

## ICR HR excellence 8 year review – progress report

### Internal Evaluation Process (concordat principle 7)

Fulfilment of the HR Excellence in Research action plan is overseen by the **Staff Engagement Committee**, chaired by the HR Director and with representatives of all staff groups - PhD students (we are a postgraduate-only institution), Postdocs, Scientific Officers (i.e. our technical staff), Faculty, and Corporate staff. Strategic advice is provided by **Academic Board**, comprised of Faculty, PhD and Postdoc reps and responsible for the professional development of Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Our three research associations: **Postdoc Association Committee (PDAC)**; **Scientific Officers Association Committee (SOAC)** and **Student Committee** also contribute ideas, priorities and receive regular updates on progress at their committee meetings.

The main means of internal evaluation is a triennial ICR-wide attitude survey, which last ran in June 2018 (action 1a), with results broken down by staff category, division, gender and ethnic origin. Our key research associations are involved in reviewing the questions and provide survey design feedback. Topics include, Career development, Equality, Training, Work environment and Wellbeing. Results are compared to previous years to identify trends, inform future actions and for external evaluation including HR Excellence in Research, Athena SWAN, and the Technician Commitment, for which we are a founding signatory. Overall the 2018 survey results show we have made good progress in areas such as equality, flexible working, communication, and management and training. The results were shared widely - **Divisions and team leaders** were provided with divisional data to identify and address local issues; the **Athena SWAN Steering Group (ASSG)** led on gender and ethnicity differences and staff associations (**PDAC** and **SOAC**) received results by staff group (action 1b, i-iii). Students also participate with results disseminated via the **Research Degree Student Liaison Committee (RDSLCLC)**. Survey results were further explored through focus groups on three key areas identified - 'Careers', 'Mental health support' and 'Tackling inappropriate behaviours'. These groups were run by an external consultant and open to all and provided a means of exploring concerns and collate suggestions. The CEO requested an annual 'pulse-check' survey to monitor these three areas. The attitude survey action plan will be driven by the Corporate Leadership Board (COO and all directorate heads), who are updated quarterly (new action 1a, i).

### Recruitment and Selection (concordat principle 1)

eRecruitment is a web-based system for advertising vacancies and processing candidates, introduced to improve the transparency and fairness of our recruitment processes. The system requires managers to upload a shortlisting document outlining how candidates were shortlisted (action 1c, i-ii). In the last academic year, we have achieved 38% of hiring managers uploading a shortlisting document which is less than our initial target of 50%, so we will further promote this feature through training (new action 1b, i). We will aim to reduce the number of applicants without an associated shortlisting document to 5% (new action 1b, ii).

To monitor best practice, we investigated how many staff members have attended Equality Excellence training, which is mandatory and monitored at probation, and how many current managers/panel chairs have attended Recruitment Essentials training (action 2a, i & ii). These were 76% and 49%, respectively as of Oct18. Though uptake has increased, these are still below our targets and our future actions will work towards improving attendance through tighter monitoring at probation (new action 2a, i & ii). We are also introducing an annual mandatory refresher online session for all staff from Jan19 (new action 2a, iii) on equality-related topics, starting with Bullying and Harassment.

### Recognition and value (concordat principle 2)

The ICR launched our institutional values in Nov18. These are: a) Pursuing Excellence, b) Acting with Integrity, c) Valuing all our people, d) Working Together, e) Leading Innovation and f) Making a Difference. As part of this launch, all staff have been asked to nominate colleagues that embody these values. The ICR will recognise nominees (new action 4a, i) and encourage all staff to embody ICR values by adding them into the appraisal forms and recruitment requirements (new action 4a, ii)

Other recognition initiatives vary according to staff type and are particularly strong for Scientific Officers (SOs). The annual Technical Conference, running since 2012 to provide SOs with a forum to present their work, has expanded to include best poster and best speaker prizes (since 2017) and the prestigious 'SO Teamwork & Collaboration Award', whereby Faculty nominate SOs who have made a valuable contribution to the wider ICR. This award, introduced in 2016, leads to the winner being widely recognised to all staff via an internal ICR-wide newsletter (action 2d, ii & Case Study 2) and presentation of the award by senior Faculty. SOs can access a mentor to help them apply for promotion and awareness of this mentoring scheme is

78% - above our target of 70% (action 2d, i). In total 28 SOs were promoted out of 35 applicants between Apr16-Apr18. In addition, the SOAC recently created Twitter and LinkedIn accounts to share news, promote initiatives and to raise the profile of individual technicians. Most notably they shared their news of collecting the ICR's Technician Commitment Award. Future actions for this group are around continuing to monitor awareness of the promotions mentoring scheme, promotion of the SO Teamwork and Collaboration Award and to understand what motivates this group (new action 2f, i-iii).

Promising Postdoctoral researchers can apply to attend the biennial Pathway to Independence leadership programme. This flagship programme last ran in Jun17 in collaboration with The Wellcome Sanger Institute and opened to 24 participants from around the UK with 94.7% rating the programme 'very good' (action 2g, i). In addition, ICR attendees can apply for a Dean's award of up to £5k to use in developing their academic independence. We also continued to offer Leadership in Action events to ICR Postdocs in collaboration with UCL, sending 9 ICR postdocs to 2 events thus far (action 2g, ii). Future actions are around continuing to build on the success of these leadership programmes (new action 2b, i - iii). We developed a pilot mentoring scheme following consultation at the institute-wide annual conference in 2017. This was piloted with one division (Cancer Therapeutics) and the outcomes evaluated. As a result, we have modified the questionnaire used and circulated it to all postdocs in Sep17 (action 2g, iii). We are now analysing the responses to assess demand and put in place appropriate support based on the identified needs (new action 2b, iv).

Clinical researchers have a dedicated biennial Pathway to Independence programme and a dedicated mentoring scheme. The Independence programme first ran in 2016 with 95.5% rating it excellent and we will be running it again in Nov18 and continue to open it to participants from all over the UK (new action 3a, i). Delegate tracking is ongoing via dedicated LinkedIn groups for each cohort (action 3c, ii), though is proving difficult due to low LinkedIn engagement from within this group. Future actions focus on establishing a plan for monitoring career progression of Clinical Pathway to Independence participants (new action 3a, ii). The annual clinical mentoring scheme was piloted with women-only in 2016 and then expanded to all eligible researchers. There have been 49 pairs matched since the start and 100% of feedback respondents would recommend the scheme to other academics (action 3d). The scheme has been highlighted as a best practice [case study](#) by Vitae.

We have allocated significant funding to a new Faculty leadership development programme, which we will develop and implement (new action 2c, ii). Career Development Faculty (i.e. junior team leaders) are core funded to attend the residential week-long 'EMBO Laboratory Leadership for Team Leaders' course and are matched with an academic mentor. Evaluation of this mentoring scheme at the 2018 CDF Away Day (action 2c) showed most CDF found the scheme useful, but the benefit depended on the mentor they were given. The main recommendation was to ensure mentors are from outside the mentee's own management chain (new action 2c, i).

All staff can access 1-2-1 impartial careers advice and we monitor awareness of this through the ICR-wide attitude survey. In 2018, 69% (clinical) and 52% (non-clinical) of researchers agreed they "can access impartial careers advice when needed" (action 3b, i). To improve awareness, we now advertise 1-2-1 sessions heavily through internal newsletters, targeted emails and at internal conferences and have created training brochures for all key researcher groups (Students, SO, Postdocs, Bioinformaticians, Clinicians, Faculty) containing information on these sessions and the tailored training opportunities for each of these staff types (action 3b, ii & iii).

### Career development (principle 3 & 4)

One way we measure the impact of ICR-provided training and career support is to monitor the career destinations and survey our Student, Postdoc and SO alumni (action 1d, i). For students, we have tracked 79% out of 675 leavers since 1980. A project is underway to directly survey student alumni on their career destinations and the impact of the support received at ICR to their career development (new action 1c, i). For Postdocs, we have tracked 74% of the 393 leavers since 2008 and have followed this up with a pilot survey in Oct17, which went out to the dedicated Postdoc LinkedIn Group (containing 134 members at the time (action 1d, ii) of which 91 are leavers). Of the 39 responses received, 77% considered the ICR provided them with impartial career advice and training that aided them in developing their career. In addition, respondents had fulfilled their aspirations in terms of job role (81%), employer (78%) and geographical location (71%) (action 1e, i). The results were presented to the **Athena SWAN Steering Group** in Aug18 and will be used to re-design a survey that will go out to a larger cohort of Postdoc leavers (>160) by Dec18 and presented at the Postdoc Careers Conference in Jan19 (new action 1c, ii). The results also reinforced feedback from our Postdoc population on the need to support the careers of those looking to transition into industrial R&D. As a result, we initiated a 'Succeeding in Industry' programme in Sep18 that we will expand (new action 3b & Case Study 1). We will

use the recently established SO LinkedIn group to aid in monitoring SO career destinations and so far we have tracked 45% of the 145 SO leavers between 2015-17 (action 1d, iii). Careers destination data will be presented to SOAC at the SO Technical Conference every other year (new action 1c, iii).

For clinical researchers, we introduced the BRC Clinical Academic Careers Programme in 2015 and this now runs yearly re-launching each October. The 2017 programme saw a number of 'Meet the Funders' sessions (with CRUK, MRC and Wellcome). Feedback on the support given to clinical academics, including this training programme, was sought through the **Clinical Academic Forum** - a network of early career clinical academics used for peer-to-peer networking and to share career development opportunities (action 3c, i). As a result, the 2018 programme saw a number of training sessions on skills to promote academic independence (e.g. Fellowship Proposals) and on coping with the challenges of a dual career (webinar on 'Resilience'). We will expand this programme beyond 2018 with a group session on 'Managing a Dual Career' due to run in Jan19 and continue to run the programme every October (new action 3a, iii).

We are continuing to develop our CDF and Faculty support and monitor this through the Faculty-specific results to the question 'I am given good training to perform in my current job'. In 2018, 54% of Faculty were positive about that statement (action 2b, i), and we are aiming for 70% by 2021 (new action 2c, ii). We also assess support for CDF by monitoring progression to tenured contracts (100% success rate in 2018/19) (action 2b, ii). We will continue to monitor these success measures (new action 2c, iii). Female CDF were invited to attend the Women in Science event which facilitates cross-institutional networking of senior leaders at ICR, Royal Marsden (RM) and The Crick Institute. Feedback from female team leaders identified actions around updating the appraisals to raise awareness of awards and committee memberships available (action 2e, iv).

We support the Leadership Development of junior/mid-level managers within Corporate and Scientific Officer roles through the Aurora (female only) and Future Leaders (FL, initially female-only until 2017) programmes. We evaluated these programmes in Aug/Sep16 with data from 2 cohorts (action 2e, i). Most participants would recommend their programme to other colleagues (88% of FL and 87% of Aurora). The review led to the FL programme being open to all genders since the 2016-17 cohort and in both programmes running yearly in tandem for at least 12 people (action 2e, iii and new action 2d, i). Future actions will be around tracking the career destination of attendees (new action 2d, iii). We will continue to grow our leadership training offered to these groups (corporate and SOs) by launching a professional leadership programme, leading to external accreditation with the Institute of Leadership and Management by Jan19 (new action 2d, ii).

Attitude survey comparisons between 2014 and 2018 shows statistically significant improvements ( $p > 0.05$ ) in responses to how managers are viewed including questions such as 'I have a good working relationship with my manager'. New managers form part of the New Managers Network and are provided with training in management topics (action 2f, i). A project is currently underway to analyse the training support offered to all managers and to develop an action plan to tackle training gaps (new action 2e, i). We will monitor improvements in manager training and support by monitoring trends through the attitude survey questions (new action 2e, ii).

To ensure selection to influential senior committees is transparent and fair, membership is either automatic according to the role (e.g. Heads of Divisions) or elected, in which case all suitable/eligible candidates are contacted. We advertise committee vacancies biannually (action 2e, ii). We will continue to monitor gender balance in senior committees, and take actions to increase diversity of committee membership and experience through investigating options for shadowing, deputy committee roles, and clear guidance to chairs to ensure all participants are heard (new action 2d, iv).

We have increased our support for Bioinformatics since the launch of our in-house 'Introduction to Bioinformatics' 3-day course in 2015; the latest additions being '10wk step-by-step R' and 'ChIP-Seq' courses. The content and format of the 'Introduction to Bioinformatics' course was formally reviewed in Nov17 and the entire R training provision has been arranged to follow a logical learning progression plan (action 3e). We now run a total of 17 informatics courses arranged as part of the 'Computing training programme'. We ran a survey in Nov18 to all scientists to assess the needs for Informatics-related training and identify any gaps in provision. This will guide our informatics training provision (new action 3c).

We recently reviewed all of our training provision (Jan18) comprising of >140 training courses, and we categorised all our courses into 14 training programmes to provide a framework for personal career development. This is being heavily advertised through the intranet and the monthly training newsletter.

### **Researcher Responsibilities** (principle 5)

In 2014 we put together The Postdoc Code of Practice, which highlights the responsibilities and expectations of Postdocs, their supervisors and the ICR. In 2017 we reviewed its impact/usage via two surveys to Postdocs and their supervisors and presented the results at the 2017 International Vitae Conference. All surveyed agreed the document was useful to have, but only some supervisors seem to actively use it in discussions. To encourage usage by Postdocs, and to ensure the document remains relevant, the Code was updated in Sep18 with the help of Faculty and PDAC and re-circulated to all Faculty and Postdocs together with the ICR's Training Catalogue (action 3a). Future actions concentrate on promoting its value and usage and to update it biennially to ensure it remains relevant (new action 3d, i & ii).

To ensure PhD students take ownership of their career development, we introduced a training screening tool in 2016 which identifies areas of development and signposts them to relevant training. We aimed for 51% of the initial cohort to have accessed the tool, but only 37% logged in and 20% completed their personal development plan (PDP). This improved slightly for the 2017/18 cohort with 38% logged in and 35% completed (action 3f, i). Our future actions will concentrate on understanding the reasons for the low uptake, on actively reminding students of completion and working directly with the students to find potential solutions (new action 3e, i & ii). Following student feedback, we introduced a hands-on training session on keeping lab books at the 2016 student induction. This was well received and so we have run it ever since (action 3g).

### **Diversity and Equality** (principle 6)

Our Athena SWAN Silver award, granted in 2016, recognises the impact of our career development and equality work on the careers and experiences of female researchers. We will submit a new application for Silver in April 2019, and have worked to create a supportive, open and equal culture at the ICR – through actions documented here and in the Athena SWAN action plan (new action 4b, i & ii).

In 2016 we established two networks that promote and celebrate diversity - the LGBT+ and the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) networks in 2016. They both have dedicated committees to provide a voice for our staff and students and have developed a set of objectives (action 1f). Our Staff Engagement Committee is championing our Wellbeing strategy which includes raising the profile of mental health awareness via training in Mental Health First Aid and guest speakers on topics such as Neurodiversity and Alzheimer's and are measuring awareness of, and support for mental health issues through our staff survey.

We were the first research institute to take part in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index (2017). For this, we conducted a self-assessment and surveyed the LGBT+ network. Our transgender policy was praised as progressive in the feedback from Stonewall but we identified two areas of improvement (policies and training). These are currently being addressed as part of a larger HR policy review. We are currently implementing feedback from Stonewall by working with our LGBT+ Network and establishing the network's objectives for 2019 (new action 4c, i & ii). So far, the group has fed into the review of equalities training to ensure that mandatory training covered issues that LGBT+ staff may experience at work. It has also set up a confidential email address for reporting bullying and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation and has a wellbeing advisor, which are volunteer staff/students trained to provide wellbeing advice and signposting. It has run social and networking events (e.g. meeting The Crick's Institution LGBT network) and has Communications reps to ensure visibility within the ICR and on social media of the network and individuals, including its champion Dr Charmaine Griffiths, Chief Operating Officer.

The BAME Forum has set up a forum to meet colleagues, share experiences and discuss initiatives to promote ethnic diversity. We surveyed BAME staff and students in May18 to identify priorities and aims for the network and this fed into the development of objectives (action 1f, i). Since then, the group has a programme of talks by ethnic minority staff in senior roles to talk about their careers and offer mentoring. We also have a schedule of events, including a Black history month party and seminars with speakers including Yvonne Coghill (Deputy President of the Royal College of Nursing). The key priorities for the group are around raising the profile of the forum with some interest recorded with a mentoring scheme. Future actions are around promoting mentoring schemes available at ICR/RM to find out if they meet the needs of the BAME forum (new action 4d).