



Bath Spa University – HR Excellence in Research Award – 6 year Review

1. Evaluation and Review process

Since achieving the HR Excellence in Research Award in January 2012, Bath Spa University has increasingly punched above its weight in terms of research success in its core areas of arts, humanities and education and in respect to success in REF2014. It has used its QR to develop a dedicated Research Support Office focussing on researcher development and support across the university. Research Statistics providing context for this review can be found in Appendix A.

In preparation for its 4 year external review, the University's Research Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy Committee (RKECC) set up an HR Excellence in Research Working Group in July 2015, and this group has met on a regular basis to review the action plan for the implementation of the Concordat, and to review the results of the Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). The Action Plan was reviewed in November 2015, in May 2017 and most recently in January 2018 in preparation for the 6 year review.

Issues raised as a result of PRES are reviewed and monitored by our Higher Degrees Research Committee. A PIRLS action plan was developed as a result of the 2015 exercise and in reviewed in April 2017 with the professoriate community. A new action plan has been developed in discussion with our Research Leader community as a result of the 2017 PIRLS exercise. This can be found in Appendix B.

As noted in our 4 year review, one of the key challenges has been how best to engage with our research community in an effective way, in an institution with a small contract researcher community, and PhD students who are predominantly part-time and practice based. A research staff forum was set up in 2014, and the membership of RKECC extended to include representation from across our research community, including fixed term contract (FTC) researcher and early stage researcher (ESR) representatives. Our Researcher Development Officer engages regularly with research staff from these communities, as well as our PhD student community, and has worked with them to develop bespoke researcher development programmes and events. A small fund has been made available to support PhD student activities, and ESR and contract researchers are eligible to apply for HEQR seed funding to support both their personal development, and public engagement and impact activities. A recent meeting with our FTC researcher community has identified a number of training needs (such as collaboration, public engagement and impact) in a format that will enable those researchers working at a distance to join training sessions through google hang-outs or skype.

The University appointed an Equality Projects officer in September 2017, and is preparing to apply for Athena Swan bronze award this academic year. This will link into the development of our action plan, as will the development of our Code of Practice on the Selection of Staff and Outputs for REF2021, where we will set out how we define 'significantly responsible for research' at Bath Spa University.

2. Details of key achievements and the progress against the strategy, indicators and actions identified in the original action plan

2.1 *Recruitment and Selection*

The University continues to recruit high quality research staff and all Line Managers are trained in recruitment and selection procedures. The Research office runs an induction programme for all new staff, and as part of the induction and probation procedures, on-line research ethics and integrity and unconscious bias training is mandatory for all new staff.

Further statistics on the breakdown of University staff can be found in Appendix A.

2.2 *Recognition and Value*

The Research Leadership programmes continue to recruit successfully, and the research leadership community is supported through research leaders' forums and peer mentor and peer review training. This enables senior staff to share good practice in leading and developing their research teams, and developing key skills for promotion.

The University ESR community has also continued to grow with high quality academic staff recruited in line with the University's research strategy. All ESRs are allocated mentors from across the research leadership community and invited to ESR bespoke training programmes.

The Research Office publishes a monthly newsletter and a research blog which highlight research successes, and has recently recruited an Impact officer and Public Engagement Manager, who work closely with our Communications team to showcase research achievements and profile our research staff. Media training is available, and staff are supported to attend workshops offering training on working with MPs, and with policy advisors. Two of our ESRs recently achieved British Academic Rising Star Awards, and we have been successful in the award of two AHRC and ESRC early stage researcher awards, which recognise the support we have in place at the University for emerging leaders.

An HEQR seed fund supports public engagement and impact activities, and new Public Engagement Champions have been appointed to work with their research staff to develop these activities.

Three strategic professors have been appointed to lead university wide research centres, linking into the University's vision, and to mentor and provide support to researchers across the University. They are responsible for developing strategic bids and awards and to developing our research community, including the recruitment of dedicated research fellows (both permanent and FTC linked to awards) in their respective areas, to enhance and grow our research community and develop and encourage collaborations across the academic schools.

2.3 *Support and Career Development*

In line with the Vitae RDF, the Researcher Development programme includes sessions on career development, and the Research Support officer works actively with our Careers and Employability team to offer appropriate training to FTC Researchers and ESR staff. Careers staff are able to offer one-to-one consultations with PhD students, and offer surgeries at our research site in Corsham on a regular basis. An audit is currently underway to audit our fixed term contract research staff expertise against research centre interests, to enable future collaborations and identify potential research grant funding opportunities for those staff.

Members of the Research Support Office regularly attend School and departmental level research committees and development events, and contribute to Research Centre events, and RSO staff work closely on a day-to-day basis with the Directors of Research in Schools, with Research centre Leaders, and with Public Engagement and REF UoA Champions.

2.4 *Researcher's Responsibilities*

As stated above, the PIRLS action plan identifies ways in which our Research leaders can be better supported, and our Researcher development programme uses resources from the Every Researcher Counts programme and the Vitae RDF to highlight researcher responsibilities across our research community.

Since the 4 year review, there has been a focus on Research Integrity and Ethics training, and a new range of discipline specific on-line modules has been launched. An on-line stage 1 approval process has been developed to ease the ethical approval process, and workshops and training are in place which help researchers to address ethical issues in their subject areas and to debate these issues with their peers.

2.5 *Diversity and Equality*

The University and has an active equality agenda which aims to develop and support women in education. It recently launched a Women's Leadership Network and ran an Equalities week in September 2017, organised by the new University Equality Projects Officer. It achieved Stonewall recognition in 2014 and is working towards Bronze Athena Swan accreditation.

2.6 *Implementation and Review*

The Concordat Action Plan is a live document and a formal evaluation is undertaken every two years by RKECC, informed by regular meetings between the Research Support Office, the Researcher Development Officer, HR and the Graduate School Manager. The Vice-Provost (Research and Graduate Affairs) has responsibility for implementing and reviewing action across the year, informed by the HR Excellence in Research Working Group, which meets at least once per year.

3. Next Steps

Concordat Principle	Next Steps	Success Measures
Recruitment and Selection	-Review and Evaluate attendance on training in this area -Ensure that WAM has allocated time set aside for research activities of all types	-By July 2019 – 80% of Line Managers to have received appropriate training - By July 2018 – WAM allocations agreed, that include protected time for Research & Enterprise activities
Recognition and Value	-work with research leadership community to ensure that successes are showcased and celebrated -Ensure that Workload Allocation Model (WAM) has allocated time set aside for research activities of all types -develop training that can include our remote researcher communities, and strive to engage with more staff through training events and workshops	-By July 2018 develop blog, newsletters and internal communication systems to highlight this more effectively -By July 2018 – WAM allocations agreed, that include protected time for Research & Enterprise activities, including time for research leadership and management

Concordat Principle	Next Steps	Success Measures
	-continue to make available HEQR funding to support research activities	-By July 2019 use technology to facilitate access to training, and monitor and evaluate to improve attendance trends across research groups
Support and Career Development	-develop and launch new MA module on Researcher Development - further enhance training and development in career planning and development - work with HR on embedding better systems for identifying and monitoring CPD sections of SDR process	- MA module launch in Sept 2019 -development of new RDP workshops to facilitate these aspects of training throughout 2017/18 - launch of new SDR system in 2018/19
Researcher's responsibilities	-Continue to embed principles of research ethics and integrity across institution - continue to work with research leadership community and with Careers and Employability to better enable staff to plan their career pathways	- By July 2018, business case developed to better resource research ethics and integrity training - By July 2019, workshops and training developed to facilitate training and development in career planning and promotion
Diversity and Equality	Development and achievement of Athena Swan bronze accreditation	July 2018
Implementation and Review	Continuation of annual review of documentation	July 2018 and July 2019