RESEARCHERS' CAREERS: GUIDANCE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATORS

Introduction

These guidance notes on the employment and management of researchers are for heads of department and departmental administrators ('department' is used to refer to departments, faculties, centres and institutes). They set out, in shortened form, practical steps which heads of department and departmental administrators should take to contribute to the implementation of the University's Employment and Career Management Scheme. This Scheme is informed by the principles of the UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

How to use these notes

The University expects that all arrangements based on the Employment and Career Management Scheme will be embedded within departments. It is recognised that some of the practicalities outlined in these notes will vary within departments, for example in accordance with the length of contract and seniority of individual researchers and PIs; the requirements of departments; the extent to which researchers work in groups and teams; and the security of external funding.

Complementary guidance notes for PIs/supervisors of researchers are available. You may wish to develop more detailed, 'local' guidance from these notes. For example, you may wish to highlight which steps during a recruitment process should be undertaken by a PI in your department and which should be undertaken by a member of administrative staff, with appropriate contact information. Please also note that a series of questions for researchers has been developed, in order to highlight important aspects of career management and to guide reflection and planning.

These notes for heads of department and departmental administrators cover:

1. selection and recruitment of researchers;
2. pay;
3. conditions of service;
4. newly appointed researchers;
5. career planning and development;
6. before funding ends.

Further information

Links are provided in these pages to sources of further information and support. These links are included as signposts: you are not expected to access them all, but may find that you are able to use them to find answers to questions relating to policy, for example, or sources of support. You may also find it helpful to be aware of the range of guidance and support that is available for researchers and for PIs. If you consider it appropriate to develop more detailed, local guidance from these notes, you may wish to include some of these links within local guidance.

Related resources

- The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers: http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/)

- Employment and Career Management Scheme for Researchers: http://www.cam.ac.uk/staffstudents/research-staff/ecm/ecm-scheme/

- Career management tool for researchers: http://www.cam.ac.uk/staffstudents/research-staff/ecm/careers/

- Managing researchers' careers: guidance for principal investigators and supervisors of researchers: http://www.cam.ac.uk/staffstudents/research-staff/ecm/pi-notes/

1. Selection and recruitment of researchers

Ensure that structures are in place so that those recruiting researchers understand their responsibilities under the University's recruitment guidance. Guidance is available online, including a summary of employer responsibilities relating to equal opportunities.

Sound selection and recruitment requires:

1. definition of the role's contribution to the research project (it is recognised that this may change, for example as the project matures). This definition should be used as the basis for an advertisement for the post. At this stage, an appropriate job title must be selected and pre-employment checks necessary for the post must be identified. Ensure that structures are in place so that members of staff are aware of the responsibilities that they have in this process. Guidance concerning job titles and pre-employment checks is available online.
2. consideration of methods which will be used during selection and which selection criteria will be used to assess each application;
3. advertising the position through the Recruitment Administration System;
4. conducting interviews and completing any other selection tests;
5. selection of the preferred candidate, on the basis of an objective assessment against the selection criteria;
6. using University online guidance on determining salary, unless the funder or fellowship scheme applies a different pay scale;
7. ensuring that structures are in place to enable the following:
   a. the researcher is sent a conditional offer letter (a template is available online);
   b. the researcher's details and the offer made to him/her are supplied to the relevant member of support staff, who will record these details in CHRIS (the HR and Payroll system) and who will return the completed staff appointment form to the Recruitment Administration team with the required supporting documentation;
   c. the researcher has either a fixed-term contract or an open-ended contract (guidance on the use of appropriate contracts is provided online);
   d. an induction programme is devised, covering the first few weeks of employment (guidance and checklists are available online);
   e. an appropriate probationary period is set in accordance with University guidance (available online).

Related resources

- The University's Recruitment Guidance: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/recruitment/
- Information about job titles: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/recruitment/vacancy/titles.html
- Template conditional offer letter: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/recruitment/administration/results.html
- Guidance on the use of fixed-term contracts, including transfer to open-ended contracts: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/fixed
- Training in fair selection: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/cppd

2. Pay

Ensure structures are in place to so that research staff salaries comply with equal pay requirements and Fixed-Term Employees Regulations. All researchers should be paid on the relevant University scales, unless a different pay scale is applied by the funder or fellowship scheme.

A starting salary should be set in accordance with the requirements of the role and the experience and professional contribution of the individual. A new external appointment will normally join on the lower salary range of the grade.

Ensure structures are in place to include research staff contribution increment exercise ('merit pay'), when prompted by the University's HR Division.

Note that when a member of research staff is employed on a subsequent research contract, the job title and salary must be clearly stated. Note that the salary will be the same, if the new roles in on the same grade as the previous one. If the new role is on a higher grade, a higher salary will be set, in line with University policy.

Related resources

- guidance on the use of fixed-term contracts, including transfer to open-ended contracts: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/fixed
- Salary determination: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/recruitment/administration/salary.html#research

3. Conditions of service

Researchers are entitled to the same conditions of service as other unestablished academic-related staff in relation to:

- hours of work;
- annual leave;
- membership of the appropriate staff pension scheme;
- disciplinary, grievance and appeal provisions;
- union representation.

Ensure that this information is included in documentation received by the researcher at the beginning of the appointment. Terms and conditions of service are summarized in the University's online Staff Guide for Academic, Academic-related and Research Staff.

The normal University arrangements, subject to sponsor conditions, apply to researchers in relation to paid sick-leave, to maternity, adoption, paternity and other parental leave, and to flexible working arrangements. Sponsor conditions do not affect employees' statutory rights.

Related resources

- University employment policies and procedures: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/
- Universities and Colleges Union: http://www.ucu.cam.ac.uk
- Staff Guide for Academic, Academic-related and Research Staff: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/guide

4. Newly appointed researchers

A newly appointed researcher needs a combination of practical information and clarification of expectations about how s/he will contribute to the research project; this combination will vary, for example according to length of contract and/or seniority. All researchers should also have opportunities to discuss progress on the project and also the next career steps. The key steps in orienting a newly appointed researcher are outlined in this section:

A comprehensive set of links to further information and guidance is provided in this section. You are not expected to refer to each, but may find it helpful to be aware of the range of information and support that is available for researchers.

1. Ensure that structures are in place to:

- clearly identify the day-to-day supervisor of the researcher, if s/he is joining a large research group;
- appoint a mentor to help the researcher settle in;
- ensure that researchers from overseas have access to information on any personal matters, such as housing, banking, healthcare and social security (the University provides online 'information for new staff');
- provide new researchers with access to appropriate computing and any research facilities required by the role.

2. Ensure that structures are in place to include research staff in departmental induction arrangements, and to highlight

- any information about research and publication protocols and codes of practice in the department. Note that researchers must be made aware at the earliest stage possible of any constraints relating to access to, ownership, control, sharing and re-use of research data. Not doing so may give rise to disputes and complaints at later stages;
- information about resources such as libraries, technical assistance, lab facilities and materials;
- information about departmental/School training and development provision for researchers.

This departmental information will be augmented by information which researchers will receive in the contract packs issued by HR, i.e.:

- a web link to the Employment and Career Management Scheme for Researchers and to the Career Management Tool for Researchers;
- a web link to the University Staff Guide: Academic, academic-related and research staff (which includes relevant University policies, including guidelines on good

research practice, intellectual property rights, health and safety and financial regulations);
- an information sheet on USS and a pensions option form;
- a postcard pointing to the University's online modules on induction, equality and diversity, and health and safety;
- information about training and career development support for researchers at Cambridge, including the Careers Service, which hosts a team of careers advisers for research staff, CPPD's research staff development programme, PdOC, the Research Office, Newcomers and Visiting Scholars Group and the Computing Service.

3. Ensure that structures are in place that will prompt PIs/supervisors of researchers to conduct induction and probationary review meetings. These structures should enable:

- follow-up and support to be provided, where necessary;
- confirmation/ non-confirmation of appointment at the end of the probationary period.

Related resources

- Probation guidance: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/probation/
- Mentoring guidelines: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/cppd/opportunities/mentor
- Information for new staff: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/new
- Cambridge local area information: http://www.cam.ac.uk/local/
- Employment and Career Management Scheme for Researchers: http://www.cam.ac.uk/staffstudents/research-staff/ecm/
- Career management tool for researchers: http://www.cam.ac.uk/staffstudents/research-staff/ecm/careers/
- Staff Guide for Academic, Academic-related and Research Staff: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/staff/guide/
- PdOC Society: http://www.societies.cam.ac.uk/pdoc/]
- Careers Advisers for Research Staff: http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdoc/pdocportal.asp
- Centre for Personal and Professional Development: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/cppd

5. Career development and planning

Ensure structures are in place to:

1. include researchers in arrangements for career management review ('appraisal'), to review and record progress and development plans. For researchers with shorter contracts, career management review meetings should be held annually. For those with longer contracts/service, career management review meetings should be held at least ever two years. More detailed guidance concerning planning for and holding constructive career review meetings is available online;

2. highlight forthcoming careers-related workshops and events provided by the Careers Service, the Careers Advisers for Research Staff and the Centre for Personal and Professional Development;

3. trigger, when notified, the University's procedures for supporting staff coming to the end of fixed-term or open-ended contracts. Guidance is available online concerning consultation and notice periods for both fixed-term and open-ended contracts. Note that the expiry or non-renewal of a fixed term contract is a dismissal in law on the grounds of redundancy. This means that statutory dismissal procedures apply to staff on fixed term contracts. Failure to observe the minimum steps in the University's procedure for the ending of fixed-term contracts could mean that a dismissal is automatically deemed to be unfair and taken to a tribunal;

4. as part of the procedure for ending a fixed-term contract, arrange a formal consultation meeting at the beginning of the final third* of the fixed-term contract or funded period. Structures should enable follow-up and support, where necessary.

* For contracts of 12 months or fewer, it is appropriate to keep the researcher informed of the funding situation on an on-going basis.

Related resources

- Career management review ('appraisal' for researchers): http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/cms.html
- Careers Advisers for Research Staff: http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdoc/pdocportal.asp

- Centre for Personal and Professional Development: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/cppd

- Procedure for the ending of fixed-term contracts: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/fixed/

6. Before funding ends

Ensure that structures are in place so that researchers are kept appropriately informed about the state of funding. Guidance is available online concerning consultation and notice periods for both fixed-term and open-ended contracts.

Note that the expiry or non-renewal of a fixed term contract is a dismissal in law on the grounds of redundancy. This means that statutory dismissal procedures apply to staff on fixed term contracts. Failure to observe the minimum steps in the University's procedure for the ending of fixed-term contracts could mean that a dismissal is automatically deemed to be unfair and taken to a tribunal.

Related resources

- Procedure for the ending of fixed-term contracts: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/contracts/

- Careers Advisers for Research Staff: http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdoc/pdocportal.asp

- Centre for Personal and Professional Development: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/cppd