

# EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR RESEARCHERS



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



**UCC**

**University College Cork, Ireland**  
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

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## Executive Summary

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A key objective of the University is to deliver international excellence in all our areas of research. The University recognises the major contribution played by researchers in delivering research of the quality and impact which characterises a world-class research focused University. UCC is committed to attracting the very best researchers and helping them to develop their careers and make their career choices realistically and effectively, whatever their chosen career path. ***UCC believes that this policy reflects and incorporates the principles of The European Charter and Code for Researchers and supports our actions within our EC HRS4R action plan thus working to maintain UCC's [HR Excellence in Research Award](#).***

The purpose of this document is to inform the University's Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers. This is vitally important in the context of national developments to creating the SMART Economy, the increase in the number of early-stage researchers in the University, to develop the University's capability to realise it's objectives in relation to research as set out in the UCC strategic framework 2009-12 and in the context of the strategically important role of research staff in the academic mission of the University.

The University's Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers draws on the national framework in terms of creating the SMART Economy and affording post-doctoral research opportunities. It is intended to provide clear minimum standards, and to be sufficiently flexible for Colleges, Schools, Departments, Institutes and Centres to adapt it to the needs of their research communities.

The document sets out University policy on the employment and career management of researchers. Researchers, principal investigators and/or supervisors of researchers and heads of schools/departments and departmental administrators are required to support the implementation of the Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers in UCC.

## Scope of the Policy

The Employment and Career Management Structure sets out the University's provisions and guidelines for the employment of researchers. Researchers are broadly defined as individuals that are directly engaged in research and who are employed for this purpose. This definition includes a wide range of research staff with different disciplinary backgrounds, levels of professional training and development, experience and responsibility and different career expectations and intentions. The Scheme applies to researchers employed within the University's Colleges, Schools, Departments, Research Institutes and Centres.

# 1. University Research Career Management Structure

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The following career management structure will be implemented for research staff in UCC. It includes clearly defined levels within the researcher career path, with a requirement for continuous professional training and development at each level. The structure currently focuses on Post-doctoral and Senior Post-doctoral Research staff. Policy will continue to be developed with regard to Research Assistant, Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow.

The career management structure is supported by an employment framework that includes a researcher's personal and professional development, a consistent recruitment process, and a clear contract management and salary administration policy.

Entry into the research career structure will occur following doctoral education. The University plans to divide research roles into a hierarchy as outlined below.

Stage 1: Postdoctoral Researcher and Senior Post Doctoral Researcher

Stage 2: Research Fellow

Stage 3: Senior Research Fellow

## 1.2 Research Assistant

This is an entry level role into a research area, for the purposes of assisting in the performance of research in the University. See Appendix 1: Definition of Research Roles and Responsibilities.

## 1.3 Post-Doctoral & Senior Post-Doctoral Researcher (PhD Graduates)

The first stage of the researcher career path is Post- Doctoral researcher and is a period of professional training and development where the researcher gains practical experience while supervised by the Principal Investigator (PI), who has secured an award for funding to conduct research and will consist of two stages:

-Post- Doctoral Researcher

-Senior Post- Doctoral Researcher

The Post-Doctoral/Senior Post-Doctoral phase has an expected duration generally up to a maximum of 6 years, on a full-time or part-time basis, subject to the term of the project, inclusive of postdoctoral experience gained elsewhere.

It is anticipated that a researcher would have obtained the skills and experience necessary after completing 3 years at the Post-Doctoral level, subject to the term of the project, to be eligible to compete for a Senior Post-Doctoral post advertised by the University should such a position become available.

The University will provide a structured programme of professional training and development, to enable Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral researchers to acquire the skills and experience necessary to become independent researchers. The completion of professional training and development at the Post-Doctoral stage will enable researchers to compete for an opportunity at the Senior Post-Doctoral level, either internally within the University or externally within academia or the private sector.

The University will create a systematic and continuous career development process for research staff, supported by Principal Investigators and the Department of Human Resources. This career track will include the possibility of a structured path for research staff in the University from Post-Doctoral Researcher up to Senior Research Fellow. Progress through the levels will be based on a competitive, transparent process that is based on research excellence and merit.

## **1.4 Research Fellow**

The second stage of the research career structure is that of a Research Fellow. The Research Fellow title would be awarded to individuals who have personally secured their own independent external research funding inclusive of their salary following an open, transparent and competitive selection process by the research funding body or who have been appointed by the Higher Education Institution following an open competition. The Research Fellow would still be associated with a Principal Investigator who would act as their mentor and facilitate access to research infrastructure.

The role also allows the Research Fellow the professional development opportunity to demonstrate the capacity for independent and self-directed research and scholarship and the management of a research team. The role allows the Research Fellow to assemble a portfolio of independent achievement and render themselves competitive for tenured academic positions or senior scientific roles in industry.

## **1.5 Senior Research Fellow**

Senior Research Fellow is a highly prestigious role and this title would be awarded to individuals who have personally secured their own substantial, independent, external, research funding, inclusive of salary, following an open, competitive and transparent selection process by the research funding body or who have been appointed by the University following an open competition. The Senior Research Fellow would be completely independent with access to their own research infrastructure and expected to support and run a research group as the Principal Investigator. It is anticipated a small number of positions with this title will be available.

## **1.6 Research Professor**

*The role of Research Professor is under development in the University currently, for those who have attained a clear international standing in the research field, with significant*

*experience in developing and running research groups and programmes and have obtained research grants to cover his/her salary and that of their research team.*

## **2. Researcher's Personal and Professional Development**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

The University will provide a comprehensive skills and career development framework for research staff. In recent years, there have been significant developments in doctoral education in UCC, with the development of PhD training designed specifically for post-doctoral students. The professional training and development framework for research staff will build on the training and developments in PhD training and ultimately form a continuum of professional training and development from primary graduation to independent careers in research. The framework will initially focus on the professional development of Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral researchers and will continue to be developed with regard to Research Assistant, Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow. The framework will support the Principal Investigator and the Post-Doctoral/Senior Post-Doctoral researcher in identifying development objectives during the period of employment, to support obtaining the skills required to progress through the research career path. The framework will enable Post-Doctoral researchers to plan their careers and to access professional training and development activities that support their research role and longer term career goals. Furthermore, it will establish a process that enables post-doctoral researchers to engage with their Principal Investigator (PI) for feedback and input on their progress.

The framework identifies four key categories of professional development for a post-doctoral researcher as they progress through their career. The four key skills professional development categories have been identified as follows; see Appendix 2: Research Skills Development Categories.

1. Professional Research Skills
2. Personal Effectiveness and Professional Development
3. Teaching, Learning and Mentoring
4. Innovation, Commercial and Industrial Skills

Each category is made up of several development sub-categories to facilitate prioritising and personalising the researcher's professional training and skills development plan and which will be used as a guide by the Post-Doctoral researcher and the PI when reviewing progress and identifying areas for development during the period of employment.

### **2.2 Principles of Research Professional Training and Development and Career Development Planning**

- The Principal Investigator (PI) and researcher will meet to discuss and agree professional training and development needs and objectives for the researcher at the start of the contract and during the period of their employment.

- Researchers have responsibility for managing and pursuing their own careers and career development, supported by the PI. See Appendix 3: University Code of Practice for Employment of Researchers.
- The process will be mandatory for all Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral research staff.
- Researchers should be supported by their PI/supervisors in seeking out opportunities to educate themselves about the variety of career paths that are open to them, including making good use of the professional training and development resources provided by the University.
- A balance will be maintained between the demands of the researcher's role and their professional training and development in the University. It is recommended that an agreed programme of professional training and development activities are undertaken in each year of the Post-Doctoral phase, at such a level that it supports but does not interfere with the core research duties of the staff member concerned.
- The process of professional training and development and career planning will be facilitated through a web based system through which Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral researchers will analyse their skills needs and record meetings with their PI, develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP) and identify and book professional training and development modules. See Appendix 4: Research Professional Development Plan.
- The career development and professional training and development framework will take account of the many possible career paths following the Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral periods and will provide options for researchers to focus on specific areas of professional training and development that will develop the skills required to progress as independent researcher through a variety of career paths in academia, enterprise and other areas of the public sector. See Figure 3 : UCC Research Skills Ladder.
- Researchers should consider realistic career options, both within and outside of the University, so that any decisions to pursue a further research appointment may be taken deliberately, rather than by default.
- Professional training and development and briefing sessions will be developed and offered to PI's to support and enable them in implementing the Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers.

## **2.3 Developing the Researcher's Personal Development Plan**

As shown in Figure 1, there are many possible career paths following the Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral periods and thus a skills development framework for researchers must recognise this and offer sufficient flexibility and options for individuals to focus more or less

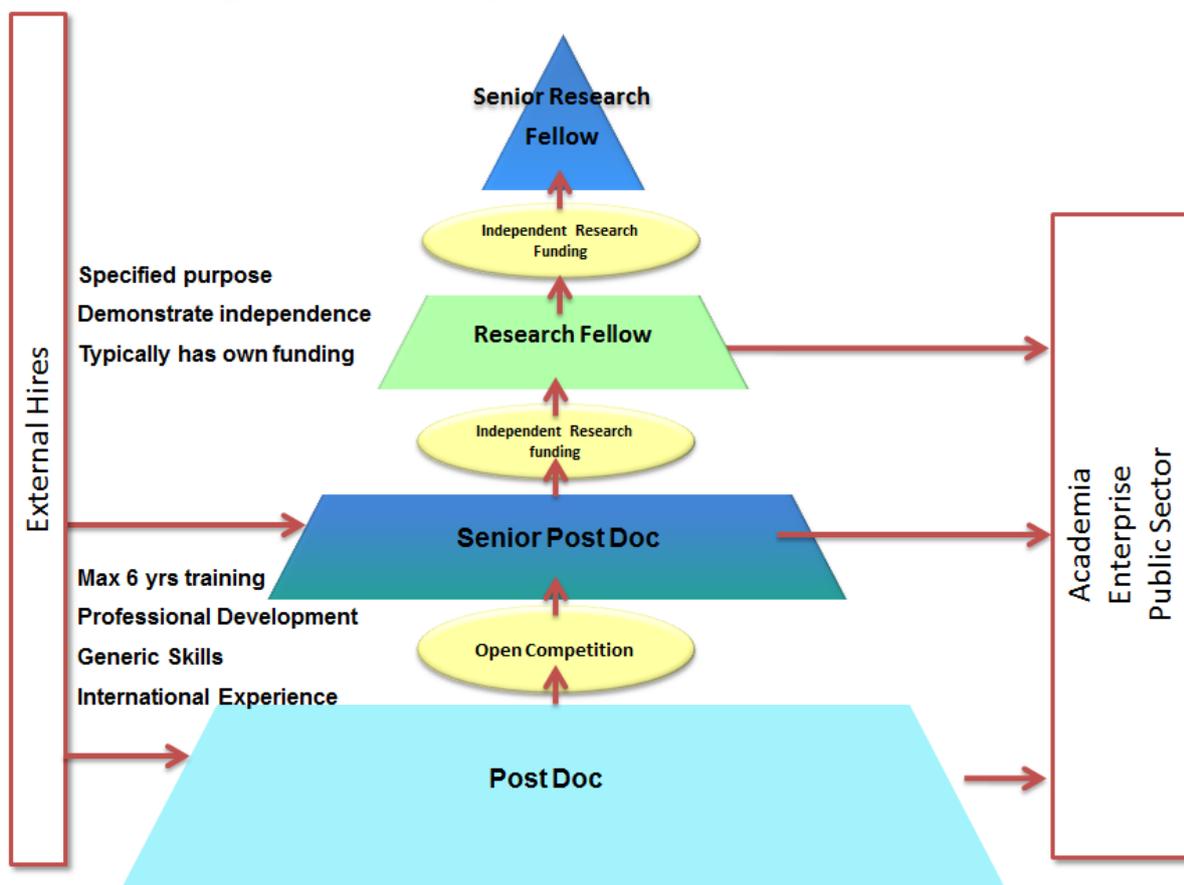
on specific areas of professional training and development that will develop the skills required for particular intended career paths.

The process of preparing a Professional Development Plan (PDP) must therefore take such individual determination into account, as well as the background and previous professional training and development of the researcher and tailor their personal training and development plan accordingly.

It could be envisaged that certain 'skills bundles' or common sets of recommendations could be created (e.g. an academic pathway, with emphasis on particular skills areas, or industry-oriented pathway, with more emphasis on different skills priorities etc.).

In addition, there must a differentiation between development plans and opportunities for Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral researchers, in terms of levels and expectations corresponding to the level of experience of each. See Figure 3: UCC Research Skills Ladder.

**Figure 1: Diversity of Paths for Research Careers**



## 2.4 Training Needs Analysis

The recognised best practice for analysing the skills and identifying gaps of individuals is the use of Training Needs Analysis (TNA), followed by preparation of Professional Development Plans (PDPs). The objective of a TNA in this regard is to ascertain the existing skills and professional training and development requirements of the researcher, taking account of their previous experience.

At the start of the researcher's contract, the Principal Investigator (PI) and researcher will meet to discuss a plan to achieve objectives during the probationary period, to identify existing skills and future professional training and development needs, based on prior experience and the nature of the research they are to undertake. See Figure 2: Timelines for Research Career Development Planning.

- From this identification of needs, an analysis should then be jointly undertaken to identify professional training and development objectives and how these objectives are to be met. This is the basis of a PDP, which is thus customised for each individual researcher. See Appendix 2: Research Skills Development Categories and Training Paths.
- The PDP then identifies year-on-year targets for professional training and development which will be undertaken by the Post-doctoral researcher to deliver the objectives identified through the TNA. See Appendix 4: Researcher Professional Development Plan.
- The PDP can be recorded electronically through a user-friendly web-based system, which is specifically designed to support TNA and PDP systems for researchers.
- The PDP may be reviewed and amended by the researcher and the PI at various intervals, generally annually. The development objectives and professional training completed are recorded in the plan.
- Researchers and their supervisors are encouraged to actively seek out opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and experience including becoming involved in aspects of research management (e.g. budget and project management), the preparation of research proposals, attendance at conferences and publication, development of technical, laboratory and discipline related skills.

**Figure 2. Timelines for Researcher’s Career Development Planning**

Month	Action	Responsibility
1-2	Induction Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University and Departmental Induction Training and development</li> </ul>	PI/Postdoc/HR
1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within two months of appointment the Principal Investigator (PI) and Post-doctoral researcher (Post doc) agree a 12 month probationary and personal development plan, with clear objectives for the probationary period, together with details of professional training and development needs, (see Appendix 2 Research Skills Development Categories).</li> <li>Written record of probationary and personal development plan agreed and signed by PI and Postdoc.</li> </ul>	PI/Postdoc
3-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Postdoc meet to discuss performance and progress and to highlight any difficulties.</li> </ul>	PI/Postdoc
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI meets formally with the Postdoc at end of probation period, to review progress. A record of the meeting is documented and sent to HR.</li> <li>Probation not confirmed – contact Human Resources.</li> </ul>	PI/Postdoc/HR
<b>The following assumes probation is confirmed</b>		
13-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Postdoc discuss and agree career goals and objectives, update performance development plan (PDP) for year ahead and identify opportunities for further professional training and development.</li> <li>Post-doc undertakes professional training and development identified and updates professional training and development record.</li> </ul>	PI/Postdoc  Post doc
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Postdoc review professional training and development undertaken to-date. Modification of PDP and identification of additional professional training and development needs and career options for the year ahead.</li> </ul>	PI/Postdoc
25-36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postdoc undertakes professional training and development identified and updates record of training and development.</li> </ul>	Postdoc
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postdoc contract and professional training and development period completed, portfolio of professional training and development and development in the University completed. Compete for Senior Post-doctoral position.</li> </ul>	Postdoc
<b>The following assumes successful appointment to Senior Post-Doctoral Researcher</b>		
37-39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Senior Postdoc agree probationary plan within two months of appointment to Senior Post-doc, identifying clear objectives during the probationary period and personal and professional objectives.</li> </ul>	PI/Senior Postdoc
40-47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Postdoc undertakes professional training and development identified and updates record of professional training and development.</li> </ul>	Senior Postdoc
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Senior Postdoc discuss and analyse accomplishments to-date.</li> <li>Agree work related goals and objectives for the year ahead.</li> <li>Identify additional professional training and development needs to achieve objectives for identified career path.</li> </ul>	PI/Senior Postdoc

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modification of PDP.</li> </ul>	
49-60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Senior Postdoc discuss and analyse accomplishments to-date.</li> <li>Agree work related goals and objectives for the year ahead.</li> <li>Identify additional professional training and development needs to achieve objectives for identified career path.</li> <li>Senior Postdoc undertakes further professional training and development identified.</li> <li>PI and Senior Postdoc meet regularly to review progress, provide feedback and to update PDP.</li> </ul>	PI/Senior Postdoc
<b>Month</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
61-70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI and Senior Postdoc discuss and analyse accomplishments, professional training and development undertaken and to agree work related goals and objectives for the final year.</li> <li>Any additional professional training and development needs required are identified to achieve objectives for identified career path.</li> <li>Senior Postdoc undertakes further professional training and development identified.</li> <li>PI and Senior Postdoc meet to review progress and to provide feedback and to update PDP.</li> </ul>	PI/Senior Postdoc
72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Postdoc contract and professional training and development period completed. Portfolio of professional training and development in the University completed. Senior Post-doc secures funding for independent research role or pursues selected career path outside of UCC.</li> </ul>	Senior Postdoc

Figure 3: UCC Research Skills Ladder

	<p><b>Senior Post Doctoral Researcher</b></p> <p><b>Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Research Process and Effective Communication- from Grant Proposal to Research Publication</li> <li>• Working with Postgraduate Research Students</li> <li>• Funder Review Panels</li> <li>• Securing Funding</li> </ul> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Academia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and Learning Skills</li> <li>• Supervising PhD Students</li> </ul> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry led workshops (e.g. leadership)</li> <li>• Commercial awareness</li> <li>• Knowledge Transfer</li> </ul> <p>-----</p> <p><b>Career Planning</b></p> <p>CV, Job Application and Interview Techniques</p> <p>-----</p>	<p><b>Senior Research Fellow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Training</li> <li>• Grantmanship</li> <li>• Managing a research team</li> </ul> <p><b>Research Fellow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring Training</li> <li>• Negotiating Skills</li> <li>• Commercialisation and IP</li> <li>• Certificate in Teaching and Learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>Postdoctoral Researchers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant Writing / Scientific Writing</li> <li>• Epigeum Module on Ethics in Research</li> <li>• Communication Skills Training</li> <li>• Presentation Skills</li> <li>• Career Planning</li> <li>• CV, Job Application and Interview Techniques</li> </ul>		

## 3. University Policy on the Recruitment and Selection of Research Staff

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### 3.1 Introduction

Research category staff refers to employees who work within a research area, on a research project or who directly support the research function of the University. In general, research staff are funded from external research grants. These funds include the following;

- Government/Exchequer funding e.g. SFI, Enterprise Ireland, IRCHSS
- Industry sources e.g. GSK, Pfizer
- EU Projects, i.e. Marie Curie
- Private Donor Funds
- Other external non-exchequer funding

The University recognises the need for Research Centres to be in a position to recruit research staff in as expeditious a manner as possible while adhering to best practice methods of recruitment and selection and in compliance with legislation. The Human Resources Department (HR) will assist and advise staff of Research Centres, Institutes and Units in managing the recruitment of research staff.

### 3.2 Pre-Advertising

- The recruitment process is initiated once a vacant post is identified and the Principal Investigator (PI) has received official notification from a funding agency confirming they are to receive a grant.
- Posts can be advertised on the basis of written confirmation that the grant is approved, the research code does not necessarily need to be set up prior to advertising. Authorisation is required from the Research Finance Office however this may be obtained after the interview process has been completed in order to make the formal salary offer and to issue the contract of employment.

*What we need from you:*

Posts will be advertised by Human Resources on receipt of a completed **Post Proposal Form** which must be submitted to HR when approved by:

- Head of School or their nominee or Head of Research Centre/Institute/Unit or their nominee.
- Research Accounts Office (before a Contract of Employment can be issued).

### 3.3 Advertising

- The University policy is that all Research posts must be advertised on the HR website, for a minimum of one week.

- Advertising on other external sites or publications can be done by request to HR. Any costs incurred with advertising must be covered by the research grant.
- The PI should submit a short advertisement to HR using the generic job template for the post. All research positions will be advertised in accordance with the University policy. The University has developed generic job descriptions for the following positions:
  - Research Assistant
  - Post- Doctoral Researcher
  - Senior Post- Doctoral Researcher
  - Research Fellow
  - Senior Research Fellow
- Further information for applicants – if there is additional information on the School, Centre or Unit, this should be forwarded to the HR Department prior to advertisement.
- Applications are made by way of CV submitted directly to the PI.

### ***3.4 Short-listing***

- The PI will manage the short-listing process and should identify one other individual who has a relevant knowledge of the research area and who will be involved in making selection decisions. This is to ensure objectivity in the selection process.
- It is recommended that the maximum number of candidates short-listed for interview does not exceed six; this is to ensure the process is manageable. Late applications may be accepted at the discretion of the PI, up to short-listing stage.
- Candidates should be short-listed based on the criteria identified in the advertisement for the post.
- A date should be agreed for interview, which ensures candidates are given sufficient notice prior to attending for interview, ideally 2 - 4weeks after short-listing.
- Following short-listing the PI will contact the candidates being invited for interview to advise them of the arrangements i.e. time/venue etc.
- The PI is required to retain a record of how decisions were made at short-listing, which will be kept at local level by the PI for any candidates who request feedback with regard to their application for the post or under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997-2003.
- Those candidates not shortlisted should receive a regret letter from the PI as soon as possible following short-listing. HR can provide the PI with sample letter templates if required.

### **3.5 Interview**

- Interviews can be conducted via video conference, or by telephone, for candidates located outside of Ireland and where the research grant cannot make provision for travel reimbursement.
- The PI should retain a record of how decisions were made at interview. This will be kept at local level by the PI as a record for candidates who request feedback or under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Following interviews, the PI should complete and forward a Recommendation for Appointment Form see Appendix 5, to advise of the successful candidate, along with their CV to HR.
- The PI should obtain references on the successful candidate and submit to Human Resources, minimum of two references.
- HR will issue a Contract of Employment.
- It is the responsibility of the PI to contact unsuccessful candidates following interview to advise the outcome. The PI can let the successful candidate know that they have been recommended for appointment, subject to confirmation of funding available and that they will be contacted by HR regarding a formal offer of appointment. Discussions on salary should not take place until the recommended salary has been fully approved.

### **3.6 Offer of appointment - by HR Office**

- HR will contact the successful candidate and make the formal offer of employment.
- HR will issue the Contract of Employment and seek a work authorisation (if applicable).

### **3.7 Records**

A personal file will be kept of the new employee in HR

Summary:

*Documentation which should be sent to HR*

- Research Post Proposal (PF4) Form before advertising
- Short Advertisement
- Recommendation for Appointment Form, CV and references following interviews—see Appendix 5: Recommendation for Appointment Form

Advice or assistance in the Recruitment and Selection Process may be obtained by contacting the Department of Human Resources on ext 3603 / email: [hrqueries@ucc.ie](mailto:hrqueries@ucc.ie)

All those involved in the recruitment of research staff are reminded of the University's Policy on Conflict of Interest in relation to Recruitment and Promotions. In the event that a PI or Selection Board member has a family or social connection to a candidate for a research position the PI should contact HR for guidance.

## 4. Contract Management Policy

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### 4.1 Introduction

Researchers are the significant participants in and essential contributors to the University's success in research. It is University policy to offer as much security of employment as possible and to ensure the optimum duration of contract is determined at the outset.

### 4.2 Contract Management for Post- Doctoral and Senior Post- Doctoral Researchers

1. All Contracts of Employment will be issued to research staff by the Department of Human Resources and contracts shall be issued as follows:

On a fixed term contract basis, this will be defined as a professional training and development role and the professional training and development will be completed within the period of the contract which is issued. Principal Investigators are required to offer a contract for the longest duration possible relative to the actual need and/ or the term of the project subject to funding.

2. A probationary period applies to all new staff joining the University. In most cases the probationary period will be 12 months from the date of joining the University, although it may vary depending on the nature of the job. During the probation period the Principal Investigator or their nominee and the researcher will meet at regular intervals to discuss the requirements of the role and professional training and development objectives, in accordance with University policy.
3. It is a legitimate objective of the University to provide Post-Doctoral research professional training and development opportunities which are of limited duration. This will allow for the progression over many years, of large numbers of Post-Doctoral researchers through the Post-Doctoral professional training and development programme providing intergenerational professional training and development in the methods and practice of research and scholarship.
4. The employment will cease at the end of the term of the Post-Doctoral contract in which the researcher is engaged. Continuation of a Post-Doctoral Researcher or Senior Post- Doctoral Researcher following expiry of their contract in a paid, unpaid or voluntary capacity is not permitted and any such continuation will be treated as a breach of University policy. Payroll will not provide salary payment for any such continuation period either at the time or retrospectively.
5. No gaps will be permitted to be filled between research projects, *i.e.*, when a project terminates, the employment will terminate and a P45 will be issued. If a gap arises before funding is received for another project on which the Post-Doctoral or Senior Post-Doctoral

Researcher may be employed, the researcher's contract will be terminated. New projects will be offered through a competitive process for an advertised position and the individual will be able to compete for this, or another position in the University should they so wish.

6. The University will provide a structured professional training and development programme for Post Doctoral and Senior Post Doctoral Researchers. The responsibility for tracking, logging and generating the record of professional training and development will be the responsibility of the researcher, signed off by their Principal Investigator and Human Resources. The purpose of the record will be to create a log, but also so that researchers leaving the University for positions in other institutions will be able to take their professional training and development record with them as evidence of their skills development.

### **4.3 Contract Management for Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow**

1. The second stage of the research career structure is that of a Research Fellow. See Appendix 1 for the full requirements of the Research Fellow role and responsibilities.
2. The third stage of the research career structure is that of a Senior Research Fellow. See Appendix 1 for the full requirements of the Senior Research Fellow role and responsibilities.
3. Contracts of Employment will be issued on a specified purpose basis linked to the research area/project.
4. Direct entry at this level through competition can also occur for researchers with appropriate experience elsewhere.

### **4.4 Non Standard Contracts of Employment less than 6 months**

Where the term of the research funded project is less than 6 months duration, the PI can with the authorisation of the Head of School or Head of Research Institute/Centre/Unit and the Research Accountant, offer a non standard contract in the circumstances below. It is advised in these circumstances, that a single specified purpose non renewable contract is issued;

- (i) Where a specific skill set is required for less than 6 months on a particular research project;
- (ii) Where the contract is issued for a replacement for a Post Doctoral researcher who has resigned during the term of the project;
- (iii) Where a contract is issued to cover a period of leave of less than 6 months duration.

## 4.5 Managing the Expiry of a Fixed Term Contract

An employment contract can end in two ways – either the contract ends at the expiry of the term or the contract is ended prematurely in the case of a researcher who resigns or where the funding is withdrawn by the funding agency.

1. HR will notify the Principal Investigator (PI) of all fixed-term research staff with a contract end date 2-3 months in advance of the contract ending.
2. The PI will meet with research staff member as soon as possible and not less than 5 weeks before the expiry date of the contract.
3. Following the meeting the PI should issue a letter to the researcher confirming the contract is ending and forward a copy of the letter to HR. The PI should confirm to HR if the employee has any outstanding holiday payments due.
4. Researchers who intend to resign from their position prior to its end date should follow the steps outlined in the [UCC Resignation Policy](#).

## ***Appendix 1: Definition of Research Roles and Responsibilities***

Research category staff refers to employees that are directly engaged in research. In general research staff are funded from external research grants.

These funds include the following;

- Government/Exchequer funding e.g. SFI, Enterprise Ireland, IRCHSS
- Industry sources e.g. GSK, Pfizer
- EU Projects, i.e. Marie Curie
- Private Donor Funds
- Other external non-exchequer funding

Staff in the research category must be employed in one of the following roles/posts.

### **Research Assistant**

This title will apply to a person of appropriate qualifications e.g., BSc or an MSc, employed on a contract for the purpose of assisting in the performance of research in the University. A Research Assistant will usually work under the direction of one or more Principal Investigator's/Senior Researchers within a dedicated laboratory on one or more research projects.

#### **KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To work under the direction of the Principal Investigator/Project Leader.
- To provide assistance in conducting research activities, including planning, organizing, conducting, and communicating research studies within the overall scope of a research project.
- To coordinate and perform a variety of independent and team activities involved in the collection, analysis, documentation and some interpretation of information/results.
- To undertake tasks which may include recording results and preparing technical reports including conclusions and recommendations. To coordinate the development of forms, questionnaires and the application of qualitative and quantitative research techniques; write procedures manuals for data collection and coding.
- To present information on research progress and outcomes to others responsible for the research project.
- To provide guidance as required to any support staff and/or research students assisting with the research project, as agreed with the Principal Investigator/Grant holder.
- Ideally to contribute to the publication of findings.
- To confer with the Principal Investigator in developing plans for research projects and to discuss the interpretation of results and the preparation of manuscripts for publication.
- To perform other related duties incidental to the work described herein.

### **CRITERIA**

- A graduate qualification in a field of discipline relevant to the area of investigation i.e. BSc or MSc.
- Some research experience is desirable.
- Good report writing and presentation skills
- Previous laboratory experience and practices are desired.
- Good analytical skills and computer skills.
- An ability to work independently to a tight schedule.
- Capability of working effectively within a team to achieve results.
- Evidence of excellent organisational and communication skills.
- High levels of initiative are encouraged.

### **Post- Doctoral Researcher**

This title will apply to newly qualified Post-Doctoral Researchers and will be considered as a period of professional training and development as the researcher will have dual goals in terms of the research project and their own career development. The researcher will be mentored by a Principal Investigator (PI). It is expected that a researcher would spend not more than 3 years at the Post Doctoral level, subject to the term of the project and would then be eligible to compete for a Senior Post Doctoral post advertised by the University.

### **KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The primary focus of the Postdoctoral Researcher will be research however a particular emphasis during this stage should include;

- To conduct a specified programme of research under the supervision and direction of a Principal Investigator/Project Leader.
- To engage in appropriate professional training and development and professional development opportunities as required by the Principal Investigator, School or College in order to develop research skills and competencies.
- To gain experience in grant writing.
- To engage in the dissemination of the results of the research in which they are engaged, as directed by, with the support of and under the supervision of a Principal Investigator.
- To become familiar with the publication process.
- To acquire generic and transferable skills (including project management, business skills and postgraduate mentoring/supervision).
- To engage in the wider research and scholarly activities of the research group, School or College.
- To interact closely with postgraduate research students who are studying for a Masters or a PhD and possibly have an agreed role in supporting these students in their day to day research in conjunction with an academic supervisor.
- To carry out administrative work to support the programme of research.
- To carry out any additional duties as may reasonably be required within the general scope and level of the post.
- To contribute to costing research grant proposals and assist in the financial management of a research project.

## **CRITERIA**

- A PhD qualification.
- Appropriate research experience.
- Appropriate technical competence and accomplishment.
- A capability of working within a project team to achieve results.
- Good communication, organisation and interpersonal skills.
- A commitment to gaining practical experience working on a research project.
- Ability to work well within a team.

## **Senior Post-Doctoral Researcher**

This is an advanced research professional training and development role, building on their prior experience as a Post-Doctoral Researcher in UCC or elsewhere, where you will conduct a specified programme of research and research professional training and development under the guidance of a Principal Investigator. The primary purpose of the role is to deliver research results and objectives, develop new or advanced research skills and competencies, the successful development of funding proposals and to interact in the supervision and mentorship of graduate students, in conjunction with an academic supervisor.

The Post-Doctoral/Senior Post-Doctoral phase has an expected duration up to a maximum of 6 years, subject to the term of the project, on a full-time or part-time basis. Movement to the grade of Senior Post-Doctoral researcher in the University will be by competing for an advertised post. External appointments made directly to Senior Post-Doctoral research positions must have previous post-doctoral experience of at least 3 years.

## **KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To conduct and lead a specified programme of research under the supervision and direction of a Principal Investigator/Project Leader.
- To secure competitive research funding for research proposals
- To engage in appropriate and professional development opportunities as required by your Principal Investigator, School or College.
- To assume a role in the design as well as the execution of research, contributing significantly to the development of research proposals and funding successes.
- To support the Principal Investigator and research group in the design and development of a research programme.
- To engage in the dissemination of the results of the research, as directed by and with the support of and under the supervision of the Principal Investigator.
- To engage in the wider research activities of the Research Group, School or College.
- To interact closely with postgraduate research students who are studying for a Masters or a PhD and have an agreed role in supporting these students in their day to day research in conjunction with the supervisor or supervision team.
- To conduct administrative and management work associated with the research project.
- To carry out any additional duties as may reasonably be required within the general scope and level of the post.
- To engage in costing research grant proposals and take on financial management of projects.

## **CRITERIA**

- A PhD qualification.
- Extensive competence and experience in a research area.
- Supervisory skills.
- Leadership potential.
- Experience of applying for and securing funding.

## **Research Fellow**

The Research Fellow title would be awarded to individuals who have personally secured their own independent external research funding inclusive of their salary following an open, transparent and competitive selection process by the research funding body or who have been appointed by the Higher Education Institution following an open competition. The Research Fellow would still be associated with a Principal Investigator who would act as their mentor and facilitate access to research infrastructure.

The role also allows the Research Fellow the professional development opportunity to demonstrate the capacity for independent and self-directed research and scholarship and the management of a research team. The role allows the Research Fellow to assemble a portfolio of independent achievement and render themselves competitive for tenured academic positions or senior scientific roles in industry.

## **KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To manage and conduct a specific programme of research and scholarship.
- To independently identify research objectives and potential funding sources and to prepare and write bids for funding proposals.
- To have a strong track record in securing external funding, including own salary.
- To disseminate the outcomes of the research, including peer-reviewed academic publications of international standing.
- To take a leading role in the further development of the research programme and in seeking and pursuing appropriate external funding.
- To participate fully in the wider research and scholarly activities of the Research Centre, School and College.
- To have some teaching and mentoring duties.
- To supervise post graduate research students as supervisor or co-supervisor, as appropriate.
- To mentor and assist students and early-stage researchers in the research group, School and College.
- To take responsibility for, manage and conduct administrative and management tasks associated with the research programme.
- To engage in appropriate professional training and development opportunities as required by the Principal Investigator, School or College.
- To carry out any additional duties as may reasonably be required within the general scope and level of the post.

## **CRITERIA**

- A PhD qualification and significant relevant research experience.
- The capacity to work independently on research projects.
- The ability to assess and evaluate concepts/theories in order to develop original solutions and particular knowledge of, and expertise in research methodologies.
- Track record of high quality peer reviewed publications.
- Experience in post graduate and Post-Doctoral supervision.
- Strong project management experience.
- Ability to provide leadership to small research teams.
- Ability to secure independent external research funding.
- Ability to contribute to broader organisational and management processes.
- Knowledge transfer and commercialisation experience is highly desirable.

## **Senior Research Fellow**

The highly prestigious and competitive Senior Research Fellow title would be awarded to individuals who have personally secured their own substantial, independent, external research funding, inclusive of salary, following an open, transparent and competitive selection process by the research funding body, or who have been appointed by the University following an open competition. The Senior Research Fellow would be completely independent with access to their own research infrastructure.

The Senior Research Fellow would have substantial experience in research and project management, a track record of high quality peer reviewed publications, and an excellent track record in obtaining research funding, including larger funds for research teams and infrastructure. Knowledge transfer and commercialisation experience should also be taken into consideration.

The Senior Research Fellow may also have some teaching and mentoring duties. Senior Research Fellows should be evaluated through a systematic and continuous professional development and appraisal system.

## **KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To have independently secured significant funding to conduct a research project as the Principal Investigator.
- To manage and oversee research projects and to take responsibility for their overall success.
- Will have full operational responsibility for a major project.
- To supervise post graduate research students as supervisor or co-supervisor, as appropriate.
- To take responsibility, either individually or in collaboration with others, for preparing bids for research funding.
- To independently and proactively identify research projects to be carried out individually or by a team.
- To act as the driver of research projects and outputs.
- May contribute to teaching with the agreement of the Head of School/College.

- Will raise significant R&D funds as a Principal Investigator and may be running an R&D activity.
- The employee will be expected to carry out any additional duties as may reasonably be required within the general scope and level of the post.

#### **CRITERIA**

- A PhD qualification and extensive relevant research experience.
- Experienced driver of research projects and outputs.
- An international track record of high quality prestigious publications.
- Should demonstrate scholarly excellence.
- Should have a track record of securing competitive funding as a Principal Investigator and independently winning substantial research funding on an ongoing basis and driving a research agenda.
- Demonstrable leadership skills.
- Teaching experience within an academic environment.
- Experience of research student supervision
- Track record of making contributions to professional bodies, national/international academic community, the University (as appropriate).
- Significant experience in technology transfer (i.e. patents / licensing / spin offs) where relevant.

## Appendix 2: Research Skills Development Categories and Professional Training and Development Paths

Category	Research Skills Sub-categories	Formal development route	Informal development route
1. Professional Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop entitled 'Effective Presentation Skills'.</li> <li>'Speak confidently workshops' coordinated by Counselling and Development Unit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflection on feedback and experience of making presentations, especially at international conferences.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethics and good research conduct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Epigeum Module on Ethics in Research (due to be available mid-2012).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in preparation of an ethical approval form for a research project.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistical Analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistical techniques courses<sup>1</sup>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Management Tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop on project management<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Samples of application of modern project management tools (e.g., GANNT charts) in own research.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and Safety Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University Health and Safety Training Courses coordinated by Health and Safety Training Unit.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the job training as part of the Post-doctoral professional training and development.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical Skills/Discipline related skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the job training and development as part of the Post-doctoral professional training and development</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Writing, Editing and Publishing</b> -Introduction to and Advanced Academic Writing</li> <li>Editorship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop entitled 'Research Process and Effective Communication-from Grant Proposal to Research Publication'.</li> <li>Workshop on academic writing and publishing<sup>3</sup>(Introduction and Advanced).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring postgraduate students in developing writing skills (e.g., organisation of PhD student journal clubs or writing circles).</li> <li>Publication of own research</li> <li>Experience as editor (or other management role) in a UCC postgraduate student journal.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> A postgraduate module is to be introduced 2011/12, which may be adaptable, or other on-line alternatives may be investigated

<sup>2</sup> To be developed, may build on recent developments in this area for PhD students

<sup>3</sup> May be adapted from module PG6001 (STEPS) for science researchers or build on developments in the Graduate Schools of the College of ACSSS

<sup>4</sup>For each of these areas, formal taught courses could be offered. Most of these are probably more pertinent to Senior Post-Docs or could be offered as introductory and advanced programmes to the respective groups of researchers

Category	Research Skills Sub-categories	Formal development route	Informal development route
Professional Research Skills (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Grantmanship and Financial Management.</u></b></li> <li>-Applying for research grants</li> <li>-Financial grant management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at workshops coordinated through Office of VP for Research and Innovation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience acting as a reviewer for international journals.</li> <li>• Evidence of applying for research funding either as part of a team or by securing independent research funding.</li> </ul>
2. Personal Effectiveness and Career Development <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time&amp; Priority management.</li> <li>• Career planning.</li> <li>• Personal effectiveness.</li> <li>• Mentoring.</li> <li>• Managing a team.</li> <li>• Resolving difficulties.</li> <li>• Negotiation skills.</li> <li>• Conducting effective meetings.</li> <li>• Dealing with the media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at workshops co-ordinated through Department of Human Resources and the Careers Service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection on career development activities.</li> <li>• Applications for posts and reflection on outcomes</li> </ul>
3. Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Lecturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at workshop 'Teaching and Learning Skills' (5 x 2 hour sessions in 2012').</li> <li>• Recorded lecture or tutorial hours on recognised UCC module.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal feedback and reflection on teaching of groups or research students.</li> </ul>
4. Innovation, Commercial & Industry Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology and Patenting</li> <li>• Industry led workshops</li> <li>• Introduction to and advanced IPR &amp; Copyright</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at workshops coordinated by Technology Transfer</li> <li>• Sessions organised by Careers Services</li> <li>• Workshop to be developed by HR</li> </ul>	

## ***Appendix 3: University Code of Practice for Employment of Researchers.***

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this UCC Code of Practice for the employment of research staff is to clearly describe the responsibilities and expectations, the key steps and procedures to be followed and to help avoid any misunderstandings which can occur due to the lack of such guidance.

#### **1.1 Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator**

The line manager will normally be the Principal Investigator for Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral researchers. For researchers who are independent investigators (e.g. holders of Fellowships) the line manager will be determined by the Head of School (or equivalent). Principal Investigators and Line managers have the following responsibilities:

1. Assume responsibility for the management and development of Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral researchers
2. Where possible include provision for professional training and development when costing research grant applications.
3. Provide researchers with clear and unambiguous information from the outset about the nature of their contract.
4. Ensure that new researchers receive an effective induction to the project and project group, even if they are not new to the School.
5. Meet with the researcher during the first 2 months of appointment to agree and document a probation plan.
6. Have regular discussions throughout the period of probation to monitor and review the researcher's performance and progress against objectives, resulting in constructive outcomes including a personal development plan and follow-up action. At least two discussions per year will be formal meetings at which notes must be taken and retained.
7. Have a formal review, including a detailed career discussion, at the end of the probationary year, to help the researcher to begin to identify and plan a career path that is both desirable and potentially available, their potential to achieve that career objective and the actions needed. A number of examples of career pathways for researchers have been identified – see Figure 1.
8. Have a formal review towards the end of the probationary period, when a decision will be made as to whether probation should be confirmed.
9. Work with the researcher to help them to develop their career by:
  - Being aware of, and encouraging participation in, professional training and development opportunities within the School, University and beyond, including the opportunities for enhanced personal skills development training. Provide opportunities within projects for researcher development.
10. Take mentoring responsibilities seriously and undertake any appropriate professional training and development.
11. Be aware of and implement the procedures in the University policy on the employment of researchers.

12. Meet when appropriate with the researcher to encourage and support their career development during and beyond the end of the current contract or project and to help them to plan an appropriate career path.

## **1.2 Responsibilities of the Post-Doctoral and Senior Post-Doctoral Researchers**

1. Take primary responsibility for own professional and career development, with the help of the Principal Investigator (PI).
2. Be proactive in meeting with the PI and any mentor during probation and subsequently, working collaboratively to ensure that probation and career development meetings occur regularly and are productive.
3. Take responsibility for keeping informed of personal, professional and career development opportunities available within and beyond the University.
4. Keep an up-to-date CV, personal development plan and professional training and development portfolio.
5. Keep informed of opportunities for career advancement in the University and beyond dependent on the selected career path.

## **1.3 Responsibilities of the Head of School/Research Institute/Centre/Unit**

1. Take overall responsibility for ensuring the development, implementation and delivery of the University Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers, for staff recruitment, contract management and professional training and career development in the School/Research Institute or Centre and in line the University policy on the employment of researchers.
2. Ensure that those responsible are trained in the employment management framework.
3. Ensure that the responsibilities are carried out effectively and that the management and development responsibilities of Principal Investigators as line managers are part of their own reviews.
4. Have general oversight of staffing matters, particularly any cases of disagreement between a line manager and member of staff and of underperformance.
5. Ensure that *all* researchers have:
  - An effective induction to the School, their project and the University.
  - Regular probation meetings.
  - Regular staff review meetings, with interim follow-up.
  - A personal development plan and follow-up action.
  - Access to staff development opportunities.

## **1.4 Responsibilities of the Department of Human Resources**

1. To provide advice and support to Principal Investigator's and to research staff in the implementation of the Employment and Career Management Structure for Research Staff.
2. To establish and implement a professional training and development and career development framework for researchers.
3. Ensure opportunities for professional training and development and career development are communicated in the University.
4. To support Principal Investigator's in the recruitment and appointment of research staff.
5. To manage the issuing and renewal of contracts of employment to research staff.
6. To provide the most up-to-date advise on the Employment and Career Management Structure for Researchers.

### Appendix 4: Research Professional Development Plan

Category	Sub-categories	Priority (L/M/H)	Agreed actions to acquire agreed priority skills	Timeline
1. Professional research skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced presentation skills</li> <li>2. Statistical analysis</li> <li>3. Ethics and good research conduct</li> <li>4. Project management tools</li> <li>5. Lab Management</li> <li>6. Strategic Planning</li> <li>7. Writing, editing and publishing                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Academic Writing</li> <li>-Editorship</li> </ul> </li> <li>8. Grantmanship &amp; Financial Management                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Applying for research grants</li> </ul> </li> </ol>			
2. Personal Effectiveness and Career Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supervising research students</li> <li>2. Managing a team</li> <li>3. Resolving difficulties</li> <li>4. Negotiation skills</li> <li>5. Conducting effective meetings</li> <li>6. Dealing with the media</li> <li>7. Time Management</li> <li>8. Career Planning</li> </ol>			
3. Teaching and learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective lecturing</li> </ol>			
4. Innovation, Commercial and Industry Networking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technology and Patenting</li> <li>2. Industry led workshops</li> <li>3. Introduction to and advanced IPR and copyright &amp; networking</li> </ol>			

**RECOMMENDATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO RESEARCH POST**

**Note: This form can only be completed after the recruitment process has been concluded.**

**JOB TITLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL/UNIT:** \_\_\_\_\_

The following candidates were invited to attend interview on <insert date>

- Candidate Name**

**Note: This post will not be approved if it is in breach of University policy on [Research Contract Management](#).**

It is recommended that the position be offered to **<Insert Name>** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please attach the CV and reference report of the successful candidate and forward to the Department of Human Resources).

**New Hire**       **Re-hire**       **If Re-hire Staff No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **End Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Post Type:**      **REAC**       **READ**       **RETE**

**IUA Scale:** Yes  No  **IUA Point on scale:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Employee Salary:** € \_\_\_\_\_ pa

**OR**

**Funding Body Scale:** Yes  No  **Employee Salary:** € \_\_\_\_\_ p.a

**Annual Increment:** Yes  No  **%Increment** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amount€:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please ensure salary is exclusive of cost of employer's PRSI & employer's pension contribution).

Please indicate if Pension is funded at 10%  or 20%

**Agresso Cost Centre (4 digit code) % Funding**


**Agresso Project Code (6 digit code) % Funding**


Salary Rationale \_\_\_\_\_

References Checked: Yes  No       Hosting Agreement Required Yes  No

I the undersigned wish to confirm that all conflict of interest issues have been dealt with in accordance with the [University Policy on Conflict of Interest in relation to Recruitment and Promotions](#)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Principal Investigator      Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Second Interviewer      Date:

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Department of Human Resources      Date:

