Careers in Research Online Survey 2015

REPORT OF KEY FINDINGS FROM UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX RESPONSES

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Careers in Research Online Survey 2015 (CROS) – Report of key findings from University of Sussex responses

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Careers in Research Online Survey was designed to help Higher Education Institutions across the UK to enhance the quality of provision for research staff. CROS was delivered as an online questionnaire to Sussex research staff using Bristol Online Survey (BOS) between the 2nd March and 1st April 2015.

There were 139 completed surveys, making the Sussex CROS response rate 41%. The response rate was the best to date, this being the fourth time for Sussex to conduct CROS.

The nationwide exercise closed on 31st May 2015 and national level aggregate responses are compared with Sussex outcomes throughout this report.

KEY MESSAGES

National question set

A. Research Careers

1. 83% of Sussex respondents are employed on fixed term contracts, indicating a slight (3.4%) decrease from 2013. A comparison with the national results indicates that the proportion of respondents employed on fixed term contracts at Sussex is higher than the national aggregate response (74%) and that Sussex is behind the national average in terms of researchers employed on open-ended contacts (Sussex 10%; national 24%).

2. Compared to 2013 there has been a decrease in the proportion of Sussex respondents employed on contracts of less than 1 year duration from 17.6% in 2013 to 7.8% in 2015. This is over 11 percentage points lower than the national aggregate result of 19.3% of researchers employed on contracts of less than 1 year.

B. Recognition and Value

3. Since 2013 there has been an improvement in the perception of equal treatment with other (non-research staff) with respect to participation in decision making, however 38.8% still do not feel equally treated in this respect. Similarly, in line with 2013 results, half of 2015 respondents still do not feel equally treated with respect to opportunities for promotion and progression.

4. There has been a sharp decrease in the proportion of Sussex respondents that feel that they are treated equally with other staff in respect of visibility on websites and staff directories since 2013 (85% in 2013 compared to 67.6% in 2015). This trend was not mirrored in the national aggregated results and warrants further investigation.

5. 59.7% of Sussex respondents had participated in an appraisal over the past two years which represents a 26.7% improvement over 2013 results. The Sussex result remains behind the 2015 national figure (66.9% national respondents have participated in appraisal in last two years), however the gap has narrowed by 5.4 percentage points since 2013. Work is still required to ensure usefulness of the process and this is already in progress with new research staff appraisal forms and supporting information for appraisers/appraisees developed for the 2015 appraisal round (May-August 2015).

6. There is improved knowledge/understanding amongst Sussex research staff of all UK initiatives relating to research staff (e.g. Concordat, Athena Swan, HR Excellence, REF etc) compared to 2013.

C. Recruitment and selection

7. There has been a distinct improvement in the information people receive during application and recruitment stages with over 90% of 2015 respondents recruited in the last two years receiving a job description, details of required qualifications and details of the specialist research skills required. In all instances these levels were above the nationwide results and are an improvement over 2013 survey results where only 76-78% of Sussex respondents had received these details.

8. There has been an improvement over 2013 results relating to induction at institutional, departmental and local levels with fewer 2015 respondents reporting that they had not been offered inductions and greater proportions citing inductions as either useful/very useful at institutional and school/department level. Results indicate there is still more work that could be done to further reduce the proportion of researchers not being offered inductions, increase uptake of offered induction programmes and to continue to improve upon the perceived usefulness of the induction programmes at each level.

D. Support and career development

9. The 2015 CROS results demonstrate a marked improvement over 2013 responses with respect to the proportions of researchers undertaking training and other continuing professional development activities. The proportion of researchers undertaking no professional development has almost halved since 2013 (from 30% in 2013 to 17% in 2015) and proportions undertaking 1-3 days and 4-10 days of professional development has increased by 12.8% and 69% respectively since 2013.

10. In comparison to the 2015 national CROS responses, Sussex researchers' uptake of training and development opportunities remains at the lower end of the scale with higher proportions of national respondents undertaking 4 or more days of training than Sussex researchers.

11. Less than half (46%) of Sussex respondents reported having a clear career development plan or keeping a formal record of professional development activities, representing an outcome 10 percentage points below the national level.

E. Equality and diversity

12. The majority of respondents (83.5%) believed that Sussex is committed to equality and diversity. However, Sussex is behind the national response in relation to the majority of equality and diversity questions asked in CROS 2015. The only exception is 'fair access to training and development' that has seen an improvement over 2013 results and is in line with the national aggregated responses in 2015.

13. Less than half of Sussex respondents thought that: (a) the institution promotes better health and well-being at work, (b) staff are treated fairly in relation to career progression and promotion, (c) staff are treated fairly in relation to reward. For these aspects Sussex scores were more than 10% behind the national level. More than a third of Sussex respondents were dissatisfied with their work-life balance.

14. Over 10% of Sussex respondents perceived that staff were not treated fairly on the basis of age (15.2%; *nat. 10.59%*), gender (23.9%; *nat. 15.5%*) and pregnancy and maternity (18.2%; *nat. 11.53%*). These proportions are higher than those reported from the Sussex 2013 results (12.7%, 15.9% and 11.7% respectively in 2013).

15. Although the trends are similar to the 2013 results, the overall results for equality and diversity at Sussex have declined since 2013 in some cases by as much as 17-18 percentage points (career progression/promotion and reward). There has been a slight decline in the national aggregate results relating to equality and diversity, which has been attributed in the analysis of national results to heightened awareness of issues; however the decline in the Sussex responses is significantly more pronounced than the national aggregate responses. The overall decline in perceptions of fair treatment amongst Sussex researchers is a significant concern and requires further investigation.

16. ### F. Sussex Specific Questions

17. 64% of researchers have noted positive improvements to the way they are supported by the institution. The most noticeable changes have been in the increased availability and visibility of training and professional development opportunities, followed by improvements in communications with research staff and visibility of postdoctoral issues. The establishment of the Research Staff Office, Research Staff Forum and Research Staff newsletter were all specifically noted as positive developments in a number of responses.

18. The results indicate that there is a good level of engagement with the research staff webpages, newsletter and workshops, with over 50% of respondents engaging either regularly or occasionally with these resources. However currently only 30% of respondents are engaging on a regular/occasional basis with the Research Staff Forum, Research Staff Office and Research Staff Reps indicating more work is required to promote the full range of resources on offer to support research staff.

19. There were a wide variety of suggestions for changes that would make a positive difference to the support researchers receive for their career development, the most popular included: permanent/more stable employment contracts, more teaching/lecturing/supervision

opportunities, funding to undertake independent research project, training for PIs on challenges faced by fixed-term research staff.

20. 32% of respondents were involved in mentoring schemes/mentoring relationships, including women's mentoring circles, 1:1 mentoring and mentoring of junior colleagues/students. Benefits were varied and included: getting support and advice, meeting other researchers, exchanging experiences, career development discussions, improved confidence, development of new skills, increased knowledge of resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue annual fixed-term contract review for science schools and extend to all schools across the University. Ensure transition of all eligible staff to open contracts (where agreed by staff member). **(Owner – PVC, Heads of School, HR)**

2. Review alternative approaches to fixed-term contract management implemented at other HEIs. Produce report and recommendations based on review. **(Owner – Research Staff Office and Research Staff Working Group)**

3. Provide training opportunities and guidance relating to promotions process for research staff. Promotions policy and process to be highlighted to all eligible research staff ahead of academic promotions round. **(Owner – Chairs of academic promotions boards (for training delivery) and RSO for training coordination and information communication)**

4. Review School/departmental visibility and web presence of research staff. Identify where there are opportunities to develop/enhance visibility of research staff **(Owner - Schools/departments and RSO)**

5. Monitor appraisal participation of research staff on annual basis **(Owner - Schools and HR)**

6. Following 2016 appraisal round (2nd cycle with new appraisal forms) evaluate usefulness of the new research staff appraisal documents using CROS 2015 appraisal questions. **(Owner – RSO)**

7. Establish postdoctoral representation on key school and university committees **(Owner – Heads of School, DRaKEs/Directors of Postdoctoral development, Committee chairs, Research Staff Reps - RSO to coordinate recommendations to governance)**

8. Invite experienced PIs/research staff managers together to discuss career development issues for postdoctoral researchers, exchange best practice and elicit ideas for University support for those new to management of postdoctoral researchers. **(Owner – RSO)**

9. Develop plan to increase engagement, resources and information for research staff managers relating to supporting research staff career development. **(Owner – RSO and RSWG)**

10. Ensure that training and development workshops make reference to UK initiatives relevant to research staff careers wherever appropriate. **(Owner RSO)**

11. Produce welcome guide for research staff joining Sussex highlighting University support mechanisms. **(Owner RSO with input from other units)**

12. Develop research staff training and development guidance; setting out recommended annual levels of engagement in training and development and nature of appropriate development opportunities. **(Owner RSO – RSWG)**

13. Raise awareness of Researcher Development Framework and career planning tools/resources through communications, website, incorporation into T&D courses where appropriate. **(Owner RSO)**

14. Investigate other HEIs approaches to supporting postdoctoral health and wellbeing. Make recommendations for health and wellbeing interventions for 16/17 **(Owner RSO).**

15. Provide outcomes of CROS 2015 to University Equality and Diversity Committee to feed into wider University response to E&D issues raised by 2015 staff survey. **(Owner RSO)**

16. Highlight Research Staff Office, Forum and reps along with other initiatives through promotion through communications and attendance at relevant school meetings. **(Owner RSO)**

17. Run CROS 2017 to continue to monitor progress in supporting the career development of researchers at Sussex. **(Owner RSO)**

NEXT STEPS

1. CROS 2015 report to be considered at the first 2015/16 meetings of the relevant University groups/committees (e.g. Research Staff Working Group, Research Staff Reps, Athena Swan, HR Committee, Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee).

2. Recommendations to be agreed by the Research Staff Working Group with input from the committees listed above.

3. Dissemination of CROS 2015 report to all research staff, PIs and Senior Managers within Schools.

4. Publication of summary and recommendations on the University's CROS website.

5. New actions to be taken forward as a result of CROS 2015 to be added to the University's Concordat Implementation Plan.

Careers in Research Online Survey 2015 (CROS) – Report of key findings from University of Sussex responses

1. Background

The Careers in Research Online Survey was designed to help Higher Education Institutions across the UK to enhance the quality of provision for research staff. CROS was delivered as an online questionnaire to Sussex research staff using Bristol Online Survey (BOS) between the 2nd March and 1st April 2015. At the time that CROS was administered, there were 339 members of research staff at Sussex, this is a 31% increase on 2013 when the research population was estimated at 258 members.

For the purposes of CROS, the term 'Research Staff' is used to describe any member of staff employed by the University whose principle role is to conduct research. The Research Staff population does not include members of faculty such as Lecturers, Readers, and Professors.

There were 139 completed surveys, making the Sussex CROS response rate 41%. The response rate was the best to date, this being the fourth time for Sussex to conduct CROS. The Sussex response rate was significantly above the 2015 national average response rate of 28%.

Responses were received from researchers from all academic schools with the exception of the School of Media, Film and Music. Figure 1. Shows the breakdown of responses by academic school and response rate by school.
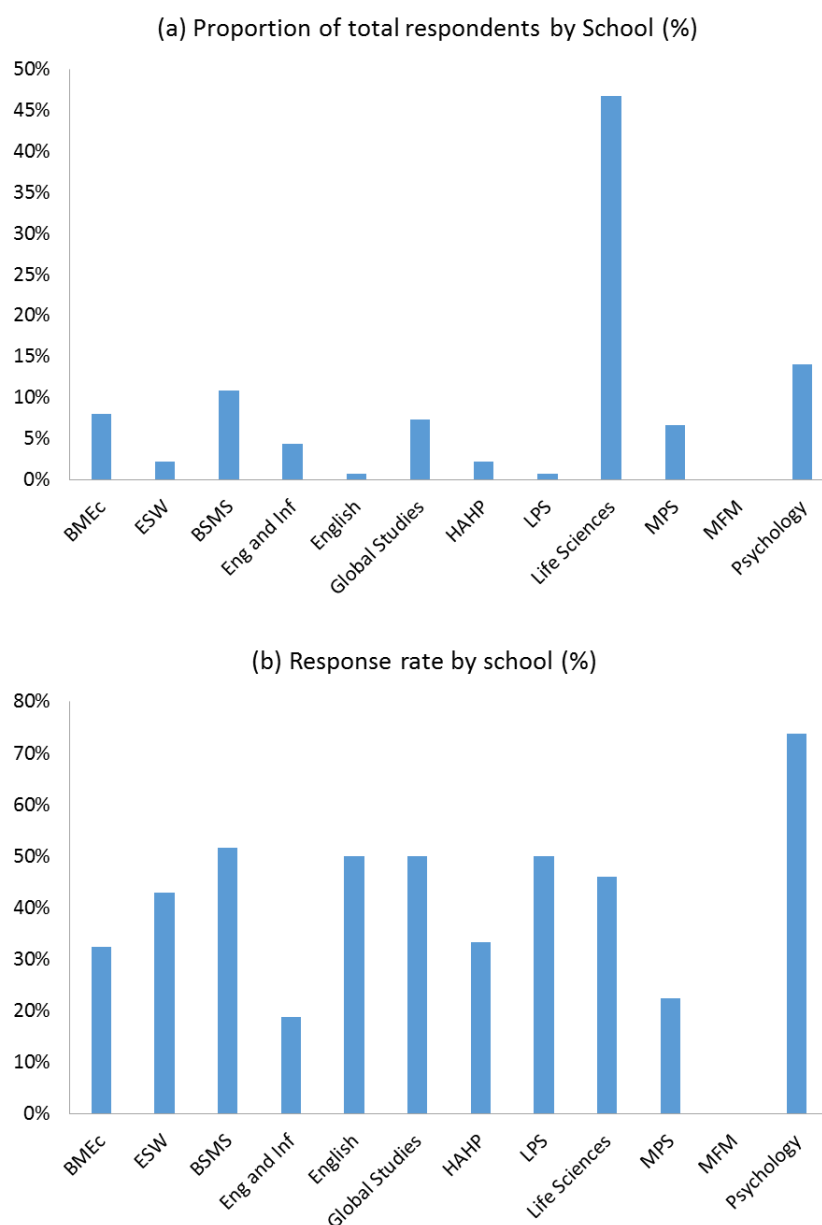

(a) Proportion of total respondents by School (%)

(b) Response rate by school (%)

Figure 1 (a) Proportion of total Sussex respondents by school; (b) response rate by school

The CROS questionnaire was structured into six sections:

1. About your research career
2. Recognition and value
3. Recruitment and selection
4. Support and career development
5. Equality and Diversity
6. About you (demographics)

In addition, a number of institution specific questions were asked on the recommendation of the Research Staff Working Group, the results of which are also presented.

This report sets out the key findings from the Sussex responses to the CROS 2015 survey. Comparisons are made against the CROS 2015 national aggregated benchmarking responses which total 8959 responses across 73 higher education institutions. Comparisons are also made with the 2013 CROS results.

Recommendations for further actions will be developed and agreed by the University's Research Staff Working Group with input from other relevant University groups/Committees (to include Research Staff Reps, University Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team, Human Resources Committee, Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee).

2. Key Findings

2.1 Research Careers

There was a relatively even spread in the number of years' experience amongst responders; 35% had been a researcher for 3 years or less, 34% between 4-9 years and 31% 10 or more years.

The majority of respondents (59%) have only been researchers at Sussex for 2 years or less, with 58% on their first research contract at Sussex. The majority of respondents (83%) are employed on fixed term contracts, which indicates a slight 3% decrease from 2013. Part-time researchers make up a greater proportion of Sussex respondents (20%) than the national average (14%).

 A comparison with the national results indicates that the proportion of respondents employed on fixed term contracts at Sussex is 9% higher than the national average (74%) and that Sussex is behind the national average in terms of researchers employed on Open-ended contacts (Sussex 10%; national 24%). Fixed term contracts were mostly between 1-3 years (75%). Since 2013 there has been a decrease in the proportion of Sussex respondents employed on contracts of less than 1 year duration from 17.6% in 2013 to 7.8% in 2015. This is lower than the national average of 19.3% of researchers employed on contracts of less than 1 year.

There have been some shifts in funding sources of respondents since 2013 as demonstrated in Figure 1. Since 2013 there has been an increase in the proportions of Sussex respondents funded by Charity, EU/EC and the Institution, whereas the proportions funded by UK Research Councils, UK industry and UK government have fallen. This may be reflective of UK government austerity

measures, economic instability affecting industrial sectors and ever increasing competition for Research Council funding, which has led to the need to diversify funding strategies.

Interestingly this trend is not mirrored in the national level results, where proportions of funding sources have remained relatively static between 2013 and 2015.
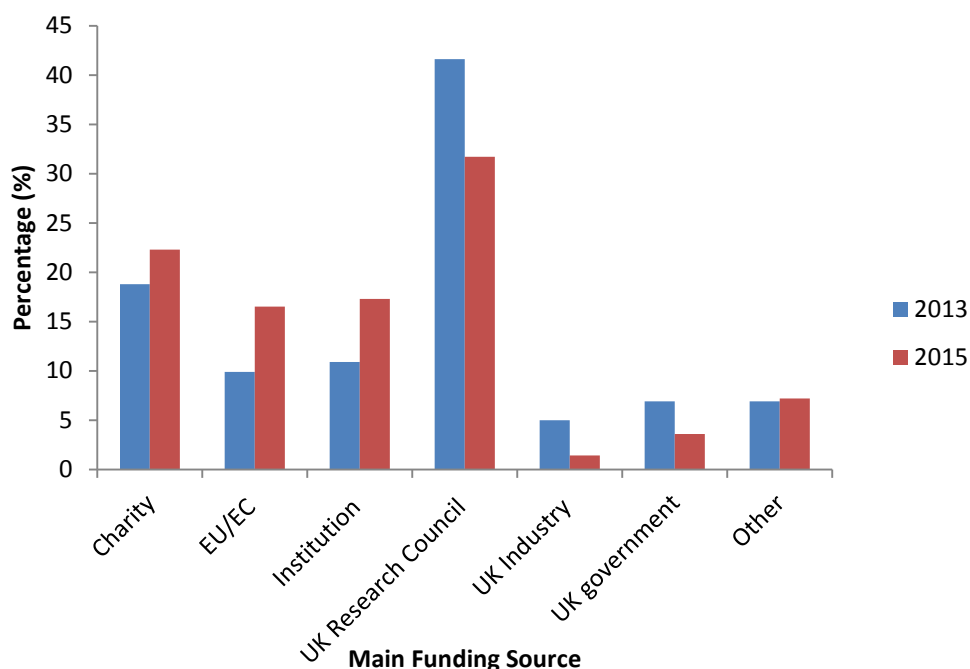

Figure 2 Comparison of Funding Sources of CROS 2013 and CROS 2015 Sussex respondents

2.2 Recognition and Value

2.2.1 Value of contributions

In results that mirror the 2013 survey and in line with the 2015 national results, the 2015 Sussex respondents felt that the University most valued their contributions to publishing, followed by public engagement, grant/funding applications and knowledge transfer/commercialisation (all activities that contribute to the REF exercise). Peer reviewing was deemed to be the least valued activity, followed by managing budgets and supervision/management of staff. Teaching/lecturing and supervision of students were fairly evenly split between respondents that felt these activities were valued and those that did not.

2.2.2. Equal Treatment

In similar results to 2013, the significant majority of Sussex respondents agreed that they are treated equally with other (non-research staff) with respect to access to training and development opportunities (81.3%; *nat: 83.3%*), opportunities to attend meetings and conferences (72.5%; *nat: 77.5%*), visibility on websites and staff directories (67.6%; *nat: 73.7%*) and flexible working (59.4%; *nat: 66.8%*). The trends are in line with the national results, however in each case Sussex is a few % points below the national average (indicated in italics). It should be noted that the proportion of Sussex respondents that agree that they are treated equally with respect to visibility on websites/directories has fallen by 17.4 percentage points from 85% in 2013. This decrease was not

mirrored in the national results and warrants further investigation as to the cause of this downward trend at Sussex.

In line with 2013 responses and 2015 national results, half of 2015 Sussex respondents still do not feel equally treated (compared to non-research staff) with respect to opportunities for promotion and progression. There has been some improvement over 2013 with respect to perceptions around opportunities to participate in decision-making processes with 47.5% of 2013 respondents feeling unequally treated in this respect compared to 38.8% in 2015. However there is still significant work required in both of these areas to ensure research staff feel equally treated in these respects.

Interestingly around 20% of Sussex respondents answered 'don't know' to the questions about equal treatment with respect to decision making/commitees, promotion and progression, flexible working and terms and conditions of employment. This indicates around a fifth of researchers are either unfamiliar with, confused about or are not engaged with University policies and procedures relating to their employment and/or career progression.

2.2.3 Integration into research communities

In line with national responses, the majority of Sussex respondents feel integrated into the departmental (76%; *nat: 77%*), institutional (59%; *nat:60%*) and wider disciplinary (60%; *nat: 67%*) research communities. However there has been a 21% decrease in positive Sussex responses for integration into wider disciplinary community since 2013 and a 12% decrease in positive responses for institutional integration. Some of the free text comments in this section help to provide further insight into some of the challenges that researchers face in feeling integrated into research communities:

> *"Everything rests upon your supervisor/PI. If he/she blocks your possibilities for going to conferences, supervise students, engaging in personal development etc. then you will never feel as an integrated part of the institution"*

> *"It feels that you are an extension of permanent/senior members of staff, rather than an individual. You are only integrated under your own initiative or as a result of your manager."*

> *"Knowing I exist would be a start. I was not invited to a researcher event because the School director of research did not have my name on the list of school researchers."*

> *"Informally I know I am appreciated and valued in the department and School; but with limited short-term contracts, limited access to training, excessive workloads, and the assumption that I will work in my time to develop grant proposals without any paid time or support it is difficult to believe that I am valued."*

2.2.4 Appraisal

A total of 59.7% of Sussex 2015 respondents reported that they had participated in an appraisal over the past two years, which is a 26.7% increase on the 2013 CROS survey results. The Sussex result is behind the 2015 national figure (66.9% national respondents have participated in appraisal in last two years), however the gap has narrowed by 5.4 percentage points since 2013.

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Of those Sussex researchers that had not participated in appraisal the majority had only recently been appointed (46.4%) or were on probation (7.1%). There has been a decrease in the proportion that had not been invited to participate in appraisal (30.4% in 2015) compared to 2013 (42.6%).

The table below summarises the responses of those researchers that had participated in appraisal in the last two years. The 2015 national results are provided for comparison.

Table 1 Respondent perceptions of usefulness of appraisal *(colour key: red = >3 % points worse than national result; yellow = within 3 % points of national result; green = >3 % points better than national result)*

Q. How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme:		Useful/Very Useful		Not Very/Not at all useful		Not applicable	
		Sussex	National	Sussex	National	Sussex	National
Overall		57.8%	61.2%	42.2%	38.3%	0%	0.5%
For you to highlight issues		61.4%	66.2%	36.2%	32.2%	2.4%	1.6%
In helping you focus on your career aspirations and how these are met by your current role?		55.5%	57.9%	42.2%	41.1%	2.3%	1.0%
In identifying your strengths and achievements?		62.6%	63.3%	36.2%	36.0%	1.2%	0.7%
In leading to training or other continuing professional development opportunities?		43.3%	52.1%	54.3%	46.6%	2.4%	1.3%
In leading to changes in work practices?		30.1%	31.4%	60.3%	63.2%	9.6%	5.4%
In reviewing your personal progress?		73.5%	69.1%	25.3%	30.2%	1.2%	0.7%

A direct comparison with 2013 data cannot be made here due to differences in data analysis due to an unusually high proportion of 2013 respondents marking the 'not applicable' option under each heading. However 2015 trends are equivalent with 2013 with appraisal being rated positively by the majority of respondents for: highlighting issues, focussing on career aspirations, identifying strengths/achievements and reviewing personal progress. Also in line with 2013 results, the majority of 2015 respondents did not find the current appraisal scheme useful for leading to training/professional development opportunities or changes in work practices.

In comparison with the nationwide 2015 responses, the Sussex appraisal scheme was rated below the national level in terms of usefulness with respect to 'highlighting issues' and 'leading to training or other continuing professional development opportunities'. The Sussex scheme fared better than the national result in respect of usefulness 'in reviewing personal progress'.

Although there has been significant improvement in the proportion of Sussex researchers participating in appraisal since 2013, action is still required to improve the usefulness of the process, particularly with respect to leading to outcomes relating to training/development and working practices.

Work to improve Research Staff Appraisal at Sussex has already been underway throughout 2014/15 and at the time of writing a tailored research staff appraisal form, supporting information and best practice guidance for research staff appraisers/appraisees has been launched for the 2015 appraisal round. Appraisal training is also being reviewed by the University's Staff Development Unit. These improvements are too early stage to have been reflected in the 2015 CROS responses, but the institution will look for any effects of these changes in subsequent CROS surveys.

2.2.5 Knowledge of UK initiatives relevant to research staff

Sussex research staff respondents have a varying degree of knowledge and understanding of relevant UK initiatives. Unsurprisingly those with funding implications and/or direct benefit to the researcher in terms of career development are more well -known than those with less tangible benefits for the researcher. Initiatives are ranked in the table below in terms of proportions of Sussex researchers that have heard of the initiative/have some understanding.

Table 2 Comparison of 2015 and 2013 levels of understanding of key UK initiatives relevant to research staff careers *(colour key: red = >3 % points worse than national result; yellow = within 3 % points of national result; green = >3 % points better than national result)*

Rank	Initiative		2015 % that have heard of/have understanding		2013 % that have heard of/have understanding	
			Sussex	National	Sussex	National
1	REF		91.4%	89.7%	89.3%	85%
2	Athena Swan		78.3%	81.82%	47.1%	54.8%
3	Vitae		71.8%	52.6%	42.2%	44.5%
4	RCUK Pathways to Impact		59.1%	58.8%	47%	46.8%
5	Vitae Researcher Development Framework		50.4%	45.8%	38%	37.1%
6	European 'HR Excellence in Research' Award Recognition		38.1%	37.3%	30.4%	32.4%
7	Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers		37.7%	39.1%	26.4%	37.2%
8	Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research		32.4%	36.9%	19%	30.7%
9	Concordat to Support Research Integrity		23.7%	27.0%	13.9%	22.5%
10	National Co-ordinating centre for Public Engagement		14.4%	20.8%	n/a	n/a

There has been improvement in the knowledge/understanding of all initiatives since the 2013 CROS survey, but still more work can be done to ensure that researchers are aware of key policies/initiatives relevant to their careers and research.

2.3 Recruitment and Selection

2.3.1 Recruitment

The majority of respondents (59%) had been recruited to Sussex in the last two years, 47.3% saw their current role advertised and 30% heard about their post through word of mouth.

During the application process over 90% of respondents recruited in the last two years had received a job description, details of required qualifications and details of the specialist research skills required. In all instances these levels were above the nationwide results and indicate a distinct improvement compared to 2013 survey results where only 76-78% of Sussex respondents had received these details. 34% of Sussex respondents had not received or did not remember receiving any information regarding transferable/personal/management skills required of the post holder during the application process (compared to 27% of national respondents) .

2.3.2 Induction

There has been an improvement over 2013 Sussex results relating to induction at institutional, departmental and local levels with fewer 2015 respondents reporting that they had not been offered inductions and higher proportions citing inductions as either useful/very useful at institutional and school/department level.

In comparison with the national 2015 CROS dataset, higher proportions of Sussex researchers do not take up offers of inductions at each level and lower proportions of Sussex researchers are offered departmental and local inductions than nationwide counterparts.

Figure 3 Perceptions of induction at Institutional, School and Local/group levels

Although the results indicate that some improvements have been made since 2013 in terms of access to induction and perceived usefulness, there is still more work that could be done to further
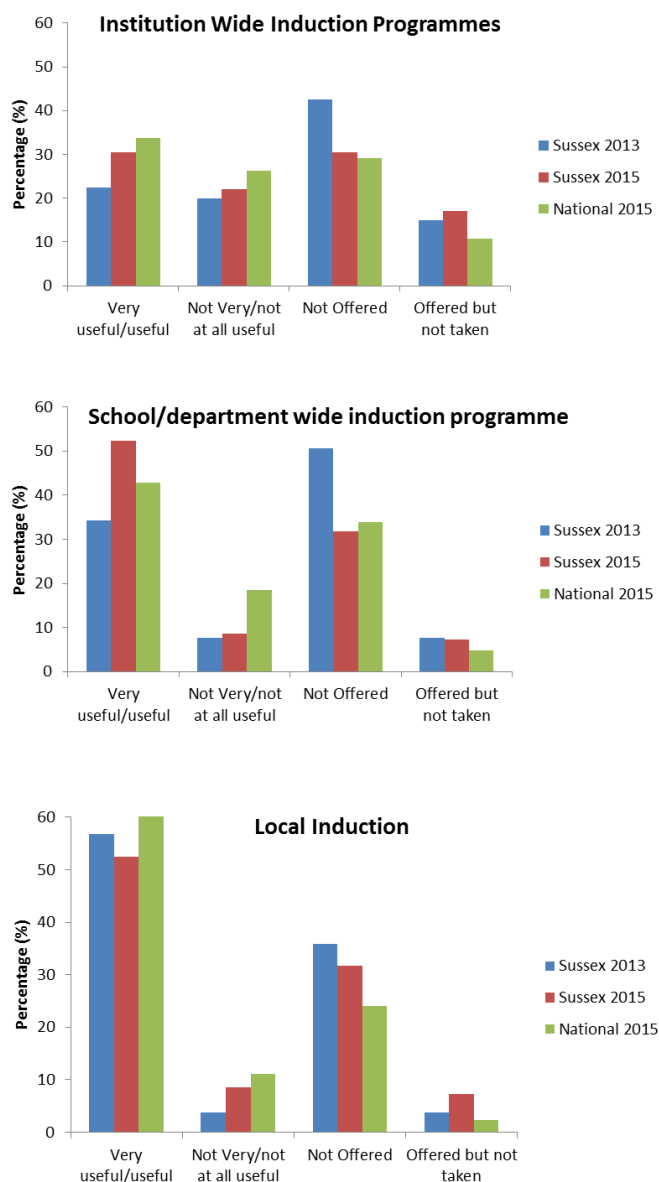
reduce the proportion of researchers not being offered inductions, increase uptake of offered induction programmes and to continue to improve upon the perceived usefulness of the induction programmes at each level.

Some free text comments from this section offer some further insight and ideas for future improvement, particularly at the institutional level:

"Induction was over a month after I started by which time I'd found most of the useful information out myself."

"It would have been beneficial to of received a welcome packet of useful information before starting my post. Information for an international researcher moving to the UK would have been particularity beneficial."

Since Jan 2015 new research staff now receive a welcome email from the Research Staff Office with key information and useful web-links within two weeks of their arrival. In October 2014 the Research Staff Office initiated a quarterly 'welcome lunch' where new starters are introduced to the support mechanisms for research and professional development across the University, however despite all new starters being invited, uptake for this event is currently less than 50%. The results indicate that more needs to be done to build upon some positive improvements that have already been made at each level to ensure a consistent and useful induction for each new research staff member. Comments indicate particular attention should be paid to induction/information for researchers moving to Sussex from overseas.

2.4 Support and Career Development

The 2015 CROS results demonstrate a marked improvement over 2013 responses with respect to the proportions of researchers undertaking training and other continuing professional development activities (Fig. 3). The proportion of researchers undertaking no professional development has almost halved since 2013 and proportions undertaking 1-3 days and 4-10 days of professional development has increased by 12.8% and 69% respectively since 2013. These
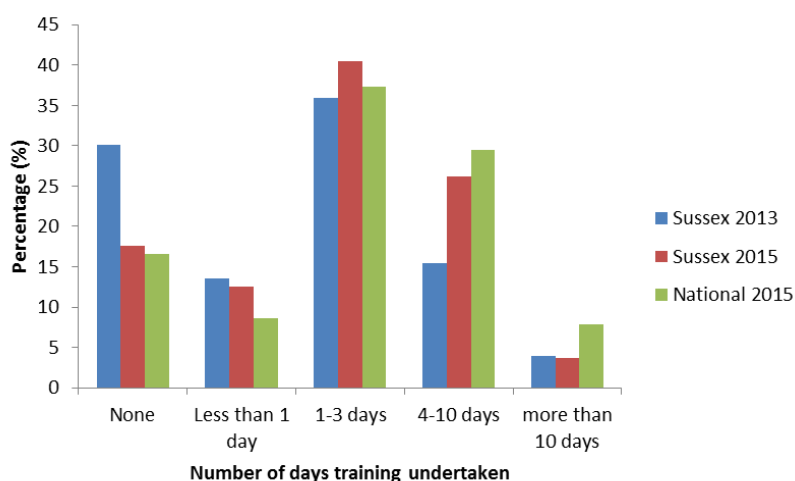

Figure 4 Professional development undertaken by respondents

encouraging results indicate that the introduction of the Research Staff Development Series in 2014/15, improved communication of opportunities through the Research Staff Newsletter, Mailing list and Reps, and various school level initiatives have collectively resulted in an overall increase in uptake of professional development activities amongst researchers.

In comparison to the 2015 national CROS responses, Sussex researchers' uptake of training and development opportunities is still at the lower end of the scale with higher proportions of national

respondents undertaking 4 or more days of training than Sussex researchers. To continue to build upon the improvements made since 2013 it will be important to not only continue to increase the numbers of Sussex researchers accessing training and development; but also to support continuing professional development by encouraging researchers to undertake multiple days of development activities/practice throughout the year.

To achieve this it will be necessary to address the barriers to professional development experienced by Sussex researchers as indicated by some of the 2015 free text responses:

> *"I am under so much time pressure that I am made to feel guilty for taking time off for career development. Writing papers is paramount for future career success yet I am given little encouragement or time to do this within my current role. Time is the main barrier to participation in training and career development. Perhaps there should be a certain % of time formally set aside for this in research roles?"*

> *"In the project I am working on, there is no money available for researchers/ post docs to attend conferences or even pay for travel to training courses off campus."*

> *"The barrier to career development here is the non-research work load"*

In line with 2013 responses and 2015 national responses, over 75% of 2015 Sussex respondents feel encouraged to engage in and 89% take ownership of their personal and career development. A total of 46% of Sussex respondents reported having a clear career development plan or keeping a formal record of professional development activities, representing an outcome 10 percentage points below the national level. Only 11% of respondents used the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to support their professional development activity.

These results indicate that although researchers generally feel encouraged to engage in professional development, there is scope for improvement in the support for career development planning and recording activity which should include raising awareness of appropriate career related resources such as the Researcher Development Framework and RDF planner. It is anticipated that the forthcoming developments to research staff appraisals will also further support career discussions and planning.

The areas in which over half of Sussex respondents indicated that they would like to undertake professional development activities (either as specific training or in relation to their own work) included: career management, collaboration and team-working, communication and dissemination, interdisciplinary research, knowledge exchange, leadership and management, research impact, supervision of doctoral/masters students, teaching/lecturing.

Most researchers were quite clear about their aspirations (with only 7% answering 'don't know' when responding to 'I aspire to work in….'). However, 20% of researchers answered 'don't know' when responding to the statement 'I expect to work in……'. This indicates that careers support and guidance to assist researchers in considering a variety of employment options should continue to be an important feature of research staff provision into the future.

Nearly three-quarters of Sussex respondents aspire to continue working in higher education, with the majority (39.6%) aspiring to a career in research and teaching and 34% aspiring to a career

primarily in research. The proportions actually expecting to achieve their goal is slightly lower with 30% expecting a career in research and teaching and 23% expecting a research career in higher education.

> *"Unfortunately, as we know there are not enough places for all to develop a research career at the University. So I think it is important to clarify this and to continue developing training on transferable skills to find opportunities outside academia." (2015 Sussex respondent free text comment)*

2.5 Equality and Diversity

The majority of respondents (83.5%) believed that Sussex is committed to equality and diversity, however table 3 demonstrates that Sussex is behind the national response in relation to the majority of equality and diversity questions asked in CROS 2015.

Table 3: Comparison of Sussex and National responses to equality and diversity related questions in CROS 2015 *(colour key: red = >3 % points worse than national result; yellow = within +/-3 % points of national result; green = >3 % points better than national result)*

		Strongly Agree/Agree		Disagree/Strongly Disagree		Don't know	
		Sussex 2015	National 2015	Sussex 2015	National 2015	Sussex 2015	National 2015
I believe my institution is committed to equality and diversity		83.5%	86.2%	11.5%	8.75%	5.0%	5.1%
I am satisfied with my work-life balance		60.4%	69.3%	36.7%	29.2%	2.9%	1.5%
My institution promotes better health and well-being at work		38.9%	51.2%	41.0%	33.1%	20.1%	15.7%
I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly in relation to access to training and development		83.5%	84.5%	5.0%	5.2%	11.5%	10.3%
I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly in relation to career progression and promotion		46.8%	61.2%	28.8%	22.4%	24.4%	16.4%
I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly in relation to day to day treatment at work		77.0%	80.9%	14.4%	10.6%	8.6%	8.5%
I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly in relation to participation in decision making		54.7%	63.0%	25.9%	20.6%	19.4%	16.4%
I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly in relation to recruitment and selection		62.6%	68.1%	14.4%	14.3%	23.0%	17.6%
I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly in relation to reward		46.8%	56.7%	23.0%	18.7%	30.2%	24.6%

Of particular concern is that less than half of Sussex respondents thought that: (a) the institution promotes better health and well-being at work, (b) staff are treated fairly in relation to career progression and promotion, (c) staff are treated fairly in relation to reward. For these aspects Sussex scores were more than 10 percentage points behind the national level. Most researchers (60.5%) reported that they were satisfied with their work-life balance (9 percentage points behind national result), however there is cause for concern for the significant proportion that are currently dissatisfied in this respect.

Over 10% of Sussex respondents perceived that staff were not treated fairly on the basis of age (15.2%; *nat. 10.59%*), gender (23.9%; *nat. 15.5%*) and pregnancy and maternity (18.2%; *nat. 11.53%*). These proportions are higher than those reported from the Sussex 2013 results (12.7%, 15.9% and 11.7% respectively in 2013).

Although the trends are similar to the 2013 results, the overall results for equality and diversity at Sussex have declined since 2013 in some cases by as much as 17-18 percentage points (career progression/promotion and reward), with the exception of 'fair access to training and development' that has seen an improvement.

The overall decline may reflect the heightened awareness of researchers to equality and diversity issues due to University participation in initiatives such as the Athena Swan and Gender Equality Charters and the HR Excellence in Research Award that have gained significant traction within the University over the past two years. There has been a slight decline in the national aggregate results relating to equality and diversity, which has been attributed in the analysis of national results to heightened awareness of issues; however the decline in the Sussex responses is significantly more pronounced than the national aggregate responses.

The overall decline in perceptions of fair treatment amongst Sussex researchers is a significant concern and requires further investigation. Due to similar concerns raised by the 2014 survey of all Sussex staff, the University's Equality and Diversity committee have initiated an independent review relating to equality, diversity and dignity at work, which will involve staff across the university via a mixture of survey, focus groups and telephone interviews. The CROS results will be disseminated to the equality and diversity committee as further evidence for this review. The outcomes of the review will inform institutional actions and in addition will be analysed to identify any specific actions that need to be taken with respect to research staff.

2.6 Demographics

The majority of Sussex respondents (31.9%) were in the age bracket of 31-35 with over three quarters of respondents aged 40 or below. There was a greater proportion of female responders (54%) than male and almost all (94.8%) of respondents did not consider themselves disabled. The majority of respondents (57.6%)   were UK nationals with 32.4% from other EU member states and 10.1% from outside the EU.

The demographics of the Sussex survey respondents were in line with those of the national dataset with the exception of nationality, where a higher proportion of Sussex researchers were either UK/EU nationals (90%) compared to the national pool of respondents (85%).

2.7 University of Sussex Specific Questions

In addition to the national question set, some specific institutional questions were posed, outcomes of these questions are summarised here.

2.7.1 Answers to "In the last two years (or since you joined Sussex if within the last 2 years), what changes (if any) have you noticed in the way the University supports research staff?"

There were a total of 73 free text responses to this question with 64% of these citing a variety of positive changes including:

> *"It has started to support research staff - there is now a dedicated research staff officer who provides forum meetings, fields enquiries, runs training and lobbies on our behalf"*

> *"MUCH improved since I arrived. The Research Staff Office is very engaged with staff across the university and in providing effective support. There have been positive changes in integration, recognition and professional development support within our School."*

> *"mentoring circle scheme for women, great newsletters for research staff, several interesting workshops being organised"*

> *"More workshops for career development are becoming available and the Athena Swan initiative has been more active"*

The responses indicate that the most noticeable changes have been in the increased availability and visibility of training and professional development opportunities, followed by improvements in communications with research staff and visibility of postdoctoral issues. The establishment of the Research Staff Office, Research Staff Forum and Research Staff newsletter were all specifically noted as positive developments in a number of responses.

A total of 13 responses stated that there had been no change although 4 of these indicated that their reason for this response was that they were very new to the institution.

Not all change noted was positive, with 10% of responses citing negative changes including;

> *"The administrative support is limited, and often not particularly 'supportive'. Specifically in finance."*

> *"There has been less capacity to help with research proposals, to a debilitating level".*

> *"Constant mental threat as being a fixed term worker. I have my house and family and its not easy to move somewhere else!"*

2.7.2 Engagement with University resources to support, communicate and develop research staff

Researchers were asked to what extent they engaged with the following resources for research staff:

- Research staff Webpages
- Research Staff Newsletter (the Sussex Researcher)

- Research Staff Forum
- Research Staff Development Series Workshops
- Research Staff Office
- Research Staff Representatives

The results indicate that there is a good level of engagement with the research staff webpages, newsletter and workshops, with over 50% of respondents engaging either regularly or occasionally with these resources, however currently only 30% of respondents are engaging on a regular/occasional basis with the Forum, Research Staff Office and Research Staff Reps.
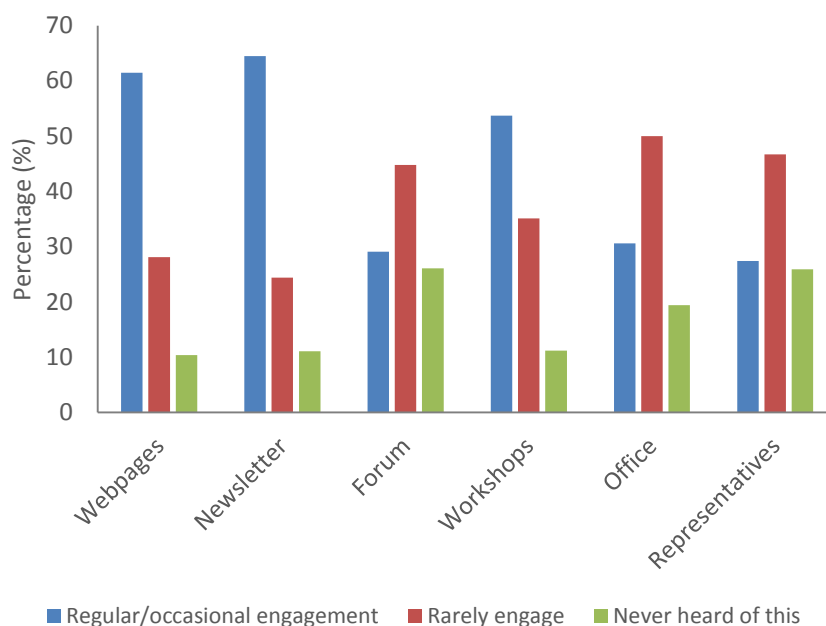
As all of the resources were only initiated in 2014 and in the case of the representatives some schools have only

Figure 5 Engagement with research staff resources

identified reps very recently, perhaps it is unsurprising that it is taking time for researchers to engage with some of these initiatives. However more work is required to promote all resources to research staff to ensure they are aware of the full range of support on offer to them.

2.7.3 Responses to 'What 2-3 changes would make the biggest positive difference to the support you receive from the University for your career development?'

There were 51 free text responses to this question with a wide variety of suggestions. Those that were mentioned by a number of responders included:

- Permanent/more stable employment contracts
- More opportunities for teaching/lecturing
- Funding to enable researchers to undertake an independent project
- Equality with academic faculty
- Training/awareness raising for PIs and senior managers around challenges faced by fixed-term postdoctoral researchers
- Increased access to mentors/1:1 career development support
- Time in contract for professional development
- More information regarding alternative careers
- More support with applying for grant funding/fellowships

2.7.4 Responses to questions relating to Mentoring

32% of respondents were involved in mentoring schemes/mentoring relationships, including women's mentoring circles, 1:1 mentoring and mentoring of junior colleagues/students. Benefits

were varied and included: getting support and advice, meeting other researchers, exchanging experiences, career development discussions, improved confidence, development of new skills, increased knowledge of resources.

2.8 Free Text Comments from Respondents

In some sections of the Survey, researchers were invited to provide any general free text comments about the section topic. Word clouds have been produced from these free text comments and are copied below. The full responses are provided in Annex 1.

2.8.1 Reward and Recognition: provide any additional comments on how you are recognised and valued by your institution, what more it could do to recognise and value your contributions, and your knowledge about research staff initiatives.

2.8.2 Support and Career Development: provide any comments you have about the career development you have undertaken/would like to undertake and any barriers to your participation.

2.8.3 Changes noticed: In the last two years, what changes (if any) have you noticed in the way the University supports research staff?
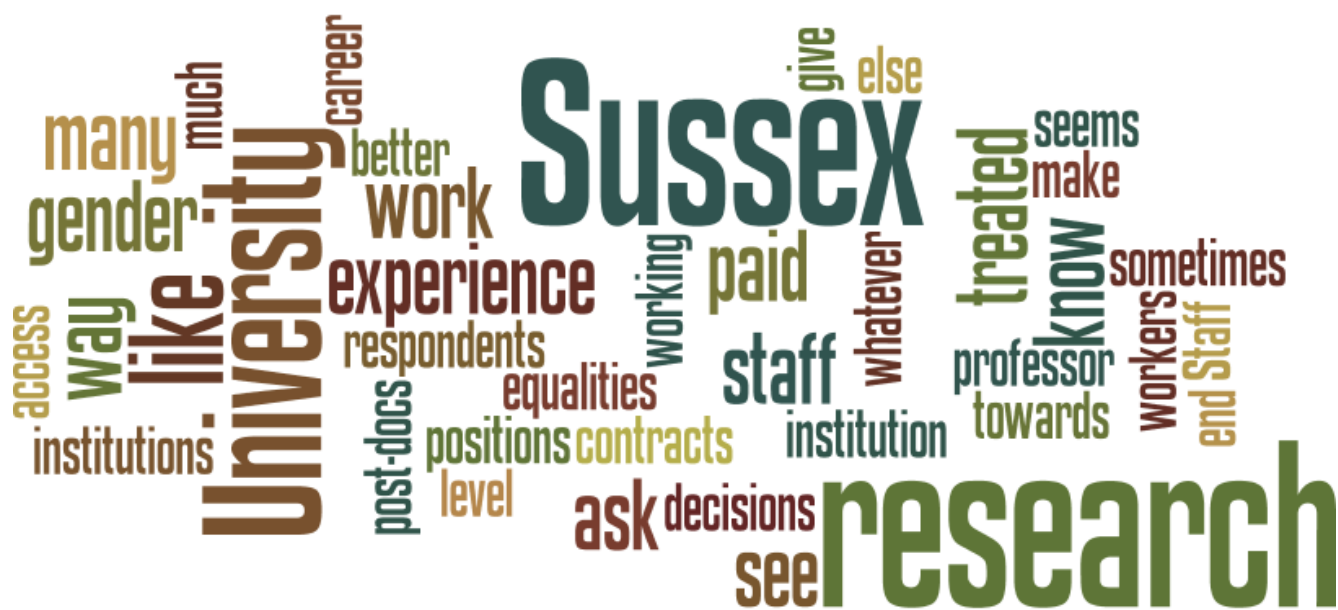

2.8.4 Changes required: What 2 - 3 changes would make the biggest positive difference to the support you receive from the University for your career development?

2.8.5 Equality and Diversity:

2.8.6   Final General Comments:

3. Recommendations

A. *Research Careers*

1. Continue annual fixed-term contract review for science schools and extend to all schools across the University. Ensure transition of all eligible staff to open contracts (where agreed by staff member). **(Owner – PVC, Heads of School, HR)**

2. Review alternative approaches to fixed-term contract management implemented at other HEIs. Produce report and recommendations based on review. **(Owner – Research Staff Office and Research Staff Working Group)**

B. *Recognition and Value*

3. Provide training opportunities and guidance relating to promotions process for research staff. Promotions policy and process to be highlighted to all eligible research staff ahead of academic promotions round. **(Owner – Chairs of academic promotions boards (for training delivery) and RSO for training coordination and information communication)**

4. Review School/departmental visibility and web presence of research staff. Identify where there are opportunities to develop/enhance visibility of research staff **(Owner - Schools/departments and RSO)**

5. Monitor appraisal participation of research staff on annual basis **(Owner - Schools and HR)**

6. Following 2016 appraisal round (2nd cycle with new appraisal forms) evaluate usefulness of the new research staff appraisal documents using CROS 2015 appraisal questions. **(Owner – RSO)**

7. Establish postdoctoral representation on key school and university committees **(Owner – Heads of School, DRaKEs/Directors of Postdoctoral development, Committee chairs, Research Staff Reps - RSO to coordinate recommendations to governance)**

8. Invite experienced PIs/research staff managers together to discuss career development issues for postdoctoral researchers, exchange best practice and elicit ideas for University support for those new to management of postdoctoral researchers. **(Owner – RSO)**

9. Develop plan to increase engagement, resources and information for research staff managers relating to supporting research staff career development. **(Owner – RSO and RSWG)**

10. Ensure that training and development workshops make reference to UK initiatives relevant to research staff careers wherever appropriate. **(Owner RSO)**

C. *Recruitment and selection*

11. Produce welcome guide for research staff joining Sussex highlighting University support mechanisms. With particular emphasis on those joining Sussex from abroad. **(Owner RSO with input from other units)**

D. *Support and career development*

12. Develop research staff training and development guidance; setting out recommended annual levels of engagement in training and development and nature of appropriate development opportunities. **(Owner RSO – RSWG)**

13. Raise awareness of Researcher Development Framework and career planning tools/resources through communications, website, incorporation into T&D courses where appropriate. **(Owner RSO)**

E. *Equality and Diversity*

14. Investigate other HEIs approaches to supporting postdoctoral health and wellbeing. Make recommendations for health and wellbeing interventions for 16/17 **(Owner RSO).**

15. Provide outcomes of CROS 2015 to University Equality and Diversity Committee to feed into wider University response to E&D issues raised by 2015 staff survey. **(Owner RSO)**

F. *General*

16. Highlight Research Staff Office, Forum and reps along with other initiatives through promotion through communications and attendance at relevant school meetings. **(Owner RSO)**

17. Run CROS 2017 to continue to monitor progress in supporting the career development of researchers at Sussex. **(Owner RSO)**

4. Next Steps

4.1 CROS 2015 report to be considered at the first 2015/16 meetings of the relevant University groups/committees (e.g. Research Staff Working Group, Research Staff Reps, Athena Swan, HR Committee, Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee).

4.2 Recommendations to be developed and agreed by the Research Staff Working Group with input from the committees listed above.

4.3 Dissemination of CROS 2015 report to all research staff, PIs and Senior Managers within Schools.

4.4 Publication of summary and recommendations on the University's CROS website.

4.5 New actions to be taken forward as a result of CROS 2015 to be added to the University's Concordat Implementation Plan.

16. Please provide any additional comments on how you are recognised and valued by your institution, what more it could do to recognise and value your contributions, and your knowledge about research staff initiatives.
instigate consistency and equality in how individuals are considered. For an independently funded fellow, who has been purely engaged in research it is reasonable that expectations in respect of research achievement (for progession to more secure position) are higher than for teaching faculty, BUT NOT if the fellows has essentially been engaged in the same job as teaching faculty and so not fully benefitted from the presumed 'protected' position; particularly when others with less experience, income and outputs are then appointed above the fellow's head.
I don't feel at all recognised or valued by either my institution nor by the academic department that I am part of. While I tried for several years to be an active participant in the life of the department, these efforts were at no point recognised. I have good relations with some members of staff but this is due to other professional and social networks rather than any institutional effort to integrate postdocs and researchs into the life of the university/department.
I feel recognised and valued by my line manager but I doubt this extends to the department or the institution even though I am often the first person the public meets at the university.
Everything rests upon your supervisor/PI. If he/she blocks your possibilities for going to conferences, supervise students, engaging in personal development etc. then you will never feel as an integrated part of the institution
Provision of basic facilities like a kettle, microwave and a fridge to prepare drinks and lunches during the day.
Since joining a small department my role has developed significantly and increased in breadth of tasks and responsibilities. Due to the small number of people in our department, I am prevented from any kind of career progression or monetary reward for my hard work because my current role cannot be upgraded due to the impossibility of managing a team of 4-6 people in a department that does not contain sufficient staff to form a team this size! The institution can only 'tick boxes' and can't look at the bigger picture so I am stuck on a grade and salary that does not reflect my true role and acts as a barrier to any type of career progession.
I am not recognised for my contribution aside from being someone who for now will put up with being overly burdened with teaching and admin (exam correction, assessment correction, exam setting) related to teaching.
I am still very new so cannot contribute to this efficiently. But overall the research staff is valued for their work here.
I am enjoying the recent spate of useful career-minded workshops aimed at postdoc researchers, but still feel that in terms of how the university monitors and records its research output, postdocs are a forgotten link.
It feels that you are an extension of permanent/senior members of staff, rather than an individual. You are only integrated under your own initiative or as a result of your manager.   Most initiatives, apart from Athena Swan, are not publicized.
It is often assumed that all researchers are post docs but that is not always the case. Although I've worked on many research contracts over 9 years, and have publications, many research positions are advertised for 'post docs' and therefore exclude me, although I probably have more experience than most early career post docs.

16 (cont.) Please provide any additional comments on how you are recognised and valued by your institution, what more it could do to recognise and value your contributions, and your knowledge about research staff initiatives.

I work in an institute that claims to be achieving world class research. It attracts millions in research funding and publishes in top journals continually. However, the most experienced postdocs are required to empty bins, clean floors, and service equipment, while maintaining the high standards of research required to allow Professors to attend international meetings, get elected onto prestigious committees, and achieve promotion. Once we have enabled our superiors to acheive their goals, we are told we have outstayed our welcome and we should really be moving on.

if the university is organizing 'development days' for postdocs they should aim them at groups that are in the same field not general ones as people from different departments have different issues

Institution needs to ask us frequently and precisely, as educated individuals and not statistics, what are the major bottle-necks and handicaps that are hindering out work. There may be a huge range of items, and they may change rapidly over five years. This would be hugely beneficial for researchers. From personal communication with researchers in other departments, academic isolation seems a common problem.

Involve postdoctoral ressearchers in decisions regarding communal areas - microscope, dark rooms etc. Also, address the issues raised in the appraisal.

Researchers are not valued at all by the management of EngInf. I have recently left Sussex - although will be still employed for 3 months remotely. Despite having been at UoS for many years I was not offered a leaving do and my going was mostly ignored - with no acknowledgement from the head of school.   This is despite bringing all my own funding and initiating a very successful TSB project and collaborations with industry. I would suggest this needs changing drastically. Also the University should have structures in place for keeping their good research staff. I believe that Universities that are doing this were much more successful in the REF. Researchers should be consulted about important decisions in the university's research strategy and should be invited to sit on the schools' research committees. I asked to join, but was refused. I am a senior research fellow. We have more time to focus on research and could be the cutting edge people, but we are not allowed to be.

* Rights and duties of researchers should be clearly details and recognised, as for staff with tenured contracts * Now the flexibility of researchers is fully exploited, without giving back well defined rights * Researchers live out of proposals and this should due recognised in their workload model * Researchers should be encouraged to teach when no funding is available

Knowing I exist would be a start. I was not invited to a researcher event because the School director of research did not have my name on the list of school researchers.

Appraisals should not be held with the immediate line manager. Due to this I have not been able to effectively raise the issues I have with the way I am managed and the limitations I have faced as a researcher due to the pressures put on me by my line manager. Recently, I obtained a mentor which has been very valuable. However, it feels very much like there is a complete lack of protection of research staff from being mistreated by line managers and no one to turn to when this does happen.   I have recently realized all of the contributions have been making regarding development of institutional research proposals goes unnoticed as I am not marked down as the PI.

To have a track record about the Funding submissions you have applied either you get funding or not as it seems that only the ones that are funded are taken in to account as an indication of recognition.

16 (cont.) Please provide any additional comments on how you are recognised and valued by your institution, what more it could do to recognise and value your contributions, and your knowledge about research staff initiatives.

Informall.y I know I am appreciated and valued in the department and School; but with limited short-term contracts, limited access to training, excessive workloads, and the assumption that I will work in my time to develop grant proposals without any paid time or support it is difficult to believe that I am valued.   Valuing staff isn't an abstract idea - it's an action (or at least it shoud be).

It should address the issue of fixed-term contracts and instability that researchers have to live with. The whole nature of fixed-term contracts made gaining a foothold in securing grants, particularly major awards has been an impossibility for large numbers of reseachers, what a waste of resources and life. I've spent a life-time on short fixed-term contracts not a way to have a career or survive. Let's hope the future can be brighter for future researchers.

I am keen to leave academic research, primarily because of difficulties in getting Research Council funding. I am increasingly concerned that RCs' allocation of funding is due to politics, connections, and perhaps corruption rather than research merit. Also the game has changed - success rates for RC funding are far too low (1%, 2%) to justify the weeks/months spent writing proposals. Research has become boring. Given that it is far easier to apply for a new permanent job elsewhere than to apply for even a month or two's salary under an RC-funded project, I am choosing to go for a better paid and more stable job elsewhere (also because I now have to prioritize my family commitments).

I feel I am invisible to my institution and my career development is irrelevant to them. As a fixed term researcher I feel I have no value and only have interactions with other staff member working on the project I am employed on. I could have been enrolled on a researcher development course, or at least had a meeting with the HoD/Head of research to tell me what is available to me and how I might progress in my career, as I have no idea.

I can see that some effort has been put over the past year, but I have been employed for more than 10 years and that is coming too late for me; I never had an appraisal before a year ago. Nothing is done for postdoc like myself who have been employed on multiple contracts and facing a dead end.

My manager is very good, and I have been included on some papers. However, I don't feel part of the wider department, and am only contacted/emailed when they want me to do something (usually unpaid). I feel strongly that my institution does not value or support me at all.

A lot of my rating is in relation to my professor/manager and not the institution per se, as they can be quite separate

There shoudl be a way to recognise activities which add value to the developmnet of the department through setting up and running gender related activities, informal networks and reading groups

21. Please provide any additional comments on your experience of being appointed and inducted into your current post.

The institutional induction programs were slightly too belated to be useful for arriving staff.

I transferred from Sussex (Informatics, as PhD student) to BSMS. The IT issues regarding my transfer we numerous, caused lengthy delays in my ability to start work. I was very surprised and continue to be disappointed by the integration between Sussex and BSMS IT in this regard.

Induction was over a month after I started by which time I'd found most of the useful information out myself.

The vice-provost (or vice-chancellor?) made sexist remarks during the induction, which was itself useless as it was 6 months after my arrival.

21 (cont.) Please provide any additional comments on your experience of being appointed and inducted into your current post.

It would have been beneficial to of received a welcome packet of useful information before starting my post. Information for an international researcher moving to the UK would have been particularity beneficial.

Especially for people coming from abroad, it would be useful to get a "starting package" with all the necessary information regarding the hiring process, the opportunity offered by the University etc. before coming to Sussex and not a few months later.

I was initially working in the lab as a casual worker before I got recruited, so the induction programs didnt really help as I had already been familiar to everything with the support of my colleagues and supervisor

Although employed by Sussex University, the institution wide induction programme I went to was one run by Brighton University. Working in a department that has crossover between the universities can sometimes be a bit confusing. For example, I never recieved any institution wide induction regarding Sussex University and yet being employed by Sussex, most of the processes we use are via sussex so it would probably be more useful to be invited to a Sussex University induction programme.

Felt pretty lost at beginning, especially since moving from overseas. Had to sort most things out myself, with some help from lab members

My induction consisted of a one- hour meeting with the PI on the project I would be working on and then being sent out to find my own way around the University to set up an IT account, get an ID card etc.

There was no such induction programme. I just sat down and talked ugh my supervisor of what I needed to do and where I could go for help.

Institutional-wide induction programme was offered months after I'd started and was on a day that I couldn't make.

25. In what other areas would you like to undertake training or other continuing professional development activity?

Media communications, public engagement and impact, employment opportunities outside of academia

Practical techniques relevant to my field.

Grant writing/applying for fellowships

I would like a careers outside academia course tailored specifically to my research area.

Organisational change

Research Funding

Scientific writing

Research skills and new lab techniques; Teaching

managing others, applying for fellowships, managing career path to eventually apply for lectureship

I think teaching is an area which I will definitely want to explore

I would like the opportunity for more teaching/supervisory experience

25 (cont.) In what other areas would you like to undertake training or other continuing professional development activity?

Coaching students and researchers in my workgroup

Official teaching qualifications.

Quite a good list you have already, I wasn't aware of a lot of things, but then I hardly have any time from doing my job.

Not sure Yet

protein crystallography, Grant proposals writing, Leadership and Management,

research impact; details on specific funding bodies; how to write and be successful in grant applications; software training in R, further training in SPSS; training in migration law (specific to postdoc)

More research method focused courses

Patents, Intelectual Property and the Spin-Off route map, Comercialization of Research

Research skill development - esp. new skills in statistics and quant methodologies.

Writing and publication; editing

I would like to develop GIS, graphs making and codings skills

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31. Please provide any comments you have about the training and career development you have undertaken.

Most of the public engagement work I have done has been independent of any formal training offered by the university.

The Springboard programme was excellent

The Springboard course was an invaluable and highly rewarding experience. Highly recommend Sussex/BSMS supports the provision of Springboard for others.

None. Self-taught.

I have worked essentially as a post-doctoral fellow, but would want to explore teaching

I have found all the courses and workshops I have attended really useful. I have had to miss some and it would be helpful if they were repeated e.g. twice throughout the year

There is no funding available for the researchers employed by the project I am working in to attend conferences or undertake external training. A lot of the training and development that I have ticked above was undertaken prior to working in academia.

I am not sure has been very usefull. To be honest i haven't really follow that up properly

So far there is no technical possibility to undertake those as I am sepeding 100% of my time on research and publication of the results.

careers outside academia; presenting at conferences; writing workshops; software training in SPSS and excel; teacher training

I have spent most of my time working on developing research proposals in support of my line manager and also carrying out more administrative related tasks for this person, rather than focusing a) on my research interests and b) developing my own career as a researcher. This has been a major set back in my career. It is very difficult to achieve the objectives I am trying to set myself when I am misguided by my line manager.

31 (cont.) Please provide any comments you have about the training and career development you have undertaken.

In general, I like the Staff Development Training Scheme at Sussex, all the training has been very useful for me and I can apply what I have learned directly to my every day work. It is a good opportunity for me to know more about the Institution, to develop my skills as a researcher and to meet new people from different areas. This has also allowed me to start new collaborations and interdisciplinary projects.

Access to brief traing has been good and very useful, but this is often superficial and tyask oriented. In-depth training to develop new skills requires more than a half-day intro.

I independently found a workshop on engaging with policy makers that I wanted to attend. The PI on my project agreed to let me go, but I felt as though I had to go to great lengths to present this as a worthy use of my time.

I've recently been promoted from fixed term Reader to open-ended Prof.

All have been basic but introductory which is what is needed at my early stage in research. A lot of what I know is available is through our Universities Research Officer, and she has been great keeping everyone informed.

There is need to provide training which is at a higher level. Sometimes I go to training workshops organised by the university and the level is too low.

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32. Please provide any comments you have about the training and career development you would like to have the opportunity to undertake, and any barriers to your participation.

There is a lack of exposure to cross-disciplinary opportunities, or these opportunities are tailored for specific fields.

I have not been made aware of any teaching/supervision training opportunities.

It would be useful to have training in writing for publication

I would like to undertake research leadership and management training but I was declined due to my 'role'. Unfortunately since my role cannot be progressed (see earlier) comments I am now stuck in a rut!

The bareer to career development here is the non-research work load.

I have worked essentially as a post-doctoral fellow, but would want to explore teaching but I believe university of sussex doesnt really encourage the post-docs to do so...the Phd students have a mandatory role to do so, i would feel it should be compulsory for post docs also to do certain number of hours of teaching, it will help them realise if they want to pursue teaching as a career option or not

I find the skills of postdocs are largely overlooked in terms of their ability to relate to students and engage them in a subject - most postdocs are given research-only roles

In the project I am working on, there is no money available for researchers/ post docs to attend conferences or even pay for travel to training courses off campus.

The university currently is not offering PGCertHE to Post-docs, this is very bad in terms of career development provided.

I don't feel as though I have the time for training courses. Most of the 'professional development activities' listen I learn on the job anyway (rather than in a classroom).

32 (cont.) Please provide any comments you have about the training and career development you would like to have the opportunity to undertake, and any barriers to your participation.

Not sure what I want to do really. I do like my job as a researcher and Wish that it was recognized as a profession.
I am interested in expanding my professional and and personal skills.
I don't see many barriers to my participation at present - I'm made well aware of any training available at my institution and am given ample opportunity to participate, and I take many of these opportunities.
At this point, main issues are that I would like to participate more in writing my research into a paper, and to get the chance to go to a conference
writing grant applications; collaboration; software training
Unfortunately, as we know there are not enough places for all to develop a research career at the University. So I think it is important to clarify this and to continue developing training on transferable skills to find opportunities outside academia.
I am under so much time pressure that I am made to feel guilty for taking time off for career development. Writing papers is paramount for future career success yet I am given little encouragement or time to do this within my current role. Time is the main barrier to participation in training and career development. Perhaps there should be a certain % of time formally set aside for this in research roles?
Only barrier is time really! Still at an early stage so not clear on where i want to go or what i need to do it.
I would like to receive training on how to interact with industry and policy makers, verbally and through calls for evidence.

34. In the last two years (or since you joined Sussex if within the last 2 years), what changes (if any) have you noticed in the way the University supports research staff?

none
The Office for Research students is definitely more active, and I've appreciated its activities. However, I think more needs to be done in addressing the fact that many of us are on short-term contracts and there is little effort made within the university (or department) to provide greater job security.
more engagement, e-mail updates and regular events
None
More training opportunities have become available
There has been a distinct improvement
No changes so far; very new to Sussex.
It has started to support research staff - there is now a dedicated research staff officer who provides forum meetings, fields enquiries, runs training and lobbies on our behalf
The administrative support is limited, and often not particularly 'supportive'. Specifically in finance.
It went to nonexistent to being very proactive
MUCH improved since I arrived. The Research Staff Office is very engaged with staff across the university and in providing effective support. There have been positive changes in integration, recognition and professional development support within our School.
I have only been here a few months, so I've seen no changes so far.

34 (cont.) In the last two years (or since you joined Sussex if within the last 2 years), what changes (if any) have you noticed in the way the University supports research staff?
Change to nomenclature of fixed-term contracts. Reintroduction of the PGCert to allow post-docs to gain teaching qualification. More professional development workshops.
More postdoctoral support in the last few months.
mentoring circle scheme for women, great newsletters for research staff, several interesting workshops being organised
None
badly with respect to marking pay when feedback is such an issue
I've ntoiced a deterioration in practical support.
there is more support for research staff, or this is now more visible
i have been here for very short time, but they are putting more effort to the career development of the research staff as it appears
Don't know, only recently been appointed
I cannot compare.
More workshops for career development are becoming available and the Athena Swan initiative has been more active
more post doctoral support
Noticed more visible support for Women through the Athena Swan project. Also noticed and appreciated the set up of an LGBT staff group (although this is from Brighton University and there isn't an equivalent group at Sussex University).
no change
Much more visibility of the research office and other support via e mail and word of mouth
It was quantitatively improved.
The research support office has become more visible. This is a good thing and I have gained greater access to training etc this way.
* Research Staff Forums * Research Officer highly engaged in researchers
Natalie James has played an active role in making the development opportunities more visible, and communicating directly with researchers.
more meetings
Actually, support for research staff (at least in terms of visibility) has certainly increased. Natalie James has helped boost the profile of research staff support.
none.
Constant mental threat as being a fixed term worker. I have my house and family and its not easy to move somewhere else!
It is definitely gone better. More training opportunity are available.
Research officer appointed
More actions taken to support staff development and much better communication of them.
None
Increased opportunities for attending career supporting workshops.

34 (cont.) In the last two years (or since you joined Sussex if within the last 2 years), what changes (if any) have you noticed in the way the University supports research staff?
more training courses seem to be on offer
none
N/A
Noticed an increase in engagement with research staff in the past year that I have been here. We are hearing more about training and development opportunities.
I think the University needs to support research more both monetarily and infrastructure-wise. I think the university lacks the ambition to excel in research.
Researchers are now mentioned, and the University starts to think what to do with them
Research staff forum and reps set up, regular newsletter, researcher specific workshops
Natalie James has started implementing masssive changes in terms of more training courses, more support and more discussions about the things we would like to see changed
More personal development workshops and seminars, which were very good
That the University has finally acknowledged a need to engage directly with its Research Staff
Research forum and email invites to training events
More encouragement to attend various events and programs
none, some effort to provide workshops on specific funding bodies such as Horizon
There has been less capacity to help with research proposals, to a debilitating level.
I like the structure and organization of the Staff Development Unit
I've only been here one month.
I saw management panic as the REF 2014 approached. There has been activity to try and engage/build bridges with researchers and a drive to try and enage staff heavily in the Athena Swann stuff
Too much focus on engagement/impact, which unfortunately means that the scientific rigour of the results, and standards of proof, have decreased. It seems like we'd be better off producing a pie-chart for a newspaper rather than reliable estimates of causal effects for a journal article.
No views on this
A lot of improvement- but as i said previously this comes too late.
There seems to be more support.
more and better training, esp for women
I've been getting emails about Researcher development activities centrally, which is positive. However, I feel more should be done at School level.
more (or more visible) career development courses, introduction of appraisals, regular grant coffee mornings
?
NONE
more organised activity in Researcher support, cpd etc
I started at the same time as the new Research Officer so I have seen the increasing improvement due to this appointment.
More support is being offered and the support is more structured
None
Seminars on career development, PGCert
More emphasis on mentoring, appraisals, and gender issues.

36. What 2 - 3 changes would make the biggest positive difference to the support you receive from the University for your career development?
Recognition that research staff play an important role in the life and success of the university
Support for fellowship applications
More support for international researchers.
To be written into funding bids A permanent contract Equality with lecturers
Training and/or greater awareness of faculty/supervisors of the issues faced by postdocs in their employ. Greater awareness on behalf of the psychology department as to the unique nature and challenges faced by clinical and mental health postdocs.
Greater understanding of the 'expectation' of researchers to work more than the requisite number of hours in order to be 'successful'. The University should actively work to oppose this practice.
Competitive scheme for small grants to support post-doc projects and/or to pay for time for grant proposals. Just some simple recognition from high up the University chain that fixed-term contracts are problematic! Some members of senior management at the University level have been very dismissive. I am really pleased with the changes that have happened through the RSO and our School, and I hope those will continue to be supported.
More training for careers outside of research. Seminars on alternate careers
a change in the attitudes of professors/PIs to realise that our fixed term contracts are important steps in our career development and not only a tool for them to get more publications!
Recognition of my abilities, responsibilites, the work I do and an annual increment in my salary (have not had one since I started work here in March 2009)
Reduce the burden of teaching and admin related to teaching from Research staff. Simple as that.
changes to fixed-term contract; more job security; more posibilities for collaborations with other Schools
We actually do not have enough time during the day in the middle of experiments to go about iyt, but if such programs are held over weekends or perhaps vacation times as well, some people would be able to attend more of them
Direct mentorship from a senior researcher regarding the procedures within the school and university. Currently I'm in a position between immediate supervisors and it significantly affects my ability to be involved in the broader decision-making and organisation within the school.
Opportunities for employing early career researchers as a central resource when not attached to specific grants. Departments are top-heavy, must need support from newer researchers that would help them develop, but I see no occasions where this happens. Although I have support from key members of staff in my department and school, there is no sense that the University wants to retain researchers (as per the Concordat) by ensuring more senior members of staff consider the development of their juniors. An annual appraisal will not achieve this on its own! While I am proactive in finding out about funding opportunities, development opportunities, networking within and outside the university, this does not necessarily mean there is guaranteed employment at the end of the contract. At the same time, I see colleagues swamped with work which could be shared/delegated with those wanting to learn...
More frequent workshops or more available dates (I find sometimes I am unable to attend due to lab committments, and several workshops seem to be one-off dates)
A way of me putting my work towards a PhD. (I have a mortgate and cannot really aford to take a massive salary drop to do a PhD, but also cannot advance further in my career without one).
1-OPENNESS TO ELIGIBILITY IN GRANTS AS APPLICANTS (VS CO-INVESTIGATORS); 2-POSSIBILITY TO FORMALLY SUPERVISE PHD STUDENTS 3-POSSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN GIVING LECTURES
Training courses repeated

36 (cont.) What 2 - 3 changes would make the biggest positive difference to the support you receive from the University for your career development?
Greater awareness of how to apply for research grants and the internal processes that facilitate this; training on how to lecture.
A drive-down of the concordat and research support policies to within department management. There is a huge amount of resistance from current management who don't see that there was anything wrong with the way things were, and why there should be a change. Compulsory training for PIs to enable them to train/develop their staff.
Better office space. Teaching qualifications.
Make PGCertHE available to post-docs.
Things that would help me publish papers faster: Computing + statistics. Also 'obligatory' yearly time-out for training course of choice.
Permanent contract
I would love it if Postdoctoral Research Fellow were recognized as proper carreer and not training
one to one advice
It would be goo if every school or the research office provides a prize or funding for postdoctoral researchers to undertake research independently of a permanent member of the University.
Time specifically built into my contract to take part in career development workshops. Advice as to which workshops would be most relevant to my career stage.
One-to-one sessions for advice and support with career development planning.
I would benefit from exchange to other research group to gain new practical skills and theoretical training related to PI career development objective.
No changes currently necessary - I have been very satisfied with the help and support I've received from the University
Better salaries and more permanent positions.
Stability and encouragement of research careers for promising researchers (they should have the time to publish and then become independent)
More opportunities to teach, supervise, and mentor
1. more workshops/training on writing successful grant/funding applications 2. writing a book proposal 3. how to collaborate with colleagues outside sussex
More capacity to help early career researchers identify opportunities and push through proposals that are preliminary in nature.
Proper time and money to support in-depth training in skill sdevelopment.
A decent and stable contract
I must say that Elena Dennison and Tina Lehmbeck at Research & Enterprise do a fantastic job. They are very helpful and supportive.
More opportunities for post-doctoral level teaching. Lab manager positions for post docs who don't want to become PIs
A mentor
more individual assistance with funding applications - finding and applying for them, e.g. personal mentor with regular meetings   More specific careers outside academia events - for ecology, not chemistry/pharmacology

36 (cont.) What 2 - 3 changes would make the biggest positive difference to the support you receive from the University for your career development?

Integration within the School/department. Being treated/welcomed like a faculty member.
SUPPORT FOR STAFF (NOT ONLY FEMALE RESEARCHERS) THAT WANT TO PROGRESS IN OR OUT THE UNIVERSITY (CURRENTLY NO SUPPORT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE NOT BEEN CHOSEN BY DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE AFTER FIXED TERM CONTRACT ENDS)
Decisive, responsive senior leadership on individual issues
Introducing gender awareness and training through all levels of the university; make lectureship and research contracts equal, and the support (for example IT) provided for both types of contract equal
Don't lnow.
I guess put pressure on the govenment to put more money into science and to fund longer term projects of more than 2 years.
1) Providing teaching opportunities in a transparent way. 2) Making sure that new postdocs are aware of support and specific terminology (i.e., research staff). 3) A clear and fair way to give feedback about advisors.

44. Please provide any additional comments you have about diversity and equality.

I'm a white male, so my awareness of diversity and equality is limited as anything related to this isn't aimed at me.
It is far more challenging for women to progress in this career than men, if they choose to have children
My current research group has far more gender diversity than my previous group (Informatics). I experienced significant negative effects of gender inequality in Informatics, particularly regarding my assumed abilities and interests. Mostly came from the younger researchers.
very alpha-male tendencies currently going on in my group and nothing is done to discourage them
Gender diversity is a particular issue for us, and there is a relative lack of female professors. I think that the research is increasingly becoming a field you can only enter if you have the money (or a spouse/family) to support you during gaps in employment - whether this is really true, or a perception, I don't know, but I suspect it's real, and I think we should be doing more to make research careers accessible to people from low-income or non-traditional backgrounds.
The ethos of doing post-doctoral research is that you have to work long hours in order to be competitive. This is very challenging for many individuals that have to balance full time work with other commitments outside of work.
none
I believe that there is now positive discrimination within the university.
Q41 above has a typo - should be 'gender identity'
it seems easier to become a PI if you are male
Paternity leave seems somewhat discriminatory, which negatively affects both men's quality of life and women's career prospects.
I think policy around pregnancy and maternity leave for researchers on fixed-term contracts is not made clear, or made easy to talk about/access.
more contribution, but no first author publish
Distinct lack of females in senior roles in School.

44 (cont.) Please provide any additional comments you have about diversity and equality.
My institution is generally good in terms of equality. The university is fairly homogenous in terms of ethnicity of staff. Politics specifically is male dominated, and as a woman I often feel patronised and as though my research is not of equal worth. This is however a wider issue in politics rather than department specific.
I am very happy with the amount of flexibility I have in my role.
We can't measure discrimination by mere headcounts of men vs women, or white vs blacks, or short vs tall, etc. Instead we should check for discriminatory barriers at key steps of the process (e.g. in hiring decisions, whether they are allowed to attend meetings, etc). If for example few women show up to certain meetings (i.e. low headcount), this is not in itself evidence of discrimination, if everyone was given the chance to attend the meeting.
Commitment is different to practice
I haven't been here long enough to have a good feel for what its like so don't feel i can comment
There is lack of understanding of what situations constitute gender inequality at the lower level (research fellows) and tendency to ignore the issue at the top level
I have put agree to all of question 42 but when it comes to toilets there is a large disparity between the number of male and female toilets in the science based buildings. This needs addressing.

50. Please provide any final, additional comments.
I married and own a house. I would like to start a family. However, my job forces me to hop between temporary contracts and justifies this by referring to post-docs positions as "training" positions. I'm coming towards the end of my contract this year and I know where I'll be or what I'll be doing after.   Post-docs are rather convenient for Universities. We do all the actual research, but are generally paid for by someone else (i.e. a research council). When the funding ends, we're gone. We make a commitment to the University, but the University doesn't make one to us.
You ask us to reflect on fair treatment including concerning gender and gender identity- and then only give female/male as possible options from which to select the gender of the questionnaire respondent.
I am very pleased to see the amount of Athena Swan related initiatives currently on offer in our department (BSMS). I would like to see a greater degree of promotion of this at the institutional level.
Researchers at the early stages of their careers are faced with many obstacles in the current climate. I believe this would be the case whatever the institution or university, but there definitely seems to be a negative atmosphere at Sussex amongst my peers. This is especially compounded by the geographical constraints on people living and working in Sussex. The only alternative employer that wouldn't require mass relocation is London - a 3 hour daily commute! Perhaps more junior lectureships and/or scientific officer roles which they have at other institutions would help give post-docs something else to work towards.
The only discrimination I can see is when PhD students are sometimes treated as workers for the professor or research staff is treated as students or workers who are only there to do whatever the professor wants them to
One of the previous questions mentioned "Reward". There is no such provision/mechanism for researhers to be rewarded, if that is meant to refer to a paid bonous.
I am still understanding the system here and how it works, so do not have more to say
I am working on a cross-institutional project. Therefore a lot of the decisions about my work are not made by colleagues at Sussex. This has had a negative impact on my work with regards to: being excluded from decision making; problems with communication; and lack of transparency.
Permanent contract for better research output.

50 (cont.) Please provide any final, additional comments.
Sussex would be a much better place for its employees if there was less top-down decisions from management and much more of a bottom-up approach. There is low morale within the whole institution because of this. I have been here on and off for many years and have a good perspective on this as I have also worked in many other institutions.
Finally, I would like to say that my title is "visiting research fellow" and sometimes it seems that I am not treated in a similar way that University paid staff. For example, I have a limited access to online resources on the Sussex (Sussex Direct) and also to the library. My access to the Sport Centre is more expensive as I'm not eligible to pay as Staff (lower price). I would like that Visiting research staff with EU funding will be able to be classify with the same rights than University Staff. At the end, I am a researcher as well as others representing the University of Sussex when doing Conference and Engagement activities. Thank you for this opportunity to know my opinion with this survey. It is way to feel that I am valuable for the organization.
Curious that you ask about experience of equalities, but dont then include all thoise charateristics ion the demographics you ask for.   How can you assess the experience of LGBT respondents and their experience of sexual orientation equalities if you don't know who are the LGBT respondents?
Without proper contracts and a proper career pathway you can't have a decent career in research. It needs to have a clear and equal structure to lecturing and it doesn't have a history of such and is way off reaching that level at the moment
thanks. hope useful