

HR Excellence in Research Award

Anglia Ruskin University – Six Year Internal Review

Introduction

Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) has held the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) Award since August 2013, and successfully completed the two-year internal review and the four-year external review in 2015 and 2017, respectively. This report describes how the 2019 six year internal review was carried out, summarises our progress implementing the 2017-2019 action plan, and outlines the focus of our strategy and our updated gap analysis for delivering on the principles of the Concordat over the next two years.

Our internal evaluation process

This review was conducted by a subgroup of the Researcher Development Working Group (RDWG). The RDWG is responsible for overseeing our researcher development activities, including monitoring our HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan, and reports to the University's Research and Innovation Committee. Researchers' views were taken into account during the review through representation on the HREiR Review Subgroup, which included early, mid and senior career researchers, researchers on fixed-term and permanent contracts and from different academic disciplines. Research staff were joined by members of our Research & Innovation Development Office (RIDO) and HR Services (HRS). We currently have ~750 academic staff on both teaching and research or research-only contracts. Of these ~350 staff have significant responsibility for research and we currently have 131 ECRs across 4 faculties. Researchers' views collected between 2017 and 2019 informed our assessment of progress against the 2017-2019 action plan and the setting of new actions. These consultations included the ARU Researcher Development and Training Survey (an online survey completed in November 2017 by 179 research active staff), ten focus groups conducted in 2017 and 2018 at our Cambridge and Chelmsford campuses to explore researcher views on different aspects of our support and career development for researchers and a consultation with 300 researchers on proposed changes to our Early Career Researchers' Charter.

Key Achievements and Progress

A: Recruitment and Selection; B: Recognition and Value – Principles 1 and 2

Development of researchers with differing employment contracts

Our 2017 Researcher Development and Training Survey provided baseline data (which will be used to measure against the impact of the new training provisions provided in 2018/2019) around types of training and development our academic and research staff had accessed and future training requirements. Of the 179 respondents, 93% had accessed training and development in their current role at ARU. Among the 62 (self-declared) ECRs, 93% had accessed training and development in their current role; of those ECRs on fixed term contracts (15) 86% had accessed training and development opportunities while at ARU. In 2018, we launched our new programme of training and development opportunities which is open to all staff with research responsibilities, regardless of contract type. Engagement with this new programme has been by researchers with all types of contracts, including early, mid- and senior-career researchers, full-time and part-time staff, and staff with permanent and fixed-term contracts, from all four Faculties.

C: Support and Career Development – Principles 3 and 4

Managing Researcher Development

Since our last review, we have created the Researcher Development Manager (RDM) role, to assess and manage the needs of the research community around career development and training opportunities. Membership of the RDWG has also been amended to increase breadth of experience and representativeness of membership and now includes early, mid-and senior-career researchers, on fixed term, permanent, part-time and full-time contracts, from diverse academic disciplines.

Audit and gap analysis

In 2017 the RDM conducted an audit of all training delivered across the University relevant to researcher development. This was then mapped against Vitae's Researcher Development Framework, and OECD's list of transferable skills for researchers, and gaps in our provision of support for researchers were identified. These are addressed in the gap analysis.

Consultation on training and development for researchers

In October 2017 the RDM conducted structured focus drop-in sessions which were attended by 40 academic and research only staff from all stages in their careers (ECR to Professors) across all faculties. Feedback from these sessions informed development of the ARU Researcher Development and Training Survey, which research active staff from across the University were invited to complete in November 2017. Information from this survey shaped the design of the new researcher-development programme for staff.

A new researcher-development programme for staff

Data from the training gap analysis and the Researcher Development and Training Survey were used to plan a new programme for research-active staff (with a clear focus on research only staff and those on fixed-term contracts), named the Researcher Development Observatory (RDO). The new RDO website on the intranet delivers on our 2017-2019 goal to develop a new researcher development 'hub' page on our website, to draw together researcher training opportunities from across the University. The RDO groups researcher training and development we offer under ten broad headings which relate to Vitae's RDF, but also speak to researchers' needs, as identified through consultation. These headings, each associated with illustrative graphics are: Introductory Essentials; Research Funding; Communication, Engagement and Impact; Writing and Publication; Working with Business; Personal Effectiveness; Career Development; Research Methods; Leadership and Management; Research Tools. Since its launch the website has had 805 visits and staff are further updated with the RDO sessions available through a monthly newsletter sent to all academic staff with research in their contract (~750), flyer desk drops, and Eventbrite invites for specific workshops.

Currently, the RDO offers 107 researcher development sessions across two University sites in addition to 12 online researcher development courses. An interim review presented to the RDWG in March 2019 reported that 92% of respondents to post-session evaluation surveys agreed or strongly agreed that attending the RDO sessions had contributed to their development as a researcher. Furthermore, 89% felt that attending the session had been a good use of their time. Most sessions had an approval rating above +10 on an approval scale ranging from +17 (positive approval) to -17 (negative approval). The highest scoring sessions, each of which scored +16, were Career Action Planning, Grow your Research Outputs, Income with Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Project Management. The impact of these courses was clear in feedback as staff noted the "workshop was transformative" and they had "already written the first draft of my project plan" (Project Management). The impact of the full 2018/2019 RDO programme will be evaluated at the end of its first year (September 2019) using feedback from workshop evaluations and establishing appropriate success measures to improve and expand the new RDO programme for 2019/2020.

In 2017 we committed to providing three new transferable skills training opportunities and have exceeded this goal. All researcher development sessions in the RDO are mapped against the RDF and OECD's transferable skills descriptors and a majority of our training opportunities now offer elements of transferable skills training. Examples include networking skills, communication/presentation skills, project/ time management skills, and a range of enterprise skills including commercialisation, patenting and knowledge transfer.

Review of our ECR Charter

A key policy in our approach to career development for Early Career Researchers (ECRs) is our ECR Charter, introduced in 2016. One of the outcomes of the four-year HREiR review was the suggestion that we review this Charter. In 2018 we commenced this review, and as part of this we have also undertaken a review of our definition of an ECR at ARU. The review began with an initial consultation on the existing Charter through a series of focus groups with researchers from across the University. A subgroup of the RDWG (which included an ECR, a Professor, a Deputy Dean for Research and a Research Fellow, plus representatives from RIDO and HRS among its members), reviewed this evidence in the light of HE sector best practice and the diverse nature of research at ARU. This group has drafted a revised Charter, with an updated ECR definition, and completed consultation with 300 staff on the proposals. The new Charter will be launched for the 2019/20 academic year.

D: Concordat Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities

Researchers taking responsibility for their own research career development.

The Researcher Development Network (RDN) was established in 2018 and is a forum for all staff (at all stages of their careers) from different faculties to come together to organise social, professional and career development activities and events. Currently there are 30 research-active staff (including research only staff and those on fixed term contracts) in the network with a core team of around 15 who are acting as RDN Champions; communicating with each other across campuses to decide how the network will run and content for each year's programme.

Researchers developing their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge around policy and commercialisation.

A commercialisation officer was appointed in January 2018 to lead the development of research commercialisation in the university. Included in this role is the responsibility to support and train research staff on commercialisation and IP issues. We have also reviewed and revised our intellectual property policy. The commercialisation officer has dealt with 109 enquiries from academics leading to 1 licence and 8 collaboration agreements. Two patents have been filed and another 3 are under consideration. In the current academic year we have provided 15 new researcher development opportunities in knowledge transfer and commercialisation through the "working with business" strand of the RDO. There has been an increase in numbers (80 staff have attended these sessions to date) and the diversity of new academics getting involved with this strand of training. In our KTP sessions, all the participants were new to KTPs and from a wide range of backgrounds and faculties including the Veterans and Families Institute who are currently progressing a new KTP application (worth around £175,000). We have also delivered 7 sandpits that encourage researchers to develop interdisciplinary projects and to collaborate with external partners. These have been attended by around 100 of our academics and 7 new multidisciplinary projects have been created with a range of external partners, including Clinical

Commissioning Groups, County and Local Councils, Fire, Police and Ambulance Services, charities and private sector companies.

E: Concordat Principle 6 - diversity and equality

It is our aim to provide a supportive environment in which to work and study, where treating each other with dignity, courtesy and respect is standard. This ethos is reflected in our strategy, *Designing Our Future 2017-2026*. Since our last review we have been reaccredited with our institutional Athena Swan Bronze award, have made our first departmental Bronze application, and we are developing a further 3 departmental applications for submission in 2019-2020. We aim to move towards achieving an Athena Swan Silver award by 2021/2022. In 2016 we were approved as a Disability Confident Employer (second level – the first being ‘Committed’) and are working towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader. We signed up to the Race Equality Charter in 2018, and in April 2019, we were shortlisted for a national University HR award for our work on equality and diversity (winners will be announced 23 May 2019).

Next Steps.

Our main focus for activity over the next two years is to embed and tailor improvements to researcher support and development that we implemented through the following strategies:

1. Continue to review RDO provision through the RDWG assessing course feedback and any gaps in our provision gained from staff feedback (communicated through surveys/email/personal communication/RDN). Continue to deliver the RDO sessions that cover our ten broad headings which relate to Vitae's RDF.
2. Build further staff engagement with researcher development at ARU through marketing the RDO as follows:
 - a. Launching the RDO programme for 2019/2020 in booklet format as an online PDF at the start of the academic year.
 - b. Desk drop flyers detailing the programme and its content twice during the academic year.
 - c. Continued use and development of RDO website: Improve website traffic by having the RDO programme icon visible on the intranet staff landing page (May 2019). Establish metrics to evaluate the impact of this increased traffic (Autumn 2021). Improve content through continual revision. Improve awareness of RDO range of activities by creating up to 10, 2-3 minute online video soundbites of up and coming workshops (Summer 2020). Produce defined researcher development pathways at different career stages searchable and accessible from the RDO website (Spring 2021).
 - d. Continued email delivery of monthly newsletters to all research active staff (currently~750).
 - e. Work with RDN champions to network across campus to raise the profile of RDO and RDN events.
3. Review our online provision to revise, refresh and create new online content. This will include creating new online training sessions where possible, webinars and recording up to 10% of the most popular RDO sessions from the 2018/2019 programme when they are delivered in 2019/2020.
4. Embed RDN collaboration with RDN Champions from each campus (and if possible each faculty) to deliver 4 network events during 2019/2020. Indicators of successful embedment will be increased attendance at RDN events and more volunteer RDN champions on both campuses.
5. Ensure new staff with responsibility for research are informed about opportunities and support available by developing a research specific induction programme open to all staff (Summer 2020). Success measures will be ~95% of all new staff on research and teaching contracts or with research responsibilities in their contract will undertake the research induction and have clear research development related targets in their first year. Increased staff attendance at RDO sessions, improved open rates for RDO email newsletters, increased web traffic, and increased attendance of the RDN network will be secondary success measures. We will review the progress of implementation of the induction programme in spring 2021 to ensure we are meeting targets.
6. Support researchers to lead research and innovation at ARU by developing a research leadership programme for ECRs and mid-career researchers. Devise expected targets and success measures for the programme (Spring 2020) and launch the new researcher leadership pilot programme (Autumn 2020).
7. Revise our approach to mentoring researchers, making it more inclusive and embedding mentoring into our career progression support framework. HR are currently reviewing our existing mentoring programmes and findings will be utilised to establish target groups and appropriate success measures such as % increase in staff taking up research mentorship as mentee or mentor (Spring 2020) and successful staff mentoring relationships in place (Summer 2020).
8. We have new operational targets to increase numbers of BME staff across the workforce and increase the number of female professors. At baseline, in 2017, 11.6% of our staff were BME and 31% of our professors were female. Our targets for 2027 are (1) to increase BME staff to 14% of the workforce and (2) to increase female professors to 40%.
9. Once proposed revisions to the ECR Charter are approved, and the revised Charter is launched, we will review representation of ECRs on University committees to ensure it remains appropriate. We will also ensure that information about ECR representation on committees is available and up to date on an ECR area of the University intranet.

In conclusion, our review has highlighted significant progress made against our action plan since 2017. Moving forward we will continue to strive to ensure that principles of the Concordat are embedded throughout the University, and that we have put actions in place to ensure we deliver on this goal.