017, reviewed yearly thereafter)	very embryonic and so actions cannot be more specific currently)  CAD training and development provision in context of Grants Academy and associated data – at least 10% engagement in activities
Supervisor Training will be developed as appropriate within the new Graduate School structure. Moving forward it will include support for supervisors in recognising and supporting mental health and wellbeing of research students.	Dean for Postgraduate Research and Graduate School Manager (October 2017)	Training completion rates (target of 100% completion for new supervisors), improved evaluation feedback responses relating to supervision support, increase of 10% reflecting value of course
Record and monitor feedback on the effectiveness of the 'development plan template' used by staff development as part of the leadership course; survey attendees of leadership courses, one year after completion to evaluate how they have applied their skills into workplace. Data from the survey to be reported to Head of HR Specialist Services.	Head of HR Specialist Services (1 year following completion of leadership programme)	Feedback from the survey will show that at least 75% of each leadership course found the use of this template 'useful or very useful' for planning steps in their career progression
Develop a leadership development programme for research-only staff 'Research Futures' Programme – based on learning from Aberdeen participants of the Scottish Crucible to support strategic career management.	Centre for Academic Development (April 2017; repeated after 18 months)	At least 20 participants, 50% satisfaction of programme and 50% positive comments related to programme value. Ongoing follow up with individuals to develop case studies
Moving forward the PERU team will exploit major activities designed to support researchers in their grants and skills development that is beyond public engagement events. In particular embedding the principles of RRI into funding applications to the European Commission.	PERU team (August 2018)	RRI embedded in all Aberdeen-led grant applications to the European Commission – 100% inclusion

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

Aberdeen will host the PCST (Public Communication of Science & Technology) conference in 2020 giving our researchers a unique opportunity to network and develop skills in issues around science and society, including tackling difficult subjects, talking with the media, exploring issues around ethics and integrity.	PERU in partnership with CPD, University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre. (June 2020)	Aberdeen researchers involved in submitting abstracts and /or activities – up to 4% of activities/sessions involving researchers. Increased networks
--	---	--

#### C. Actions Related to Researchers' Responsibilities (Concordat Principle 5)

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

The work on Principle 5 is situated within the wider institutional People Strategy with a focus on creating an all-embracing supportive environment across the university community. Further context comes from the University's Employee engagement strategy that aims at building a sense of community among staff and improving feedback from staff.		
The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principle 5 highlighted in the 4 year review and outlines future actions for 2016-2018. It does not comment on current and ongoing practice.		
Focus area	Evidence and actions	
C1	We will identify and implement strategies to <b>improve the response rate to CROS and PIRLS surveys</b> . This will include initiatives such as maximising the leverage offered by other initiatives to enhance responses and to showcase more effectively how the feedback has been taken on board. LEAD: CAD (March-May 2015).	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>CAD coordinated and ran CROS and PIRLS surveys in 2015 and these were extensively promoted by the CAD and through invitations to participate from the VP for Research and Knowledge Exchange and College Directors of Research.</p> <p>CAD also engaged with the Research Staff Association to promote and encourage participation. Colleges and Schools were kept informed of their response rates and individual schools then continued to promote the surveys. Response rates for both surveys were greatly improved; CROS from 22% to 39% and PIRLS from 21% to 31%.</p> <p>Results have been analysed and reports circulated. The data has been used to inform Athena Swan action plans and will contribute to (together with other institutional data) informing the <i>People strategy</i> operational plan moving forward. CAD has analysed results and incorporated these in reviewing provision and have communicated relevant results to other Professional services colleagues. Indeed we have already taken forward actions from surveys where</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		the dominant theme was academic leadership. CAD hosted a mid-career leadership event in November 2016 (identified as a development need from PIRLS) and a fellowship event in December for research-only staff (identified through CROS).
<b>C2</b>	We will seek to enhance the work of the <b>Research Staff Association (RSA)</b> and extend its reach. By 2016 we hope to have identified further support structures for the sustainability of the RSA and to have established more initiatives. LEAD: CAD and RSA (Ongoing, review in 2016).	<b>Incomplete but ongoing</b> CAD has continued to support the Research Staff Association over the last 2 years liaising with the committee and through the Athena Swan SAT teams. The RSA has implemented a new initiative 'Tea with the Speaker' where external seminar speakers are invited to meet with research staff across the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition in an informal setting. New career development initiatives have been slow due to multiple changes to the committee and organisation, however a Fellowship Fast-track event took place on 1 December following feedback from research staff, supported by CAD. As the new school structures settle, the CAD will be able to explore structure and sustainability.
<b>C3</b>	The <b>CAD will work to streamline communications</b> such that we can highlight all of the provision offered by CAD as a whole rather than create divides between research and teaching. This is also true for our provision as we will seek to identify synergies across programmes. LEAD: CAD (March 2015).	<b>Completed and ongoing</b> CAD continues to streamline and improve communications as described above through the TPD group and through the CAD e-zine. The CAD <a href="#">Annual Academic Development symposium</a> provides a platform to bring together research and teaching practice to research and academic staff. A researcher development (30 credit) module has also been embedded into the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice. 'Building a Successful Research Career' supports researchers in developing their career and enables them to make strategic choices to establish their research career including understanding the funding landscape, grant writing, knowledge exchange and networking. Launched in 2015, 10 early career researchers (research-only and academic) have successfully completed the course. The postgraduate certificate forms part of the <a href="#">Continuing Professional Development Framework for Learning &amp; Teaching</a> which offers three flexible routes to professional recognition by the Higher Education Academy.

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

C4	The <b>RDAG</b> will continue to <b>review its membership and remit annually</b> . LEAD: RDAG	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>As part of the Professional Services Review, institutional committees were reviewed and streamlined. As such, the Researcher Development Advisory Group no longer meets but researcher development issues and activities are reported through multiple routes including the Research Policy and Postgraduate Committees, the Gender Equality Steering Group and the TPD and Employee engagement working groups. This is beneficial as it broadens the reach of Researcher Development team and associated activities and provides multiple routes to engage with and receive feedback from the researcher community.</p> <p>The structure of PURE (the University's Research Information System) has been redeveloped in partnership with PERU in order to better encourage Public Engagement and Training reporting and recording. The redeveloped system is about to be launched and increased activity recording is anticipated over the next 24 months in synergy with impact case study development for the next REF.</p>	
Future actions (2016-2018)		Lead and date	Success measure
Reporting of CROS and PIRLS survey data through the Research Policy Committee to take forward actions relating to academic leadership for research-only and academic staff.		CAD, (Ongoing, review date June 2018)	Evidence of actions being taken forward by committee.
Review and re-launch of Researcher-led initiatives fund to promote researcher responsibility in career development activities.		CAD (Launch by September 2017, review annually thereafter)	Increase in applications from research-only staff - 5% increase. Case studies on website - 2 by end 2017.
Learning from Scottish Crucible, for the benefit of early career research-only staff, develop and deliver a forum event led by University of Aberdeen Scottish Crucible delegates sharing their learning – Research Futures event – see section B).		CAD and Research and Innovation (Grants Academy, March 2017)	Feedback evaluations from delegates to provide benchmark criteria for success and impact. At least 20 participants, 50% satisfaction of programme and 50% positive comments related to programme value. Ongoing follow up with individuals to develop case studies.

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

Engage with Grants Academy to develop career development support as required.	Research and Innovation (Ongoing)	Evidence of activities being developed and delivered.
Recording of training and professional development, and of Public Engagement activities through PURE.	CAD, PERU and Research and Innovation (PURE Team), (December 2017)	Increase in number of development activities recorded in PURE profiles – 10 % increase.

#### D. Actions Relating to Equality and Diversity (Concordat Principle 6)

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

The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principle 6 highlighted in the 4 year review and outlines future actions for 2016-2018. It does not comment on current and ongoing practice. In particular the actions are derived from institutional action plans for Athena Swan and Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	
Focus area	Evidence and actions
<b>D1</b> Promote <b>gender equality</b> as part of wider culture at the University.	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>The Equality Outcomes Action Plan Progress Report was published on 30 April 2015, as required to meet our statutory duty. The <a href="#">interim report</a> provides a progress column on the status of the actions to date. The Equality Outcomes plan will be reviewed with new outcomes identified by April 2017.</p> <p>We continue to support and celebrate International Women’s Day through a high profile conference held on March including senior, inspirational speakers and networking opportunities. The <a href="#">conference</a> is open to staff, students and the wider public.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Senior Female Network</a> was established in 2012 to ensure that as an institution, we are identifying and addressing the issues that are central to career development for female colleagues and particularly those in, or aspiring to, senior positions. The network provides a regular opportunity (2-3 times per year) for senior female colleagues to network and engage in conversation about matters affecting them and their colleagues.</p> <p><a href="#">LGBT staff network</a> now have their own governing structure and a program of events outlined. The LGBT group now includes a large number of senior people with plans to engage with Heads of Schools.</p>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

		<p>The University signed up to the Stonewall “No bystanders campaign” in 2016 to encourage a zero tolerance policy towards unfairness. We continue to be a <a href="#">Stonewall Diversity</a> champion.</p> <p>The Public Engagement with Research Unit regularly champions LGBT issues across its annual programme of events. Every major calendar anchor/festival has at least one event that tackles issues around equality and diversity, particularly encouraging debate across stakeholder groups.</p> <p>In 2016, 15 members of staff were supported to participate in the Leadership Foundation Aurora Development Programme, applicants were invited to apply (over 77 applications for 15 places).</p>
<b>D2</b>	Adherence to principles of <b><u>diversity and equality</u></b> in all academic job posts.	<p><b>Completed and ongoing</b></p> <p>Since the University of Aberdeen has embraced the Athena SWAN Charter in 2011, it has demonstrated the ongoing drive to address issues of gender equality across the institution. The University of Aberdeen applied for the renewal of the institutional Athena SWAN Bronze award in November 2016. The School of Psychology and the School of Natural and Computing Sciences successfully achieved Athena SWAN Bronze awards in 2016. Several other schools submitted applications for Athena SWAN Bronze award in November 2016.</p> <p>The Gender Equality Steering Group (formerly Athena SWAN Institutional SAT) was established in December 2015 and it was agreed that school level self-assessment teams should have research-only (postdoc) members to represent the viewpoint of research-only staff and to ensure that researchers are involved in decision making process around career development and progression.</p> <p>The Researcher Development team embeds equality and diversity principles into training and development activities and highlights the Athena SWAN Charter.</p> <p>The Researcher Development team together with the Athena SWAN team in HR conducts bespoke workshops to help applicants formulate their action points for the Athena SWAN award applications.</p>
<b>D3</b>	Develop a strategy for extending <b><u>training in unconscious bias</u></b> to managers across the University.	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p>We have piloted unconscious bias training for senior recruiters and are in the process of identifying a model for delivering training across the institution – see section A→Future Actions→Recruitment and Selection.</p>
<b>Future actions (2016-2018)</b>		
		<b>Lead and date</b>
		<b>Success measure</b>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review

### Updated Action Plan - September 2016

<p>Implement and deliver the institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award action plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual reporting on AS progress to all staff</li> <li>• Supporting schools to prepare Bronze/Silver Award action plans</li> <li>• Undertake Equal Pay Audit</li> <li>• Review recruitment, selection and promotion data in Athena SWAN context</li> <li>• Review committee membership (gender balance, researcher representation)</li> <li>• Annual monitoring reports of gender balance on UoA influential committees and for training and professional development activities</li> </ul>	<p>VP People Strategy; Gender Equality Steering Group; HR/SAT Teams (December 2017); Equality &amp; Diversity adviser (December 2017)</p>	<p>Report published at <a href="http://www.abdn.ac.uk/athenaswan">www.abdn.ac.uk/athenaswan</a> and staff e-zine</p> <p>Successful applications for Bronze/Silver awards</p> <p>Actions taken forward in Athena SWAN action plan</p> <p>Gender balance on influential committees, with no less than 60%(m) to 40%(f)</p>
<p>Review and update Equality Outcomes plan in 2017</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity Adviser, Human Resources (April 2016)</p>	<p>Progress in equality, diversity and inclusion as recognized through renewed action plans</p>
<p>Develop open groups/forums for staff to discuss mental health and wellbeing concerns</p>	<p>Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing; HR (December 2016)</p>	<p>Increase in awareness (through survey mechanisms, 10% increase) and attendance at forums (5% increase)</p>
<p>Continue to engage with the Leadership Foundation Aurora Development Program in 2017, encouraging research-only staff to apply</p>	<p>Heads of School</p>	<p>Evidence of engagement and participation, numbers of research staff applying (2% increase)</p>

#### E. Actions Relating to Monitoring Progress (Concordat Principle 7)

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.

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review Updated Action Plan - September 2016

The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principle 7 highlighted in the 4 year review and outlines future actions for 2016-2018. It does not comment on current and ongoing practice. In particular the actions are derived from the Employee Engagement Working Group action plan.

2014 Actions		Evidence and actions
<b>E1</b>	Development of the people strategy for 2015-2020 will identify a number of new actions for the teams involved in the HR Excellence in Research process. These will be incorporated into operational plans upon publication of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020.	<b>Completed</b> People Strategy has been developed (April 2016) and will be revised in 2017. Many of the actions relating to Employee Engagement, Equality and Diversity and Framework for Academic expectations (discussed in sections A, B and D) are complete or being taken forward in associated action plans and institutional operational plans.
<b>E2</b>	Continue to benchmark against best practice through local and national surveys.	<b>Completed</b> CROS and PIRLS surveys were conducted in 2015 and reports circulated as appropriate across schools. Reports were developed with a focus on academic leadership highlighting good practice and development needs within schools.
<b>E3</b>	We will seek to find efficiencies in reporting and interpretation of survey data across the University committees and to the community. LEAD: CAD and HR (review annually to 2017).	<b>Completed</b> The Senior Adviser in CAD has assumed responsibilities for undertaking and analysing core surveys that will provide data relating to actions within this plan. Individuals and teams involved in the HR Excellence Process also sit on associated working groups to ensure actions are reviewed and progressed whilst minimising overlaps and duplication of effort.
<b>E4</b>	CAD will continue to lead on the HR Excellence in Research review in 2015-2020; progress, review and implementation will be monitored.	<b>Completed</b> CAD led the 6 year internal review, in consultation with Human Resources (and appropriate teams within) and updated relevant committees with the review process. Research Staff also consulted through the Athena Swan SAT teams (more efficient engagement mechanism with greater reach across the University, than research staff society at this time).
<b>Future actions (2016-2018)</b>		<b>Lead and date</b>
		<b>Success measure</b>

## HR Excellence in Research: Two Year Internal Review Updated Action Plan - September 2016

Review of Institutional People Strategy in context of Strategic Plan development	VP People Strategy (Ongoing)	Measured against individual actions within associated action plans
Run CROS & PIRLS in 2017 and continue to communicate and monitor results in line with the actions identified within the Employee Engagement Strategy (communication of results within 2 months of completion)	CAD (July 2017)	Improve response rates by 5%, in particular for CROS
The Staff Development team will conduct a survey to assess development needs of all staff across the institution (complimentary to questions asked within institutional staff survey, CROS and PIRLS)	Staff Development Team (December 2016)	Baseline data of engagement with survey, evidence of actions being taken forward
Introduce regular speed networking events with a gender balance of male and female mentors; encourage more males to attend them; record feedback Rationale behind: Feedback indicates staff highly benefit from the networking opportunities available as part of leadership. However, data show that these events are mainly attended by females	Staff Development (December 2017)	Networking events increased and attended also by males. Feedback formally recorded showing that these events are well received by both males and females
Closer working with Research Policy Committee through updates from VP for People Strategy on issues relating to researcher and research manager activities	VP People Strategy and CAD (March 2017)	Evidence of actions relating to Research Policy Committee consultation