University College Dublin

Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

UCD DUBLIN

Contents

Introduction

The European Charter and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are best practice guidelines for the employment and development of researchers. In order to facilitate the implementation of the Charter and Code the European Commission can award the 'HR Excellence in Research Award'. This logo is awarded to research institutions and funding agencies that have made significant progress in implementing the Charter and Code.

The process for obtaining the award involves conducting an internal analysis of how the university is performing against the four areas outlined in the Charter and Code:

- Ethical and Professional
- Recruitment
- Working Conditions & Social Security
- Training

Once the analysis is complete and gaps identified, the university then develops an action plan to address the gaps in meeting the practices outlined under each of the principles of the Charter and publishes both the Gap Analysis and the action plan on the university website. Following the submission of the Action Plan to the European Commission (EC) and successful assessment of the process followed and action plan received, the EC will approve the use of the 'HR Excellence in Research Award'. The university then implements the Action Plan and conducts a self-assessment after two years. An external evaluation will occur at least every four years.

About University College Dublin

University College Dublin (UCD) is one of Europe's leading research-intensive universities where undergraduate education, postgraduate masters and PhD training, research, innovation and community engagement form a dynamic continuum of activity. The university was established in 1854 by John Henry Newman whose classic work The Idea of a University is one of the most enduring texts on the value of higher education and a source of inspiration for UCD's current educational philosophy.

Today UCD is Ireland's largest university with almost 25,000 students. It is the most popular destination for Irish school-leavers and actively promotes university life as a journey of

academic and personal discovery through its highly innovative and flexible UCD Horizons undergraduate curriculum.

UCD is Ireland's leader in postgraduate education with approximately 7,000 postgraduate students, representing approximately 28% of the UCD student population, and almost 2,000 PhD students. Over 50% of UCD undergraduates progress to postgraduate studies. UCD is home to over 5,000 international students and, in addition, places great emphasis on the internationalisation of the Irish student experience – preparing all UCD students for future employment and life that crosses borders, boundaries and cultures.

The role of UCD within Irish higher education is underscored by the fact that UCD alone accounts for over 30% of international students, over 25% of all postgraduate students and almost 28% of all doctoral enrolments across the seven Irish universities.

The UCD context: participating in the HRS4R process

UCD endorsed the Charter and Code on 13th September, 2006 as part of the Co-operation Accord[1] which states:

'We recognise the value of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their Recruitment and support and endorse the principles set down in them and wish to build on them'.

UCD is well placed to apply for the 'HR Excellence in Research Award' following recent developments in its supports for researchers in the university including the UCD Structured PhD programme and the implementation of the UCD Research Careers Framework.

The UCD Structured PhD aims to enable UCD PhD students achieve the best possible experience of graduate research and training.

The UCD Research Careers Framework establishes a structured and supportive skills and early career development model for Postdoctoral Fellows, as recommended in the sectoral Advisory Science Council (ASC) policy document 'Towards a Framework for Research Careers'[2]. The UCD Framework represents a joint initiative between UCD Research and UCD HR. This initiative directly supports UCD researchers in achieving their research and career goals.

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/data/usgn_orgs/ie_ucd.pdf
[2] http://www.sciencecouncil.ie/media/asc081009_researcher_careers.pdf

Defining Early-stage, Experienced and other researchers

For the purposes of the UCD HRS4R Gap Analysis and Action Plan, postgraduate researchers are termed Early-stage Researchers and postdoctoral and other researchers are referred to as Experienced Researchers. This is in line with European Commission documentation which defines Early-stage Researchers as researchers in the first 4 years (full-time equivalent) of their research activity, including the period of research training. Experienced Researchers are defined as researchers having at least four years of research experience (full-time equivalent) since gaining a university degree/ diploma giving them access to doctoral studies, in the country in which the degree/diploma was obtained or researchers already in possession of a doctoral degree, regardless of the time taken to acquire it[3].

It should be noted that in the Irish higher education system researchers at postgraduate level (early-stage researchers) are not, in most cases, employees but are registered as full-time students. The Charter and Code outlines principles targeted at employers of researchers and this does not therefore include postgraduate researchers in the Irish context. However, for the purpose of the UCD HRS4R Gap Analysis and Action Plan all researchers are considered professionals regardless of their employment status. This does not, however, constitute a transfer of employee rights or the creation of a relationship of employment for these early-stage researchers. In considering the application of the Charter and Code principles to the policies and practices in UCD, researchers at all stages of the career trajectory were considered.

National Legislation

In 2006, the Irish Universities Association examined how the Charter and Code related to existing practices and current legislation in Ireland by conducted a comprehensive gap analysis exercise on a national scale. The Gap Analysis involved a detailed examination of the individual sections of the Charter and Code, comparing and contrasting these with a wide range of existing legislation and policies. The national Gap Analysis report sets out a full scale comparison of each section of the Charter and Code with Irish university policies, practices and legislation. This report also lists guideline documents supporting the Charter and Code.

The UCD HRS4R Task Force members also contributed to the Gap Analysis document by outlining areas where legislation or national guidelines supported or impeded specific

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[3] http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/pdf/wp_feb2006_en.pdf (section 2.5.3)

principles. This was supported by a wider consultation process drawing on particular expertise in relevant areas. For example, specific clauses from the Universities Act 1997 were included in support of principles under ethical and professional aspects and academic freedom. Information was provided for the legislative context for the principle on accountability citing the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003, the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 & 2003. With regard to ethics, Clinical Trials on Medicinal Products for Human Use Regulations, 2004 (S.I. 190 of 2004) implementing the EU Clinical Trials Directive (2001/20/EC) were also noted in the Gap Analysis. However the most comprehensive list of guidelines and supporting legislation remains the report by the IUA despite the fact that some of its contents have been superseded by changes in legislation since 2006 and the publication of additional national guidelines for research and higher education.

Title:	TASK FORCE ON THE EU COMMISSION'S 'HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH' HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY FOR RESEARCHERS (HRS4R)
Established:	APRIL 2012
Purpose:	The Task Force was established to : • Carry out an internal analysis, to compare UCD policies and practices against the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers • On the basis of the results of this analysis, the Task Force identified gaps between UCD policies and practices and the principles • Where deemed necessary, the Task Force proposed actions for UCD to undertake to address the gaps identified • To present the action plan to the Standing Committee for Postdoctoral Career Development (SCPCD)
Structure of the Task Force:	**Sponsor:** Professor Desmond Fitzgerald, Vice-President for Research **Chair of the Task Force:** Professor Dolores Cahill, Professor of Translational Science Address School of Medicine & Medical Science, Conway Institute of Biomedical and Biomolecular Science, UCD The Task Force was established as a sub-group of the Standing Committee for Postdoctoral Career Development (SCPCD) with additional invited experts.

	Project sponsor: Professor Desmond Fitzgerald, Vice-President for Research Standing Committee for Postdoctoral Career Development (SCPCD) HRS4R Taskforce, Chair Professor Dolores Cahill PIs, Post Docs, PhDs, Research Staff Association, College Heads, Graduate Studies, Ethics, Legal, HR, UCD Research Secretariat: UCD Research, UCD HR
Membership	The Task Force is comprised of a wide range of researchers and university staff from across the campus including early-stage researchers, members of the UCD Research Staff Association, Principal Investigators, College Principal, and representatives from administrative units such as UCD Research Ethics Office, Career and Development Centre, Graduate Studies, Access Centre, UCD Human Resources, UCD Research etc.
Relationship with existing Groups and Policy:	The HRS4R Task Force operated as a sub-committee of the Standing Committee for Postdoctoral Career Development (SCPCD) and informed the SCPCD of its findings as a gap analysis and action plan.
Functions and outputs:	1. The Task Force was established to analyse the principles of The European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and where deemed necessary to suggest actions which UCD will undertake, to the Standing Committee for Postdoctoral Career Development (SCPCD) 2. To assess current policies and practices in UCD *vis a vis* the principles of the Charter and Code and to identify gaps and potential actions to remedy these gaps 3. The outputs of the Task Force were: (i) the completion of the Gap Analysis template as it

	relates to policies and practices in UCD (ii) The approval of a draft Action Plan to be submitted to the SCPCD as an executive summary of the Gap Analysis.
Work Schedule:	**Phase 1** This phase involved a period of consultation where the Task Force members were asked to access the principles on the HRS4R template as a shared online document and input comments, observations, links to data, etc. under several headings: - Description of Principle - Is this Principle relevant to UCD? - Are you aware of relevant legislation or national guidelines which support or impede this principle? - Can you provide evidence of UCD policy in this area? (url) - Can you provide evidence of UCD policy in this area? (narrative) - Does a gap exist in UCD policy or practice? - If a gap exists, what mode of action for UCD? (None; UCD change; UCD lobby) - Suggestions for Actions for UCD This phase also involved a more widespread consultation with specific members of staff in UCD where additional expertise was required to scrutinise specific principles and their relation to current policy and practice in UCD. This consultation included the following administrative units: UCD Finance office; UCD Library; UCD Teaching and Learning Unit; UCD Nova (Innovation); Communications; Corporate and Legal. **Phase 2** Task Force meetings: - Recap on background context and development of HRS4R template to date. - Discussion on Principles and how they relate to current policies and practices in UCD. - Discussion on which principles required action and which mode of action

- Overview of themes emerging from the work of the Task Force
- Drafting of proposed actions (what, who, when).
- Final discussion on Principles and focus on draft Action Plan with a view to agreeing structure and themes of the document.

Phase 3

The secretariat revised the Draft Action plan and circulated to the Task Force for sign off. Following a period of further consultation, the Draft Action plan was circulated to the University's Human Resources Directors for approval and subsequently submitted to the Standing Committee on Postdoctoral Career Development, the Task Force (reflecting the input from all stakeholders) and the Vice-President for Research for institutional endorsement.

UCD HRS4R Actions

Actions proposed are not in all cases solution-driven but seek to establish the conditions to allow the most appropriate actions to be discussed, agreed and implemented, such as the establishment of working groups in the case of Research integrity, ethical considerations including data management and storage, and research mobility.

The main themes emerging from the Gap Analysis of the Charter and Code and current UCD policies and practices, which led to the proposed actions below, are the following:

- Research integrity and ethical considerations (including data management and storage)
- Recruitment of early-stage (postgraduate) researchers
- Enhancing skills and career development
- Mobility, attracting researchers and the portability of grants

1. Research integrity and ethical considerations

UCD will continue to contribute to the discussion on National Protocols and facilitate the implementation of the National Protocols for Research Integrity as published by Royal Irish Academy and the Irish Universities Association.

UCD Research will facilitate the establishment of a Working Group on Research Integrity and Research Ethics including researchers at all levels of the research career path, staff representatives from UCD Office of Research Ethics Committee, UCD Corporate and legal, UCD Graduate Studies Office, UCD Teaching and Learning, UCD Library, UCD Research etc.

The Working Group will develop mechanisms for embedding good research practice into the culture of all scholarship and promote awareness of research integrity and research ethics issues, including supports to promote good research practice to undergraduates, graduates and staff engaged in research. Specifically, it is suggested that a common module, workshop or staff programme on research integrity principles and ethical practices be developed and applied as part of undergraduate, postgraduate and researcher training.[4]

The Task Force discussed several specific actions which the Working Group may consider in order to ensure that appropriate research practices are embedding into the culture of UCD and researchers at all stages of their career including, for example:

- Develop workshops on research integrity and research ethics
- Best practice in data management and storage
- Establishment of Research Ethics officer at School level
- Establishment of Research Integrity Officer as Institutional level
- Raise awareness of research integrity and research ethics across campus
- Design and dissemination of handbook on research integrity and research ethics for new researchers in UCD

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[4] As proposed in the Discussion Document 'Ensuring Integrity in Irish Research'
http://www.ria.ie/getmedia/28404e5c-4839-4408-9d40-e2a3770c775a/ensuring-integrity-in-irish-research.pdf.aspx

2. Recruitment of early-stage (postgraduate) researchers

2.0 Alterations to the UCD Recruitment website will be made to include details on working conditions for all research positions. Currently this information is not as easily found as it might be on this part of the UCD website. This action will provide more clarity for applicants to all research positions.

2.1 For the recruitment of early-stage (postgraduate) researchers, UCD will maintain a variety of recruitment mechanisms at local level but will publish guidelines on best practice aspects on recruitment processes specifically for early-stage researchers. For example, all recruitment of early-stage researchers should include:

- A broad description of knowledge and competencies required, building on the existing job descriptions
- A description of the working conditions and entitlements, including career development prospects
- Adequate and standardised time between the advertisement of the vacancy or the call for applications and the deadline for reply

3. Enhancing skills and career development

3.0 UCD will support researchers and increase career opportunities by setting targets for increased numbers of job placements and funded research positions such as national employment-based funded programmes and EU industry-linked awards for early-stage researchers.

3.1 Early-stage and Experienced Researchers may focus on an academic career as their preferred option. In some cases researchers are inclined to avoid exploring other career opportunities. UCD will to continue to integrate career awareness, development and planning amongst early-stage and experienced researcher with emphasis on diverse career paths and to engage with the researcher and supervisor/PI communities to emphasise the value of the process.

3.2 Researchers should include the appropriate level of teaching and learning skills training as part of their Research and Professional Development Plan (Early-stage researchers) and Research Skills and Career Development Planning (Experienced researchers). SCPCD will determine and propose appropriate policy to the UCD University Management Team for implementation. To include:

- A specific upper limit on teaching hours
- Responsibility at School level
- A transcript template to be completed at School level indicating level of contribution to teaching

3.3 Researchers should include the appropriate level of innovation /entrepreneurial skills training as part of their Research and Professional Development Plan (Early-stage Researchers) and Research Skills and Career Development Planning (Experienced Researchers). SCPCD will determine and propose appropriate policy to the UCD University Management Team for implementation.

4. Mobility, attracting researchers and the portability of grants

4.0 UCD will establish a Working Group to determine researcher and institutional requirements in terms of mobility and the portability of research grants including mechanisms such as entry and exit point templates, policy for portability of grants both nationally and in the case of EU grants, internationally, data management, portability of pensions, portability of research grants, Intellectual Property, patents, etc.

Schedule of actions

Action heading	Sub-action	Responsible unit	Timeframe for implementation
1. **Research integrity and ethical considerations**	Discussion on National Protocols	UCD Office of Research Ethics, UCD Research	Currently underway. Ongoing process at national level.
	Implementation of the National Protocols for Research Integrity	UCD Office of Research Ethics, UCD Research	Pending outcome of discussion at national level.

	Establishment of a Working Group on Research Integrity and Research Ethics and associated activities	UCD Office of Research Ethics, UCD Research	Quarter 4 2012.
2. Recruitment of early-stage (postgraduate) researchers	Alterations to the UCD Recruitment website	UCD HR, UCD Research	Quarter 3 2012.
	Guidelines on best practice at recruitment stage	UCD HR, UCD Research	Quarter 4 2012.
3. Enhancing skills and career development	Achieving targets for increased numbers of job placements and funded research positions for early-stage researchers	UCD Research	Quarter 3 2012 and ongoing.

	Integrate career awareness, development and planning amongst early-stage and experienced researcher	UCD Career Development Centre, UCD Research	Quarter 4 2012 and ongoing.
	Clarifying the appropriate level of teaching and learning skills, innovation and entrepreneurial training.	SCPCD, UCD Research	September/ October 2012.
4. Mobility, attracting researchers and the portability of grants	Establishment of a Working Group to determine researcher and institutional requirements in terms of mobility and the portability of research grants	UCD Research	Group established Quarter 4 2012 and implementation of outcomes during 2013/ 14.