

**2 Year Internal Assessment Report for the HR Excellence in Research Award
November 2015**



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Introduction and Context

St George's, University of London (SGUL), established in 1733, is distinctive as the UK's only independent medical and healthcare Higher Education Institution, employing around 700 staff, 21% of whom are engaged on a fixed term contract to undertake research. SGUL shares its main campus with St George's Hospital, one of the UK's largest teaching hospitals. SGUL underwent a significant restructuring process in early 2014, whereby our three academic divisions were dissolved and four new institutes created. There are now three research institutes: Cardiovascular and Cell Sciences, Immunity and Infection, and Population Health; and one educational institute: the Institute of Medical and Biomedical Education.

Our recently launched [strategic plan for 2015-2020](#) has three themes: The breadth of our translational work for patient benefit; the international dimension to our work; and working in collaboration. Our main research objective is to enhance the delivery of world-leading and internationally excellent research in focused and distinctive areas of expertise. As part of the strategic plan, we plan to enhance the research environment by:

- Building 'critical mass' in innovative research areas through recruitment, repositioning research effort, and through internal and external collaborations;
- Developing early career researchers and recruiting researchers with an international reputation;
- Fostering a supportive environment for young researchers, with strong mentoring, a dynamic seminar programme and enhanced numbers of PhD students;
- Ensuring a vibrant PhD and postdoctoral training programme;
- Succession planning;
- Growing fundraising, enterprise and other 'third-string' activities;
- Supporting public engagement activities;
- Communicating our message effectively both internally and externally.

Section 1

Outline how the internal evaluation was undertaken (including how researchers' views were taken into account during the review and, where relevant, how the review links with existing QA and other implementation/monitoring mechanisms.

The internal evaluation against the action plan was undertaken by the Associate Dean for the Career Development of Contract Research Staff and the Learning and Development Manager within HR, in collaboration with other relevant staff, such as staff development institute leads and institute directors. Outcomes from CROS and PIRLS 2013 and 2015 informed the progress of the action plan, particularly to determine if there have been any improvements in the views of researchers. The views of researchers were also gathered through meetings and workshops. Relevant elements of the action plan have been reviewed as part of our Athena SWAN silver application. The review of the 2013 action plan will be discussed at the next Human Resources Committee and Research Strategy Committee. The 2015-2017 action plan will be a standing agenda at both of these committees for the two year period.

Section 2

Detail key achievements and the progress against the strategy, indicators and actions identified in the original action plan

Principle 1 – Recruitment and Selection

Our e-recruitment system enables a fair and transparent shortlisting against person specifications. Functionality has now been added to the system to allow collation of protected characteristics data for advertised roles. These reports will be used from spring 2016. Recruitment and selection training is offered throughout the year for all recruiting managers.

Principle 2 – Recognition and Value

The requirement for fixed term contracts is reviewed to ensure that permanent roles are offered, where applicable. This is achieved through an annual audit of fixed term contracts and permanent contracts are considered when fixed term contracts end.

Feedback on performance and staff development needs are discussed and recorded in personal reviews for all employees. In 2014, the completion rate of personal reviews within the research institutes was 90%, which was an improvement on the completion rate of 68% in 2013 (2015 personal reviews are still in progress).

Principles 3 & 4 – Support and Development

There is a rich and vibrant seminar series for each institute, in addition to new events such as the *Research Grants Day* in October 2015 that provided insights from funding bodies for grant applications, with 65 people in attendance and established events such as the [annual St George's Research Day](#). SGUL continues to provide regular staff development opportunities to improve researcher skills, such as writing for publication, writing grant proposals, research degree supervision and career planning workshops.

Although the research representative group was not particularly active, there are a number of researchers who are now engaging with ideas to support their development, such as the creation of a researcher development community that will be supported centrally by the staff development team. The Postgraduate Certificate in Contract Research Skills is not being run in 15/16 due to lack of registrations, but many of the elements of the qualification are still available through our common postgraduate framework and the graduate skills school programme. SGUL has launched the SHINE (St George's Health in Education) CPD framework that enables staff to obtain membership of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), at Associate Fellow, Fellow and Senior Fellow levels.

Principle 5 - Researchers' Responsibilities

SGUL holds an annual careers conference and other workshops for researchers which focus on individual responsibility for active career management. Due to the personal review electronic system entering its final year before a new HR information system is introduced, the RDF has not been integrated into the personal review process, but will inform the design of the new review system.

The Enterprise team has raised awareness of the support and processes that enable knowledge transfer and the commercialisation of Intellectual Property (IP). The team has a dedicated section which works closely with the research institutes and has regular meetings with researchers and Research Managers to advise on these matters. Since December 2014, over £250k was awarded under the Impact and Innovation Awards.

Principle 6 – Diversity and Equality

SGUL is part of the Two Ticks scheme and is a Stonewall Diversity Champion. It was ranked 47 out of 398 organisations in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index in 2015. SGUL was awarded the bronze level of the Athena SWAN award in 2014 and is currently putting together its application for the silver Athena SWAN award, where many parts of the action plan will impact on women researchers.

Principle 7 – Implementation and Review

Significant workforce restructuring in early 2014 particularly affected the continuity of some of the initiatives laid out in the action plan, and latterly, the gap between the departure of the Head of Staff Development in early 2015 and the commencement of employment of the replacement Learning and Development Manager in late June 2015. These are now historic issues – the forthcoming action plan will be reviewed at every meeting of the Human Resource and Research Strategy Committees.

Section 3

Outline next steps and the focus of the strategy for the next two years, including success measures.

As outlined in the introduction, our strategic plan for 2015-2020 will have a direct impact on how SGUL meets the aspirations of the HR Excellence in Research Award. The main priorities for the next two years are:

Priority	Responsibility	Success Measures
Priority 1 To provide research staff with skills and tools to actively manage their careers, through the development of a vibrant researcher development group, led by researchers themselves.	Research representatives, L&D Manager, Associate Dean for the Career Development of Research Staff.	Minimum engagement of 12 researchers in the group. Minimum 4 meetings per year. Programme of events published each term, directly related to the priorities identified by the group.
Priority 2 Raising the profile of the RDF and the associated planner.	Learning and Development Manager, Associate Dean for the Career Development of Research Staff.	At least 20 researchers trial the RDF planner in spring 2016. Improved response from CROS 2017 respondents that they have an understanding of the RDF (Q15.10).
Priority 3 Current staff development workshops will be reviewed and new provision developed as required, including coaching and mentoring.	Learning and Development Manager, Associate Dean for the Career Development of Research Staff	Revised central staff development programme for researchers launched by May 2016, with >80% positive feedback.
Priority 4 To pull together an explicit research staff data subset that will allow SGUL to target resources and staff development provision accordingly.	Deputy Director of HR, HR Information Officer	Subset of data prepared annually to inform action plan and reviews of relevant policies and initiatives.
Priority 5 To implement an effective communications strategy, to ensure that research staff are fully aware of career and professional development opportunities available to them.	Learning and Development Manager, Associate Dean for the Career Development of Research Staff.	Increased researcher engagement with a range of activities. Opportunities are publicised using a range of channels.