Code of Practice for the Development of Research Staff

Lancaster University
August 2017

Lancaster's vision for the development of research talent

The role of Lancaster University research staff

Lancaster's Strategic Plan 2020 and Our People Strategy 2020 set out goals and priorities to conduct excellent research within an environment which nurtures and cultivates its staff, encouraging them to fulfil their career ambitions. Lancaster is immensely proud to have attracted a critical mass of highly talented research staff and whose contributions are vital to our success as a world-class research institution. Their expertise, energy and commitment are visible in both Lancaster's outstanding research outputs and in the shaping of the wider research community through the mentorship they offer for fellow staff and students alike.

Lancaster is committed to Vitae's Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and our good practice to date has led to us being awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award from the European Commission. Our vision is for a fully integrated research community within which our exemplary research staff are provided equally exemplary opportunities to contribute, develop and progress. In recognising the key role of research staff, Lancaster University will:

▪ Nurture research staff individually and as a key cohort within the wider multi-disciplinary research community
▪ Foster an institutional research culture that is inclusive and respectful
▪ Acknowledge and amplify the contribution that Lancaster's research staff make to world-class research

Lancaster's commitment to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers is led by the Concordat Implementation Group and further underpinned by a Code of Practice for the Development of Research Staff. This draws together much of the good practice that already exists across the institution, and provides a resource to guide both Principal Investigators in creating a supportive environment for research staff *and* research staff in fulfilling their responsibilities to their own career and professional development.

Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff

Approach

The Code of Practice for the Development of Research Staff (the 'Code') directly supports the Vision for the Development of Research Talent by promoting a management approach that fosters a research environment which nurtures the capacity of its research staff, supporting them to develop in their chosen career.

The Code is intended to be a dynamic, living resource providing guidance to research staff, principal investigators, academics, professional services and the wider institution. Accordingly, it adopts a simple, web-based approach, comprising three high-level webpages:

1. Getting Started
2. Managing and Developing
3. Looking to the Future

The Code sets out the roles and responsibilities of both Principal Investigators and Research Staff and the University (academics, professional services and the wider institution) and seeks to formalise much of the good practice already present within Faculties and Departments.

The Code, whilst recognising that primary responsibility for career development lies with individual Research Staff, also recognise that Principal Investigators have a clear role in providing a supportive environment for staff, allowing them to make the best use of their talents, take on new roles and responsibilities, develop networks and progress their career to become leaders in their chosen field.

Code of Practice for the Development of Research Staff

Getting Started

Principal Investigator – roles & responsibilities

1. Access relevant <u>training</u> & <u>guidance</u> to enable you to undertake the role of PI e.g. OED's Research Leadership Development Programme.

2. With the <u>HR Team</u>, together develop job description & person specifications for all members of your project team(s).

3. Familiarise yourself with <u>HR policies and procedures</u> relating to the recruitment, selection and management of research staff.

4. Ensure your research staff are aware of, and have completed, University, Faculty and Departmental <u>induction</u> sessions, as appropriate.

5. Make your research staff aware of <u>University policies and procedures</u> relating to research best practice, research ethics, commercialisation issues (IP), research data management etc.

6. Initiate the probation and <u>PDR</u> processes and use constructively to be clear about expectations, establish objectives and agree development needs.

Research Staff – roles and responsibilities

1. Familiarise yourself with <u>induction</u> guidance and complete induction process.

2. Ensure you are aware of <u>University policies and procedures</u> relating to research best practice, research ethics, commercialisation issues (IP), research data management etc.

3. Identify and engage an appropriate <u>mentor</u>, either within the University or externally.

University – roles and responsibilities

1. Develop mechanisms to reduce the use, and impact of, <u>fixed-term contracts</u> and encourage the retention of high quality research staff.

Getting started as a new PI, or with a new project to deliver, recruiting and managing new research staff, and ensuring the best possible start for both project and research staff.

Resources
- Organisational and Educational Development
- Research Leadership Development Programme
- The Lancaster Researcher
- The Lancaster PI
- Glossary

Code of Practice for the Development of Research Staff

Managing and Developing

Principal Investigator – roles & responsibilities

1. Ensure your management style supports equality, diversity and inclusion, nurturing an inclusive research community, e.g. through flexible working, equal opportunities for all, access to MARS and related funding sources etc.

2. Engage fully with the university's PDR process for the development and support of you and your research staff, ensuring that PDRs are carried out in a timely fashion, and in accordance with University guidance.

3. Encourage research staff to access formal and informal development opportunities, e.g. knowledge exchange and public engagement activities.

4. Identify opportunities for research staff to take on new roles and responsibilities in line with their career aspirations where appropriate.

Research Staff – roles and responsibilities

1. Pro-actively manage your professional development, maintaining your professional profile, networks and independence.

2. Seek out career development opportunities e.g. OED's Researcher Development Programme, Library Research Bites etc.

3. Engage fully and pro-actively with the university's PDR process.

4. Participate in departmental, faculty and wider university research governance e.g. Research Committees, and with the Research Staff Association (RSA).

University – roles and responsibilities

1. Encourage awareness of career opportunities outside of academia that might suit researchers' strengths, values and priorities.

2. Promote and embed the principles of the Vitae Researcher Concordat.

Managing and developing both you and your research staff in terms of career development and researcher support.

Resources
- LU EDI Strategic Vision 2020
- Vitae
- University policy on research
- Organisation & Educational Development (OED)
- Researcher Development Programme
- Research & Enterprise Services
- Research Staff Association

Code of Practice for the Development of Research Staff

Looking to the Future

Principal Investigator – roles & responsibilities

1. Discuss career plans, exploring potential options with research staff, including the Careers Service at least 6 months before the end of contract.

2. Explore opportunities for continued research staff employment, e.g. project extension, follow-on projects etc., including sharing and making use of your personal networks and contacts, where appropriate.

Research Staff – roles and responsibilities

1. Discuss options for future project funding with your PI and contribute to planning future work as appropriate, e.g. engaging with Research & Enterprise Services (RES) and the Research Services Office (RSO).

2. Seek out opportunities to apply for future independent funding, if appropriate e.g. register for RESEARCHConnect and attend RES funding call events.

3. For employment opportunities within Lancaster University, register with HR for the University's staff redeployment scheme.

4. Visit Careers to develop your own career plan, access support and advice, and attend events to develop and broaden your networks.

University – roles and responsibilities

1. Support, at an early stage, research staff undergoing redeployment and ensure they are aware of the University's redeployment register.

2. Where redundancy is unavoidable, ensure that redundancy processes and procedures are understanding to the needs of fixed-contract research staff.

3. Recognise the challenges inherent in making the transition from researcher to PI and develop clear routes through which transitions can be made.

Looking to the future, to address the challenges faced as projects & contracts complete; but also looking to the longer-term, identifying new career development opportunities within or without research and academe.

Resources
- LU Careers
- Research Services Office
- ResearchCONNECT

Managing and Developing [example]

Researcher roles and responsibilities

Developing and maintaining your professional independence

- Identify opportunities for your own career development and attend all relevant training (within the university or external).

- Review your own training needs with your PI and consider how skills and knowledge acquired during this role will support your future career goals. It is expected that researchers will normally undertake at least ten days a year of training for personal, professional and career development (e.g. relating to teaching, enterprise, knowledge exchange, employability and/or public engagement).

- Join appropriate mailing lists and on- and off-line fora and other networks to keep abreast of new developments and investigate the range of possible career opportunities.

- Be proactive in writing a career plan, seeking advice from Careers or a mentor, as well as attending relevant careers-focussed events or training (e.g. careers workshops for staff.

Reflect
By the end of your first 2-3 year postdoctoral contract, you should have a clear idea of your longer-term research vision and what you will need to do to be successful.

Act
Speak with the Organisational Education and Development (OED) team, Careers and your colleagues to identify different routes and better understand the options and opportunities are available to you.

Resources
- Organisational Education and Development (OED)
- Careers Service
- My HR