*The University of Strathclyde was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award in September 2011 and reaccredited in 2015. Recipients of this award are required to undertake an internal self-assessment two years after reaccreditation. This report summarises progress against the 2015 - 2017 Action Plan and our focus for the next two years.*

**A) Background and Internal Review**

The University of Strathclyde is a leading International Technological University with strong links to a number of industrial partners. The University has over 500 members of research staff that sit within four faculties: Engineering, Science, Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS) and the Strathclyde Business School. Researcher Development at Strathclyde is overseen by the Researcher Development Sub-Committee (RDSC), which itself reports to the university level Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). RDSC is composed of the Faculty Vice-Deans (Research) as well as Organisational and Staff Development Unit (OSDU), Researcher Development Programme (RDP), research staff and PGR representatives. It is chaired by the Deputy Associate Principal for Research and Knowledge Exchange.

In September 2015 responsibility for research staff development moved from the RDP in Research and Knowledge Exchange Services (RKES) to the OSDU within the HR Directorate. RDP continue to provide development support for research postgraduates (PGRs). Following this move a consultation was undertaken to inform the development of any new provision for research staff, as a result of this change a number of new initiatives have been launched which are detailed within this report.

OSDU provides staff development across the University, with two researcher development programmes: the Strathclyde Programme in Academic Practice, Researcher Development and Knowledge Exchange (SPARK) which is accredited to Masters level and the workshop-based Strathclyde Programme in Research and Leadership (SPIRAL).

**How the internal review was undertaken and how Researchers views were taken into account**

Having held the HR Excellence in Research (HR EiR) Award for six years, internal evaluation of the actions is now embedded within core practices and review processes across the university. Progress against the HR EiR action plan and the related Researcher Development Strategy and Action Plan is reviewed by RDSC. This report has been reviewed by the University Staff Committee, RKEC and the institutional Research Staff Association, the Researchers’ Group (RG). This six-year progress review was led by OSDU in consultation with key stakeholders from HR, RKES, RG and the Equality & Diversity team.

The outcomes of the research staff consultation have underpinned the activities relating to this plan over the last two years. Research staff from all faculties took part in the consultation through surveys, interviews and a focus group. The findings from the 2015 and 2017 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) also informed this progress report.

**B) Key achievements and progress against the 2017 strategy and action plan**

**Principles 1 & 2 (Recruitment & Selection, Recognition & Value)**

1. A review of the fixed-term contract process has taken place and actions aimed at increasing the transparency and efficiency around the management of fixed term contracts have been implemented.
2. The Researchers’ Group, an institutional-level Research Staff Association and sub-group of RKEC, was launched in September 2016. The committee is comprised of research staff from across all faculties with approximately 15 members at any one time; representatives of the group now sit on RKEC, RDSC and some faculty research committees. Broadening formal representation at faculty and departmental level is an action for the group over the next two years.
3. Strathclyde performs well against the national picture in relation to recruitment information (CROS2017): 94% of respondents received a written job description (89% nationally) and 82% state they received details of the transferable skills required (70% nationally). In 2016, 94% of research staff also took part in the appraisal process.

**Principles 3, 4 & 5 (Support, Career Development and Researchers’ Responsibilities)**

1. Following the move of research staff development from RDP to OSDU in September 2015, a consultation took place between November 2015 and March 2016 to investigate development needs of this group. A qualitative survey was completed by research staff from all faculties, followed by interviews with 14 individuals with research experience ranging from 2 months to 15 years. Senior academic staff members from a previous Researcher Development Short Life Working Group and Vice-Deans (Research) were also interviewed.

Along with CROS 2015 results, the outcomes were used to develop a proposed programme combining current provision and new additions. This was refined at a research staff focus group and agreed at RDSC. All faculties were represented at all stages of the process.

1. A suite of research staff webpages has been developed (<https://www.strath.ac.uk/hr/learninganddevelopment/researchstaffdevelopment/>). The consultation had recommended any new provision for research staff should be included within the current programmes targeted at academic staff so a dedicated webpage approach has been taken to ensure research staff are able to identify relevant opportunities for their career stage. The Researchers’ Group also has a web page hosted in the same area.
2. Five new workshops focusing on research staff career development have been implemented as a result of the consultation. The workshops are popular with research staff with repeat sessions being scheduled due to high uptake. Engagement by research staff with researcher development CPD activities has more than doubled during the last year, with 173 individuals attending these activities (81 in 2014/2015).
3. In September 2016, 14 members of research staff graduated from SPARK programme with 12 PG Certificates and 2 PG Diplomas. 78 are currently enrolled.
4. Support has been developed for staff applying to the leadership development programme, Scottish Crucible. This is aimed at new academic and research staff with the highest potential to effect societal change in Scotland. Of the 30 successful applicants this year, eight were from Strathclyde, of which two were members of research staff.
5. Since January 2015, OSDU have been working with the external organisation, Vitae, to design and pilot a recognition framework (the Vitae International Researcher’s award (VIRA)) for researchers’ skills development in relation to the RDF. The first six members of staff (four research staff) completed this programme in April 2017 and were awarded the Vitae International Researcher Award (VIRA). The pilot will continue at Strathclyde over the coming year.
6. The Strathclyde Teaching Excellence Programme (STEP) was launched in October 2015. This is a workshop-based programme that supports all staff who teach. Research staff are able to attend these sessions to support them in any teaching they undertake.

A new workshop mini-series was launched in June 2017 for research staff who teach or are interested in teaching, the workshops are delivered entirely by research staff with design/development support from OSDU.

1. The Researchers’ Group have organised networking and information events since its launch in September 2016 with the aim of connecting Strathclyde’s research staff and identifying issues or support needs. In May 2017 they organised a research staff conference around the universities strategic research themes which was attended by 50 members of research staff.

**Principle 6 (Diversity & Equality)**

1. Athena Swan awards are held by eleven STEM departments, with applications submitted from all STEM departments and Athena Swan teams now existing in all HASS and Business schools/departments.
2. Diversity week runs in March each year. This is a programme of events to raise awareness of Equality and Diversity issues as well as to promote dialogue between students, staff and the community from all backgrounds. There are over 30 events and 2000 individuals attended (attendance is not recorded by student/staff category).
3. Mentoring for staff returning from parental leave was introduced in 2017, this is available to research staff.

**Principle 7 (Implementation and Review)**

1. Formal mechanisms are in place for monitoring progress on researcher development activities, the Concordat/HR Excellence in Research and the Athena SWAN action plans through RDSC and the Researchers’ Group, which report to RKEC and the University Staff Committee.
2. CROS has run every two years since 2009 (PIRLS since 2011) with increasing numbers taking part every year. The results are reported to RDSC and other stakeholders, being used to inform University strategy and action planning.
3. OSDU’s Researcher Development programmes are evaluated and reviewed each year, with reports submitted to RDSC/RKEC, the Researchers’ Group and the University Staff Committee.
4. Members of OSDU and RDP take part in a number of national researcher development initiatives and groups, such as the Universities Scotland – Research Training Sub-Committee, the Scottish Higher Education Researcher Developer group (ScotHERD), the Scottish Higher Education Developers (SHED) as well as contributing at national conferences and events. The Academic Development Lead (Research) is the Vitae Scotland Regional Representative and member of the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers review panel.

**C) Next steps and the focus of the strategy for the next two years**

**Principles 1 & 2 (Recruitment & Selection, Recognition & Value)**

* To continue to implement, and improve where appropriate, the Policy for the Use of Fixed-Term Contracts.
* To ensure that research staff are represented consistently across the University.
* The Researcher Development Strategy 2015-2018 and the HR Strategy (HR Activity Plan) build on recognition of the importance of researchers, as set out in the Concordat.

**Principles 3, 4 & 5 (Support, Career Development and Researchers’ Responsibilities)**

* To support research staff development in line with Researcher Development Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2018 and the University’s strategic aims: *Internationally Leading Research, World-leading Innovation and Impact, Global Engagement*
* To implement the researcher development recognition framework for the Vitae International Research Award.
* To develop and implement long-term evaluation processes for all institutional learning and development interventions for researchers, including online learning.
* Continue to increase Research Staff engagement with SPIRAL and SPARK.

**Principle 6 (Diversity & Equality)**

* To pursue accreditation for Athena SWAN Charter Mark for all University departments, with departments in all faculties to achieve an Award.

**Principle 7 (Implementation and Review)**

* RDSC/RKEC, the Researchers’ Group and Staff Committee receive regular updates on progress on staff related matters including all researcher development activities and action plans.
* Annual review of Researcher Development Programmes including new research staff provision.

**D) Success Measures**

Our success will be measured in terms of timely achievement of the actions as set out in the Action Plan. In addition, our success measures include the following:

* Evidence of progress/improvement in CROS and PIRLS data when compared with previous years
* Retention of institutional Athena SWAN Bronze and the submission for departmental Athena Swan Awards within all departments
* Increased engagement of events within SPARK and SPIRAL
* Impact of learning and development interventions identified and reported