

# Every Researcher Counts

## Briefing for principal investigators, research group leaders and research managers

### About this briefing

**This briefing provides information for principal investigators, research group leaders and managers of research staff who work in a development, leadership or management role, with research staff. It is part of the 'Every Researcher Counts' project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), supported by the other UK Funding Bodies and managed by Vitae to promote equality and diversity in research careers as an important part of their implementation strategies for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.**

Further information at

[www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts)

### Overview

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers has clear expectations for institutions and principal investigators 'to enhance the research workforce and thereby sustain research excellence in the UK, bringing benefits to the health, economy and wellbeing of our nation'. The Concordat 'sets out a vision of working practices, roles and responsibilities that will ensure the continued provision of well-trained, talented and motivated researchers that is essential to the continuation of our research excellence'.

Principle 6 of the Concordat, states that 'Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and management of researchers'. Many of the challenges relating to equality and diversity are systemic within higher education, particularly in relation to research staff. The demanding nature of research work can often have a detrimental and disproportionate effect on the performance and career progression of certain groups, particularly women, black and minority ethnic and disabled researchers.

Equality and diversity, and good staff management within the research environment are an important part of successful research excellence, recognised by funders and institutions. Guidance for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) recognises the importance of the Concordat and equality and diversity in creating an excellent research environment.

#### Benefits to principal investigators

Embedding equality and diversity for research staff into normal research practice produces many positive outcomes and contributes to research excellence:

- Enable researchers to improve their research output
- Retain the talent and expertise of your existing research staff
- Attract and recruit excellent researchers from a wide talent pool
- Improve the research environment and contribute to your institutional REF profile

## Policies, implementation and review

Equality and diversity is enshrined in legislation and national policies. Your institution will have policies relating to equality and diversity that affect you as an individual and also have implications for managing your research staff.

### Areas to consider

- Improve your knowledge of your institution's equality and diversity policies
- Understand how your institution views your role and responsibilities as a manager in ensuring equality and diversity and how you can fulfill these
- Find out who you can talk to about equality and diversity, e.g. human resources specialists, equality and diversity advisors
- Encourage your staff to take part in institutional and sector surveys to aid your institution and you to review equality and diversity issues.
- Actively seek ways to influence and be involved in the development of institutional equality and diversity policies relating to you and your research staff.

### Leadership development for principal investigators

This HEFCE funded project provides online resources for new and aspiring principal investigators (hosted on the Vitae website) [www.vitae.ac.uk/pi](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pi)

“Building equality and diversity training into all our leadership and management training, into the promotions process, into workloads guidelines, and into appraisal, can and does make a difference for all of our research staff: Winning the Times Higher Award for our training of Principal Investigators on Research Teams helped to give all of this activity a high profile”

Professor Terry Threadgold, Pro Vice-Chancellor,  
Staff and Diversity, Cardiff University

## Recruitment and selection

Principal investigators aim to recruit the best researcher for the job. To recruit from the widest available pool of talent, equality and diversity needs to be considered at all stages of the process

### Areas to consider

- Refresh your knowledge of institutional equality and diversity policies for the recruitment of staff
- Include information about, for example, flexible working, and support available to disabled staff in the recruitment process
- Ensure all interviewers have received equality training
- Work with human resources staff to provide flexible employment terms and conditions to enable you to recruit the best talent

### Acting on robust data, University of Leeds

The University of Leeds has implemented detailed equality monitoring forms (including asking applicants questions on caring responsibilities, religion/belief and sexual orientation) as part of their new e-recruitment project. Applicants are asked to complete an on-line form as part of submitting their applications. The e-recruitment system allows for considerable reporting, including generating tabled reports on applicants, short listed candidates and successful interviewees by protected characteristics. This data will be presented to all faculties on an annual basis as part of the integrated planning exercise, for comment and action where appropriate.

“Using recruitment and selection data is an important way for managers in institutions to review what is happening in practice and identify if there are any issues relating to equality and diversity. Using this data provides the evidence to take action”

Patrick Johnson, Head of Equality and Diversity,  
University of Manchester

## Recognition and value

As a principal investigator you are in a position to foster a working environment where all your research staff are recognised and valued, acknowledged for their wider contributions as well as research excellence, and valued as individuals.

### Areas to consider

- Consider whether there are any factors in the nature of the work, your management style or recruitment practices that may be having an impact on the recognition and value of individuals
- Work with human resources staff to ensure that your processes for reviewing, recognising and valuing the work of your research staff are inclusive
- Ensure transparency in your performance review and promotion processes
- Consider how best to work with research staff requiring different types of support. For example, applying the principles in the Premia resources when working with disabled research staff. [www.vitae.ac.uk/premia](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/premia)
- Understand funding bodies' requirements and provision in support of research staff e.g. maternity cover bursaries, bridging loans

### Every Researcher Counts: guide to flexible working

This resource helps principal investigators manage different working patterns in a research environment. Available at [www.vitae.ac.uk/resources](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/resources)

“I currently work four days a week, and have found the University's flexibility in allowing me to work part-time for a while invaluable in combining my career with family life. In the long term I expect to return to full-time employment”

Ruth Cameron, Principal Investigator and Joint Director  
of the Cambridge Centre for Medical Materials.

## Support and career development

Developing your research staff enriches the quality of the research talent pool. As a principal investigator you play a fundamental role in ensuring equality of opportunity for your research staff. Your research staff are entitled to career development opportunities throughout their period of employment. You have a key role in ensuring that all your staff have an opportunity to benefit. The resources developed by the Every Researcher Counts project are available for your own use. [www.vitae.ac.uk/ercresources](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/ercresources)

### Areas to consider

- Consider your own working practices, group culture, implicit assumptions and expectations
- Review your institutional programme of development opportunities to ensure that it provides opportunities for the needs of your research staff
- Share practice with other principal investigators to build a common culture and extend good practice in managing through equality and diversity
- Discuss development opportunities with your research staff and facilitate participation

### Vitae Researcher Development Framework

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and encourages them to aspire to excellence. Principal investigators can use the framework in their role supporting the career development of all researchers and their own development, and consider their contribution to creating an inclusive environment and equality of opportunity. In relation to equality and diversity, principal investigators should aspire to act as a role model when dealing with diversity and difference; educate, advise and guide less experienced researchers and help shape departmental/institutional policy and implementation. [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)

## Researchers' responsibilities

The Concordat is clear that primary responsibility for career development rests with the individual. Research staff should feel empowered to raise any issues relating to equality and diversity which are barriers to their research excellence and career progression.

### Areas to consider

- Create an environment where your research staff feel that they can express their views and discuss issues relating to equality and diversity
- Ensure that your research staff are aware of their responsibility to raise issues that they are facing and encourage them to do so
- Highlight to your research staff where they can go for advice and who they should speak to for support
- Examine the culture and practices of you and your research group and the implications for equality and diversity.
- Communicate relevant equality and diversity policies your research staff

### Every Researcher Counts: Important conversations

Being able to have important conversations with your research staff confidently is a necessary skill to build and maintain an equal and diverse environment. The Vitae 'Important conversations' resource for principal investigators:

- Builds awareness of the different support and working requirements of different individuals
- Increases understanding of the elements of equality and diversity in practice
- Helps prepare for important conversations with research staff

[www.vitae.ac.uk/ercresources](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/ercresources)

## Every Researcher Counts

Vitae was commissioned by HEFCE and supported by the other UK Funding Bodies to lead on a project to raise awareness of equality and diversity for research staff within higher education.

As part of the project, a suite of flexible resources for staff developers and principal investigators has been developed to ensure that, in relation to research staff, equality and diversity issues are understood, visible and prioritised in higher education institutions (HEIs).

The resources include adaptable training sessions and supplementary guides on:

- Team management: Important conversations
- Career conversations
- Using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- Flexible working
- Incorporating equality and diversity into existing workshops

The resources provide HEIs with a flexible set of activities and reference materials which can be embedded in existing staff development programmes to support institutional equality and diversity policies.

You can find downloadable versions of all these resources, stakeholder briefings on the Equality Act 2010 and further information about the Every Researcher Counts project on the Vitae website

[www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts)

# The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination law consolidating and streamlining it into a single act. The Act recognises that different treatment is necessary to ensure equality and recognises nine protected characteristics.

When a member of research staff is treated less favourably than other staff because of one of the protected characteristics, they are not being treated fairly and a case for discrimination could be made. With the exception of marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, research staff are also protected from discrimination if they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

'Diversity recognises that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways, and that those differences are to be recognised, respected and valued.'

'Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination. There are two main types of equality encompassed in equal opportunities: equality of treatment, concerned with treating everyone the same, and equality of outcome, focusing on policies that either have an equal impact on different groups or intend the same outcomes for different groups' [extract from ECU definitions]

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Disability (including carers of disabled people)
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) briefing 'Equality Act 2010: Implications for higher education institutions' draws out the implications of the Act. [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/equality-act-2010-briefing.pdf/view](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/equality-act-2010-briefing.pdf/view)

ECU also produces an annual statistical report. [www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2011](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2011)

Equality Challenge Unit works to further and support equality and diversity in UK higher education and is funded by Universities UK, GuildHE and the UK Funding Bodies.



## Useful links

- **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** [www.researchconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk)
- **Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland** [www.delni.gov.uk/](http://www.delni.gov.uk/)
- **Equality Act 2010** [www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/equality-act-2010](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/subjects/equality-act-2010)
- **Equality Challenge Unit** [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)
- **Higher Education Funding Council for England** [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)
- **Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** [www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk)
- **Research Excellence Framework** [www.hefce.ac.uk/ref](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/ref)
- **Scottish Funding Council** [www.sfc.ac.uk](http://www.sfc.ac.uk)
- **Vitae** [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)

- **Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS)** [www.vitae.ac.uk/cros](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/cros)
- **Every Researcher Counts project and resources** [www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/everyresearchercounts)
- **Leadership development for principal investigators** [www.vitae.ac.uk/pi](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pi)
- **Premia – resources for disabled researchers** [www.vitae.ac.uk/premia](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/premia)
- **Principal Investigators and Research Leaders (PIRLS)** [www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/pirls)
- **Vitae Researcher Development Framework** [www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf)



Vitae is the UK organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of researchers in UK higher education institutions, working directly with institutions, policy makers and funders. Vitae leads on the UK implementation of the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers by providing information, raising awareness and facilitating the sharing of strategies and practice.

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK), managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities



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Version 1 October 2011.