Introduction

The University received the HR Excellence in Research Award in September 2011 and retained it in subsequent reviews in 2013 and 2015. This report and associated action plan outline our internal evaluation process, the successes driven by our action plan and how these link to University priorities. The report also sets out the main focus of our strategy for the next 2 years and the key measures of success which form the basis of an updated action plan for 2017-19.

Process of internal evaluation: This process of review and planning has successfully become embedded as part of the University’s governance and reporting structures. The previous Concordat Steering Group has been replaced by a new Career Development for Research Staff steering group (CDRS), with a clear remit to promote the implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers throughout the organisation, including supporting personal and career development opportunities for research staff. The steering group, chaired by the Vice-Principal (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Wider Impact), with research academic and research staff representatives from Research Staff Associations (RSAs), Organisational and Professional Development (OPD), HR and the Careers Service, reviews progress and reports to University Committees of Court and Senate: People and Organisational Development Committee (PODCO) and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). The Researcher Development and Projects Officer (RDPO) and the HR Manager (Operations) ensure that issues raised, and decisions taken by the Group, influence training provision and HR Policy respectively. The internal evaluation included careful review of progress against previous action plans with input from key stakeholders across the University (including HR, OPD, Equality & Diversity, Careers and Enterprise and Revealing Research). Data from Careers in Research online survey (CROS) 2015 and from the 2015 and 2017 University Staff Surveys which included a section of CROS like questions for specifically for research staff, feedback from the researcher development workshop programme within OPD, along with discussions at meetings of CDRS shaped priority areas focused on in this review and action plan. Along with input from the above surveys, RSAs and representatives’ inputs to the action plan were received via CDRS and RSA committee.

A draft of the internal evaluation report was shared with Vitae at the end of August 2017 for comment and feedback. The revised action plan covering 2017-19 focuses on further tasks planned and carries forward those still in progress from the previous plan. The action plan can be viewed [www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/hrexcellenceinresearch](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/hr/hrexcellenceinresearch).

Key achievements and progress against original action plan and four-year review and action plan

Over the last year the University has developed its Strategy to 2022 which recognises the importance of our people and has at its heart a high performance community. The new strategy brings renewed emphasis on advancing our values and enabling our people to flourish. Themes include promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, recognising excellent performance and outcomes, valuing feedback and communication, enhancing personal development, wellbeing and performance and embedding interdisciplinary research and teaching. A set of formal performance measures supporting the delivery of our strategy have been approved by Court and precise definitions and targets are being developed. The emphasis on developing our University community will promote and support our commitment to the HR Excellence in Research agenda.

Key Progress against Principles 1 and 2: Recruitment and Selection; Recognition and Value:

- **In our 2017 staff survey, 91% of Research staff who responded reported that they believe University acts fairly with regard to recruitment, compared with 75% in the 2015 survey.** (Measure HRE 1)

Significant progress has been made on recruitment supported by the investment in a dedicated HR Officer (Recruitment) post in January 2017. Work on branding and promotion of the University as an inclusive and welcoming employer from advertising to induction has been completed. A broader range of targeted advertising channels has been introduced, including social media, to improve accessibility of opportunities. Shortlisting and interview scoring and feedback forms have been introduced to support fair recruitment practices. Single gender recruitment panels are no longer used and monitoring is in place to ensure compliance. Driven by the University Executive Group, completion rates for Equality and Diversity training for all staff is have risen from 41% in 2015 to 75%. Staff induction events and materials have been reviewed and relaunched.

- **In our 2017 staff survey 80% of Research staff said they had had an Objective Setting and Review meeting in the last 12 months compared with 67% in 2015.** (Measure HRE 2)

The University’s appraisal process, Objective Setting and Review (OSaR), is an integral part of supporting research staff and provides an opportunity to discuss training and career development. The University is taking proactive measures to ensure 100% uptake of OSaRs for research staff by regular monitoring and reporting of completion rates for each School. In our 2017 staff survey, 64% of Research respondents found the OSaR meeting useful and 57% felt valued by the University, but, only 48% of respondents from our Research community felt their OSaR meeting left them feeling that their work was valued (Measure HRE 3). The quality of OSaR discussions is therefore an area for investigation and action going forward.

- **In our 2017 staff survey 79% of Research respondents said they felt fairly paid in relation to other staff at the University doing a similar job.** This compares with 69% of staff across all categories in the University. (Measure HRE 4)

The University continues to adhere to its principals of fair and transparent reward for all staff regardless of contract type. This is underpinned by our job evaluation process and use of the Framework Agreement. Promotion procedures have been reviewed and a cross-University, rather than individual School approach introduced to ensure consistency. Merit Awards have been expanded to include accelerated advancement. This scheme has been re-introduced after years of absence and is recognised to be a more
inclusive process for staff employed for shorter periods. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out for Promotion and Merit Award exercises and remuneration statistics are analysed by HR and monitored by the University Executive, PODCO and the University Remuneration Committee.

**Key Progress against Principles 3 and 4: Support and Career Development:** The results of our Staff Surveys are used assess our performance on the provision of training/learning support and career development. In our 2017 staff survey Researcher respondents said:

- I feel that I am given the same opportunities to develop as other staff (81% compared with University wide response of 71%) (Measure HRE 5)
- I am satisfied with my current level of training and development (74%, University wide response 73%) (Measure HRE 6)

A detailed section of the survey breaks down Researcher development activities and asks Researchers to identify which activities they have completed and would like to complete. This drives the planning of our development activity for the Research community. In 2015/16 OPD ran 47 specific researcher development workshops and the number of workshops increased to 50 in 2016/17. The level of engagement from our eligible population of research staff in these workshops and other more general training activities was 23.48% in 2015/16 and 28.53% in 2016/17. A full listing of our OPD programme and events, and our Researcher Development Policy and Annual Reports which give more detail of researcher development activities are available on our OPD web page.

A Training and Development Officer post was created and appointed in January 2017. The role has oversight of existing and proposed mentoring schemes. A new booklet *Mentoring, making the difference* and short video are now available on the OPD Mentoring web page. In the last 12 months the site has had 1,224 unique page views. The University runs a successful cross-institutional Early Career Academic Mentoring Scheme which ensures that researchers are supported in developing their careers through a variety of possible career paths. This collaboration, initially with the University of St Andrews, was extended to include the University of Abertay in 2016/17 and more recently Glasgow School of Art to better serve the needs of Researchers across all disciplines. Overall, the number of Mentee partnerships has increased dramatically:

- Mentee partnerships, 2015/16: 30; 2016/17: 67; 2017/18 to date: 123

**Key Progress against Principle 5: Researchers’ Responsibilities:** All researchers have a responsibility to be proactive in developing their understanding of good research practice and of the various standards that govern research. The University of Dundee is committed to excellence in research by promoting the highest standards of research integrity and leading on university-wide training on the subject. As such the University commissioned an online training resource entitled: Responsible and Ethical Practice in Research. The resource includes a video, quiz and case studies. In addition to 6 sub-topics, a compendium of Case studies and notes for moderators was also produced for supervisors and senior academics, to support face-to-face training at School level. Research Staff have had access to the Research Integrity training as of May 2017.

As well as discussion through our OSaR process and mentoring schemes, a range of career development activities are offered to Researchers to support career decisions. These include a specific workshop *Career Transitions: Exploring Career Opportunities for Researchers, How to Secure a Lecturing Post*, one-to-one careers advisory sessions. In total 55 places were taken up across 2016 and 2017 in these activities. Other activities to support this Principle include the Converge Challenge 2017 which attracted 23 applications from our Research community.

**Key Progress against Principle 6: Diversity and Equality:** Equality and Diversity considerations are embedded throughout the University’s policies and procedures and the University has actively promoted equality and diversity through training and awareness raising, its governance structure and mainstreaming plans under its public sector equality duty.

- In our 2017 staff survey 97% of all respondents said they were aware of the University’s policies on Equality and Diversity
  (Measure HRE 7)

The University published its 2017 - 2021 Equality Outcomes and Equality Outcome Action Plan in April 2017. The plan sets out timescales for the completion of a range of actions which include the introduction of Equality Impact Assessment training for all Schools and Directorates. Equality and Diversity Committees have been established in each of the Schools and are supported by the University Equality and Diversity Office to develop local plans, addressing local issues, as well as supporting the delivery of the Equality Outcome Action Plan. An additional Equality and Diversity Officer has been appointed to support this work. In April 2017, the University’s Bronze Athena Swan award was successfully renewed. Details of our Equality and Diversity activities are available on our website.

**Key Progress against Principle 7: Implementation and Review:** Our strategy is agreed and progress monitored and reviewed via the recently established CDRS. The University’s biennial Staff Engagement Survey including CROS like question is a key tool for measuring progress of our overall performance with metrics associated with the Concordat. It also informs our planning process. Specific feedback from our research staff cohort, identifying issues and key areas for improvement and action is also gathered through Have Your Say sessions.
Strategy and success measures: 2017 – 2019

The new University Strategy to 2022 was launched in September 2017 with our high performance community at its heart. This renewed focus on “A high performance community, working together and supporting each other to become Scotland’s leading University, transforming lives locally and globally” will drive our HR agenda, generally. For our Research community the Concordat Principles and Action plan have an important role in contributing to our University strategy themes and objectives and bring structure to our planning and evaluation activities which will in turn contribute to University-wide performance measures. Metrics linked to the strategy will be reviewed through the University’s Governance structure including, special interest committees (e.g. Equality and Diversity) and themed reports at quarterly PODCO meetings and, where appropriate, Court.

Whilst timely achievement of the activities set out in our Action Plan gives some measure of our success and commitment to implementing the Concordat Support the Career Development of Researchers, the University biennial staff survey is our key feedback mechanism for the Research community to tell us how successful these activities have been. Our recently delivered results for 2017 are positive as detailed above, but further analysis will be carried out to identify gaps or issues. Plans for feedback through focus groups and team sessions are being developed and these will further inform our action planning. The University is committed to future staff surveys and, where appropriate, interim themed surveys/pulse surveys to check progress towards our key objectives.

Strategies to support Principles 1 and 2: We will continue to work on developing our recruitment policies and procedures. Recruitment metrics will be analysed and reported as part of our PODCO reporting schedule and through Athena Swan activities at University and local level. The introduction of a new HR Business system should provide improved reporting functionality and and we will work closely with Business Transformation team to develop an improved scheme of recruitment metrics (implementation date of new system to be confirmed, expected 2018).

Key Measure: HRE1

We have a clear target to Increase in completion of Objective Setting and Review (OSaR) to 100% of eligible community. Implementation will be driven by University Executive Group and monitoring through our governance and reporting structures. The staff survey highlighted the need to focus on improve the quality of OSaR discussions supported by regular OSaR training events at University-wide and School level and review of OSaR process. We will take advantage of opportunities in new HR Business System to tailor the paperwork and process to specific job categories and include skills and competencies following implementation of new system.

Key Measures: HRE 2, HRE 3;

In relation to reward, the University will continue to monitor and report and carry out EIAs for remuneration decisions including Merit Awards.

Key Measure HRE 4

Strategies to support Principle 3 and 4: The University Staff Survey, which contains CROS-like questions for research staff, will run every two years and provides detailed feedback from our Research Community. Further analysis of the most recent survey will be carried out and information used to plan activities for Researchers. We will continue to build on the development programme for our leaders, including research leaders, measuring impact of the programme. The expanded Early Career Academics’ Mentoring Scheme will be promoted and rebranded as Teaching, Research and Academic Mentoring (TRAM). Research staff will also have the further opportunity to access mentors from our Professional Services directorate following the launch of our new Professional Services Mentoring Scheme in 2018.

Key Measure HRE 5, HRE 6

Strategies to support Principle 5: Following a successful pilot of the online Research Integrity training resource with postgraduate researchers, a mirror site for research and teaching staff has now been launched. Staff will be encouraged to complete this training by letter of endorsement from the Chair of the University of Dundee Research Governance and Policy sub-committee. Research Integrity training is to be strongly recommended as part of the University’s agreed standard set of criteria for research supervision accreditation. We will review staff survey responses to assess interest/requirements in career development activities and work across the University to provide support in this area.

Measure: plan for activity linked to staff survey responses and activity take-up.

Strategies to support Principle 6: Achievement of Athena SWAN Awards in 2017 and 2019 and execution of and progress reporting for plans for both Athena SWAN and the Equality Outcomes. EIAs will be used across the University to inform decision-making, identify gaps and action plans. 100% completion rate for Equality and Diversity training modules achieved through objective setting and close monitoring of completion rates through the University Governance structure. An unconscious bias training module was introduced to senior level staff at the University and made available to all staff through our OPD programme from 2016/17. Key Measures: HRE 1, HRE 7

Strategies to support Principle 7: Continue to monitor and respond to researcher opinion and maintain links with other HEIs. The recent Staff Survey the results will be used to inform improvements in researcher development support. The internal and external evaluation processes provide a good opportunity to establish and review ongoing support for the career development of researchers. There continues to be research staff representatives on management committees. PODCO and CDRS will be updated regularly on the progress of our activities.