



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



## University College London HR Excellence in Research Award: Two-year Review

### Introduction

**“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 understanding 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 research 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 advancement 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 has a strong commitment to open access to research, with all of its research publications, subject to permission, placed in UCL Discovery, an online repository available to everyone, whilst UCL Press is the first fully open access university press in the UK.

### **1. Background to this application to be rewarded the HR Excellence in Research Award**

In May 2013, UCL received the HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission. Since this time UCL has worked towards meeting the actions outlined in the original submission whilst taking account of developments which have occurred since.

This includes the merger of UCL and the Institute of Education (IOE) which took effect from 2 December 2014. The merger created a new institution with over 35,000 students, confirming UCL as the biggest higher education institution in London, and the largest postgraduate institution in the UK, with 19,000 postgraduate students. Given this it has been jointly decided that the HR Excellence in Research review periods be kept

separate at the present time and then merged into a single joint review at the subsequent review date for UCL of 19 May 2017. This decision is reflected in the UCL IOE's 2-year review of January 2014 and revised action plan are shown below for reference:

<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/AboutPolicies/HRExcellenceResearchAward2YearReport0114sub.doc>

The following report therefore outlines the key achievements and progress against the original **UCL** Concordat Implementation Plan.

## 2. How the review was undertaken

The internal review was informed by ongoing monitoring since 2013, interaction with our Researcher Community, data from the Athena SWAN self assessment and Race Equality Charter processes, CROS and PRLS and input from a combination of colleagues who either provide support and who have close links in working with research staff, students and key stakeholders.

The overarching data was collected, assessed, monitored, reviewed and acted upon primarily by two main forums. These are the Research Staff Consultation Group (RSCG) which is responsible for governance and strategic matters and the Researcher Development Working Group (RDWG) which is responsible for the operational and grass roots activities concerning the Researcher Community at UCL. Both provide formal involvement, engagement and consultation with researchers and representation at various fora. These groups report into Human Resources Policy Committee and the Training Board which also feed into other forums including the Ethic Committees, Academic Board, Equality and Diversity Committees to ensure the Researcher agenda is kept uppermost in the decision making fora that govern UCL

## 3. Highlights of some achievements

Principle (s)	Action Taken	Achievement
<b>Principles 2 &amp; 4:</b>	Research Staff Consultative Group (RSCG) chaired by the V-P (R) and supported by HR re-established.	The RSCG membership is diverse and representative of all researchers across UCL.
<b>Principles 2, 3, 4 and 5:</b>	<p>Researchers offered opportunities to develop their own careers as well as having access to additional pay progression.</p> <p>This is offered through UCL Career Services, UCL Faculty Career Advisors&lt; Public Engagement and Organisational Development.</p>	<p>Better promotion and recording of trained accessed by Researchers.</p> <p>In the academic year 2013 – 2014, training data shows that research staff attended 2,183 training events booked through OD's Single Training Booking System (STBS), and of these courses OD and HR provided 796. Bi Annual Research Staff Conference provided researchers with opportunities to participate in workshops such as "From Researcher to Academic – transition", and "Fellowships" and "Managing Your Career by Yourself"</p> <p><a href="https://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/osd/research/conference/programme11.php">https://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/osd/research/conference/programme11.php</a></p>

<p><b>Principles 3 and 4:</b></p>	<p>CALT has replaced 'Teaching in Higher Education for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants' with Arena One and Two. Researchers are welcome to take part in UCL Arena provision. The advantage for researchers is that participation is self-paced and flexible so they can select the approach which suits them best. Researchers are fully supported by the UCL Arena team if they decide to apply for Fellowship.</p> <p>These are respected nationally and internationally.</p>	<p><b>HEA Fellowships - Since April 2014</b></p> <p>Associate Fellow - 124 Fellow - 52 Senior Fellow - 13</p> <p><b>HEA Fellowships - Since May 2014-15</b></p> <p>Associate Fellow - 84 Fellow 45 Senior Fellow 10</p>
<p><b>Principles 5</b></p>	<p>UCL is a subscriber to the UK Research Integrity Office, and the Provost's Senior Management Team has endorsed the Universities UK 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity'. UCL is committed to support integrity and high ethical standards in its research.</p>	<p>The UCL Research Governance Committee (RGC) updated its Code of Conduct for Researchers that sets out the general principles of conduct by which UCL expects research to be carried out at or in the name of UCL in 2013, and this will be continuously updated as required. A revised procedure was also implemented for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research in March 2014.</p>

#### 4. Next steps

Whilst progress has been made since the last submission; the data from the CROS and PIRLS surveys and various fora also shows that we can do more to better support our researchers. The aim will be to increase our positive engagement with the researcher community by at least 65% by 2017. We will do this through the introduction of a single portal website for researchers, incorporating training, public engagements and impact opportunities; sharing good practice at conferences, seminars, network sessions and case studies; clearer linkages between supervision and support for career development and promotions.

To achieve this step change a number of steady actions have been identified to be delivered over the next two years. The action plan will be used as a living document to track, monitor, assess, review progress against the anticipated outcomes. Accountability will rest with the Vice Provost Research, the Senior Management Team and Heads of Departments. Governance will be through the RSCG and RDWG groups which both meet termly. The purpose of the six scheduled meetings is to ensure joined up support and advocacy for our researcher community.

**Charlotte Croffie**  
**Director of Organisational Development, on behalf of the Research Staff Consultant Group**  
**University College London**  
**September 2015**