



The University of Bedfordshire’s “HR Excellence in Research Award” – Two Year Internal Review

Award Date: 24 May 2013
Review Date: 22 May 2015

Introduction

The University of Bedfordshire was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award by the European Commission in May 2013. The Award highlights the University’s commitment to supporting the career development of researchers.

Recipients of the award are required to undertake an internal review of their progress in achieving the actions/outcomes set out in their action/implementation plan at least once every two years.

This report contains the findings of the University of Bedfordshire’s internal review and revised action plan for 2015-17.

Outline of the Internal Review Process

The internal evaluation of the University’s Concordat Implementation Action Plan (2013-2017) was conducted by the Director of Research Development in consultation with key contacts in Human Resources (HR), Innovation & Enterprise (I&E), the Research Graduate School (RGS), the Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE) and the University’s ten Research Institutes (RIs). The Research and Enterprise (R&E) Committee reviewed the University’s Concordat Implementation Action Plan on 25 March 2015. Members were requested to submit additional comments and updates that had not yet been captured by the internal evaluation.

Researchers’ views have been taken into account during this review through input from the Directors of Research Institutes representing the researchers in their areas, and through HR scrutiny and synthesis of responses to the University of Bedfordshire Staff Survey 2015. Input has also been received from academic schools and other professional services.

Key Achievements and Progress against the original Action Plan

REF 2014 classified almost half of the University’s submitted research as world leading or internationally excellent. We doubled our proportion of world leading research even though we submitted research from almost three times the number of staff compared to the 2008 assessment, signalling the success of researcher recruitment and development processes.

The University has been an ‘Investor in People’ (IiP) organisation since 2008, achieving Investors in People Gold standard in 2011, which was successfully re-accredited following an assessment in 2014. An improvement plan was created in 2014 following reaccreditation, which includes further actions for improving our learning and development activities, including for our researchers.

As part of the University Document Management Project in 2014, all documents and policies available on the staff intranet and staff development pages have been reviewed and refreshed.

A: Recruitment and Selection

There is an action plan designed to achieve the strategic aims in the Organisation and People Development Strategy, led by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), which is reviewed regularly and revisions endorsed through the University Resources and Employment Committee.

As well as having processes in place to ensure that selection panels are diverse and panel members are trained, the University recently implemented a policy of including students on interview panels for the majority of academic roles.

B: Recognition and Value

In order to further improve the transparency and equity of staff pay for those on spot salaries, such as Professors and managers, a spot salary review was undertaken in 2015. This included a robust job evaluation process.

The Policy and process for promotion and recruitment to senior academic title was approved in March 2014 and sets out clear guidance on promotion to Grade 9 and above.

C: Support and Career Development

The University is committed to helping to support staff in their development. The University has policies for progression from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and opportunities for promotion to Principal Lecturer and Professorial roles; development opportunities are provided for staff to prepare for application for promotion.

The University Strategy 2012-2017 states that all academic staff will have a minimum of five days CPD per annum. Delivery of this forms part of the Organisation and People Development Strategy.

The Centre for Learning Excellence has developed its own webpages which provide information on professional development available at the University.

The Staff Review process was reviewed and refreshed in 2014 and further recommendations for improvements to the process are being put in place for the 2015 round.

The recently created Innovation & Enterprise Service runs workshops, provides individual coaching and helps to link researchers with businesses and other organisations in order to develop researchers' expertise, innovation and impact.

The University's Annual Staff Conference has Research as a major strand, providing opportunities to showcase research and network.

The University acknowledges through analysis of staff review personal development plans, that many developments activated involve CPD such as attendance at conferences which is additional to the formal development opportunities provided by the University through Human Resources and the Centre for Learning Excellence.

D: Researcher's Responsibilities

The Innovation & Enterprise Service was created to provide a more effective service to support collaborations with colleagues including CPD and Employer Engagement courses, selling specialist facilities linked with academic expertise to external organisations and providing practical support with bidding opportunities.

E: Diversity and Equality

The University monitors its workforce by staff group and grade to identify any gaps and sets out actions plans were concerns are identified.

The University has reviewed and regained its Positive About Disabled People and Stonewall accreditation and is considering further awards as part of the work programme of the Equality and Diversity Committee.

The Flexible Working Policy was reviewed and revised in 2014.

The University is moving towards a more facilitative, mediated style of resolving grievances and complaints of harassment and bullying in order that issues are dealt with, where possible, informally and quickly. This is proving to be effective.

F: Implementation and Review

The Action Plan is a live document and a formal evaluation is undertaken annually by the Research and Enterprise Committee. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) has responsibility for implementing and reviewing action across the year, in consultation with HR and the Director of Research Development.

Next Steps and Success Measures

Next Steps	Lead(s)	Success Measure(s)	Date
Review staff probation booklet to make it more user friendly and ensure the needs of researchers are clearly included.	HR, supported by R&E Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion Evaluation of feedback on revised booklet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nov 2015 Oct 2016
Map the RDF against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> current HR policies and guidelines University-wide CPD provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR HR, I&E, RGS, MARC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion Addressing gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2015 July 2016
As part of the work programme of the E&D Committee, apply for Mindful Employer and the Gender and Race Equality Charter Marks in 2015. Also revisit the unsuccessful 2013 Athena SWAN application submitted and submit a fresh application.	E&D Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved processes Improved data Successful submissions for external recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dec 2015 July 2016 July 2016
Monitor the impact of the Post-2014 REF Strategy and planning towards REF2020 on the recruitment and development of researchers.	R&E Committee, supported by HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of any regression against 2014 benchmarks and linked action planning Improvements in researcher development 	Annual monitoring
Investigate the participation in CROS or a similar means of receiving feedback from research staff to inform their development.	R&E Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision about means to increase feedback from researchers Feedback-based action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 2016 Jan 2017
Monitor the effect of the recently revised Promotion and Recruitment to Senior Academic Title Policy to support development of research staff.	HR & R&E Committee	Knowledge of impact and efficacy, linked to any necessary revision	Annual monitoring for three years