

Keele University Concordat Implementation Action Plan 2015 – 2017, Mid-Point Internal Review October 2016

In November 2017 it will be four years since Keele gained the HR Excellence in Research award. In October 2017 our Concordat Implementation Action Plan 2015 – 2017¹ and an updated plan covering a further two years, will be externally reviewed to determine whether the UK Panel will renew or withdraw our Award. The Award demonstrates our commitment to the implementation of the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, which is an agreement between the funders and employers of research staff to improve the employment and support for researchers and research careers in UK higher education.²

This short report presents an update on an informal internal review that was conducted in October 2016 and information relating to our maintenance of our HR Excellence award.

1. Mid-point internal review

In order to ensure that we are on track with regard to the actions that we committed to in our 2015 – 2017 Action Plan, the Learning and Professional Development Centre (LPDC) initiated a mid-point internal review in October 2016 (involving HR and LPDC staff) to internally reflect on progress so far. This is not something that we are formally required to do as part of the HR Excellence in Research process but experiences from managing our 2013-2015 Concordat Implementation Action plans suggest that the more regularly we review the process, the easier it is to keep on top of our commitments.

The initial update can be found in Appendix 1. On the whole most actions are progressing according to our initial commitments. Some things have not progressed as hoped. For example, the reporting to Research Committee of anonymous data on research staff attendance at centrally-provided workshops (as is provided to University Postgraduate Research Committee for PGR engagement) is not yet established. The new records system in place from August 2016 should mean that it is easier to collate this information for reports to Research Committee in the future.

A new full-time researcher developer is currently being recruited to replace Jen Smith who is leaving at the end of October. The new developer will co-ordinate the Action Plan and lead on the annual monitoring of work flows and activities on behalf of Research Committee. This mid-point review will help to inform their work.

2. The 4 year external review process

In October 2017 Keele University will be subject to a 4 year external review.³ This means that we will need to:

- publish a short four-year review report (based on a template) to summarise progress against our published Concordat Implementation Action Plan.
- publish an updated action plan, with actions for at least a further two years, aligned to the four year strategy set out in the four year report.
- provide optional short case studies to showcase particular examples of effective practice.

¹ Available at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/lpdc/research/hrexcellenceinresearch/>

² See <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/concordat-to-support-the-career-development-of-researchers>

³ Full information can be found at <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/hr-excellence-in-research/hr-excellence-in-research-award-four-year-external-review-process-1>

Our report and progress will be reviewed by three external reviewers, who will undertake telephone interviews to clarify aspects of the report and to provide expertise and input. If major concerns arise, reviewers may undertake site visits.

The outcome of the external review will determine whether the UK Panel (which includes the European Commission) will renew our HR Excellence in Research Award.

As in previous submissions, we will be able to provide drafts to Vitae for feedback in advance of the final submission to the external reviewers.

**Dr Jen Smith, Learning and Professional Development Centre
October 2016**