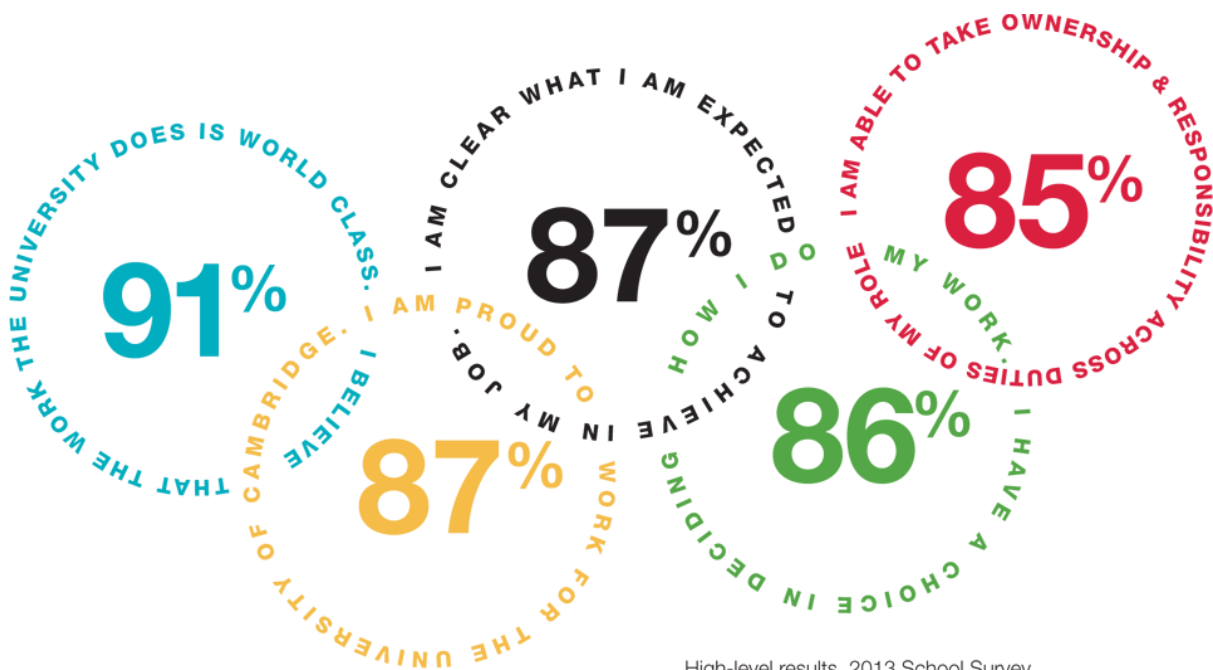


# SCHOOL SURVEY FAQs

The year for achieving <sup>more</sup> great results.



High-level results, 2013 School Survey

The time has come again to have your say...

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Q1. Why is the School undertaking a survey?**

The survey will give you the opportunity to tell us how you feel about working at the University and in the School of Biological Sciences and in your Department/Institute. The information, opinions and ideas that emerge will identify areas for improvement for individual departments and institutes, and bring benefits to the School and the University as a whole both now and in the future. The results will also help us to monitor diversity practices, aid staff wellbeing, and allow us to benchmark our School against other institutions and other Schools within the University of Cambridge.

In addition, the survey will provide valuable data to departments intending to apply for an Athena SWAN award. While Athena SWAN was designed to recognise a commitment to supporting the careers of women in science, the positive impact of improving working practices is likely to be felt across all departments/institutes and staff groups.

## **PARTICIPATION**

### **Q2. Who is taking part in the survey?**

The survey is being launched to all employees of the School. It doesn't matter how long you have worked here, where you work, or what job you do – your views are equally valid and equally wanted. "Employees" means all those with a University contract (including those on fixed term contracts), but not agency workers, retired staff, volunteers, or people working under a Visitor Agreement. This is because many of the survey questions touch on aspects of working for the University which are not relevant to non-employees.

However, in response to staff comments in 2013, we are including one additional category in this survey. We are including those research fellows whose funding comes to them direct and is not routed through a University of Cambridge contract. These research fellows are technically not employed as staff by the University of Cambridge, but their working lives in our departments/institutes is in most if not all respects just the same as research fellows whose funding is routed through the university payroll, and they are included.

We will contact those who are absent from work to tell them about the survey and give them the opportunity to participate if they wish.

Additional support is available for staff with disabilities, for instance offering large font or completion of the survey over the phone direct with ORC International. Please call ORC on 0845 676 2096 if you need any help.

### **Q3. Why should I participate in the survey?**

This is an opportunity for you to have your say and to provide your views on important aspects of your employment with the University. What you tell us will help identify areas for improvement for individual departments and institutes, and also highlight things that currently work well. It will also inform the University's decision as to whether to run another survey at some time in the future.

The 2013 survey results stimulated debate and innovation across the School. Departments and institutes reviewed their feedback mechanisms (including appraisal and mentoring); identified new ways in which to alert staff to career information and non-pay benefits; improved their support for post-docs; and used the data about development and wellbeing to inform their Athena SWAN submissions.

The 2016 survey will help departments and institutes identify issues and opportunities in the same way.

**Q4. Is it compulsory to take part?**

No – participation is entirely voluntary. However, we would like as many people as possible to complete the survey. A good response rate ensures we have more reliable and robust data that is representative of colleagues across the School.

Even a partially-completed survey will be of value, so you can choose not to answer a specific question or a number of questions if you wish.

**Q5. Are the trade unions aware of the survey work?**

Yes – plans for the School survey have been shared with the trade unions.

**Q6. Who are ORC International?**

The University has appointed an independent global research company, ORC International, to collect and analyse your responses. This ensures that all responses are completely anonymous and confidential. The University does not have access to ANY of the data and respondents cannot be identified.

ORC specialises in many areas of research, including employee research and customer research. They have a great deal of specialist experience in running staff opinion surveys with a variety of UK organisations, including a number of universities. You can visit their website <http://www.orcinternational.com> to find out more.

Individual survey responses will be returned directly to ORC and will not be seen by anyone in the University, thereby ensuring confidentiality.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY****Q7. How can I be certain that my feedback will remain confidential?**

Confidentiality is paramount to the success of the survey. This is one of the reasons we have appointed an external research company, ORC International, to collect and analyse your responses.

**ORC International belongs to the Market Research Society (MRS) and as such ORC works to a strict industry code of conduct that protects the individual confidentiality of all survey participants.**

Please see [http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code\\_of\\_conduct/](http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code_of_conduct/) for more information.

***ORC are legally bound to ensure that no-one from the University has access to ANY of the completed questionnaires or sees the raw data. Equally, there is no way either the University or ORC can identify which members of staff have or have not completed the survey.***

We will not analyse how individuals respond and no data will be available to identify any group of fewer than 10 respondents, although of course all responses will be included in the overall results. This means that if fewer than 10 women in a department/institute complete the survey the results cannot be reported on by gender.

**Q8. Can my response be traced back to my computer by the University?**

No. Since the survey is being hosted by ORC International on their server, no one at the University has access to the responses at any point during the survey, nor can anyone trace responses back to an individual or group of individuals. At no point will you be asked to input your email address or Raven password.

## **THE QUESTIONS**

### **Q9. What kind of questions are in the survey? What does the survey measure?**

The survey asks your opinion on a broad range of topics, such as your job, your development, leadership and line management, work-life balance, pay and benefits, inclusion and fair treatment, communication and your overall perceptions of the University.

The majority of questions take the form of a statement and you are requested to tick the most appropriate option from those listed. In most instances there is a 5 point scale of responses to choose from, from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

There are questions that invite you to provide a free-form response, and also questions about your personal details – grade, length of service etc. These questions are optional (and we stress your identity will not be revealed through you answering them) but your responses will help us understand whether there are any factors relating to personal details which influence a member of staff's experience of the University. Information such as length of service, for example, will help identify whether there are any special issues or support needed for new recruits, and gender or sexuality information will help us to identify whether there are any equality issues that we need to explore further. This is in line with the University's commitment to providing a working environment in which colleagues across the School are treated equally and with dignity and respect.

The questionnaire is very similar to the one used in 2013 across the University, and more recently the Clinical School Staff Survey, which means it has been tested. It also means we will be able to compare our results to another science-based School.

### **Q10. Why will I be asked to give some personal details?**

It is important that we can group the results in different ways, for example comparing departments/institutes and job categories. This will help us to identify priorities in different parts of the School so that action can be taken to improve the experience of working in these areas.

As explained above, information, such as length of service or gender will help us to identify issues where support may be needed. Completing the personal details section will make the survey results more meaningful. We stress you will not be identified by giving these details.

### **Q11. To which staff group do I belong?**

There are five main groups that are invited to take part in the survey. To help you identify which group applies to you, below are example roles within each group:

<b>Academic:</b>	Lecturer, Clinical Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, Professor,
<b>Academic Related:</b>	Departmental Administrator, Computer Officer, Project Manager
<b>Assistant:</b>	Lab, Research or Teaching Technician, Facilities Manager, Secretary, Administrator, Receptionist, Cleaner
<b>Research:</b>	Research Assistant, Research Associate, Senior Research Associate, Principal Research Associate (including research fellows), Assistant Director of Research, Director of Research
<b>Research (own-funding):</b>	Research fellows holding awards which are not routed through a University contract

If you are still unsure then please check with your Local Administrator or tick the 'Don't Know' box.

## **SURVEY COMPLETION**

### **Q12. How do I complete the survey?**

All those with computer and internet access at work will be sent an online link to ORC's website. By clicking on this link you will be taken to the questionnaire, hosted on ORC's server.

For those without computer and internet access, or who are away on maternity or long-term sick leave, a paper copy and pre-paid reply envelope will be issued to enable you to return the completed survey directly to ORC. Please note that paper copies should be returned by 27 April 2016 to ensure they reach ORC by the closing date of 29 April 2016.

### **Q13. Neither taking part online or on paper will work for me, how else can I participate?**

Alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, telephone completion etc.) are available for anyone who is unable to take part online or via a paper copy. Please telephone the ORC International helpline (tel: 0845 676 2096) to discuss your options. ORC will help ensure you are given the opportunity to complete the survey.

### **Q14. How long does it take to complete the survey?**

As a guide, it will take 20-30 minutes to fill in the survey, either online or on paper. The time taken depends on how long you think about your responses and whether you wish to add any free text comments at the end of the questionnaire.

### **Q15. Do I have to answer all the questions – can I leave a question without a response?**

The online survey does not force a respondent to answer every question as we appreciate you may be unable or may not wish to answer a particular question.

### **Q16. Can I browse through the online questionnaire before filling it in?**

Yes, but please note that after browsing, if you wish to complete the survey you must go back to the beginning and answer the questions, rather than pressing the "Next" button at the end. Pressing the "Next" button means that a blank survey is sent to ORC, which obviously doesn't tell us anything.

### **Q17. Can I change any of my responses once I have entered them online?**

If you have not yet reached the end of the survey and submitted all responses (you will be told at the end of the survey when you have submitted your responses) you can go back and change your answers. You do this by clicking on the browser back button (usually an arrow pointing to the left) until you have returned to the page with the response you wish to change. Once you have made the change you should click the "Next" button as before, which takes you to the next page of questions. However, you will then have to answer all the following questions again to the end of the questionnaire.

### **Q18. Would I be able to save progress on the form and come back to it or do I have to answer the whole survey in one go?**

You will be asked to set your own password as you start the survey specifically so that you can come out of the survey part-way through and go back to complete it at a later time. To return to the survey, simply click on the survey link that was emailed to you, and you will be taken back to the point where you left the survey. Please note that you will not be able to change the responses to questions previously answered, only to answer the remaining questions.

**Q19. What is the deadline for completion of the survey?**

For online completion, the survey is available up to 5pm on Friday 29 April 2016. Paper copies should be returned to ORC in the pre-paid envelope provided by Wednesday 27 April 2016. No responses received after the deadline will be included in the results.

**RESULTS REPORTING****Q20. Will the results of the survey be reported to staff?**

Yes, top level reports are likely to be available during June. These will be anonymised reports showing the statistical results summarising the responses.

There may be the chance for you to volunteer for focus groups to share any further feedback you may have on the survey experience. Focus groups may be run after the questionnaire is complete and the results have been analysed.

**Q21. Will action be taken as a result of the survey?**

The results will help us understand how you view your job, your department/institute, and the University. Our ultimate aim is to examine how we can change the things that need improving, and to keep doing the things you tell us are currently working well. Until the survey is completed and the responses analysed it is difficult for us to know the themes that will emerge. Whilst it would be impossible and impractical for the School to commit to addressing every single issue raised, the survey will help us to prioritise these issues, and departments/institutes are free to concentrate on particular issues of concern. Where we identify issues that are common across several departments, the School may progress the matters via focus groups.

**QUERIES****Q22. If I have a query about the survey, who can I contact for information and advice?**

Please contact your Staff Survey Key Contacts in the first instance. Their contact details are supplied in the email that accompanies this document. One of them is likely to be your Departmental Administrator.

Alternatively, you may contact Angela Lowe ([aml72@cam.ac.uk](mailto:aml72@cam.ac.uk)) or ORC International, by email at [uocbiological2016@orcsurvey.co.uk](mailto:uocbiological2016@orcsurvey.co.uk).