

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE (LSE) HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH - FOUR YEAR REPORT

Introduction

This report demonstrates the progress made by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in implementing the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* and how the School is continuing to further support research staff. The LSE is introducing a New Research Staff Career (NRSC) for the next academic year (2015-16), which signals the beginning of a cutting edge career structure that will recognise and reward excellence in research at the School. The external evaluators of the HR Excellence in Research Award are cordially invited to make a site visit to the LSE, when representatives of the School and research staff would be happy to discuss the progress to date. A summary of the NRSC is **attached** at **Annex A**.

The School employs around 200 salaried research staff, most of whom are located within Research Centres and some within Academic Departments.

The School has taken a pro-active approach in ensuring that effective support provisions are in place for its research staff. A Research Staff Working Group (RSWG) was created in 2007 to look at support provisions for research staff and to provide a forum for stakeholders to participate in consultations on how this work could be further developed. In June 2010 the Research Staff Committee (RSC) was created and the work of the RSWG was handed over to this group. The Research Staff Committee now has formal oversight for this area. See here for full [Terms of Reference](#) of the Committee and its [Membership](#).

Developing and Reviewing Actions

The RSC aims to ensure that the School is closely aligned with the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, and has therefore developed a **Concordat Action Plan** to address any areas of shortfall which could be addressed by the School. A Gap Analysis was conducted in 2010, the results of which were included in the School's first **Concordat Action Plan 2010-2012**, **attached** at **Annex B**. This highlighted the key areas for further action by the School in order to ensure that it is supporting research staff during their employment at the LSE. The Action Plan also incorporated themes that were highlighted through the 2009 **Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)** and the **2009 LSE Staff Survey**, as well as other areas identified through the Research Staff Committee. An interim review was undertaken in 2012 and the Action Plan was reviewed and updated for 2012-2014, **attached** at **Annex C**. A further revision of the Action Plan has been developed by the Research Staff Committee for 2015-2017, **attached** at **Annex D**.

The RSC discusses updates and receives feedback from Committee members on the Action Plan's progress during its meetings. While the School has made good progress against its action points to date, it recognises that there is still room for improvement. Even where areas have been identified as 'complete', the School is keen to continuously review and improve these, and has therefore also identified some of them within subsequent updates to the Concordat Action Plan.

Feedback From Research Staff

The School values feedback from research staff, which is received via:

- **Research Staff Committee** - During the establishment of the RSC, the School was keen to ensure that there are mechanisms in place for research staff to contribute towards decision making processes of the School. The RSC has five members of research staff in various roles on the Committee, who regularly engage with the research staff community at the School on various matters discussed at meetings. Other members of the Committee who are also involved in supporting research staff also provide perspectives on agenda items.
- **Research Staff Association (RSA)** - The LSE Research Staff Association (RSA) was created in May 2012 by members of the research staff community, and represents around 200 research staff members, creating a greater sense of community among Researchers.
- **University and College Union (UCU)** - UCU is the trade union recognised by the LSE to negotiate on behalf of research staff. The UCU Research Staff Representative, who is elected by the LSE UCU branch members and is democratically accountable to them, sits on the RSC.
- **Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) 2009 and 2013** - The School has participated in the CROS during 2009 and 2013 in order to capture the views of research staff. Themed results were received by the RSC and incorporated into the Concordat Action Plan.
- **LSE Staff Survey 2009 and 2012** - All LSE staff were invited to participate in both Staff Surveys. Themed research staff results were received by the RSC and the Committee was invited to identify five key themes for inclusion within a School level Staff Survey Action Plan.

Some Achievements To Date

With the support of colleagues and groups within the School, the RSC has been able to work through its Concordat Actions and increase awareness of School support provisions on offer:

Principle 1: Recruitment and Selection

LSE is committed to hiring outstanding world-class faculty based on open and global searches that involve and are open to input from existing faculty at all grades. LSE is also committed to equality and diversity as well as the fair treatment of all applicants who apply for vacancies at the School. The RSC is kept abreast of changes to research staff recruitment procedures and receives annual management of information data from Human Resources on the number of appointments, gender and ethnicity data as well as reasons for leaving employment.

The **Recruitment and Selection Guidance for Academic and Research Staff** was reviewed in 2014 in order to guide the future direction of recruitment activity within the School.

The School has also now produced a new **Redeployment Policy and Procedure**, which also includes research staff. This means that the School is more active in offering redeployment when necessary to research staff where their contract comes to an end due to funding limitations. This policy sets out a framework for managers to manage redeployment in a fair and effective manner, in line with the School's policy statement on equality and diversity and good employer practice.

The Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) has created a **revised Induction Programme for Research Staff** which started in 2012-2013 and provides new research staff with a warm and

informative welcome to the School. The RSC regularly reviews the Induction Programme with the TLC and has made recommendations for content specifically suited to LSE's research staff.

Principle 2: Recognition and Value

The School is recognising and values research staff in various ways:

The RSC conducted a **Review of Research Staff Careers** in 2013/14. As part of the Review, the Committee engaged with the wider research community within the School. A Report outlining the Committee's recommendations was submitted in April 2014 for consideration by a Group consultation and negotiation forum composed of members of academic management, HR and UCU. The Review addressed, amongst others, the following issues: the pay, titles and roles of research staff, and opportunities and procedures for career development and training.

Following the Review, the LSE is introducing a New Research Staff Career (NRSC) from the next academic year (2015-16), with implementation activity taking place between March and July 2015. Further discussions between the School's Management team and UCU are planned to take place in the Summer Term 2015 around future promotions to or within the NRSC.

The RSC has reviewed the **Research Staff Promotions Guidance**. In particular, it looked at clarifying the Promotions process within the Guidance, the establishment of a Committee to consider more complex cases, and clarifying the criteria for self-sponsored cases. As indicated above, there will be further changes to the research staff promotions and recruitment procedures.

The RSC made recommendations for changes to the **Contribution Pay Guidance** and encouraged raising awareness of the processes to ensure that managers know how to reward their staff. Some of the actions taken were that all Principal Investigators (PIs) were contacted to inform them of upcoming deadlines, in a bid to encourage applications for research staff.

The RSC discussed and helped to develop a **Bridging Fund** to retain and support researchers with a proven track record between externally funded grants.

To protect research activity and findings, the Intellectual Property rights of all parties are clearly detailed in the School's revised **Intellectual Property Policy**. The RSC has continued to receive updates from the School's Research Committee (which overlooks the research strategy and activities of the School) and Research Division on this area of work.

Principles 3 and 4: Support and Career Development

The School has achieved the following in regards to supporting researchers' careers at the School: The RSC revised and implemented a School framework for the Annual **Career Development Review Meetings** for research staff. The most recent updates in June 2014 included clarification on who should conduct the Meetings, as well as an updated Template Form in which reflections on various aspects of a research staff member's career could be noted.

The Committee has oversight of the **Research Staff Mentoring Guidance**. The RSC annually reviews the Guidance and Process and makes recommendations for changes. The most recent updates include clarification on who conducts Mentoring, as well as outlining the expectations of the Mentor and Mentee. The RSC has also suggested support sessions for new Mentors.

In 2012, the RSC developed and finalised the **Guidance on Supporting and Managing Research Staff**, designed for colleagues involved in supporting and managing research staff. The Guidance flags key pieces of information for various stages of the researchers' employment cycle. The Guidance has also contributed towards improving **accessibility of research staff information on the LSE website**. The research staff areas of the LSE website are continuously being reviewed to ensure that content is easily accessible and relevant to research staff.

In addition, the RSC has developed the idea of **workshops for new and existing Principal Investigators**. Delivered through the Teaching and Learning Centre, the sessions include input from colleagues and Divisions across the School, offering Principal Investigators new to the role the opportunity to discuss various aspects of their role with other Principal Investigators. More recently, the School's Research Division has established a comprehensive **training programme on grant-winning**, which is available to both teaching and research staff.

Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities

The RSC developed the document **Responsibilities in the Research Relationship**, outlining what is expected of researchers and PIs in regard to effective management practice and developing positive working relationships during the project. The framework is also designed to ensure that research staff have appropriate support(s) for their career and personal development.

Principle 6: Equality and Diversity

The School, as a whole, is responsible for promotion of equality and diversity. Equality and Diversity is a key principle in the School's recruitment and selection practices and the School promotes equality and diversity at all stages of the employment cycle of all staff groups.

To ensure and facilitate embedding of equality and diversity in School processes, policies, practices and attitudes and behaviours, an **Equality and Diversity Executive Group** was created which comprises of Heads of Services and considers strategic issues and reports to the Director and Council. In addition, the School's **Equality and Diversity Consultative Forum** comprises of representatives from various services in the School and raises and discusses local equality and diversity issues, reporting to the Equality and Diversity Executive Group.

Principle 7: Implementation and Review

The School is committed to undertake regular reviews of researchers' careers via the RSC. The School also invests more resources in being involved with EU and UK initiatives to have access to best practice across the sector and to influence wider agendas for researchers' benefit.

The strategy for continuing to support Research staff at the School over the next four years is included in the Action Plan **attached** to this report at **Annex D**. It includes measuring the impact of the New Research Staff Career through the CROS Survey. Research staff processes will continue to be overseen by the RSC. The Action Plan will be updated as part of the discussions that take place in the RSC as well as in accordance to School wide initiatives or policies.

Human Resources, 14th April 2015