

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD: UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN PROGRESS REPORT, EIGHT YEAR EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Overview

The University of Aberdeen received the HR Excellence in Research Award in December 2010 and retained it in 2012, 2014 and 2016. As a condition of our award we are required to undertake an eight-year external 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 outline our continued progress to date and our plans for the next two years.

Governance

The University underwent a significant restructuring process two years ago, which saw changes of remit and responsibility for many of the staff in Professional Services, and in the Vice Principal portfolios. Alongside this, the University has recorded a reduction in academic staff numbers across all career stages. In 2017, in response to a University-wide review of Professional Services Support, the Grants Academy was established. It brings together expertise in grantsmanship from across the University to support researchers at all career stages in the preparation, submission and management of grant applications, including early career fellowship support. To align with this strategic development, and to support the research environment for REF, Researcher Development has been relocated from the Centre for Academic Development and embedded within Research and Innovation. This allows the Researcher Development remit to sit within the portfolio of the VP Research and Knowledge Exchange, aligning formal reporting with colleagues who support all researchers throughout the research cycle. A period of vacancy between summer 2016 and September 2018 has allowed for reflection on the Researcher Development role and a refocusing of its function in supporting researchers at all stages. In August 2018 the University appointed a new Principal, Professor George Boyne. He is currently leading a university-wide consultation to inform our strategic priorities for the future. Following a period of focused provision in supporting staff policies and practices, led by the Vice-Principal for People, the People Strategy is now embedded within the core business of the Directorate of People. This brings together support functions for staff and students including Human Resources, Athena SWAN, the Careers Service and Staff Development under the leadership of the Director of People. Following a review of the structures in place for oversight of the Concordat, highlighted in responses to the 2019 CROS survey, a Postdoctoral Research Committee has been formed. It is chaired by the Vice-Principal, Research and Knowledge Exchange, and includes research staff representatives from each of the twelve Schools, as well as a member from HR and the University's Athena SWAN Co-ordinator. It is clerked by the Researcher Development Adviser. This committee has responsibility for overseeing the HR Excellence plan, and will meet four times a year in advance of the Research Policy Committee, to which it will report. The RPC is also chaired by the Vice-Principal, Research and Knowledge Exchange, and will have a standing item on the agenda for researcher career issues including Concordat implementation and review via the HR Excellence plan. In this way, institutional oversight of the Concordat is embedded in the University's governance structures, while simultaneously providing research staff with a formal mechanism for reviewing and developing the plan.

How was the eight-year review undertaken?

Overall responsibility for reviewing and evaluating progress sits with Vice Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange working closely with Researcher Development, Research and Innovation, HR Staff Development, Communications, and relevant Schools. For the eight-year review, we have reviewed and evidenced progress against our 2016 action plan, and developed our two-year action plan for 2018-2020. In consultation with our HR Partners, actions in the HR Excellence in Research Award were aligned with other University initiatives (e.g. Employee Engagement, Wellbeing, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), and with the University's Strategic Plan 2015-20. The University is due to report on its Athena Swan action plan in 2019, and so this will be fully aligned with the HR Excellence reporting in 2020. A proportion of our researchers were engaged through CROS 2017, and views on University policies and practices were also collected through the Staff Survey. As the Postdoctoral Research Committee will not formally meet until November, the Researcher Development Adviser undertook a series of focus groups with research staff across disciplines, including with the Nvision Committee – a network for postdoctoral researchers in the Institute of Medical Sciences, which represents approximately one fifth of the current research staff population. The focus groups reviewed the action plan and generated discussion of actions to be included in the future. Some suggestions have been incorporated into the current plan, and some will be taken forward by the PDRC over the course of 2019/20.

An internal review was undertaken, consulting with colleagues across the university with responsibility for implementing the plan.

- Researcher Development has undertaken a comprehensive review of our provision in this area, comparing with similar institutions in Scotland. Following a vacancy in this post there is work to do, and this forms a core focus for our 2018-20 action plan.

- Researchers' views were taken into account through a series of focus groups over the summer period in 2019, engagement with the 2017 Internal Communications survey and the 2018 Staff Survey. From November 2019 the newly-formed Postdoctoral Research Committee will have oversight of the plan, with members of research staff from all relevant Schools.
- A draft of the report and action plan was submitted to and approved by the Research Policy Committee.

Key achievements and progress against the 2016 action plan

Full details of progress against the 2016 actions are provided in the updated action plan document. A summary of highlights from the last two years is provided here:

Key achievements and progress against Principles 1&2: Recruitment, Selection, Recognition and Value

- Following feedback from the 2016 Staff Survey a Working Group was set up to increase Employee Engagement within the university. Initiatives which have arisen from this include our series of Wellbeing Days, attended by over 1150 staff altogether, and the creation of sixteen named Wellbeing Co-ordinators.
- An HR Partner for Reward and Recognition has been appointed as a result of the establishment of the Reward Strategy Working Group. It has four areas of focus, outlined in the detailed plan. It is due to report to the Senior Management Team in early 2019 with strategies to be taken forward.
- Our Internal Communications Strategy has been revised, and now includes Communication Champions in each School, a series of Open Sessions where colleagues can learn about different parts of the university, and the 'Getting to Know...' series of articles which run in the staff e-zine.

Key achievements and progress against Principles 3&4: Support and Career Development

- In September 2017 we established the Grants Academy which embeds wraparound support for our staff at all stages of the research grant cycle, from conception of ideas, through development and refinement of a funding application, to research delivery and realising impact. 42 training events have been provided so far, including the 'Conversations On...' series which addresses interdisciplinary topics, visits from funders, grant writing workshops and training on Working with Industry. Researcher Development is embedded within the Grants Academy, and support for grant writing is a major focus of the RD programme.
- Our Public Engagement with Research Unit secured two years' funding in 2016 to support EXPLORATHON, a public engagement event staged as part of European Researchers Night. It forms a core part of our strategy to embed the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation into our research outputs, along with the Public Communication of Science and Technology conference, to be held in 2020.
- A Researcher Development Adviser was appointed in September 2018, with responsibility for the provision of professional, personal and career development activities for research-active staff. This provision is embedded within the Grants Academy as part of our strategic refocusing of the Researcher Development remit. A programme of professional development training for research staff is in place to run between January and June 2019. Further areas of strategic priority are in development as part of our forward plan.

Key achievements and progress against Principle 5: Researcher Responsibility

- The Institute of Medical Sciences has recently established the NVision Network, to promote the career development of its postdoctoral researchers. It has a designated academic lead with dedicated workload allocation for the Researcher Development role, and a committee of postdocs who will plan and facilitate a series of events and speakers for the rest of the cohort. Around half of the postdocs in IMS have attended events so far. The planned programme includes a speaker from the Scottish Office, a patent lawyer, the CEO of a start-up company, the editor of a scientific journal, and speakers from within the university who can discuss engagement with industry and moving from academic careers to careers in business and industry. This represents a refocusing of our research staff society, to be more inclusive and proactive. They will liaise with the Researcher Development Adviser to share good practice and ensure the integration of provision between the IMS and the rest of the University.
- In recognising the need for researchers to engage beyond their internal networks, the University has purchased Altmetrics, which allows the tracking of online engagement with their work to facilitate the planning of publication strategies and evidencing public engagement. It forms part of a toolkit to enable researchers to be more strategic in their professional development planning. A 'train the trainer' event is scheduled for December 2018, following which a series of workshops will be run for academic and research staff.
- Researcher Development has undertaken a review of current processes, and will implement a series of strategies aimed at connecting new training provision with an enhanced online presence. This will raise awareness of the university's provision amongst researchers, allowing them to engage in a variety of ways.

Key achievements and progress against Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

- 14 out of 16 departments now hold an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Both of the remaining departments are submitting their application at Bronze level at the end of November 2018 (outcome due in March 2019). The School of Psychology will be submitting an Athena SWAN Silver award in April 2019. The University retained its Bronze award in 2017.
- The majority of influential committees within the university have achieved at least a 40/60 per cent female to male ratio, 95% of all recruitment panels are now gender-balanced, and blind review is in place in the promotions process.

Key achievements and progress against Principle 7: Implementation and Review

- Following the 2017 Staff Development Survey, the following areas of development have been identified and implemented: a greater focus on online modules and more accessible 'microlearning' opportunities, coaching for internal job applicants, online provision for Academic Line Management training, job shadowing opportunities, and further opportunities for the Women in Leadership training.
- Our 'Lunch and Learn' events allow staff to engage with university processes and personnel while also providing an informal networking opportunity. 40% of participants in 2017/18 were male.

Strategies and success measures beyond 2018

We have developed an updated action plan that sets out the focus of our strategy for the next two years. The Postdoctoral Research Committee will monitor progress. A brief summary of the strategy and actions is provided here:

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

- Building on our successful Wellbeing strategy, a series of Wellbeing events will be held 4-8 March 2019, incorporating Around the World in Many Faiths Day, Mental Health Day, and International Women's Day. 80% of feedback from attendees will be positive.
- An evaluation of the role of probationary mentors will be undertaken, including the development and implementation of action plans. These plans will be implemented by September 2019, with evidence of recommendations and actions being taken forward.
- By December 2019 40% of all staff will have undertaken unconscious bias training, including 100% of staff involved in recruitment and promotions processes.
- A new Employee Benefits platform will be implemented from early 2019. Data will show a 20% increase in staff engagement, versus the old scheme.

Strategies to support Principles 3&4: Support and Career Development

- Researcher Induction sessions will be run three times a year, to welcome new research staff, situate them in the UK research landscape, and raise awareness of the Concordat.
- A PI leadership development programme will be delivered in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, to run in May 2019 and 2020. This will require the development of a new model, due to the structural shift within the University from Colleges to Schools. Following this, Researcher Development will approach other Schools to gauge interest in similar programmes. 80% of participants will find the training to be 'useful' or 'very useful'.
- An evaluation of our Leadership Courses, accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management and run by HR Staff Development, will be undertaken in 2019. These include Early Management Development, Middle Management Development and International Leadership Development. Evaluation will include a survey of attendees one year after completion, to assess how their new skills have been applied. Results will show that 75% of each leadership course found the use of this template 'useful or very useful' for planning steps in their career progression.
- From January 2019 a programme of personal, professional and career development training for research staff will be put in place, to equip these researchers with the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to do research, advance their careers with academia and beyond, and strategically plan for their futures. This will be expanded in AY 2019/20 to ensure full coverage of the four domains of the RDF. Feedback from training events will show 80% of attendees found them to be very good or excellent.
- A programme of lunchtime 'Research Bites' will be run in AY2019/20. Open to all researchers, each workshop will cover an aspect of the grant application cycle (finding funding, ethics, impact etc), with information and contacts within the University. 80% of feedback from attendees will be positive.
- Tailored programmes of support and training will be developed to assist researchers in their engagement with business and policymakers. Feedback will show that at least 80% of attendees found this to be useful or very useful.
- The international Public Communication of Science and Technology conference will be hosted in Aberdeen in 2020. Aberdeen researchers will present up to 4% of activities and sessions.

Strategies to support Principle 5: Researcher Responsibility

- Researcher Development will establish the Research Futures Fund, offering funds for research staff to develop and host career development events which align with the University's strategic priorities. Up to four awards will be offered in 2019. Award holders will feedback that they have enhanced skills in: interdisciplinary working, network building and/or industry engagement.
- Researcher Development will create a suite of 'talking head' videos which will support early career researchers in thinking about the following areas: writing proposals, managing research projects, interdisciplinary research, working with external stakeholders, creating impact. These will be hosted online and used in training courses. Analytics will show an increase in video views in the year after completion.
- Mentoring scheme will be reviewed and re-launched by Staff Development in 2019, PDRC will inform this to ensure it meets the unique needs of this group.
- A series of training workshops for Altmetrics will allow researchers to track online engagement with their work in order to plan publication strategies and evidence public engagement. 80% of attendees will rate this training as 'useful' or 'very useful'.
- Internal communications for Researcher Development will be improved to increase awareness of our provision and encourage greater engagement by researchers. This will include updated pages on Staffnet, an RD blog, and downloadable information leaflets. The annual Staff Survey 2020 will show an improvement of at least 5 percentage points in questions relating to awareness of, opportunities for, and satisfaction with training and development.
- Training will be offered to all research-active staff on key aspects of engaging with industry to build collaborative partnerships. A number of Industry Fellowships, of 1-3 months, will be available for externally-funded researchers, to make further links and develop skills. These will be awarded on a competitive basis. This is part of a pilot scheme, and will be reviewed and evaluated at the end of the programme.
- Ideation workshops will be offered to staff and students in the Life Sciences, to increase our pipeline of start-up and spinout opportunities. This is part of a pilot scheme, and will be reviewed and evaluated in due course.

Strategies to support Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

- The university will continue to support Athena Swan applications. Only two Schools are yet to achieve the Bronze Award, and the results of these applications are due in March 2019. Another is in the process of applying for a Silver Award. As the latter is a prerequisite for an institutional Silver Award, we will make a Silver application if the School is successful.
- We will encourage research staff to engage with the Aurora Development programme through the newly-established research staff network and conference. Up to 10 applications will come from research staff.

Strategies to support Principle 7: Implementation and Review

- The newly-established Postdoctoral Research Committee will allow feedback from research staff in each School to be incorporated into forward planning for HR Excellence. It will also facilitate interdisciplinary networking and community-building amongst research staff. Three new strategies driven by research staff to be implemented by Researcher Development and colleagues.
- Researcher Development will run a Research Staff Conference, which will allow researchers to share experiences, present ideas and hear from experts in academic and non-academic career planning and development. All places at the conference will be full.
- We will run CROS in 2019, to incorporate researchers' views on our provision. Results will inform the agenda for the first meeting of the PDRC.
- As Athena Swan reporting is due in 2019, Researcher Development will align our HR Excellence strategy with the new Athena Swan plan. HR Excellence reporting in 2020 will therefore include progress made against the 2019 Athena Swan plan, as 'additional actions'.

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Review of progress against 2016 actions, 2016-2018

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 6-year review and outlines future actions for 2016-2018.

| 2016 Actions | Lead and Date | 2018 Progress | |
|--|--|---------------|---|
| Recruitment and Selection: Continue to review and enhance recruitment and selection practices for employees (research staff) and employers including: | | | |
| Review and assess all job adverts to reflect options for family friendly and/or flexible working (job share/part-time etc). Success Measure: Increase in the number of females applying and being successful at Grade 8 & 9 positions by 5% by April 2019. | Director of HR Services (April 2017). | A1 | Complete Request to Recruit forms now require statements about flexible working to be included in job adverts. If the role is unsuitable for flexible working, a reason must be included on the form. Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 six jobs were advertised at Grades 8 and 9, and women were successful in 50% of interviews. Between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 ten jobs were advertised at Grades 8 and 9, and women were again successful in 50% of interviews. While this does not represent an increase in terms of success rate, it is an increase in overall numbers, from 3 to 5. |
| 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 | Equality and Diversity Adviser; (March 2017); Staff development team (December | A2 | In progress – moved to forward actions Unconscious bias training was delivered to approximately 70 staff between 2015 and 2017. Feedback indicates that staff recognised the need to monitor and evaluate their own thoughts and behaviours in relation to decision-making at all levels in the University. Further training for staff on unconscious bias continues 2018-20. |

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| <p>guidance materials around recruitment and selection for managers.</p> <p>Success Measure: 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>2017); HR (February 2017)</p> | | | | | | | | |
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| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: 100% uptake by end 2017.</p> | <p>Head of Specialist Services (December 2016)</p> | <p>A3</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>The completion of this training is now mandatory. Completion statistics for the last three months show an upward trend.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1032 767 1512 850"> <thead> <tr> <th>31/03/2018</th> <th>30/06/2018</th> <th>30/09/2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>79.8%</td> <td>82.0%</td> <td>84.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | 31/03/2018 | 30/06/2018 | 30/09/2018 | 79.8% | 82.0% | 84.9% |
| 31/03/2018 | 30/06/2018 | 30/09/2018 | | | | | | | |
| 79.8% | 82.0% | 84.9% | | | | | | | |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: Gender balance on recruitment panels</p> | <p>Head of Specialist Services (February 2017); Recruitment Services Team Leader (June 2017)</p> | <p>A4</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Around 95% of all panels are gender balanced. This is checked by the recruitment team. There are occasions where a lack of balance is legitimate, for example when interviewing for a particularly specialist position where a balance is not possible.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Induction: Continue to review induction processes and procedures including:</p> | | | | | | | | | |

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| <p>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).</p> <p>Success Measure: 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>Staff Development Team/Line managers (April, 2017); HR (April 2017)</p> | <p>A5</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>The induction checklist is in place, and is now used with all staff. Electronic induction packs have been developed using Page Tiger, and are available on Staffnet. Line managers use these for induction with new employees, to be completed within three months. A central list is kept and followed up as necessary.</p> <p>The format of our staff induction has changed, taking the form of a whole-morning event with presentations from across the university. This includes a welcome from the Principal, and an introduction to research and research careers from the Vice-Principal Research and Knowledge Exchange. Information on relocation to Scotland and Aberdeen is also included. Further information is available online.</p> <p>45 staff attended the most recent induction event, on 15 April 2019. 7% of attendees were postdoctoral researchers.</p> <p>A buddy scheme has also been introduced, which aims to put new staff in touch with others in an informal and social way. It is open to all staff and has been particularly helpful for new international staff.</p> |
| <p>Develop and deliver induction training for academic line managers to support local-level inductions for research-active staff.</p> <p>Success Measure: Induction training developed and delivered to ALMs, 80% uptake by Jan 2018.</p> | <p>Staff Development Team (Spring 2017)</p> | <p>A6</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>ALM training has been developed from whole days to separate sessions as required in order to better meet the needs of academic line managers, and is now embedded. Uptake is usually around 85%. Training is delivered in batches so this figure will fluctuate. Those who do not attend are followed up by HR Partners who can provide smaller group training to those new in the roles. All current managers have received comprehensive training, including training on equality and diversity.</p> |
| <p>Reward and recognition: Continue to review and enhance policies and practices relating to recognising and valuing the contributions research staff make including:</p> | | | |
| <p>Set up promotions working group to review effectiveness of the recently revised promotions process and implement new recommendations.</p> | <p>HR Director (November 2017)</p> | <p>A7</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>The Reward Strategy Working Group was established in 2016 to drive forward the project of developing and delivering an innovative Reward Strategy for the University. The group was split into four sub-group, as follows.</p> |

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| <p>Success Measure: Increase (at least by 10%) in responses to CROS survey in questions relating to recognition & value.</p> | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Framework Agreement & Pay Structures (including consideration of salary banding for Professorial staff) • Promotions, Contributions & Recognition arrangements • Financial & Non-financial benefits & Total reward • Career Pathways & Progression within and between grades <p>Of the four subgroups, the Review of Framework Agreement and Pay Structures subgroup has been prioritised and an SMT report with the proposals will be submitted in early December. A new employee benefits platform will be implemented from January 2019, and linked to a Promotion and Employee Benefits Roadshow.</p> <p>The remaining proposals will be considered by the SMT in early 2019.</p> |
| <p>Introduce blind review of promotion applications.</p> <p>Success Measure: Blind review of promotion applications is in place.</p> | <p>HR Director (December 2016)</p> | <p>A8</p> | <p>Complete An initial blind review stage was introduced to promotion procedures in 2017 to reduce the potential for unconscious bias.</p> |
| <p>Increase frequency of promotion workshops and information sessions.</p> <p>Success Measure: 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 promotions process.</p> | <p>HR partners, Athena SWAN Leads (April and Dec 2017)</p> | <p>A9</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>Two extra sessions were organised by the Senior Women's Network, with previously successful candidates invited. Information sessions and workshops run at the start of every promotions cycle, but turnout has been low. Feedback suggests that staff would prefer one-to-one support instead, and this is currently under review by the Promotions subgroup of the Reward Strategy Working Group. Further proposals include the incorporation of information sessions into School meetings, and increased information on Staffnet, including videos. The working group will report in early 2019.</p> |
| <p>Provide Academic Line Managers training on the promotions process.</p> <p>Success Measure: 100% of ALMs attended the training.</p> | <p>Staff Development Partner (November 2017)</p> | <p>A10</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>All line managers have had training on the promotions process, as of December 2017. Training is scheduled for December 2018. This training is delivered in batches so numbers will fluctuate. Those who do not attend are followed up by HR Partners who can provide smaller group training to those new into the roles.</p> |

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| <p>HR will work closely with academic schools to embed Framework of Academic Excellence into workload models and within the discipline context for research and teaching.</p> <p>Success Measure: Publicly available workload models.</p> | <p>VP People Strategy (Spring 2018)</p> | <p>A11</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>Workload models are available locally within Schools but they are not published more broadly at this time. Work continues to consider options for the implementation of a software package to support the collection and transparency of this information. School strategic plans are available on School webpages, for example the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition.</p> |
| <p>Evaluate the role of probationary mentors; develop and implement Action plans (e.g. including training of probationary mentors).</p> <p>Success Measures:</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>HR and Athena SWAN) School leads (September 2018)</p> | <p>A12</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions</p> <p>The deadline for evaluating the role of probationary mentors has been pushed back to June 2019 due to maternity leave. An action plan will follow the evaluation.</p> |
| <p>Annual Review: Continue to review and enhance practices relating to the annual review process, including:</p> | | | |
| <p>Evaluate effectiveness of the annual review process in place since 2014.</p> <p>Success Measure: 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>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>A13</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>A full institutional review was due to be undertaken after piloting OneSource, a software package which connects HR processes within the university. However this pilot was not carried forward to full implementation. Staff Development evaluated the annual review process in 2017, and over 75% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Annual review provided a useful opportunity to reflect on my performance over the past year. • My Annual Review has enabled me to discuss important matters related to my development with my reviewer. • Following my Annual Review I am now clearer on what is expected of me for the following year. • I intend to make time to reflect on my Annual Review paperwork in order to review and update the objectives set. |

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| <p>Introduce an 'annual review' checklist including areas such as, for example, promotion and training needs.</p> <p>Success Measure: Checklist produced/distributed and completed by all reviewers by the end of 2017 annual review round.</p> | <p>HR Head of Specialist Services (February 2017)</p> | <p>A14</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>The annual review checklist is available online in Staffnet, along with the appropriate review forms, for use by all staff.</p> |
| <p>Create a database to be used by schools to record their annual review completion rate.</p> <p>Success Measure: Athena SWAN Culture Survey'18 show that at least 80% of females and males "have usefully discussed promotions and career development at their annual review. Database provided to schools and kept up-to date annually at school level.</p> | <p>HR partners (June 2018)</p> | <p>A15</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>The implementation of the OneSource database was reconsidered following a trial in 2017. Further options for the recording of the annual review process are currently under consideration. Schools will provide annual review completion rates as part of the Athena Swan reporting next year.</p> |
| <p>OneSource HR module automated annual review process.</p> <p>Success Measure: OneSource HR module is developed and implemented.</p> | <p>HR (end 2018)</p> | <p>A16</p> | |
| <p>Employee Engagement: continue to review and enhance policies and practices to ensure staff feel engaged and valued including:</p> | | | |
| <p>Review working group activities to include gaining staff viewpoints (establish a staff forum and suggestion boxes).</p> <p>Success Measure: Engagement with forum and evidence of actions from forum being taken forward; 5% increase in suggestions submitted by end 2017.</p> | <p>HR (December, 2016); Director of External relations; Communications (January, 2017)</p> | <p>A17</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Staff suggestion boxes have been in place since 2016, but the frequency of suggestions is low, with only 68 suggestions altogether. The Communications email account is the preferred route for general staff feedback.</p> |

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| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: Improvement in survey questions related to internal communications. Evidence of actions from communications survey being taken forward.</p> | <p>Communications (January 2017)</p> | <p>A18</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>‘Getting to Know’ articles have been firmly established since late 2016 and regularly run in the staff e-zine. They allow members of staff to introduce themselves to the university community, and briefly discuss their role.</p> <p>Communications Champions have been established in each School and each department of Professional Services as a result of the survey. A form has recently been added to Staffnet which the Champions, or other staff, can use to share news with the Communications team.</p> <p>The survey also highlighted a desire for more face-to-face sessions with the SMT. This resulted in a series of ‘Open Sessions’ which included a presentation and questions. These are ongoing, held every few months, and now include a variety of staff across the university who want to raise their profile with colleagues.</p> <p>Following the survey the Staffnet Homepage was revamped, to include a banner which changes frequently to highlight staff news.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: 5-10% improvement in responses to survey questions related to staff morale and wellbeing.</p> | <p>HR Specialist Services (March 2017)</p> | <p>A19</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions</p> <p>The Staff Survey was operated in 2018, and results released in November. It had a response rate of 39%, almost identical to the previous figure. There was a small improvement in responses related to staff morale and wellbeing, of 0.5%. Of the questions asked in the previous survey, 75% showed improvement. Particular areas of strength relate to the percentage of staff who: are clear on their responsibilities and duties (up by 13.4 percentage points); are satisfied with their induction (up by 7.1 percentage points); feel they are trusted to make their own decisions (up by 10.7 percentage points).</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>HR Specialist Services (March 2017)</p> | <p>A20</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>An HR Manager and Partner for Reward and Recognition have been recruited. The Promotions sub-group of the Reward Strategy Working Group also has Recognition in its remit. A number of draft proposals, including annual prizes with research-related categories, are currently under consideration, to be submitted to the SMT in January 2019.</p> |

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| <p>Success Measure: HR Partner recruited and taking forward actions related to reward and recognition.</p> | | | |
| <p>Improvement of working conditions: Implement actions identified in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy including:</p> | | | |
| <p>Appointment of wellbeing coordinators and mental health champions. Success Measure: Evidence of actions being taken forward, reviewed by Employee Engagement working group.</p> | <p>Vice-Principal for People Strategy; Equality and Diversity Adviser (December 2016)</p> | <p>A21</p> | <p>Complete Sixteen named Wellbeing Co-ordinators have been appointed across the university. In 2016-17 three successful Wellbeing Days were held, with feedback indicating that there is an appetite for more events and that participants had gained knowledge about the support mechanisms open to them in relation to mental health and wellbeing concerns. Approximately 300 staff attended each Wellbeing Day. Two Wellbeing days were held in January and October 2018, on both campuses, with stalls from Women’s Aid, Choose Life, University Health Coaching, Aberdeen Sport’s Village and others. The October days were attended by over 850 staff and students.</p> |
| <p>Provide training and development activities for all staff through online modules and face-to face sessions (certified training). Success Measure: Training and development activities for all staff are provided through online modules and face-to face sessions.</p> | <p>Head of HR Specialist Services (October 2017)</p> | <p>A22</p> | <p>Complete Staff Development run accredited training in Mental Health which can be undertaken through the Skills Network. Additionally, all staff have access to two online mental health services: PAM Assist – a free, confidential support service which includes online information and an advice line staffed by professional advisers – and Big White Wall, an online counselling module. The Wellbeing Co-ordinators are able to provide staff with advice on how to access these services.</p> |
| <p>Embed wellbeing awareness into Supervisor training sessions and into researcher development courses where appropriate. Success Measure: Wellbeing awareness is embedded into Supervisor training sessions and into researcher development courses where appropriate.</p> | <p>CAD/Graduate School; HR Specialist Services (June 2017)</p> | <p>A23</p> | <p>Complete The PGR School is working with the University Mental Health Adviser to develop and deliver wellbeing training and awareness into supervisor training sessions and structured workshops for PGR students. As the Researcher Development Adviser shapes her provision Wellbeing Awareness will be embedded into training sessions for researchers.</p> |

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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 6-year review and outlines future actions for 2018-2020.

| 2016 Actions | Lead | 2018 Progress | |
|--|---|---------------|---|
| 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. Success Measure: More bespoke support provided. Data gathered from CROS and PIRLS reflect improved percentage of satisfaction by at least 5%. | CAD (Review from July 2017 but ongoing as required) | B1 | Reviewed The Researcher Development Adviser position became vacant in 2017. This provided an opportunity to refocus the role and to embed it more firmly into the research environment of the University, situating it within R&I. Following the establishment of the Grants Academy in 2017 RD provision is now linked to this, as a result of drive to improve support for researcher career development. The University Innovation Fund is available to assist researchers with projects in preparation for REF. |
| Development of an online module on research integrity that will complement our existing research ethics and governance module. Success Measure: Number of participants undertaking the course in the first instance, expected 50% uptake by Jan 2018. | CAD (March 2017) | B2 | In progress – moved to forward actions An online module for Biosciences has been developed internally, and data on the number of participants will be collected going forwards. A Research Integrity working group has recently been established, chaired by the Dean of Research (Life Sciences), to review the University's policies and procedures with reference to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and the recent House of Common report. It is planned to purchase online Research Integrity training developed by the University of Dundee, to roll out for all research staff and students. |
| To collate and share information about development needs from annual review summaries and survey data. Success Measure: Evidence provided as part of review of annual review process | CAD/TPD Group (review dates September annually) | B3 | Reviewed HR are currently reviewing online options for the collation and sharing of annual review data, having trialled OneSource last year. |
| Establish a 'Grants Academy' to provide holistic support for research active staff in the | VP Research and | B4 | Complete |

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| <p>preparation of funding applications and in the delivery of project outcomes, impact and dissemination.</p> <p>Success Measure: Data related to research staff's engagement in Grants Academy support, increase in value of grants, increase in income per FTE (plans are very embryonic and so actions cannot be more specific currently)</p> | <p>Knowledge (end 2017)</p> | | <p>The Grants Academy is in place and includes: the VP and the Director for Research and Innovation; the School Directors of Research; the Public Engagement Co-ordinator; the Commercialisation Manager; six specialist Business Development Officers, and the Researcher Development Adviser. It supports our staff in all stages of the research grant cycle, from conception of ideas, through development and refinement of a funding application, to research delivery and realising impact.</p> <p>Since its establishment in 2017 the Grants Academy has provided 42 training events for staff, including the 'Conversations On...' series which addresses interdisciplinary topics, visits from funders, grant writing workshops and training on Working with Industry. The average attendance at events is 23 participants.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: CAD training and development provision in context of Grants Academy and associated data – at least 10% engagement in activities</p> | <p>CAD/ Research & Innovation (ongoing through 2017, reviewed yearly thereafter)</p> | <p>B5</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions</p> <p>Researcher Development now sits within Research and Innovation and has strong links with the Grants Academy, to support this strategic development and the REF research environment. RD provision will be tailored to align with Grants Academy requirements as it is developed, with an initial focus on writing for grant applications. Two workshops on Writing for Fellowships have been included in the initial provision for research staff for the upcoming term.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: 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</p> | <p>Dean for Postgraduate Research and Graduate School Manager (October 2017)</p> | <p>B6</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>Supervisor training ran in December 2017, with 44 attendees. It focused on the following: Understanding what the role of supervision entails,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional, national and international frameworks for good supervisory practice • Effective monitoring and assessing PhD students' progress • Examining a PhD thesis • Specific challenges faced in supervision <p>This course will run again in Feb 2019. The PGR School has embedded wellbeing into monitoring and progression activities – the team act as a first point of contact for students and organise events related to mental health and wellbeing.</p> |

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| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: 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</p> | <p>Head of HR Specialist Services (1year following completion of leadership programme)</p> | <p>B7</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions A major evaluation of our accredited Leadership programmes will be undertaken by Staff Development in 2019, which will include evaluation of the template. This review seeks to establish the effectiveness of the provision in terms of how it has been used by the participants. It includes questions such as 'How has the programme helped you to manage your staff?', 'Has the programme helped you to achieve any new goals and aims?', and 'How has the programme benefited your career?' All participants in Leadership programmes are invited to give feedback.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measure: 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</p> | <p>CAD (April 2017; repeated after 18 months)</p> | <p>B8</p> | <p>Reviewed This programme was postponed due to the vacancy in Researcher Development. An alternative is currently under development.</p> |
| <p>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.</p> | <p>PERU team (August 2018)</p> | <p>B9</p> | <p>Complete PERU is a partner in the NUCLEUS project, which investigates how to make Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) a reality in universities and research institutions. The PERU team use their expertise in RRI to advise researchers on connecting with stakeholders such as policymakers, journalists and citizens, in order to prepare proposals to all funders, including the European Commission.</p> |

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| Success Measure: RRI embedded in all Aberdeen-led grant applications to the European Commission – 100% inclusion | | | |
| 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. Success Measure: Aberdeen researchers involved in submitting abstracts and /or activities – up to 4% of activities/sessions involving researchers. Increased networks | PERU in partnership with CPD, University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre. (June 2020) | B10 | In progress – moved to forward actions The call for abstracts for the PCST will go out early next year, with the conference being held in May. It will be linked to the university’s existing May Festival, giving opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas and networking. |

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 6-year review and outlines future actions for 2018-2020.

| 2016 Actions | Lead | 2018 Progress | |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| 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) | C1 | Reviewed The new Researcher Development Adviser post has academic leadership training within its remit. Training needs will be explored within Schools and feedback will be sought from research staff networks, as well as course feedback, once these are fully established. A report will be sent to each meeting of the Research Policy Committee. |

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| <p>Success Measure: Evidence of actions being taken forward by committee.</p> | | | |
| <p>Review and re-launch of Researcher-led initiatives fund to promote researcher responsibility in career development activities.</p> <p>Success Measure: Increase in applications from research-only staff - 5% increase. Case studies on website - 2 by end 2017.</p> | <p>CAD (Launch by September 2017, review annually thereafter)</p> | <p>C2</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions Researcher Development holds a budget for researcher-led training initiatives, which will be developed over the next reporting period. Further funding for training and development is available within R&I, in the form of the University Innovation Fund, for pump-priming, knowledge exchange, commercialisation projects and other activities.</p> |
| <p>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).</p> <p>Success Measure: 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.</p> | <p>CAD and Research and Innovation (Grants Academy, March 2017)</p> | <p>C3</p> | <p>Reviewed The Institute of Medical Sciences has recently established the NVision Network, to promote the career development of its postdoctoral researchers. It has a designated academic lead with dedicated workload allocation for the Researcher Development role, and a committee of 10 postdocs who will plan and facilitate a series of events and speakers for the rest of the cohort. Around half of the postdocs in IMS have attended events so far. The planned programme includes a speaker from the Scottish Office, a patent lawyer, the CEO of a start-up company, the editor of a scientific journal, and speakers from within the university who can discuss engagement with industry and moving from academic to business careers.</p> <p>This represents a refocusing of our research staff society, to be more inclusive and proactive. They will liaise with the full-time Researcher Development Adviser to share good practice and ensure the integration of provision between the IMS and the rest of the University.</p> |
| <p>Engage with Grants Academy to develop career development support as required.</p> <p>Success Measure: Evidence of activities being developed and delivered.</p> | <p>Research and Innovation (Ongoing)</p> | <p>C4</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions Following the appointment of the Researcher Development Adviser in September 2018 a programme training for research staff has been put in place from early 2019. This focuses on career planning, including Writing for Fellowships, Project Management, Planning for a Research Career and Careers Beyond Research.</p> |
| <p>Recording of training and professional development, and of Public Engagement activities through PURE.</p> | <p>CAD, PERU and Research and</p> | <p>C5</p> | <p>Reviewed Academic staff record a variety of professional development activities within PURE, including consultancy, public engagement, peer review and public lectures. There was a decrease in the</p> |

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| <p>Success Measure: Increase in number of development activities recorded in PURE profiles – 10 % increase.</p> | <p>Innovation (PURE Team), (December 2017)</p> | <p>the has</p> | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2016</td> <td>578</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017</td> <td>451</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>278</td> </tr> </table> | 2016 | 578 | 2017 | 451 | 2018 | 278 | <p>numbers of activities recorded, but this should be seen in context of a decline in overall staff numbers. A new strategy been developed, linking PURE to Altmetrics.</p> |
| 2016 | 578 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | 451 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2018 | 278 | | | | | | | | | |

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. Following the Athena SWAN reporting in 2019 further actions can be incorporated.

The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principle 6 highlighted in the 6-year review and outlines future actions for 2018-2020. In particular, the actions are derived from the institutional action plan for Athena SWAN.

| 2016 Actions | Lead | 2018 Progress | |
|--|---|------------------|--|
| <p>Implement and deliver the institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award action plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reporting on AS progress to all staff • Supporting schools to prepare Bronze/Silver Award action plans • Undertake Equal Pay Audit • Review recruitment, selection and promotion data in Athena SWAN context • Review committee membership (gender balance, researcher representation) • Annual monitoring reports of gender balance on UoA influential | <p>VP People Strategy; Gender Equality Steering Group; HR/SAT Teams (December 2017); Equality & Diversity adviser (December 2017)</p> | <p>D1</p> | <p>In progress – moved to forward actions</p> <p>14 out of 16 departments now hold an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Both of the remaining departments are submitting their application at Bronze level at the end of November 2018 (outcome due in March 2019). The School of Psychology will be submitting an Athena SWAN Silver award in April 2019. The University retained its Bronze award in 2017, and this is due for review again in 2019.</p> <p>The Gender Equality Steering Group has oversight of the Gender Action Plan, which embeds and mainstreams the principles of equality and diversity across the university. It reports to the UMG.</p> <p>Three out of four influential committees have achieved at least a 40/60 per cent female to male ratio:</p> |

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| <p>committees and for training and professional development activities</p> <p>Success Measures: Report published at www.abdn.ac.uk/athenaswan 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> | | | <table border="1" data-bbox="1070 284 1935 496"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Women</th> <th>Men</th> <th>Total</th> <th>%W</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Court</td> <td>2017/18</td> <td>11</td> <td>14</td> <td>25</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UMG</td> <td>2017/18</td> <td>13</td> <td>18</td> <td>31</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SMT</td> <td>2017/18</td> <td>4</td> <td>6</td> <td>13</td> <td>40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Senate</td> <td>2017/18</td> <td>41</td> <td>71</td> <td>112</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Gender balance for our accredited Leadership programmes is as follows:</p> <p>ILM L3 (early management development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2017: 12 delegates (9 female/3 male) - 2017: 11 delegates (7 female/4 male) - 2018 (1): 11 delegates (9 female/2 male) - 2018 (2): 15 delegates (13 female/2 male) <p>ILM L5 (Middle Management Development Programme)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2017: 12 delegates (8 female/4 male) - 2018: 15 delegates (10 female/5 male) <p>International Leadership Development Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2016-17: 13 delegates (6 male/7 female) <p>Further actions will be evidenced as part of the Athena SWAN reporting in 2019.</p> | | | Women | Men | Total | %W | Court | 2017/18 | 11 | 14 | 25 | 44% | UMG | 2017/18 | 13 | 18 | 31 | 42% | SMT | 2017/18 | 4 | 6 | 13 | 40% | Senate | 2017/18 | 41 | 71 | 112 | 37% |
|--|---|------------------|--|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|----|-------|---------|----|----|----|-----|-----|---------|----|----|----|-----|-----|---------|---|---|----|-----|--------|---------|----|----|-----|-----|
| | | Women | Men | Total | %W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Court | 2017/18 | 11 | 14 | 25 | 44% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UMG | 2017/18 | 13 | 18 | 31 | 42% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SMT | 2017/18 | 4 | 6 | 13 | 40% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Senate | 2017/18 | 41 | 71 | 112 | 37% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Review and update Equality Outcomes plan in 2017.</p> <p>Success Measure: Progress in equality, diversity and inclusion as recognized through renewed action plans</p> | <p>Equality and Diversity Adviser, Human Resources (April 2016)</p> | <p>D2</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>The Equality Outcomes plan was updated in 2017. Progress since 2015 includes the establishment of Wellbeing Co-ordinators, blind review in the promotions process, and an increase in take up of the online Equality and Diversity training.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>Develop open groups/forums for staff to discuss mental health and wellbeing concerns.</p> | <p>Director of Health, Safety and</p> | <p>D3</p> | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>In addition to our Wellbeing Co-ordinators, new networks include: the LGBT+ Network, the Senior Female Network Group and the Menopause Network.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| Success Measure: Increase in awareness (through survey mechanisms, 10% increase) and attendance at forums (5% increase) | Wellbeing; HR (December 2016) | | |
| Continue to engage with the Leadership Foundation Aurora Development Program in 2017, encouraging research-only staff to apply. Success Measure: Evidence of engagement and participation, numbers of research staff applying (2% increase) | Heads of School | D4 | In progress – moved to forward actions No central records are kept regarding the Aurora programme. From 2019, Researcher Development will liaise with Schools to track engagement and encourage the inclusion of research-only staff. |

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.

| The table below provides evidence against specific focus areas for Principle 7 highlighted in the 6-year review and outlines future actions for 2018-2020. | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------|--|
| 2016 Actions | Lead | 2018 Progress | |
| Review of Institutional People Strategy in context of Strategic Plan development. Success Measure: Measured against individual actions within associated action plans. | VP People Strategy (Ongoing) | E1 | Reviewed Following the appointment of our new Principal the Strategic Plan is currently under review. He is gathering the views of researchers to inform this planning, through a series of open consultation meetings within Schools. Following a period of focused provision in supporting staff policies and practices, led by the Vice-Principal for People, the People Strategy is now embedded within the core business of the Directorate of People. This brings together support functions for staff and students including Human Resources, Athena SWAN, the Careers Service and Staff Development under the leadership of the Director of People. Researcher Development is running a series of focus groups with research-active staff to respond to the Independent Review of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. These views will be submitted as a response to the consultation. |

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| <p>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).</p> <p>Success Measure: Improve response rates by 5%, in particular for CROS</p> | CAD (July 2017) | E2 | <p>Complete</p> <p>CROS was run in 2017. The response rate for 2017 did not increase by 5%, mainly due to the University's Staff Survey also running that year, and many of the CROS themes being captured this way.</p> |
| <p>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).</p> <p>Success Measure: Baseline data of engagement with survey, evidence of actions being taken forward</p> | Staff Development Team (December 2016) | E3 | <p>Complete</p> <p>The survey has been completed, with 62 respondents, and has been used for planning training development needs. Areas of development include: a greater focus on online modules and more accessible 'microlearning' opportunities, coaching for internal job applicants, online provision for Academic Line Management training, job shadowing opportunities, and further opportunities for the popular Women in Leadership training.</p> |
| <p>Introduce regular speed networking events with a gender balance of male and female mentors; encourage more males to attend them; record feedback</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Success Measures: Networking events increased and attended also by males.</p> <p>Feedback formally recorded showing that these events are well received by both males and females.</p> | Staff Development (December 2017) | E4 | <p>Complete</p> <p>Staff Development run a series of 'Lunch and Learn' events which allow staff to learn about aspects of the university before taking part in an informal networking event. Topic included Understanding Your University (56 attendees), University Finance (20 attendees), and the Research Excellence Framework (23 attendees). For the four sessions run in 2017/18, 40% of the participants were male. Speed Mentoring, which is integrated into other events, launches and publicity, also runs every year.</p> |
| <p>Closer working with Research Policy Committee through updates from VP for People Strategy on issues relating to researcher and research manager activities.</p> | VP People Strategy and CAD (March 2017). | E5 | <p>Reviewed</p> <p>Issues relating to researcher activities are raised with the Director of Research and Innovation in the first instance, who takes them to the Research Policy Committee as appropriate.</p> |

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| Success Measure: Evidence of actions relating to Research Policy Committee consultation. | | | |
|---|--|--|--|

Forward Actions, 2018-2020

| | Actions 2018-2020 Principles 1 & 2 (including Success Measures) | Complete by | Lead |
|-----------|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| A1 | A series of Wellbeing events will be held 4-8 March 2019, incorporating Around the World in Many Faiths Day, Mental Health Day, and International Women's Day. Success measure: 80% positive feedback from attendees | March 2019 | HR Specialist Services |
| A2 | Evaluate the role of probationary mentors; develop and implement Action Plans (e.g. including training of probationary mentors). Success measure: Action plans developed and successfully implemented. Evaluation undertaken and evidence of recommendations/actions being taken forward. | Sept 2019 | HR |
| A3 | Unconscious bias training will be open to all staff, and mandatory for those involved in recruitment and promotions. Certificates of attendance will be issued. Success measure: 100% of staff involved in recruitment and promotions will have undertaken the training, and 40% of all staff. | Dec 2019 | HR Specialist Services |
| A4 | A new Employee Benefits platform will be implemented from early 2019. Success measure: Data will show at least a 20% increase in engagement from staff versus the old platform. | Aug 2019 | HR Specialist Services |
| A5 | 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 Success measure: 5-10% improvement in responses to survey questions related to staff morale and wellbeing. | Dec 2020 | HR Specialist Services |
| | Actions 2018-2020 Principles 3 & 4 (including Success Measures) | Complete by | Lead |
| B1 | Researcher Inductions will be run in October, February and June, including talks from the Vice Principal Research and Knowledge Exchange, Researcher Development, and Grants Academy, to welcome new researchers, highlight University training provision, and situate them in the UK research landscape. Success measure: 80% positive feedback from attendees | June 2020 | Researcher Development |
| B2 | Plan and implement a PI training programme for SMMSN and use this experience to approach other Schools to discuss their provision. Success measure: 80% of SMMSN participants find the training to be 'useful' or 'very useful'. | May 2019 | Researcher Development |

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| B3 | 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. Success measure: 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. | Sept 2019 | HR Specialist Services |
| B4 | A programme of lunchtime 'Research Bites' will be run in AY2019/20. Open to all researchers, each workshop will cover an aspect of the grant application cycle (finding funding, ethics, impact etc), with information and contacts within the University. Success measure: 80% positive feedback from attendees. | Dec 2019 | Grants Academy/ Researcher Development |
| B5 | Establish a training programme for postdoctoral researchers focused on career development and transferable skills. Going forward, this will be improved through feedback from the workshops and the PDR. Success measure: Feedback on training courses 80% 'good' or 'very good'. | Dec 2019 | Researcher Development |
| B6 | Develop and run a training programme for researchers which equips them with skills and opportunities to engage with business and industry. Success measure: 80% positive feedback from attendees. | June 2020 | IKE/Researcher Development |
| B7 | Work with the Scottish Policy and Research Exchange, to host events giving researchers an overview of the policy landscape and highlighting opportunities for engaging with the policymaking process. Two events to be aimed at PhDs and ECRs. Success measure: 80% of participants will report that their knowledge has been improved. | Nov 2019 | IKE/Public Affairs/Researcher Development |
| B8 | 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. Success measure: Aberdeen researchers involved in submitting abstracts and /or activities – up to 4% of activities/sessions involving researchers. Increased networks. | May 2020 | PERU |
| B9 | Provision of an online module on research integrity that will complement our existing research ethics and governance module. Success Measure: Number of participants undertaking the course in the first instance, expected 50% uptake. | June 2020 | Research Integrity Working Group |
| Actions 2018-2020 Principle 5 (including Success Measures) | | Complete by | Lead |
| C1 | The Aberdeen Research Futures fund will be established, offering funds for research staff to develop and host career development events which support the University's strategic priorities. Up to four awards will be offered in 2019. Success measure: up to four events which enhance researchers' skills in: interdisciplinary working, network building and industry engagement | Jun 2020 | Researcher Development |
| C2 | Researcher Development will create a suite of 'talking head' videos which will support early career researchers in thinking about the following areas: writing proposals, managing research projects, interdisciplinary research, working with external stakeholders, creating impact. These will be hosted online and used in training courses. | Dec 2019 | Researcher Development |

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| | Success measure: analytics will show an increase in video views in the year after completion. | | |
| C3 | A series of training workshops for Altmetrics will allow researchers to track online engagement with their work in order to plan publication strategies and evidence public engagement. It will be linked to staff PURE profiles. Success measure: training rated as 'useful' or 'very useful' by 80% of attendees. | Jun 2019 | Research Policy team |
| C4 | Internal communications for Researcher Development will be updated, to increase awareness of our provision and encourage greater engagement by researchers. This will include updated pages on Staffnet, an RD blog, and downloadable information leaflets. Success measure: an improvement of at least 5 percentage points in Staff Survey questions relating to awareness of, opportunities for, and satisfaction with training and development. | Dec 2020 | Researcher Development |
| C5 | Training will be offered to all research-active staff on key aspects of engaging with industry, to build collaborative partnerships. A number of Industry Fellowships, of 1-3 months, will be available for externally-funded researchers, to make further links and develop skills. These will be awarded on a competitive basis. Success measure: This is part of a pilot scheme, and as such will not be measured using SMART targets. It will be reviewed and evaluated at the end of the programme. | Dec 2019 | IKE/ Researcher Development |
| C6 | Ideation workshops will be offered to staff and students in the Life Sciences, to increase our pipeline of start-up and spinout opportunities. Success measure: This is part of a pilot scheme, and as such will not be measured using SMART targets. It will be reviewed and evaluated in due course. | Dec 2019 | IKE/ Researcher Development |
| Actions 2018-2020 Principle 6 (including Success Measures) | | Complete by | Lead |
| D1 | All schools within the university will hold at least an Athena SWAN Bronze award. Success measure: the applications of the last two schools to submit for this award (currently under consideration) will be successful. | Mar 2019 | HR Specialist Services |
| D2 | Providing at least one school obtains an Athena SWAN Silver award, the university will take forward plans to apply for a Silver Award. Success measure: Silver Award application submitted | Dec 2020 | HR Specialist Services |
| D3 | The Aurora Development Programme will be promoted through the PDRC. Success measure: 3 applications will be submitted | Dec 2020 | Researcher Development |
| Actions 2018-2020 Principle 7 (including Success Measures) | | Complete by | Lead |
| E1 | The newly-established Postdoctoral Research Committee will allow feedback from research staff in each School to be incorporated into our forward planning. It will also facilitate interdisciplinary networking and community-building amongst research staff | Dec 2020 | Researcher Development |

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| | Success measure: three new strategies driven by research staff to be implemented by Researcher Development and colleagues | | |
| E2 | A Research Staff Conference will be held, which will allow researchers to share experiences, present ideas and hear from experts in academic and non-academic career planning and development. Success measure: all places at the conference will be full. | Aug 2020 | Researcher Development |
| E3 | CROS will run in 2019, to incorporate researchers' views on our provision. Success measure: results will form part of the agenda for the first meeting of the PDRC. | Dec 2019 | Researcher Development |
| E4 | Researcher Development will align the HR Excellence strategy with the new Athena SWAN plan, due for reporting in 2019. Success measure: HR Excellence reporting in 2020 will include progress made against the 2019 Athena SWAN plan. | Dec 2020 | Researcher Development |

Acronyms

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|------|--|-------|---|
| ALM | Academic Line Management | PGR | Postgraduate Research |
| AS | Athena SWAN | PIRLS | Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey |
| CAD | Centre for Academic Development | PDRC | Postdoctoral Research Committee |
| CROS | Careers in Research Online Survey | PERU | Public Engagement with Research Unit |
| HR | Human Resources | REF | Research Excellence Framework |
| IKE | Impact and Knowledge Exchange | RRI | Responsible Research and Innovation |
| ILM | Institute of Leadership and Management | SMMSN | School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition |
| PCST | Public Communication of Science and Technology | TEF | Teaching Excellence Framework |