Quick Guide to supporting researchers

Why it matters...

Delivering excellence in research and excellence in education is the central role of the University of Essex. As such, researcher development is vital to support the growth of researchers by developing research and transferable skills, helping researchers to building their research profile and develop their academic network.

The University of Essex received the HR Excellence in Research Award in May 2014. To attain the award, a gap analysis against the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers was carried out and an action plan for implementing principles of the Concordat was produced.

A number of steps were taken to ensure a broad support and developmental base was in place for all researchers at the university.

What do I need to do?

Researchers development and their developmental needs should form a central part to their annual performance and development review.

Postgraduate research students can be supported in undertaking an online Training Needs Assessment, followed by identification of suitable Proficio or external courses to meet their needs.

For early career researchers support is available through the Research and Enterprise Office, who offer development activities related to all aspects of a research career; grant writing, ethics, intellectual property, research impact and the REF, knowledge exchange and commercialisation and the University research repository.

Evolving support

- The support researchers require will vary with the stage of their research careers.
- Research students will find most of their development needs can be met with Proficio, our innovative professional development scheme for postgraduate research students, unique to Essex.
- Early career researchers may benefit from the wide ranging support offered by the REO. From grant applications, research ethics, to intellectual property and collaborative working contracts, they offer a wide range of support also suitable for developing the careers of PI’s and mid-career researchers.
- Research leaders may benefit from coaching or mentoring, and may act as mentors for early career researchers.
- Consider what support and development is needed whether as a part of a doctoral students Training Needs Analysis or as part of research staff appraisal and development reviews.

Contact LDev or the REO for support.
Vitae – Research developer framework (rdf)

Vitae is the global leader in supporting the professional development of researchers, experienced in working with institutions as they strive for research excellence, innovation and impact.

The University has an institutional membership which gives researchers access to a range of career development tools, training and support.

Central to this is the Researcher Development Framework.

The framework describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers, from PhD students to research leaders.

Coaching and Mentoring?

Further support is available for researchers at any stage in their career through the University mentoring programme.

Coaching is an alternative opportunity to have space and time dedicated to developing and supporting you in your role. This can be for exploring what additional skills you might want to bring to the fore, how to best support colleagues, how to juggle the demands on your time – or anything else that is relevant at this time.

A coaching session gives you the opportunity to take time out to think about and articulate some of the challenges ahead and start developing your strategy.

For example if a colleague is struggling to meet REF publication targets, after an initial discussion within departments, coaching may be a suitable option to develop a SMART publication strategy.

Email coaching @essex.ac.uk to apply for coaching or for further information.

Research supervision

We know that high quality supervision is one of the key factors in student satisfaction, progress, timely submission, and success. It is important that all of our research student supervisors are engaged with current best practice and reflect on their own supervisory practice.

To ensure that we continue to properly support our research students, we have invested in the development of an online set of resources by Epigeum, to enhance the practice of supervising PhD students. The resources draw on the experience of all the participating Universities, drawn from the UK and beyond.

It provides excellent guidance and varied pathways dependent upon experience. One for those new to supervising research students, one for those new to supervision at Essex and an opportunity for experienced supervisors to reflect on their current practice.

Search Moodle for Supervising Doctoral studies.

Contact LDev or the REO for support.