



HR Excellence in Research Award Summary Report 2019-2022

The University of Greenwich (UoG) was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award in January 2013 and retained the award at its review in 2020. This report summarises progress against the Action Plan over the 2019-2022 period as well as our focus for the next three years.

(A) Background and Internal Review

At the UoG, approximately 50% of staff are employed in academic roles and 50% in professional/administrative roles. Just over half of academic staff are considered to have a significant responsibility for research with staff selecting and pursuing a research career pathway as part of the University academic framework.

The university offers a diverse educational curriculum in four Faculties distributed across three campuses. It has a proud tradition of promoting diversity and providing education and research opportunities to disadvantaged groups. As a consequence of the university's People Enabling Strategy, it aims to recruit and develop colleagues who inspire society through the discovery, application and dissemination of knowledge.

Central to the career development of the researcher-staff base is the activity of the university's Research and Enterprise Training Institute (RETI) which sits within the Greenwich Research and Enterprise (GRE) directorate. RETI manages the training and development of supervisors and postgraduate research students (PGRs) via a portfolio of mandatory and optional training, as well as guidance, advice and the provision of regulatory and procedural documentation when required. The training is delivered by both internal and external experts through a blended approach and has been instrumental in developing the expertise and confidence of the researcher community through implementation of the HR Excellence in Research Award, Researcher Development Concordat (RDC), and Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF). RETI's support extends into faculty and departmental events. In conjunction with the Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDC), RETI oversees the quality and standards of research degrees by ensuring they meet the required standards set out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

How the internal review was undertaken, and Researchers' views taken into account

The review was co-ordinated by RETI in collaboration with Human Resources (HR) on behalf of the university's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (R&KEC). Regular updates were presented at the R&KEC committee for confirmation of action points and future direction.

A gap analysis was undertaken by RETI to compare the policies and practices at the UoG against the HR Excellence in Research Award principles, and action points identified. Views of researchers and their managers were obtained via several routes, including (i) UoG Research and Enterprise Committee (REC, now named as R&KEC) meetings, (ii) PGR ECR (postgraduate researchers and early career researchers) forum meetings, (iii) FRDC meetings for each faculty, (iv) via RETI training events for PGRs and research supervisors. Quantitative feedback was obtained via a number of surveys to include Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) 2020, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) in 2019 and 2021, and UoG annual staff surveys.

An analysis of the findings from CEDARS, and its mapping with the RDC principles were presented at the R&KEC meetings in September 2020 and April 2021, respectively. Areas of good practice and areas needing improvement were discussed by the Doctoral Society, faculties, GRE, Greenwich Students Union (GSU), Human Resources (HR) and RETI and future action points developed in July 2021. In the PRES, within the seven core areas, the University scored (definitely or mostly agreed) >80% in research skills, responsibilities, professional development, progression and supervision. Moreover, of the 103 participating institutions, the University was ranked 9th for research skills, 20th for responsibilities, 22nd for professional development and 23rd for progression.

(B) Key Achievements and Progress Against the 2019 Strategy and 2019-2021 Action Plan

The key achievements and progress against the RDC obligations and actions points are outlined below in the context of the Concordat principles. Significant achievements have been noted in several areas and these are being taken further forward

by the university's Research and Knowledge Exchange (R&KE) strategy 2030, to improve support to our research community, examples include promoting interdisciplinary research and, support for Early career researchers (ECR).

Principle: Environment and Culture

University institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers: Through the University and People Enabling strategies the university commenced a new approach where staff are invited to support the design of new policies, and redesign of existing ones, through facilitated engagement sessions. This is intended to make policies more supportive. Recognised trade unions continue their roles to support policy design through consultation and negotiation. When staff join the university, they are invited to a structured induction including a welcome from the university senior leaders, as well as an induction with their respective line managers. They are also provided with online resources and an induction checklist with quick links to key policies to support their initial probationary period within the university. When new policies are developed the GRE directorate ensure researchers are given feedback opportunities via team meetings, email/yammer and staff briefings. These are organised to increase participation and engagement, so implementation of procedures is transparent, equitable, fair and effective. In support of the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, the university funded research into the experiences of LGBT+ staff. This research is aiming to accelerate the lack of qualitative information and should influence policy development and practice. A Race Action plan was launched in 2022 which reinforces our commitment to race equality and sets out a series of measures to achieve its objectives including supporting policy development. Our events aim to be a catalyst for ongoing change and to create a culture where everyone can play a part as advocates, allies, and inclusive leaders.

A supportive research environment: Managers are required to complete the university's managing equality, diversity and inclusion essential online training to pass probation, and every 3 years as a refresher as part of the appraisal cycle. Data from the university learning management system is shared with senior managers who monitor and support staff to complete this development. In 2020, the university funded development of a research led allyship and active bystander intervention online training offer. Data is being analysed for the impact on attitude change. So far over 100 have been involved in the pilot, and it is intended that this research led training will be made available to all staff as part the People Enabling Strategy. The university Race Action Plan will also be investing to support training to develop equity.

To promote good mental health and wellbeing of researchers, the university's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2022 supports researchers through effective wellbeing and mental health provisions, and aligns with the university's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. HR has provided training on Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) since 2019 and has been shortlisted by an InsideOut award, as well as line manager training on wellbeing, training on transitioning from the pandemic by managing your wellbeing. RETI has provided new wellbeing training including time and stress management techniques for researchers.

The university's Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure was updated in 2021

https://docs.gre.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/131915/bullying-and-harassment-policy-and-procedure-september-2021.pdf. This supports the university to tackle, discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation in line with the Equality Act 2010. As outlined in the Bullying and Harassment Procedure guidance, the university has an incident management reporting tool. In line with recommendations from the Office for Students, the university will be launching a new Report and Support tool in September to students and then all staff, to support incidents of sexual violence and misconduct.

To ensure researchers and their managers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the highest standards of research integrity, a gap analysis on the Concordat to support research integrity was undertaken in 2020 which confirmed that the UoG integrity framework is sound. The University is committed to implementing the principles and commitments of the Universities UK (UUK) Concordat to support research integrity (2012), and has set a Code of Practice for Research, as well as Procedures for Investigating Research Misconduct. The University's Research Ethics Committee considers/approves research projects requiring ethical approval in accordance to the university ethics policy. RETI provides training on research integrity and ethics to PGRs, researchers, and managers.

Provide opportunities for engagement of researchers and managers on professional development activities. Examples here include: RETI training programme for PGRs/research staff on public engagement, research leadership, employability skills for researchers. In response to the feedback from our researchers and developments within the sector, the programme is refreshed on an annual basis. A total of over 170 sessions were delivered in 2020-21, and 204 in 2021-22. The number of attendees at its training sessions increased from just under 1,000 in 2019-20 to 1,995 in 2020-21. Since 2019 HR has organised annual Aurora programme on leadership development for women, for researchers and professional staff, and to date 20 have completed the programme in 2019-20 and another 10 in 2020-21. HR run other training courses, for example, career coaching for managers, coaching for all, recruitment and selection and, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI); reverse mentoring and seminar events organised by key staff networks with bodies such as Women's Higher Education Network and Henpicked advocate support for flexibility, mentorship and sponsorship for personal and career development. Also, researchers have been appointed on University Alliance (UA) Doctoral Training Alliance (DTA)

Fellowships and Studentships where DTA scholars receive a very valuable and enriching experience through training delivered by other UA universities, as well as opportunities for collaboration and placements. RETI hosted the UA DTA Summer School in 2020 with a focus on improving research visibility, and skills training, examples included powerful presentations, vocal coaching, and research impact at the UK Parliament.

A university-wide 3 minute thesis (3MT) competition was launched by RETI in 2019, and the UoG PGRs competed in the 2020, 2021, 2022 Vitae national competition where a UoG PGR student won the People's Choice Award in 2021, and a UoG PGR student has been selected for the semi-finals in the 2022 competition.

Principle: Employment

Interview panels at the university comprise of a diverse workforce to prevent unintended bias. Also, training on recruitment, including interview skills is provided by HR and RETI (RETI for PGR recruitment).

To provide clear and transparent merit-based recognition, reward and promotion pathways that recognise the full range of researchers' contributions, and the diversity of personal circumstances, the university implements the HR merit-based recognition and reward/promotion scheme, promoting the diversity of researchers. Also, GRE Research and Enterprise Awards event is held annually to celebrate research with a particular focus on PGRs and ECRs.

Recruitment and selection of Horizon2020 COFUND Research Fellows with the University Alliance. As part of the UA DTA programme, the university has appointed Fellows to the Horizon2020 COFUND Fellowships programme, with **ECRs as lead supervisors and also part of the interview panels.**

Recruitment and selection of University-funded Research Fellows in 2020: The University funded the recruitment of 10 researchers, predominantly ECRs, as 3-year Research Fellows to enhance its research profile.

Retention of researchers: Since 2019, RETI has provided mandatory training for research staff on undertaking and managing research, recruitment and selection of PGRs, supervision of PGRs, international compliance, and research ethics, and has added mandatory training on preparation to be a PGR examiner and chair of an examination panel in 2022. RETI has also introduced a Lunch n' Learn series in 2022 to support researchers in areas of wellbeing, funding, networking.

Principle: Professional and Career Development

To recognise that moving between, and working across, employment sectors can bring benefits to research and researchers, and to support opportunities for researchers to experience this, in 2019 RETI introduced training on careers outside of academia, careers in leadership for researchers. HR provides a job shadowing scheme to consider work with external institutions.

A new academic workload planning tool (AWP) has been launched in 2022 to support academic development through time allocation and a transition year is being run in 2022-23. A new management systems with reporting facilities, 'Horizon' for university-level information has been introduced in 2020-21, and 'PULSE' for researcher-specific information was initiated in 2021 with implementation in phases in the current year.

Staff appraisal is contractual. All staff are trained on appraisal annually. Senior managers lead appraisal training including those with responsibilities for R&KE, so staff receive pertinent information and examples of objective setting, 1-2-1s, performance reviews and career planning. All resources from training are available online through guides and videos.

(C) Next Steps and Focus of the Strategy for the Next Three Years

A Researcher Development Working Group will be set up with representation from RETI, HR, GSU, Doctoral Society, and faculties. One of the main objectives of this Group will be to identify a mechanism for data collection for the implementation of the minimum of 10 days of continuing professional development (CPD) for research-only staff. The university will be launching a new professional services career framework which makes competences for career planning visible up to director positions. The framework will focus on competences which are applicable to all roles in Higher Education. The university has commenced work on technicians commitment. Other operational activities include further progress on the Race Equality Charter and Athena Awan applications towards achieving accreditation, scope a university-wide seminar series, and develop ECR networks in faculties where not already in place. Implementation of the usage of the reporting tools for the new management systems Horizon and PULSE to improve reporting and future planning.

Our success will be monitored in terms of timely completion of the proposed actions in the 2022-2025 Action Plan. Updates will be communicated to researchers regularly. Views from researchers will be collected from a range of university committee meetings. Success on implementation of the actions will be measured via surveys such as CEDARS, PRES and UoG staff surveys which will be compared with previous years.

Abbreviations:

3MT: 3 Minute Thesis
AWP: Academic Workload Planning
CEDARS: Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey
CPD: Continuing Professional Development
DTA: Doctoral Training Alliance
ECR: Early Career Researcher
EDI: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
FRDC: Faculty Research Degrees Committee
GRE: Greenwich Research and Enterprise
GSU: Greenwich Students Union
HR: Human Resources
LGBT: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
MHFA: Mental Health First Aid
PGR: Postgraduate Researcher
PRES: Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
QAA: Quality Assurance Agency
PGRs: Postgraduate Research students
PRES: Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
R&KE: Research and Knowledge Exchange
R&KEC: Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee
RDC: Researcher Development Concordat
RDF: Researcher Development Framework
REC: Research and Enterprise Committee
RETI: Research and Enterprise Training Institute
UA: University Alliance
UoG: University of Greenwich
UUK: Universities UK