

Six-year self-assessment for the HR Excellence in Research Award (September 2017)

The University of Bath received the HR Excellence in Research Award in September 2011 and retained it in 2013 and 2015. This report focusses on the progress made in key areas since 2015 and will also outline key future actions. A complete list of actions planned can be found in the new action plan.

In its research strategy the University of Bath sets out that excellence in research means to create internationally-renowned research in a supportive and vibrant research environment fostering a culture of open enquiry and debate. The HR Excellence in Research Award action plan is one of the initiatives to support these intentions in addition to e.g. the Workforce Strategy and Athena Swan Action plans as well as the GW4 Alliance with the Universities of Exeter, Cardiff and Bristol.

Process of internal review:

The responsibility for implementation of the strategy lies with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and is managed by the Research Staff Working Group (RSWG). The RSWG, that also leads the review of the implementation, comprises eight early career researchers representing the different Faculties and the School of Management, the Researcher Career Development Advisor and the Academic Staff Development Manager. The group is chaired by a senior academic (Professor Chris Brace) who sits on the University Research Committee. Progress on the action plan is regularly reviewed informally and actions are added as and when they arise. In addition, formal reviews have taken place in 2013 and 2015. For the review in 2017 researchers' views have been taken into account through consultation with and constant input of the RSWG. The Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2017 and through a 'culture survey' in 2017 Major stakeholders, such as Human Resources (HR), were consulted on their progress and further actions towards the action plan.

Key achievements and progress against 2015-17 action plan

More detailed information on actions and success measures can be found in the updated action plan.

1 & 2: Recruitment & Selection and Recognition & Value

- A career progression pathway –detailing promotion criteria and process- for research staff (grade 7 to 8) has been developed. It was approved by Council in July 2017. Research Staff will be invited to apply for promotion for the first time as part of the promotion round in August 2017.
- We have continued to provide best practice training for the Staff Development and Performance Review for reviewers and reviewees with 71 staff attending training in the past 2 years.
- It has been agreed that all research staff (and PGRs) can have an online presence (web profile) from January 2018 and a common format for all staff in the Education and Research job family has been developed.
- Generic job descriptions for research staff (grade 6, 7 and 8) have been developed. This will be rolled out after consultation with relevant parties.
- Departmental induction processes were improved with 62% (up by 12% from 2015) now being offered an induction to the department and 76% (up 11 % from 2015) being offered a local induction to their current role.

3 & 4: Support and career development

- A [mentoring scheme](#) for all staff in the Education and Research job family has been set up. In CROS 2017 24.5% of respondents indicate that they have been mentored which is a 6% increase from CROS 2015.
- Research staff can now officially be members of the supervisory team for PGRs (see QA7, section 8.3.8) and thus receive formal recognition for their contribution. CROS 2017 indicates that 47% of research staff are already aware of this.

- The Research Innovation service (RIS) offers monthly 'Shut up & Write' sessions. These are advertised regularly to research staff via email and twitter and usually at least 1 out of 6 participants is a member of research staff.
- RIS have started to run two day grant/fellowship writing retreats. Participants for these events are selected after application to take part. 11/68 participants were research staff.
- The Faculties of Science and Engineering & Design have run 6 months long programmes for selected early career research staff to develop/start developing fellowship proposals. Satisfaction with the programme was high.
- QA9 (Quality Assurance Code of Practice for Professional Development and Recognition for all staff and students who teach) was updated to explicitly include support and development for research staff who teach. 12% more staff state in CROS 2017 that they have undertaken teaching or lecturing responsibilities compared to CROS 2015.
- The Centre for Learning and Teaching has introduced a 1 day 'Introduction to teaching' workshop for research staff. The workshop received excellent feedback and was well attended.
- New terms of reference for the Departmental Research Staff Co-ordinators have been drawn up and rolled out across the Faculties. They clarify the role of the Co-ordinators including their role in induction, helping find research staff a mentor and monitoring of Staff development and Performance Review participation.
- The University has appointed 18 50th Anniversary Prize Fellows. These positions aim to enable early career academics to get a flying start to their research careers. Prize Fellows start with two years research time and development activities as part of a cohort, and then move on to the usual probationary requirements for academic staff.
- A [GW4 Crucible](#) programme, building on previous SouthWest Crucible programmes, for 30 talented future research leaders across the GW4 Universities was run in 2017. The programme received excellent feedback. One member of research staff that took part has since been offered a lectureship position at Bath. Further GW4 Crucible programmes are planned for the future.

6: Equality and Diversity

- The University continues to implement the Athena Swan principles and had applied for re-award.
- 9 University Departments (compared to 2 in 2015) now hold a departmental Athena Swan Bronze award. 5 of these departments are now working towards a Silver Award. All remaining departments (including non-STEM ones) are working towards a Bronze Award submission.
- As part of the 50th Anniversary a [1 day event to celebrate women STEM](#) was held. It was a successful event, attended by around 150 staff from across the University, with internal and external speakers.

Strategy beyond 2017

An updated action plan has been developed based on feedback from CROS 2017, an internal culture survey aimed at research staff and feedback from the Research Staff Working Group as well as HR.

The main actions are as follows (additional actions can be found in the action plan for 2017-2020)

1 & 2: Recruitment & Selection and Recognition & Value

The University has an ongoing commitment to recruit and retain the best researchers from diverse backgrounds. In addition to the points below the University is currently reviewing its induction process for all staff:

- Develop shared vision for research staff at the University of Bath
- Continue to improve departmental induction process for research staff by establishing a working group to develop a University wide induction guide for research staff, to be used in departments

3 & 4: Support and career development

The University continues to take a pro-active approach to improving support mechanisms, structures and frameworks to ensure that the professional, personal and career development needs of all staff are met. Specific activities for research staff will include:

- Pilot a university wide programme to support a cohort of research staff to prepare for application for a lectureship position based on a programme previously run in the Faculty of Science.
- Review current policy on eligibility of research staff (grade 7) to apply for external funding.
- Develop and run a pilot scheme to provide research staff with the opportunity for teaching experience
- Develop and run a pilot scheme to provide research staff with the opportunity to become Associate Fellows of HEA
- Create a web based career management hub for all staff providing a focal point for accessing resources

6: Equality and Diversity

The University has an ongoing commitment to Equality and Diversity and is actively committed at all levels to Athena SWAN and the aim is for all departments to achieve the Bronze Award in 2020.

- Continue to support the departments that are applying for Athena SWAN awards
- Continue to promote mentoring scheme for all staff in Education and research job family to research staff

7: Implementation and Review

Implementation and review of actions will be managed by the RSWG. Progress against the actions will be monitored annually on an informal basis and as a formal review every two years. Results from future CROS, focus groups and other staff surveys will be taken in account. Actions regarding Equality & Diversity will be managed by the Equality & Diversity team and the academic departments through monitoring of the Athena Swan action plans.

Success measures beyond 2017:

Our success will be measured against the specific actions as outlined in our action plan 2017-2020. Some general indicators of success for the next three years will include:

- Continued implementation of Athena Swan principles across the institution and ongoing success at departmental level applications with all departments achieving the Bronze award by 2020.
- Increased participation in training and development opportunities, including GW4.
- Continued engagement of staff with the Staff Development and Performance Review with 80% of staff reporting it as useful by 2020.
- Evidence of improvement of CROS and culture survey data as compared to 2017 surveys.
- Continued promotion of mentoring scheme across the University and uptake of the scheme from staff across the Education & Research job family with 50% of all staff having a mentoring relationship by 2019.