

HR Excellence in Research Award: 2010-2012 evaluation, Loughborough University

Loughborough University has made considerable progress towards the implementation of objectives outlined in our 2010 Concordat Implementation Plan, in addition to making further commitments and achievements that bolster our support for the career development of researchers. This report outlines progress to date in this respect and provides a strategy for further development for supporting this group, and marking our commitment to the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award.

Internal evaluation of progress towards alignment with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Coordination of the evaluation of progress was undertaken by the Research Staff and Student Development Officer, who was an original contributor to the 2010 Concordat Implementation Plan and member of the Concordat Working Group. During the evaluation process, views of researchers were taken into account via survey responses and specific consultation. This included:

- Results from the Loughborough University Staff Survey 2012 for the Research Job Family
- Results from the Careers in Research Online Survey 2011 and 2009
- Consultation on the revised Code of Practice for the Employment of Researchers with:
Loughborough University Research Staff Association (LURSA), Loughborough University branch of the Universities and Colleges Union (LUCU), Research Committee, & Academic Leadership Team

Prior to publication, the revised Code of Practice must be given formal approval by the Human Resources Committee; the next meeting of this committee is in February 2013.

Following initial analysis of progress using the above information, views on the evaluation and progress report were sought from Human Resources Advisers, Director of Human Resources, Associate Deans for Research, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research), Dean of the Graduate School, Loughborough University Research Staff Association members, LUCU, and the Careers Advisor for Researchers.

The Concordat implementation plan complements our Athena SWAN applications and action plans, both for the Institutional bronze renewal and individual School submissions, whereby achievements towards the Concordat Implementation and Athena SWAN are mutually beneficial. Furthermore, the University is responding to results of the internal University Staff Survey held in 2012; actions are required on individual Schools and Sections, in addition to a University-wide action plan, which will further complement the Concordat Implementation Strategy.

Key achievements & progress against implementation plan

In addition to actions completed prior to the publication of our Concordat Implementation Plan in 2010, the University has made progress in the following areas which were specifically identified in the plan.

Task	Responsibility	Completion/ Progress
Redeployment vacancy register and redeployment priority given to staff on notice of redundancy	Human Resources	Summer 2011
Improved interactive equality and diversity training available. Online training on Equality and Diversity including: Bullying & Harassment, (for all staff and managers), Diversity in the Workplace and Equality Impact Assessment training; bespoke Equality & Diversity courses for specific teams (since 2010). Over 500 staff are trained on an annual basis as of 2011	Human Resources	Since October 2010 and ongoing
Established Loughborough University Research Staff Association	Res. Office,	November 2011.

	Research Staff	Support continuing
Management and leadership programmes delivered and open to Principal Investigators and research staff, include ILM levels 2-5 certification, Springboard, Spring forward, Navigator, and Fresh Steps	Human Resources	2011 onwards
Performance and Development Review has been rolled out across campus, and all staff are expected to receive an annual PDR.	Human Resources	December 2010 onwards
Probation for all staff, including Research Staff, has been improved, with greater flexibility provided	Human Resources	2011 onwards
All recruitment and selection processes are administered by a central team	Human Resources	Autumn 2010 onwards
Fixed term contract use has remained steady (74%-76% of population) over the period 2010-2012. However, results of the 2011 CROS survey comparison between 1994 and Russell Groups showed that more Loughborough respondents had open-ended contracts (32% compared to 19% and 18% respectively). The University is working with campus trade unions to reduce further the use of fixed-term contracts in order to provide greater security of employment.	Human Resources	Effect a reduction in use of FTC for Research Staff, where possible, to be reviewed 2014
A leaflet on Communicate, a course for staff with English as a second language, has been produced. Online course for Communicate participants has been developed	Teaching Centre	Summer 2011
Ethical advisory committee structure reviewed & new structured has been implemented	Senior Management Team	Autumn 2012
Dedicated Research Staff Webpages, includes update content:: Equality and Diversity information and staff groups, links to the Loughborough Research Staff Association, Loughborough Concordat Implementation plan, links to HR Excellence in research webpages at Euraxess, a link to the New Staff Webpages, and the Athena Forum postdoc careers guide	Research Office	2008 onwards. Regular updates to continue, to be reviewed 2014
Mentoring scheme for research staff is now in its fourth year, with over 50 mentor/mentee partnerships having been established	Research Office & Careers Centre	2009 onwards; currently underway
Annual Conference for researchers (includes research staff talks, photographic and poster competition, workshop sessions, topical information). Helps build a supportive and inclusive research culture and community. Local conferences within Schools also take place.	Research Office & Graduate School	Annually since 2008; next conference March 2013
Teaching Skills Course and Successful Teaching and Assessment for Researchers programme to support and provide professional development for researchers who teach	Teaching Centre and Research Office	Bi-annual, on-going since 2008

In addition to the successes against the 2010-2012 Concordat Implementation plan, additional achievements have been identified that contribute towards the strategy for implementation of the Concordat to support the career development of researchers, shown below.

Task	Responsibility	Completion
Embedded Research Staff support through Research Staff and Student Development Officer, Research E-learning Officer, and new Career Development Advisor for Researchers; posts based in the Graduate School, Research Office and Careers and Employability Centre respectively. These posts replace previously Roberts-funded posts	Operations Committee	Spring 2012
Developing Future Research Leaders programme, including personal leadership development grant. Competition for this programme was open to research & lecturing staff, and 6/10 places were awarded to research staff.	Research Office	March – June 2012
Participated in CROS 2011 (41.1% participation from Research Staff)	Research Office	May 2011
Athena Bronze Institutional renewal submission	Human Resources	Submitted November 2012
Departmental Athena SWAN Silver Award submission, from the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences (SSEHS)	SSEHS & Research Office	Submitted November 2012
All Graduate School workshops open to research staff and mapped to the Researcher Development Framework	Graduate School	October 2012
EPSRC Bridging the gaps funding for interdisciplinary pilot projects was run as an internal competition, open to research staff	Research Office	January 2012
STEM Schools receive support from Research Office for Athena SWAN submissions. Currently one completed submission, another is in progress.	Research Office	December 2011 onwards

Future Steps and Strategy for 2012-2014

Loughborough University is fully committed to providing a positive working environment for all staff, including research staff. The strategy towards the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development Researchers over the next two years mainly focuses on building on previously identified gaps in support for researchers from the 2009/2010 analysis by the Concordat Working Group, and in the original implementation plan, and using more recent survey data as described above.

The University response to the 2012 Staff Survey includes identification of key areas for improvement of the whole institution with regard to: Uptake of Performance and Development Review (PDR), Work/Life Balance, Leadership & Management, Reducing Bureaucracy, Eliminating Bullying and Harassment. These areas, particularly PDR and Leadership and Management form part of our original Concordat Implementation plan. The plan, therefore, sits within a framework of development and improvement across the whole institution, which will be of benefit to all staff including Research Staff. Furthermore, it is worth noting that of all seven job families across the University, the Research only job family had the highest number of 'green' categorised responses (10% above the institutional average) of any job family, and the number of 'red' categorised responses (10% below institutional average) was four out of seven. Thus Research Staff are in one of the more satisfied groups of Loughborough Staff. Success measures will be quantifiable in future Staff Surveys and CROS surveys where comparisons to previous years will identify improvements. The University also plans to participate in Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey in 2013 to inform our four-year progress review.

Areas highlighted in the above surveys, and the 2012 Athena SWAN bronze renewal application have highlighted some areas where research staff have specific concerns. These include communication and support from the Senior Management Team, feeling integrated into research, local, and University communities, and the research community stimulating their work. In addition, researchers had a lack of awareness of campus trade unions. The aim is to achieve better integration through improved information, awareness and communication, for example through websites and communications relevant to different stages of researchers' employment. Induction procedures continue to vary across Schools and at this key point, as researchers join the institution, improvements to help researchers feel that they are joining a wider community, rather than a single research group or centre may address these concerns.

The first action for 2013 is to gain approval for publication of our revised Code of Practice for the Employment of Research Staff by the Human Resources Committee. With appropriate circulation and usage this new code will go some way to helping to achieve many of the objectives in our Concordat Implementation Plan. Success will be apparent if the Code is adopted and incorporated into induction materials for researchers; and if managers of researchers and researchers themselves are aware of the contents and significance of the Code, thus helping to engender a positive culture change for researchers. Other elements of the strategy include improving personal and professional development provision through embedding the Researcher Development Framework, and enhancing equality and diversity through future bids to the Athena SWAN charter.

Recognising that researchers also have a responsibility for their own development, a key aim is to encourage and enable researcher to do so, for example by supporting our local Research Staff Association, and through the on-going and successful Research Staff mentoring scheme.

Key measures of success for the above strategy will be apparent through: responses to future Careers in Research Online Surveys, the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey, outcomes from Athena SWAN applications, and direct feedback received through research staff, for example those involved in the Research Staff Association.

Action Plan: The revised action plan has been published and is available at:
http://www.lboro.ac.uk/service/sd/rs/rs_resources_lboro.html