HR Excellence in Research Award: Six Year Review – May 2019.

Introduction: The HR Excellence in Research Award was attained by Goldsmiths in September 2012. In January 2019 we were granted permission to move to the later Cohort 8 to take account of the timing of a review of university-wide research-related activity led by our Pro-Warden (Research and Enterprise) (PWRE), and changes in staffing responsible for co-ordinating the HR Excellence in Research Award.

How our evaluation was undertaken: This report on implementation is informed by the large scale departmental review undertaken during 2017. The Chair and co-ordinator of Concordat Implementation Meetings (CIG / ECRG) met with members of the management of 15 academic Departments with 2 Departments responding by email; we also held 2 focus groups for ECRs nominated by their departments and for Concordat Implementation Group funding awardees. There were in total 20 attendees in the 2 focus groups from 9 departments (roughly 50% departments) and similar numbers from each of the 3 Schools. Notes were taken at all meetings and then circulated to attendees afterwards for checking. The report was discussed at 2 CIG/ECRG meetings and in May 2018 a paper (including the report and survey data) presented to the PWRE for review by the Research and Enterprise Committee1. In October 2018, our PWRE formed and chaired a Steering Group (the Concordat Working Group (CWG)) to plan a better, more standardised and consistent delivery of support to researchers across the governance structures in the university. This large-scale review of research support at Goldsmiths dovetails with our institutional preparations for REF2021 and addresses overlaps with complementary programmes such as Athena SWAN. The action plan and a later section of this report will include details of these revisions.

Governance of research at Goldsmiths: Goldsmiths’ research spans the arts, humanities, social sciences and computing. Much of our research is interdisciplinary – groups of researchers working to understand a complex problem, drawing on their distinctive disciplines to arrive at a single solution. Goldsmiths Research and Enterprise Committee (REC) is the key strategic committee of Academic board responsible for all aspects of research and enterprise, including research training, research ethics and integrity and knowledge exchange. Since early 2012, there has been a group reporting to Research and Enterprise Committee to oversee the implementation plan for the Concordat to support the career development of researchers and renewal of the HR Excellence in Research Award. CWG members are primarily senior managers in functions responsible for implementation: Directors of HR, Director of Research Services, the Dean of the Graduate School; 2 ECRs and the current ECRG co-ordinator. The Goldsmiths Strategic Plan 2018-20232 centres research and knowledge exchange as a key priority for the University, and commits to ‘improving approaches to recruiting and developing staff, with clear progression routes that recognise a range of contributions and a range of development opportunities’.

PROGRESS ON ACTIONS (2017-2019)

Recruitment and Selection: Goldsmiths rolled out a new recruitment system in 2015, the online platform has standardised stages to be met to improve consistency for applicants. Recruitment and Selection training has been delivered to 35 staff in the past 2 years with a further 118 staff participating in unconscious bias workshops. The training supports recruiting managers to develop job descriptions and person specifications appropriate for the role. The training and related resources explore best practice interview and selection techniques, and provide guidance on mitigating unconscious bias in recruitment. In 2017 Goldsmiths was accredited as a Disability Confident Employer; as part of which we operate a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria.

Recognition and Value: A review of departmental provision for ECRs was conducted in June to December 2017. Our aim was to understand departmental provision and how the Concordat Implementation Group could provide support mechanisms to augment the departmental offerings. The review revealed a range of support mechanisms, both formal and informal, across departments. Given nearly all departments included new lecturers (16/17, 94%) within their definitions of ECRs, teaching and some experience of pastoral duty is nearly universal; as is some form of mentoring provision (14/17 departments, 82%); some form of internal funding support was available for conferences and projects (varying amounts from £500 to £1,500) in all departments. Our English and Comparative Literature

1 https://www.gold.ac.uk/governance/committees/researchenterprisecommittee/
2 https://www.gold.ac.uk/strategy/; Section 6, “Supporting the Goldsmiths Community of students, staff and alumni”.
Department offer an innovative support package for new PhDs and a Postdoctoral Associate scheme to assist and support moves to a first academic post; this is one of two formal schemes offered. The key concerns shared by departmental representatives and ECRs from Focus Groups were that time for their own research was limited despite contract terms; inability to provide and access matching funds for prestigious externals schemes; structures in departments may not support new staff/ECRs have difficulties in being embedded in the research culture. The College is therefore developing co-ordinated support for Early Career Researchers, to complement the provision within departments, this will include a package to allow students who had successfully completed their PhD at Goldsmiths a continuing affiliation with Goldsmiths (library card; alumni email address; opportunity to join a mentoring programme; and opportunity to access dedicated internal funding opportunities).

Goldsmiths runs a funding scheme for Early Career Researchers which made 26 awards in 2 years. Departmental review findings show that 12/17 departments offer researchers individual support for their own projects and to support conference attendance. Sums range from £1,500-500 automatically for staff; £150 -£500 where PhD students are considered ECRs. Some departments have an automatic allocation and a competition for further/extra funding. The Graduate School supports the career development of PGRs through the Graduate School Fund (GSF). GSF awards are made three times a year and typically support activities such as conference attendance, events organising, fieldwork visits, and training costs. In 2017/2018, a total of £30,576.39 was awarded to doctoral researchers through the GSF. Other internal funding schemes such as Alumni Fund and Public engagement fund offer opportunities to fund research activity.

Support and Career Development: HR undertook a review of its Learning and Development provision in 2017 and additional resource was allocated within HR to support a refreshed provision. The learning and development programme is open to all staff and is widely publicised through all-staff communication channels. Research staff are encouraged to take part in Goldsmiths leadership programmes and Advance HE leadership programmes. The Research Services team deliver targeted workshops for researchers e.g. Research Impact, Intellectual Property, Nvivo training. Online resources are provided, including links to external briefings. The Graduate School deliver a programme of training for PHD students, including Research Methods Training 2017/18 14 PGRs engaged with the module.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: In 2017 following a broad consultative exercise we introduced our revised equality objectives, progress is reported to the Human Resources and Equalities Committee each term and an annual progress report is published on our website. Our EDI Strategy aims to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that we do, to support this, E&D has been added as a standing item to the agenda of all university committees. One of our key aims is to raise the profile of researchers from diverse and under-represented backgrounds through regular features in all staff news and through the promotion of research events. Our EDI Intranet pages contain links to research relating to equality and social justice.

**ACTIONS PARTIALLY COMPLETED (CARRIED INTO 2019-21 ACTION PLAN)**

- **Participation rates in CROS/PIRLS:** Our aim was to engage at least 40% of researchers in the CROS and PIRLS. The surveys are promoted through regular newsletters and in briefings co-ordinated by Research Services, however, response rates continue to be low (20/ 24% responses to CROS and 9/ 21% to PIRLS in 2017). Engagement with the surveys will continue to be a priority - we will engage more directly with colleagues to promote this, e.g. Research Services will promote the survey to Heads of Department and Directors of Research.
- **Participation in annual Professional Development Review (PDR) process (actions 9, 24, 25):** All staff are entitled to PDR and these are promoted through staff training and communications. However, take up of PDR continues to be low. Information from our review and surveys (including Athena Swan and department reviews) indicates that engagement with PDR continues to be low. The CROS indicated that researchers found PDRs useful to record career progress and training, however, access to PDRs was mixed and 4 participants did not find them useful. Athena Swan Survey data indicates 42% of staff have had a PDR in the past year.
- **Athena SWAN application: Institutional Bronze award (action 17):** Goldsmiths submitted its first application for a Bronze Athena Swan award in April 2017. While unsuccessful, the feedback primarily reflected the need for more complete data to be available for evaluation and reflection. The quality of our legacy staff data was a known problem at that time and has been the subject of an institutional project overseen by the Data
Management Leadership Group from May 2017 onwards. Staff data integrity has seen a significant improvement since that point and the institution is in the process of submitting an institutional award. Two departments also plan to submit their own applications during 2019.

**NEXT STEPS – KEY ACTIONS FOR 2019-21 (YEARS 7, 8)**

**Recruitment and selection**
- Introduce mandatory recruitment training for recruitment panel chairs, including Principal Investigators (deliver to all PI and Managers by January 2021)
- Review the Goldsmiths recruitment policy / procedures to ensure equality of opportunity, transparency and fairness for researchers (Complete review by January 2020)

**Support and career development**
- Support for post-docs. This proposed package of measures would allow students who had successfully completed their PhD at Goldsmith to have a continuing affiliation with Goldsmiths and for them to supported in taking the next steps in their careers. (Implement by August 2020)
- For ECR staff employed at Goldsmiths further promotion of PDRs as developmental tools and not solely as necessary step in promotion process (Aim to achieve target of 60% of survey respondents reporting engagement with PDR by July 2021)
- Develop a dedicated website to promote academic skills aligned to the RDF with the option to download the career tracker (publish webpage by June 2020).
- Test online professional development planning (PDP) and progress monitoring tool (Inkpath) October 2019. Roll out to all PGRs in 2020/21 if testing phase is successful (if funding is made available) 80 students and supervisors engaging with Inkpath by September 2020).

**Recognition and Value**
- Increase engagement with CROS and PIRLS by 5% each year, aiming to achieve 30-35% response rate by 2021, Undertake a targeted communication campaign encouraging researchers to complete the CROS and PIRLS surveys: Head of Departments and Directors of Research and Enterprise to share survey with their teams; Research Services to send directly to researchers; Provide pamphlets with information about the surveys to PIs as part of induction materials.
- Develop co-ordinated support for Early Career Researchers, to complement the provision within departments, this will include a package to allow students who had successfully completed their PhD at Goldsmith a continuing affiliation with Goldsmiths (library card; alumni email address; opportunity to join a mentoring programme; and opportunity to access dedicated internal funding opportunities). Implement by July 2020.

**Researchers Responsibilities**
- Review guidance for staff and managers (including PIs) on conducting effective PDR (implement by July 2020)
- Embed discussions of personal ownership / agency for career development within Researcher Development Programmes.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
- Promote the family friendly policies to research staff through Research Services newsletters and workshops (ongoing – review June 2020)
- Continue to participate in the Disability Confident, Stonewall (Ongoing – Aim for renewal by Jan 2020)
- Gain Athena Swan Bronze Award (Dec 2019)

**Management and Implementation of Concordat**
- Revisions to the concordat that require re-alignments in our own Codes of Conduct/documentation, actions 2, 20;
- Collection of broader range of data such as leaver data and better data sharing between activities (e.g. Athena SWAN, REF2021 and HR Excellence in Research Award). This enhanced data will facilitate better targeting of activity and reporting on success. (Action 12)