Research Staff

Transferable skills, professional and personal development training and support

Photo by Scott Waddell

Photo by Alexandra Florea
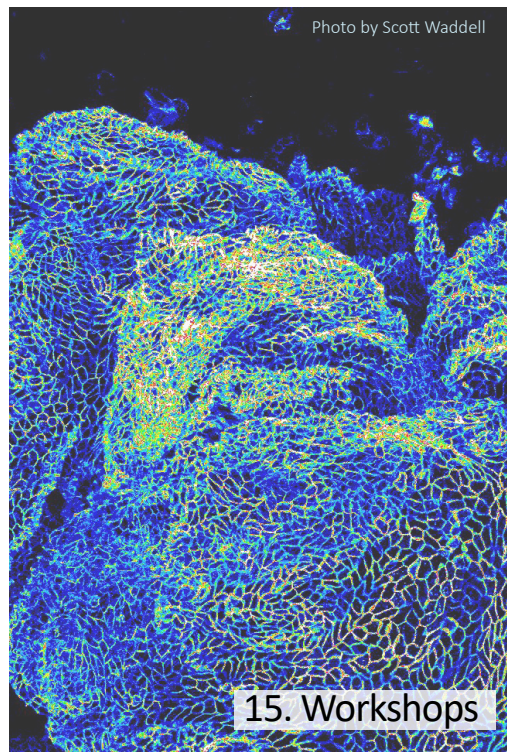
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Photo by Audrey Chagnot

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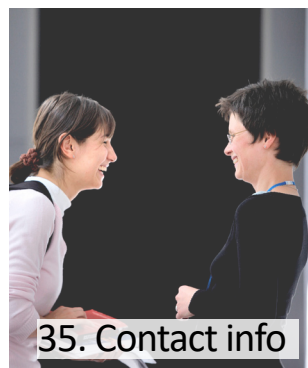
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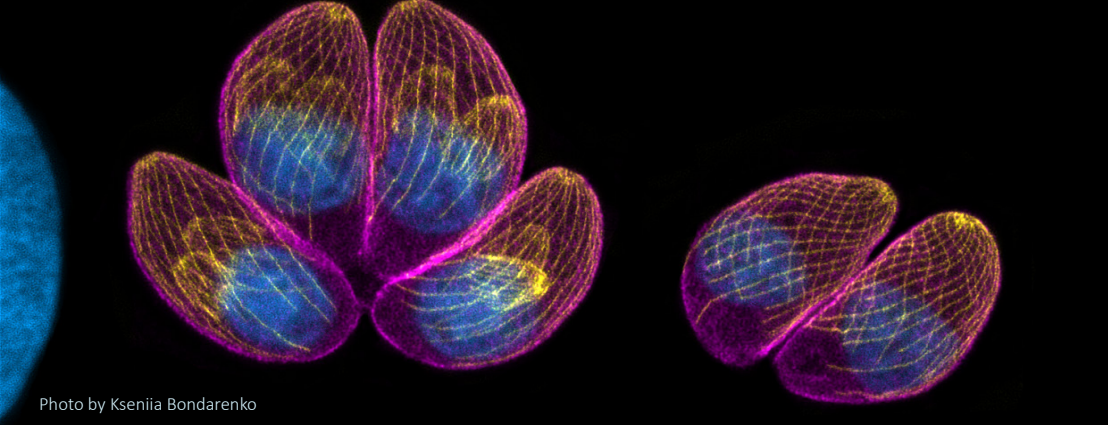
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Photo by Kseniia Bondarenko

"In the Researcher Development Team we provide direct support for postgraduate researchers and academic research staff through training, resources, networks, and advice, to enable effective researcher practice, build communities, and provide expertise and support for local and institutional initiatives to enhance research cultures."
Researcher Development Team Purpose Statement, 2025

Welcome

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) supports the career and professional development of the University's population of around 2000 research staff. We use the umbrella term research staff to describe postdocs, fellows, research associates and technicians. Whether you are on your first research contract, are new to Edinburgh or have years of experience, this brochure summarises the training and support we offer.

All our workshops are free to access and have been tailored to the professional skills a researcher needs to do their job. You are a large community, with diverse needs, so the programme of workshops presented here is only part of what the University can offer.

We have also been working on ensuring our work in supporting research staff aligns with national level initiatives. As a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers we are committed to developing new approaches and support for research staff across the University. One significant outcome is the development of the Research Staff Hub. This University landing page is for research staff and draws together resources and information and signposts useful services: Support for Researchers

We always welcome feedback, so please do let us know what you think via the course feedback or by contacting us directly on iad.researchers@ed.ac.uk.

Meet the Researcher Development Team (Research Staff)

Dr Fiona Philippi
Head of Researcher Development

Nicola Cuthbert
Researcher Development Manager

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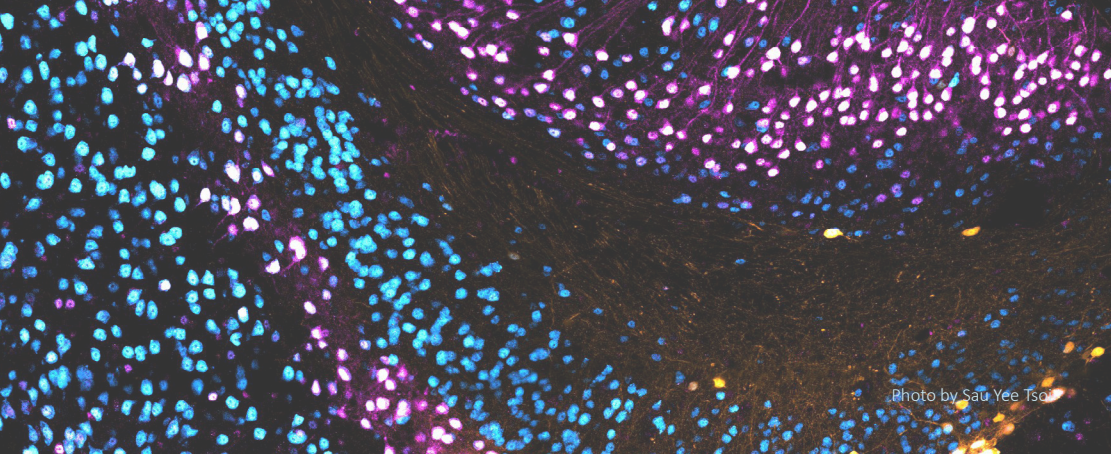

Dr Emily Woollen
Academic Developer

Dr Lindsay Randall
Academic Developer

Alex Peden
Head of Research Cultures

Stella Bray
Senior Administrative Officer

Photo by Sau Yee Tso

How to use this brochure

This brochure provides an overview of the training and support available through the IAD for research staff. It also links to IAD support for PhD supervisors and Principal Investigators and learning and teaching roles.

To make it easier for you to find what you are looking for, we have broken down our core programme into themes.

Please note that the programme is subject to possible change. Full and updated information (including dates, full descriptions and booking information) can be found on our webpages.

Workshop Guidance

Further information and guidance on booking, cancelling and workshop eligibilty is available on the IAD website: Complete course list.

If a workshop is full, please add yourself to the waiting list, if we see there is a high demand we will aim to add additional workshops based on waiting list numbers.

Supporting Research Staff: Policies and Practice

The University of Edinburgh is committed to supporting the professional and career development of all our research staff. Alongside the training we deliver, the IAD works closely with colleagues around the University to ensure that our policies and practices reflect this commitment.

Code of Practice for the Management and Career Development of Research Staff

If you are new to the University or uncertain about what you are entitled to as a member of research staff, we'd strongly encourage you to become familiar with our Code of Practice. This puts the national and international guidelines about supporting and managing research staff into an Edinburgh context and clearly sets out the responsibilities of researchers, their managers and the University.

With practical advice and clear information, the Code is designed to be used by researchers and their managers to prompt useful discussions on research progress, training and career progression. It highlights the various policies and documents which affect research staff so you can understand how the University expects you to be managed and guided.

The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

On 4th February 2020, The University of Edinburgh signed the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

The Concordat, commonly known as the Researcher Development Concordat, is an agreement between stakeholders to improve the employment and support for researchers and researcher careers in higher education in the UK. It sets out three clear principles of environment and culture, employment, and professional and career development. The principles are underpinned by obligations for the four key stakeholder groups, funders, institutions, researchers and managers of researchers, to realise the aims of the Concordat.

Research staff play a vital role at the University of Edinburgh and we are committed to supporting their career development.

By signing this document, the University is demonstrating its continued commitment and ongoing support of research staff careers, but also to working in partnership with other institutions and funders to explore more systematic changes.

As per our signatory responsibilities, the University of Edinburgh is required to publish an action plan and annual report, which includes our strategic objectives, implementation plan and progress. Our action plans and reports have been saved on the Research Study Hub, Concordat section.

Research Staff Hub

The Research Staff Hub (RSH) brings together information from across the University to support research staff to undertake their role, develop themselves and progress in their career.

The RSH is a website drawing together the resources research staff might need during their employment at the University, while also increasing visibility of services including IAD, ERO, EI, Health & Safety, and Information Services. It also provides a platform to update on Concordat progress and developments for researchers and their managers.

10 Days Professional Development

A key commitment in the Concordat is that universities will provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement, and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year.

A short video and webpage are now available, which provides more information for researchers on what the 10 Days Professional Development is and how researchers might use these 10 days (or more) to best effect.

Support for Research Ethics and Integrity

Research ethics and integrity underpins excellent research, and is at the heart of what constitutes good research practice. It means conducting research in such a way that allows others to have confidence and trust in the methods and the findings of the research, leading to improved research quality. All researchers share the responsibility with their institutions to uphold research ethics and integrity, and it is important to educate yourself on your responsibilities and best practice in order to enhance your research.

For more information on training, guidance and support, go to the IAD research ethics and integrity webpages.

Researcher Development Framework

The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) articulates the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of effective researchers. Refreshed in 2025, the RDF is structured around three domains: researcher, research and research communities, with researchers as the focus of the framework and research communities recognising the broader research culture and environment.

The RDF is designed for research staff, and PIs/supervisors, for planning, promoting and supporting personal, the professional and career development of researchers.

Photo by Kallen Sullivan

Photo by Cristina Martinez Gonzalez

The IAD has produced two online guides for research staff to complement the expertise and support across the University:

Thriving in your research position, with a focus on being resilient, includes advice, worksheets and case studies.

Beginning your research position in Edinburgh, is aimed at new staff and focuses on finding support in Edinburgh and managing the transition to postdoctoral research.

Supporting you and your wellbeing

Research involves a lot of uncertainty, so you are likely to have a plan to help you maintain progress in your project and have ideas about how you will address problems as they arise. It's just as important to think about how you will notice if your wellbeing suffers and to have a plan to tackle this. The University has a range of services and resources to help you. Some will help you to manage your research, others will be more focused on your mental health.

As a member of staff, you can access free and confidential support from the Staff Counselling Service.

The Staff Disability Advice Service provides specialist support, advice and guidance on request.

The Chaplaincy offers a wide variety of wellbeing activities, for people of all faiths and none.

You can also access expert third party support including Togetherall (Formerly Big White Wall).

Keep updated and stay connected

IAD4Researchers blog
To keep up to date with news and events, subscribe to our researchers blog where we promote events, courses and initiatives that reflect on our work supporting researchers at all stages.

Social media

LinkedIn: @University of Edinburgh Institute for Academic Development

@University of Edinburgh Research Staff Careers Support

Support for Researchers:
Postdocs, Research Associates and Assistants, Research Fellows and Technicians

Research Staff Hub

Resources from across the Univesity to support research staff in one place:

https://support-for-researchers.ed.ac.uk

Career Development
Managing career paths, exploring aspirations and understanding options
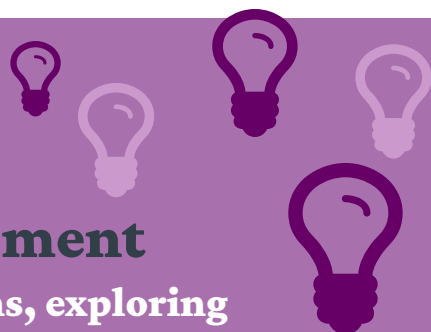
Mentoring and Coaching

One-to-one conversations to support development

Online Resources
Access to focussed information and tailored support

Writing Support

Presenting ideas effectively in publications and proposals

Workshops for researchers

Research Connections
Developing networking and collaboration skills to form lasting connections

The Institute for Academic Development
is working to improve our

Research Cultures

https://www.ed.ac.uk/research-innovation/research-cultures

THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Research Staff Workshops by theme

Professional Development

Research Connections and Collaborations

Publications

Research Projects

Careers

Developing your Research Leadership

This interactive workshop for research-active staff facilitates a reflection on your research leadership, and what that means in your context. We will look at theories on leadership as well as consider practical experiences.

Making the most of your Postdoc

This workshop is designed to help you take a proactive approach to career planning, ensuring you make the most of your postdoctoral contract while positioning yourself for long-term success.

Giving an Effective Presentation

Giving a great presentation is largely about practice, but there are many things you can learn that will improve the way you connect with an audience. This interactive workshop, for staff who are doing research, will explore the tricks, tips and techniques of great presenters.

Writing Retreats for Staff

We offer both in-person as well as online writing sessions throughout the academic year for academic staff to have space and time to work on chosen writing projects.

Voice and Presentation Skills Workshop

This workshop is for staff who are doing research and will explore what makes your voice interesting and sustainable when delivering a presentation.

Advanced Presentation Skills Masterclass

This interactive workshop, for staff who are doing research, is designed to help you practice a pre-prepared presentation in a relaxed and supportive environment. You'll then review it, deconstruct it and identify opportunities for improvement.

Imposter Syndrome: Why successful people often feel like frauds

The workshop, for staff who are doing research, explains why high performing people often doubt their abilities. It will also show the links to perfectionism and self-handicapping strategies such as procrastination, avoidance and over commitment.

Research Connections and Collaborations

Developing Research Collaborations

This workshop is designed for research-active staff who wish to enhance their ability to collaborate effectively, whether initiating collaborations with academic, industry, public sector, or third sector partners, or seeking to strengthen existing partnerships, this session provides insights and strategies for collaboration.

Getting Started in Public Engagement with Research

This workshop will provide an introduction to the ways you can engage the public with your research.

Facilitation Skills for Public Engagement

The workshop is for staff who are doing research and looks at ways of improving the communication and inter-personal skills needed to facilitate well.

How to Create and Run a Public Engagement Event

Developing and running a public engagement event can be daunting, but done well can be a very rewarding experience. This workshop will help you to identify the who, when, where, what and why of engagement.

Navigating the Peer Review Process

This workshop will introduce researchers to the peer review system including the process, the complexities, the responsibilities of the author/reviewer and how to get the most out of the experience.

Managing the Publishing Process

This workshop will cover the key steps leading up to the publication of a research paper, including the editorial process, time frames, choosing the appropriate journal, peer review, metrics, legal considerations and how to navigate the scholarly publishing process.

Collaborative Writing and Publishing

This workshop is for staff who are doing research to explore both the benefits and potential pitfalls of writing in collaboration with others.

Writing Freely: Blogging about your research

Explore what blogging can add to your academic practice and how to use it to support your research.

Introduction to Copyright

Provides an overview on the fundamentals of copyright as it applies to students and academic researchers in terms of writing dissertations/theses, journal articles and other types of research outputs.

Copyright and Social Media

This workshop will cover topics such as fair dealing, copyright infringement, Creative Commons and how to obtain permission to use copyrighted materials.

Academic Publishing

This workshop explains the relationship between copyright, Creative Commons licenses and Open Access and how authors can navigate the publishing process meeting all their funder's requirements.

Creative Commons for Beginners

This session provides researchers with a comprehensive introduction to Creative Commons licensing. Discover the various license types, learn how to apply them to your creative works, and explore the benefits of sharing content while retaining control over your intellectual property.

Writing a Data Management Plan for your Research

At the end of this practical workshop, researchers will have produced a 1st draft Data Management Plan (DMP) for their research project and will understand the basic components of a good DMP.

Working with Personal and Sensitive Data

This awareness raising workshop, for staff who are doing research, will introduce how to collect, share, store and protect the sensitive data you may encounter.

How to Design a Public or Stakeholder Engagement Process

This workshop is for staff who are doing research and will offer strategies to design public engagement activities where everyone is engaged and comes away with something useful.

Archiving your Research Data

In this workshop researchers will learn how to approach the key decisions around archiving research data, such as whether to release data under an open licence.

Generative AI & the researcher: strategies, insights & practical uses

This workshop, designed for researchers, aims to demystify the rapidly evolving area of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) tools, and provides a practical insight into how these tools can be used.

Data Management for your Research

This workshop provides an overview on research funders and University requirements for researchers, research data lifecycle, data management plans, storing data securely during a research project, options for sharing or archiving data at the end of a research.

Our Careers Support is aimed at Research Staff on fixed term contracts.

Career Briefing Sessions

During the year, we offer a number of short, 50 minute lunchtime sessions on a variety of topics including Narrative CVs, Career Decision-making, CVs more generally, and Career Anxiety. We are always developing new topics so keep an eye on P&M over the year.

CV briefing sessions

These workshops will address how to present your skills, experience and research effectively:

- **Academic CVs**
- **Non-Academic CVs**

Academic Interviews

This workshop covers what to expect at academic interview, how to prepare and give you a chance to practice interview questions in a group setting.

Linkedin and Social Media Retreat

This retreat offers a dedicated period of time to set aside other demands and responsibilities to focus on optimising your social media profile for career management and planning. A qualified careers adviser will be on hand to support you.

Squiggly Careers and Your Options

Participants will learn how to navigate squiggly careers by applying their research skills and creativity to ask helpful questions, gather data to inform decision-making, cope with uncertainty, and adapt to the unexpected.

Research Staff Career consultations 1:1s

These one-to-one appointments with a professional career adviser can be used for many purposes, including discussing career options, paths and planning, receiving practical advice on preparing a targeted CV or application form, undertaking a mock job interview or general career advice.

Careers Month

During Careers Month, the Institute for Academic Development Research Staff Careers Consultants will deliver an exciting programme of events dedicated to different forms of career support each week. Careers Month is intended to complement the core careers programme offering and will typically include briefing sessions, external speakers and 1:1 career support.

Career Case Studies

A range of video and text based career case studies are available to provide an understanding of how researchers developed their careers and to assist you in the planning of your own career goals.

Online Panel Sessions

We run occasional online panel sessions throughout the year where people who have made the transition from academia to specific industries share their experiences and advice.

Careers Resources

We have a range of online resources you may find helpful in relation to planning your career.

Connect with us and follow our LinkedIn page

We share information and advice in a career-oriented space, connecting with Research Staff and other colleagues across the institution, and beyond, connecting with employers, organisations, and alumni to support researchers in their career development and management.

Follow us: @University of Edinburgh Research Staff Careers Support

Online Courses and Resources

To ensure researchers have access to support as and when they need it, we have a selection of online resources and guides. These either complement our core workshop programme or provide a readily available resource for those very popular workshops, designed to support you in your research role at Edinburgh.

Mentoring and Coaching

Mentoring

Mentoring is an opportunity to seek support and guidance from someone in relation to career development and progression.

The following mentoring support and resources are available from the IAD:

Mentoring Resources – 4 standalone online resources exploring what mentoring is and what it is not, the role of the mentee in finding and building mentoring relationships and the skills required in the role of the mentor. There is also links to resources for further reading and support.

Setting up a local researcher mentoring scheme – an online resource with practical suggestions on setting up a mentoring scheme in Schools/Centres

Mentoring Circles – A group mentoring programme for postdocs. Mentoring sessions will be in small groups, with 3/4 postdocs matched with a mentor.

Coaching

Coaching is impartial and confidential conversations with a trained coach who will listen, ask incisive questions and offer feedback and observations to facilitate you to think deeply around your own development, to build your own awareness, and take responsibility to solve your own problems. The IAD offers researchers (staff only) three one-hour coaching sessions over several months with a trained coach to support you to reach your goals and unlock your potential.

Writing Support

The IAD offer a number of writing sessions to support researchers and PIs to carve out dedicated time to progress writing projects. These include half day online and hybrid writing retreats, Narrative CV Writing retreats, along with taking part in the annual WriteFest. You may also be interested in running your own writing retreats and to help with this the IAD have produced a 'Facilitators Guide' to give you an idea of the structure of different retreats, the things to think about before and during the retreat and your role as facilitator. More information can be found on our webpages.

WriteFest

Writefest is an annual event, running in November each year, with the aim of bringing people together to raise awareness, support and celebrate academic writing.

Photo by Michael Merlin

Researcher Realities

Researcher Realities is an umbrella initiative that invites conversations among and across the researcher community about the hows of research: the lived realities and experiences of being a researcher. This is a conscious shift away from outputs and outcomes to focus instead on processes, career histories, and the realities of navigating planned and unplanned life events alongside research. By prompting reflections and enabling the sharing of experiences across disciplines and career stages, we aim to promote open, transparent, and inclusive research cultures.

Researcher Realities conversations happen in a variety of formats: an annual event; thematic in-person pop-up sessions; and a curated blog series.

Visit our Researcher Realities webpage, to see what is happening and how to get involved.

Photo by Cristina Martinez Gonzalez

Photo by Michaela Nosková

Research Staff / Postdoc Societies

Research staff societies are organised by researchers for researchers. These societies offer the chance to meet other researchers, access local information relevant to your discipline, locate opportunities for collaboration, attend talks and seminars and allow for valuable social and networking opportunities.

The IAD holds networking events for society members bi-annually and there is a Teams space to allow societies to share news, resources, good practice and develop a network at the University.

Our research staff societies' webpage has further information if you are looking to set up a society or locate existing societies. It also has information about the type of external networks which support research staff societies.

Postdoc Appreciation Week
Postdoc Appreciation Week (PAW), held in September each year, is an opportunity to recognise and celebrate our fantastic postdocs, and the great work they do.

Originating in the USA, PAW is now embedded in UK and Irish universities, with a consortium of Universities organising national activities, alongside their own institutional activities.

At Edinburgh, our Postdoc Societies plan events and awards during this week, the Research Staff Hub has further information.
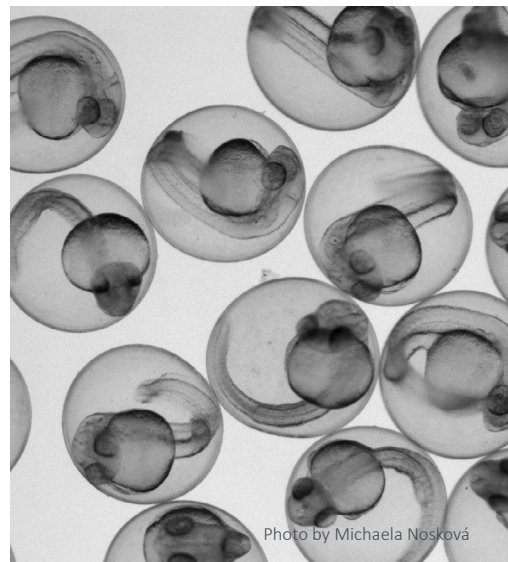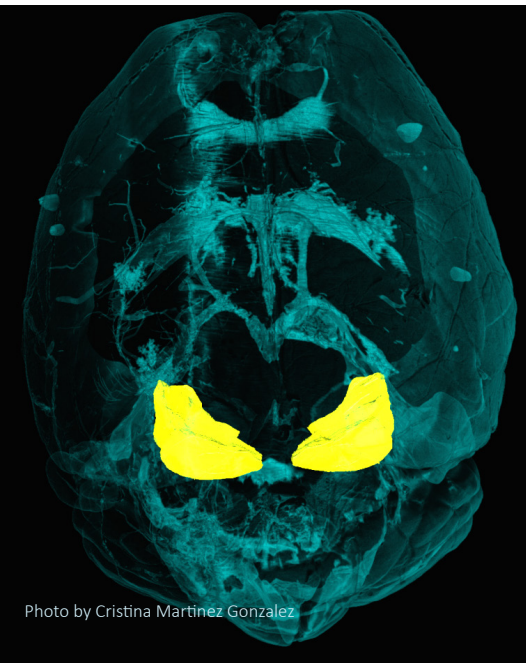
Principal Investigators

Support for Principal Investigators and Research leaders

The IAD provides training and support for all University of Edinburgh Principal Investigators (PIs) and research leaders. For more information about the support for Principal Investigators and research leaders see our web page.
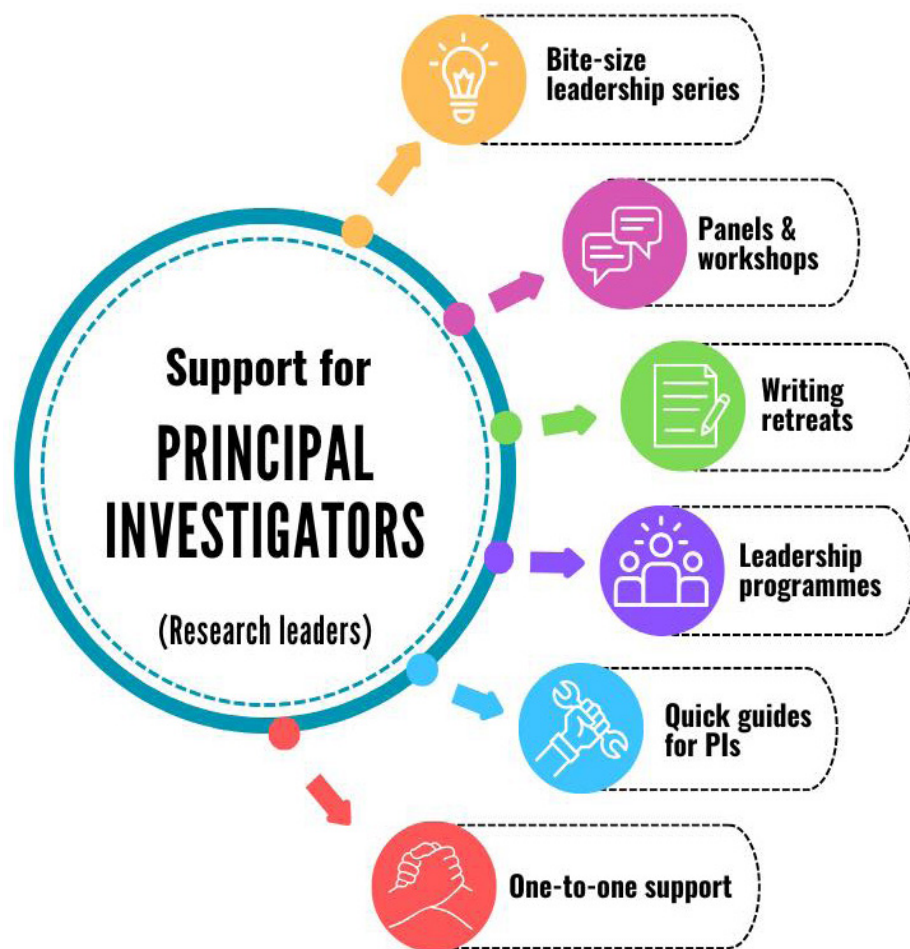
The PI programme provides a flexible offer to suit individual needs and preferences, including:

Bite-size leadership series
A series of optional short monthly online spotlight sessions focusing on different topics for research leadership.

Panels & workshops
Learn new skills, learn from others and discuss challenges with peers in workshops or Researcher Realities panel events.

Writing retreats for staff
Protected time to progress on projects in a supportive writing environment, run several times a month online and hybrid.

Leadership development programmes
Cohort-based research leadership development programmes for new and more experienced PIs, both online and in-person.

Quick guides for PIs
Short guides designed to help you navigate information, key policies and procedures and clarify role expectations for PIs.

One-to-one Support
Coaching, leadership development consultations and mentoring opportunities and guidance.

Support for PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS (Research leaders)

- Bite-size leadership series
- Panels & workshops
- Writing retreats
- Leadership programmes
- Quick guides for PIs
- One-to-one support

Support for Supervisors and Examiners

The IAD offers a variety of workshops, training and resources to support you in your role as postgraduate research supervisor and examiner. While our support targets specifically postgraduate research supervisors, it may also be of use to anyone who supervises at the University of Edinburgh.

Online courses for supervisors

Fundamentals of PhD Supervision

New supervisors are required to complete this online course, which introduces supervisors to common elements of supervision and supervision at the University of Edinburgh. Supervisors should renew this training every 5 years, and this online course should be completed in addition to attendance at College or School specific supervisor briefings or training.

Fundamentals of PhD Examination

This online course supports PhD examiners in developing their understanding of the examination process and their role within it. This course is also available to external supervisors examining University of Edinburgh doctorates.

Workshops for supervisors

The IAD offers targeted workshops to research supervisors:

- How can Supervisors help PhD students develop their Academic Writing
- Supervising Emotionally Demanding Research
- PhD Student and Supervisor Round Table Workshop
- Supervising with(in) Neurodiversity
- Towards intercultural and relational supervision: how can we rethink the supervisory relationship?

Supervisor Community of Practice

In 2025, the IAD launched the university-wide Supervisor Community of Practice (CoP). This university-wide community of practice is a collaborative online space for PGR supervisors to connect, share best practice, troubleshoot, build community, and grow their supervisory skills and knowledge. The Community of Practice hosts "Supervisor Spotlight Sessions", highlights resources from its resource and literature libraries, and hosts optional reading groups for supervisors.
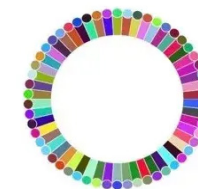
UKCGE Supervisor Accreditation Support

The UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) offers two levels of formal recognition for supervisory practice. The IAD, alongside other Scottish universities, co-coordinates a Scotland-wide UKCGE supervisor writing group for supervisors seeking either recognition level, which will commence again in January 2026. In addition to support for the Scotland-wide UKCGE supervisor writing group, we will be developing local support for UKCGE supervisor recognition in AY2025-2026 including self-paced asynchronous modules targeting each UKCGE criteria.

You can learn more about all of the IAD support for supervisors on the IAD supervisor webpages and on the Doctoral College supervisors webpages.

Support from Other Central Services

Developing Digital Skills

As researchers it is important to keep your digital skills up to date. This will enable you to better communicate and collaborate using digital tools, manage and visualise data, help you develop your network, and share research through social media and online channels.

At the University, the development of digital skills is underpinned by the Digital Skills Framework- a tool to help you evaluate your current levels of digital capability, reflect on development needs, plan a development path and find resources to help develop your digital skills.

You can attend training courses through the Digital Skills Programme, or attend our six month Developing Your Data Skills programme, which develops broad data skills across three levels of complexity. If you prefer self-led learning, LinkedIn Learning is our online skills development service offering an extensive library of high quality video courses in digital, technology, creative and business skills.

Digital Research Services

Digital Research Services provide a single point of access for data-intensive and computational work at any stage of the research lifecycle. Check out their website for a collection of tools, training and events or get tailored advice from one of the college-specific Research Facilitators.

Innovation Careers Hub

The Innovation Careers Hub is a one-stop shop for researchers at all levels, from Early Career Researchers to Professors, who are interested in pursuing an innovation career path at the University of Edinburgh. It also offers information and resources for innovation-active academics and those who support them.

Edinburgh Research Office

At Edinburgh Research Office, we work alongside researchers to grow ideas into successful research projects. We provide expertise at all stages, from developing your idea and identifying funding, to crafting your application and managing your award.

Our Research Community HUBsite for University researchers, research leaders and research support colleagues, allows you to access and explore a wealth of ERO information, resources and services.

You can also contact your Research Funding Specialist or Research Grants Administrator for personalised advice on a proposal or an existing grant you are currently working on.

Public Engagement

One of the most effective mechanisms for developing as a researcher is to get involved in one of the many public engagement opportunities in the University. Alongside the skills that you will develop, you will be an ambassador for the University and the important research we do here. Whatever your future career path, public engagement will add real impact to your CV and allow you to demonstrate a wide range of skills.

There are many events, festivals and programmes around the University to get involved in, and in IAD we run public engagement workshops to support you.

Support for Learning and Teaching Roles

New teaching experiences can be exciting but daunting! Whether you're approaching your first tutorial, lecturing for the first time or taking on your first course organisation or cohort lead role the IAD is here to help.

If you're about to start tutoring or lab demonstrating then have a look at our workshops and resources for tutors and demonstrators. Some of these are intended as an introduction for those new to these roles. If you're new to lecturing then you might also like to attend some of our workshops for tutors and demonstrators as these cover topics like lecturing. You could also come along to some of our 'Talking about Teaching' workshops, which are short practical introductions to teaching topics.

You may want to begin an accredited programme or award focused on teaching in higher education. This is likely to be useful for your future career. There is the option of doing the Edinburgh Teaching Award or the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice.

We have a range of networks you can join, as well as other resources and support, so do have a look at these on the IAD web pages. Do remember to ask around in your subject area for advice as well. You should get help locally with how your teaching fits into particular courses and programmes and how teaching is administered.

Contact Details

If you would like to find out more about the workshops, events and resources offered by the IAD, please visit our website www.ed.ac.uk/iad/researchers or email iad.researchers@ed.ac.uk

Email: iad.researchers@ed.ac.uk

LinkedIn: @University of Edinburgh Institute for Academic Development

@University of Edinburgh Research Staff Careers Support

If you require this publication in an alternative format, please email: iad.researchers@ed.ac.uk

Image credits: Lottie Cripps, Paul Dodds, Sam Ingram-Sills and Mihaela Bodlovic.

Some images in this brochure were submitted as part of a Research Image competition held by IAD in 2024. We are delighted to be able to showcase some of the research going on across the University.