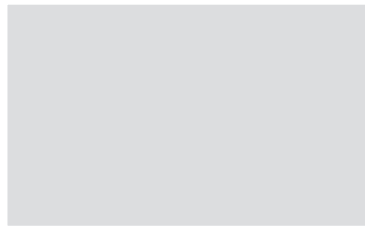
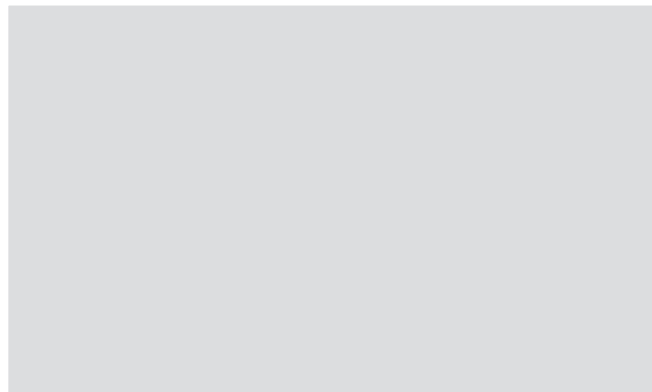


HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

2016

UCC Research Survey Report

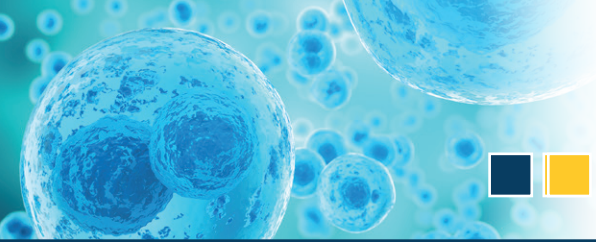


UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Mary O'Regan - Research Advisor
Human Resources University College Cork





2016

■ ■ UCC Researcher Survey Report ■ ■

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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, University College Cork ('UCC') gained the HR Excellence in Research Award in recognition of the University's on-going commitment to adopting the principles of The European Charter for Researchers and a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In 2015 UCC retained that award. The aim of the Charter and Code for Researchers is to ensure that the nature of the relationship between researchers and employers is conducive to successful research performance and to the career development of researchers.

As we strive to continuously improve the working conditions for our research staff the European Commission has also recognised the importance of training and development for researchers and has included **Article 32** in all Horizon 2020 grant agreements. **Article 32** relates to the working conditions, recruitment processes and career development of research staff paid from EC funded H2020 awards and is tied in to the Charter and Code for researchers and the HR Excellence in Research Award which UCC has attained.

This is an evolving process that enables HR to place the principles of the European Charter and Code at the core of its policies for research staff. It's a voluntary process that UCC has committed to wholeheartedly. It is not a requirement for participation in EU funded programmes yet - but when we consider that every UCC Principal Investigator signs up to the principles of the Charter and Code when a Horizon 2020 grant is awarded then we can understand how important this award is to UCC and how seriously the European Commission considers it.

These two surveys form part of UCC's strategy within the HR Excellence in Research. The results of the Researcher Surveys are outlined in this report.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The University College Cork Researcher Survey 2016 and "Where are you now? survey" are a measure of UCC's commitment to our research staff and to the European Commission HR Excellence in Research Award. The provision of favourable terms and conditions of employment for researchers, open transparent and merit based recruitment, training and development opportunities and upholding the principles of responsible conduct of research are all of great significance to the university.

Survey Content

The surveys engaged with research staff both within and external to the University. They requested information on researchers views and attitudes across a number of topics relating to the research environment here in UCC namely: research culture; ethics; their role; their research group; facilities for research; engagement; training and development; recruitment and gender equality in research.

Identifying Areas for Action

One of the main objectives of these surveys is to provide data to inform the HR Excellence in Research process in UCC where change or further development is required.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The internal survey was launched on December 5th 2016 and closed on 31st December 2016. During that period 957 research staff were employed in UCC. Of those, 210 responded to the survey.

The “Where are you now?” external survey was launched in October 2016 and closed on March 14th 2017. 130 people responded to the survey.

At analysis stage the data for both surveys was reviewed to ensure that it was representative of the known profile of the employees surveyed. As a result 16 responses were removed from the internal survey as the respondents were not in the catchment profile.

Both surveys were multimodal and were accessible through PC/Laptop and Mobile/Tablet.

The internal survey was conducted on-line and consisted of 46 questions which included demographic, open ended, rating scale, and dichotomous questions. The survey gathered information on the four key areas identified by the European Commission within the Charter and Code for Researchers as being of direct relevance to research staff:

- i. Ethical and Professional Aspects
- ii. Recruitment
- iii. Terms and Conditions of employment
- iv. Training and Development of research staff.

To embrace and connect with actions from UCC’s Athena Swan Charter the survey also sought information on gender equality within the research community in UCC.

- v. Gender

The external survey was conducted on-line and consisted of 32 questions which included demographic, open ended, rating scale, and dichotomous questions. The survey gathered information on where our researchers are now and how their careers have evolved since they left UCC. This survey will inform UCC’s HRS4R action plan to improve the working experiences of our current research staff. To embrace and connect with actions from UCC’s Athena Swan Charter the survey also sought information on gender equality within the research community when these participants worked in UCC.

Response Rate

There were 194 responses to the internal survey which equates to a response rate of 20%. This represents a strong survey sample.

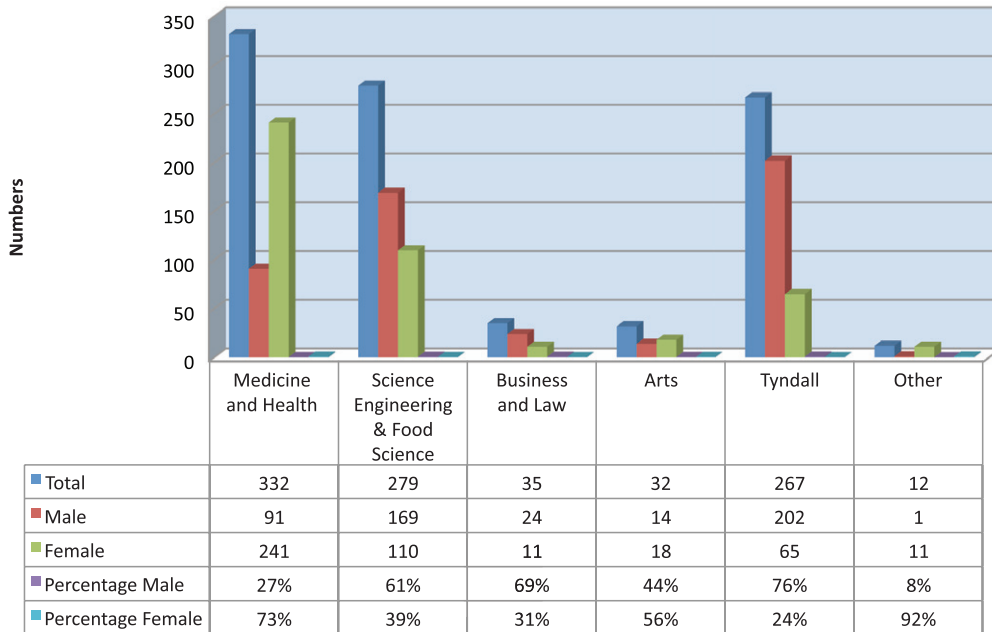
There were 130 responses to the external survey. This also represents a strong sample.

For the purposes of this survey, a researcher/research support professional is someone who has been recruited by UCC and is paid from research funding.

DEMOGRAPHIC DECEMBER 2016

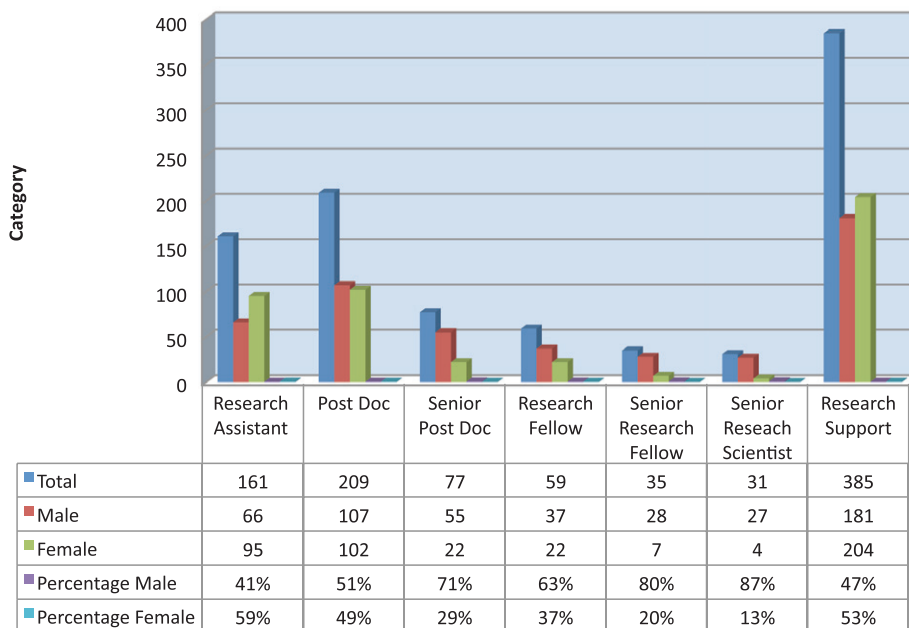
Research staff numbers total 957 - All Researcher Numbers All Colleges and Units

Colleges and Research Centres defined by Gender



All Researchers by Category - All Colleges and Units

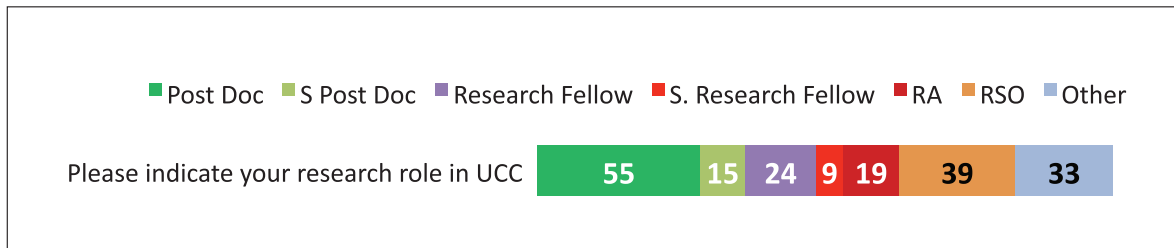
Category defined by gender all Research Staff 957



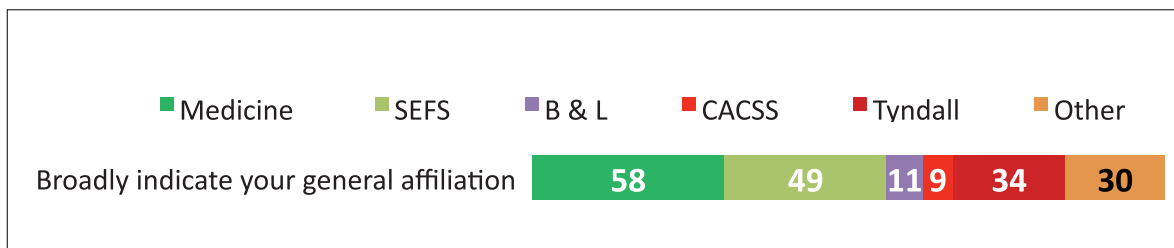
- Senior research roles in UCC are predominantly held by males.

INTERNAL SURVEY

Demographic of those who participated (194)

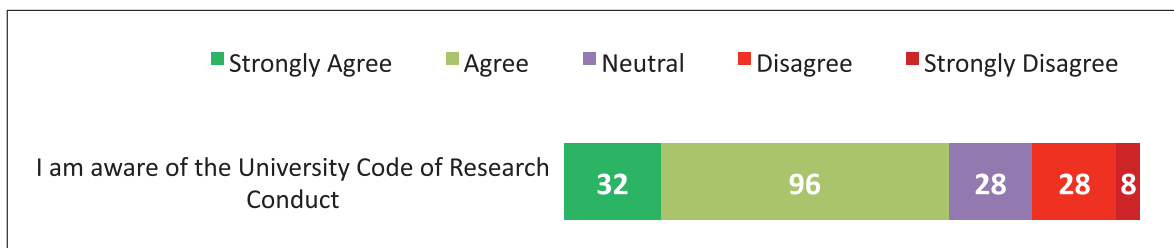


- More post docs contributed to the survey than any other research staff category

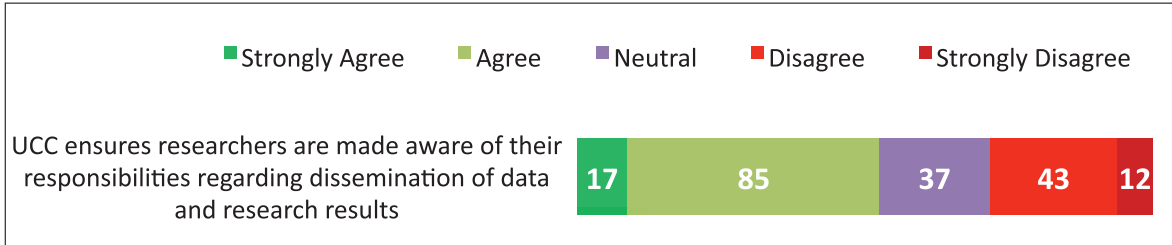


- More researchers from Medicine and Health contributed to the survey than from any other unit

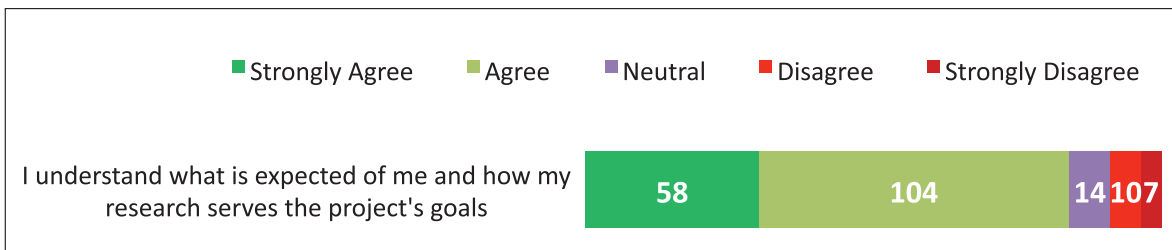
ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS



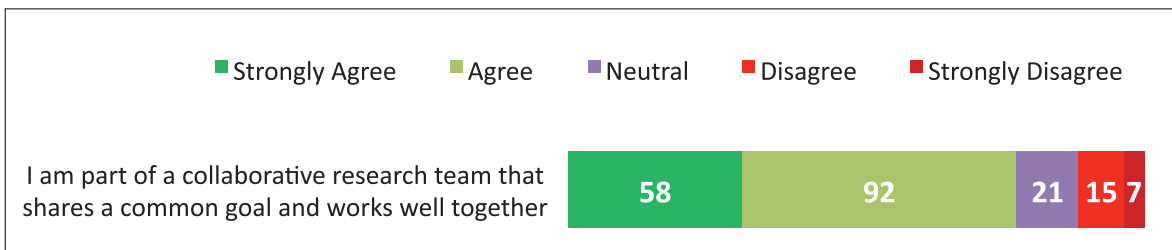
- Most researchers are aware of the University Code of Research Conduct



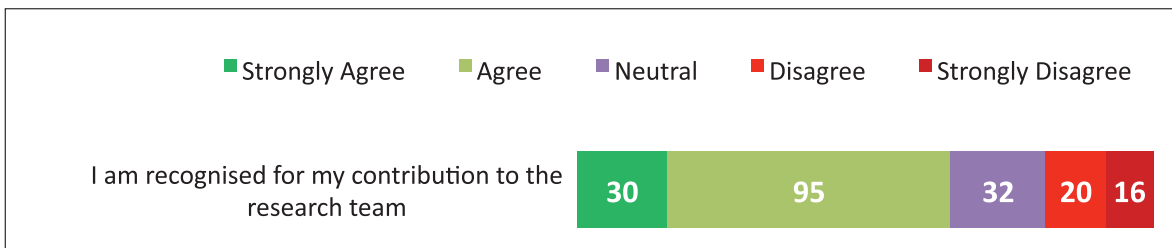
- **Most researchers agree with the proposition**



- **Most researchers understand what is expected of them**



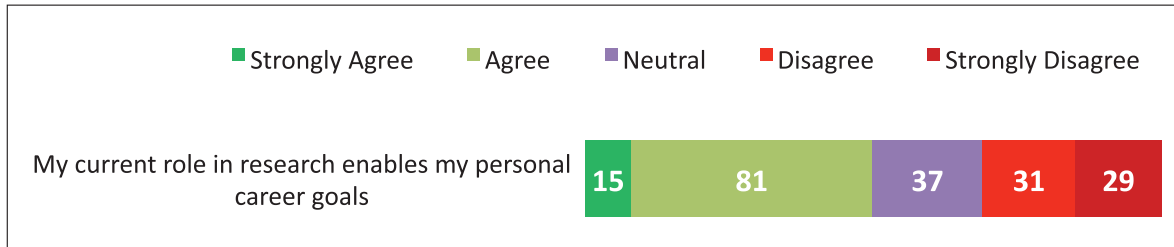
- **Most researchers feel part of a team that works well together**



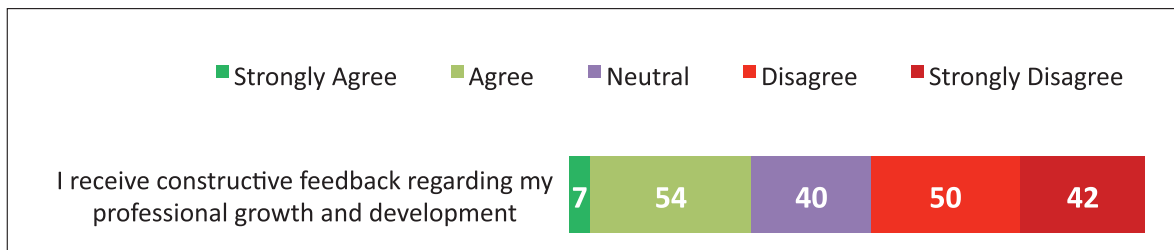
- **Most researchers feel recognised for their contribution to the team**

2016

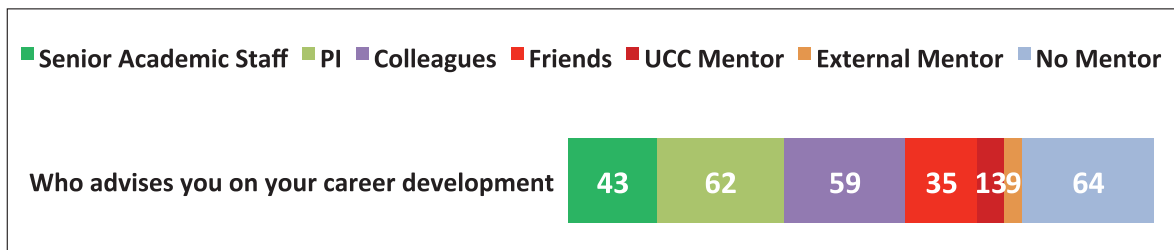
UCC Researcher Survey Report



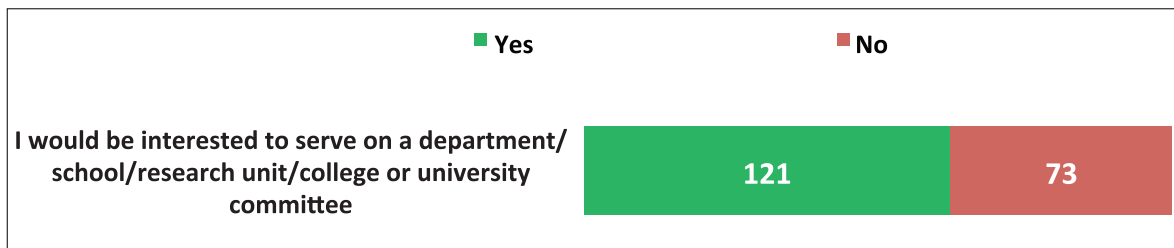
- Most researchers believe that their role enables their personal career goals



- Most researchers do not receive constructive feedback on professional growth and development



- Many researchers do not have anyone to advise on their career



- 62% of researchers are interested to serve on a committee

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS: INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

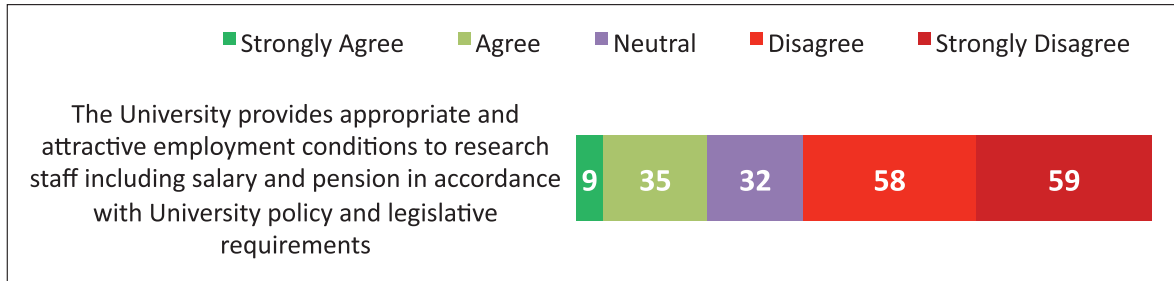
“UCC is absolutely stone-age in its approach to research and the fact we are even having a discussion about research as somehow divorced from teaching & learning is pathetic for any university which wishes to be competitive in the 21st century. Research active staff engaged in teaching & learning is a prerequisite to a university”

“The work done within my own group is well organised and tremendously engaging...”

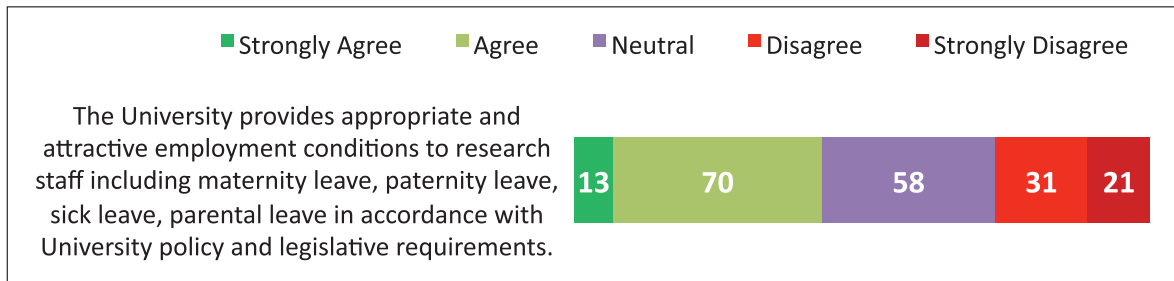
“I currently find myself in a good post, which I would be very reluctant to leave as I have senior academic staff who are happy to see me progress and support me in that progression...”



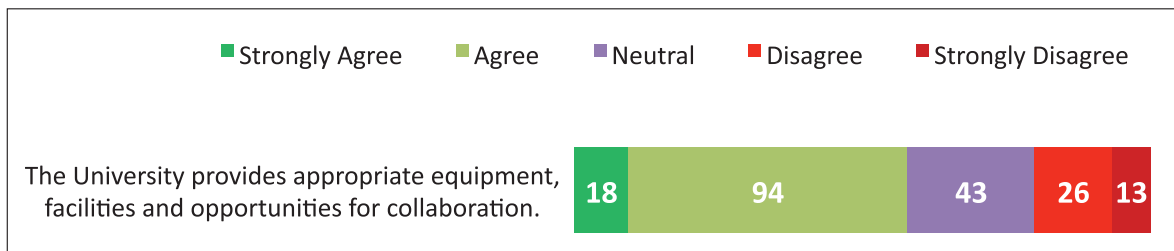
TERMS AND CONDITIONS



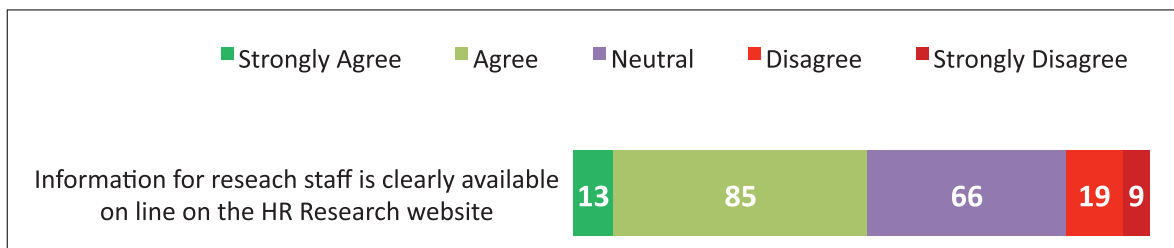
- **Most researchers do not agree that the University offers attractive salary and pension**



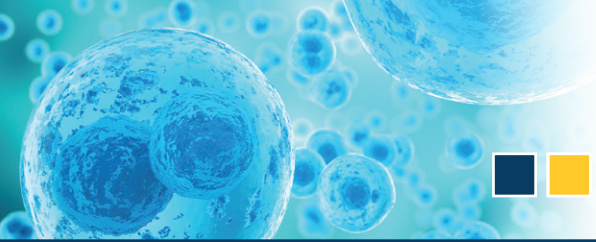
- **Most researchers agree that the University offers attractive maternity and other benefits**



- **Most researchers agree that the University offers appropriate facilities**

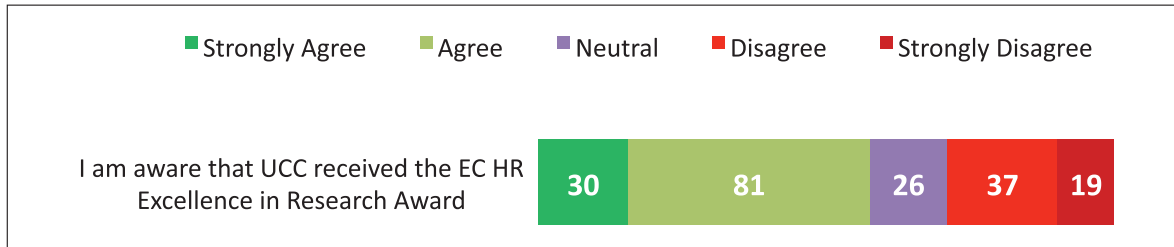


- **Most researchers agree that the information on the HR Research Website is clear**

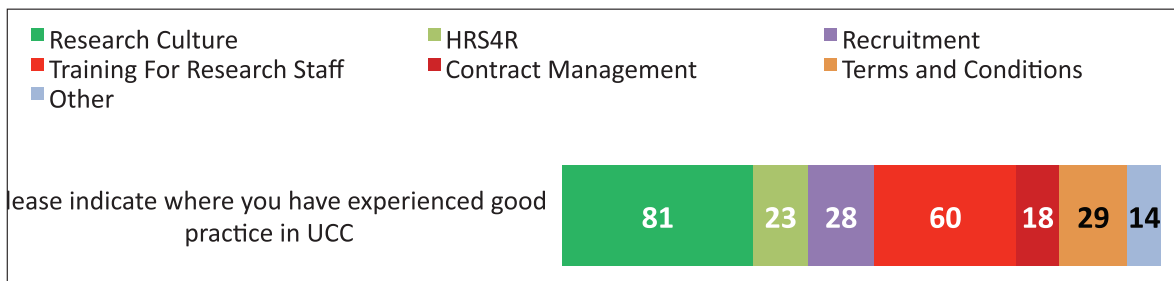


2016

UCC Researcher Survey Report



- Most researchers are aware that UCC received the HR Excellence in Research Award



- Researchers indicate good practice in Research Culture and Training for Research Staff

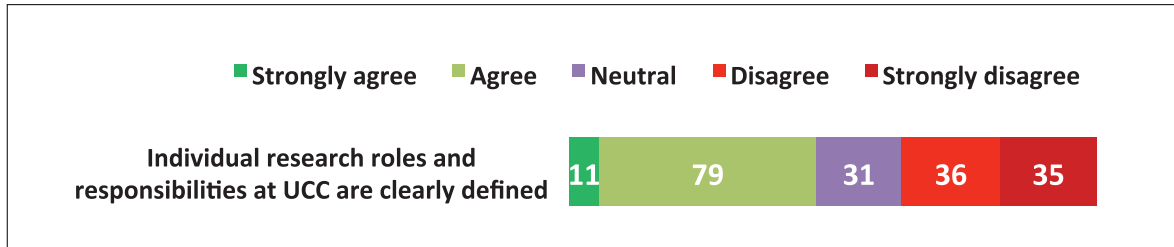
TERMS AND CONDITIONS: INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

"The most important issue facing researchers is that it is extremely difficult to progress from post-doc to senior post-doc (and beyond) because funding bodies do not allow for this - they only want to employ those up to post-doc level because this costs them less."

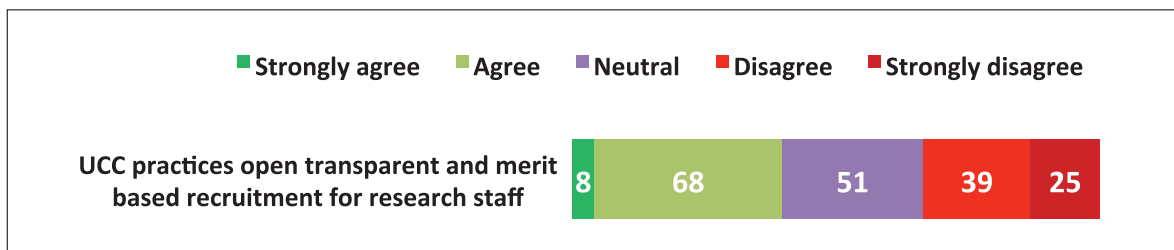
"Researchers deserve fairer working conditions with better salaries and more permanent contracts and to be respected by full-time academic staff in terms of their workload and research commitments."

"Job security would be a priority to me, also recognizing and financially rewarding employees for their experience should be common practice."

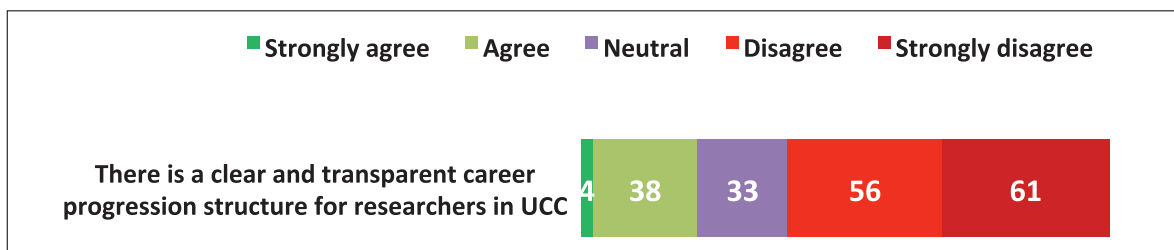
RECRUITMENT



- Most researchers agree that individual roles are clearly defined



- Most researchers agree or are neutral that that UCC practices OTM-R



- Most researchers disagree that there is a transparent career progression structure



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

RECRUITMENT: INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

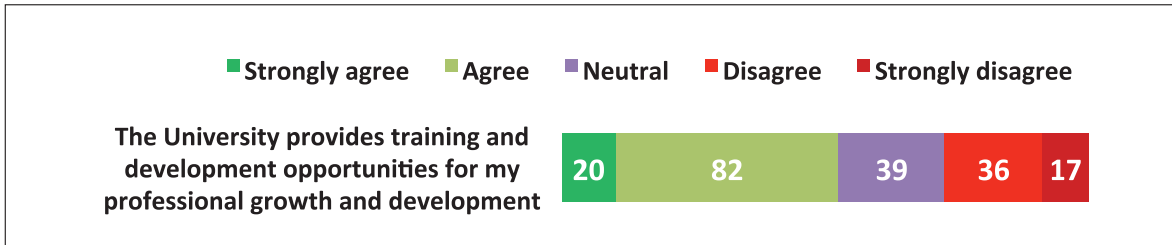
“The idea of a research career progression framework looks good on paper but it’s not actually as straight forward in reality. For example, progressing from postdoc to senior postdoc is largely dependent on an appropriate position becoming available, something that’s far from certain in the current funding environment. It makes career and life-planning in general quite difficult and stressful.”

“The current research career framework is unfair. Researchers feel that UCC do not view research as a sustainable career and instead a pipeline through which there is high turnover. There is a sense that this structure is to minimise ‘liability’ of researchers to UCC and avoid UCC’s legal obligations under the Fixed Term Workers Act..”

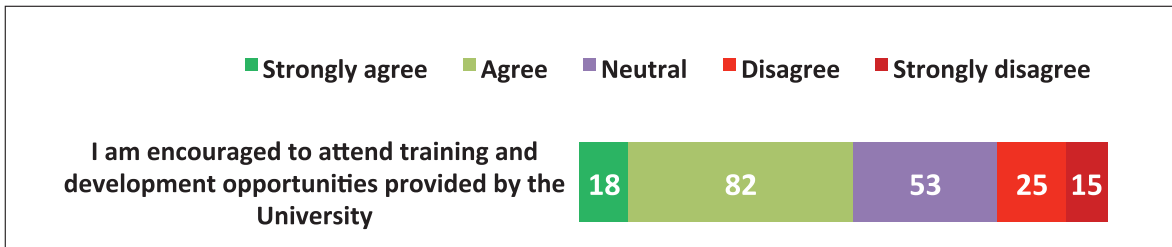
“I have an issue with forced progression from post-doc to senior post-doc and from senior post-doc to research fellow. I don’t think there is any other profession that has this ‘up or out’ policy. It puts an inordinate amount of pressure on young researchers to find increasing amounts of funding (if they are like me and have to bring in their own funding for both their salary and research).”



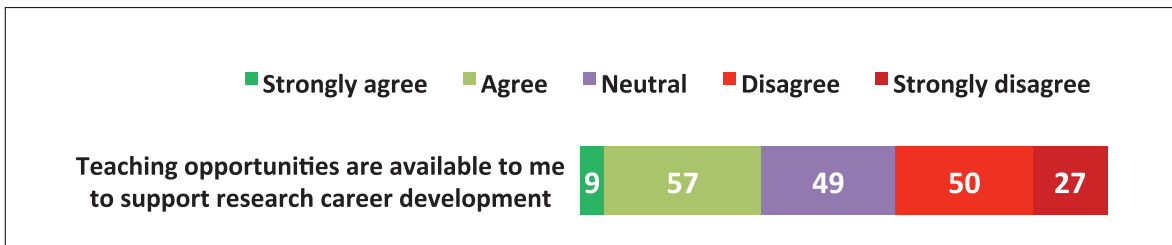
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCH STAFF



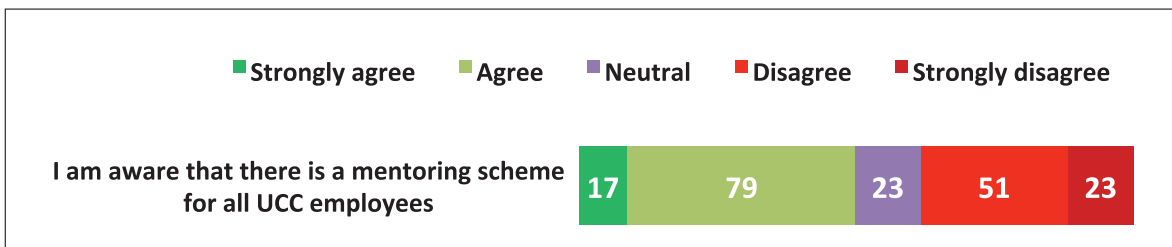
- Most researchers agree that training and development opportunities are provided



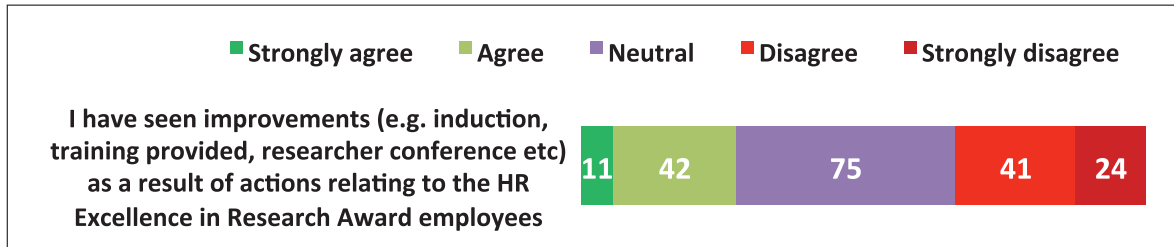
- Most researchers agree that they are encouraged to attend training



- The result is balanced between those who agree or disagree with many neutral



- Most researchers are aware of the mentoring scheme



- Most researchers are neutral to improvements from HR Excellence in Research



- Researchers indicated they want training in the above

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCH STAFF: INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

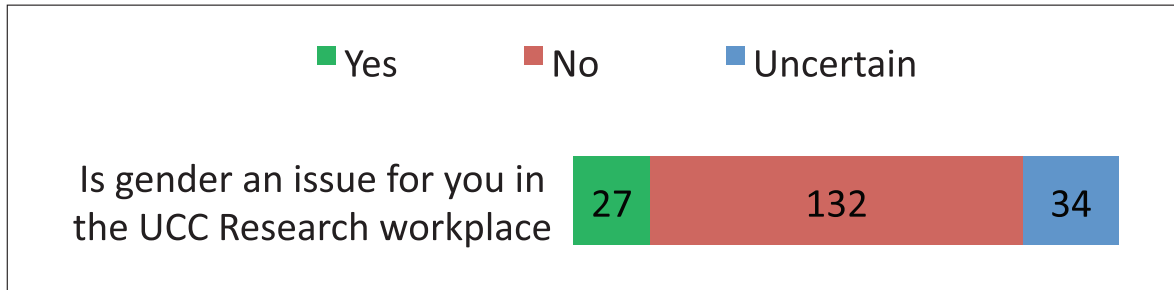
“Certificate in teaching and learning, dip in teaching and learning, various continuous professional development courses and workshops run by UCC.”

“My main goal was to improve my publication record, which I have achieved.”

“Attended Aurora programme, attended training in communication and leadership, workshop on supervision and completed Professional Skills for Research Leaders.”

“I have never been encouraged by my manager or the centre management to attend any training or development. In general training and development is never discussed.”

GENDER



- Majority of researchers indicated that gender is not an issue for them in the workplace

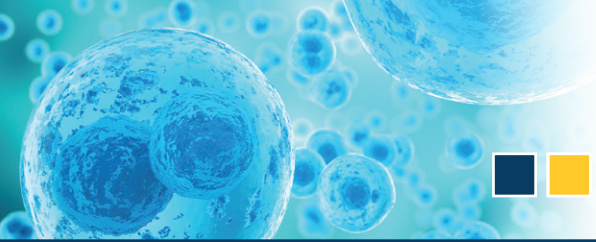
Those Surveyed	
Male	89
Female	101
Non-Binary	4

GENDER: INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

“It’s not a UCC issue but rather a funding issue - females in senior levels of research become less competitive at securing funding as there are limited funding mechanisms and females who have taken maternity leave and possibly parental leave are competing against male counterparts in the same arena, which isn’t a level playing field. Research outputs including publications are obviously affected by leave from the workplace.”

“Even though working for women in research - representing the research group is given to the younger better looking staff”

“There are few female senior academics/role models, even in biological sciences where there is a huge majority of female researchers at the PhD and PD level”



2016

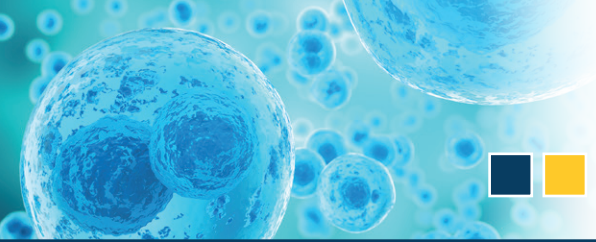
■ ■ UCC Researcher Survey Report ■ ■

RESEARCHER SURVEY: WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

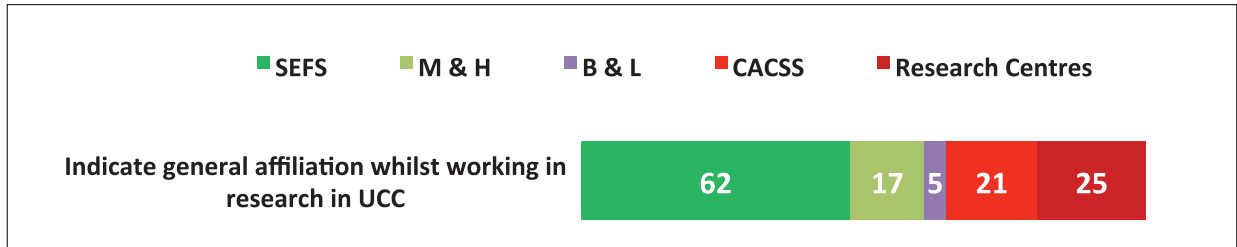
Responses from all over the globe



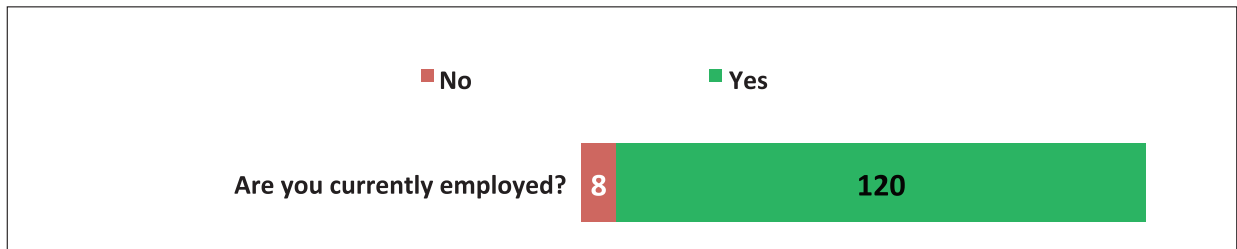
Irish UK French German Spanish Italian Iranian Chinese
African Australian American Polish Romanian and many more....



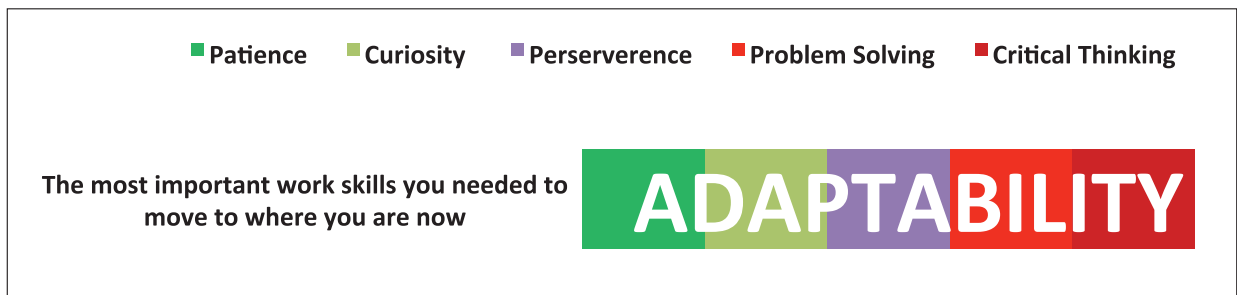
DEMOGRAPHICS - 130 ANSWERED SURVEY



- Most worked in SEFS

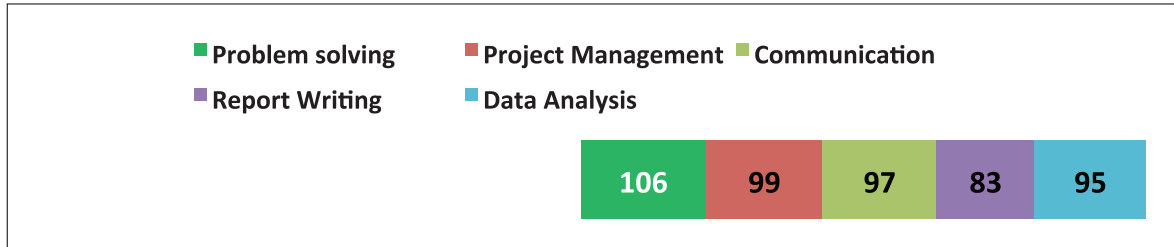


- 92% are employed

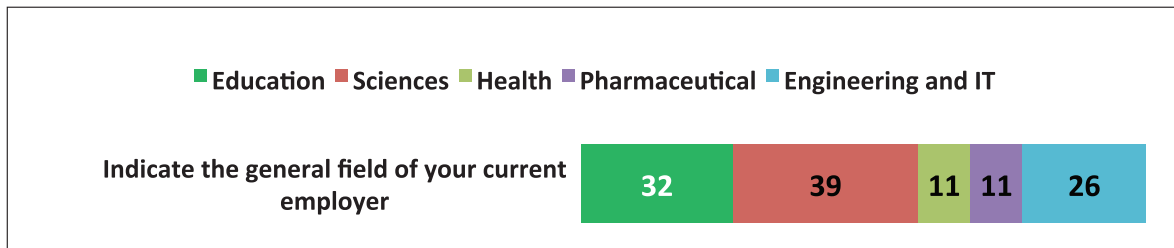


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GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS



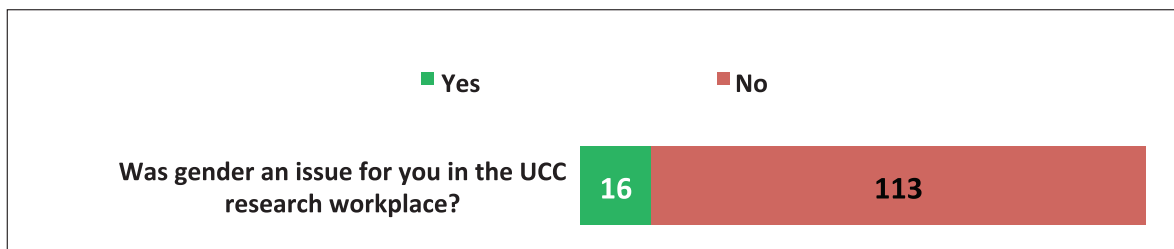
- The 5 most important transferable skills that you consider of importance to your career development



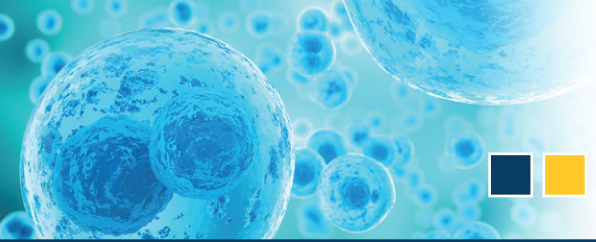
- The Sciences and Education are the most popular career choices



- Most are still working in positions where their research experience is relevant



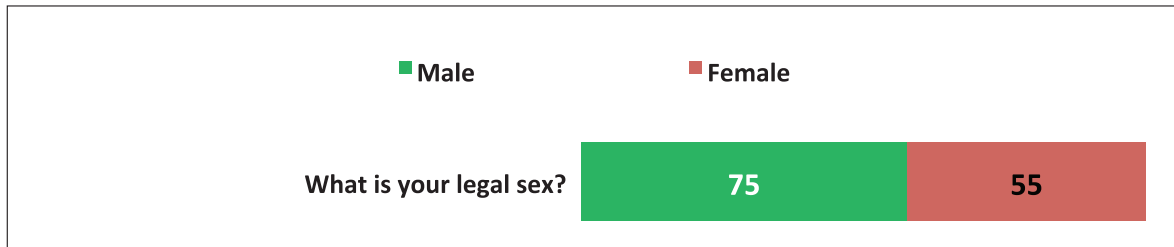
Yes 12% No 88%



2016

UCC Researcher Survey Report

Gender of those who answered the survey



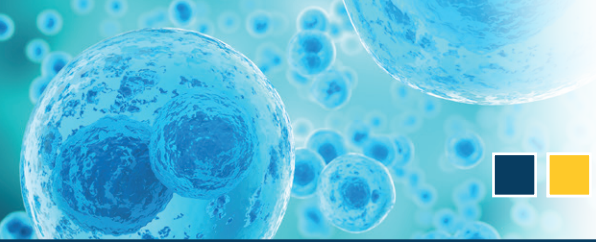
Male 58% Female 42%



One metric we can all be proud of.....

Yes 73%





WHERE ARE YOU NOW? : INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

“Doing things college by college, school by school means those in some units have opportunities, others don’t. Need to move to matrix level of support, not linear line management - if you get a bad line manager, you’re scuppered, sometimes for decades.”

“UCC offers the possibility to carry out research in a great academic environment - very diverse, welcoming and dynamic.”

“While I find the general research culture in UCC to be good, the contract lengths available are not appealing.”

“I think several factors lie behind whether someone progresses well at UCC. Only once or twice have I seen examples of gender inequality but I feel this has been less and less the case, thankfully. As for just the day to day experience of working at UCC I felt it was a very positive experience from a gender equality perspective.”

“Good opportunities for career development. For people from abroad, few years spend as a researcher in UCC could be a great cultural experience. Good employment conditions.”

“I had good exposure during my time as a researcher in UCC to develop the skills required for my current role.”

“My line managers always supported my work and, where possible, attendance to courses and conferences.”

“I had a very good time during my employment, had it not been for this amazing opportunity to emerge, I would have liked to stay longer.”

SUMMARY OF POSITIVE FINDINGS

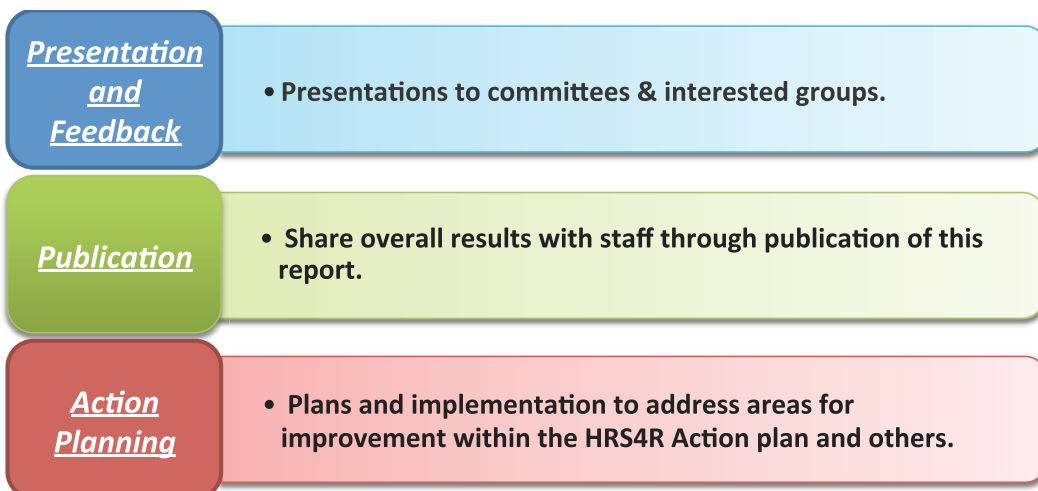
Positive Findings

- Researchers in UCC are enthusiastic and motivated about their research work
- They feel that they are part of a team and are appreciated for their contribution to that team
- They appreciate the facilities available to them and the opportunities for research collaboration
- They want to engage in committee work and contribute to the university through that channel
- They partake in training and development opportunities provided to them and are encouraged to do so
- They mostly believe that their current role enables their personal career goals
- They believe that the University offers attractive employment conditions (except for salary)
- HR information is clearly and easily available to them
- Most researchers know that UCC has gained the HR Excellence in Research Award
- They have experienced good practice in the overall research culture
- They have experienced good practice in training and development opportunities
- Individual research roles are clearly defined
- UCC practices open, transparent and merit based recruitment
- Most researchers said that gender is not an issue for them in the UCC research workplace.
- Most researchers are aware of the University Code of Research Ethics and of their responsibilities in that regard

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

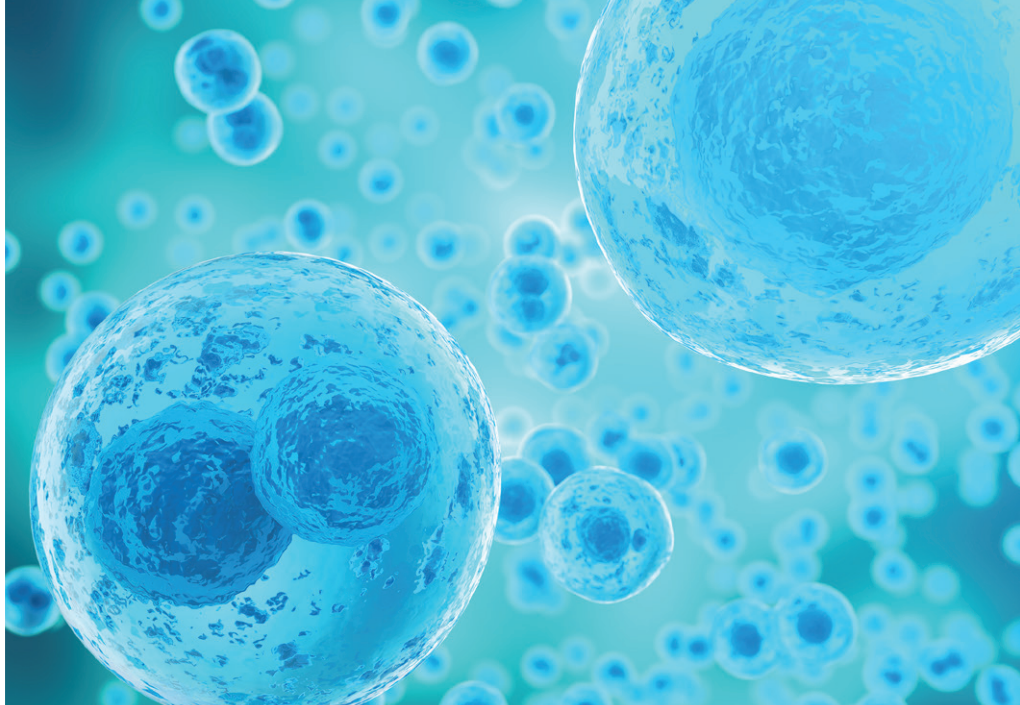
- Many researchers do not have anyone to advise them on career development
- Despite having various channels for internal communication around training and other initiatives many researchers believe that these channels could be improved
- Majority of researchers have concerns about the UCC Researcher Framework
- Majority of Research Support Officers have concerns regarding career progression
- Researchers want more involvement with decisions that affect them
- Researchers believe that advocacy with funding agencies surrounding terms and conditions of employment and career security should be more of a priority
- Most senior research roles are held by males
- Further embed HR Excellence in Research Award in policy and culture of the university
- Target training to those areas as indicated by past and present research staff

NEXT STEPS RESEARCHER SURVEYS 2016

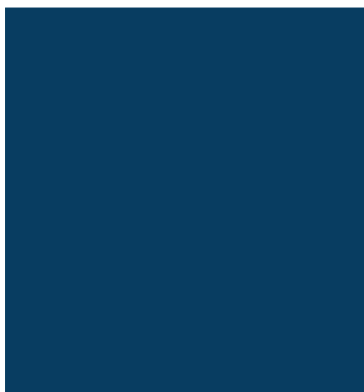


THANKS TO THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED

1. Research Staff who completed the survey both inside and outside of UCC
2. HR staff who completed the many sample surveys....
3. Mr Barry O'Brien, Director of Human Resources
4. Professor Anita Maguire, Vice President for Research and Innovation
5. Paul Ryan, Employee Relations Manager, HR
6. Dr Siobhan Cusack, Senior Research Officer, UCC Research Support Services
7. Anne Gannon, HR Manager
8. Helen O'Donoghue, HR Manager
9. Susan O'Callaghan, HR Manager
10. Mary Ward, HR Manager
11. Laura McSweeney, Research Contract Management
12. Tracy Eagles, HR Business Advisor
13. Dr Paul Bolger, Environmental Research Institute
14. Professor Geraldine Boylan, College of Medicine & Health
15. Professor Alan Kelly, School of Food & Nutritional Sciences
16. Ms Kate O'Brien, Science, Engineering and Food Science
17. Dr Caitríona Ní Laoire, College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences
18. Dr David O'Connell, UCC Research Support Services, Office of Vice President Research and Innovation
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21. Dr Michael Nolan Tyndall National Institute
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23. Dr Gordon Dalton, Secretary of the UCCRSA Committee, Hydraulics & Maritime Research Centre, MaREI
24. Dr Mark Jessopp MaREI, Coastal and Marine Research Centre and UCC RSA Committee
25. Dr Andrew Allen APC Microbiome Institute/Biosciences Institute
26. Dr Alice Lucey School of Food & Nutritional Science
27. Dr Mairead Harding Oral Health Services Research Centre and Dental School and Hospital
28. Dr Caitriona Long-Smith Department of Anatomy



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