Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff

UEA is currently ranked in the top 200 universities in the world for research excellence[1]. The contributions of research staff are central to our status as a world class research institution and we recognise the significant contribution that research staff make to the work of the University. We are committed to policies and procedures that promote the management, development and support that our researchers require to facilitate their work and their continuing professional development.

This Code of Practice provides guidance to research staff, Heads of Schools (HoS), Principal Investigators (PI) and other research managers (collectively referred to as research managers), and Research Staff Co-ordinators (RSC) on how they can create an appropriately managed and supportive environment in which research staff can work effectively in pursuit of their project goals and to develop their careers.

The Code draws on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and has been developed from our **Action Plan** to support the implementation of the Concordat. UEA is a holder of the European Commission's award that acknowledges our alignment with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for their recruitment. UEA also holds the Bronze Athena Swan Award, which recognises our commitment to advancing women's careers in academia.

1. Terminology

Research staff and **researchers**[2] are terms used to refer to those employed at UEA on fixed term contracts on Research & Analogous Terms of Appointment, normally employed to carry out research supporting a PI, and often supported by grants from external funding bodies.

They report to and are supervised by their **research manager**, who will normally be the member of academic staff (Principal or Chief Investigator) responsible for the grant on which the researcher is employed. In cases where the researcher is directly funded (e.g. by a Research Fellowship) the HoS will normally act as research manager.

2. Responsibilities

(a)   Research Manager
     The research manager should:

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[1] 2019 Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

[2] Occasionally research staff are appointed or re-appointed to indefinite contracts while the funding remains for a fixed term period, or underwritten by the School on an indefinite basis. For the sake of equality and consistency, the principles set out in this Code are intended to apply to these staff as well. The terminology "fixed term" is also intended to include all research contracts which have an end date regardless of length, including shorter temporary (previously known as Casual) contracts of employment.

- Undertake appropriate training to become equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to act as line manager. As a minimum, this should include the E-Learning Modules for Recruitment & Selection, Diversity in the Workplace and Staff Appraisal. A range of training opportunities are provided via CSED.
- Maintain an awareness of and adherence to University policies and procedures, including Health & Safety (H&S), Annual Review and Appraisal.
- Establish at the beginning of employment what is expected in terms of ethical standards, laboratory procedures, objectives, and reasonable expectations of output. Guidance on research integrity and good practice can be found here https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/ren/research-integrity
- Ensure that research staff are aware that work-related issues should be raised with the research manager in the first instance.
- Ensure that both project productivity and career development are explicitly acknowledged and valued; and in setting the objectives of the research project, time should be structured so that the researcher can access appropriate training and development opportunities.
- Ensure that research staff are able to take their full leave allowance during the course of their contract.
- Ensure that research staff are able to take part in the **minimum requirement** for all UEA staff which is two full days of training per annum.
- Include time and funding for the development of researchers as part of grant applications wherever this is allowed.
- Take full responsibility for managing the appraisal process for research staff, including reporting completion for monitoring and reporting purposes.
- Provide clarity about the role and responsibilities of the researcher within the research project, set clear objectives at the start of the contract to be reviewed at least annually and normally as part of the appraisal process; provide regular feedback on performance; and discuss any problems as early as possible.
- Ensure that research staff are appropriately acknowledged and credited for their contributions to both project and School activities and, wherever possible, actively encourage the involvement of research staff in the preparation of research proposals.
- Publicise funding opportunities to research staff. Additional support and information on funding opportunities may be available from Research and Innovation Services
- Encourage researchers to contribute to the preparation of manuscripts, participate in relevant courses for further training, and be involved in applications for further research funding, such, for example, travel grants, small pilot grants, and if, appropriate, fellowship applications. Where funding bodies permit, research staff should be encourage to submit grants as either PI or co-investigator. Wherever possible, if a grant is submitted with a named researcher, that researcher should be named as a co-applicant.
- Make research staff aware of opportunities for promotion, increments and ex gratia payments as part of the Annual Review process.

(b) Researcher
The Researcher should:

- Comply with the terms and conditions of their employment and all policies and procedures that apply to them.
- Familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the University's Guidelines for Good Practice in Research
- Seek clarity about their role and responsibilities within the research project, requesting regular feedback from their research manager on performance, and discuss any work-related problems as early as possible.
- Take responsibility for planning and managing their own career; reflect on and discuss career ambitions; and seek out appropriate training and development opportunities that enable them to develop the key skills that will maximise their chances of progressing within academia, increase their employability as researchers, or give them the flexibility to change career. Helpful information and guidance can be found here www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development
- Proactively participate in developmental activities such as the annual appraisal process, RESNet and School or faculty-based events, attending conferences, internal or external training workshops, or visiting or hosting collaborators, as appropriate.
- Participate in the life of UEA and, as experience develops, be willing to contribute to more activities within their Schools.
- Familiarise themselves with the support available from CareerCentral, Human Resources and the Centre for Staff and Educational Development.

(c) School
Schools and departments (or other research groupings) should:
- Appoint a RSC who will be able to provide advice and support, and will meet with individual researchers as part of their induction.
- Promote and encourage good management practices to ensure compliance with relevant policies and procedures.
- Provide support for research managers, including training and development support where appropriate.
- Facilitate access to a wide range of opportunities for training and development via CSED (who can provide specific training for research staff seeking to develop their careers within and beyond academia) and CareerCentral (where a confidential career guidance appointment is available to all research staff).
- Provide an induction programme and assign new research staff a buddy/informal mentor, where appropriate.
- Actively encourage research staff to become involved with the wider activities of the department, where relevant, such as teaching and supervision, outreach, further training or additional enterprise and engagement activities outside the remit of their research project (bearing in mind external funding conditions which may set limits or expectations)
- Provide clear guidelines on how research staff can contribute to teaching and supervision and other activities.
- Ensure representation of research staff on all appropriate committees, including School Boards.
- Provide access to necessary facilities for the performance of research staff duties and development needs.

- Ensure that H&S procedures for research staff working on-site and off-site are in place and that the necessary support, training and insurance cover is provided.
- Ensure that any work-related queries that cannot be resolved by the research manager should be raised with the HoS.
- Ensure that research staff are appropriately consulted, adequately represented at all levels of decision making within the School, and suitably resourced.
- Recognise, via the Annual Review process where appropriate, additional activities undertaken by research staf.
- Ensure that annual appraisals take place for research staff (and within the first two months of appointment). When this hasn't happened, follow up with research manager to ensure timely action within the University's published timeframe.
- Ensure that where the RSC is also the research manager, that the researcher has an alternative person who can fulfil this role.

(d) Compliance and update
- HR will regularly monitor levels of compliance with this Code.
- RSCs will consult researchers and report to the HR on its implementation.
- RSCs will produce an annual report reviewing how the Code of Practice is being implemented in their area of responsibility.
- Associate Deans for Research will report findings to the Research Executive.
- The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will report findings, where appropriate, to the Executive Team, and will notify Deans and HoS should follow up action need to be taken.
- HR will review the Code annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of UEA and its research staff.

3. **Prior to appointment**

   (a) Recruitment - university recruitment and selection procedures are designed to ensure fairness and equity and to ensure that all staff, including research staff are appointed to the grade appropriate to the duties of their posts. It is also essential that those appointed meet the requirements of the post. Research & Innovation Services (RIN) co-ordinate the recruitment activity for grant-funded appointments. Appointments funded by the University are co-ordinated by Human Resources (HR).

- Applications for grants should, wherever possible, include sufficient time and resources[3] to provide training & development activities.
- Research managers should conduct recruitment activity in accordance with the University's Recruitment and Selection Guidelines, and associated guidance from HR, at each stage of the recruitment process to ensure that research opportunities attract a diverse pool of appropriately qualified applicants and that recruitment decisions are free from discrimination and unconscious bias.

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[3] For Research Council UK projects employing research staff £200 p.a. should be included in the indirect costs for training and development.

- Research managers should undertake training in recruitment & selection and equality & diversity and refresh their knowledge on a regular basis.
- Research staff are appointed to, and paid at, a range of grades which progress in level to reflect the complexity, demands and levels of responsibility expected in the roles. To ensure equality and consistency, the grade of a post will be established by HR based on the responsibilities to be undertaken in the role, not the level of funding available to finance the post, using the [Grade Criteria for Research Staff](#).
- The starting salary will normally be at the bottom of the appropriate grade. A starting salary higher on the scale can be made in discussion with HR and will be subject to demonstrable skills and experience exceeding those set out in the person specification.
- Researchers will progress by one spine point each year until the uppermost point within the band is reached, where provided for by the funding. Grant applications should take this pay progression into account.
- A recruitment process is not normally necessary for named research appointments. Appointment of named researchers is, however, subject to UK immigration laws and the University being granted permission to employ the researcher, where they are not automatically entitled to work in the UK.
- The nature of research funding means that research staff appointments are typically for a fixed term, however, researchers are entitled to the same terms and conditions of appointment, regardless of contract length.
- The length of appointment should be as long as is reasonably practical and normally for the relevant period of guaranteed external funding.
- Researchers are employed on the basis of formal written contracts of employment drawn up and issued by HR. These must always be issued by HR in advance of any start date and following satisfactory completion of the necessary right to work checks. Where applicable, confirmation of employment is normally subject to a probationary period of six months.
- Queries about employment contracts should be directed to the relevant Human Resources Manager.

4. During appointment

(a) Induction - a structured induction into the University is important for all new employees to help them settle into their role and to feel welcomed and valued.

- Research staff should receive an appropriate local induction, ideally in the first week of joining the project.
- RSCs will be notified about new research appointments by HR.

(b) Annual Review – the normal processes and procedures for Annual Review should apply to researchers, subject to the approval of the appropriate funding body and where provided for by the funding. Grant applications should take this pay progression into account.

- Schools will be required annually to review the salary and grading of research staff, who will have the opportunity to seek promotion, special or

discretionary increments, and ex-gratia payments. Full details can be found here https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/promotions/research.

- Research managers will ensure that information about the Annual Review process is drawn to the attention of research staff, and that all research staff are considered for awards whether or not they proactively put themselves forward for consideration.

(c) **Appraisal - i**n accordance with the National Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers, research staff should undergo a Professional Development Review, which is included in the appraisal at UEA. Further details can be found here https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/research

- Research managers should ensure they know who they are responsible for appraising and should undergo Appraiser training prior to conducting an appraisal.
- Research managers should ensure that all research staff are offered an annual appraisal, regardless of contract length, and that the appraisal comprises both a review of performance on the research project **and** the training and developmental needs and aspirations of the researcher.

5. **Approaching the end of a fixed term contract -** the University encourages the renewal and extension of fixed term contracts, wherever possible, to retain staff. However, due to the uncertain nature of external research funding, no guarantee can be given of continuing employment beyond the expiry date of any fixed term.

- HR will notify research managers and HoS when a researcher's contract is due to expire, following the published process. Researchers will be notified so that they are aware that discussions are taking place.
- The end of contract is normally classed as a redundancy at law and the research manager will be responsible for consulting with the researcher about the action they intend to take, and will give the earliest possible notice if a grant is not likely to be renewed, or their continued employment or an extension is in doubt.
- If funds are extended and there is little or no variation in the nature of the work, the contract with the post holder would normally be renewed, apart from in exceptional circumstances which should be discussed in advance with HR.
- In line with the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, researchers with 4 years' continuous service will be reviewed to determine whether they should receive an indefinite contract.
- Researchers should ensure that they have discussed with the research manager the availability of further funding or other opportunities within or outside the University, and keep the research manager informed of their career interests and the type of post for which they might wish to apply at the end of their contract.
- Researchers and Schools/research groupings should work together to explore and apply for alternative sources of funding, wherever practical;

where wishing to remain at UEA, research staff can monitor vacancies and consider how best to avail themselves of these opportunities. Information regarding opportunities for employment at UEA is advertised on the [HR vacancies](#) web pages.

- Researchers seeking access to alternative internal posts will have access to the University's Redeployment Register; Redundancy pay is calculated in line with current legislation and will apply to those researchers with two or more years' continuous service.

- It may be possible, exceptionally and at the Head of School's discretion, to provide bridging funds to support continuing employment for a short period pending commencement of new funding arrangements.

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