



# **The HR Excellence in Research Award in the UK and Europe: main challenges**

**Dr Janet Metcalfe, Vitae**

[www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)

---

**Vitae is led and managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation,  
supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK) and UK HE funding bodies,  
and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities**



**Our mission and aims**

Supporting world-class personal, professional and career development for researchers for personal, economic and social benefit.

[Find out more >](#)

**RDF Planner**



Web app for researchers now available by subscription

[Find out more >](#)

<p><b>Become a researcher</b></p> 	<p><b>Developing as a researcher</b></p> 	<p><b>Supporting researcher development</b></p> 	<p><b>Supervising and managing researchers</b></p> 	<p><b>Employing researchers</b></p> 
---	--	---	---	---

**Latest News**

**Focus on Enterprise!**  
Feb 28, 2014

**Welcome to the first phase of our new website...**  
Feb 28, 2014

[Read all news >](#)

**Register to our site and...**

- ...access publications and communities
- ...read our new Enterprising researcher booklet
- ...browse examples of academic CVs



**EVENTS**

**#Vitae14 How to start a business after your PhD?**  
20 March 2014

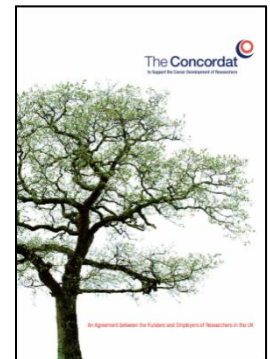
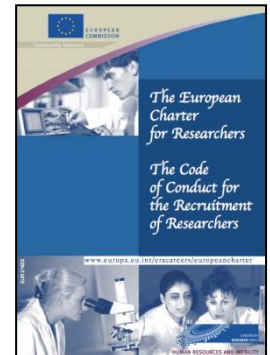
A virtual Google event with researchers turned entrepreneurs. Join us on 20 March and ask your questions.

[Book now >](#)

-  World-class professional development for researchers
-  Informing policy development
-  Working directly with institutions to enhance practice
-  Providing information, resources and activities for researchers
-  Building an evidence base to inform practice and policy

# Background

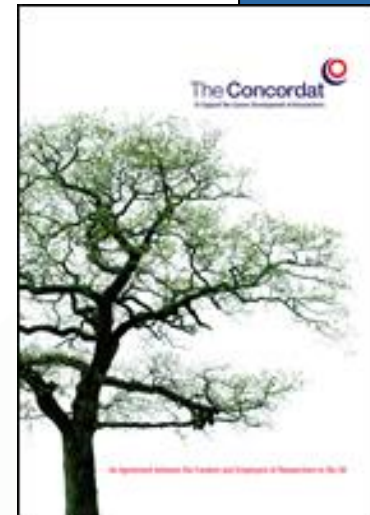
- ✔ 1996: UK Concordat for research staff
- ✔ 2001: Review of research careers initiative
- ✔ 2002: CROS
- ✔ 2002: Roberts professional development and UK GRAD Programme
- ✔ 2005: European Charter and Code
  - ✔ 2006: UK gap analysis
  - ✔ 2008: Concordat and Vitae
- ✔ 2008: HR Strategy for Researchers
  - ✔ 2009: CROS re-launched
- ✔ 2010: first HEIs receive HR Excellence in Research Award
  - ✔ 2011: PIRLS
  - ✔ 2012: Concordat review and measures of progress
- ✔ 2013: Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
- ✔ 2013: Feasibility study into formal HR certification
  - ✔ 2013: Vitae review of HR action plans across Europe
- ✔ 2014: Horizon 2020, article 32 (C&C implementation)
- ✔ 2016? Accreditation? Condition of H2020 funding?



# Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers (2008)



- ✔ Recruitment and selection
- ✔ Recognition and value
- ✔ Career development
- ✔ Researcher responsibilities
- ✔ Equality and diversity
- ✔ Monitoring and review

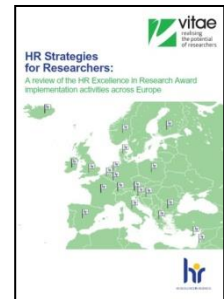


# HR Excellence in the UK (2010)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

- ✔ Concordat is equivalent to the Charter and Code
- ✔ UK HR Excellence in Research panel
  - ✔ mandate from the Concordat Strategy Group
  - ✔ includes representation from the European Commission
  - ✔ reviews initial submissions and two-year internal review submissions
- ✔ Vitae manages process
  - ✔ coordinates and negotiates the UK process with the European Commission, streamlined for institutions
  - ✔ reviews and provides feedback to institutions on submissions
  - ✔ reviews progress and drives enhancement
  - ✔ developed external review process
  - ✔ developed UK response to the proposal for a formal HR certification
- ✔ 80 UK organisations with the Award



# HR Excellence in Research Awards 2014



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

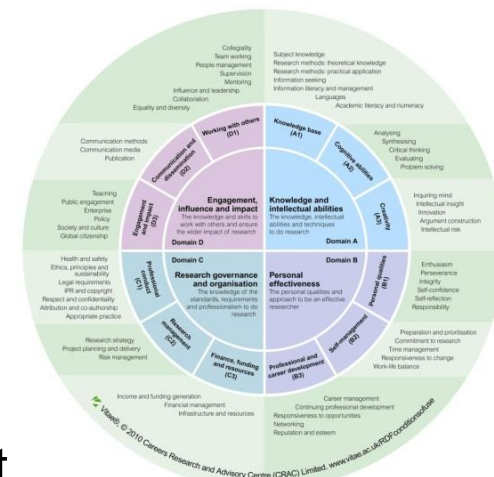


# UK institutional benefits and drivers



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

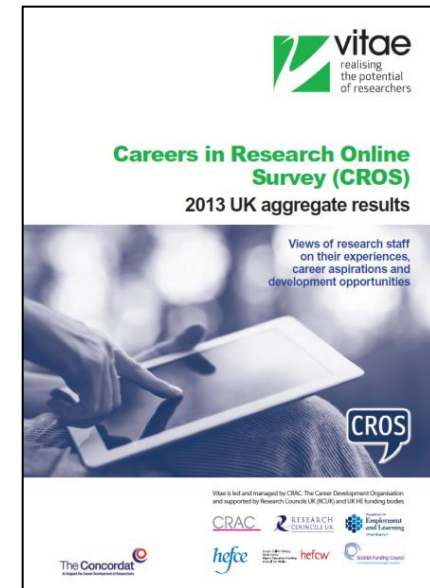
- ✔ Produce excellent research
- ✔ Recognised as research intensive
- ✔ Attract the best researchers
- ✔ Increase researchers' abilities
- ✔ Increase research funding
  
- ✔ Research Excellence Framework
- ✔ Research Council UK statement of expectations
- ✔ Athena Swan, encouraging women in science
- ✔ Legacy of Roberts funding, professional development
- ✔ Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
- ✔ Concordat and HR Excellence in Research Award
- ✔ Enhancement and benchmarking



# Careers in research online survey (CROS) (2009, 2011, 2013)



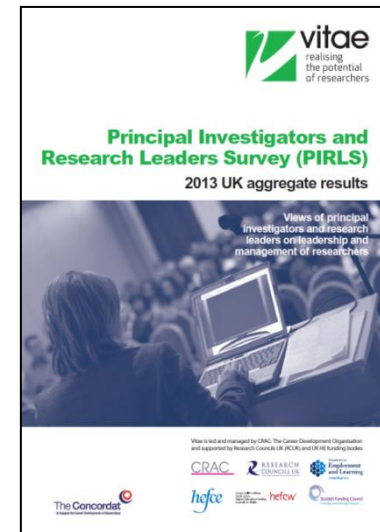
- ✔ Parallel online surveys run by HEIs targeting research staff
- ✔ Question set covers the Concordat principles
- ✔ Anonymous views of their experiences, career aspirations and development opportunities
- ✔ Longitudinal comparisons and confidential benchmarking groups
- ✔ 2013 UK aggregate data: 8216 responses from 68 institutions representing a 26% response rate
- ✔ Valuable tool in gathering views of research staff and observing progress with Concordat implementation





# Principal Investigator and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) (2011, 2013)

- Parallel online surveys run by HEIs targeting principal investigators and research leaders
- Anonymous views of research leadership and management of researchers
- Longitudinal comparisons and confidential benchmarking groups
- 2013 UK aggregate data: 4837 responses from 49 institutions representing a 28% response rate



# Concordat: Recognition and value

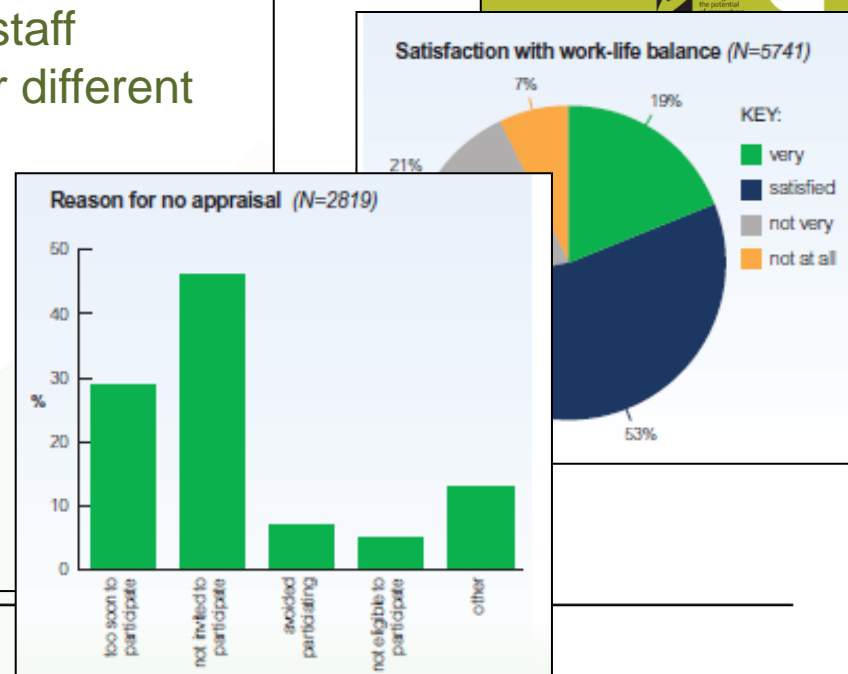
“Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation’s human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world class research”

## CROS 2013

60% have an appraisal; 44% useful  
40%-87% perceive fair treatment with other staff  
35%-77% perceive recognition and value for different activities  
70% satisfied with work-life balance

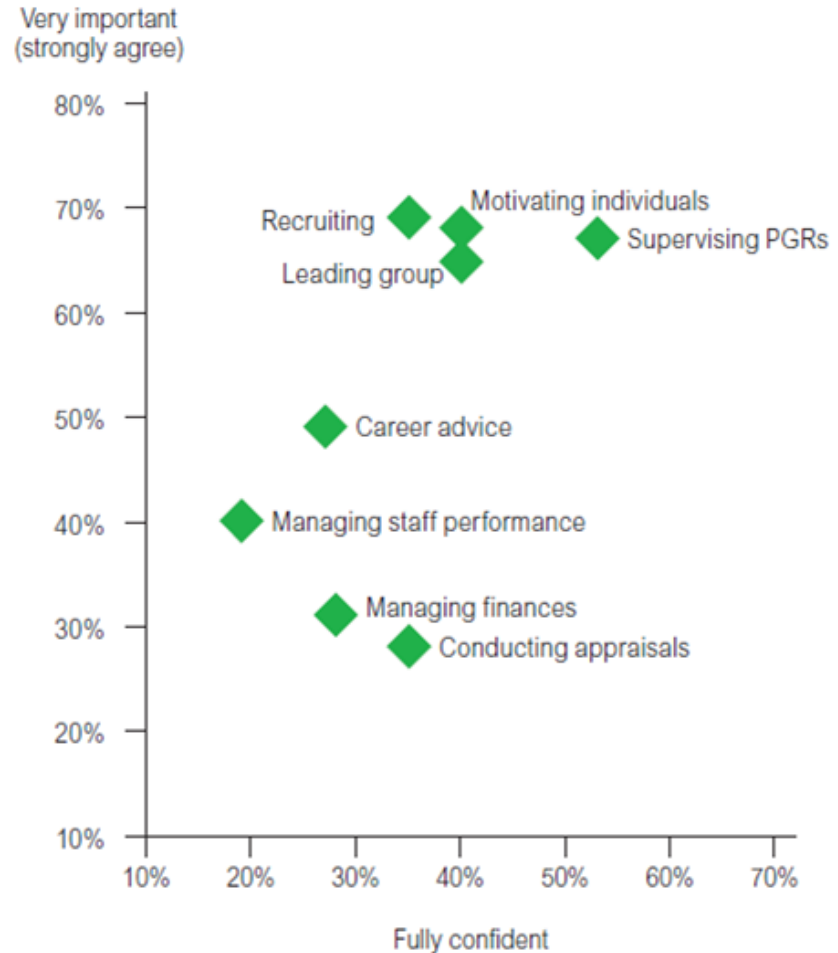
## PIRLS 2013

83% have an appraisal; 53% useful  
65% confident in performance management  
65% confident in conducting appraisals  
48% satisfied with work-life balance

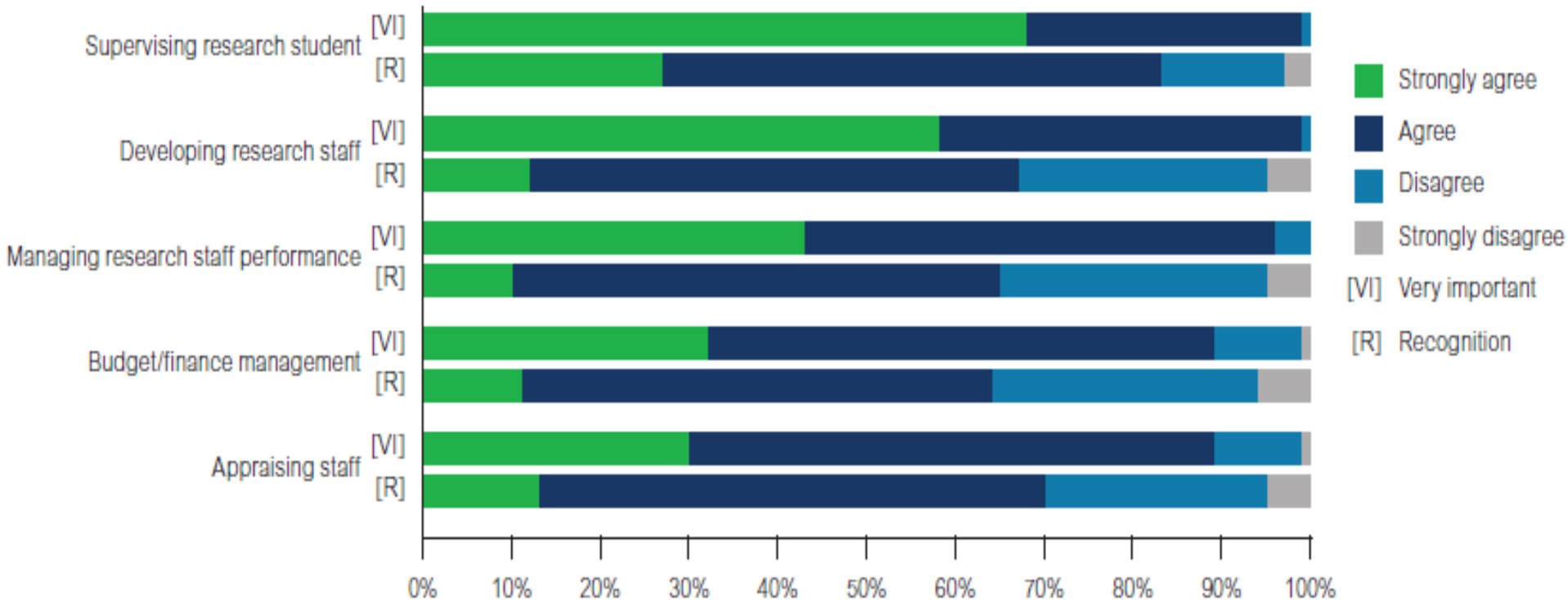


# PIRLS 2013: importance of confidence

- ‘People management’ roles perceived less important than ‘leadership’ activities (or core research), and less valued
- Lowest confidence in giving career advice, performance management, conducting appraisals, managing finance



# PIRLS 2013: Importance and recognition



# HR Strategies for Researchers: Review of implementation across Europe (2013)



- ✔ Timely to review activities: growing numbers with the Award, formal accreditation on the horizon
- ✔ Major review of all published documentation associated with the Award across Europe
- ✔ 61 UK and 48 non-UK institutions reviewed (seven research funders)
- ✔ Aimed to compare UK and non-UK implementation strategies and highlight themes, strengths and gaps, mapped to the Concordat principles
- ✔ Identified a framework based on what institutions reported they were monitoring to measure their success against objectives
- ✔ Snapshot: used a repeatable methodology



# Review of HR Award action plans: key findings

- Significant evidence of implementation across all the Concordat principles, both UK and non-UK
- Engagement with the C&C or Concordat had 'driven practice and transformed the nature of researcher HRM'
- High degree of consistency across Europe, with some notable differences
- UK institutions able to draw on UK-level infrastructure, eg surveys, benchmarking, Vitae Researcher Development Framework, etc



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



# Recruitment and selection; Recognition and value (principles 1 and 2)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

- ✔ Most commonly cited evidence:
  - ✔ reviewed pay and progression of researchers (100%)
  - ✔ reviewed recruitment processes (93%)
  - ✔ developed, reviewed or implemented appraisal procedures (89%)
  - ✔ increased number of positions openly advertised (70%)
- ✔ Other themes:
  - ✔ training staff on recruitment panels
  - ✔ monitor and report on recruitment
  - ✔ addressing fixed term contracts
  - ✔ monitoring staff satisfaction and engagement
- ✔ Stronger focus on researcher mobility in non-UK plans
- ✔ Policies cf on the ground action



# Support and career development (principles 3 and 4)

- ✔ Most commonly cited evidence:
  - ✔ offering career/professional dev programme (100%)
  - ✔ providing access to careers advice and guidance (98%)
  - ✔ induction (82%)
- ✔ Other themes:
  - ✔ mentoring programmes
  - ✔ supporting principal investigators/managers to increase their understanding of career development
  - ✔ monitoring take-up of career and professional development
  - ✔ specialist inductions
  - ✔ researcher development programmes (drawing on Vitae Researcher Development Framework)
  - ✔ careers advice and mentoring



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH





# Researchers' responsibilities (principle 5)



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



- ✔ Most commonly cited evidence:
  - ✔ facilitating research staff to take on wider role (71%)
  - ✔ research staff included in institutional committees and structures (62%)
- ✔ Other themes:
  - ✔ research staff associations
  - ✔ policy on researcher responsibilities
  - ✔ enabling researchers to gain experience/profile beyond the institution
- ✔ Individual responsibility of enabling role of the organisation

# Equality and diversity principle 6



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

- ✔ Most commonly cited evidence:
  - ✔ Monitoring equality and diversity (84%)
  - ✔ Equality and diversity policies (80%)
- ✔ Other themes:
  - ✔ External recognition
- ✔ Focus on wide range of protected characteristics cf focus on gender/disability

# Implementation and review principle 7



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

- ✔ Most commonly cited evidence:
  - ✔ Monitoring implementation (97%)
  - ✔ Publishing plans and progress reports (94%)
  - ✔ Collecting/using data on researchers' experiences (84%)
- ✔ Other themes:
  - ✔ Informal benchmarking, seeking recognition and input
- ✔ Legal compliance
- ✔ High level of surveying and consultation within national framework
  - ✔ CROS
  - ✔ PIRLS

# Recommendations



- ✔ Widen take up of the Award
- ✔ Explore use of the evidence-based framework to underpin evaluation
- ✔ Organisations should fully publish plans
- ✔ Review areas where less consistent evidence of action
  - ✔ employer and researcher responsibilities
  - ✔ specialist development and careers support for researchers
  - ✔ equality and diversity agenda
  - ✔ training for research staff to take on supervisory/management roles
- ✔ Explore extending UK surveys to enable international benchmarking