

Human
Resources
Strategy for
Researchers

Self-Assessment
Report 2015

University of
Limerick





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Overview of the University of Limerick

About the University of Limerick

The University of Limerick is a young, ambitious and responsive organisation with a reputation as a pioneer and innovator. As one of Ireland's five-star universities, we have long had a track-record for great drive, innovation and responsiveness. Our campus has expanded rapidly over the past 40 years to be regarded as one of the most impressive in Europe while our state-of-the-art research infrastructure has been further enhanced through sustained investment and expansion. Our research addresses areas of importance to our society, such as education, languages, healthcare and social inclusion, and has a significant impact on sectors that are vital to the Irish economy, such as pharmaceuticals, med-tech, software, food, communications and energy.

The Bernal Project

The University of Limerick is home to the Bernal Project, a €52 million investment which builds on our significant strengths in **applied science and engineering**. Examples of these research strengths include internationally leading research in crystallisation and crystal engineering. The Institute has utilised its research expertise to lead large, inter-institutional research centres in pharmaceutical materials, pharmaceutical processing, composite materials and dairy processing. The Bernal Project has led to the recruitment of 6 world-leading professors to date, a start-up fund to support their research activity and the construction of a new 12,000sq m research facility.

Graduate Employment and Cooperative Education

The University of Limerick has the highest graduate employment rate in Ireland. University of Limerick's 70% graduate employment rate for 2013 primary degree-holders is 19% higher than the HEA's most recently-available national average figure (51% for 2012). The pioneer of Co-operative Education in Ireland, UL has the largest placement programme in the country and one of the largest in Europe. Over 1,600 placements are secured annually; the average placement rate over the past three years is 95%. The international dimension of the programme is significant: more than 20% of students undertake placements within a network of twenty-five countries across all five continents.

Enterprise Engagement



The University of Limerick has long had a track-record of excellent industry collaboration. UL is partnering with over 180 multinational and SME companies in leading sectors for our economy from pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, agri-food, software, materials. These partnerships are furthered through our position as hosts of Science Foundation Ireland funded Centres of Excellence – the Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) and Lero – Irish Software Engineering Research Centre together with the Enterprise-Ireland/IDA supported Irish Centre for Composites Research (IComp), Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology Centre (PMTC), Dairy Processing Technology Centre (DPTC). These partnership anchor R&D activity firmly within the Irish enterprise landscape which leads to job retention and creation, skills enhancement, increased competitiveness and ultimately ensuring Ireland’s future as a knowledge-based economy.

The establishment of the UL Enterprise Corridor encapsulates a convergence of enterprise activity from the Kemmy Business School to the Computer Science & Information Systems Department and Nexus Innovation Centre. The Enterprise Corridor is now home to one of the world’s biggest pharmaceutical companies Johnson & Johnson who have established a Development Centre which generated 100 high value jobs. The presence of companies like this on campus is testament to the wealth of expertise in health and pharmaceutical research at the University.

Find out more at www.ul.ie

HR Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) at the University of Limerick



The **HR Excellence in Research Logo** is awarded by the European Commission to universities, research and funding organisations abiding by the principles provided for in the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct of Recruitment of Researchers](#).

The HR Strategy for Researchers, on the grounds of which the HR Excellence in Research Logo is awarded, is a means of supporting employers and funding institutions in practically applying the principles of the Charter and the Code. It has the following characteristics:

- It is implemented by universities and research and funding organisations on a volunteer basis
- It is elaborated on the basis of internal self-assessment, taking into consideration the autonomy of the institution.

In order to develop the HR Strategy for Researchers, the following five steps are followed:

1. An internal analysis by the research institution to compare institutional practices against the “Charter & Code” principles, involving all key institutional stakeholders including researchers.
2. The development and publication of an “Institutional HR Strategy” and action plan based on the results of the analysis. This document is published on the institutional website.
3. Once the strategy and action plan have been acknowledged by the European Commission, the right to use the “HR Excellence in Research” logo is awarded.
4. Progress in the implementation of the strategy and the action plan are subject to a self-assessment after two years.
5. An external evaluation takes place every four years.

Consultation Process: University of Limerick

Following a successful expression of interest, the University of Limerick was accepted to be part of the third cohort of the EU Euraxess HR strategy group.

Representatives from the University of Limerick attended a Euraxess meeting in Barcelona in January 2012. This provided an opportunity for networking with EU counterparts and for considering how best to approach the design of the gap analysis and subsequent action plan.

The forty principles outlined in the Charter & Code were reviewed by HR and the Research Office with a view to identifying the legislation, policies, and procedures currently in place. This step also involved identification of any clear gaps between the Charter & Code and existing practices and rules within the

University of Limerick. A Euraxess Steering Committee was established consisting of the following representatives:

- VP Research
- Dean of Science & Engineering
- Dean of Education & Health Sciences
- Dean of Kemmy Business School
- Dean of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
- Director of Research Support Services
- Human Resources Director
- Director of a Research Institute - Materials & Surfaces Science Institute
- Head of Department - Life Sciences
- Two Research Staff Representatives
- Human Resources Officer for Research

The first Steering Committee meeting was held in February 2012. At this meeting the working group was defined. The Working Group was established, based on recommendations from the Steering Committee.

The Working Group consisted of the following representatives:

- Director of Research Support Services - Dr. Puneet Saidha
- Assistant Dean of Research, Faculty of Business – Dr. Helena Lenihan
- Assistant Dean of Research, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science – Dr. Helen Kelly Holmes
- Professor at the Graduate Entry Medical School, Faculty of Education and Health Science – Prof. Anne MacFarlane
- Lecturer, Faculty of Science and Engineering – Dr. Jakki Cooney
- Postdoctoral Researcher, Faculty of Science and Engineering – Dr. Tom Arbuckle
- Human Resources Officer for Research – Alison O’ Regan

The first meeting of the Working Group took place on 24th February 2012. The group was briefed on draft gap analysis and agreed to conduct consultation within their respective faculties. Information was returned from the Working Group during the period March/April 2012. The quantity and quality of the feedback reflected the tremendous work and commitment of the working group. The feedback reflects comments from 30 participants and is representative of both researchers and PI’s across each of the four faculties. The feedback was then collated and reflected in the action plan.

The Steering Group met on Wednesday the 4th April 2012 to review the draft gap analysis. Further suggestions and revisions were made to the gap analysis following this review. Following on from this the draft action plan was collated based on the actions outlined in the gap analysis. This was reviewed by both the Working Group at the meeting on the 1st May 2012 and the Steering Committee prior to final agreement and submission to the EU. The European Commission approved the [University of Limerick HRS4R Action Plan](#) in January 2013.

Benefits of the Euraxess Project to the University of Limerick

- The HR Strategy for Researchers will make the University of Limerick more attractive to researchers looking for a new employer or for a host for their research project. This will help to attract the best researchers from around the globe.
- The logo “HR Excellence in Research” will identify the University of Limerick as a provider and supporter of a stimulating and favourable working environment.
- The HR Strategy for Researchers will support the University of Limerick in the implementation of the Charter & Code in its policies and practices.

The University of Limerick HR Strategy for Researchers Self-Assessment Review 2015

This report provides an update on the implementation of the [University of Limerick HRS4R Action Plan](#), which was approved by the European Commission in January 2013. The self-assessment review will provide an update against the stated actions as specified in the 2013 [University of Limerick Action Plan](#) under each of the four main headings:

- Ethical & professional aspects
- Recruitment
- Working conditions &
- Social security and training

Where new actions have been agreed as part of the self-assessment review, these have been included in the report. Where relevant, the report outlines proposed next steps under the headings of the original action areas. The report also outlines actions for implementation during 2016- 2017.

Ethical & Professional Aspects: Review of Progress of Actions from the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

Objective: Update the researcher induction processes, both centralised induction and that given by supervisors/managers, to incorporate information on UL’s research-relevant policies and practices. Introduce induction checklists to ensure all relevant topics are covered. (2013)

As part of induction for research and academic staff representatives from the Research Office, Human Resources Research, Finance and the Library present information in relation to the relevant policies and procedures as it relates to research.

All research relevant information, policies, procedures, training information and forms will be held in a centralised location on the web, on the Research Portal for the University of Limerick. As at 2015 the Research Portal is in the development phase and it is hoped that it that it will go live in 2016. In the interim all relevant research policies are available on the relevant Departments website (Research Office, HR, Finance, and Technology Transfer Office).

Guidelines for induction for both the [Head of Department](#) and the [Induction Coordinator](#) within the relevant department are available on the HR website. These guidelines include checklists of the relevant topics to be covered with the new employee.

HR is currently (2015) working on an online induction facility which will mean that induction information is available for individuals to access in one central location online as required.

Objective: Provide training for researchers in public engagement activities, including media training (2013)

As part of the Research Lunch n’ Learn Series a lunchtime session was held in April 2013 in relation to “Utilising the Media to Enhance Your Research Profile”.

Furthermore, a one day training programme took place during 2013 and 2014 for both academic and research staff members in relation to “Using Social Media to boost your Academic/Research Profile”.

Objective: Evaluate effectiveness of implementation of the PDRS system for the research community, including PI involvement in this system. PDRS system should include focus on future career development of researchers(2013)

A review of the PDRS for Research Staff is currently on-going. The proposal is to amend the PDR to include a greater focus on future career development of researchers. The University of Limerick is currently reviewing the PDRS process with a view to transferring from a paper based process to an online electronic format. As part of this review, the incorporation of future career development will be considered and included in the updated online version if appropriate.

Objective: Provide on-line diversity training, to complement existing diversity training programme (2013)

The LEAD (Living Equality & Diversity) ELearning Programme is available for all University of Limerick Staff Members to access via the Human Resources Website. This programme is relevant to all staff members, but it will also have particular relevance to staff members who have responsibility for recruitment. The LEAD Programme is a modular learning tool. It has five core modules: Understanding Diversity; What's it got to do with you? From Compliance to Commitment; Recruitment & Selection and Dignity & Respect. Each section contains: video and multimedia stories and scenarios, interactive games and quizzes and online instant assessments to offer participants valuable feedback on their learning. The programme is available on <http://www.leadequalitynetwork.com> and staff members may log in with their own e-mail address where they will have the option of using their existing password or creating a new password to gain access to the programme. This programme was recently awarded an Outstanding Achievement IITD (Institute of Training & Development) Award in the Most Innovative Use of Technology category. By using this interactive and multimedia resource, staff will have the opportunity to consider and reflect on the part they play in building an inclusive culture across the university sector. This programme is promoted to staff members via the Training & Learning Section of the Human Resources Department.

The University of Limerick was also awarded funding in 2013 from the Irish Equality Authority as a member of the Irish University Sector to enhance supports offered to staff with disabilities, including research staff. This project commenced in September 2013 and initiatives will also include staff training in this area

[Unconscious Bias Online Training](#) (40 minute programme) was launched in July 2015 and is available via the HR website. This training is recommended for all staff in particular those who are members of selection boards.

Objective: Update researcher information resources, such as internal websites, guidelines and training programmes, to ensure UL's research-relevant policies and practices are clearly documented in a visible manner. Provide search facility to allow easy access to such information.(2013)

The Research Office at the University of Limerick are currently investing in creating a University of Limerick Research Portal, which will allow for both academic and research staff members to access all research relevant documentation from one central point on the web. The Research Portal is intended to

contain all relevant research policies, procedures, training information and forms from all the research support services including the Research Office, Finance, Human Resources, Graduate School and the Library. As at June 2015 the Research Portal is in the development phase.

Objective: Identify mechanisms and supports for researchers to engage in public dissemination, such as through the UL press office, and through the creation of a community forum to allow research findings to be shared with the broader community (e.g. public lecture series)(2013)

A Dissemination & Communications Working Group has been established between Research Office, the Glucksman Library and Corporate Affairs to champion and embed best practice, innovations and training requirements in support of research dissemination and communication.

The Corporate Affairs Division of the University of Limerick has an on-going focus on Research Public Relations, placing research stories in local, national and international media on an almost weekly basis.

Faculties and Departments run Public Lecture Series events e.g. Irish Times Innovation Roadshow (Research & KBS), GEMS Annual Public Lecture, Journalism Lecture Series. These are supported by the Corporate Affairs Division in relation to PR but are coordinated by the relevant Faculty or Department. Building an Innovation Ecosystem Research Marketing campaign run by Corporate Affairs included print advertising in the Irish Times, online video marketing and PR communications profiling University of Limerick researchers.

The University of Limerick Links magazine is published twice a year and is open for any staff/faculty to submit profiles, stories, news etc.

The University of Limerick News Update – e-newsletter was launched in November 2013 and will be issued on a bi-weekly basis to the campus community, including University of Limerick news, researcher profiles etc.

Objective: Examine mechanisms to provide for replacement of staff on research projects during situations of sick leave or maternity leave (2014)

[Guidelines for Maternity, Paternity or Adoption Leave Cover for Research Staff](#) were approved in 2015. Executive Committee have approved that in circumstances where funding is not provided for the

replacement of staff within the specific research project then replacement costs will be covered by the University of Limerick.

The University of Limerick has also introduced a [Research Grant for Returning Academic Carers' \(RGRAC\)](#) to support academic staff across all Faculties in re-establishing their independent research careers on return from extended leave (20 weeks or more) for reasons connected to caring - such as adoption leave, additional paternity leave, maternity leave, or leave to care for a dependant. The Research Grant for Returning Academic Carers' provides additional support to minimise the impact of extended leave on research activities. Returning Academic Carers' will be able to avail of 6 months protected research time on return from carers' leave or hire a research assistant for the period of the carers' leave to maintain their research.

Objective: Update ethics guidelines, and corresponding training, to provide clarity on relationships between the various ethics approval committees, in particular those at UL and the HSE. (2014)

ULREG (University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance committee) is primarily concerned with research related policies, procedures and governance, whilst all research ethics applications are considered at Faculty level by Research Ethics Committees (RECs). All appeals of Faculty REC decisions are referred to ULREG. The University's Research Ethics and Governance structure is now clearly outlined on the ULREG website, including the relationship between the UL and HSE ethics approval committee: [ULREG Website](#). Each of the four faculties also has a research ethics website (which can be accessed from the ULREG website) which clearly outlines the guidelines and structure for research ethics applications.

At national level a working group completed a draft policy statement on ensuring research integrity in Ireland. A consultation on the draft statement was carried out in 2013. The document [National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland 2014](#) was launched on the 4th June 2014. The working group members included representatives from the University of Limerick – Prof. Alan Donnelly.

Research Ethics training took place on the 22nd January 2014 and on the 22nd January 2015. Research ethics training is part of the University of Limerick's core training and is carried out annually. On the 29th January 2015 the Chair of the National Consent Policy Advisory Group, Deirdre Madden addressed the University of Limerick research community in relation to the [National Consent Policy](#) which addresses ethics in healthcare.

Objective: Implement consistent guidelines on the collection, use and retention of data for research purposes, once the new regulations on this subject are finalised. Provide guidelines and training on procedures to ensure research data is secure and reliably backed-up.(2014)

The University has a Records Management & Retention Policy and an associated records retention schedule (available at www.ul.ie/recordsmanagement). In addition, the University has a Data Protection Regulations and an associated Staff Compliance Guide (available at www.ul.ie/dataprotection).

The purpose of the University's Records Management & Retention Policy is to ensure the creation and management of complete, usable and reliable records, which are capable of supporting the University's functions and activities and which ensure accountability. Records must be retained for as long as required to meet the legal, administrative, financial and operational requirements of the University, as recommended by the records retention schedule, after which time they must be destroyed or filed/archived as appropriate.

The University's records retention schedule has a dedicated research records section which prescribes retention periods for records through the life cycle of research projects from proposal and funding application stage, the administration and running of research projects and the collation of data, findings and reports. The schedule also addresses retention requirements for financial records, records related to university-industry interactions in research area, campus companies, intellectual property records and for postgraduate and undergraduate research documents (including final theses, dissertations and final year projects).

Identify mechanisms/opportunities to reward outstanding research performance.(2015)

The [UL Research Awards](#) have been established to recognise and encourage overall research excellence, important research achievements, and research that has significant impact. The two awards under the scheme are an Award for Excellence in Research and the Award for Excellence in Research (Early Career).

Future Ethical & Professional Objectives: Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

Examine potential mechanisms to improve the ethics review and approval process, including possible mechanisms to simplify/expedite the process, and mechanisms for two-way feedback/exchange between researchers and the approval committees.(2016)

Update UL policies and practices as appropriate, based on the outcomes of national initiatives, e.g. the IUA national code of conduct for research ethics and integrity, the national IP framework.(2016)

Examine potential mechanisms to assist researchers in understanding commonly used contractual terms and conditions, such as guideline documents, help-desk services, etc.(2016)

Explore mechanisms to streamline researcher processes, including those relating to accountability and authorisation. (2017)

Develop strategy for compliance with data protection guidelines, including addressing issues such as open-plan workspaces, data retention requirements exceeding student/staff time at the university(2017)

Complete EU project to examine role of women in research- FESTA (2017)

The University of Limerick is a partner organisation in the EU FP7 project Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia (FESTA) which is taking place from 2012 -2017. News and updates on the status of the project are available at www.festa.europe.eu

Monitor recruitment statistics for all areas of equality (2017)

As part of the gender projects currently on going at UL recruitment statistics for the period 2102 - 2014 are currently being analysed and steps to increase the number of female applicants in STEMM processes will be reviewed to ensure that: (i) the procedures used to advertise posts are gender neutral, (ii) female applicants are actively encouraged, (iii) training is provided and (iv) members of interview boards are given training on unconscious bias.

Additional Ethical & Professional Objectives /Original Objectives Carried Forward following Two Year Review

Consider how best to support Performance Development Review (PRD) process for research staff.

Review how the national research integrity policy is implemented within UL and ensure there is clarity around this.

Finalise development of the Research Portal and launch same.

HR to finalise the online induction facility which will mean that induction information is available for individuals to access in one central location online as required.

Recruitment: Progress on Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

The Research Careers and Development Framework needs to be communicated effectively to applicants/new employees to ensure realistic career expectations are created with researchers from the beginning of the employment relationship and that they are aware of the support mechanisms available to them. This framework also needs to be communicated to current staff and PI's. (2013)

The information in relation to the Research Careers & Development Framework is presented to new hires during induction. Candidates at interview are also made aware of the contract type on offer and the potential contract length.

In support of the Research Careers & Development framework a training programme on “Maximising Your Research” was piloted in 2014 with members of staff who are on tenure track programmes. This programme will be rolled out again in 2016 and will be available to research staff.

The University of Limerick joined **Vitae** in January 2015. Vitae is a UK non-for-profit Charity dedicated to active career learning and development for Researchers. Vitae have great expertise at enhancing the skills and career impact of researchers and offer online supports for both researchers and supervisors of researchers in their roles.

Review advertisements to ensure that requirements are in line with the role, ensuring that they are correctly labelled and in line with appropriate salary scales.(2013)

In order to assist members of staff in completing job descriptions for research positions, the Research Recruitment Pack is now available on the Human Resources website pre-populated with the relevant job description and salary information for each of the research grades. This initiative aims to standardise and improve the recruitment process and assist managers in writing job descriptions. Managers will need to amend the generic job description to include the specific details of the position.

All Recruitment Packs are subsequently reviewed by the Human Resources Officer Research to ensure job descriptions are appropriate to the relevant grade of the position and the relevant salary scale is applied.

Additional sources of international recruitment need to be reviewed to ensure the University of Limerick obtains the best candidate for the role. (2013)

During 2013 a number of initiatives have been implemented to expand international recruitment at the University of Limerick. Investment has been made in additional video conferencing facilities at the University of Limerick to increase the university's capability to conduct interviews with international candidates. Video conferencing facilities are now available within Human Resources and throughout Plassey House. Videyo is currently also available as an additional web conferencing facility to reduce the cost to research budgets of interviewing candidates who are located internationally and to increase access to web conferencing facilities for candidates.

The University of Limerick has participated in a national initiative to set up a website for vacancies in academic, research, management, administrative and support services within the Irish Higher Education Sector. This website www.universityvacancies.com was launch during 2013 and it is anticipated that it will assist in attracting international candidates to Irish Universities including the University of Limerick.

Additional international websites have also been reviewed and the University of Limerick has joined www.naturejobs.com, www.euraxess.com, www.researchgate.net and will continue to review international recruitment websites and update as appropriate.

Appropriate recruitment training for selection board members needs to be undertaken and mechanisms to increase uptake on training need to be identified.(2014)

A one day programme on Interview Skills for Selection Board members took place February and October 2014 and February 2015. These programs were advertised to all staff members and it was recommended that ALL selection board members undergo formal Interview Skills Training. This 1 day programme has been specifically designed to cover all aspects of the University's Recruitment & Selection procedures.

The Interview skills programme is currently under to review with the intention to reduce the length of the programme to offer a more focused programme. It is hoped that this will increase participation in the training.

The Human Resources Division continues to expand the range of eLearning Programmes on offer to all Employees. An unconscious bias eLearning Programme is available in UL since June 2015 and this is for particular relevance to members of selection boards.

The LEAD (Living Equality and Diversity) eLearning Programme has been designed for use by all University staff - academic, professional and support – and is particularly relevant to staff with management or recruitment roles.

Ensure continued improvement of recruitment process including reviewing and communicating the research recruitment procedures and updating recruitment guidelines and supporting documentation/resources as appropriate.(2015)

Recent updates on the recruitment process include that the approval process for research funded administrative posts has been simplified. All research funded administrative posts will no longer required prior Recruitment Sub Committee approval and will be advertised once the recruitment pack is completed with the appropriate signatures and the job description has been agreed with Human Resources. In the event that Human Resources and the PI do not reach agreement in relation to the job description, the post may be forwarded to Recruitment Sub Committee for review. Governing Authority will be notified of all research funded appointments.

New recruitment procedures were introduced in 2015 [Procedures for the Recruitment and Appointment of Externally Funded Academic Staff](#) to allow for the recruitment of externally funded academic staff, where there is a funding call from a research body or any other appropriate funding body, which is of strategic importance to the direction of UL.

As part of the Athena Swan initiative, 30% female gender representation is now required on all selection boards

Future Recruitment Objectives: Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

Support for mobility for researchers to be provided via centralised readily available information. Consider possibility of external placements and the development of further support mechanisms for mobility. Review researcher intake with international experience and act on this as appropriate.(2016)

Centralised support is available for work permit / hosting agreements via the HR Research Office.

The EU portal www.euraxess.com is also a key support for researcher mobility in the EU

Additional Recruitment Objectives following Two Year Review

UL will implement the EU recommendations on open, transparent and merit-based recruitment practices for researchers (OTM-R).

The University of Limerick will work to facilitate the ease of advertising of research posts via social media such as LinkedIn or Twitter

The University of Limerick will consider whether it is appropriate to make unconscious bias training compulsory for all selection board members or alternative approaches to ensure members of selection boards are availing of this training

The University of Limerick will continue to work to improve the recruitment process including further development of UL's online recruitment system.

Working Conditions and Social Security: Progress on Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

Continue review of health and safety as part of the HR Division's ISO quality system (2013)

Health and safety legislation applies to research as it does to any other area of the University. It is the responsibility of research supervisors to ensure that projects are properly run, comply with current legislation and do not cause illness or injury.

The Health & Safety Unit assists by providing technical assistance and specialist advice on how researchers may meet the relevant health and safety standards. Health and Safety Information and Training Programmes suitable for researchers are provided each semester. The training courses provided for researchers during 2013 were: Compressed Gas Safety Awareness; Using Hydrofluoric Acid Safely; Fume Cupboard Calibration; Chemical Agent Risk Assessment; General Risk Assessment; Fire Fighting & Fire Warden; First Aid; Safety Policy Training; Working with Ionizing Radiation; and, Laser Safety Awareness.

The Health and Safety Unit's activities and key performance indicators (KPIs) are integrated in the HR Divisions ISO Quality System. The Unit is audited annually to ensure it continues to meet the ISO 9001 Quality Standard.

Communicate the research contract management policy clearly to research staff at induction training. Ensure researchers have clear expectations in relation to their contracts of employment and PIs are aware of their responsibilities to communicate with researchers. Support researchers in their own career development through career development training / PDR process, in which discipline specific research training needs can be identified. Consider further initiatives to improve employment conditions of research staff. (2013)

During Induction for Academic and Research Staff, details of the University of Limerick research contract management policy are outlined to ensure that researchers have clear expectations in relation to their contracts of employment.

Career Development Training was provided to staff members in 2013 via a two day programme titled "Your Career, Your Choice". This programme was available to all staff of the University of Limerick. The focus of this training was to enable participants to have the necessary tools to prepare a comprehensive

career plan. This training also included a personal one and half hour session with a career coach. This one-to-one coaching session should enable the individual to plan for their future career. Further career development training will take place during 2014.

Online Epigeum research specific training is available to research and academic staff on the Human Resources website. This includes training on Career Planning in the Sciences and Career Planning in Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences.

Information in relation to the Research Careers & Development Framework is available for all staff members on the Human Resources webpage. This information is included at all relevant research training initiatives including Head of Department Training.

Develop the recognition of researchers by reviewing the access researchers have to participate in relevant decision making bodies within the University of Limerick. Take appropriate action as a result of this review.(2014)

A review of the Research Grades eligible to vote in Governing Authority elections has resulted in Governing Authority approving a revised electorate for voting in Governing Authority elections, that includes the previously omitted grade of Research Officers.

The Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures was updated and approved by Academic Council in May 2014 and includes the provision to allow for the Postgraduate Research Committee, in exceptional circumstances, to permit the appointment of a primary supervisor from a non-traditional academic role, including research grades.

Ensure all relevant policies/research support initiatives are communicated clearly to research staff and PI's through a series of briefing sessions/training initiatives. Review policies annually, taking best international practice into account. (2014)

All HR Research related policies/documents (Research Careers & Development Framework, Research Contract Management Policy, Job Evaluation for Researchers, Research Role Profiles and Research Recruitment Policies) are available for all staff to access via the HR website. All policies are monitored on an ongoing basis and where changes are required the policies are updated and submitted to GA for approval, where appropriate.

At Induction which takes place each semester staff are informed of the research related policies.

Dignity and respect training takes place on numerous occasions throughout the year and all members of staff are required to attend Dignity and Respect training to build an understanding of what is meant by Bullying and Harassment; to build awareness of the contents of UL's Dignity and Respect Policy with a view to ensuring a work environment, where people are treated with dignity and respect and to understand the options available to employees who are experiencing an issue of harassment or bullying.

Continue to review IP management within the University of Limerick and identify opportunities for improvement by reviewing disputes arising. Consider the possibility of a simply guide to IP, separate to the policy. Undertake initiatives to support broader knowledge transfer in relation to IP. (2014)

During 2014 the Technology Transfer Office of the University of Limerick together with HR carried out a number of training events to support knowledge transfer in relation to IP. The Technology Transfer Office is also working on creating a guide to Intellectual Property, which will be promoted to research staff once available. Online Epigeum training programs for researchers are also available from the University of Limerick HR website including "Intellectual Property in the Research Context" and "Managing Your Research Project"

Continue to introduce and encourage flexible work practices such as shorter working year. (2014)

The University of Limerick operates a Shorter Working Year Scheme. This scheme is advertised by the Human Resources Compensation & Benefits Office to all staff annually in October/November. A Shorter Working Year Scheme Calculator is available online on Core Portal for new applicants to the Scheme. The calculator will illustrate the potential changes to salary based on an individual's current payslip if they were to avail of the Scheme.

There are numerous flexible work practices available to staff including Career Break, Leave of Absence Scheme, Flexible Working Hours Scheme, Job Share Scheme and Part-time working policy. Full details of these schemes are contained in these policies and are available to staff to view on the Human Resources webpage.

Ensure information in relation to benefits for researchers such as salary scales, pensions, increments and payments for teaching are readily available and communicated to research staff. Benchmark salaries annually and take appropriate action (2015)

All information in relation to benefits including salary scales for researchers is available on the HR website. Research salary scales available on HR website. UL participates in national reviews of salaries as part of the Irish Universities Association network.

New members of staff are provided with copies of the [Staff Handbook](#) upon joining UL which details all the benefits available to staff at UL

UL has become an Associate Member of the RESAVER Consortium, an initiative undertaken by the EU to create a single European pension arrangement for Researchers. The scheme is currently in development with a view to becoming operational in 2016.

Review resources available to researchers including IT equipment (Visio/equipment for remote collaboration) and space allocation (Buildings & Estates) and take steps to improve same. (2015)

Space allocation for researchers is covered by UL's protocol and procedures for Space Management Policy and continues to be monitored and reviewed by Buildings & Estates.

Video conference facilities are now available throughout Plassey House.

EdTech provide two videoconferencing suites located at GLG043 and GLG049, for use by the campus community, located in the Library Building at basement level. These can be booked through the ITD call logging system

Future Working Conditions & Social Security Objectives: Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

The University of Limerick is participating in an EU project FESTA (Female Empowerment in Science & Technology Academia) with aim of identifying barriers to progression for female academics, and to identify suitable actions to deal with this. In conjunction with this project review recruitment data for equality statistics and take appropriate action.(2017)

UL has a very comprehensive gender action plan which is very focussed on female academics and researchers within STEMM. UL also intends extending this gender action plan across the wider institution.

UL was one of the first Irish Institutions to be awarded the prestigious Athena Swan Bronze Institution Award in July 2015. The Athena SWAN (AS) Charter is an academically led initiative that aims to effect cultural and systemic change in higher education institutions to support gender-equality and the progression of women (and men where appropriate) in STEMM disciplines. As part of the AS Charter recruitment data has been analysed for equality statistics and appropriate action will be implemented as part of the project

UL is a member of **FEASTA** an FP7 funded initiative looking at Female Empowerment in Science and Technology Academia.

UL is also a lead partner in a European PROGRESS funded initiative looking at Gender Equality in key decision Making committees (**GEM**)

UL has the highest level of female Professors at (31%) in Ireland.

Draft and communicate guidelines on authorship to all faculties.(2017)

Vancouver Authorship Guidelines are currently in operation in the faculty of EHS and are available on the EHS website: <http://www.ul.ie/ehs/research-tools/research-support>

UL will work to ensure that guidelines on authorship are available in all faculties.

Additional Working Conditions and Social Security Objectives following Two Year Review

Recognition of researchers – consider possibility of researcher representatives participating at departmental meetings or research support services group meetings or similar to represent the interests of researchers

IP support seminars to be provided on engaging with industry

Training: Progress on Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

Develop a mentoring/coaching scheme for researchers, particularly for early stage researchers.(2013)

The [Research Coaching Scheme](#) at the University of Limerick was officially launched by VP Research and Human Resources in September 2013. The Research Coaching Scheme is a voluntary system which aims to bring together those involved in research to exchange experience, and to provide guidance and support in achieving research outputs, including publications, books, research grants, or other relevant research outputs. The system is additionally aimed at allowing emerging researchers to plan their research career and to develop an effective research portfolio. Over seventy applications for research coaching were received and training for coaches and those seeking coaching took place during October 2013. The research programme coaching is now available to all research and academic members of staff of the University of Limerick. Further information is available from Human Resources Research or Training and Development, Human Resources.

The University of Limerick also operates a separate [Mentoring Scheme](#). This scheme is less focused on specific research outputs but rather offers a platform through which experiences can be shared on a one-to-one informal basis thus providing support to people at various stages in their careers. It aims to help mentees to build self-confidence, share knowledge, skills and experience, increase cross departmental networking, provide help with career planning and encourage inclusivity across the University of Limerick. Further information is available from Training and Development, Human Resources.

As a follow on from the Research Careers Framework implement training to support both the researcher and the supervisor in their roles. This should outline their roles/responsibilities and supports available to them.(2014)

During 2014 a number of research training initiatives were coordinated to support researchers in their roles.

These included the following research lunch and learn events:

- Research Strategy – Standing Out from the Crowd
- Publications – Tips on Strategy & Process

- Building Effective University – Industry Collaborations
- Horizon 2020 – Getting Into A Consortium As a Partner
- European Funding – Reflections from EU RESTORE on project development and management
- An Introduction to Social Media for Academics
- Interfaculty Research Collaboration Event
- Practice Impact: Presentation by former Leadership Development Programme Participants
- Partnerships: Presentation by former Leadership Development Programme Participants

The **Research Coaching Scheme** which was launched in September 2013 is also available to all research and academic staff at the University of Limerick. A member of staff requiring coaching is paired up with a suitable senior colleague who provides coaching to progress towards certain research outputs. Training is provided for both parties.

The University of Limerick joined [Vitae](#) in January 2015. Vitae is a UK non-for-profit Charity dedicated to active career learning and development for Researchers. Vitae have great expertise at enhancing the skills and career impact of researchers and offer online supports for both researchers and supervisors of researchers in their roles.

Provide on-going IP management training to research staff. Consider introducing specialist induction for social sciences / humanities including application of IP policies and rights (2015)

During 2015 the Technology Transfer Office together with HR carried out a series of four lunchtime seminars to support knowledge transfer in relation to IP:

- IP – What does it mean for me? , Barry Purdy, Lucey International Intellectual Property
- Commercialisation Supports, Majella Maher, Enterprise Ireland
- Is there a Market for my Research? Katrina Bradley, Commercial Consultant, Montana Marketing
- Life of a University Spinout, Gabriel Leen, UL researcher & Co-founder of PolyPico

In 2015 the Research Office expanded the UL Research Impact programme and has increase the number of case studies to 8. See: <http://ulresearchimpact.com>

[Online Epigeum training programmes](#) for researchers are also available from the HR website including “[Intellectual Property in the Research Context](#)” and “Managing Your Research Project”.

The Technology Transfer Office is also working on creating a guide to Intellectual Property, which will be promoted to research staff once available.

Future Training Objectives: Actions Identified in the 2013 [HRS4R Action Plan](#)

Consider possibility of financial provision for discipline-specific training for researchers (2016)

Provide training for PI's in mentoring and managing post-docs. Develop a briefing document for PhD supervisors to act as a guide in relation to frequency of meetings, level of support required etc.(2016)

All UL staff and students now have access to Vitae resources which includes online resources for managing post-docs.

Research Principal Investigators have participated in the Research Leadership Programme. This programme includes 360 degree feedback, personal coaching, action learning, group institutional projects and training days to develop leadership skills and capabilities. The program typically takes place over the course of one academic year.

A half day training event on effective PhD supervision was provided by HR in March 2014.

Support the continued professional development of research staff by developing and promoting a comprehensive training schedule. Encourage research staff to consider and plan for their future careers via the careers support seminars, one-to-one coaching, PDR process and other initiatives as may be deemed appropriate (2017)

The University of Limerick officially launched its Research Careers Programme in April 2015 at the launch of the Vitae services to UL. Following on from this launch a number of workshops will be held in relation to research careers including:

- Interview skills for interviewees
- Identifying job opportunities
- A series of career talks by former postdocs working in a variety of roles including academia, industry, policy development, entrepreneurs, and others.

E-learning programmes, designed specifically for the university sector are also available to University of Limerick staff in the following areas:

- [The Research Skills Masters Programme](#) (includes careers supports and planning for researchers)
- [University Leadership and Management Programme](#)

Review international research training initiatives and adopt key leanings of this. Identify creative ways to actively advertise and encourage take up of training initiatives (2017)

The format of the research lunch and learns whereby research members of staff can access research training during lunchtimes and avail of a light lunch has proved effective at increasing the take up of research training.

A detailed schedule of training at UL is available on the HR Website including research focused training. <http://www.ul.ie/hr/courses>

In 2014 HR together with the Research Office launched the *Maximising Your Research Output*, a programme for established researchers. This modular programme is available for both research and academic staff. The aim of the programme is to provide a structure to assist participants to develop a research output strategy. It includes modules on building collaborative partnerships and managing your digital footprints. A series of guest speakers were also invited. This programme will run again in 2016.

In November 2014 Dr. Mary Shire, Vice President Research University of Limerick launched ‘Research Impact’ – a dialogue on the importance of translational research. The University of Limerick has long had a reputation for translational research, making an impact for industry, society and the world at large. UL researchers are encouraged to develop research impact case studies demonstrating a clear link between their research and its impact. As part of the launch of Research Impact, four best practice case studies were developed focusing on research that has been evidenced to deliver real impact. In 2015 the Research Office expanded the UL Research Impact programme and has increase the number of case studies to 8. Full information on the research impact initiative and the supports available to researchers is available at <http://ulresearchimpact.com/>

Two half day training programmes focusing on Networking for Research Success and Networking for Collaboration – were provided in April 2014 and January 2015.

The Research Office together with the Assistant Deans of Research and HR coordinated an inter-faculty research collaboration event at the University of Limerick in March 2014. The aim of this event was to give academics and researchers the opportunity to meet with potential collaborators from other disciplines and faculties and explore potential collaborations.

A full list of research training is available at <http://www.ul.ie/hr/courses>

Additional Training Objectives following Two Year Review

Research Coaching pairings are to be reviewed to ensure they are still working effectively and a call for new participants in the programme is to be issued.

Review possibility of **financial provision for discipline-specific training** for researchers

Provide training for PI's in mentoring and managing post-docs. Develop a briefing document for PhD supervisors to act as a guide in relation to frequency of meetings, level of support required etc.

The Technology Transfer Office will create a guide to Intellectual Property, which will be promoted to research staff.