

CROS 2017

University of St Andrews

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](#) and the full survey results for St Andrews are available on the University website.

2. Response rates and participation

Nationally 67 HE institutions participated in CROS 2017, with a total of 7657 respondents participating. This represents an overall response rate of 24% from the total population of possible respondents.

The response rate at the University of St Andrews was consistent with the overall national response rate with 78 respondents, representing 23% of potential respondents. This is a decrease from the 92 respondents in 2015, but an increase from 58 respondents in 2013.

The University of St Andrews last participated in 2015 and the 2017 results therefore include benchmarking against the 2015 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. Other response categories have been similarly summarised to provide a clearer picture of how the University of St Andrews results for 2017 compare with the 2015 results and with the aggregate results for all participating institutions. This echoes the approach adopted by Vitae in their publication of the results ([Vitae Five Steps Forward](#)).

Of 104 relevant questions (those with the standard rating scale, plus those including a 'have done' option relating to training and working with others) 37 (or 35.5%) return an overall positive response rate within 5 percentage points (above or below) of the aggregate positive response.

This degree of consistency is lower than 2015 (54.5%) demonstrating that there are more areas in which there are greater differences between St Andrews and the aggregate results across other UK institutions than in previous years.

The highlights reported below indicate each of the questions where the positive response rate for St Andrews varies from the aggregate positive response by 5 percentage points or more.

Highest scoring

Q. #	Question text	Institutional positive response % 2017	National aggregated average +ve response 2017	Institutional/national difference 2017 (% points)
11.1.1a	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: Access to training and development opportunities?	97.4	83.2	14.2
23.2.a	To what extent do you agree that: You take ownership of your career development?	95.4	88	7.4
16.1.a	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff? Athena Swan Gender Equality Charter Mark	94.8	89.7	5.1
38	Are you granted annual leave when you request it?	94.6	-	n/a
48	I would value the opportunity to network with other research staff in my discipline	93.4	-	n/a
36	Do you have a positive working relationship with others in your research group?	92.3	-	n/a
16.10.a	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff? Research Excellence Framework (REF)	92.3	91.6	0.7
53.a	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: Access to training and development	92.3	82.8	9.5
55	Have you ever felt that you have been discriminated against in your post? (Answering No)	92.3	88.1	4.2
20.1.a	During the application process, which of the following were you provided with? (Those answering Yes of those recruited in last 2 years): A written description summary of what the job entailed (job description)	91.8	98	-6.2

Lowest scoring

Q. #	Question text	Institutional positive response % 2017	National aggregated average +ve response 2017	Institutional/national difference 2017 (% points)
24.8.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Leadership and management	20.5	21.6	-1.1
30.b	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Knowledge exchange	19.5	35.9	-16.4
23.5.a	To what extent do you agree that: You use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework to support your continuing professional development activity?	19.2	11.8	7.4
30.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Engage with policymakers and end users	18.4	33.4	-15.0
24.10.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Public engagement	17.9	25.0	-7.1
24.9.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Personal effectiveness	16.7	20.0	-3.3
24.15.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities: Being mentored	16.7	23.5	-6.8
24.7.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Knowledge exchange	15.8	17.5	-1.7
24.6.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Interdisciplinary research	10.3	20.5	-10.2
28.f	Working with others (answering Have Undertaken): Undertake an internship/placement outside higher education research	10.3	10.8	-0.5

Most improved

Q. #	Question text	2015	2017	Change 15-17 (% points)
46	I am aware of the University's Equality Policy	42.4	90.7	48.3
45	I am aware of the University's Health Working Lives programme	20.7	58.4	37.7
15.7.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: In reviewing your personal progress?	50.0	78.8	28.8
24.4.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? (Answering Undertaken) Equality and diversity	26.1	51.9	25.8
16.1.a	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives: Athena Swan Gender Equality Charter Mark	69.6	94.8	25.2
15.2.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: For you to highlight issues?	58.3	81.4	23.1
10.1.a	To what extent do you agree that your institution both recognises and values the contributions that you make to: Grant/funding applications?	43.5	61.1	17.6
23.1.a	To what extent do you agree that: You are encouraged to engage in personal and career development opportunities?	68.5	85.9	17.4
16.9.a	How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff: RCUK 'Pathways Impact'	57.6	74.4	16.8
15.5.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: In leading to training or other continuing professional development opportunities?	37.5	53.5	16.0

Least improved

Q. #	Question text	2015	2017	Change 15-17 (% points)
21.2.a	When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following? Useful/Very useful (of those recruited in last 2 years): Departmental/faculty/unit induction programme	71.4	43.8	-27.6
21.3.a.	When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following? Useful/Very useful (of those recruited in last 2 years): Local induction to your current role	90.0	62.5	-27.5
29.a	Research and financial management (answering Have Undertaken): Manage a budget	42.4	24.4	-18.0
54.1.a	Overall, I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly irrespective of their: Adoption and parental leave	82.6	66.7	-15.9
41	I am aware who the research representative is in my school.	60.9	47.4	-13.5
28.a.	Working with others (answering Have Undertaken): Collaborate with colleagues outside the UK	85.9	73.1	-12.8
28.d.	Working with others (answering Have Undertaken): Mentor and support other researchers	44.6	33.3	-11.3
34.a	If you answered yes (<i>to having caring responsibilities</i>), do you feel these caring responsibilities have a negative impact on your career? (answering No)	62.1	53.8	-8.3
30.d.	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Engagement and impact (answering Have Undertaken): Teach or lecture	62.0	54.5	-7.5
31.a	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? Communication and dissemination (answering Have Undertaken): Present work at a conference orally	88.0	80.8	-7.2
54.2.a	Overall, I think that staff at my institution are treated fairly irrespective of their: Age	82.6	75.4	-7.2

Top Ten - Best performing against national aggregated average

Q. #	Question text	National aggregated average +ve response 2017	Institutional positive response % 2017	Institutional/national difference 2017 (% points)
52.2.a.	I am satisfied with my work-life balance	33.1	76.9	43.8
12.2.a.	To what extent do you agree that: You are integrated into your institution's research community?	28	67	39
15.3.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: In helping you focus on your career aspirations and how these are met by your current role?	48.9	69.8	20.9
21.1.a.	When you started with your current employer how useful did you find the following? Useful/Very useful (of those recruited in last 2 years) : Institutional-wide induction programmes	37.9	58.4	20.5
15.2.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: For you to highlight issues?	61.7	81.4	19.7
11.7.a	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: Visibility on websites and staff directories?	73.1	89.8	16.7
52.3.a.	My institution promotes better mental health and well-being at work	50.5	66.7	16.2
10.5.a	To what extent do you agree that your institution both recognises and values the contributions that you make to: Publications	75.4	91	15.6
15.5.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: In leading to training or other continuing professional development opportunities?	38.2	53.5	15.3
15.7.a	How would you rate the usefulness of your institution's staff review/appraisal scheme: In reviewing your personal progress?	63.8	78.8	15.0

Top Ten - Worst performing against national aggregated average

Q. #	Question text	National aggregated average +ve response 2017	Institutional positive response % 2017	Institutional/national difference 2017 (% points)
24-30	In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities? (Answering Undertaken):			
28.b.	Collaborate in research with businesses or other non-academic research users	47.7	26.9	-20.8
29.a	Manage a budget	42.1	24.4	-17.7
30.b	Knowledge exchange	35.9	19.5	-16.4
30.a	Engage with policymakers and end users	33.4	18.4	-15.0
29.b	Plan and manage a project	54.9	41	-13.9
24.5.a.	Ethical research conduct	34.8	21.8	-13.0
24.13.a.	Supervision of doctoral/masters students	36	23.1	-12.9
28.g.	Work as part of a cross-disciplinary team	52.6	39.7	-12.9
29.c	Write a grant / funding proposal	57.4	44.9	-12.5
20.4.a.	During the application process, which of the following were you provided with? Yes (of those recruited in last 2 years): Details of the transferable / personal / management skills required of the post-holder	87.8	75.5	-12.3

Equality and diversity

A number of questions in this section were specific to St Andrews and no aggregate data is therefore available. Other noteworthy responses to Equality & Diversity questions for which aggregate data is available include:

Q. 54. 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, Caring Responsibilities, Adoption and parental leave

St Andrews scored higher positive results than the national aggregate for all of these characteristics.

Positive responses regarding these characteristics were all over 60%, with Pregnancy and maternity scoring lowest at 63.7% and Nationality scoring highest at 85.5%. There was a fall in positive results for Age of 7.2%, and Adoption and parental leave of 15.9%.

Q. 52. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

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

- 91.1% of respondents believed the University is committed to equality and diversity (up 7.4% from 83.7 in 2015) compared with the national aggregate of 86.5%

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

- 76.9% are satisfied with work-life balance (down 3.5% from 80.4%), compared with the national aggregate of 43.8%

Q. 53. 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 the following; Access to Training and Development, Career Progression/promotion, Day to Day treatment at work, Participation in decision making, Recruitment and selection and Reward.

Training and development scored the highest in this category with 92.3% (compared to the national aggregate of 82.8%) and whilst Reward scored lowest at 48.9% (compared to the national aggregate of 51.9%).

Q 11. 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:

11.5.a. Requests for flexible working?

Positive responses for this question have remained consistent with previous years at 71.8% in 2017 compared to 71.7 in 2015. This demonstrates access to flexible working by Research Staff.

Q.16. How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the following UK initiatives relevant to research staff?

16.1.a. Athena Swan Gender Equality Charter Mark

We have seen an increase in respondents' knowledge of the Athena Swan Equality Charter Mark with 61.5% having some understanding and a further 33.3 knowing of it but not knowing the detail (compared to 39.6% who were aware and 31.9% who knew of it but not the detail in 2015) demonstrating a much greater awareness of the Charter Mark.

Q. 24. In which areas have you undertaken, or would you like to undertake, training and other continuing professional development activities?

24.4.a. Equality and diversity

51.9% in 2017 stated that they have undertaken this type of training, a significant increase from 26.1% in 2015. We have seen an insignificant decrease in those respondents who would like to undertake this type of training at St Andrews from 23.9% in 2015 to 23.4% which may be due to the introduction of an online diversity training programme in the intervening period between surveys, offering greater accessibility to this type of training to all staff, including Research Staff, in addition to signposting this training to new members of staff during induction.

Q. 34. Do you have current caring responsibilities e.g. for children or adults?

Slightly fewer respondents reported having caring responsibilities in 2017 (26%) compared to 2015 (31.5%). There has been a decrease in respondents reporting that **'these caring responsibilities have a negative impact on their [your] career?'** The number of those answering 'Yes' has decreased to 46.2% in 2017 from 62.1% in 2015 (the latter having been a significant increase on the 2013 result of 38.9%).

Other equality and diversity notable results

- 58.4% are aware of the HWL programme, an increase of 37.7% since 2015.
- 90.7% are aware of the University's Equality Policy, an increase of 48.3% in the same period.

4. What next

The institutional HR Excellence in Research Award working group will review the results of CROS in the context of the institutional 2016-2018 [HR Excellence in Research action plan](#), available on the University website. This CROS Narrative Summary document and the CROS Statistical Overview will be presented to the Research & Teaching Staff Forum, in addition to being used by the Wellbeing & Engagement Group to inform their activities, and forming part of future Athena Swan submissions.

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