



CAREERS GUIDE FOR MANAGERS OF RESEARCH STAFF

How can you support the career development of your research staff?

As a manager of research staff you may find that you are the natural first port of call for careers advice from your postdoctoral researchers, particularly those considering a research or academic career. Here are some suggestions for effective ways to support research staff with their career development:

- **Be open to having conversations about career plans**
Remember you don't need to have all the answers; just being open and listening can help. Ideally these conversations would be happening from the start of a contract; consider asking what researchers' future plans are and how this contract can help them to achieve those. Career conversations can be integrated into the SDPR process, which is an ideal vehicle for discussing broader career development.
- **Take a supportive, non-directive approach**
Avoid assumptions about what particular individuals may want to do. Be open to discussing career options outside of academia, even if you feel you don't have all the answers. If asked give constructive and honest feedback about an individual's suitability for an academic research/teaching career.
- **Ask open questions and encourage reflection**
Questions could include: 'What are your thoughts about longer term career plans?'; 'What skills and experience will you need?'; 'What skills are you developing though your current research project?'; 'Where could you get more information and advice?'
- **Signpost to appropriate sources of advice and support**
Signpost research staff to Anne Cameron a.i.cameron@bath.ac.uk, the Researcher Career Development Adviser, if they are interested in options outside of your area of knowledge or would benefit from more in-depth careers support.
- **Provide support and mentoring on academic career development**
It may be helpful for research staff to discuss their broader academic career development with a mentor other than yourself; encourage participation in the mentoring scheme for staff in the Education and Research job family www.bath.ac.uk/hr/learning/individuals/coaching-mentoring/mentoring-education-research-job-family.

There are also things that you can do as a Principal Investigator:
Help with development of a publication strategy; involve researchers in your own grant writing and encourage them to apply for small pots of money; help facilitate teaching experience and let them observe your own teaching; encourage involvement in conferences; provide feedback on academic CVs and advice on interview preparation; share your own career pathway with them and share the highlights and challenges of an academic career.

- **Introduce research staff to your own internal and external networks and collaborators**

You may be able to introduce your researchers to academic colleagues, PGR alumni, external stakeholders or industrial collaborators who may be additional sources of career advice and information.

- **Encourage and facilitate a proactive approach to professional development and involvement in wider departmental and university activities**

This will help to develop non-research networks and to build transferable skills such as team working, organisation and leadership. Employers outside of academia will value a wide range of experience, so encourage involvement in activities in Departments and across the wider University. **It is important to give research staff time to attend workshops and other career development activities; UKRI expects research staff to engage in development as part of their contract.**

Additional Resources

Infographics summarising employment data and sample job titles for doctoral graduates www.vitae.ac.uk/impact-and-evaluation/what-do-researchers-do/career-destinations-by-discipline-infographics-1.

What do research staff do next? – report and series of 40 case studies on what research staff do on leaving academia www.vitae.ac.uk/impact-and-evaluation/what-do-researchers-do/WDRSDN.

Vitae – www.vitae.ac.uk the national researcher development organisation has a wealth of careers and professional development information and advice, particularly career stories of other researchers www.vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers/researcher-career-stories, CV examples www.vitae.ac.uk/researcher-careers/researcher-cv-examples and the *Career-wise researcher* booklet www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/guides-briefings-and-information/the-career-wise-researcher-vitae-2013.pdf.

Jobs.ac.uk – as well as being one of the main places to look for HE academic and non-academic roles in the UK, jobs.ac.uk also have a blog and articles with careers advice, and a range of free e-books on topics including writing cover letters for research jobs and academic job interviews www.jobs.ac.uk.

Research Professional – international database of large and small pots of research funding www.researchprofessional.com.

Careers Service blog – we write posts on a range of careers-related topics, including many that are of specific interest to doctoral and post-doctoral researchers <http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/careers>.

Manchester Academic Careers website – detailed advice on academic career pathways, job applications and video career stories www.academiccareer.manchester.ac.uk.

Nature Jobs blog – lots of careers-related articles for scientists <http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs>.

Support from the Careers Service

The Researcher Career Development Adviser, Dr. Anne Cameron, provides confidential careers advice, information and guidance for research staff. Specifically this involves:

- **1:1 careers guidance appointments**

These 45-minute appointments, offered on campus throughout the academic year, can be used by research staff to discuss any careers-related matter in confidence. Frequent topics include:

- Identifying skills and strengths
- Identifying and discussing potential career options
- Discussing plans for academic career development
- Finding jobs and identifying job-search strategies
- Feedback on applications and CVs, and support with marketing research skills outside of academia
- Support with interview preparation and the provision of practice interviews
- Signposting to internal and external sources of support and advice.

Research staff can book these appointments at any time by emailing Anne Cameron a.l.cameron@bath.ac.uk.

In addition, research staff receive an invitation for an optional discussion about their career development with Anne Cameron six months and 12 months into their contract at the University.

For research staff based off campus, careers guidance appointments and practice interviews can be offered via telephone or Skype.

- **Career management workshops and skills training**

Within the development programme for research staff we deliver tailored career management sessions for research staff, on topics including career options, interview preparation and using social media for career development.

- **Specialist information resources**

The Careers Service website has a specific section for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers which contains extensive information on possible career options, vacancy sources and self-marketing, and there is a web page for researchers in each discipline www.bath.ac.uk/guides/careers-service-support-for-researchers.

- **Access to employers and professional networks**

The Careers Service organises a number of careers fairs and hosts presentations from employers representing a wide range of sectors. Throughout the academic year all undergraduate and postgraduate students and research staff have the opportunity to meet a wide range of employers on campus when they give presentations. All students and research staff can also access Bath Connection www.bath.ac.uk/guides/using-bath-connection-as-a-careers-tool, a database of Bath alumni contacts, some of whom are doctoral graduates, who can offer insights into their experiences of working in various roles, sectors and organisations.

- **Provision for specific groups on request**

We are very happy to provide tailored sessions for Departments, Faculties and research groups. Contact Anne Cameron a.l.cameron@bath.ac.uk to arrange this.

Careers Service

August 2018

© University of Bath

This publication is available online at

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/list-of-careers-service-publications.

If you need this information in another format, please contact us.

www.bath.ac.uk/careers.