



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

Researcher Development Time Policy

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Scope	3
3. Aims, Expectations and Benefits	3
4. Examples of Development Opportunities	6
5. Considerations	9
6. Monitoring and Review	9
7. Related Policies	10
8. Definitions of Terms	10

I. Introduction

The University is committed to ensuring that all staff develop their skills, knowledge and competencies effectively in a manner that enables them to reach their potential and contribute fully to the achievement of the University's strategic objectives.

The [Strathclyde People Strategy \(staff login required\)](#) commits to a supportive and empathetic community that ensures an inclusive and collegiate environment, alongside its wider vision of creating an exceptional values-based work culture with support for initiatives such as "[The Strathclyde Pledge](#)' (staff login required) and becoming a signatory to the revised [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) (the 'RD Concordat'). Stronger emphasis on continuing [career](#) and [professional development](#) is also prominent across the [UK Research & Innovation sector](#), including through enhanced expectations in funding processes.

This **Researcher Development Time Policy** reflects these sector priorities and Strathclyde's People-Oriented Value by offering a framework dedicated to Researchers that underpins the provision of opportunities, support, encouragement, and time to establish and cultivate their professional development and associated career goals, ultimately facilitating elevated individual performance and improved employability.

This Policy relates to all members of [Research Staff](#) employed by Strathclyde (termed '[Researchers](#)' here and throughout), as well as being of direct relevance to all [Managers of Researchers](#), i.e. staff who in their current position are, or could reasonably be expected to be, a Line Manager or direct Supervisor to one or multiple Research Staff members.

The Policy is further accompanied by a set of two **guidance documents for [Research Staff members \(staff login required\)](#) and [Managers of Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#)**, dedicated to supporting them in its practical implementation.

I.1. Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

The requirement that Researchers are provided adequate and supported development time is an obligation of Strathclyde's commitment to the revised [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#).

The University became a signatory to the revised RD Concordat in June 2020, demonstrating its continuing focus on supporting the career and professional development of its Researchers. The Concordat recognises the critical role of research and innovation in delivering the UK's ambitious economic and industrial strategies and aims to set the gold standard in Researcher Development. The expectations outlined in this Policy regarding time and support for Researchers to engage in professional development are directly aligned with the obligations of the RD Concordat, specifically:

Institutions must:

- provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata, per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.
- provide researchers with opportunities, and time, to develop their [research identity](#) and broader leadership skills.

Managers of Researchers must:

- support researchers in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through the use of mentors and careers professionals, training, and [secondments](#).
- allocate a minimum of 10 days pro rata, per year, for their researchers to engage with professional development, supporting researchers to balance the delivery of their research and their own professional development.
- identify opportunities and allow time (in addition to the 10 days' professional development allowance) for their researchers to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills and provide appropriate credit and recognition for their endeavours.

Researchers must:

- take ownership of their career, identifying opportunities to work towards career goals, including engaging in a minimum of 10 days' professional development pro rata, per year.

- explore and prepare for a range of employment options across different sectors, such as by making use of mentors, careers professionals, training and secondments.
- seek out, and engage with, opportunities to develop their research identity and broader leadership skills.

2. Scope

This Policy covers **all University employees in Research staff categories Grades 6 to 10** (termed '**Researchers**' here and throughout). The Policy formally applies to those staff with contracts initiating on or after the date of approval of this Policy. For Researchers on existing contracts, there will be a transition period of six months before the Policy formally applies; during this time, it is recommended that Researchers on existing contracts take the opportunities presented, where appropriate, following open discussions with their Line Manager or direct Supervisor.

The Policy is also of note to **all Managers of Researchers**, i.e. staff who in their current position are, or could reasonably be expected to be, a Line Manager or direct Supervisor to one or multiple Researchers (even if this is not currently the case), as it outlines expectations for their line management duties.

It is recognised that there is a wider set of staff and student groups involved in the University's research environment, comprising but not limited to Postgraduate Research Students, Knowledge Exchange Staff, Teaching Staff, Technicians and other personnel active to some extent in research. While these groups are not directly covered by this Policy, considering their role in contributing to the University's strategic objectives, a similar approach as outlined in this Policy is recommended for these groups' professional development.

3. Aims, Expectations and Benefits

This Policy provides a commitment to and guidance on effective development time for Researchers to ensure that Researcher [professional and career development](#) is embedded consistently across the University. In this context, professional and career development is defined

as engaging with opportunities to develop one's professional competencies and gain experience to support one's future career.

With specific regards to dedicated Researcher Development Time, the University follows the RD Concordat obligation that Researchers are supported to incorporate at least 10 days of professional development time (pro rata) per year, as well as additional time dedicated to developing their own research identity and broader leadership skills.

It is fully recognised that the nature of research environments and funding means that Researchers will pursue careers across a range of employment sectors and the University is committed to supporting and preparing its staff to reach their individual objectives in a diversity of careers. This Policy, and the related **guidance documents for [Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#) and [Managers of Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#)**, thus provides a formal framework to support Researchers in analysing their developmental needs, planning and prioritising opportunities, and monitoring progress towards personal goals, all whilst, ultimately, equipping individuals with the impetus and skills to elevate productivity, creativity, and confidence levels within their current and future remits.

3.1. Researchers

In the context of this Policy, Researchers are required to:

- identify and participate in development opportunities, including professional development activities and those to support development of their research identity and leadership skills, in order to work towards their career goals, thus taking ownership of their career;
- track their development time throughout the year aiming towards engaging in a minimum of 10 days' professional development activities (pro rata) per year, as well as additional time to develop their research identity and leadership skills;
- engage in career development discussions with their Line Manager or direct Supervisor on a regular basis, such as during probationary review meetings, the annual Accountability and Development Review (ADR) and other recurring meetings. Such discussions should cover the individual Researcher's development needs, plans for development opportunities and potential barriers to their development.

Individual Researchers will benefit through:

- identifying, pursuing and achieving their personal professional development objectives;
- engaging in opportunities to develop their leadership skills, research identity and professional independence;
- engaging in opportunities to enhance their understanding of the wider research system;
- establishing ownership of their career and an enhanced understanding of the breadth of their career possibilities;
- maintaining and enhancing their skillset to work towards achieving their career goals;
- increasing their confidence, efficiency and credibility.

3.2. Managers of Researchers

In the context of this Policy, Managers of Researchers are required to:

- enable their Researchers, including through appropriate time allocation in projects and role responsibilities, to engage in a minimum of 10 days' professional development activities (pro rata) per year, as well as additional time to develop their research identity and leadership skills;
- discuss development needs and undertaken/ongoing/planned development opportunities with their Researchers on a regular basis, such as during probationary review meetings, their annual Accountability and Development Review (ADR) and other recurring meetings;
- support their Researchers to balance the delivery of their research and their professional development, including through identifying solutions to potential barriers to development that their Researchers may face.

Individual Managers of Researchers, as well as Research Groups, will benefit through members of their team:

- becoming more effective in the workplace and their role;
- having an increased understanding of the context and implications of their work;

- contributing to the body of knowledge and skillset of the team;
- bringing new stimuli and perspectives to the team; and
- feeling supported and more valued within the team.

3.3. University, Faculties, Departments & Schools

In the context of this Policy, the University, including Faculty leadership colleagues, and Heads of Departments and Schools, are required to:

- promote this Policy fully within their areas, acknowledging that Researchers will pursue careers across a range of employment sectors;
- monitor the appropriate application of this Policy by Researchers and Managers of Researchers within their areas;
- provide leadership and direction by seeking ways to embed Researcher development initiatives at Faculty/Departmental/School level.

Colleagues in Professional Services should ensure alignment with and facilitate the delivery of this Policy in their contexts in order to support Researchers across the institution.

The Policy offers the following benefits at Department/School/Faculty and University levels:

- close alignment with the University strategic priorities;
- improved organisational performance and staff morale;
- fostering a positive research culture where individuals' needs are acknowledged and supported;
- leadership and management development of key staff groups.

4. Examples of Development Opportunities

Development opportunities can take on various forms and will depend on individual development needs, which may vary depending on one's role, background, discipline and career aspirations. It

is therefore important that development opportunities are chosen on a personal basis with input from the Line Manager or direct Supervisor.

Professional development activities are not limited to formal training courses or programmes and can present as a wide array of experiential possibilities. Individual activities may take place within a variety of settings and Researchers are encouraged to appreciate the diverse range of opportunities open to them. In relation to their future careers, Researchers may explore activities associated with both academic and non-academic contexts. In the context of this Policy, these activities should be additional to the normally expected components of the Researcher's role, bringing added value.

Research identity and leadership skills may be developed through taking on more independence, management responsibility and/or leadership within aspects of one's current role, as well as through professional development activities.

There is variation in individual Researchers' roles and, therefore, depending on individual circumstances, it is possible that an opportunity could be considered as a *professional development activity*, as an activity to develop *research identity and leadership skills* or, in some cases, *not applicable as either* in the context of this policy. Consequently, it is important that Researchers and their Managers openly discuss development opportunities appropriate to the individual's circumstances.

Example: *Attending a conference on a topic directly related to one's research work is usually not a development opportunity in the context of this Policy as this is normally an expected activity within a Researcher role. However, attending a conference could be a **professional development activity** in the context of this Policy for a Researcher if it will provide an opportunity to enhance their skills or expand their network beyond the expectations and scope of the current project and if it is driven by the Researcher's wider interests and career motivations. Or it could be an opportunity to enhance their **research identity and leadership skills** if they were, for example, presenting an independently defined project or on behalf of their line manager/supervisor.*

Possible opportunities relevant within this Policy include but are not limited to:

- Courses, workshops and training programmes
- [Workplace shadowing](#)
- Secondments and internships
- [Mentoring](#) relationships
- Participation in associations, societies and networks, as well as networking more generally
- Participation in committees and working groups at University, Faculty, or Department/School level
- Outreach and [public engagement](#)
- [Knowledge exchange](#), business engagement and commercialisation
- Applying for research funding – from small seed or travel funds to larger grants and fellowships
- Teaching or supervising students or other less senior colleagues
- Organising seminars and networking events
- Peer reviewing publications and grant applications
- Speaking at conferences, workshops or external organisations
- Organising research visits or placements

It should be noted that there may be discipline-specific differences relating to these examples and Researchers are welcome to discuss potential opportunities with colleagues or identify additional opportunities that may be more suited to their individual development needs.

Further details on how to identify and engage with suitable development activities as well as examples regarding professional development opportunities can also be found in the **guidance for [Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#) and [Managers of Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#)** related to this Policy.

Independent of the skill to be developed, the value of all of these opportunities will be enhanced through focused reflection and alignment with potential career aspirations, as well as through meaningful discussions between the Researcher and their Line Manager, direct Supervisor or other appropriate colleagues.

5. Considerations

Enquiries related to this Policy, including conflicting views between Researchers and their Line Manager or direct Supervisor on the timing or value of specific development opportunities, should be discussed openly between the relevant parties as soon as is possible. Any further questions or concerns regarding the application of this Policy should be addressed with Heads of Departments/Schools or can be raised with the Institutional Researcher Development Concordat Team (Institutional RD Concordat Champion: [Dr Emma Compton-Daw](#); Researcher Development Officer: [Dr Hollie Jackson Ireland](#)).

6. Monitoring and Review

The responsibility for individual monitoring and tracking of development time shall lie with the individual Researcher, while Managers of Researchers are responsible for enabling and encouraging their Researchers to apply this Policy (supporting resources and templates are available within the **guidance documents for [Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#) and [Managers of Research Staff \(staff login required\)](#)**). The responsibility for discussing development needs and planned development opportunities shall also lie with both the individual Researcher and their Line Manager or direct Supervisor.

Monitoring and review of this Policy falls within the remit of the Research Development & Culture Sub-Committee (RDCSC). The University endeavours to apply processes, such as the Accountability and Development Review (ADR), Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS), and the HR Excellence in Research Award Review, to monitor the overall implementation of this Policy. To understand the effectiveness of this Policy, monitoring data may also be requested at Department/School, Faculty or University level; therefore, it is important that tracking development time is embedded within the use of this Policy.

7. Related Policies

This Policy operates in conjunction with other relevant University and funder policies, including:

- the [Accountability and Development Review \(ADR\) Policy \(staff login required\)](#), defining the ADR framework to facilitate regular formal discussions between members of staff and their manager relating to individual work performance and objectives, as well as training and development needs; and
- the [Research Code of Practice](#), defining and promoting excellence in research practice, production and dissemination, as well as providing general guidance on the appropriate conduct of research.

8. Definitions of Terms

Where definitions are taken from other documents, the source is provided in square brackets.

Career development The ongoing process of taking responsibility for, and managing, one's career, through seeking professional advice and working towards set goals. A key element is usually documenting a career development plan, which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis [RD Concordat].

Knowledge exchange Knowledge exchange can be defined as a collaborative, creative endeavour that translates knowledge and research into impact in society and the economy. KE includes a set of activities, processes and skills that enable close collaboration between universities and partner organisations to deliver commercial, environmental, cultural and place-based benefits, opportunities for students and increased prosperity." [KE Concordat].

Manager of Researchers A Manager of Researchers is defined here as a staff member who in their current position is, or could reasonably be expected to be, a Line Manager or direct Supervisor to one or multiple Researchers (even if this is not currently the case).

Mentoring Mentoring is an ongoing, usually long-term, relationship between a more experienced or qualified person outside of one's line management (the mentor) and a 'mentee'. The purpose is to provide guidance to support the mentee through their career and personal development, through formal and informal meetings [RD Concordat].

Other forms of mentoring, such as reverse mentoring (where a more junior colleague mentors a more senior colleague) or reciprocal mentoring may also fall within this definition.

Public engagement Public engagement describes the many ways in which the activity and benefits of research can be shared with the wider public. Engagement is typically a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, aimed at generating mutual benefit which results in greater relevance, accountability and transparency [RD Concordat].

Professional development The ongoing process of developing one's professional competencies and gaining experience to support one's future career [RD Concordat].

Research Staff

University of Strathclyde employees in Research Staff categories Grade 6 to 10 (Research Assistants, Research Associates, Research Fellows, Senior Research Fellows and Principal Research Fellows).

Researcher

A Researcher is defined here as an individual whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who is employed specifically for this purpose by a higher education institution or research institute [RD Concordat].

In the context of this Policy, this refers to University of Strathclyde employees in Research Staff categories Grade 6 to 10.

Research identity

Researchers increasing their impact by developing their professional research competencies and reputation through activities such as teaching, publishing, conference presentations/organisation, grant proposal writing, networking, managing budgets, knowledge exchange and secondments [RD Concordat].

Secondment

Secondment means that an employee temporarily moves into a different role within their Department/School, within another part of the University or within an external organisation, on a full-time or part-time basis [[Flexible Staff Resourcing/Temporary Staff Assignments Policy \(staff login required\)](#)].

Workplace shadowing

Workplace shadowing means that an employee gains a deeper understanding of a different role or the workings of another Department/School and builds partnership working relationships by observing the incumbent post holder for short periods of time, typically half a day or a day a week for two or three weeks [[Flexible Staff Resourcing/Temporary Staff Assignments Policy \(staff login required\)](#)].