UCL HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan for 2015 – 2017

"UCL is London's research powerhouse, with a commitment to enhancing the lives of people in the capital, the UK and around the world. Our academics have breadth and depth of expertise across the entire range of academic disciplines. Individually, they expand our under- standing of the world; collectively and collaboratively, they deliver analysis that addresses the major challenges facing humanity."
– Professor David Price, UCL Vice-Provost (Research) from UCL Research Strategy 2011

Academic excellence and conducting research that addresses real-world problems inform our ethos to this day. As London's Global University, UCL is engaged across the spectrum of research projects, from arts and humanities to the basic and applied sciences and medicine; UCL is open to talent from around the world; and, furthermore, it is engaged with the needs of an interconnected world. As London's research powerhouse we deliver re- search impact resulting from multidisciplinary research excellence. This results in myriad benefits to society, such as medical innovations, cultural enrichment, informing public policy and boosting economic prosperity. Our academics and researchers make substantial contributions to the advance- ment of disciplines and to addressing social and economic challenges faced by the UK and beyond.

UCL is one of the largest UK research universities, with an income of more than £1 billion in 2014. In 2013-14, it had the second highest research grant income among UK universities. UCL has a population of more than 10,000 researchers, including more than 2,300 academics, more than 3,000 research staff, and 5,000 post-graduate research students.

In the Research Excellence Framework 2014, UCL was rated top university in the UK in terms of total research power, and second to the University of Oxford in terms of volume of world-leading research. Many UCL units dominated their field, including Built Environment, Neuroscience, Population Health and Education, whilst UCL Economics achieved the highest grade point average of any unit in the UK. UCL is one of the world's top twenty universities in terms of volume of highly cited research papers (Source: Thomson Reuters InCites Essential Science Indicators).

UCL promotes research-led teaching to maximise tangible societal outcomes, transfer research into industry, increase the body of knowledge for the common good. (See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of what UCL currently does for its researchers). Below is the new action plan to support the re- searcher community and retain our positon as a research powerhouse.

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
1.2	Employers should strive to attract excellence and respect diversity (see Principle 6).	HR/ Deans	Work with Heads of Departments to ensure the Recruitment and Selection process is fair and transparent. **By July 2016.** Implementation the new HR system which will make it easier to distinguish between staff on different contracts and therefore enable staff to track their career path and participation in training/development opportunities etc. Ensure the new HR system enables data to be better captured and analysed. **August 2017.** Extraction of this information, the results of which are discussed at the termly meeting of the Research Staff Consultative Group (RSCG), scheduled to be held in November 2015, March 2016 and July 2016 and corresponding dates in 2017. **Starting in November 2015**.	First phase of the new HR system implemented in July 2016 enabling the recording of relevant data on who has been recruited, where they are working and the impact of their research. Evidence that this information and action points from RSCG are fed into other processes such as appraisal, Athena SWAN, Race Equality action plans and the REF and vice versa. Intelligence from the analysis of the HR data on attracting excellence and respecting diversity are used to influence best practice in this area.	
1.4	To assure fairness, consistency and the best assessment of the candidates' potential, recruitment and progression panels should reflect diversity as well as a range of experience and expertise.	HR OD/ Policy	Introduce the online unconscious bias training as a compulsory part of the wider recruitment and selection training/ process and link this with the Athena SWAN and Race Equality Action plans. **By February 2016.** Discuss at the Equalities and Diversity Committee in October 2015, February 2016 and May 2016. **Starting in October 2016.** Discuss at HR Policy Committee in January 2016, March 2016, June 2016 and corresponding dates for both committees in 2017. **Starting in January 2016.** Improve data access and data quality for interview panel membership and monitor the implementation of UCL's policy that there must be no all-male or all-female panels. **By September 2016.**	See 1.2 above. In addition evidence this is discussed at the Equalities and Diversity Committee and the HR Policy Committee.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
2.1	Employers are encouraged to value and afford equal treatment to all researchers, regardless of whether they are employed on a fixed term or similar contract.	Research Staff Consultative Group (RSCG)	Regular item on the Research Staff Consultative Group (RSCG) meetings scheduled for November 2015, March 2016 and July 2016 and corresponding dates in 2017 to review data, establish ambitious targets and monitor progress against these. **Starting November 2015.** The new HR system will make it easier to distinguish between staff on different contracts and therefore enable you to track their career path and participation in training/development opportunities etc. Work with other Vice-Provosts' and Deans to ensure this is monitored and reported on to Provost as part of the Equalities and Diversity Accountability Framework and the annual appraisal process. **By July 2016.**	Linked to Athena SWAN and Race Equality Action plans. Generic data and themes from the Equality & Diversity Accountability Framework and appraisals are used to influence future actions that address any concerns raised. Work with others including Vitae to influence the funding regimes which have the greatest impact on the award of contracts. This exercise is completed annually and there is evidence that the results have been used to address any issues that are revealed through our monitoring of equality and diversity concerns such as focus groups or via the staff survey etc.	
2.3 (a)	Research managers should to participate in management, including career development guidance & supervision of those who work in their teams.	HR and Deans	The appraisal process is due to be reviewed. It is intended that the new annual appraisal process will have a clearer focus on career development and training needs, work/life balance and ways of working as well as a stronger focus on progression towards promotion. Introduction of the new appraisal process in conjunction with the phased introduction of the new HR system. **By June 2017.** Ensure this new process is communicated effectively to research staff and Principal Investigations (PIs) when it is launched. **By July 2016** Include the integration and use of the career development plan into the appraisal template for researchers. **By September 2017.**	The numbers of participants on this programme has increased by 25%. Feedback from researchers on appraisal in the UCL- wide staff survey improves between the 2015 and 2017 staff surveys by 15%. The quality of appraisal for researchers and use of career plans to support career progression opportunities is increase by up to 30%.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
2.3 (b)		HR/RSCG	Survey PIs on progress made against this criterion using the bi-annual staff survey (October – November 2015) to collect data and benchmark progress made. **Starting in October 2015.** It is important that PIs feel they are recognised for developing, managing and supervising staff. Therefore there is a need to ensure these activities are recognised and valued. For example, exploring why PIs feel they are recognised for their supervising research students but not developing or managing research staff may help in identifying actions in this area. **Ongoing action.** The appropriate committee reviews all applications for accelerated increments and other pay-related. The applications are reviewed to ensure consistency, but also in relation to equality and diversity. Divisions are questioned if, for example, a disproportionate number of applications are from men. It is proposed that this process will be reviewed in 2016 – after two years of data has been compiled. If it is clear that this has had a positive impact in relation to fairness and transparency, a proposal will be presented to HRPC (HR Policy Committee) with a recommendation that this be rolled out to other faculties. **By December 2016.**	Committees decisions on pay used as a baseline for targeted action to reduce dissatisfaction by 10%. This target will need to be reviewed in light of any pay awards and or efficiency considerations. Increase of at least 10% of the number of researchers recognised via UCL award schemes. Increase of 30% in number of researchers sponsored to attend flagship UCL programmes.	
2.4	Organisational systems must be capable of supporting continuity of employment for researchers.	HR	Regular monitoring of the use of the redeployment register by School and recording the outcome. To be reviewed at HR Leadership Team (HRLT) meetings termly. **Starting in December 2015.** Data to be shared with RSCG (Research Staff Consultative Group) to agree feasible actions to rectify any concerns raised. **March 2016.**	Concrete evidence that the redeployment register is being used effectively. The data received in more robust. The date has been analysed and shared with RSCG who have used it for benchmarking and to positively influence future actions.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
2.6 (a)	Researchers need to be offered opportunities to develop their own careers as well as having access to additional pay progression.	OD/ UCL/ Careers/ CALT	Continue to promote Vitae RDF and encourage PIs, Researchers and Post Docs to attend UCL run training. **Jan 2016.** Advertise training courses available; ensure courses are more clearly identified when training courses may be particularly relevant to them. Jan 2016. Feedback used to influence future courses that are made available. July 2016. The take up of training is monitored through appraisals and recorded via individual learning records and discuss at RDWG (Researchers Development Working Group). **July 2016 o**r as and when major changes are introduced.	100% of all courses reviewed, linked to RDF (Researcher Development Framework) and clearly sign posted for Researchers and PIs. 30% sample of applications reviewed between October 2015 – October 2017 and 25% increase in signposting of more tailored training. 25% increase in number of researchers taking up training opportunities between October 2015 – October 2017.	
2.6 (b)		HR OD RDWG	Ensure PIs and managers are aware of their role as a sponsor and developing the career of researchers. This linked to an action within the race Equality Action Plan to develop a sponsorship scheme. Set up bimonthly meetings with Equalities & Diversity team (E&D) to further develop and introduce the sponsorship sche. **October 2015.** Publicise to PIs the support offered by UCL Careers and Faculty Career Consultants/Advisors. **January 2016.** Review the training currently undertaken by PIs and Line Managers. **August 2016.**	Data is also cross referenced against E&D data and take up of sponsorship through the initiative that is being developed. Progress reports presented to both RDCG and RDWG meetings, resulting in resources being pooled to ensure the most effective support is made available to the researcher community.	
2.6 (c)			The analysis from PIRLS evidenced that there is a difference in the number of female researchers verses male researchers who attend training courses. In response we plan to: Review the data on the gender of PIs who are completing training courses at UCL.	30% attendance rate achieved at the focus groups. 25% increase in engagement with female researchers between October 2015 – October 2016 and a further 5% by July 2017.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
			Ensure women are engaging in these events at an equitable rate. If women are not accessing training at the same rate as men, consider running female only courses, and/or running focus groups with female PIs to discuss why they are not accessing training. **January 2016.** Introduce focus groups. **January 2016** Monitor take up and engagement. **February 2016** Follow up actions as a result of the induction and visiting the revamped website. **March 2016** Work with 50:50 Gender Equality Group, and Race Equality Steering Group to challenge poor practice and identify good practice. **October 2015**	Ten researchers at various points in their careers are engaged in a pilot study and their progress tracked. Case studies which demonstrate the impact of this initiative on Researchers development, access to opportunities and the promotion of their work have been developed and published on the researchers' website.	
3.6 (a)	Employers should provide a planned induction programme for researchers on appointment to a research post to ensure early effectiveness through the understanding of the organisation and its policies and procedures.	HR/OD	Provide guidance and templates to departments to ensure their induction processes are consistent and new starters are provided key information relating to the department, faculty and UCL. Ensure information relating to local support for researchers are highlighted. For example research staff networks/ forums, training opportunities, departmental careers events and seminars etc. **By March 2016.** The proposed new website is developed and acts as a 'one-stop shop' more effectively signposting researchers to the plethora of support and development available to them at various points of their career. **By March 2016.**	Single portal website developed for Researchers with clear links to various elements such as training, accessing funding , links to enterprise, public engagement etc. Analytics: 5,500 hits per year on new website. The website signposts to the Vitae induction resources for Researchers area. Data from the CROS and PIRLS surveys which focus on satisfaction with induction used review the effectiveness of induction on a yearly basis.	
3.6 (b)		HR/OD	Design an online UCL staff handbook / 'Life at UCL' webpage, summarising policies on flexible working, parental leave, training opportunities, promotion process, and other important information. See action 5.6 in the SWAN action plan 2015-18. **Sep 2017.**	Online UCL staff handbook / 'Life at UCL' webpage developed and linked to the single portal for researchers at UCL.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
3.7	Employers and funders will wish to consider articulating the skills that should be developed at each stage of their staff development frameworks and should encourage researchers to acquire and practice those skills.	VP R RSCG RDWG	UCL Arena developed. See: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/arena Postgraduate researchers benefit from Arena One. Academic staff on probation must gain Higher Education Academy Fellowship to pass probation. This is done through Arena Two. All other researchers participate in Arena Open which is a flexible self-directed programme with multiple varied teaching opportunities for development as a teacher in higher education. Continue to work with CALT to promote Arena to the researcher community. **September 2016.**	Ensure all researchers are aware of and encourage them to make the most of opportunities under UCL Arena which is mapped to the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (UKPSF). Successfully worked with the CALT team, RSA and UCL/IOE to extend this provision of Arena to researchers across UCL/IOE. Increase in number of researchers gain accreditation of UCL Arena.	
4.11 (a)	Employers will wish to ensure that developmental activities open to researchers include preparation for academic practice.	HR	Consider how to better recognise and value the contributions PI's make in providing career advice and support to early career researchers. The promotion process at UCL is currently being reviewed. Ensure that the changes to promotion are communicated clearly to research staff and the impact the changes have on them. Ensure these messages focus on the fair application of the new promotions process. **July 2016.**	Inclusion of contributions as a criterion within the promotion process. Publicise opportunities for recognition such as Provost Excellence Award on the researcher website. Encourage researchers to put themselves and others forward for the various recognition schemes. Monitor take up and aim for a 20% increase in recognition at corporate and local levels	
4.11 (b)		HR OD	Work with the proposed new rewards team following the HR restructure (if the current proposal is approved) to ensure reward processes at UCL are fair, transparent and equitable. Ensure equality monitoring is undertaken annually for all reward processes, with any discrepancies investigated and addressed. **March 2016.**	As above. In addition, reviewed E&D data at the RDSC and RDWG meetings, to identify trends and take action to address areas of concern and to promote best practice where it is found.	
4.11 (c)		RSCG	Review the current provision of research forums / networks. Suggest Faculty-wide networks in areas where there is little provision. **April 2016**.	Mapped researcher networks across UCL/IOE (UCL IOE) and these are published on the website.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
				Standardisation of support for the networks and publicise their activities. A named member of contact for the networks can be found on the researchers' website.	
4.11 (d)		RSCG/ OD	Engage the researcher community in shaping the agenda for conferences and taking a role in using the conference and networking events to disseminate in-formation and share best practice. **February 2016** Build on the research conference – make sure this is publicised and feedback is received and reviewed each year. **April 2016.**	The researcher community have been more involved in shaping the agenda for annual researcher events and the bi-annual conference. Feedback from the conference improves. Currently, 89% positive. Increase of 30% of researchers showcasing their work and impact of this on the wider researcher agenda at UCL and other external events.	
4.11 (e)	Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation or management Committees.	RSCG RDWG	UCL's RSCG chaired by the Vice - Provost (Research) and the RDWG, chaired by the Pro-Provost of the Doctoral School both comprise membership from key institutional areas involved in developing researchers and members of both research staff and research student communities themselves, continues in its aims to develop a consistent framework for researcher development at UCL, identifying priorities for change and improvement within existing activities, practice and policies. **November 2015 (then termly)** Collectively and individually they feed into staff meetings and represent the researcher community on management committees which meet termly.	Met termly at meetings scheduled for October/ November 2015, February/March 2016 and June/July 2016 (and corresponding dates in 2017) identified and addressed issues impacting on the researcher community at an operational level. Actions from RSSC and RDWG fed into the Training Board for Researcher Development including the Doctoral School. Minutes used to evidence progress made against the action points and new developments which concern or impact on the researcher community.	
4.14	Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.	HR/OD	Ensure the uMentor platform is effectively promoted and developed to meet the needs of researchers. Also see action 2.4 in the Athena SWAN action plan 2015-2018. Increasing take up of mentoring by researchers by at least 35%. **December 2016.**	Ongoing action to encourage the use of mentoring generically for researchers agreed and link to other action plans such as Athena SWAN, Equality and Diversity (B-MEntor) and Aurora programme.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
				Evidence that the 35% increase has been reached.	
5.3 (a)	Researchers should recognise their responsibility to conduct and disseminate research results in an honest and ethical manner and to contribute to the wider body of knowledge.	VPR/ RSCG	RSCG has set up a consultative group to review the ethical processes at UCL led by the Ethics Committee. **Follow up in February 2016.**	Feeds into the Research Staff Consultative Group (RSCG). Evidence that this has been reviewed on a regular basis. Results crossed referenced with the Ethics Committee. Trends analysed to reinforce ethical standards at all level OD research.	
5.3 (b)		HR/OD	Work with UCL public engagement to engage research staff in knowledge exchange and public engagement activities. **October 2016.**	Number of Researchers who work with UCL Public Engagement Unit (PEU) increased by 20%.	
6.3	It should be emphasised that the demanding nature of research careers has a disproportionate effect on certain groups.	HR Deans RSCG	A paper on issues surrounding maternity leave for researchers has been developed by the 50:50 Gender Equality Group. This paper will be discussed with the researcher forum for further discussion and development before it is sent to HR Policy Committee (HRPC) for consideration. **By March 2016.**	RSCG met termly during November 2015, March 2016 and July 2016 to develop a strategy to tackle this working with key stakeholders across UCL and more broadly to redress this sector-wide problem. Progress and impact recoded and reported to HRPC.	
6.3 (a)		HR\EDI	A number of actions have been included within the Athena SWAN and Race Charter marks relating to reporting discrimination, bullying and harassment. At the start of 2016, we will be reviewing the 'report and support' system and assess whether this is something we could implement at UCL. **January 2016.** In addition, we will be promoting the new Dignity at Work statement and Dignity at Work Advisers.	Review the 'report and support' paper, And actively support of this initiative. Monitor use of UCL Dignity at Work Advisors by researchers' results and feed into pressure groups if necessary.	
6.3 (b)		HR/EDI	Raise this issue for discussion with the Staff Disability Forum. **November 2015.** Report outcome of this exercise to the RSCG and RDWG **in term 2 of 2016**.	Actively support of this initiative. Monitor results and feed into pressure groups if necessary.	
6.4 (a)	Employers should ensure that the working conditions for researchers provide the flexibility necessary for successful research performance in line with legal requirements.	VPR HR/EDI	Tackle long hours working culture in order to improve work-life balance of staff. **January 2016.** Discuss at the researchers forum and/or at focus groups with PI's and researchers. **March 2016.**	Will be reviewed as part the equality framework and by the RSCG as it is closely linked to section 6.3.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
			Continue to support The UCL Parents and Carers Together (PACT) network, launched in the summer 2014. The group meets once a month and meetings have included training on time management, and meetings with local charities and support groups. There are currently over 200 members. The group has male and female co-chairs. **July 2016.**	Improved results in relation to work-life balance between the 2015 and 2017 UCL-wide staff surveys.	
6.4 (b)		HR/OD	Run focus groups with female PIs (Principal Investigators) to establish why they may have responded less positively than male PI's. Discuss their own career trajectories and their opinions on why positivity appears to decrease between research roles (CROS survey) and PI roles (PIRLS survey). **March 2016.**	As above aim to attract at least 40% of the female PI population to focus groups to help shape practical steps to improve careers trajectories.	
6.7 (a)	Employers and researchers can often benefit if researchers have an input into policy and practice through appropriate representation at staff meetings and on organisation or management committees.	RSCG/ Deans/ HR	Ask each department to review the gender balance of their key committees, and ensure that both male and female research staff are represented where appropriate. This is already taking place in many Athena SWAN departments**. January 2016.** Ensure committee vacancies are advertised within departments – not filled through a 'tap on the shoulder'. **January 2016.** Monitor the impact of this action at a corporate level. **December 2016.**	No committee to have zero female representation by 2017.	
6.7 (b)		RSCG/ HR/OD	Form closer links with the UCL Institute of Education (IOE) to learn from their best practice. Ensure IOE colleagues directly feed into the RSCG and RWDG and lead on specific areas i.e. Staff Association. **October 2015.**	Explore the introduction of a Staff Association for Researchers across UCL.	
7.2 (a)	The signatories agree to run and evaluate CROS and PIRLS survey and act on the data collated.	RSCG/ RWDG	Increased participation between the last CROS and PIRLS survey and the most recent one signifies progress. The results of the 2015 surveys have been used to monitor progress on the implementation of the Concordat at UCL and underpin the new action plan for UCL. **September 2015.**	Aim for 40% of the UCL research population to complete the next CROS and PIRLS surveys.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
			Feed into local action plans. **September 2015.** Action plans and progress monitored at local, faculty and Organisational levels in **November 2015.** Data feed into the agendas of the RDCG and RDWG to ensure it is used to address concerns raised and improve the Researcher experience at UCL to an even greater extent. **November 2015.**		
7.2 (b)	The signatories recognise the value of innovation in practices and of sharing practice between institutions and aim to promote these throughout the implementation and review process.	RSCG/ HR	UCL will continue to liaise with Vitae and other Institutions and organisations to share, publicise and implement practices to support researchers' development and the sustainability of research careers in the UK, such as the Strategic Partnership work UCL is doing with Francis Crick Institute, Alan Turing Institute, etc. **September 2015.** Continue to chair the Bloomsbury Group for Post Doc training, support and development. **March 2016.**	Encourage networks to engage with other Researcher groups internally and externally. Take part in conferences and lead on the dissemination of best practice and share learning about other initiatives/projects on return to UCL.	
7.5 (a)	Under public sector equality schemes, employers are required to monitor equality and diversity indicators for their researchers. This section focuses on the coordination and enhancement of existing information collection and not on the creation of additional data. There is a strong presumption that in implementing the concordat, significant emphasis will be placed on the use of existing data and information sources and on the sharing of good practice between institutions and to provide evidence of its impact.	RSCG/ HR	UCL will continue to liaise with Vitae and other institutions and organisations to share, publicise, and implement practices to support researchers' development and the sustainability of research careers in the UK. **September 2015.**	As above.	
7.5 (b)	Promote HR Excellence Award.	RSCG/ HR	Promote the award when UCL are reaccredited with a piece within the Week @UCL and Researcher focused newsletters. **December 2015.**	Relevant articles and inclusion as a section on new researchers' website.	

Concordat Clause	Descriptor	Lead	Action (Progress and Comments)	Success Measure	Update
		RSCG/ HR	Brand all researcher-related activities and development opportunities with the HR Excellence Award logo. **December 2015.**	Note sent out from UCL President and Provost and Vice-Provost (Research) promoting the use of the badge.	
		RSCG/ HR	Display HR Excellence Award badge on all UCL communications and marketing materials. **December 2015.**	As above and addition to electronic signatures where appropriate.	