

Developing Excellent Researchers: Six-year self-assessment report HR Excellence in Research Award

An overview of the University of Suffolk

The [University of Suffolk](#) successfully gained the HR Excellence in Research Award in June 2017, retaining the award at the two- and four-year reviews in 2019 and 2021 respectively. The accompanying Looking Back Action Plan (2021-2023) and the Looking Forward Action Plan (2023-

work

to implement the Concordat for the Career Development of Researchers. Following receiving the HR Excellence in Research Award and implementing the action plans, the university demonstrates its commitment to providing a conducive and supportive environment for researchers. These initiatives contribute to the overall growth and success of the research community.

The governance structures and the internal evaluation

The strategic lead responsible for the HR Excellence in Research Award is the Pro-Vice Chancellor Research. The operational lead is the Head of Research Development.

Excellence in Research Working Group, Research Management Group and the Research and Enterprise Committee. The Research Management Group, the Research and Enterprise Committee and the University of Suffolk Senate are responsible for the Governance Arrangements Approval of the Self -Assessment Submission. The HR Excellence in Research

- Early Career Network: we launched the Early Career Research Network in October 2022 and run monthly Early Career Researcher Lunch Talk events with invited speakers. The ECR Network provides a valuable platform for networking, collaboration,

Recognizing the unique needs and challenges they face is essential for fostering their growth and success in the research environment. The development of the Looking Forward Plan for the next three years demonstrates our commitment to ongoing improvement and addressing the evolving needs of research-only staff and early career researchers. It provides us a roadmap for implementing targeted initiatives and strategies that will enhance the experiences and support their professional development. The Looking Forward Plan (2023-2026) allows for the identification of new areas of research focus, the exploration of innovative approaches, and the implementation of measures that align with the evolving landscape of research and the specific needs of research-only staff and early career researchers.

Using various communication channels, such as newsletters, emails, and 1-2-1 meetings, workshops, networks, School committees and staff development days, the university will reach out effectively to research staff and their line managers. By continuing to provide comprehensive support and guidance, we will empower research staff on research contracts to engage effectively with promotion and redeployment processes. This not only promotes their career progression but also contributes to a thriving research environment where talent is nurtured and valued.

The University will continue to facilitate networking and collaboration opportunities for research staff to enhance their visibility within the institution and beyond. We will encourage their participation in conferences, workshops, and research events where they can showcase their work to establish connections with colleagues and potential collaborators. Such opportunities will expand their professional network, open doors for collaboration, and increase their chances of promotion or successful redeployment. While we understand why fixed-term contracts are frequently utilized for research-only staff, we will continue to monitor and evaluate the use of fixed term contracts via the institutional research management committee on a six-monthly basis over two years. We aim to reduce the number of research-only staff on fixed term contracts from 67% (2022/23) to less than 50% by 2025. This aim demonstrates a commitment to providing more stable employment options for research staff. We will ensure all research staff on fixed term contracts have equal access to career development and training opportunities. We aim to increase the fixed term research staff engagement with training (monitored via appraisal system) to 100% of fixed term staff engaging with at least one institutional training opportunity annually.

To measure the success of the initiatives and action plan (2023-2026), we have identified specific indicators that can be used to track progress, some of which are listed below:

- Researcher Development Programme: Incarch 3843 reW* nBT/F1 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 263.57 381.67 Tm