

# RESEARCHERS' CAREERS: GUIDANCE FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS / SUPERVISORS OF RESEARCHERS

## *Introduction*

---

These notes set out practical steps which PIs and supervisors of researchers should take when recruiting, employing and managing researchers. Fuller detail is contained in the Employment and Career Management Scheme for Researchers, which you may access from this page.

The University expects that all arrangements based on the Employment and Career Management Scheme will be embedded within departments. ('Department' is used in this guidance to refer to departments, faculties, centres and institutes). 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.

## **How to use these notes**

These notes endeavour to highlight steps which should be taken by PIs and those which are likely to be undertaken by members of administrative staff, for example during recruitment. **Practices and structures vary across the University: use these notes to find out who is responsible for what in your environment.** If you have questions relating to practices in your department, please contact your departmental administrator, or equivalent, in the first instance. More detailed interpretation of this guidance may be sought from your HR School team.

These notes for PIs and supervisors of researchers 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**

This guidance contains reference to sources of further information and support. These 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.

The UK Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, to which the University is a signatory, emphasises that researchers are responsible for their own progression, with appropriate support from their PIs/supervisors and institutions. You may find it helpful to know of guidance notes that are available for researchers and for heads of department and departmental administrators

## 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 heads of department and departmental administrators: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/staffstudents/research-staff/ecm/inst-notes/>

## 1. Selection and recruitment of researchers

---

All researchers must be recruited in accordance with the University's recruitment guidance. **As principal investigator, you are responsible for ensuring that this guidance is followed.** It is vital to go through a recruitment process with an open mind: considering the criteria you really require for the longer term will help you find the best candidate. Not doing so may result in protracted management difficulties.

Legislative requirements mean that it may be difficult to get a candidate into post rapidly, so try to plan ahead and seek local advice within your department early on. Note that you do not need to follow a selection process where a researcher is named on a grant.

The key steps in a sound selection and recruitment process are outlined here. Note that some of these steps need to be taken by you, and others will be taken by administrators. **Practices and structures vary across the University: use this guidance to find out who is responsible for what in your environment.**

**Sound selection and recruitment** requires you to:

1. define the role's contribution to the research project (it is recognised that this may change, for example as the project matures), and use this definition as the basis for an advertisement for the post. Ensure that an appropriate job title is used and that you know which pre-employment checks will be necessary for the post. Guidance concerning job titles and pre-employment checks is available online. To understand how pre-employment checks are handled in your department, consult your departmental administrator or equivalent;
2. consider which methods you will use during selection, how these will help you to assess each applicant's potential for the role, and which selection criteria you will use to assess each application;
3. your co-operating with procedures to advertise the position through the Recruitment Administration System. To understand how recruitment procedures operate in your department, consult your departmental administrator or equivalent;
4. conduct interviews and complete any other selection tests;
5. select the preferred candidate, on the basis of an objective assessment against the selection criteria;
6. using University guidance on determining salary (see online recruitment guidance), unless the funder or fellowship scheme applies a different pay scale. Contact your departmental administrator, or equivalent, to discuss and agree salary;
7. ensure 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).

To understand how this stage of the recruitment process works in your department, contact your departmental administrator or equivalent.

### 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

---

You should recommend a starting salary in light of the requirements of the role and the experience and professional contribution of the individual; you should discuss and agree the starting salary with your departmental administrator, or equivalent (see 'selection and recruitment', 6). All researchers should be paid on the relevant University scales (see online guidance), unless a different pay scale is applied by the funder or fellowship scheme. A new external appointment will normally join on the lower salary range of the grade.

As is the case for other staff, researchers are entitled to annual salary increments, within the salary range for their grade, subject to available funding. You should participate in the research staff contribution increment ('merit pay') exercise, when prompted by your department, subject to available funding and any approval that is required by the funding body.

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 role is 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

- Salary determination: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/recruitment/administration/salary.html#research>

## 3. Conditions of service

---

Note that 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 staff pension scheme;
- disciplinary, grievance and appeal provisions;
- union representation.

You do not need to provide this information: it will have been included in documentation received by the researcher at the beginning of the appointment. (These terms and

conditions are summarized in the University's online Staff Guide for Academic, Academic-related and Research Staff.)

Note that 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 your 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.

Note that some of these steps need to be taken by you, and others will be taken by administrators. Practices and structures vary across the University: use this guidance to find out who is responsible for what in your environment.

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.

#### **Important information**

Ensure that the newly appointed researcher:

- knows who his/her day-to-day supervisor is, if he/she is joining a large research group;
- knows who has been appointed as his/her mentor;
- if from overseas, has access to information on any personal matters such as housing, banking, health care and social security. (The University provides 'information for new staff online'; your department may provide additional information: ask your departmental administrator, or equivalent);
- has access to appropriate computing and any research facilities required by the role.

You should ensure that the newly appointed researcher has been included in departmental induction arrangements. A summary of information which new members of research staff should receive is included in the career management tool. You may wish to **ask your new colleague to refer to the career management tool and to check that s/he has received this information.**

For your reference, this list includes:

- 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.

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.

### 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>

### **Newly appointed researchers: settling in**

You should set up initial face-to-face meeting to clarify:

- details of the role;
- the degree of freedom for pursuing the research objectives;
- any confidentiality and/or intellectual property constraints, including any constraints on access to ownership, control, sharing and re-use of research data. (Many complaints and disputes which arise could have been pre-empted by clarifying expectations regarding access and re-use of data as early as possible in a researcher's contract);
- expectations about output and progress;
- publication protocols;
- teaching opportunities and/or obligations;
- the researcher's own career aspirations and skills development priorities.

You should ensure that researcher has opportunities to discuss any of the following that are relevant to his/her research work:

- lab procedures and practices;
- health and safety;
- ethical standards and other aspects of academic integrity in research.

You should ensure that researcher is involved in regular research project meetings throughout the research contract.

### **Newly appointed researchers: probation**

You should hold probationary review meetings as part of the probationary arrangements for researchers, covering:

- performance to date;
- next career steps;
- professional development plans.

You should encourage the researcher to make initial contact with the Careers Service, including the Careers Advisers for Research Staff, in order to inform him/herself of the range of employment opportunities that are available to research staff, both within higher education and in the private and public sector.

### Related resources

- Probationary arrangements for researchers: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/hr/probation/crs/>
- Careers Advisers for Research Staff: <http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/pdoc/pdocportal.asp>

## 5. Career planning and development

---

You should hold formal career management review ('appraisal') meetings with the researcher, to review and record progress and development plans. For researchers with shorter contracts, these meetings should be annual. For researchers with longer contracts/service, career management meetings should be held at least every two years. More detailed guidance concerning planning for and holding constructive career review meetings is available online.

You should review funding status and progress on research project, to clarify prospects for any extension of the research contract. Confirm these to the researcher. Notify your departmental administrator if an extension is possible or if no further funding is available.

As the final stage of the contract begins, University policy requires that you hold a formal consultation meeting with the researcher to clarify whether further grant funding is likely. If it is not, discuss alternative options with the researcher. Further support and guidance is available from your department and School HR team.

During the last third of the contract, you should review the researcher's career progress to date and the likelihood of their acquiring an academic or similar post. You should refer the researcher to relevant support services, including the Careers Service and the Careers Advisers for Research Staff.

### Related resources

- Career management review ('appraisal') for researchers: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/forms/cms/>
- University policy on ending of fixed-term contracts: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/policy/fixed>
- 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>

## 6. Before funding ends

---

Ensure that the researcher is 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.

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.

Notify the departmental administrator if no further funding is available.

### Related resources

- University policy on ending 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>