

Supporting Early Career Researchers Policy Statement

Owner: Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Knowledge Exchange

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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 four to seven 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,¹ explaining to Heads of Research and Knowledge Exchange how they arrive at their definition.

The Main Features of Support for ECRs

1. Our **Staff Researcher Development programme** run by Research and Postgraduate Office, 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.

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

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.
7. We subscribe to Vitae and are signatories on the Research Development Concordat, which is dedicated to fulfilling research potential.
8. We also fund Researchers via competitive application, Research Centres and Groups, host an annual research conference, run regular seminars, and run 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.
10. We have established a clear route to academic promotion which provides opportunities for promotion to Reader and Professor, annually.