

## HR Excellence in Research Award Two-Year Internal Review

### 1. Introduction

Coventry University (CU) signed up to the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and was awarded the **HR Excellence in Research Award** in 2012. A detailed Gap Analysis was undertaken and an [Action Plan](#) agreed at this time. Both documents are refreshed by internal self-assessment at least once every two years.

The following report is a summary of the most recent review of the Action Plan that was conducted in November/December 2014. The review took the form of structured face to face meetings with colleagues who were identified as having primary responsibility for each of the sub-sections in the Action Plan. A summary of progress was then drafted and circulated to the Concordat Sub-Committee for comment. The Sub-Committee membership and Terms of Reference are detailed on [Appendix A](#).

### 2. Key Achievements (2012-14)

Key achievements are outlined below against each of the seven key principles and details are provided in the Gap Analysis & Action Plan see [Appendix B](#).

#### A – Recruitment & Selection

Coventry University is committed to extensive investment in building research capacity over the next five years. Recruitment and retention of the highest quality researchers is a key priority. To support this we have:

##### 1. Improved the clarity and visibility of research opportunities on our webpages

- [recruitment webpages](#) redesigned - making the content more dynamic and improving the search functionality so that research opportunities are easier to find (150 key research appointments since the launch).
- Incorporated Learning & Development courses/ development opportunities offered to Research staff on the recruitment site.

##### 2. Expanded our recruitment team - as a result of the increasing volume of researcher applications. Our team has grown to include specialist posts to handle research recruitment.

##### 3. Invested in growing our PGR Community - offering over 200 PhD studentships for 2015-16. We have seen a 15% increase in PGR applications from the same time last year.

##### 4. Focused on ensuring equality and diversity

- Policies, procedures and Equality & Diversity statistics are still published on the external website.
- Race Equality Chartermark – CU is one of 31 trial institutions in the process of applying for the 'Race Equality Chartermark' (concludes in Spring 2015)
- Unconscious Bias Training is mandated for panel Chairs and is currently being embedded into Recruitment & Selection training throughout the University. 168 people attended R&S training since Sept 2012. Panel composition is monitored.

##### 5. Monitored equal pay for researchers – an audit was carried out in April 2013. It showed that CU

researchers, as a sub-group of CU staff, had a smaller pay gap than the HE sector generally and national figures produced by the ONS.

## B – Recognition & Value

CU is investing heavily in programmes, structures and systems which support recognition of researchers.

Current initiatives include:

1. A **suite of Researcher Development Programmes**<sup>1</sup>, which will cover Early-Career and Middle-Career Researchers and Research Leaders - An initial cohort of 30 early-career researchers will start an 18-month programme in January 2015. Criteria have been set to ensure fair and open access regardless of employment terms.
2. A **researcher module** (currently in development) **to be integrated into our PgCert** in Higher Education Professional Practice. For academic years 2012-13 & 2013-14 there have been 225 enrolments.
3. A **new Academic Role Profile Framework** (built on elements of the Vitae Researcher Development and the HEA frameworks) already designed and with an implementation plan in place for 2015. It consolidates, standardises and clarifies roles, expectations and progression criteria for all academic roles. This addresses the previous gap in progression pathway from research assistant to research associate.
4. A **new Resource Information Management (RIM) System** will be implemented by Summer 2015. This will facilitate better information management, more tailored researcher development and more targeted communications with researchers.

## C – Support & Career Development

CU is committed to increasing researcher international mobility and personal and career development.

Current initiatives include:

1. **Seedcorn funding** (finance to support international research trip for participants on early-career researcher development programme initiative).
2. **International mobility scheme for researchers** (under development).
3. A **discreet internationalisation strand within the new role profile framework** (developed from the [HEA Internationalisation Framework](#)) which sets clear institutional expectations for international activity for all academic staff.
4. **Global Leaders programme**, developing leadership potential and supporting mobility in postgraduate students.
5. Successful **ECR mentoring scheme** (32% increase in uptake between 2013/14 and 2014/5)
6. **“Research at Coventry” events** are held quarterly.
7. **Online doctoral supervision programme** and programme of 12 **supervisor workshops** available to all researchers (currently running twice throughout the academic year).
8. Researchers who teach can also access **Introduction to Teaching in Higher Education**. 323 total enrolments for academic years 2012-13 & 2013-14.

<sup>1</sup> Mapped to Researcher Development Framework, RCUK Statement for Expectations for Doctoral Training, UK Concordat to support research integrity, UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

9. **Technology Enablers for Research Group** has been established and is currently focusing on open access publishing and collaborative technologies to support international research.

See also B1 above.

## D – Researchers’ Responsibilities

Individual researcher engagement with personal and career development is supported through:

1. **Development Needs Analysis and goal-setting**, based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. This is incorporated into all researcher development programmes.
2. **Development and Performance Review process**, currently in review as part of the implementation of the new academic role profile framework.

## E – Equality & Diversity

CU Equality and Diversity Committee have responsibility for oversight of equality and diversity matters across the University. Key activity has included:

1. Achieved **Athena Swan Bronze Award** at University level.
2. Ongoing review of activity and processes as a **Stonewall Diversity Champion and “Two Ticks” system**.
3. Attended Vitae ‘Every Researcher Counts’ train the trainer event.

## F – Implementation & Review

Implementation and review of the HR Excellence in Research Award and Concordat Action Plan has been overseen by a sub-group of the CU Research Committee who have worked with a nominated individual from the HR team. The Action Plan has been updated regularly and published on the CU webpages.

Members of CU learning development team share best-practice and remain up-to-date with national/international policy development related to research careers through: Midlands Research Staff Association and Vitae Midlands Hub.

### 3. Next Steps

Coventry University is committed to an ambitious step-change in our research capability over the next five years. At the heart of this strategy is large-scale investment in researchers and the quality of the research environment. The seven key principles set out in the Concordat will provide a framework for activity in: recruitment and selection, recognition and value, support and career development and equality and diversity amongst researchers.

In the next two years we will build on our successes and will undertake significant projects which will ensure the development of strong, diverse communities of researchers (from PhD to professor) who are well-supported and whose value to our institution is recognised. Flagship projects will build on excellent work to date and will include: on-going review of the current development offer for researchers and significant

investment in the delivery of a suite of targeted Researcher Development Programmes to ~90 researchers (early-career and middle-career researchers and research leaders) per year; implementation of a distinct research pathway within the existing PGCert in Academic Practice; roll-out of a new academic role profile framework; review of doctoral training structures, form and content; and embedding of a new support structure to allow academic staff to complete their PhD and develop their research potential. This activity will support our objective that 55 members of staff will complete their PhD within the next 2 years.

Implementation will be: measured by regular evaluation and review (including analysis of national survey data - PRES, CROS and PIRLS - and institutional staff and PGR surveys); informed by road-show events, Research Staff Away Days and ECR forums; and monitored by formal governance groups (Research Committee and Capability Development Working Group).

The Four Year Concordat Review will use all of the mechanisms above to ensure that a wide body of staff is consulted.

An Action Plan for the period 2015-2017 is detailed on **Appendix C**.

## **Appendix A - Constitution and Terms of Reference, Research Concordat Sub-Committee**

### **1. Purpose and scope**

This Sub-Committee supports and develops researcher development and addresses the needs of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers to ensure that the university is meeting the needs of researchers in the University and contributes to the implementation of the University's Research Strategy. The Research Concordat Sub-Committee will regularly review progress against the Concordat action plan agreed by the Research Committee and Vitae.

The Research Concordat Sub-Committee is responsible to the University Research Committee for the exercise of the University's powers in relation to the support and career development of researchers. It has a strategic role, advising the University Research Committee on local and national issues relating to researcher career development.

### **2. Terms of reference**

1. To review the Concordat Action Plan.
2. Develop a Research Development Pathway for research staff.
3. To implement the RCUK Research Development Pathway.
4. To review progress against the action plan and highlight any barriers to achievement of the actions.
5. To make recommendations to Committees where necessary about areas of activity not outlined in the action plan.
6. To take responsibility for the communication and dissemination of activities to Faculties/Schools/Services where applicable.
7. To monitor and review impact of the RCUK Researcher Development Pathway
8. To oversee attainment of the HR Excellence in Research badge and regular review of the badge criteria.

### **3. Constitution**

The constitution of the Research Concordat Sub-Committee is:

- (a) Director of Research, ex officio;
- (b) Director of Human Resources;
- (c) Deputy Director of Human Resources
- (d) Head of Organisational Development and Learning;
- (e) Four Early Career Researchers;
- (f) Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow
- (g) Recruitment and Selection Manager
- (h) HR Learning and Development Adviser (Research)
- (i) Careers and Employability Advisor (Postgraduate Students)

The Chair is entitled to invite other persons on an ad hoc basis as required.

The committee will strive to maintain a membership that reflects a rich diversity, taking positive action to achieve this where necessary. In meeting this objective the Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional members.

The Chair is appointed by the Chair of Academic Board on advice of the Committee, either from or additional to the membership specified above. A Deputy Chair may be similarly appointed from amongst the membership. Total Membership: 12 (Quorum: 7)

**Appendix B - Coventry University Gap Analysis and Action Plan. The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers - August 2012 (*Progress Update November 2014*).**

See separate document

**Appendix C - Coventry University Gap Analysis and Action Plan. The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers - January 2015 – January 2017**

See separate document