


**Support for Arts and Humanities  
Researchers Post-PhD  
AHRC and British Academy report**


**Vitae Research Staff Conference  
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# Overview...

- Introduction to the report
  - Key findings
  - Good practice
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# Introduction

- Commissioned Oakleigh Consulting Ltd
  - Early career researchers (ECRs) - 8 years post-PhD
  - Focus on those wishing to pursue an academic career
  - Section on AHRC-funded postdocs
  - Survey and interviews
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# Respondents

- ECR survey:
    - ECRs not in the HE sector (97)
    - ECRs on fixed-term contracts (544)
    - ECRs on permanent contracts (241)
  - 32 responses from 23 Universities
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# Key findings – contract type

- Range of contracts; variety of roles
- Around half on fixed-term gave negatively or neutrally phrased reasons for taking up current position
- 70% on permanent contract had previously held fixed-term
- Almost 40% on permanent have held a fractional contract. For fixed-term this is 50%.
- Quarter in HE are ‘portfolio workers’


# Key findings – support

- 61% of permanent sought advice prior to PhD; 43% on fixed-term
  - Most beneficial support:
    - Advice with preparing grant applications
    - Time to publish
    - Mentorship
  - Support may not reach those most in need
  - Issue of time to take up support
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# Key findings – Concordat


- Implementation cross-institutional
- Academic group less well informed than Career advisers and staff developers
- ECR perceptions do not match university assertions
- ECRs on fixed-term and teaching-only contracts least likely to feel valued, recognised and supported

# Key findings – main concerns

- About 92% of ECRs on fixed-term contracts expressed concern about their careers. Compares to 60% on permanent
  - Concern about skill development
  - Succession of short-term posts seen negatively
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# Key findings – AHRC-funded

- Part of team – networking, visibility, skills, collaboration
  - Transition support
  - Networking with peers
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# Good practice

- Advice and support is made available at an early stage
- A broad based approach to identifying ECRs
- Advice is provided on a broad range of possible careers
- ECRs' requirements lead and inform the advice and support made available
- Senior academics are informed of support available and are enabled to provide this
- Mentors are relevant to the needs of the individual
- Networks are in place to share experience

# Workshop

- How might ECRs wishing to pursue an academic career be supported effectively?
  - How can ROs ensure that all ECRs who might benefit from support gain access to it?
  - How might the gap in perception of the Concordat delivery be bridged?
  - How should academics be supported to enable them to give effective advice to ECRs?
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