

## HR Excellence in Research Award



## RESPONSE TO VITAE'S HREiR 12 YEAR EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

The feedback from the external review team received on 7 December 2022 was welcomed. The comments have been circulated to key personnel, reported to relevant committees and are now fully actioned. A revised suite of documents has been uploaded to the University of Reading's external website for final review by Vitae's UK Panel.

### Detail

Following Reading's HREiR submission to Vitae in September 2022 the peer review panel reported "it was clear that there is a high level of commitment to implementing the Concordat at Reading". The panel confirmed that there was sufficient evidence that the review process had been followed correctly. However, the UK panel supported Vitae's peer reviewer recommendations that "**there are some changes to be made in advance of confirming retention of the Award**". These changes have been asked to be addressed by 7 March 2023. The changes requested and response/action taken is captured in the table below.

Change requested	Response
That Reading reviews it's success measures on the forward-looking plan to help them demonstrate their impact better and to achieve their ambitions. We would like them to consider the most appropriate data to use to measure the success of their actions, which may not always be survey data (CEDARS). We applaud the use of CEDARS data but would like to see additional types of data used where appropriate, including qualitative data.	<p>Success measures for 2022-25 have been reviewed. We also plan to take advantage of best practice in the sector and will participate in the rescheduled Vitae training event 'designing success measures' in April 2023.</p> <p>Additional/amended measures included in the 2022-25 plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>EC16</b> – Positive researcher engagement improves, both within and across Schools. At least three informal social events will be held per academic year to support ECR networking, awareness, mental health and wellbeing and inter-disciplinary collaboration (each year). Participation and diversity of Schools/ Departments increases each year.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>ECR1 &amp; EI2 &amp; PCDI1</b>- Develop and run a new face-face induction each term for new staff members, to introduce them to the Concordat, the Graduate School and signpost them to the breadth of support available. At least 75% of attendees rate the induction as informative and useful (starting June 2023 and every term).</li> <li>- <b>ECR3</b> – Staff induction on-the-day evaluation records &gt;75% know where to find information on wellbeing and mental health.</li> <li>- <b>EI3</b> -The number of promotions from Grade 6-7 and 7-8 (via the Merit based promotion panel and main University Titles committee) will be monitored over the three years to assess whether there is an increasing/decreasing trend and whether further action is required to address any barriers to the promotion pathway.</li> <li>- <b>ER3</b> – Amendments are made to the new HR System being developed, specifically capturing RS improvements (Dec 2024) e.g. completion of mandatory training on D,E &amp;I and PDRs to inform future reporting and action planning.</li> <li>- <b>PCDI2</b> – New HR System being developed to consider incorporating a mandatory PDP as part of the individual’s probation period. This will help to embed career and personal development planning into RM role.</li> </ul>
<p>That Reading finds a way to future-proof their Research Staff Committee and the system of postdoc representatives on other committees, to ensure continuity of representation. During the call, we discussed the idea of a wider pool of research staff to act as representatives rather than the opportunities/ workload all falling on the chair of the</p>	<p>The first meeting of the re-established Research Staff Committee (RSC) was held on 13 December 2022. Alternative committee models and structures were investigated in 2022, and other institutions consulted with in order to inform the proposed (and now adopted) committee structure. A Chair and Co-Chair has been appointed with ongoing logistical support provided by the Graduate School to ensure continuity and make best use of researcher's time. Meetings will take place termly as a minimum. This also opens up opportunities for staff to sit on broader University committees such as Research and Innovation and Senate.</p>

Research Staff Committee as one way this could be achieved.	
That Reading upload their original, 2 year and 4-year documentation to the webpage where the more recent documentation sits. As well as being expected as part of the submission, we feel that the availability of these documents will assist with institutional memory and will help demonstrate the level of progress that has been made over time (completed).	All previous documentation (which had been recently archived for brevity!) are now available again on the external website. <a href="https://www.reading.ac.uk/hr-excellence-in-research">HR Excellence in Research (reading.ac.uk)</a>
That Reading reformat some of the boxes on the 2020-22 reporting document to ensure that all of the text is visible, as they are currently too small to contain all of the text.	All boxes have been reformatted so that all text is visible.
The peer review team further recommends that Reading write up the ECR conference as a case study for Vitae.	The case study given as an example during the telephone interview is being written up. It will be submitted to Vitae as a case study example in due course.

## Next steps

Delivering the HREiR 2022-25 action plan is well underway. The Graduate School is working with staff at all levels to secure further improvements in employment, environment and career and professional development over the next three years.

We look forward to hearing from you.

**Susan Glover**  
**Research Development Project Officer, Graduate School**  
20 February 2023