

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD
2-Year Internal Review Progress Report
(November 2015)

In November 2013, The Courtauld Institute of Art received the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award, which acknowledges our commitment to researcher development. The Courtauld is a single subject institution with a relatively small number of researchers. The research staff category comprises of postdoctoral fellows, whose positions are funded and governed by external funding bodies.¹ The Institute recognises that researchers form a key part of its plans to carry out, promote and shape research in art history and conservation at the highest level. The Courtauld is therefore committed to providing the necessary support for its academic staff and researchers.

1. How was the internal evaluation undertaken?

The internal evaluation was undertaken between December 2014 and November 2015. The first stage of the review process was undertaken by the independent chair of the Concordat Implementation Group (CIG),² Professor Neil Cox, who is also a member of the International Advisory Board of The Courtauld's Research Forum. Professor Cox undertook a review of progress against our original Action Plan whilst suggesting next steps to incorporate into our future strategy for researcher development.

The second stage included review, internal analysis and future strategy development by the CIG subgroup, which included Dr Alixe Bovey (Head of Research), Anjum Saad (Head of Human Resources), Dr Irene Noy (Sackler Research Forum Postdoctoral Fellow), Dr Jocelyn Anderson and Dr Maria Mileeva (both Early Career Researchers/members of faculty). Over a series of meetings in October and November 2015, the Concordat principles were reviewed and priorities identified in consultation with Professor Deborah Swallow (Director). Special attention was paid to chair's comments and the views of the current postdoctoral fellows; all members of the CIG had an input into the two-year review.

The review of the Action Plan is an ongoing process, which is done on regular basis. The CIG meets once a year in the Autumn term to carry out a self-assessment, to review progress and best practice in preparation for the next cycle of recruitment. Our postdoctoral fellows are generally recruited on an annual basis.³ The CIG reports to the Research Forum International Advisory Board, which meets every December. The Head of Research also reports CIG's activities to the Research Committee, the Academic Board and the Senior Management Team.

The final and third stage of the review was the documentation process, which was collated by Dr Maria Mileeva (previously ECR with Special Responsibility for Research Administration) and a subset of the CIG members (using minutes from previous meetings, independent chair's

¹ During the academic year 2015-2016, The Courtauld's community of researchers consists of 4 postdoctoral fellows (Sackler Research Forum Postdoctoral Fellow, Mellon MA Postdoctoral Fellow, Henry Moore Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow, and Caroline Villers Fellow).

² The membership of the CIG includes Head of Research, Head of Human Resources, a selection of ECR members of faculty and at least one current researcher (postdoctoral fellow).

³ Currently, only one of the postdoctoral fellowships is a two-year post (Henry Moore Foundation Fellowship).

review, and outcomes from briefing sessions with the newly established ECR network). The report below is a summary of the track and review progress against The Courtauld's Action Plan. The internal review also feeds into the existing QA mechanisms for our teaching programme and research outputs. The Institute's key ongoing monitoring systems are the Teaching and Learning Committee and peer review of teaching, as well as regular external reviews (which will include TEF & REF).

2. Key achievements and progress against the original plan

Full details of progress against our 2013-2015 Action Plan are provided in the updated document, which is available to view online [here](#). A summary of highlights is provided below.

Key progress against Principles 1 & 2:

- Introduction of a new e-recruitment system and online training for all staff on equal opportunities 'Equality Essentials'.
- Establishment of an ECR network, which will provide a platform and vehicle for identifying and delivering training opportunities.
- Inclusion of Researcher Development Framework into The Courtauld's Research Strategy.

Key progress against Principles 3 & 4:

- The ECR network was established in Autumn 2015. So far, it has held one briefing session with the ECR community to formalise its aims and objectives and commission training opportunities to include employability skills, grant writing, 'alternative academic' (#AltAc) careers, and media training.
- In addition to the first day induction session with the academic mentor and HR, The Courtauld has a transparent induction and probationary period policy, which requires line managers/mentors and new employees, including researchers, to have regular review meetings during the probationary period, to set agreed objectives, identify development opportunities or other support required, and for each meeting to be recorded formally on the review forms. This enables both the researcher and the line manager to monitor and assess progress, to identify and make any adjustments required to assist the new researcher to gain an understanding of the organisation's policies and procedures, and so assist the new researcher to become an effective member of the organisation at an early stage of their employment with The Courtauld.

Key progress against Principle 5:

- Establishment of the ECR network which allows for researchers to identify and commission training opportunities.
- The development of The Courtauld's Research Strategy, which acknowledges and supports researchers to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

Key progress against Principles 6:

- Introduction of a new e-recruitment system and online training for all staff on equal opportunities.

Key progress against Principles 7:

- The Courtauld undertook an institute-wide staff survey in Spring 2015. The results of the survey will feed into the development of our Research Strategy and ECR Network.
- Sharing of best practice solutions with the help of the independent chair of the CIG review in December 2015.

3. Next steps and focus of future strategy for the next two years, including success measures.

We have updated our Action Plan, and this sets out the focus for The Courtauld's strategy for 2015-2017. This plan includes continuing actions from our previous Action Plan and further actions that will build on progress achieved so far. A brief summary of the actions is included below (with success measures listed at the bottom).

Principles 1&2:

- The Courtauld wishes to extend the definition of 'researcher' to include early career academic staff who may be aspiring to, or sustaining, a research career through a series of teaching contracts and fellowships (early career staff who are 'engaged' in research). This would include research students, postdoctoral fellows, Visiting Lecturers and Early Career teaching appointments, all of whom form a vital part of The Courtauld's research culture. The Courtauld is committed to providing the best possible environment for this large community, as well as sustaining our collective aims.
- Work with Development and trusts and charities to increase the number and range of postdoctoral fellowships that we offer, and thereby to facilitate the transition from student to research professional.

Principles 3&4:

- Establishing a formal Early Career Researcher network, through which training can be commissioned that responds to this community's own priorities, including employability skills, grant writing, 'alternative academic' (#AltAc) careers, and media training.
- Ensuring our researchers are prepared to be adaptable and dynamic participants in highly competitive academic, curatorial, conservational, and other fields through effective training, mentoring, and professional experience, as appropriate to their abilities and ambitions.
- Make steps to develop guidance for our researchers on next steps after current funding ends.
- Raise awareness of the induction and review mechanisms on the VLE for academic and research staff.

Principle 5:

- The Research Strategy will be finalised in the Spring term and available online thereafter. The draft of the Research Strategy will be circulated to The Courtauld's Academic Board and other groups (e.g., the curatorial team, the library, postdoctoral fellows) for comment.
- Establish Concordat awareness briefings through ECR network.

Principle 6:

- Update REF Code of Practice once information about the next submission is available.

Principle 7:

- The next step would be to design our plan to measure and evaluate researcher development activity. To achieve this we will identify and engage stakeholders to agree the scope and purpose of evaluation and identify the levels of evaluation to focus on. We wish to validate what we do and inform future development.
- Participation in future Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS).

Our success will be measured by progress against the 2015-2017 Action Plan, as well as these additional indicators:

- Increased number of training sessions offered through ECR network; increased number of researchers, ECR and research students joining the ECR network, future participation in the CROS/PIRLS surveys; increased take-up of appraisal/probation review; to embed the RDF in the workshops and training sessions offered by the ECR network.