**HR Excellence in Research Award
Two-Year Internal Review (Jan 2017-Jan 2019)**

Context

A New Strategic Direction

We published our new University strategy in February 2017. The strategy sets out our mission to *Transform Lives,* ensuring our research programmes generate social, economic and cultural benefits; working with others to ensure those benefits are wide-reaching.

The Creating Knowledge (Research) Pillar, one of our four strategic pillars, drives the Creating Knowledge Implementation Plan under the leadership of the PVC Research and Global Engagement. A new Dean of Research was appointed (October 2018) to take a leadership role in the delivery of the plan. We have established three research and impact platforms, aligned to our strategic priorities and the UKRI grand challenges. The platforms provide a focus for areas of research strength, galvanise collaboration across the University and externally, ensure coordinated support for our research community, and act as the vehicle for delivering our strategy and investment decisions.

The University has also launched the *Hallam Deal* for all staff and students to create an outstanding environment in which to study, research and work. The deal sets out what staff can expect in return for their commitment - not just the tangible pay and benefits, but also the clarity of expectation, the job itself, the working environment and the opportunities available. The Hallam Deal includes a clear expectation that staff share responsibility for their career and development needs. [Principle 5]

Internal Review Process

Implementation of our Concordat action plan is now overseen by the University's Researcher Concordat Operations Group (RCOG), which meets at least three times per year to evaluate progress against our Concordat action plan. RCOG reports to the University's Creating Knowledge Pillar Board (CKB) which is responsible for delivering the strategic objectives relating to research and innovation. The Chair of RCOG is a member of CKB.

Membership of RCOG was expanded in September 2017 to include a representative from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team. Membership also comprises senior and ECR representation from our four faculties, and staff from Human Resources and Organisational Development and the Research and Innovation Office.

This internal review has been undertaken by the RCOG. Outside of RCOG meetings, researchers' views were captured through: 2017 CROS and PIRLS surveys; Early Career Researcher (ECR) network meetings and events; a specific session for ECRs at the Creating Knowledge Conference; faculty-organised ECR events and the new Research Staff Induction event which included discussion tables hosted by the RCOG chair around support for ECRs under the Concordat. Progress against our action plan was communicated to researchers via the ECR reps, a Creating Knowledge blogsite and our Research and Knowledge Exchange newsletter, published quarterly.

This review links with other quality assurance, governance and equality charters through overlapping membership of the Researcher Concordat Operations Group, University Gender Equality Steering Group and faculty and University-level Creating Knowledge Boards.

Achievements and Progress

The full details of specific achievements and progress against our action plan can be found here: https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice/researchers-concordat

Research and Innovation Investment [Principle 5]

The Creating Knowledge Investment Prospectus was launched in September 2018. The prospectus commits over £1 million of internal funding in 2018-19 across seven funding

streams to support researchers at all stages of their career to develop research and innovation activities and to stimulate activity that aligns with our research priorities. A launch event with a particular focus on ECRs (49 attendees) was held to promote the schemes. Significantly, three of the seven schemes were designed to pump-prime research activity and a proportion of funding was either ring-fenced for ECRs (e.g. the fellowship fund) or research teams had to demonstrate support for and development of ECRs (e.g. challenge fund and the strategic investment fund). To date, 61 applications have been received across these three schemes and 21 awards. Four of the 11 fellowships were awarded to ECRs in their own right, and all of the 10 awards across the challenge and strategic investment funding included ECRs within the core research teams with a commitment to ECR development. Schemes will continue to run in 2019 including rolling deadlines for developing international collaborations, cluster funds to support research networks and impact funding.

To support staff development, in particular ECRs, we established an internal a peer review college. This brings together our Professoriate (including Readers) to provide summative and informative feedback to applicants, ensuring the review process is developmental for applicants. All applicants receive feedback from three reviewers and from a mixed gender panel; this has been very well received by applicants.

Other key achievements

1. We launched new Equality and Diversity and Unconscious Bias e-learning modules in June 2018 and all members of recruiting panels must complete both courses before taking part in any staff selection. All chairs of recruitment panels must now attend a mandatory development workshop before chairing a staff recruitment panel and go through an EDI statement with all their panel members prior to the interviews starting. [Principle 1]

2. In 2017, we launched a new Performance and Development Review (PDR) process for academic staff. The process is supported by an online toolkit and guidance which includes specific information on research objectives, as well as guidance on appraising researchers. Alongside this we have developed an Academic Career Framework (ACF) setting out expectations for academic achievement across four strands including research and innovation. The ACF supports the PDR process and is designed to help academics (including researchers) agree objectives and reflect on their current contribution, development and career ambitions and plans as part of the PDR process. [Principle 2]

3. A number of initiatives have focussed on supporting researchers with their research outputs and external funding [Principle 2]:

   - Staff engagement in our internal assessment of research (mini-REF) increased from 509 in 2015 to 567 in 2017. All submitting staff were provided with constructive feedback on their output quality and publication strategy.

   - Following the launch of our peer support policy in 2016, this was followed up by the establishment of a strategic bids group in January 2018, to support staff with large scale, interdisciplinary bids and fellowship applications. The impact of policies and processes is difficult to measure but we observed an increase in grants applications and grants awarded from £4.2 million in 2016-17 to £4.8 million in 2017-18.

   - One of our four faculties piloted a targeted intervention programme for ECRs to support external fellowship applications.

4. In December 2018, we introduced an enhanced University-wide induction for new researchers which will be run on a twice-yearly basis. The aim is to introduce new

researchers to the expectations around and support for research and knowledge exchange activity and provide them with a forum to meet new colleagues and potential collaborators. [Principle 3]

5. Over the last academic year, we expanded the Sheffield Hallam Researcher Development (SHaRD) programme to include new workshops on commercialisation, REF impact and finding funding. We have also instigated new routes to support staff to achieve HEA Associate Fellowship - (i) a new course aimed at staff in student-support roles (first cohort started July 2018) and (ii) a programme for postgraduate research students, submitted for HEA accreditation in October 2018. [Principle 4].

6. We successfully launched our Early Career Researcher (ECR) network in January 2018, with internal funding to facilitate networking and development events. The network has been pitched inclusively to cover all those new or returning to research, regardless of their overall career stage. The network has run a number of events at both the University and faculty level focussed on helping ECRs to become established in their research career, to network, collaborate and bid for funding. ECR reps are now in place for each of the faculties as well as a wider steering group to help plan events and activities. [Principle 5]

Strategy and actions 2019-21

Our Concordat action plan supports the ambitions of our Creating Knowledge Implementation plan; it leads activities under the strategic goal of "*building a strong research and knowledge exchange culture*". Concordat activities will support work-streams on community (including events, communications and staff development); consistent approaches to sabbaticals, mentoring and support for ECRs; and the development of the platforms and how these support staff to grow their research careers.

We will build on progress already made under the Creating Knowledge strategy to support and enhance the research community and culture, ensuring research and researchers are valued for their contribution. We will create more opportunities for staff to engage with other researchers and to develop new collaborations and networks. Linked to this, a significant piece of work will be to embed the new research and impact platforms and establish the necessary support structures.

We will review approaches to supporting research staff across the University. We will continue to prioritise support for ECRs, as well as ensuring equality of access to mentoring. Staff recruitment and development activities will be focussed on building and developing research capacity and capability, and supporting the development of academic research careers from ECRs through to Professors. We will seek staff feedback on the new Academic Careers Framework and make any improvements necessary to support PDR.

Details of our planned actions and success measures can be found in our updated action plan: https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice/researchers-concordat

Progress against our plans will be monitored through RCOG and reported to CKB. Feedback from staff will be sought formally (CROS, PIRLS, University Employee Opinion survey) and informally (e.g. through staff development evaluations). We will also monitor staff engagement in relevant activities and initiatives, such as internal funding streams, platform activities and the annual Creating Knowledge conference.

Wider outcomes - such as research capacity and capability - will be monitored through the CK strategy mechanisms. The governance structure allows effective 2-way communication between RCOG and CKB, ensuring that Concordat actions support delivery of the University's strategy, and that implementation plans are informed by Concordat priorities and principles.