

## Supporting Early Career Researchers

Policy Statement: February 2020

### Principle of Flexibility

Research Councils and other agencies use definitions which are fixed in relation to the individual's completion of their PhD, normally at 4-7 years out. We think this rigid definition fails to achieve the flexibility required for a staff body such as ours, where some very experienced lecturers are seeking to develop research careers for the first time; where others are joining us from professional backgrounds; and where mid-career lecturers are acquiring PhDs significantly after beginning academic careers.

We therefore invite colleagues to self-designate as ECRs,<sup>1</sup> explaining to Research Leads how they arrive at their definition

### The Main Features of Support for ECRs

1. **Research Development programme** run by our Centre for Professional Education Practice (CPED), which provides a variety of sessions to support staff at all stages of their careers.
2. Appraisal through **My Review**, a university-wide mechanism of annual review in which colleagues can discuss needs, aims, ambitions, and targets.
3. An optional (but strongly-encouraged) **Mentoring Scheme** in which any colleague can seek support from a more experienced colleague.
4. **Research Planning** scheme which is linked to the award of research support and should be seen also as a complement to mentoring. In the Planning process, colleagues set themselves targets to further their research careers, whilst also providing an opportunity for the University to understand how to support them.
5. **Annual Workload** for research in order to support field trips, conference presentation, etc.
6. **A Research Leave Scheme** (one-semester-in-six) which all ECRs will be given at least once in order to start projects, with further iterations being based on delivery of precious leave objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> **REF Definition of an early career researcher (ECR):** Category A staff who started their careers as independent researchers on or after 1 August 2016.

7. We subscribe to Vitae, which is dedicated to fulfilling research potential.
8. We also fund Research Centres and Groups, host an annual research conference, run regular seminars, and have recently launched an Interdisciplinary Research Forum.
9. The Research and Postgraduate Office also provides support for Researchers to apply for external funding sources including post-doctoral and early career fellowships.

Anne Markey  
Don MacRaid  
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