

**Engaging Researchers in identifying their leadership  
development needs and enhancing their capabilities  
through a reflective and reflexive process**

**Research Report**



**University of Hertfordshire**

**4<sup>th</sup> August 2011**

**Contact:** Paul Smith

[p.e.smith@herts.ac.uk](mailto:p.e.smith@herts.ac.uk)

**Project team:**

**Jill Lees** (HR Manager – Development)

**Kevin Flinn** (Head of Leadership and Organisational Development)

**Dr Rodney Day** (Head of Science and Technology Research  
Degree Programmes, Science and Technology Research Institute)

**Paul Smith** (Principal Lecturer in HRM, Business School)

**Sushma Kiri** (Graduate Consulting Unit, Business School)

**Prepared for: The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education**

---

## Executive Summary

---

This project investigated the leadership development needs of researchers. The project team wished to find out how current generic training and development provision was viewed and how this provision could be modified and improved as necessary. The area of leadership and leadership development has become of crucial importance given the challenging and competitive environment faced by higher education institutions.

The relevant literature in this areas points to the need for the sector to move beyond a narrow focus on leaders towards *leadership*, with such a broader conceptualisation encompassing notions of distributive leadership. The importance of contextual influences is also stressed.

The main methodology was an on-line survey using Likert-type scales plus some open questions and this initial version of the report contains the results of this. In addition, a number of research leadership experience groups and interviews are taking place and these will be reported on in an addition to this initial report.

In terms of results, in summary: the number of respondents by time spent on research showed something of a bi-polar distribution and, although the majority were engaged in coordination and supervisory responsibilities at a local level, there were also a useful number of responses from those with department, faculty and university-wide responsibilities. Those that felt their leadership development needs to be research-specific were only in a small majority over those who felt them to be generic. Two areas of strong need were identified: managing projects, finances & resources on the one hand and strategic leadership on the other. One-to-one discussions, mentoring and coaching were strongly favoured as methods of delivery over more formal workshop-based methods. On-line approaches scored low. Awareness of the leadership development opportunities currently offered was relatively low.

Key messages from the project for researchers, staff developers and senior managers are outlined.

---

## Table of Contents

---

Executive Summary .....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
1 Introduction .....	1
2 Research Methodology.....	4
2.1 Research Aim .....	4
2.2 Research Approach .....	4
3 Literature Review.....	6
4 Training and Development .....	11
4.1 University of Hertfordshire Research training programmes .....	11
4.2 Other Universities' Research Training programmes .....	13
5 Analysis.....	15
5.1 Research Engagement with UH .....	15
5.2 Research role.....	18
5.3 Staff management and appraisal.....	21
5.4 Leadership development .....	22
5.5 Training and development .....	24
5.6 UH Leadership development .....	28
5.7 UH Leadership development and training .....	30
5.8 Experience for leadership development.....	31
6 Key Findings .....	32
6.1 Online Survey .....	32
7 Conclusions and Key Messages .....	34
7.1 For Researchers .....	34
7.2 For Staff Developers.....	34
7.3 For Senior Managers .....	35
8 References .....	37

---

# 1 Introduction

---

The Leadership Foundation in Higher Education (LFHE) has highlighted the challenges faced by higher education institutions (HEIs) and those working within them. It is argued that a new framework for HEIs, against the backcloth of a challenging financial environment, will require robust, focused and imaginative leadership at all levels of the sector.

A number of LFHE reports point to increased levels of competition, due to demographic changes, competition for key staff, competition for research funding and for post-graduate students, and pressure on public and private finances. Ball (2007) similarly points to the increasingly challenging and competitive environment faced by higher education institutions in terms of government policies, changes in funding, demands of employers for skilled and employable graduates, and changes in societal values. In such an environment, with a resultant focus on goals and targets, it is unsurprising that leadership, and leadership development, are becoming increasingly important.

Encouragingly, there is evidence that higher education has made significant progress in this area. Research findings by Burgoyne *et al* (2009) point to leadership development being high on the agenda for policy-makers and senior managers in HEIs, with both a growth in investment in leadership and management development and a concomitant recognition of the benefits of such investment. The authors also highlight the wide variety of approaches to development being used and to active consideration being given to suitability and context. However, the report also points to a current narrow focus on leader rather than leadership development across institutions. Ball (2007) also points to the traditional focus on the leader and suggests the need for HEIs to move towards an alternative conception in which leadership is viewed as being distributed throughout the institution and where the context of leadership is seen as crucial.

In terms of the leadership of academics in research specifically, research constitutes a key objective for many HEIs and is of strategic importance. The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and subsequent Research Excellence Framework (REF) have provided a clear impetus for the greater formalisation of research structures and processes, clearer definition of research targets as well as the need for research to be more actively managed and led. An increasing link can be proposed between research leadership and research outcomes, partly through the intervening variables of staff commitment and engendering a research culture. This is even more the case in the current competitive context of research grants and funding awards as well as resultant outputs. The increased emphasis on performance targets and outcomes requires a greater focus on both 'transformational' leadership in terms of providing strategic direction and

inspiration, and 'transactional' in terms of effectively managing the day-to-day research process as well as more informal leadership.

In a further reminder of the importance of context, Ball (2007), in his work on hospitality management research, found significant differences in research contexts in pre- and post-1992 universities. Whilst the former were research-led, the latter could be termed teaching-led in that whilst research was seen as important, it was not the top priority and, faced with competing demands, was viewed as something of a contested domain.

### **The University of Hertfordshire**

The University of Hertfordshire (UH) is widely acknowledged as a dynamic and entrepreneurial university which offers excellence in teaching, learning and research, and puts students at the heart of its activities.

Achieving university status in 1992, it is now ranked 41 out of 113 universities in the Complete University Guide 2011, published by the Independent Newspaper, and was recently recognised for its outstanding and world-leading research in the Government's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) to assess the quality of research in UK universities. Significantly, it is one of only six UK universities to be funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to accelerate its business-facing mission, invest in its capability and responsiveness to provide business engagement and support, as well as to drive national and regional economic prosperity, by working closely with businesses through strategic alliances and partnership opportunities.

Research is at the core of the University's strategy to facilitate far-reaching engagement with business, community and national and international partners. The UH maintains three separate research institutes:

- **The Health and Human Science Research Institute**

The Health and Human Sciences Research Institute (HHSRI) was key to Times Higher (2008) 'rising star award', submitting staff in four areas, Nursing, Pharmacy and Pharmacology, Psychology and Social Work. Up to 90% was rated as 'International Quality' research.

Across all disciplines the 50+ research collaborations with overseas universities reflects the international status of research through Schools and Centres that make up the Research Institute.

- **The Science and Technology Research Institute**

The Science and Technology Research Institute (STRI) is a vibrant, multidisciplinary community of more than 160 research staff and students. The research is organised within four Research Centres addressing the themes of Astrophysics, Atmosphere, Computing and Engineering.

- **The Social Science, Arts and Humanities Research Institute**

The Social Science, Arts and Humanities Research Institute (SSAHRI) contain world-leading and internationally rated researchers from a wide range of disciplines in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. SSAHRI's research units were judged to be of international quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and a substantial amount of this research was judged to be 'world-leading'.

### **UH Strategic Plan for 2010 – 2015**

In 2011 Professor Quintin McKellar was appointed as Vice Chancellor and in his Inaugural Address he stated that research will be a specific focus for the UH in the coming years. In this speech he covered the relationship between universities as 'Engines of Prosperity' and 'Guardians of Civilisation', and how this relationship will be affected by the Research Excellence Framework, to be launched in 2014 which is set to take into account the economic benefit of the research undertaken by Higher Education Institutions. He considered research in terms of both its economic and cultural value and concluded by stating that each is as important as the other, and each is reliant on the other.

'Research, Innovation and Enterprise' is one of five strategic drivers employed by the UH in its Strategic Plan for 2010 – 2015. This driver is underpinned by a number of research goals:

- To be known for the 'international excellence' of its research in a number of selected areas
- To ensure high quality, responsive and impactful research, consultancy and client engagement
- To ensure world-leading research to be employed through the development of successful knowledge transfer partnerships
- To develop postgraduate research through enhanced postgraduate recruitment activity

UH aims to be ranked within the top 50 universities for the quality of its research within the Research Excellence Framework by 2015 through this strategic driver.

---

## 2 Research Methodology

---

This section provides an explanation of the research aim and objectives, including specific data sets used and relevance to the end deliverables. This section also provides an explanation of the research approach including the sources from which primary data was collected and an evaluation of the research sample.

### 2.1 Research Aim

The project's aim is to enhance the leadership capabilities of the University's research community through the process of researching their leadership development needs.

#### Objectives:

- To research the current thinking on research leadership development and identify development provided by other HE institutions or national bodies
- To establish a clear understanding of the development needs of the research community at UH in relation to leadership and the extent to which these differ from generic leadership
- To establish a clearer understanding of how researchers learn effectively as well as their perceptions to learning and development in order to inform the adaptation, design and positioning of development solutions.
- To identify how UH can adapt its generic provision around leadership to be relevant and perceived as relevant by the research community
- To identify any unique development needs of our Research Leaders and design a range of innovative, cost-effective options to meet them
- Enable Research Leaders to better understand the leadership dimension of their role and enhance their capabilities through reflecting on their own practice during the project
- To develop a flexible process and framework to support UH and other HEI's in understanding how to progress specialist needs in the context of tighter financial times.

### 2.2 Research Approach

A brief overview of the research approach followed by the team is described below:

- A literature review was carried out, providing information regarding research and publications identifying leadership skills in HE for Academic, Professional and Research leaders
- A review was carried out to explore the research leader development provision and current thinking in nationally recognised bodies such as RCUK, Vitae and the work of the National Centre on Public Engagement.

- A review of the development provision for Research Leaders in other HEI's and the Leadership Foundation was completed.
- A survey was designed and conducted from 1/2011 to 2/2011 using Bristol Online Surveys (BOS) to seek Researcher and Research Leader views on effective research leadership and how they learn effectively. The questionnaire consisted predominately of Likert Scale type questions; although a number of open response questions were also included.
- A series of research leadership experience groups and interviews was carried out to further clarify respondents' views on effective research leadership and effective learning strategies. These are currently ongoing and the findings will be presented as an addition to this initial report.
- A review of our current leadership development provision was conducted and assessed against the identified development needs and methods for effective learning of our Research Leaders and appropriate adaptations were identified

---

### 3 Literature Review

---

At the commencement of the research, two fundamental issues had to be resolved before the study could be operationalised: what constitutes 'leadership' and who should be included in the study as a 'researcher'.

Few business and management topics have received as much attention as leadership and there are many competing definitions of the term. Theories of leadership encompass trait, style or behaviour, and contingency approaches. Another area for debate is the extent to which leadership can be differentiated from management.

For the purposes of this study, the need to consider the key variables faced by the leader and the importance of context were seen as being of prime importance. Thus Garrett and Davies (2010) have likened leading academic staff and researchers to 'herding cats' suggesting a 'light touch' approach should be adopted. Ball (2007) contrasts the research environment and differing perceptions of research at pre and post-1992 universities. Whilst research may well be seen as being of importance in the latter, and that certainly is the case at Hertfordshire, it has to be viewed alongside other activities, including teaching and administrative duties. Not only can this form something of a 'contested terrain' but individual workloads often encompass all three and the proportion of those purely engaged in research is likely to be less than in the pre-1992 establishments.

As a result of the above deliberations a number of decisions were made: firstly, for the purposes of this study, leadership was defined widely and was viewed as encompassing both those providing vision and strategic direction at the top, but also as something that is distributed throughout the organisation and may be informal. Thus in terms of researchers or research work, this could encompass self-leadership, subject leadership and informal influence in a group setting and mentoring, as well as leadership roles more formally tied to hierarchical position.

Secondly, the boundaries between what was considered to be 'leadership' and 'management' were considered to be blurred and overlapping. Thus reference is made in the survey to staff development initiatives which could fall into either, or both, categories.

Thirdly, the questionnaire was distributed to all academic staff, merely inviting those who perceived themselves to be 'research active' to complete the questionnaire, a decision which took into account that research was often just one part of an academic's job. This is in contrast to

other studies such as the Vitae CROS survey which differentiates between researchers and lecturing staff and excludes the latter.

### 3.1.1 The Concordat (2010)

The Concordat's report is based on 7 core principals. These principals outline good practice for the employers of researchers. Below is an overview of the principles and subsequent points signifying specific values relevant to leadership research.

#### 1. Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection process ensures recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

#### 2. Recognition and Value

Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation

- Appraisal: UH recommends two meetings per year for staff appraisal.
  - a) A Project Review Meeting that concentrates on progress towards the goals of the specific research project.
  - b) A Development Review Meeting focusing on the wider career and personal development of the researcher beyond the current project.

#### 3. Support and Career Development

Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.

- Offer training and placements to broaden awareness of other fields and sectors.
- Employers should provide a planned induction programme for new researchers
- Managers should actively encourage CPD so far as is possible within a project.

At UH, training and development is offered for Principal Investigators, Research Supervisors and Managers to enable them to undertake their roles effectively.

#### 4. Support and Career Development

The importance of the researchers personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is recognised.

- Employers will wish to ensure that researchers are provided with teaching and demonstrating opportunities as a part of their career development, suitable training and support is provided.
- Mentoring arrangements should be supported by employers as a key mechanism for career development and enhancement.

#### 5. Researchers' Responsibilities

Individual researchers share the responsibility for their own personal and career development

- It is primarily the researcher's responsibility to identify training needs and actively seek out opportunities for learning and development in order to further that career and take personal responsibility for their choices
- Researcher should ensure that their career development requirements and activities are regularly discussed, monitored and evaluated throughout the year, and that they commit themselves fully to all such activities.

#### 6. **Diversity and Equality**

Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of the researchers.

#### 7. **Implementation and Review**

The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

UH does not take a 'one size fits all' approach to personal and career development. Rather a framework is provided to steer the recognition, personalisation, and encouragement of individuals, Schools and managers to plan and enhance the skills and capabilities of researchers.

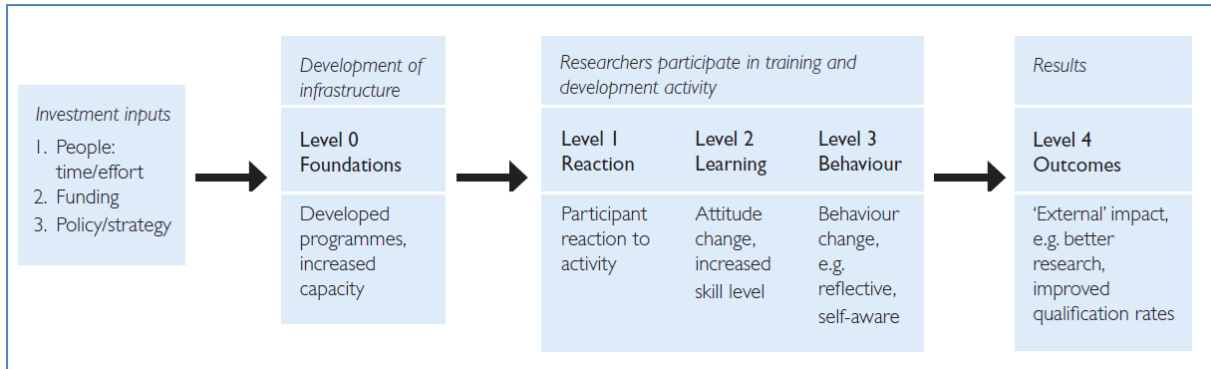
### **3.1.2 The Rugby Team Impact Framework: one year on (2009)**

The Rugby Team's report demonstrates that there is emerging evidence that researcher training and development activity does have a significant impact on researchers. The research conducted drew the following conclusions:

- Improves research outputs, grant writing success, fellowship success and performance in research.
- Enhances the postgraduate researcher and supervisor experience
- Enhances employability
- Enhances and increases the public understanding and outreach activity of researchers

The Rugby Team's report concludes that there is a significant and growing evaluation activity in the sector and plans to support continued growth. The report provides a 'snapshot' of the evaluation of researcher training in the UK, and provides evidence that the sector can be confident in achieving the aim of building a significant evidence base for researcher training and development in the coming years.

At the core of the report are 4 stages with which evaluation procedures can be rated.



**Figure 1:** Rugby Team Impact Framework

**Source:** The Rugby Team (2009)

The above diagram shows the levels researcher training impact. Level 0 (foundations) equates to the baseline assessment of skills and training needs. Levels 1, 2 and 3 (reaction, learning and behaviour) signify how the training is processed, what is learnt and how it is employed by researchers. Level 4 (outcomes) measures the final results of the training and development activity.

### 3.1.3 Vitae (2010)

Vitae have recently developed the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) is a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. The RDF was created from empirical data, collected through interviewing researchers, to identify the characteristics of excellent researchers expressed in the RDF as 'descriptors'. The descriptors are structured in four domains and twelve sub-domains, encompassing the knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards to do research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.



**Figure 2:** Research Development Framework

**Source:** Vitae (2010)

**A. Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities**

This domain relates to the knowledge and intellectual abilities needed to be able to carry out excellent research and covers knowledge base, cognitive abilities and creativity.

**B. Personal Effectiveness**

This domain contains the personal qualities, career and self-management skills required to take ownership for and engage in professional development.

**C. Research Governance and Organisation**

This domain relates to the knowledge of the standards, requirements and professional conduct that are needed for the effective management of research. It further covers finance, funding and resources for conducting research.

**D. Engagement, Influence and Impact**

This domain relates to the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to engage with, influence and impact on the academic, social, cultural, economic and broader context.

The RDF aims to give researchers the encouragement to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development. Each section is linked as in the diagram above, and Vitae suggest that acquiring a balance in each of these fields will enable researchers to become more effective.

The four fields identified by Vitae are well rounded and comprehensive in terms of the values and abilities looked for in a researcher, and thus this framework has become core to all contemporary research training schemes.

---

## 4 Training and Development

---

This chapter provides details of the current Training and Development programmes available to both UH employees and the employees of other Higher Education Institutions.

### 4.1 *University of Hertfordshire Research training programmes*

Researchers at UH are both entitled and encouraged to access the support and training opportunities on offer. Below are some of the specific training schemes available. One of the key aspirations from the strategic plan was that more than 80% University of Hertfordshire staff should be undertaking some form of professional development activity.

HR Development will work with departments across the University to produce the Development Priorities annually and provide a programme of events designed to support those priorities. Because UH is a flexible learning organisation, their staff members are therefore encouraged to develop their capabilities to enhance the University's reputation through:

- **Workshops and events** - provides full information about all the workshops and events we support.
  - **Personal development** - designed to develop an individual's skills e.g. communication.
    - An outstanding customer experience (customer service)
    - Assertive communication
    - Chairs and convenors of meetings
    - Managing workload and priorities
    - Managing your University of Hertfordshire career
    - Planning and clerking meetings
    - Planning and leading successful change
    - Presentation skills
    - Project planning
  - **Learning, teaching, research** - workshops that support academic and professional staff.
  - Technology, media - a variety of workshops to support staff using various technology and IT skills.
  - Miscellaneous - other workshops/events for all staff.
- **Online learning** - University of Hertfordshire now have a variety of online learning options.
- **Leadership/management development** - information about various development opportunities available for managers.

- **Tailored opportunities** - if you are looking for support to organise an away day or some tailored department development, this will explain how we can help.
- **Development FAQs** - if you have question about development, you may find the answer here.

The research specific courses offered at UH include the following courses and workshops.

- **Creating you First Research Application**  
This workshop aims to provide expert help and guidance for academic and research staff planning their very first application for research funding.
- **Grant Applications Clinic**  
This workshop aims to provide expert help and guidance for academic and research staff in the process of writing an application for research funding. By the end of the session attendees who have sent in a draft proposal receive detailed feedback on their proposal.
- **Turning Failure into Success**  
This unit looks at unsuccessful grant applications and provides employees with the knowledge and skills for successful applications in the future.
- **Raising your Research Profile**  
This workshop looks at raising the personal profile of researchers at the University.
- **How to be an Effective Researcher**  
This course is suitable for research staff and aims to provide comprehensive guidelines and strategies for the successful implementation of research in all sectors.

#### **Generic Leadership Training courses:**

- **Making Sense of Leading**  
The programme has been developed for new, returning, or experienced academic and professional managers who have had little or no formal leadership development recently.
- **Transition to Leadership**  
This workshop is suitable for professional and academic staff who have the responsibility for leading other members of staff, either formally or informally. The course covers issues such as Leadership, Motivation and Team-work.
- **Appraiser Training**  
This course aims to help appraisers understand the purpose and process for appraising staff. It is a participative and highly practical session designed to help you to develop the skills needed to appraise your staff.
- **Recruitment and Selection training**  
This course aims to help recruiting staff to understand the purpose and process for recruiting and selecting staff. It aims to provide a set of guidelines and standards for the

recruitment and selection of employees into and within the University thereby establishing a consistent approach to staff selection.

- **Conflict management and Resolution**

This course enables employees the ability to cope effectively with conflicts in the workplace.

- **Priorities, Time and Self-Management**

This course covers issues such as prioritising workloads, time saving strategies and techniques for professional organisation and efficiency.

#### **4.2 Other Universities' Research Training programmes**

In addition to the courses offered by UH this section includes an overview of some of the training courses offered by other Higher Education Institutions. In accordance with the aims of the reports an understanding of these courses will enable:

- The identification of methods for the adaption of UH generic provision around leadership to ensure relevance to the research community.
- Identification of research development courses and workshops provided by other HE institutions or national bodies
- The establishment of a clear understanding of the development needs of the research community at UH in relation to leadership and knowledge of the extent to which these differ from generic leadership

Below listed are courses offered by other Higher Education Institutions which would be relevant development for researchers and research leaders:

- **Action Planning** (Manchester Business School, 2010) and (University of Birmingham, 2010)
- **Approaches to Leadership** (University of Birmingham, 2010)
- **Conflict Management** (University of Birmingham, 2010) (Liverpool University, 2010) (Sheffield University, 2010)
- **Development of Personal and Career Goals** (Sheffield University, 2010)
- **Funding & Communications** (Bristol University, 2010) (Manchester Business School, 2010) (Liverpool University, 2010)
- This course covers the following issues:
  - Grant Application
  - Promote research
  - Peer review
  - Research budget-management techniques
  - Coping with economic costing
  - Research reputation through funding

- Traditional networking
- **Identify the leadership style** (Manchester Business School, 2010)
- **Leading and Developing a Team** (Manchester Business School, 2010) (Cardiff, 2010) (Sheffield University, 2010)
- This course covers the following issues:
  - Understand the team leader role
  - Characteristics of research teams
  - Building and maintaining team focus
  - Commitment
  - Identifying team roles
- **Personal Vision** (University of Birmingham, 2010)
- **Presenting Yourself as a Research Leader** (Ashridge, 2010) (Sheffield University, 2010)
- **Team Building** (Cardiff, 2010) (University of Birmingham, 2010) (Sheffield University, 2010)
- **Team Roles & Dynamics** (Cardiff, 2010) (University of Birmingham, 2010)
- **Team Working** (Cardiff, 2010) (University of Birmingham, 2010) (Sheffield University, 2010)
- **Understand how to Adopt Different Behaviours to Maximize Personal Effectiveness and Influence** (Sheffield University, 2010)
- **Understanding your Leadership Style** (Manchester Business School, 2010)

It can be observed that the training and development courses in other universities are developed around leadership, funding and communications for conducting research. A review of the content, structure and delivery of the training programs was used to gain general understanding of the identified needs and solutions provided by the universities. This information was qualitatively used to develop a quantitative questionnaire with main areas of focus being staff management and appraisal, leadership development needs, training and development and experience.

## 5 Analysis

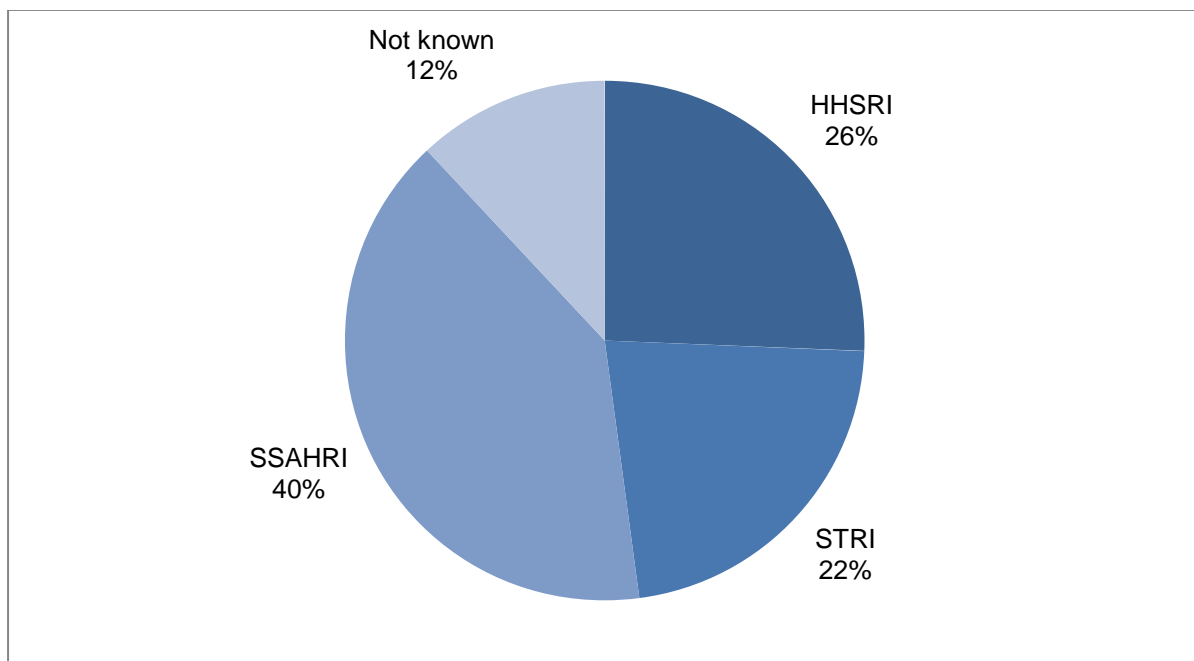
The following section addresses the data that was collected in the online survey. Respondents are researchers from UH and represent all three research institutes. The research sample for the survey is comprised of staff from the University of Hertfordshire. Due to the nature of research work the exact number of research staff was difficult to ascertain; however it has been estimated at around 450 by the HR team. Of this number 181 responded, but only 117 completed the survey. Therefore, for the purpose of analysis, we have only considered the responses of the participants who completed the survey.

A simple random sampling method was implemented to guarantee equal representation of members from the population. The confidence interval on the basis of 95% confidence level and target population of 450 was 7.8%. This indicates a high level of accuracy and the responses collected are strongly representative of the total population sampled

### 5.1 Research Engagement with UH

In this section the questions related to the respondent's research engagement with the UH have been presented.

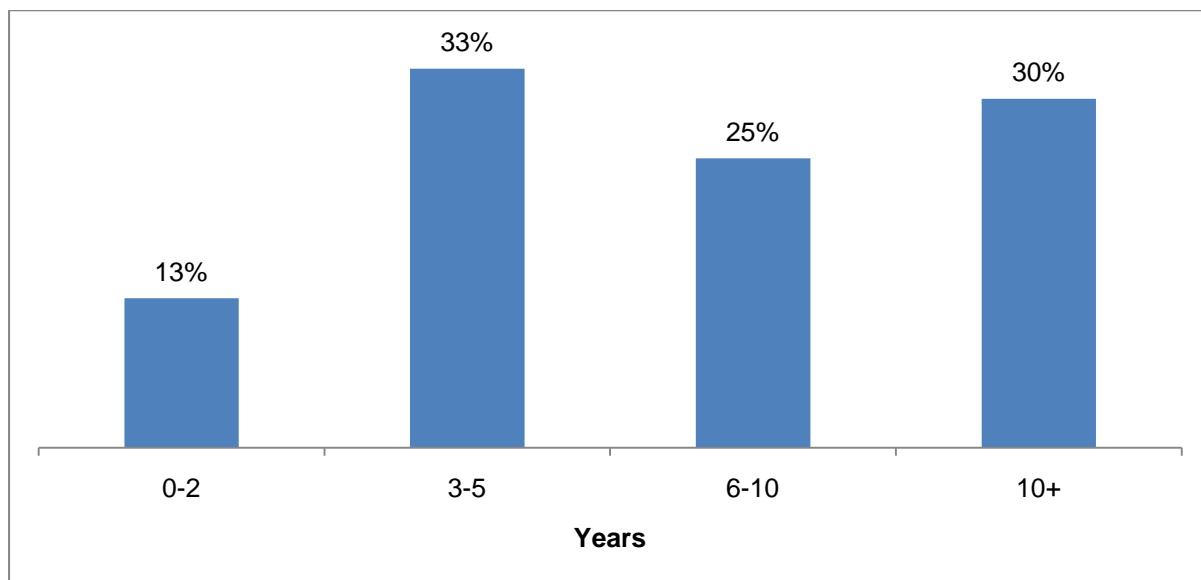
All respondents who participated in the survey are employed at the UH. The university consists of three main institutes: Social Science, Arts and Humanities Research Institute (SSAHRI), Health and Human Sciences Research Institute (HHSRI) and Science & Technology Research Institute (STRI). Figure 3 shows the proportion of responses from their respective institutes.



**Figure 3:** Q. 1. Number of respondents from Respective Research Institutes

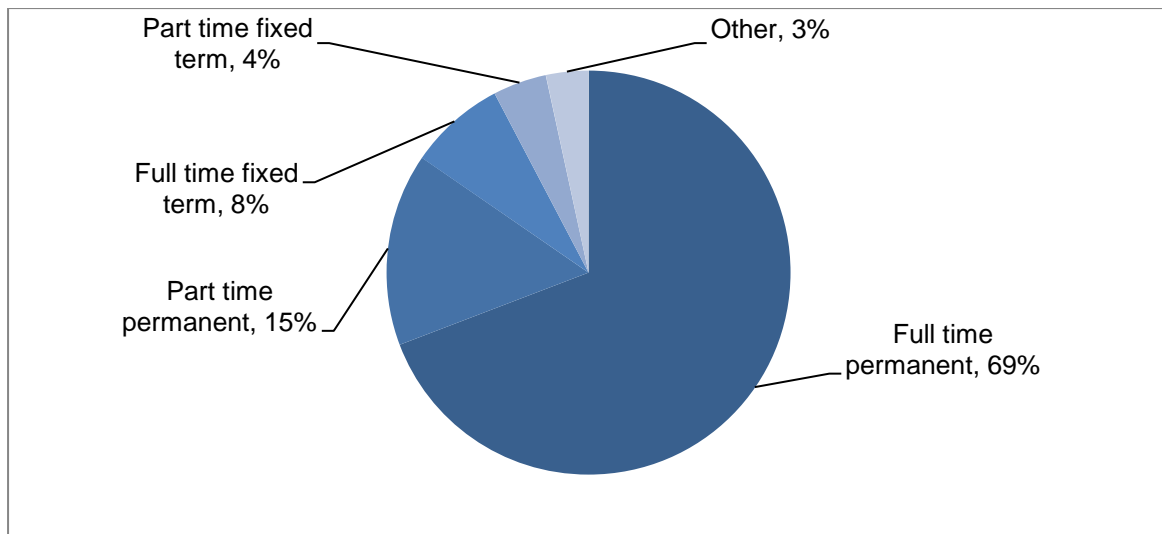
The responses indicate that the institute with the highest responses rate (40%) was the SSAHRI whereas the HHSRI and the STRI both account for 26% and 22% of responses respectively. However, a sizable 12% of respondents were unaware of the institute for which they work. This could indicate that some participants do not work directly for any institute, or work for more than one institute at any given time.

### Experience



**Figure 4:** Q. 3. Experience Level (years)

Figure 4 shows that the survey primarily represents researchers with over 3 years of experience working for the UH. Participants with 3-5, 6-10 and 10+ years' experience each represent between 25 and 33% of respondents. The lowest percentage of responses is from researchers who have worked for the University for 2 or fewer years. This chart therefore shows that the majority of responses come from researchers with at least three years of experience at the UH.

**Employment Status**

**Figure 5:** Q. 5. Respondent's employment status

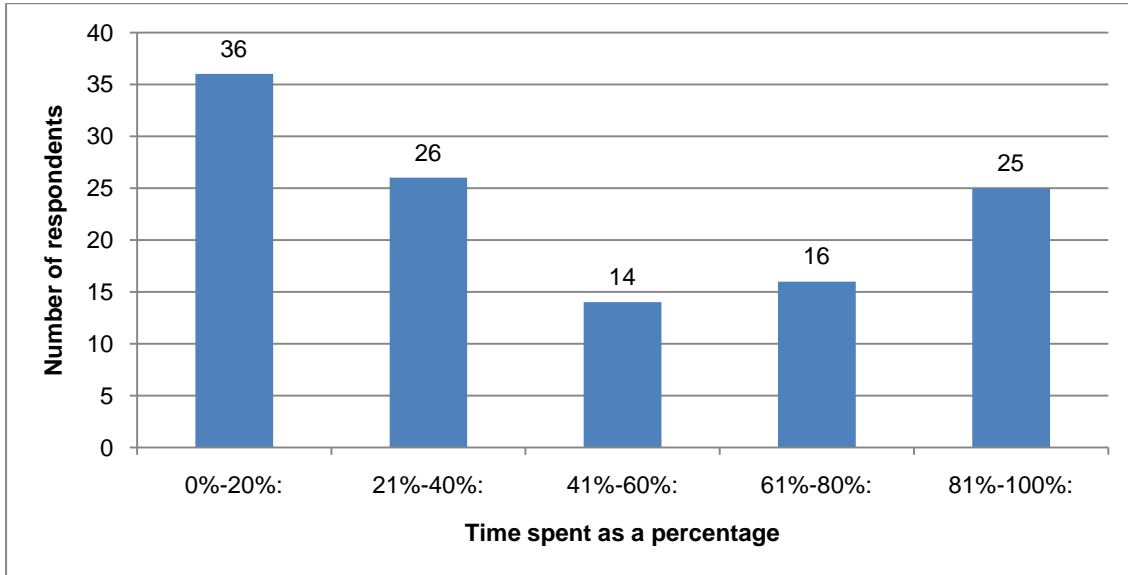
Figure 5 shows 69% respondents are in permanent, full time roles within the university. Other roles account for 31% of respondents, with half of these being part time permanent positions. Respondents who are only in fixed term contracts at the university make up only 12% of the total responses.

To summarise, the above figures suggest that the survey was completed by researchers who, in the majority (83%), consider themselves to be actively researching or conducting research as a part of their work. In addition to this the majority of respondents (87%) have had over 3 years of experience researching for Hertfordshire University, and so can be expected to be well aware of the needs for training in research. 69% also occupy permanent positions within the university, suggesting that the majority of the response is from experienced researchers, indicating that the responses are likely to be well informed and reliable.

## 5.2 Research role

In this section the questions related to the respondent's research role within their institute have been presented.

### Time spent in research as a proportion of workload



**Figure 6:** Q. 6. Time spent in research (% of workload)

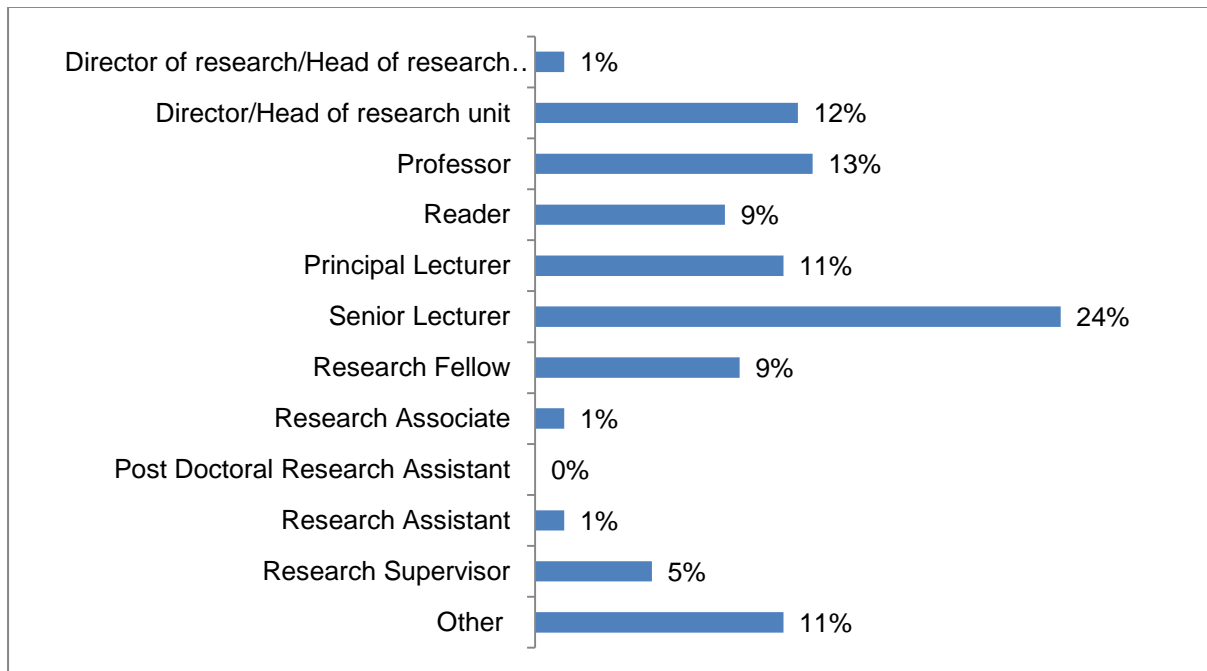
The highest numbers of respondents (36) spend less than 20% of their time in research. A total of 62 respondents (53%) spend under 40% of their time in research, suggesting that for them research is not the primary goal. However 25 respondents (21%) do spend almost all of their working day conducting research.

Question 7 was an open-ended question asking researchers how much of the time spent researching (as indicated in figure 6) is spent managing and coordinating research. The results showed that the respondents spent a widely varying proportion of their research time managing or coordinating research. The highest proportion of responses indicated that 0% was spent managing and coordinating. A relatively equal spread of respondents outlined management time from 10% - 90%, and a further 4 respondents (3.4%) said that 100% of their research time was spend managing research. Below are some other notable comments:

- *"PT PhD so not really leading yet"*
- *"This role is likely to grow for me in the future, as I have recently been asked to develop a research group within my School."*
- *"From my personal research 0.2 contract nil. As a Doctoral research supervisor, 3%; as Director of Professional Doctorate Programme approx 10%"*
- *"Variable depending on whether a project is actively running"*

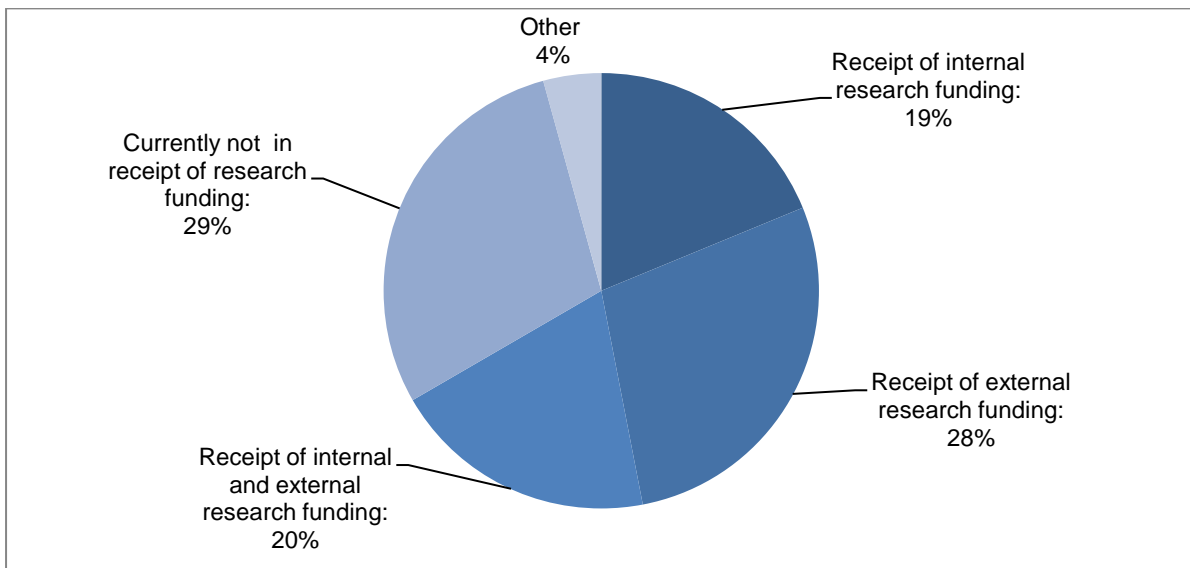
The above comments indicate that in some cases it is difficult for researchers to give an accurate answer to this question. There is sometimes an ambiguity between time perceived researching and managing/coordinating research, and for some researchers it differs greatly in terms of project.

### Research role



**Figure 7:** Q. 8. Respondents' research role

The highest numbers of respondents by a substantial margin are Senior lecturers, comprising 24% of respondents. Directors/Heads of Research Units, Professors, Readers, Principle Lecturers and Research Fellows each comprised between 9% and 13% of responses. This indicates that the majority of respondents (69%) occupy relatively senior roles within the university and will therefore have had a sizable amount of research experience. Junior staff (Research associates, Post Doctoral research assistants and regular research assistants) comprises only 2% of the total response, therefore 98% of respondents occupy more senior roles and are thus more familiar with leadership in research.

**Research funding**

**Figure 8:** Q9. Research funding that best describes the current situation

Figure 8 indicates that there was equal distribution of research funding. Researchers receiving external funding and those receiving no funding at all each make up 28% and 29% of the respondents respectively. Those receiving internal funding and both internal and external funding each make up around 20% of recipients.

To summarise, the respondent's time spent in research varies widely, but the majority tend to spend less than 40% of their time in research or over 81% of their time in research. However, 79% of respondents are in positions equal to or more senior than 'research fellow', therefore it can be assumed that given their seniority they have a high level of knowledge regarding the needs for leadership training.

### 5.3 Staff management and appraisal

The following questions in the survey gather information regarding the levels of management and appraisal that the respondents are engaged in.

#### Description of respondents' current research role

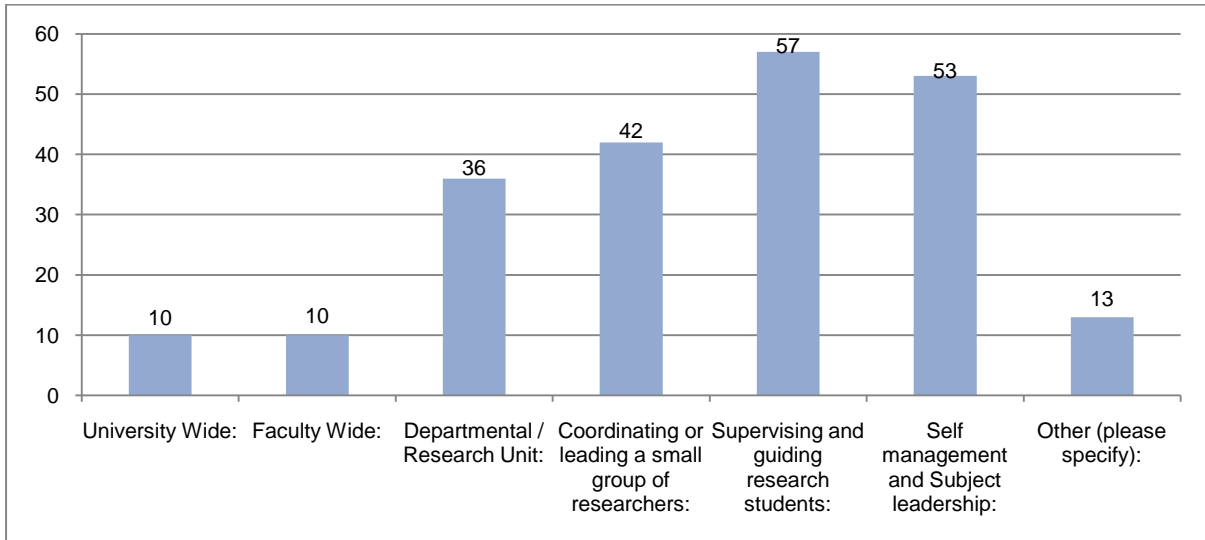


Figure 9: Q. 10. Description of research role

Figure 9 shows that the highest number of responses (57 and 53) were in the areas of 'supervising and guiding research students' and 'self management and subject leadership' respectively. In general this data indicates that the respondents' research role is generally within their department, with only 10 respondents indicating that their research role was faculty wide and another 10 indicating that their research role was University wide. Therefore the majority of respondents are either supervising small group of researchers/research students, or not supervising any researchers at all.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate the number of researchers/research students they coordinate /oversee/manage as a part of their role.

**Table 1:** Number of researchers managed / coordinated

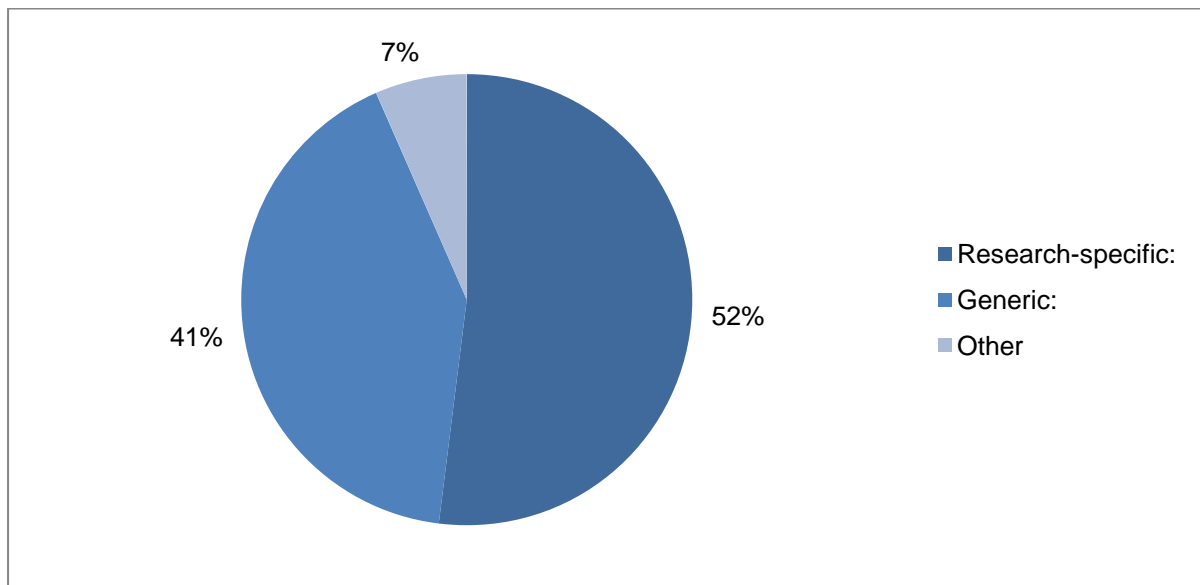
No. of researchers managed/coordinated	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12	15	20	30	40	50
Respondents (%)	28	4	14	7	11	4	4	3	5	5	3	5	3	2	2	1

Table 1 shows over a quarter of respondents (28%) do not coordinate/oversee/manage any researchers while 14% of respondents' coordinate/oversee/manage 2 researchers, and 11% coordinate/oversee/manage 4 researchers. The number of respondents drops steadily in relation to increasing numbers of managed staff.

#### 5.4 Leadership development

This section outlines the perceived need for leadership development, and the areas in which leadership development are most necessary.

Question 14 prompted respondents to outline their perceived leadership development needs.



**Figure 10:** Q. 14. Respondent perspective of leadership development needs

The above figure shows that 52% of the respondents see a need for research-specific leadership development, and 41% see a need for generic leadership development. This shows an overwhelming perceived need for leadership development in these two areas.

Question 16 asked respondents about their personal, individual leadership training needs as researchers. Below are some of the responses:

- *“I think that my leadership development needs to be research and academics focused. For example, managing research students has aspects that are not strictly research related, but that are important to academics who conduct research “*
- *“Leadership and understanding and keeping abreast of latest market and social research techniques”*
- *“Managing projects, finances and resources.”*
- *“Persuasive as I need to influence researchers across the institution”*

Question 18 outlined which aspects of research and research leadership respondents found most challenging. Below are some of the responses:

- *“Time management”*

- *“Bringing in funding”*
- *“Managing resources, finances and people”*
- *“Motivating people”*
- *“Form filling”*

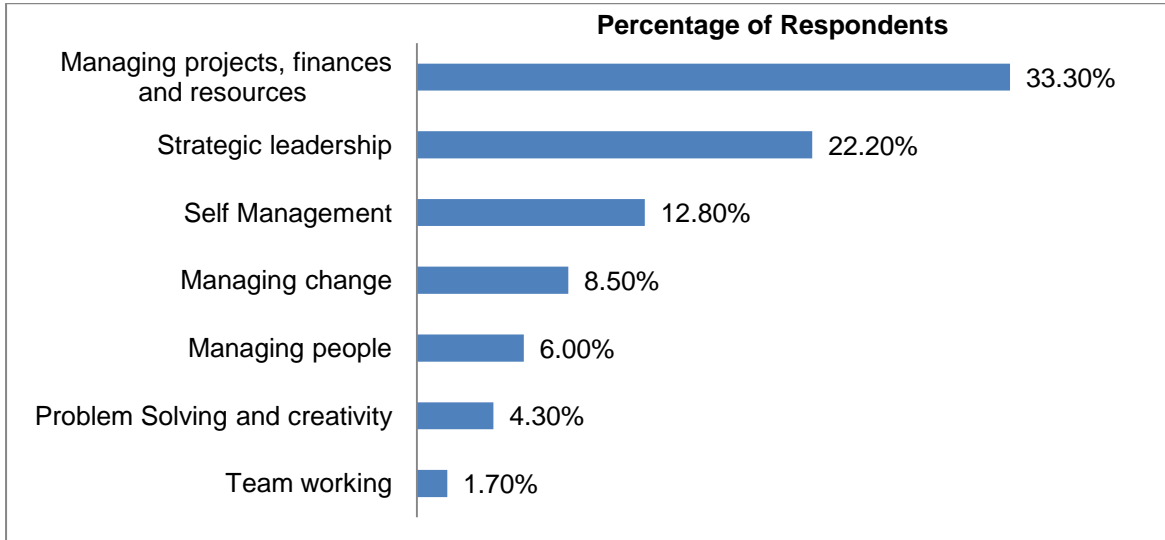
Of the above responses by far the most repeated was “time management”. It can therefore be assumed that demands on time are a very key issue for research leaders. However, one respondent who indicated that time management was an issue also outlined that he/she had been to time management courses and training sessions but that these were unproductive because of the sheer size of the workload. Another popular response was ‘bringing in funding’, which is an issue which would possibly benefit from specific funding-orientated courses or training programmes.

To summarise, this section has outlined that researchers see a high need for both Research-specific and Generic leadership development. Also, researchers found that demands on time, financing and funding were the most challenging aspects of their role within the university.

### 5.5 Training and development

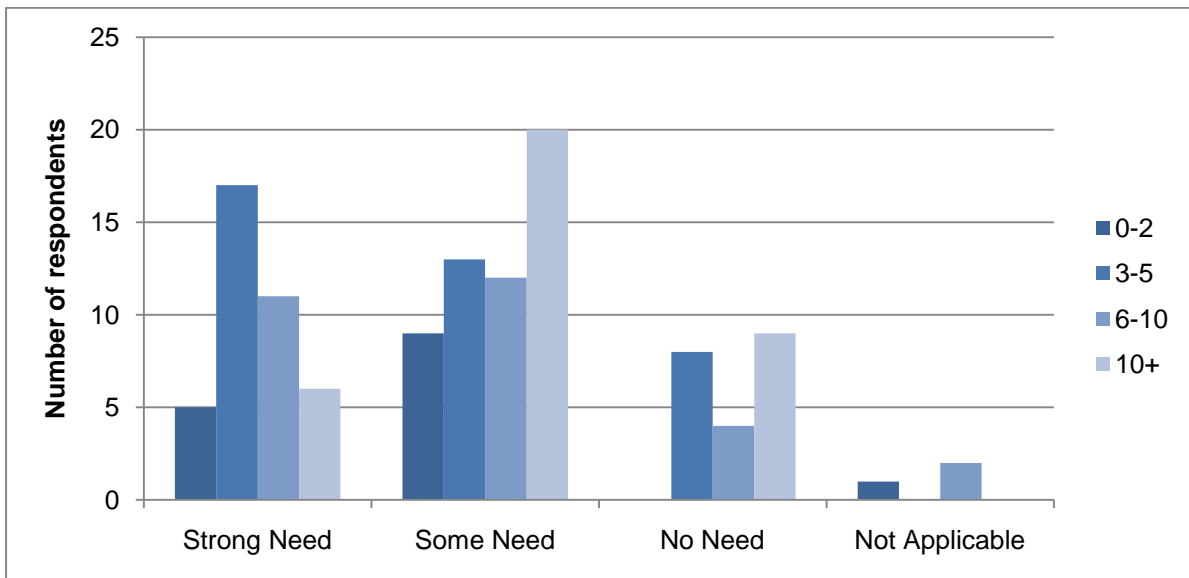
A synthetic metric measurement scale has been used to collect responses that help in comparing the order of importance and relevance to the question.

This section aims to outline the current research leader’s training and development needs.



**Figure 11:** Q 15. Areas with strong need for training and development

A third of respondents identified strong leadership training need to be in ‘Managing Projects, Finances and Resources’. More than one in five also identified a strong need for leadership training in the ‘Strategic leadership’ area. Very few researchers identified ‘Team working’ to have a strong need for training.



**Figure 12:** Q. 15c. Perceived need for training in ‘Managing projects, finances and resources’ by experience level

The above chart shows that training in this field is needed most by researchers who have had between 3 to 5 years of experience. A very high proportion of researchers with over 10 years of experience also indicated that there was some need for training in this field. However, the most

experienced respondents could have learned to manage this need and therefore see it as less vital, hence the relatively low response of 10+ responses in the strong need category. It can therefore be assumed that training in 'managing projects, finances and resources' is seen most necessary by more experienced researchers, in particular those who have between 3 and 10 years of experience.

Figure 13 shows the perceived need for Strategic Leadership by research role.

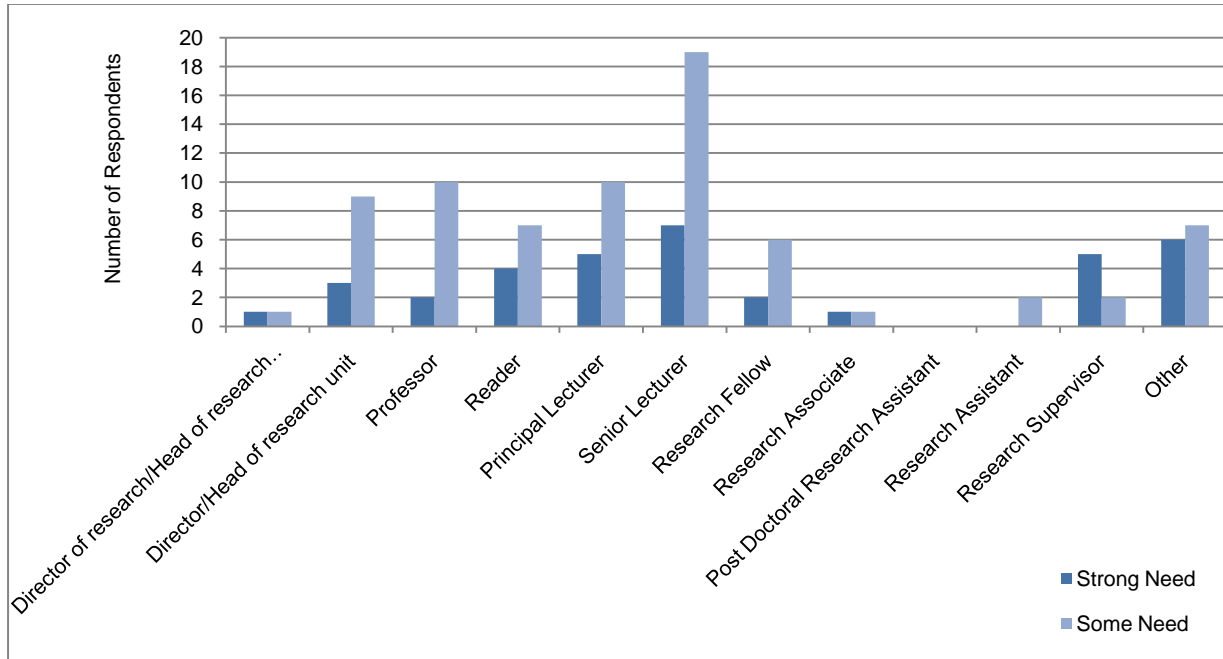
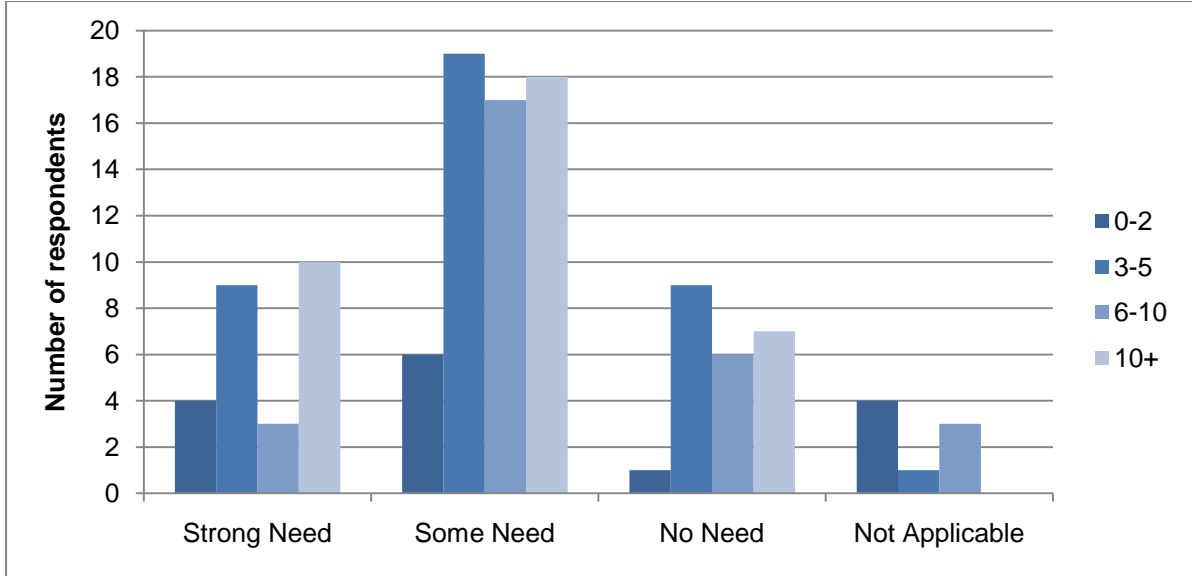


Figure 13: Perceived need for strategic leadership by research role.

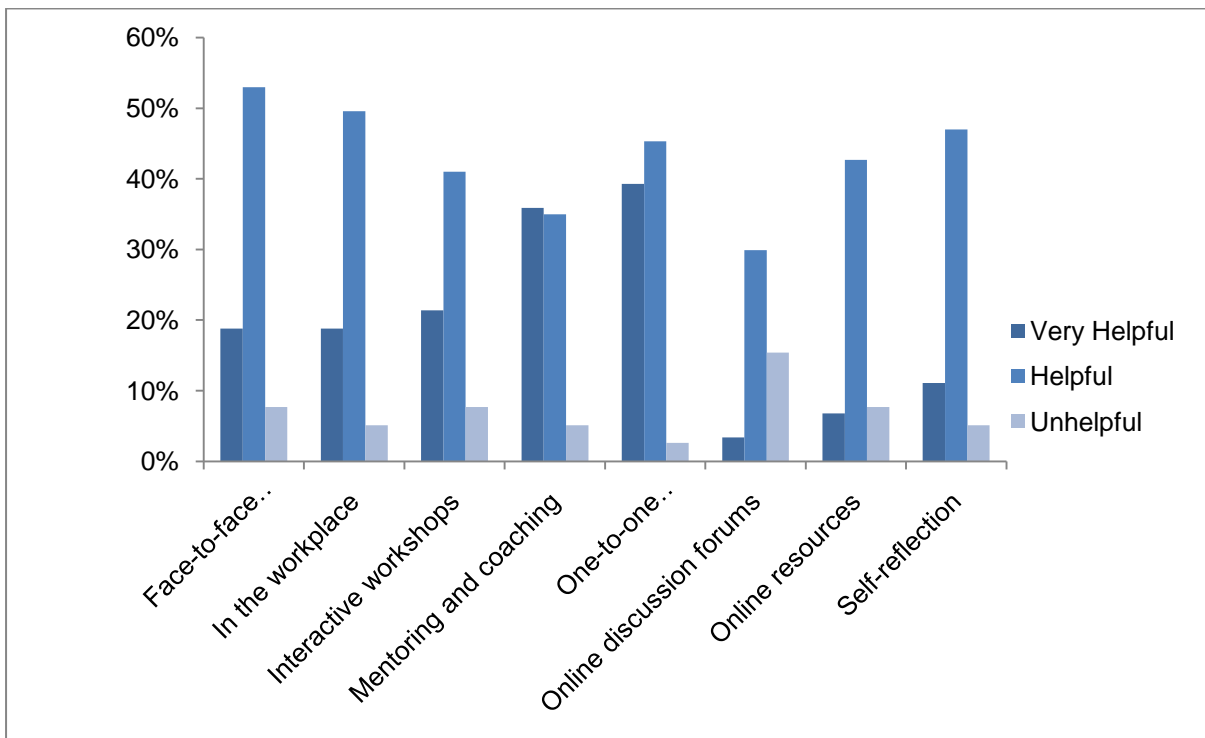
The above graph shows that Senior Lecturers see the highest need for training in strategic leadership, constituting the highest number of responses in 'some' and 'strong' need. A total of 26 senior lecturers, 72% of respondents in this position, indicated a need for training in this area.

**Need for training in 'Strategic leadership' by experience level**



**Figure 14:** Q. 15c. Perceived need for training in 'Strategic leadership' by experience level

The above chart shows that, similarly to figure 15, there is a high perception of need for training in this field in all levels of experience. Most notable, however, is the disparity between perception of 'strong need' between the 6-10 and 10+ year categories. Only 3 respondents with between 6 and 10 years of experience indicated a strong need for training in this field.

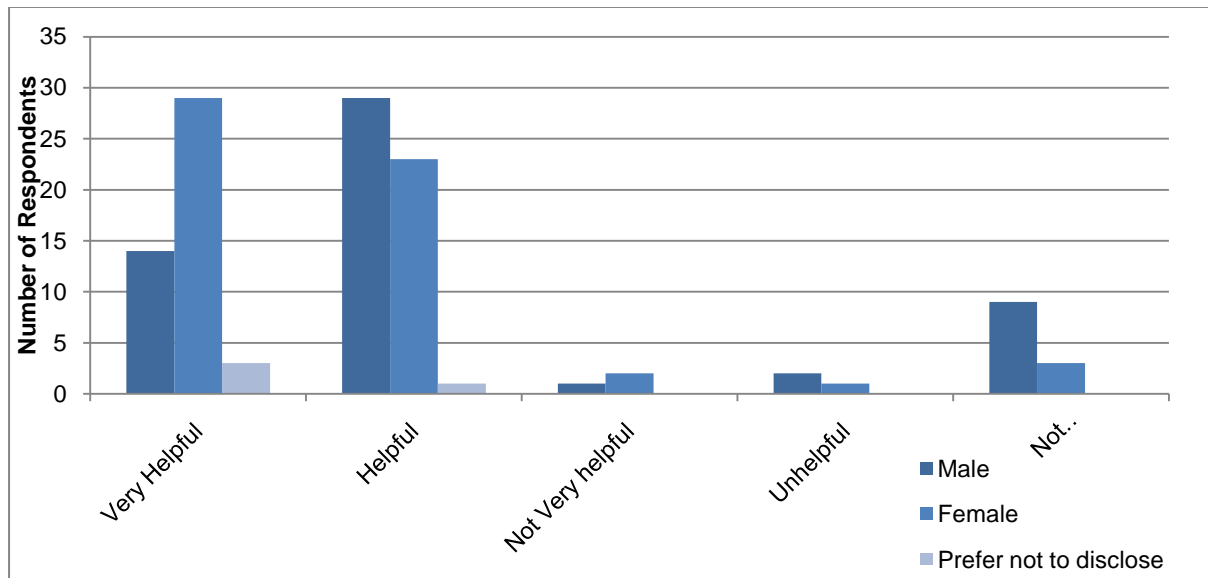


**Figure 15:** Q. 17. Preferred mode of training and development

The above chart indicated respondents' preferred mode of training and development. One to one conversations and coaching and mentoring are seen as by far the most helpful learning methods. By contrast online discussion forums are seen as the least helpful method of learning. However,

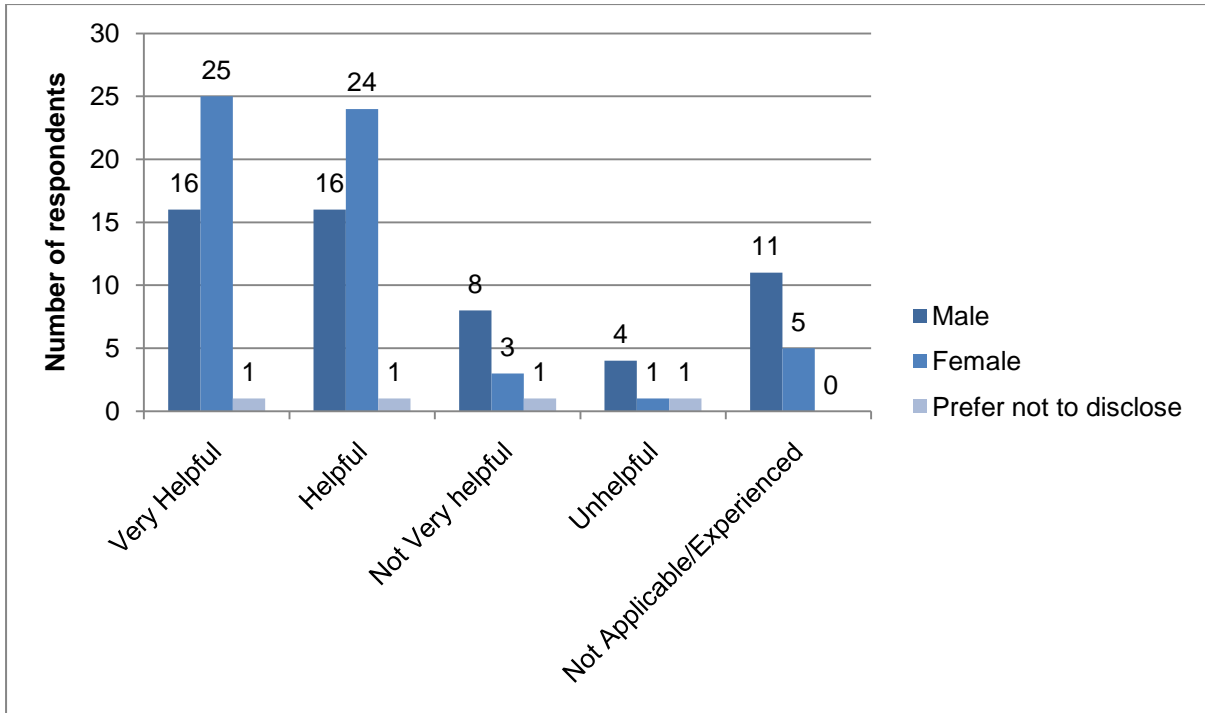
there may be a disparity between the perceived and actual benefit of online discussion forums, and this learning method should perhaps not be ruled out, especially given its accessibility and cost-effectiveness.

It is necessary to look closer at both 'one to one conversations' and 'mentoring and coaching', the highest valued methods of learning



**Figure 16:** Value of 'one to one conversations' by gender

The above chart indicates that over twice as many women indicated that one to one conversations are a 'very helpful' method of learning. While the majority of males indicated that this method is 'helpful' it is clear that it is thought more beneficial by females than males. This trend is also reflected in the value of 'mentoring and coaching' by gender.



**Figure 17:** Value of 'one Coaching and mentoring' by gender

The above chart shows, similarly to figure 17, that females value this method of learning more highly than men. A substantially higher proportion of men found this method both 'not very helpful' and 'unhelpful'. However, 16 male respondents also found this method both very helpful and helpful, and this must not be overlooked.

To summarise, the results of this section of the survey indicate that, according respondents, the areas in which research leaders would find leadership training most beneficial are 'managing projects, finances and resources' and 'strategic leadership'. It is also supposed that the most helpful ways for research leaders to learn are in one to one discussions and through mentoring and coaching. These conclusions are applicable across the board, though a higher percentage of females and employees with 0-10 years of experience perceive these needs as more important.

## 5.6 UH Leadership development

This section outlines research leader's perception of the leadership development programmes provided by the UH and their perceived effectiveness.

Figure 18 shows the research staff's level of awareness of the leadership development initiatives provided by the UH.



**Figure 18:** Q. 20. UH staff leadership's involvement in development initiatives

Figure 18 shows that the 'making sense of leading', 'transition to leadership' and 'linking research skills and leadership' initiatives were not only underutilised, but also a large proportion of researchers were unaware of these initiatives. When considering the responses to question 15, which indicated that 'strategic leadership' would be a beneficial training scheme, it becomes apparent that if staff were aware of some of the existing initiatives then they would be more likely to attend and so gain applicable knowledge. The most attended training sessions are shown to be 'appraisal training'. This is interesting when considered against question 12, which shows that less than a quarter of the staff to complete the survey actually appraises any of their staff. Time management was also indicated as a need by the respondents. A time management training initiative is present in 'priorities, time and self-management.' However, this initiative has both the highest awareness and the lowest uptake rate. This could be due to the fact that its title includes 'self-management.' Self management is perceived as a very low priority in terms of training by the researchers. To rectify this separate and specific 'time management' initiative may prove more successful.

In summary the main problem with UH's leadership initiatives is their visibility to researchers. A huge proportion of respondents are not aware of the existence of these courses, particularly in the areas where they are most needed.

### 5.7 UH Leadership development and training

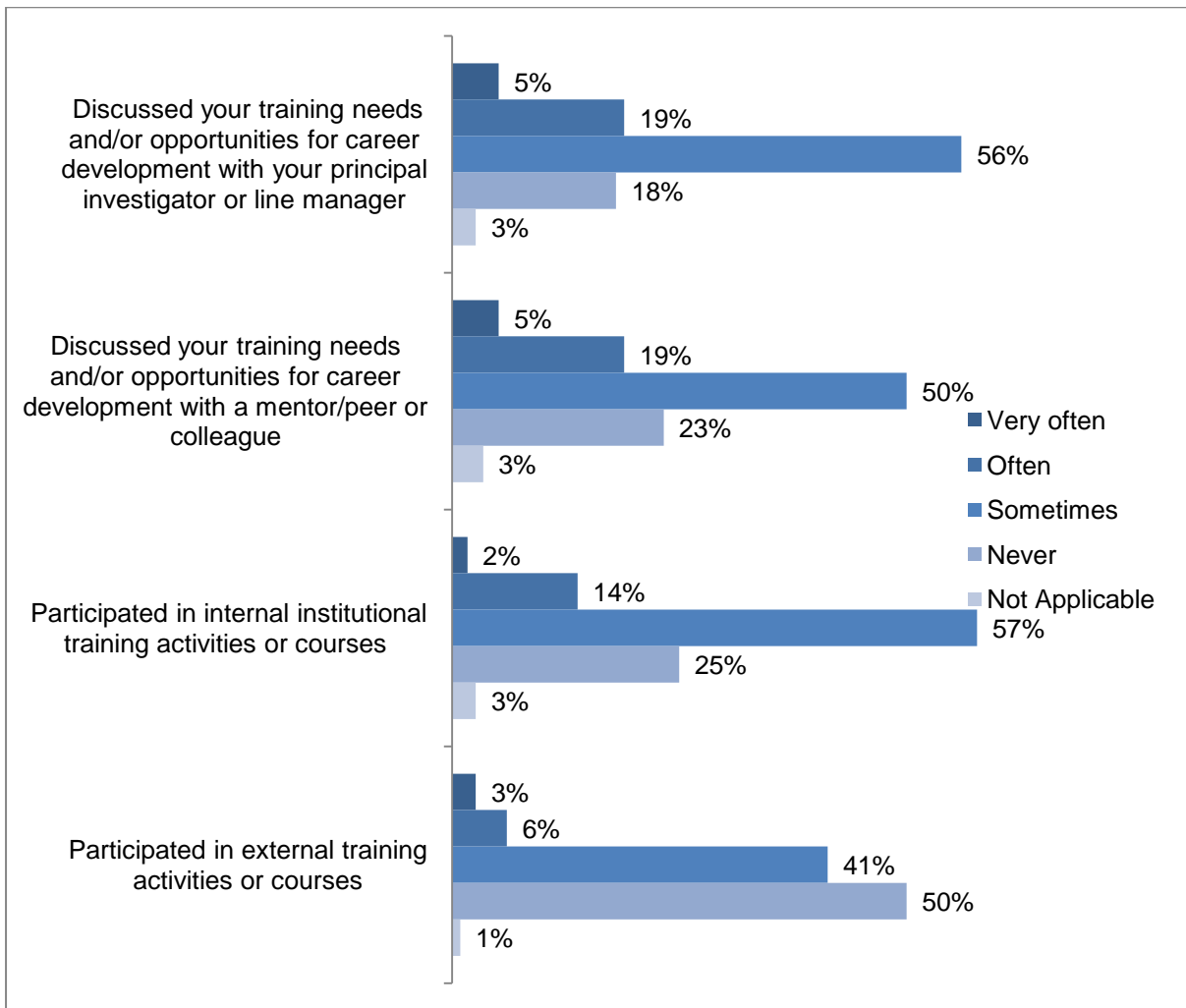
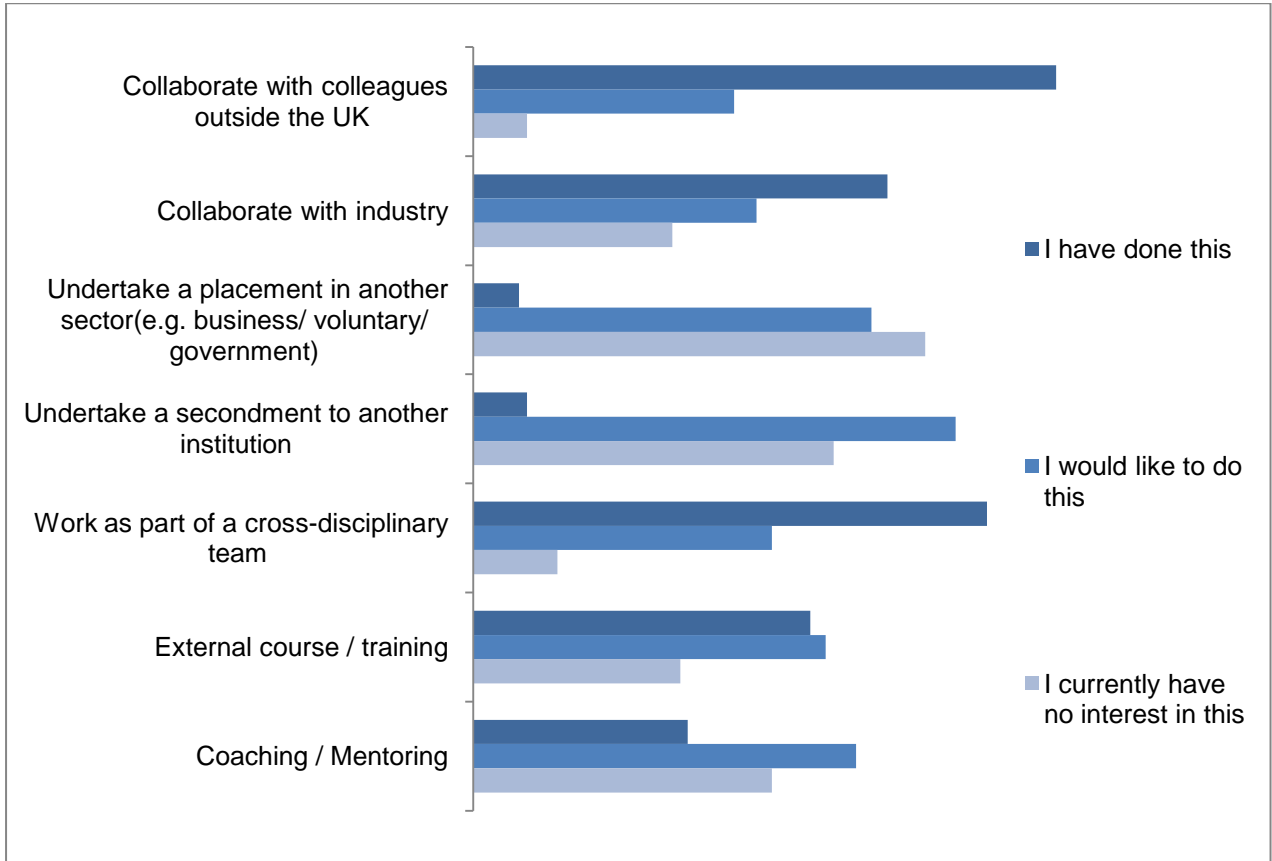


Figure 19: Q. 22. Respondents' involvement in research leadership

The above chart shows that the area where the staffs have least involvement is participating in external training activities or courses and half of the respondents have never taken part. In the other three areas figures are very similar with half or more researchers indicating that they 'sometimes' discuss their training needs and participate in training activities. In all four of these areas never more than 5% of respondents indicated that they were very often involved in such activities. In general, such discussion of training needs is relatively infrequent; with no more than 24% of respondents indicate that they discuss their training needs very often or often.

### 5.8 Experience for leadership development

This section outlines the methods respondents have used to gain experience for leadership development. It also measures their enthusiasm for the various methods that have not already been engaged in.



**Figure 20:** Q. 23. Other methods of gaining experience for leadership development

The above chart shows that the most commonly used method of gaining experience (utilised by 65% of researchers) is collaborating with colleagues outside the UK. Working as a part of a cross disciplinary team has been utilised by 57% of respondents. The least utilised methods, accounting for 5 and 6% of responses respectively are undertaking a placement in another sector and undertaking a secondment in another institution. In contrast these two methods also the most desirable methods of gaining experience.

---

## 6 Key Findings

---

### 6.1 Online Survey

- **Research engagement with UH** – 40% of the respondents belong to SSAHRI. 83% of respondents were conducting research related activities. 87% of respondents have had over 3 years of research experience within the UH. 69% of researchers are in permanent, full time positions at the university, and a further 15% occupy permanent positions on a part-time basis. Some respondents are also directly responsible for training their own staff, developing personnel and securing funding on a large scale.
- **Research role** – 53% of respondents spend less than 40% of their time conducting research related activities, but 21% dedicate 80 – 100% of their time to their research. The majority of respondents occupy positions that are equal or senior to ‘research fellow’ indicating most respondents are experienced in leading research.
- **Staff management and appraisal** – 68% of the respondents either supervise small groups of researchers/research students, or do not supervise any researchers. 77% of the respondents do not appraise any of their researchers.
- **Leadership development** – 52% of the respondents see a need to research-specific leadership development, and 41% see a need for generic leadership development.
- **Training and development** – the areas of ‘managing projects, finances and resources’ and ‘strategic leadership’ were the areas in which researchers felt the strongest need for management training. 36% of the researchers indicated that ‘one to one conversations’ was a very helpful method of learning. 33% indicated that ‘mentoring and coaching’ was a very helpful method of learning. Online discussion forums and online resources were seen as the least helpful method of learning.
- **UH leadership and development** – A large proportion of researchers do not know of the existence of the ‘making sense of leading’, ‘transition to leadership’ and ‘linking research skills and leadership’ initiatives. The most attended training session is ‘appraisal training’. Current staff awareness of existing training initiatives is extremely low.
- **UH leadership development and training** – No more than 24% of participants discuss their training needs often or very often. Participants are least involved in external training courses, with only 9% engaging in them either often or very often. Staff uptake, as with awareness, is also low.
- **Experience for leadership development** - Collaborating with colleagues outside of the UK and working as part of a cross disciplinary team are the most commonly used methods of gaining experience in leadership development. In contrast undertaking a

placement in another sector and undertaking a secondment in another institution is the least utilised but most desirable methods of gaining leadership development experience.

---

## 7 Conclusions and Key Messages

---

This project was located within the broad area of leadership in higher education (HE). The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) has recently made reference to a new framework for HE, one in which a tougher and more challenging financial environment has had important implications for leadership and leadership development in the sector. More specifically the project focused on academic researchers and their leadership development needs.

The main aim was to engage researchers at the University of Hertfordshire in the identification of their leadership development needs as well as to ascertain their views on research leadership in the institution more generally. Given the high response rate to the survey this engagement process could be viewed as having been successful. Responses from staff indicated that this topic was viewed as an important issue for them, and for the University.

The importance of context has been stressed and this had key implications, both for the design of the survey and interpretation of the results. Both 'researcher' and 'leadership' had to be defined broadly in order to encompass the variety and complexity of practice. In terms of generalisation, the results are likely to have greater application to similar, i.e. post-1992, institutions although only as a matter of degree.

### 7.1 For Researchers

- It is advisable for researchers to take a more dynamic role in their own development, actively seeking out training and development opportunities. The 'Researcher's responsibility' section of the Concordat should be addressed and personal responsibility taken for career enhancement.
- It is advisable for researchers to take a more proactive role in ensuring their career development requirements and activities are regularly discussed, monitored and evaluated throughout the year.
- It is recommended that researchers communicate with staff developers with regard to the relevance of training courses, and certain pertinent topics which may not currently be supported.

### 7.2 For Staff Developers

- Engaging Research staff in development activities can be very difficult. It may be advisable to explore how coaching/mentoring and one to one conversations could be utilised more as methods of training delivery. The context in which many Research staff

work makes attendance on classroom based workshops and modular programmes difficult to commit to. Respondents believe that the most beneficial method of learning involve support from senior/experienced research leaders.

- It would be beneficial for the existing training courses offered by the UH to be better marketed to the research employees. A large number of participants indicated that they were unaware of the training which is offered to researchers and research leaders, and a higher level of visibility could increase uptake in some areas, particularly in relation to the 'making sense of leading' and 'transition to leadership' programmes.
- The subjects of 'Managing Projects, Finances and Resources' and 'Strategic leadership' were identified as a strong need for research leadership. Staffs Developers may wish to explore these areas more fully.
- It would be beneficial to separate the time management content of the 'priorities, time and self management' training course. Time management proved to be a highly desired area of training, but it is probable that researchers do not involve themselves with this training course because of its self-management content that is seen as unhelpful by a large proportion of researchers. A well advertised, specified time management course could increase uptake and satisfy researchers' demand for training in this area.
- The areas of 'managing projects, finances and resources' and 'strategic leadership' were the areas in which researchers felt the strongest need for management training and it is recommended that these areas are explored.

### **7.3 For Senior Managers**

- The national initiatives such as Concordat and the Rugby Team Impact Framework highlight the responsibility and benefits for institutions in providing development for Research Staff. The Researcher Development Framework provides a guide for both Managers and Research staff on the focus for development.
- The need to understand the complexity and variety of practice of research activity and the management of this activity across the University and the implications of this, and the distributed nature of research leadership, for leadership development
- A strong preference amongst respondents for one-to-one discussions and coaching and mentoring has potential implications for the responsibilities and work load of senior researchers and research leaders
- Respondents to the online survey believe that the least beneficial methods of learning are online-based. However, online forums and online resources are by far the most efficient and cost-effective training methods. They are also far more accessible than, for instance, a one to one discussion with a senior researcher, in fact they can be utilised at any time from prospectively any location.

- The two least utilised methods of gaining leadership experience were undertaking a placement in another sector and undertaking a secondment in another institution. These are also the two areas in which the respondents seem most enthusiastic to take part. It is advisable that a higher level of information is available in these areas, promoting these methods as viable leadership training endeavours.

---

## 8 References

---

- Ball, S. (2007). 'Leadership of Academics in Research'. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership* , 35 (4), 449-477.
- Burgoyne, J., Mackness, J. and Williams, S, (2009) *Baseline Study of Leadership Development in Higher Education*, Leadership Foundation in Higher Education.
- CIPD Online (2010) *Learning and Talent Development: Annual Survey Report 2010*. Available at:  
[http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/lnanddev/general/\\_Learning\\_and\\_development\\_summary.htm](http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/lnanddev/general/_Learning_and_development_summary.htm) [Accessed on: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011]
- The Rugby Team (2009) *The Rugby Team Impact Framework: one year on*. Available at:  
The Concordat (2010)
- Ashridge (2010) *Developing Business and leadership skills* Available at  
<http://www.ashridge.org.uk/website/content.nsf/wOPN/Developing+Business+and+Leadership+Skills~Fact+File?opendocument%20Ash%20ridge> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- Evolve team Limited (2009) *Research team leaders* Available at  
[http://evolveleadteam.co.uk/html/research\\_team\\_leaders.html](http://evolveleadteam.co.uk/html/research_team_leaders.html) [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- Cardiff University (2010) *Leadership and Management Development Programme for Research Team Leaders* Available at  
<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/humrs/staffinfo/organisationaldevelopment/leadership/research/index.html> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- Garrett, G., & Davies, G. (2010). *Herding Cats: Being advice to aspiring academic and research leaders*. Axminster: Triarchy Press.
- London School of Economics (2010) *LSE support for research managers and supervisors* Available at  
<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/staff/Research%20staff/informationForResearchManagersAndSupervisors/lseSupportForManagersSupervisors.aspx> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- Manchester Business School (2010) *Research team leadership Programme* Available at  
<http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/trainingteam/Training/Programmes.aspx?PagelD=5-12> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- Sheffield University (2010) *Research leadership development programme* Available at  
<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/content/1/c6/08/85/57/Programme%202009.pdf> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]

- University of Bristol (2010) *Research team leaders* Available at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/researchstaff/research-team-leaders/> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- University of Birmingham (2010) *Research Team Leader Programme* Available at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/researchstaff/research-team-leaders/> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- University of Leicester (2010) *Action Learning for Principal Investigators* Available at <http://www.le.ac.uk/researchleader/actionlearning.html> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- University of Liverpool (2010) *Research team leadership* Available at <http://www.liv.ac.uk/hr/organisational-development/leadership-programmes/research-team-leadership.htm> [Accessed: 1st November, 2010]
- Vitae (2011) *Researcher Development Framework*. Available at <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/Researcher%20development%20statement.pdf> [Accessed: 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011]
- Valuing Research Staff (2011), *Implementing the Concordat* [Online], Available at: <http://www.herts.ac.uk/fms/documents/research/concordat-brochure-april-2010.pdf> [Accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011]