

CROS 2015 results - narrative summary

1. What is CROS?

The Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) is a biennial survey carried out by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) and the results are published by Vitae, the UK organisation which champions professional and career development for researchers in higher education.

CROS has been running since 2002 and gathers anonymous data about working conditions, career aspirations and career development opportunities for research staff in UK higher education. It was originally developed using funding from HEFCE, SHEFC, and the DTI/OST (now BIS) and was revised in 2008 in light of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#).

CROS provides a valuable way to follow the progress of institutions and the sector. In particular, it:

- helps those concerned with researcher development to plan their interventions;
- provides institutions with evidence in relation to the European HR Excellence in Research award and their submissions for the research environment element of the Research Excellence Framework;
- provides institutions with the opportunity to compare their institutional results with the UK aggregate or standard benchmarking groups.

This document provides a summary of the results for the University of St Andrews based on a comparison of responses from our own institution against the aggregated responses from all participating institutions.

The full aggregated results can be viewed on the [Vitae website](#) (note that the University of St Andrews is an institutional member of Vitae and if you have not already registered for access to their website use your university email address to do so). The full survey results for St Andrews are available on the [University website](#).

2. Response rates and participation

Nationally 72 institutions took part in CROS 2015, with a total of 8964 respondents participating. This represents an overall response rate of 28% from the total population of possible respondents.

The 23% response rate at the University of St Andrews (92 respondents) was lower than the overall national response rate. However, this is an improvement on the 58 respondents in 2013 and represents an increased response rate of 7.3% points.

The University of St Andrews last participated in 2013 and the 2015 results therefore include benchmarking against the 2013 results as well as the national aggregated average responses.

3. Interpretation of results

The results presented here are based on a summary of the raw data, where positive responses on the rating scale (*e.g.* 'Agree Strongly' and 'Agree') have been added together to provide an overall 'positive response' figure, provided as a percentage of respondents. Other response categories have been

similarly summarised to provide a clearer picture of how the University of St Andrews results for 2015 compare with the 2013 results and with the aggregate results for all participating institutions. This echoes the approach adopted by Vitae in their publication of the results ([Careers in Research Online Survey \(CROS\) 2015 UK aggregate results](#)).

Of 101 relevant questions (those with the standard rating scale, plus those including a 'have done' option relating to training and working with others), more than half (55 questions or 54.54%) return an overall positive response rate within 5 percentage points of the aggregate positive response.

This degree of consistency, only slightly lower than 2013 (60.75% of relevant questions), suggests that the results are valid and that the areas where the responses do express greater differences from the aggregate results are significant.

4. Summary results

4.1 Highest scoring questions

Q. #	Question text	% +ve response
37	Are you granted annual leave when you request it? (Most of the time/always)	91.3
46	I would value the opportunity to network with other research staff in my discipline	90.2
20	(If recruited in the last 2 years) When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following? <i>20.3.a. Local induction to your current role</i>	90.0
19	(If recruited in the last 2 years) During the application process, which of the following were you provided with? <i>19.2.a. Details of the qualifications required of the post-holder</i> <i>19.3.a. Details of the specialist research skills required of the post-holder</i>	89.1 89.1
15	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff? <i>15.8.a. Research Excellence Framework (REF)</i>	88.0
30	30.1.a. Present work at a conference orally	88.0
53	Have you ever felt that you have been discriminated against in your post? 'No' responses	88.0
9	To what extent do you agree that your institution both recognises and values the contributions that you make to: <i>9.5.a. Publications?</i>	87.0
35	Do you have a positive working relationship with others in your research group?	87.0
47	I would value the opportunity to network with research staff in other disciplines.	87.0
51	I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly, regardless of personal characteristics such as age, ethnicity, disability, gender or gender identify, in relation to: <i>51.1.a. Access to training and development</i>	87.0

4.2 Lowest scoring questions

Q. #	Question text	% +ve response
15	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff? <i>15.6.a. National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)</i>	9.8
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities?	

	23.5.a. Ethical research conduct	10.9
27	27. a) Working with others (Have done it) 27.6.a. Undertake an internship/placement outside higher education research	10.9
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? (Have done it) 23.6.a. Interdisciplinary research	12.0
22	To what extent do you agree that: 22.5.a. You use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to support your continuing professional development activity?	13.0
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? ('Have done it') 23.7.a. Knowledge exchange	15.2
	23.2.a. Collaboration and team working	17.4
	23.8.a. Leadership and management	17.4
	23.9.a. Personal effectiveness	17.4
	23.10.a. Public engagement	17.4
	23.1.a. Career management	18.5

5. Internal benchmarking

The categories summarised below include the questions where the positive response rate for 2015 varies from the 2013 positive response by 5 percentage points or more.

5.1 Most improved questions

Q. #	Question text	2013	2015	Change (% points)
20	(If recruited in the last 2 years) When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following? 20.2.a. Departmental/faculty/unit induction programme 20.3.a. Local induction to your current role	23.4 58.7	71.4 90.0	48.0 31.3
39	I am aware who the research representative is in my school.	37.9	60.9	23.0
15	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff? 15.1.a. Athena Swan Gender Equality Charter Mark	49.1	69.6	20.5
14	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: 14.3.a. In helping you focus on your career aspirations and how these are met by your current role?	39.5	56.3	16.8
20	(If recruited in the last 2 years) When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following? 20.1.a. Institutional-wide induction programmes	42.6	56.0	13.4
47	I would value the opportunity to network with research staff in other disciplines.	74.1	87.0	12.9
27	27 a) Working with others (Have done it) 27.1.a. Collaborate with colleagues outside the UK	73.7	85.9	12.2
36	How would you describe your working hours? Respondents selecting the 'Reasonable/Normal' response	53.4	64.1	10.6
28	28. b) Research and financial management (Have done it) 28.1.a. Manage a budget	32.1	42.4	10.3

46	I would value the opportunity to network with other research staff in my discipline	80.4	90.2	9.8
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5.2 Least improved questions

Q. #	Question text	2013	2015	Change (% points)
27	27. a) Working with others (Have done it) 27.2.a. Collaborate in research with businesses or other non-academic research users 27.7.a. Work as part of a cross-disciplinary team	63.2 68.4	27.2 43.5	-36.0 -24.9
9	To what extent do you agree that your institution both recognises and values the contributions that you make to: 9.1.a. Grant/funding applications?	60.7	43.5	-17.2
10	To what extent do you agree that your institution treats you (as a member of research staff) equally with other types of staff in relation to: 10.6.a. Terms and conditions of employment (excluding any fixed-term nature of contract)?	64.9	47.8	-17.1
29	29. c) Engagement and impact (Have done it) 29.2.a. Knowledge exchange	35.7	19.6	-16.1
52	Overall, I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly irrespective of their: 52.4.a. Gender	89.7	75.0	-14.7
15	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff? 15.3.a. Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers	47.3	32.6	-14.7
10	To what extent do you agree that your institution treats you (as a member of research staff) equally with other types of staff in relation to: 10.7.a. Visibility on websites and staff directories?	91.2	77.2	-14.0
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? (Have done it) 23.10.a. Public engagement	29.8	17.4	-12.4
	To what extent do you agree that: 22.4.a. You maintain a formal record of your continuing professional development activities?	57.9	45.7	-12.2

6. External benchmarking

The categories summarised below include the questions where the positive response rate for St Andrews varies from the aggregate national positive response by 5 percentage points or more.

6.1 Best performing against aggregated national average

Q. #	Question text	Institutional positive response % 2013	Institutional positive response % 2015	Change (% points)	National aggregated average +ve response 2015	Institutional/national difference 2015 (% points)
20	(If recruited in the last 2 years) When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following?					
	20.2.a. Departmental/faculty/unit induction programme	23.4	71.4	48.0	42.8	28.6
	20.3.a. Local induction to your current role	58.7	90.0	31.3	62.7	27.3
	20.1.a. Institutional-wide induction programmes	42.6	56.0	13.4	33.7	22.3
27	Working with others					
	27.1.a. Collaborate with colleagues outside the UK	73.7	85.9	12.2	66.8	19.1
9	To what extent do you agree that your institution both recognises and values the contributions that you make to:					
	9.5.a. Publications?	83.9	87.0	3.1	73.5	13.5
	9.9.a. Teaching and lecturing?	39.3	47.8	8.5	34.8	13.0
50	Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.					
	50.2.a. I am satisfied with my work-life balance	75.7	80.4	4.7	69.3	11.1
29	Engagement and impact (Have done it)					
	29.4.a. Teach or lecture	58.2	62.0	3.8	51.5	10.5
15	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff?					
	15.7.a. RCUK 'Pathways to Impact'	60.7	57.6	-3.1	48.8	8.8
30	d) Communication and dissemination (have done it)					
	30.1.a. Present work at a conference orally	94.6	88.0	-6.6	80.7	7.3

6.2 Worst performing against aggregated national average

Q. #	Question text	Institutional positive response % 2013	Institutional positive response % 2015	Change (% points)	National aggregated average +ve response 2015	Institutional/national difference 2015 (% points)
14	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme:					
	14.7.a. In reviewing your personal progress?	48.8	50.0	1.2	69.1	-19.1
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities?					
	23.5.a. Ethical research conduct	15.8	10.9	-4.9	29.8	-18.9
27	27. a) Working with others					
	27.2.a. Collaborate in research with businesses or other non-academic research users	63.2	27.2	-36.0	43.8	-16.6
14	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme:					
	14.4.a. In identifying your strengths and achievements?	41.9	47.9	6.0	63.3	-15.4

12	Over the past two years (or since taking up your current position if that is more recent) have you participated in staff appraisal/review?					
	'Yes' responses	50.9	52.2	1.3	67	-14.8
14	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme:					
	14.5.a. In leading to training or other continuing professional development opportunities?	34.9	37.5	2.6	52.1	-14.6
15	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff?					
	15.1.a. Athena Swan Gender Equality Charter Mark	49.1	69.6	20.5	81.8	-12.2
29	29. c) Engagement and impact					
	29.2.a. Knowledge exchange	35.7	19.6	-16.1	31.6	-12.0
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities?					
	23.4.a. Equality and diversity	31.6	26.1	-5.5	37.6	-11.6
23	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities?					
	23.12.a. Research skills and techniques	29.8	29.3	-0.5	40.7	-11.4

7. Equality and diversity

7.1 Institution-specific questions

A number of questions in this section were specific to St Andrews and no aggregate data is therefore available. Some of the noteworthy responses among these questions were:

Q52. Overall, I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly irrespective of their:

Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Gender Identity, Nationality, Pregnancy & maternity, Religion/Belief, Sexual Orientation.

All respondents thought that these 9 protected characteristics were treated fairly, all scoring above 66% positive response. However, the positive results for Gender dropped from 89.7% in 2013 to 75.0% in 2015.

Q50. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

50.1.a. I believe my institution is committed to equality and diversity

83.7% of respondents believed the University is committed to equality and diversity

50.2.a. I am satisfied with my work-life balance

80.4% are satisfied with work-life balance.

Interestingly the positive response rate to the same question in the University Staff Survey conducted in April 2015 was 76.3%, indicating that on average, research staff are more satisfied with work-life balance than other staff groups.

Q51. I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly, regardless of personal characteristics such as age, ethnicity, disability, gender or gender identify, in relation to:

This question covered: access to training and development, career progression/promotion, day to day treatment at work, participation in decision making, recruitment & selection and reward.

Training and development scored the highest in this category with 87.0% and reward being the lowest at 55.4%. Recruitment & selection was the worst performing question compared to 2013 scoring 72.4% in 2013 and 66.3% in 2015. While close to the aggregated national average of 68.1% this is still a cause for concern and possible action.

Q10. To what extent do you agree that your institution treats you (as a member of research staff) equally with other types of staff in relation to:

10.5.a. Requests for flexible working?

Positive responses for this question have remained constant with 71.9% noted in 2013 and 71.7% in 2015.

Q15. How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff?

15.1.a. Athena Swan Gender Equality Charter Mark

We have seen a 20.5% point increase in respondents' knowledge of Athena Swan, from 49.1% positively response rate in 2013 to 69.6% in 2015. This is still well below the aggregated national average of 81.8%, indicating work still to do.

7.2 Standard questions

Some equality and diversity-related questions were included in the standard question set. The following are notable responses where aggregate data is available:

23. In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities?

23.4.a. Equality and diversity

The 31.6% positive response rate in 2013 has fallen to 26.1 in 2015, a -5.5% change, also comparing unfavourably to the 37.6% of respondents nationally who have done this type of training. We have seen an increase in those respondents who would like to undertake this type of training at St Andrews from 12.3% in 2013 to 23.9% in 2015 - higher than the national aggregated average. This indicates an appetite for more training in this subject matter. With the introduction of the new on-line diversity training programme, we may find a positive increase in these results for CROS 2017 with a potential new cohort of Research Staff accessing the online material. There is also an opportunity to offer this material to all current research staff.

33. Do you have current caring responsibilities e.g. for children or adults?

There has been no significant change in the % results to this question with 31% in 2013 and 31.5% in 2015. However, we have seen a change in the negative impact aspect to this question where respondents felt that **'these caring responsibilities have a negative impact on their [your] career?'** The response increased from 38.9% in 2013 to 62.1% in 2015. It would be interesting to drill down further into these responses to establish the extent of the negative impact.

Other equality and diversity notable results

- 20.7% are aware of the HWL programme
- 42.4% are aware of the Race Equality Charter

8. What next?

The institutional HR Excellence in Research Award working group will be considering the results of CROS and identifying a range of actions to address the areas highlighted. These will be added to the institutional [HR Excellence in Research action plan](#), available on the University website. This will be subject to external review in May 2016. Retention of the Award is dependent on implementation of actions included in this plan.

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