Researchers14 Best Practice Case Studies 2023 for The UUK annual report on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Researchers14 is composed of researcher developers from the Russell Group universities. Together, the group represents over 65% of the research staff community in the UK. We define 'research staff' as employees (i.e. not research students) who are on fixed-term funding, whether external or internal, and who are employed to do research.

With this group of researchers as its sole focus, Researchers14 provides a strategic view of the people, culture and issues surrounding this researcher community, and shares good practice in researcher development.

Case studies selection

Each Researchers14 member organisation had the opportunity to submit 2-3 case studies for consideration and indicate which stakeholder and Principle they would apply to. In total 34 case studies were submitted, some under multiple Principles. 20 case studies were submitted to Environment and culture for consideration; 9 for Employment; and 23 for Professional and career development.

On 17 March 2023, the group met to decide which case studies should be put forward. When discussing the case studies, the group looked to include examples that showcase the breadth of work that is being undertaken by institutes across all the stakeholder groups and Principles. Where possible, two case studies per stakeholder per Principle have been submitted (18 case studies in total). Open links have been included throughout so that resources are accessible to all in the sector.

Contributing organisations

The following organisations contributed to generating this collection of case studies.

University of Birmingham	King's College London	Queen Mary, University of London
University of Bristol	University of Leeds	Queen's University Belfast
University of Cambridge	University of Manchester	University of Sheffield
University of Edinburgh	Newcastle University	University of Southampton
University of Glasgow	University of Nottingham	University College London
Imperial College London	University of Oxford	University of York

Please contact Karen Hinxman (Researchers14 Chair) if you require further information on the case studies, would like to know more about Researchers14 or would like to work with the group.

Table of case studies

Environment and culture		
Institution	**Improving governance and representation: Giving a voice to researchers** Bristol, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield, Southampton, UCL, York	**York Researcher Festival** York
Managers of researchers	**Frameworks that enable and recognise the contributions of Research Staff to supervision and mentoring of postgraduate researchers (PGRs)** Glasgow, Queen's University Belfast	**Development programme to enable female researcher to thrive** Birmingham
Researchers	**The Research Staff Hub** Edinburgh	**Queen Mary Postdoc Conference** Queen Mary
All stakeholders	**Clarifying responsibilities and setting expectations** Imperial, Oxford, Queen Mary, Sheffield, UCL	

Employment		
Institution	**Enhanced institutional support for fellowship holders** Queen's University Belfast	**Introducing a new Academic Promotions Framework** Bristol
Managers of researchers	**Academic's Success Guide** Imperial	**Improved appraisal for researchers** UCL
Researchers	**Fellowship Fortnight** York	

Professional and career development		
Institution	**Policy on teaching opportunities for research staff** Bristol	**R14 Collaborative Networking and Profile Building Course for Postdocs** Queen Mary
Managers of researchers	**Changing University development culture** Manchester, Sheffield	**PI development suite** UCL
Researchers	**Cohort-based career development programmes** Leeds	**Development of Career Resources for those exploring Career Options beyond Academia** Edinburgh

Environment and culture

Institutions

Improving governance and representation: Giving a voice to researchers
Bristol, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield, Southampton, UCL, York

Problem: Lack of awareness of the Concordat and inconsistency in representation across institutions.

Universities have developed a robust governance structure to ensure researchers have a voice and are represented/consulted with at all levels. This broadly consists of:
Governance: University level committee: responsible for the Concordat and reporting into senior groups (Senate/Council) with membership including academic champion leads, researcher representatives and research support (researcher development, careers service and HR). Many institutions integrate this activity with Research Culture Groups and other charters providing a holistic approach.
Leadership: Academic champions, raising awareness of the Concordat and collective role in supporting researcher careers. They sit on committees working closely with researcher representatives addressing local research culture.
Representation: Researcher Representatives embedded in research themes/faculties linked to research staff associations/forums and sit on senior University Committees.

Improved governance has led to working groups (often chaired by Faculty/Concordat Champions), with researcher representatives and relevant stakeholders focussing on key challenges including; induction, reward and recognition, career support and wellbeing. This inclusive way of involving the researcher community in the Concordat implementation ensures wider engagement with initiatives.

Institution specific activities:
- **Bristol:** developed an active network of appointed [Concordat Champions](#) in each school who address local research culture and share good practice
- **Nottingham:** Faculty-specific Concordat action plans have been co-created by [Faculty leads](#), School Research Staff Champions, researcher representatives and with wider community consultation
- **Oxford:** research staff matters are raised and governed through [three linked central committees](#)
- **Sheffield:** developed [videos](#) on what the Concordat means to different stakeholders
- **Southampton:** established [five working groups](#) to assess key issues across the University and sector, to make recommendations
- **UCL:** The [Research Staff Consultative Group](#) shares the ownership of, and oversees progression against the [Concordat Action Plan](#)
- **York:** [Research Staff Liaison Officers](#) connect and enable researchers, are recruited through open calls and receive an honorarium

York Researcher Festival
York

The [York Researcher Festival](#) celebrates the contribution that postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers make to research, culture and community at York. The programme is researcher-led, with the majority of sessions devised, designed and delivered by researchers - with input from academic and professional support staff. In 2022 over 400 researchers took part and gave an overall satisfaction rating of 93%. 95% would recommend the event. Lasting for a week and with over 20 sessions on offer,

the festival enables researchers to take stock and focus on personal goals and career aspirations, learn from each other and academic staff and develop and enhance skills.

The Festival is an important platform for raising awareness of the Researcher Development Concordat, for example, 'Being a researcher at York' was delivered by HR colleagues and highlighted the employment policies, entitlements and benefits available to researchers. Contributions from the Rainbow Alliance (the staff equality social and support network), the Staff Race Equality Forum and the Women in Research Network seek to integrate researchers within the University community where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated. Highlights from the Festival include researcher-led sessions on the following topics:
- Opportunities and challenges of interdisciplinary research
- Introduction to sustainable research
- Looking after your mental health in academia
- What are early career fellowships, and how can they help you develop your career?

To support continuous professional development highlights from the most popular Festival sessions have been professionally edited and promoted as an 'on-demand' resource so that researchers and PIs can revisit them as part of their 10 days professional development.

Managers of researchers

Frameworks that enable and recognise the contributions of Research Staff to supervision and mentoring of postgraduate researchers (PGRs)
Glasgow, Queen's University Belfast

Experience in supervising or mentoring PGRs is an important development opportunity for postdoctoral research staff, enhancing perceptions and application of skills and behaviours related to research leadership, career development and doctoral supervision. Formal opportunities that support this are lacking, and informal contributions are often not appropriately recognised.

Queen's University Belfast and the University of Glasgow have developed two approaches to address this:

Queen's University Belfast introduced the role of Assistant Supervisor, which enables the official appointment of postdoctoral researchers alongside academic supervisors, within healthy boundaries set to manage their level of responsibility and workload. They receive an appointment letter and are attached to the student in the student informatic system. They 'learn by doing', through mentoring by academic supervisors, student feedback, and bespoke workshops. The role is popular, with appointments across a range of Schools (including in Arts and Humanities), and cross-Faculty appointments. Feedback from postdocs, students and academic supervisors has been positive, some Assistant Supervisors have been nominated by their students for Postdoc Awards, and others have used their experience to obtain Associate Fellowship of the HEA.

The University of Glasgow recently launched the third cycle of their Thesis Mentoring programme that pairs postdoctoral researchers with PGRs who are writing their thesis. This programme gives research staff an opportunity to gain mentoring experience, using supportive learning conversations to assist mentees, who report positive effects on their ability to navigate the writing process, their confidence, and on their ability to monitor progress towards their deadline. It also supports research staff to gain essential supervision experience, and to work towards professional recognition as a UKCGE Recognised Associate Research Supervisor. All mentors indicated that the programme improved their current or future ability to support and supervise PGRs and many were nominated by their mentees to enter the 'Thesis Mentor Hall of Fame'.

Development programme to enable female researcher to thrive
Birmingham

The Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) developed the SUSTAIN programme to enable female researchers to thrive in independent research careers. The AMS SUSTAIN programme which began in 2015 provides training and support, primarily through professional development training, mentoring and peer-to-peer coaching. The College of Medical and Dental Sciences (MDS) at the University of Birmingham took inspiration from the AMS SUSTAIN programme and took it one step further by opening the programme to all underrepresented groups and genders.

The approach taken here is part of the University's Strategic Framework, Birmingham 2030 of which a key element is People and Culture. This seeks to build a culture which is supportive and inclusive with a focus on the development of people and teams. This investment in training and mentoring will help to ensure our future leaders are equipped to motivate and sustain high performance levels, build effective and collaborative teams, and create a stimulating, intellectual environment.

We particularly encouraged applications from staff who consider themselves to belong to demographics currently underrepresented in biomedical research leadership. The target audience for MDS SUSTAIN was for academics who were in the process of establishing their first research group or who had recently established their first research group.

The pilot MDS SUSTAIN programme appears to have been very successful with regard to its initial objective of providing professional development training, mentoring and peer-to-peer coaching to under-represented groups. Two-thirds of the pilot's cohort were made up of women, with a diverse range of demographics across the cohort. Currently, in its second round, the aim is to make this an annual programme for researchers within the University of Birmingham.

Researchers

The Research Staff Hub
Edinburgh

The Research Staff Hub (RSH) is a landing page for all research staff at the University of Edinburgh. It showcases and raises awareness of the support available to research staff from across the institution and coordinates all support at School/College and Support Group level. The RSH supports the research environment and culture at Edinburgh, by being a resource focused on improving communication, engagement and coordination and a platform to update on Concordat progress and developments for researchers and their managers.

Through a period of consultation with researchers, post-doc champions and support staff, information and ideas were gathered on how the University could provide better support to research staff. The need for central level webpages specifically for research staff, which link to all relevant information from across the University, was a clear message. This along with the need to ensure that there is consistent and comparable support for all researchers made the RSH a key action in our Concordat action plan.

The RSH has been designed in such a way that it brings together resources from across the University to support research staff to undertake their role, develop themselves and progress their career. It contains a wealth of information on topics for doing research; such as open research, ethics and integrity and research partnerships, as well as funding and impact, health and wellbeing, community

[and networking](#) plus much more, there are also dedicated resources to help [managers of researchers](#) support the research staff they employ.

The RSH is now well embedded into our University structures and since its launch in June 2021 the site views, and requests by colleagues to add/update content, demonstrate the benefit of and need for this resource.

Queen Mary Postdoc Conference

Queen Mary

The first [Queen Mary Postdoc Conference](#) is co-created by an organising team of 17 postdocs along with researcher developers and careers consultants in order to bring postdocs from across the University together as a community and create a forum for their voices to be heard. 'Postdocs 2027 - Creating your vision of the Queen Mary Postdoc experience' invites postdocs to share and discuss their experiences of postdoc life, and to propose changes they would like to see at Queen Mary. The conference provides networking opportunities, a platform for local RSAs, careers talks from former Queen Mary postdocs, a research talk competition, poster session, and practical skills development opportunities for the delegates and particularly for the organising committee.

The key outcomes of the conference are:
- A postdoc-designed SharePoint resource to enable Queen Mary postdocs to search for peer support and promote skill sharing across the university. On registering for the conference, postdocs can opt into joining a searchable database that will be maintained by the Researcher Development team.
- The careers talks will be written up as a series of postdoc career journey case studies to start a growing resource as inspiration for Queen Mary postdocs.
- A recommendation paper presenting the postdoc voice to the senior University leadership.

For all stakeholders

Clarifying responsibilities and setting expectations

Imperial, Oxford, Queen Mary's, Sheffield, UCL

Problems addressed

The Concordat document is unfamiliar, long, and 'distant' for many of our stakeholders. Equity is undermined by inconsistencies within universities and the sector in what is expected of contract researchers and what they can expect from their academic managers and from the institution.

Opportunities seized

Positive behaviour change will rely on bringing Concordat-related commitments to life locally. Repeated use of accessible text drawing on Concordat obligations at key stages of the researcher and manager life cycle could clarify responsibilities, set expectations and thereby increase reach, equity and overall impact. Raising the number of institutions with charters and the consistency in their content will both help individual researchers and managers who move between institutions, and set a sector standard.

Activity and outcomes

Table 1 below lists examples of charters and codes of practice in place or in progress. Most were developed in consultation with researcher representatives and related committees including academic and professional services staff. In several universities, these documents are shared at induction and signposted during annual appraisal or career/personal development reviews in order to

support the conversations and to resolve potential conflicts. Sheffield has had positive feedback from researchers who used the charters to frame conversations in departments regarding workload inducing issues and support for professional development, and report positive resolutions.

Table 1. Examples of charters and codes of practice in place or in progress across Researcher14 members

Institution	Document	Content and length		Intended or current use				
	Name and link	Researchers are responsible for…	Researchers can expect/ Managers should…	Job descriptions	Distributed with new contracts	Inductions	Annual development reviews (CDR/PDR/SRDS*)	Staff handbook or webpages
Sheffield	Charter	1 page for researchers ASPIRE	1 page for line managers INSPIRE	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oxford	'Charter' under internal consultation	Combined in one page, each section has about 6 bullet points		Intention	Intention	Intention	Intention	Intention
Imperial	PI Code of Practice	Intention	6 pages set out by Concordat principle, attractively designed	No	No	Yes	Yes	Sits in 'leading your research group' resource for managers/PIs
Queen Mary	Code of Practice for Research Staff	5 pages text. Also mapped to Research Integrity Concordat.	No	No	Yes	Intention	No	Yes
UCL	Research Staff Code of Practice	4 pages on responsibilities of researchers, their managers and institutions (within 24-page booklet covering research practice and wider HR elements)		No	No	Yes	Recommended for appraisals, and for PIs to refer to periodically. Used in mediation of any disputes	Informal contract between UCL and research staff

*SRDS is Sheffield's Staff Review and Development Scheme

Employment
Institutions

Enhanced institutional support for fellowship holders
Queen's University Belfast

Fellowships offer researchers a means to develop independence in their research and begin an academic career. However, they are an exceptionally competitive career option. Beginning a fellowship can be overwhelming with new, increased expectations, and a future academic career remaining precarious. To maximise the career development of fellowship holders hosted by the University, Queen's University Belfast invests in an enhanced package of financial and employment support for fellows, complemented by targeted development initiatives.

Fellowship applicants are offered institutional enhancement awards depending on the category of fellowship, which is defined based on the scale, duration, and career stage of the scheme. This includes start-up funding, a funded PhD studentship, and a pathway to a permanent post at Senior Lecturer level, for the most senior fellowships.

Fellowship holders are also invited to join the [Fellowship Academy](#), a support structure and peer-network bringing together fellows across disciplines and career stages. Queen's fellows have access to tailored learning activities, focused on research and funding, leadership development, networking and collaboration, impact, and innovation. Fellows have opportunities to engage with a range of researchers and leaders within and beyond Queen's, enhancing their own leadership development.

Feedback from fellows on the support they receive from the Fellowship Academy is positive, and funders also welcome the overall institutional support provided when reviewing fellowship applications. The start-up funding and studentships give fellows the resources to evolve their projects, grow their research teams, and contribute to Queen's longer-term research strategy and culture. Complemented by the tailored development resources, this enables them to progress in their career, with most fellows involved successfully securing further fellowships and/ or academic posts.

Introducing a new Academic Promotions Framework
Bristol

What was the problem?
In 2017 we reviewed academic promotion and analysed our gender employment/pay. The analysis underpinned two new Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs): one for the percentage of female professors and one for the professorial gender pay gap.

The resulting challenge was to update the promotion criteria to fully capture the aspirations of our strategy while ensuring they were transparent and accessible, and rewarded and recognised the full range of academic contributions and achievements we valued. It also needed to address the under-representation of women on the Research and Teaching Pathway and over-representation on the Research Pathway where promotion opportunities are limited.

What did we do?
After extensive consultation we arrived at the Academic Promotions Framework (APF). It comprises four broad categories with a balance of criteria (15 in total) covering the full range of expectations and experiences across all academic pathways and the full diversity of work at the University. It was first

used in [Promotion up to Professor](#) in 2020/21 and has since been extended to cover all academic promotion and movement.

The APF applies to all academics across all career pathways. Depending on career stage and pathway, a different mix of criteria are required to make a case. It is of particular relevance to researchers at the early stages of their career as they can now take a more strategic approach to planning their career. The APF also facilitates better career discussions and promises to inform more flexible and inclusive progression for all our academic staff.

What is the impact / what are we hoping the impact will be?
We are on track to meet our SPI targets in 2023: 33% female professors and +/-3% professorial GPG. There is increasing evidence of more career discussions using the APF and the number of early/mid-career researchers applying for promotion has increased since launching along with the proportion of female cases.

Managers of researchers

Academic's Success Guide
Imperial

Imperial commissioned comprehensive resources to be developed specifically for Principal Investigators (PIs) to support them with their Concordat obligations. The resources were developed in response to the recommendations of two scoping projects on assessing the needs of probationary lecturers and PIs. More than 500 Imperial academics contributed to the new online toolkit, called the [Academic's Success Guide](#). The topics covered are:
  ➢ Navigating induction and probation
  ➢ Managing yourself and your career
  ➢ Leading your research group
  ➢ Managing research projects

Every topic contains links to local sources of support, policy, and guidance at Imperial, as well as external services.

[The Academic's Success Guide](#) provides perspectives and relevant advice from PIs and senior managers from academic departments and professional services at Imperial on the [induction and probation](#) process, as well as a wide range of tools and strategies to support new academics with [establishing their career.](#) The sections on [managing projects](#) and [leading a research group](#) cover processes and offer tried and tested models, along with useful tip sheets and templates to help navigate the day-to-day work of managing projects and people.

This resource is designed to be accessible by everyone and although it has been designed with Imperial academics in mind, the topics covered are universally relevant to all UK academics. The resource is modular and bite-sized, allowing for timely support to new academics as and when needed. To ensure that everyone can get the most out of this comprehensive resource, a short introductory [video](#) has been produced.

Improved appraisal for researchers.

UCL

While appraisal conversations are intended as tools for reflection and development planning, they are reportedly considered by the researcher community as an ineffective and underutilised resource.

UCL's CEDARS results revealed that the engagement with the appraisals and the level of career support provided by managers of researchers was reported below the national benchmark. In response to that, UCL conducted intensive consultations across stakeholder and researcher groups, and, drawing from examples of already established good practice, introduced a new format of appraisals. The refreshed process is guided by a new, purposefully built appraisal review form for academic, research and teaching staff, closely aligned to UCL Academic Careers Framework and to the obligations under the Researcher Development Concordat. Sections specifically designed to strengthen the awareness of the Concordat include development plan recording the use of 10 developmental days, and a career planning section. To provide further guidance, a new online training for managers and appraisees was created, with plans to develop additional resources based on case studies and examples of good practice as more evidence of impact becomes available.

The intended outcome of the appraisal improvement project is to increase the confidence and competence of managers to conduct the appraisal, and to provide an effective tool for researchers to fully benefit from the process. The impact is monitored through the CEDARS survey and feedback provided by the Research Staff Consultative Group.

Researchers

Fellowship Fortnight

York

In 2019 York created an Early Career Fellowship Programme to provide comprehensive support for prospective, and current Fellowship holders and alumni. It brings together fellows from across disciplines to share practice through a series of events and workshops. Fellowship Fortnight is also an opportunity to celebrate the research, leadership and contribution that Fellows make to research culture. The HR Excellence in Research review team 2022 noted: *York have increased the number of externally funded fellows and now have 95 fellowship holders, alongside this they provide a robust package of support [Fellowship Fortnight] to help early career researchers develop their fellowship applications. 40% of attendees went on to submit fellowship applications.*

Fellowship Fortnight is delivered by the Fellowship Coordinator and team in collaboration with York's 19 discipline-specific early career researcher forums. It provides support for anyone, and everyone involved in Fellowships, from current Fellows and the staff who support them, to prospective Fellows who may not know anything about Fellowships at all. Despite the niche subject, 182 researchers and colleagues attended at least one event in the fortnight. 100% of those providing feedback stated that they would recommend the event they attended to others.

Festival events include:
- Workshops and talks for prospective fellows, including our flagship 3-day intensive development programme, *Preparing for Fellowship Success* and drop-in writing/surgery sessions.
- Professional development and career development activities for current Fellows - including career planning, narrative CVs, leadership, using social media to promote research and giving effective pitches.

- Fellowship community social events and research culture cafes
- Best practice events for academic and professional services staff who support and 'sponsor' current and prospective Fellows.

Professional and career development
Institutions

Policy on teaching opportunities for research staff
Bristol

What was the problem?
The University Research Staff Representatives Committee presented the issue of inconsistent access to teaching opportunities and lack of transparent allocation processes to the Research Staff Working Party in 2020/21, which became part of the University's Concordat action plan.

What did we do?
A task and finish group was convened to review current policy and practice of teaching opportunities for research staff. The task and finish group met three times over a year and included academic representatives from each Faculty. It was led by the Chair of the Research Staff Working Party and the Head of HR Operations. The review found that researchers had inconsistent access to teaching opportunities. For example, in some places access to teaching opportunities was dependent on individual PIs, and the process of allocating teaching opportunities varied across the University. The group then reviewed and updated the existing policy on teaching activities of research staff to fully demonstrate our commitment to the Concordat and supporting researchers' career development.

The final output was a policy that is opportunity-led and focuses on teaching as a career development opportunity for researchers. To ensure fair and transparent access to these opportunities, Schools are expected to develop a centralised allocation process. Research Supervision is also included, with both teaching and supervision expected to be recorded under a School's workload allocation model. Schools and researchers are reminded that teaching may form part of researchers' 10 days of development while also being within funder Terms and Conditions.

The University has committed to monitoring the implementation of the policy through analysis of school data twice yearly and an annual staff survey.

What has been the impact?
The policy was launched just before the 22/23 academic year with the intention that Schools focus on getting ready for full implementation in 23/24. The first review of school data showed that the majority of schools have adapted a centralised school allocation and recording process, whilst some making the necessary changes. We are working towards researchers having equal access to teaching as a development opportunity while enabling them to contribute to the University's teaching with their own unique expertise.

R14 Collaborative Networking and Profile Building Course for Postdocs
Queen Mary

The R14 Networking and Profile Building Course is a collaboration, initially between eight R14 institutions, now involving twelve. The course supports the development of networking skills and the building of cross-institutional networks of the cohorts of 70-90 postdocs participating in each iteration. The approach simultaneously strengthens the existing network of researcher developer colleagues who design and deliver the sessions in pairs and saves time and resources through collaboration. Conceived as an online programme during the pandemic, the course is now running for the fifth time and continues to evolve and develop to address researchers' needs and include more institutions, receiving positive feedback from the postdocs each time it runs, particularly as an

opportunity to meet and network with people from across the country whilst developing skills vital to their careers. The six-session course covers networking, confidence, collaboration, social media, research profile, and an online 'conference networking session' using the platform Kumospace and includes content delivered by researcher developers, practical exercises, and invites academic staff from the participating institutions to share their perspectives on these topics.

Managers of researchers

Changing University development culture
Manchester, Sheffield

At both the Universities of Sheffield and Manchester, training and development activities for researchers are delivered by different providers across numerous departments. Researchers and managers of researchers found it difficult to know what development was available and how to navigate access. Additionally, those providing development often worked in isolation causing activities to overlap or gaps in provision.

The University of Sheffield Staff Development Strategy Board brings together managers of researchers and key development providers. Initial focus led to the procurement and implementation of a new learning management system: a single central hub for all learning and development opportunities for staff and PGR students. Managers of researchers can also assign and review the development activities of their research team members.

The project has driven culture change between development providers leading to a new joint Academic Developer post: a collaboration between researcher development and people development. Additionally, the first mandatory ED&I training launched in the system led to more than doubled engagement/completion of the course.

At the University of Manchester information and support for researchers applying for externally funded fellowships has been dependent on local connections and relationships. This has led to varied understanding as to the best way to support this critical academic career step, for both researchers and managers of researchers.

Researcher Development team-led collaborations with academic staff and professional services teams have enabled better signposting and a system of cross-referral for those aspiring to research fellowships. This has been co-created with managers of researchers and research staff via the representatives' forum and the fellowship strategy group.

The success of the active collaboration between Faculties and Researcher Development has allowed coherent institution-wide policies around professional development, equality and inclusion to be fed into fellowship applications, with some initial funding success.

PI development suite
UCL

Managers of researchers play a pivotal role in ensuring a supportive and balanced working environment for researchers. For research team leaders however, the appointment to the leadership role is not linked to prior people management experience, but on the strength of their research activities. UCL launched two new development programmes to prepare research team leaders for

their roles: [Advancing PIs](#) (for leaders new to people management) and [Experienced PIs](#) (aiming to develop strategic leadership capabilities).

The scope and learning objectives for both programmes were developed based on the extensive Learning Needs Analysis and responsibility mapping, led by external consultants who conducted a 6-month research project involving focus groups and interviews across all affected communities. UCL commissioned Advance HE to design and deliver the initial pilots, and after great reception, both programmes were confirmed as part of core provisions and added to the central leadership nomination process. This resulted in a change of perception of the programmes, elevating them to a key mechanism for researcher talent development and succession planning within the faculties.

Now in its second year, the PI development suite continues to grow and expand in response to universally positive feedback. Of particular interest is the reception of the PI SharePoint Hub, designed as a digital learning space. In addition to hosting training resources and materials supplementing live sessions, this virtual space acts as a community hub and a long-term dynamic resource, with examples of good practice, a useful information section, community sharing and links to HR policies, therefore creating a one-stop-shop for research team leaders.

Researchers

Cohort-based career development programmes
Leeds

At the University of Leeds, we want to offer our researchers not just short-term career solutions but foster their long-term career management skills. We have created three cohort-based career development programmes where researchers play an active role in their own development (and that of their colleagues) to create lasting change over three to six months.

First, our established Career Architect for ECRs who want to explore career alternatives to academic research in a structured, in-depth career transition programme. Secondly, Career Accelerator, for ECRs who know exactly what career path they want but who welcome help securing their ideal post, most commonly so far, lectureships. Recently, we piloted Career Catalyst with 60 PGRs, ECRs, research technicians and lecturers, to enhance their digital career management skills using LinkedIn and LinkedIn Learning. The diverse pilot community helped to nurture a more collaborative and cohesive research culture across schools, faculties, and perceived hierarchical roles.

Whilst we continue to offer individual careers workshops and independent learning materials, development in cohorts is now a core offering. These longer group programmes lead to greater personal motivation and transformation: participants develop stronger bonds and support networks across the university; they tend to thrive in collaborative, shared learning experiences; and the longer, consistent relationships and support mechanisms create greater trust. In turn, this helps researchers finally address issues they have avoided for some time. The most reported benefit of all these programmes is greater confidence in their ability to move forward in their careers.

Of course, there are challenges: group programmes are resource-intensive; they cannot be replicated at scale easily without losing their personal touch; they require experienced facilitators; and participants must be fully committed and open for an extensive group experience. But for the right person, these programmes offer exactly the transformation many of our researchers seek.

Development of Career Resources for those exploring Career Options beyond Academia

Edinburgh

The University of Edinburgh's Concordat action plan has a commitment to 'support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers'. To support this, and complement our in-person workshops and 1:1 consultations, we decided to focus on enhancing the provision of online career resources. The intention was to develop a suite of resources in different formats to give those thinking about a career transition a starting point to explore further.

We started by reviewing the current career development resources at the University, in consultation with colleagues and researchers. As a result, it was concluded that it would be useful to have:

- a greater emphasis on career resources for those moving, or considering moving, to careers beyond academia.
- career development workshops transformed into continuously available online tools.

In response to these needs, we developed:

Micro Workshops, a series of short presentations with voiceover and links to further resources and activities, intended to help researchers explore their values and drivers, identify transferable skills and think about how to evidence these within a non-academic CV.

Career Conversation **videos**, a series of recorded interviews with people who have transitioned from university research positions to careers beyond academia. Participants discuss their research background, their motivations for moving into a new sector and how they found out what CV, skills, experience etc., were required.

Careers Beyond Academia, a written guide providing career transition information and some common examples of roles that researchers have moved into, linking to resources and how they fit into the process of career planning.

The resources are open access and accessible to researchers at all times. They are available to researchers who cannot attend scheduled workshops or 1:1 consultations, and act as a conduit to direct researchers towards these more bespoke resources.