

BOARD OF THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Responsibilities under the University's Research Staff Code of Practice

The University's [Code of Practice on the Employment and Career Development of Research Staff](#) was implemented in October 2010. The new Code reflects changes in employment legislation and reflects the principles in national and European research agreements. Individual faculties and departments have been asked to implement the Code locally.

The purpose of this paper is to summarise the various responsibilities under the Code, effective from 1 October 2011, as they apply to (1) the Faculty; (2) the Supervisor or PI; and (3) the Researcher. It should be read alongside the University's [Checklist for Researchers](#), and [Researchers' careers: guidance for principal investigators, research group leaders, heads of department and departmental administrators](#).

1. *The Faculty's responsibilities*

- Appointments of research staff must be made in accordance with the University's Equal Opportunities Code of Practice on Recruitment and Selection, as well as in accordance with the management guidelines on recruitment procedures issued by Personnel Services, which promote the principles of fair and open selection and provide for training in fair selection. To this end, PIs and others serving on selection committee should be made aware of the relevant training sessions run by the [Oxford Learning Institute](#), and of the guidelines on appointment processes issued by [Personnel Services](#), and advice should be provided as appropriate by the Faculty's administrative staff, who will coordinate all such appointments, where possible.
- The Faculty must abide by the provisions of the Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) [Regulations](#) 2002, in ensuring equal treatment of those on fixed-term contracts compared with those on other types of contract. The Faculty must also ensure that the correct type of contract is issued; that an appropriate job title is used; that all research staff receive the same kind of contractual documentation as other staff; and that the immediate supervisor of the researcher and the nature of that supervision is clearly identified (the identity of the supervisor will normally be given in the contract of the employment, and the nature of the supervision will normally be outlined in the further particulars for the post, or – in the case of named postdoctoral research fellowships – the application materials).
- The Code of Practice requires that where possible and appropriate, researchers will be offered a mentor "to serve as a sounding board, information source, critical friend or career guide". It is the policy of the Philosophy Faculty Board that a mentor should be appointed for every academic appointee. Where possible, the mentor should be in place before the start date of an appointment, and – where applicable – should be someone who is not directly involved with the research project or centre which the researcher will be joining.
- The Faculty will assist, where possible, in securing college associations for research staff, though a college association in all cases cannot, unfortunately, be guaranteed. The Faculty will ensure that new staff understand the structure of the collegiate University, and the ways in which college associations might be secured. In particular, the Faculty will draw the attention of new research staff to the Conference of Colleges' [website](#) where college vacancies are collectively advertised.
- The Faculty will take appropriate steps to ensure that research staff are able to participate fully in the life of the Faculty as well as that of the research project or centre in which they are involved. Each member of research staff in Philosophy will automatically become a member of the Faculty, and will be entitled to attend lectures, seminars, and society meetings, as well as the twice-termly meetings of the Philosophy Faculty/Panel. New research staff, along with new academic staff in the Faculty and new teaching and research staff in Philosophy within the various colleges, are invited to a welcome lunch, held at the beginning of the academic year, and are provided with a copy of the Faculty's Handbook for Academic Staff.

- Where appropriate and permissible within the terms of the award, research staff will be provided with opportunities to offer lectures or research seminars for the Faculty, to gain experience of tutorial teaching within a college, and to participate in undergraduate examining or assessing. In support of these activities, research staff will be entitled to attend the Faculty's annual Tutorial Teaching Seminar (run by the Director of Graduate Studies), and its Undergraduate Examining Seminar (run by the Research Coordinator). Research staff will also be encouraged to attend relevant courses run by the Oxford Learning Institute.
- The Faculty will oversee the process for probationary reviews of appointment for research staff, providing advice and support to PIs or supervisors where appropriate. The process of probationary reviews for research staff will normally be as follows:
 - An interim review of progress will be conducted by the PI or Supervisor at the mid-point of the Probationary Review period. A brief report of this review will be sent by the PI or Supervisor to the researcher, clearly setting out any additional objectives or expectations for the remainder of the review period. A copy of the report will be submitted to the Faculty's Research Coordinator, via the Faculty Administrator.
 - A full review will take place at the end of the Probationary Period, informed by the mid-point review. Again, a brief report of the full review will be sent by the PI or Supervisor to the researcher, with a copy to the Research Coordinator, via the Faculty Administrator. Where appropriate, the Faculty Administrator will write to the researcher, on behalf of the Chair of the Faculty Board, confirming the extension of the appointment beyond the probationary period.
 - In each case, the PI or Supervisor will be responsible for drawing to the attention of the Research Coordinator, Administrator, or Faculty Board Chair, any causes for concern. This must be done at the earliest possible stage, outside of the two review processes as necessary.
- Research staff must be kept informed about the state of funding for their post and project, about the likelihood of future funding or employment at the end of the present appointment, and about sources of dedicated [careers advice](#) within the University. In particular, the Faculty Administrator will, not later than three months before the expiry or potential termination date of the appointment, write to researchers setting out the University's obligations to staff approaching the end of a fixed-term contract and the [procedures](#) which will be followed in the event that the researcher wishes to be considered for alternative employment within the University.

2. *The Principal Investigator's or Supervisor's responsibilities*

- The PI or Supervisor is expected to familiarise themselves with the University's Guidance for [Principal Investigators and Research Group Leaders](#), and to undertake any training courses as appropriate (including, for example, their online [Recruitment and Selection](#) course).
- An early discussion to identify the researcher's aspirations and likely career trajectory should take place, usually within the first three months of employment.
- More generally, supervisors and PIs are responsible for regularly discussing with researchers their research objectives and their work performance; and provision must be made for a clearly-defined probationary period with appropriate probationary review meetings, training needs assessment, and career planning (see above, under Faculty responsibilities, for further information about probationary reviews).
- Supervisors and PIs will ensure that researchers receive appropriate credit for work they have undertaken, and that they receive the necessary support to enable them to undertake and maximise the benefits of career development opportunities.
- Supervisors and PIs will take reasonable steps to facilitate college associations for research staff.
- An early discussion to identify the researcher's aspirations and likely career trajectory should take place, usually within the first three months of employment. Researchers may aspire to academic posts at Oxford or at other universities; research careers outside academia; or careers drawing on their research skills but without a specific research focus. They and their supervisors should keep

their aspirations under review in the light of progress, and the activities agreed should reflect the trajectory while also enabling the researcher to acquire flexibility and adaptability.

3. *The Researcher's responsibilities*

- Research staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the [Checklist for Researchers](#) appended to the University's Code of Practice for Research Staff.
- Researchers will be required to pursue, with diligence, the research and other duties of the post, as set out in the further particulars.
- Researchers have responsibility for managing and pursuing their own career. They and their supervisors are encouraged actively to seek out developmental opportunities – such as becoming involved in aspects of research management (e.g., budget and project management), teaching, publication and conference attendance, membership of committees and other community service, the preparation of research proposals, suggesting new research possibilities and sources of funding, and attending relevant courses.
- Researchers have a duty to report the results of all work undertaken to their supervisor and PI, and should not normally publish or communicate the results of work outside a research group without the written agreement of the supervisor or PI.
- Researchers should recognise that the skills and achievements required to move on from a research position may not be the same as the skills and achievements which they displayed to reach that position. Researchers should seek out appropriate opportunities to acquire new skills, through training, developmental activity such as attendance at conferences, or experience; and their supervisors should support them in this. In planning and managing their careers, researchers are encouraged to make use of the guidance from the Personnel Committee and the resources available from the Humanities Division's [Training Office](#) and the Oxford Learning Institute and the Careers Service.
- Researchers should initiate discussions of future career options with their supervisors, and such discussions should take place well before the end of each individual's fixed-term contract (around nine months before the end may be appropriate in many circumstances). Efforts should be made to consider realistic career options outside universities as well as within, so that any decision to pursue a further research appointment may be taken consciously, rather than by default. Research staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the University's [procedures](#) governing the expiry of fixed-term contracts.
- Research staff are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the Faculty, accepting where possible requests for them to take on duties for the Faculty where such duties are both reasonable and commensurate with the terms and conditions of the relevant sponsor.
- Research staff are expected to raise promptly any queries or concerns about aspects of their role, their employment, or their research. Such matters can be addressed as appropriate to the PI of the relevant project, to the Faculty Administrator, to their mentor, or to the Faculty's Research Coordinator.

4. *Further information*

- Further information can be obtained from the Administrator and Secretary to the Faculty Board (tom.moore@philosophy.ox.ac.uk); from the Philosophy Research Coordinator (adrian.moore@philosophy.ox.ac.uk); or from the Humanities Division's Training Officer (jessica.march@philosophy.ox.ac.uk).