

Summary of the CROS & PIRLS Surveys for Research Staff, 2011

Background

In May 2011 SOAS ran two national surveys to gather the anonymous views and experiences of research leaders and research staff¹. The Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) was sent out to 50 research leaders at SOAS, with 3 responses received with questions relating to their perceived capabilities, the support available to them and their views about what is important for developing future research leaders. The Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) was sent to 17 research staff, with 4 responses received with questions relating to experiences, employment, career development and career aspirations.

Results

The completion rate for both surveys was low (6% PIRLS; 23.5% CROS) so the results cannot be considered to be representative. However, the School may wish to consider why there was such a low completion rate, and how to engage these groups with such initiatives. In addition, the following points which have been raised as issues may be used as the starting point for further discussion and possible inclusion in the action plan for the application for the HR Excellence in Research Badge² which SOAS plans to make in early 2012.

A. PIRLS

1. Range and quality of activities and support to develop research skills
2. Collaborations outside HE
3. Usefulness of the Staff Development and Review (SDR) meeting and process
4. Recognition of management and administration within SOAS
5. Scheduling of meetings and workload expectations

B. CROS

1. Contract details e.g. job description, probation details
2. Local induction
3. Engagement with institutional induction
4. Knowledge of the School's Research Strategy
5. Knowledge of the Concordat, Vitae and the HR Excellence in Research recognition
6. Integration into the School's research community
7. Career development planning and CPD
8. Engagement with the Staff Development & Review process

Next Steps

The points above will be included in the gap analysis required for the application for the HR Excellence in Research badge. An action plan will be built up as part of this process, looking at where SOAS needs to build on its current support for researchers, although SOAS already has many robust policies and procedures in place.

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¹ In this context 'researchers' are defined as those individuals whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who are employed for this purpose. It therefore excludes other members of staff such as lecturers.

² The European Commission's process to acknowledge UK HEIs alignments with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their recruitment.