Introduction
Welcome to your research role at the University of Reading. This booklet is intended to provide you with an explanation of what you can expect from the University and from your Principal Investigator (PI) to support you in your role and in your career development. It also outlines your responsibilities in line with the expectations of the University of Reading and the funders of research including UKRI.

For the purpose of this booklet, the term ‘research staff’ is used to describe a number of roles and job titles including, although not limited to, Post-Doctoral Research Assistant, Research Fellow, Research Associate, Research Officer and Research Scientist. It is aimed at research staff on a fixed term, grade 6 or grade 7 contract.

The University publically demonstrates its commitment to the support and development of research staff through its attainment of the Human Resources Excellence in Research (HRER) Award, the principles of which are shown in Appendix A. It is proud to be one of only ten UK universities to have retained the award since its introduction in 2010, which it does through its commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

The Concordat is an agreement between the funders and employers of research staff in the UK and sets out clear standards that research staff can expect from the university that employs them, as well as their own personal responsibilities as members of the research community. The Concordat places personal and professional development at the heart of the experience of research staff and is key to realising the potential of the research workforce and in achieving the University’s research strategy.

Indeed, terms and conditions of Research Council FEC Grants state that "The Research Organisation is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for the management of research staff set out in the 2008 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and subsequent amendments".

This guidance therefore draws on good practice from the Concordat and the University’s policies relevant to the management and development of research staff. The management responsibilities of PIs are outlined in the booklet 'PI Management Responsibilities'. Your Principal Investigator should provide you with an overview of the key points about the research project and with the contents of this booklet as outlined in the checklist ‘Topics for Discussion with your PI’ shown in Appendix C. You can find the booklet in this link.
# Table of Contents

## Contents

- Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
- Expectations from Research Staff .................................................................................. 3
  - Local Concordat for Research Staff ........................................................................... 3
- Research Staff Responsibilities ....................................................................................... 4
  - Responsibilities to the University ............................................................................... 4
  - Responsibilities to Yourself ......................................................................................... 4
  - Managing your Career ................................................................................................. 4
  - Developing Yourself ..................................................................................................... 5
  - Researcher Development Framework .......................................................................... 5
- Management Responsibilities of PIs .............................................................................. 5
  - End of Research Project / Contract of Employment .................................................... 5
- Useful contacts ............................................................................................................... 6
  - University of Reading .................................................................................................. 6
  - External contacts .......................................................................................................... 6
- Appendix A ................................................................................................................... 7
  - Development opportunities for Research Staff .......................................................... 7
- Appendix B .................................................................................................................... 9
  - Checklist to cover with research staff ......................................................................... 9
Expectations from Research Staff

As a member of staff, all University policies and procedures are applicable to you. In addition to the support and benefits enjoyed by all members of staff, there are additional principles that are specifically applicable to research staff on fixed-term contracts. These principles are in place in recognition of the importance of research staff to the University and its research. As explained above, the University is committed to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, which sets out all the practices you can expect to be in place to support you in your research role. The principles of the Concordat are:

Principle 1: Recognition of the importance of recruiting selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research

Principle 2: Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation’s human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research

Principle 3: Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment

Principle 4: The importance of researchers’ personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career

Principle 5: Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning

Principle 6: Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers

Principle 7: 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

Local Concordat for Research Staff

To reinforce the University’s commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, an agreement was drawn up between the University of Reading and its unions concerning career management and the conditions of employment for post-doctoral researchers employed on fixed term contracts, called the Local Concordat for Research Staff. Some of the key principles of this agreement include:

- your PI will explain the objectives of the research project and the demarcation of responsibilities at the outset of the project
- you should be provided with a mentor at the start of your contract; a person who is not your PI
- there should be, as appropriate, quarterly meetings with your PI to review progress towards the target tasks and changes to the targets agreed and recorded
- you should be encouraged to teach and supervise students at levels appropriate to your own qualification, to provide you with teaching and supervision experience for your career development
- you should actively participate in the induction and training programmes provided by the University, which includes support in career management and development
- you should participate in the University’s Performance and Development Review process. The review should be conducted by your PI, unless you request an alternative reviewer who will be appointed by your Head of School or his/her nominee
- you should have equal status with Lecturers and attend Research Group, Departmental, School and Research Theme meetings as appropriate. Your views can also be represented through the Research Staff Committee.

Research Staff Responsibilities

Responsibilities to the University

You will have seen during the recruitment process the job description and person specification that provide a comprehensive explanation of your key responsibilities to successfully perform in your role. It’s important for you to understand how the research you are conducting fits into the University’s overall aims, which you can do by being familiar with the Strategy 2026. The principles within the Strategy are underpinned by the document Working Together: A Strategy for Success. This recognises the crucial contribution that all staff make to the achievement of the University’s aims. In these demanding times for the University we have to enable everyone to make the best contribution they can. It is only by doing so that we will improve our standing as a leading research-intensive university and become an excellent place for both staff and students to work.

Both these strategies are complemented by the The Values for Working Together and the Professional Behaviours, which together help to provide clarity about common objectives and purpose, and the ways in which we can most productively work together. The Values for Working Together aim to provide a framework within which the University community can work together effectively toward the achievement of excellence. The University will provide a working environment and experience that reflects these values and expects all colleagues to conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with them. The Professional Behaviours illustrate the types of activity that the University believes will promote excellence. They are applicable to all staff at the University and can be adapted to reflect the particular needs and circumstances of different roles. They are intended to act as a guide of the behaviours the University will recognise, reward and endorse.

Responsibilities to Yourself

You will no doubt be aware that the number of research staff who are able to progress to a permanent contract as a lecturer is limited. In fact HEFCE’s 2006 figures demonstrate that 6000 new lecturers a year are needed in England from a pool of approximately 40,000 research staff. These figures should not deter you from pursuing an academic career, but they do emphasise the importance of you acquiring transferable skills to keep your options open. This is reinforced in both the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and the Local Concordat for Research Staff. They talk about the importance of you taking responsibility for developing and managing your career. You should ensure that your career development is regularly discussed and evaluated with your PI and mentor. You are urged to view a research contract as an opportunity to develop experience and skills as a precursor for employment within academia or elsewhere. There are a number of ways in which the University supports and encourages you to take the opportunities available to you during your contract.

Managing your Career

You can use this Researcher Development Career Planner form to help you think about your career goals and identify the actions that you can take in order to achieve those goals. There are many opportunities that you can take in order to develop your skills and broaden your experience to further your career. Some of these opportunities are listed in the Research Staff Development Prompter, which you can use to discuss with your line manager/reviewer.
Developing Yourself

People Development provide a wide range of training events and opportunities for you. **Research Staff Development Opportunities** lists workshops which are focused on the needs of research staff. A wider list of workshops can also be found on the search for a course page. From here you are able to see the next available workshops, and book a place. Examples of the variety of ways in which you can develop yourself are shown in Appendix A.

Researcher Development Framework

Vitae is the UK awarding body for the Human Resources Excellence in Research (HRER) Award. They have developed the Research Development Framework (RDF), which describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers. It is a useful point of reference for developing career and personal development plans. **Researcher Development Framework**

Management Responsibilities of PIs

The management and development responsibilities of PIs are documented in a guidance booklet. The guidance includes a reminder of the University's reward and recognition schemes, criteria for promotion for research staff from grade 6 to grade 7, the importance of your on-going learning and development and the Health and Safety guidelines applicable for research work. The checklist of information that your PI should cover with you is in Appendix B and is on the **Research Staff Induction** page of the staff portal.

End of Research Project / Contract of Employment

There is an expectation that you should be involved through the submission of a second grant application at the end of the project, if there is any continuation of the research and in that application you would be credited as being its ‘co-author’. The University has specific legal duties with regard to the termination of fixed term contracts of employment, which your PI will follow in consultation with HR. When your contract may be coming to an end, you can register for Jobalerts, which will make you aware of any jobs you may have interest in, which are advertised on the University website. You can set the parameters of the alerts e.g. grade of role, key words.
Useful contacts

University of Reading

Human Resources
www.reading.ac.uk/humanresources
humanresources@reading.ac.uk
+ 44 (0)118 378 8751

People Development
www.reading.ac.uk/peopledevelopment
peopledevelopment@reading.ac.uk
+ 44 (0) 118 378 6113

Careers Advisory Service
www.reading.ac.uk/careers/staff/researchers.asp
careers@reading.ac.uk
+ 44 (0) 118 378 8359

External contacts

Vitae - Researcher Development Framework
https://www.vitae.ac.uk/

Research Councils
www.rcuk.ac.uk/index.asp

The European Charter for Researchers PDF download
europa.eu.int/eracareers/pdf/am509774CEE_EN_E4.pdf

Universities UK
www.universitiesuk.ac.uk

Research Careers Initiative
www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/activities/rci.asp

The Leadership Foundation
www.lfhe.ac.uk

Association of Researchers in Medicine and Science
www.hope-academic.org.uk/arms/arms.html

Higher Education Funding Council for England
www.hefce.ac.uk/

Universities Superannuation Scheme web site
www.usshq.co.uk/
Appendix A

Development opportunities for Research Staff

Learning and development can arise from a variety of opportunities; not just attending training courses. Examples of opportunities to develop skills include:

- A new challenge or responsibility
- Acting as a reviewer/ examiner
- Attending and presenting at conferences
- Coaching
- Giving new presentations
- In-house informal discussions/seminars
- Internal and external committee work
- Job/task/role rotation
- Joining or creating a network of contacts
- Lab Demonstration
- Mentoring
- Observation, peer review
- Organising a consultation exercise or gathering systematic feedback
- Organising events
- Planned or guided reading
- Representing the School or University in a wider context
- Review, evaluation or audit activities
- Secondments
- Supervising others
- Team activities
- Temporary membership of a working party
- Time set aside for self-paced learning
- Training or inducting new staff
- Tutoring of or by peers
- Visits

Development courses for Research Staff

- Costing for Research Proposals
- Writing a Data Management Plan
- Research Data Management: an Introduction
- Research Data Management Surgery
- Using Social Media to Communicate and Enhance your Research
- Communicating your Research: Five Simple Ideas
- Overview of Research Funding
- Introduction to Writing Successful Grant Proposals
- Stakeholder Mapping
- Scholarly publishing: requirements and opportunities
- CentAUR, REF & Funders’ Open Access Policies for Publication
- CentAUR and Open Access Surgery
- ORCiD Identifiers
- Introduction to Altmetric Explorer
- Introduction to Bibliometrics
- Introduction to SciVal Research Intelligence Tool
• Managing your Digital Researcher Identity
• Research Impact
• How to Write a Policy Brief
• Engaging with Policymakers
• Writing for Non-academic Audiences
• Researchfish
• Presenting Yourself at Interviews
• Moving to a University Lectureship
• Moving towards a career in industry
Appendix B

Checklist to cover with research staff

1. The objectives and important milestones of the project
   Provide a copy of the project proposal containing a complete description of the project, its objectives, proposed methods and timelines

2. Your responsibilities within the project
   Explain their role and what’s expected of them during the research project, how this will be reviewed and who by

3. Other people’s responsibilities within the project
   Who else is involved in delivering the project, including other research staff and support from PhD students, technical staff and research functions

4. Expectations and targets associated with probation
   Explain their role and what’s expected of them during their probationary period, how this will be reviewed and who by. What happens at the end of the probationary period

5. Reviewing my progress and the PDR process
   Explain how their progress against their targets will be reviewed and who by. The Performance and Development Review (PDR) process and who carries it out

6. Arranging a mentor
   Ensure that a mentor is allocated from within the school to provide support and guidance to help them settle into their role as smoothly as possible.

7. Targets for publication and the publication plan
   The process and timescales for publication including which journals and compliance with the University of Reading publication guidelines

8. The procedure for establishing the order of names in the authorship of papers and other publications
   Clarification of how credit is provided towards the research

9. Opportunities for supervision and teaching
   Explanation of any opportunities to supervise and / or teach within the School, for example for PhD students

10. The time available for personal and professional development on a yearly basis
    Explanation of the time allocated within the grant conditions for personal development and how you will support this

11. Research Development Framework from Vitae
    Explanation of the key attributes of a successful researcher, as shown on the Researcher Development Framework, which they can use to formulate a development plan.
    www.vitae.ac.uk

12. Learning and Development opportunities
    Range of research specific and career development opportunities provided by the University. Research staff development
13. Career Development Plan
   Explanation of the form to help them plan career development activities

14. Research Staff Committee
   How the interests of research staff are represented by the Research Staff Committee
   Research Staff Committee

15. Criteria for promotion for research staff from grade 6 to grade 7
   Explanation of the promotion process and criteria

16. Research Travel Grant
   Explanation of funding that can be applied for to support the travel and registration costs
   associated with the dissemination of research 'outcomes' at international events and
   conferences.
   Research Travel Grant Sub-Committee; you will need to input your University username and
   password to access this page

17. HR considerations
   Explanation of the HR policies and guidelines that are relevant for providing a supportive
   working environment, including the Employee Assistance Programme and the University's
   commitment to well being

18. Health and Safety considerations
   Explanation of the H&S policies and guidelines that are relevant for providing a safe working
   environment

19. Sustainability
   Explanation of the University's sustainability vision and the ways in which you can work to
   contribute to this vision

20. Research Ethics
   Explanation of the role of the Research Ethics Committee and the associated compliance
   guidelines

21. Research outputs
   Explanation of CentAUR, the Institutional Repository for depositing research outputs

22. End of research project
   Explanation of what you can expect to happen towards the end of the research contract