

Making the most of the P&DR process for Researcher Development in the Edinburgh Medical School

Background

External research has shown that around 5% of our researchers are likely to gain academic posts, others will move to longer term contract-based research in the academia or to a range of careers outside of academia. There is a clear need for researchers to take responsibility for their career development from an early stage to ensure that they are in the optimal position for transition to their next role. ***However researchers frequently do not adequately engage with training opportunities available to them and postpone important career decisions until near to the end of research contracts.***

All research staff in the Medical School should now be offered an annual Performance & Development Review (P&DR). The standard CMVM P&DR form requires *identification of up to 6 key objectives*, and a separate section on *agreed professional/personal development plans for the coming year*. The P&DR thus provides an excellent opportunity for PIs and researchers to discuss career development, to encourage active engagement from an early stage with opportunities that enhance their current role and help transition to their next role whether it is in or beyond academia. ***The recommendations below are designed to enhance researcher engagement with the available training.***

Current Support for Researcher Development The University provides excellent development opportunities for researchers through the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), the Careers service, Mentoring Connections, the Research Support Office (RSO). These add to opportunities outside the University offered by Learned Societies, Funding Bodies and others. Most research staff receive a monthly newsletter from IAD highlighting opportunities in the University, although penetration of the Newsletter is still variable across research staff. All Grade 6, 7, and more recently also Grade 8, new starts in the Medical School identified by HR as being researchers now receive a **welcome letter** from GAG* encouraging early engagement with career development and providing link to useful docs, and to post-doc societies who offer local training & development at 3 sites in EMS (WGH, Central & BQ). GAG also operates a twitter feed ([@EdMedECR](#)) that highlights relevant training and funding opportunities both in and beyond the University. **There is however a need to reinforce these efforts through personal contact with researchers during their time in the University.**

Recommendation for enhanced P&DR for post -docs

1. **In advance of the P&DR** Reviewee and reviewer should familiarise themselves with the *Code of Practise for Management and Development of Research Staff* and the *Research Staff Development, Training and Support Brochure* (links below). The excellent PDF '*Beginning you research position*' & '*Thriving in your research position*' guides may also be helpful for reviewees. Encourage use of the '*Thriving in your research position*' PDF guide (link below) and associated activity sheets to encourage reflection on resilience, research activity & career. **Many of the IAD programmes have now been moved online in response to Covid19, and have been supplemented by an excellent Pop-Up IAD workshops to support researchers in resilience, career planning, CVs and more. See the IAD website, @EdMedECR, @researchersAtEd and @sarashinton**
2. **During the P&DR** Use the Meetings guidelines in the *Code of Practise*, and if appropriate completed '*Thriving in your research position*' activity sheets to shape discussion around development & careers.
3. **During the P&DR** Use the *Research Staff Development, Training and Support Brochure* to identify relevant training opportunities, depending on career stage and discussion above. Also

encourage consideration of opportunities in relevant professional bodies & external organisations e.g. WTCRF, Royal Society of Edinburgh, SULSA. Record specific plans on P&DR form to ensure reflection on progress in the following year.

4. **During the P&DR** Encourage researchers to subscribe to the EMS ECR mailing list (https://mlist.is.ed.ac.uk/lists/info/ecr_ems) so that they receive regular updates on development and support.

Useful Links

IAD Code of Practise for Management and Development of Research Staff

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/research-roles/research-only-staff/advice/codes/code-practice>

IAD Research Staff 19/20 manual

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/b6ac0a0a-f8b6-4e32-8dc6-fdc645d0125f>

IAD Guide for New Researchers in Edinburgh

http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Researchers/Research_staff/Beginning_your_research_position_in_Edinburgh.pdf

IAD Thriving in Your Research Position

http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Researchers/Research_staff/Resilience/Thriving_in_your_research_position_FINAL.pdf

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May, 2020