**Project Specification**

To carry out research and suggest solutions to raise the profile of research at the University and create better practices for supporting research staff coming to the end of their contract. This will involve improving opportunities and information around showcasing researchers’ skills and developing support for researchers looking to retain employment at the University or being able to successfully move into a different role that supports their skills and experience.

One of the areas highlighted in the updated Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers, is for Institutions is to ‘*Seek to improve job security for researchers, for example through more effective redeployment processes and greater use of open-ended contracts, and report on progress’*. Research Staff tend to be on varying short-term contracts, and this can be detrimental to their development and their career progression. Currently at the University, research staff underuse the Talent Register and when they do, it’s not to best effect. PIs could also be more aware of how the Talent Register could support them, for example when writing grants.

The main aims of this project are around more robust support for staff on fixed-term contracts, by improving re-deployment within the University; ensuring that researchers are equipped to move between roles and making clearer links to roles and redeployment practices. It will also aim to support researchers to be more proactive with their career development and highlight opportunities to transition more efficiently into different roles. We see this being achieved through supporting researchers to create stronger online profiles to showcase their skills, creating better communications and guidance on using and getting the best out of the Talent Register, and creating support and training to move across projects or into different roles.

This project also supports the University’s approach to improving research culture, with a more positive approach to redeployment. The current pandemic also highlights the need for the development of this support, for those who may have faced a disruption to their research because of COVID-19 and unsure how this places them in their employment and future career. A strong selection of online profiles will demonstrate to external funders and prospective employers the breadth of skills and quality of researchers at the University of Edinburgh.

Part of this project will be to better understand our research staff population. The term “ECR” (Early Career Researcher) is used to describe a number of different career stages and generates some confusion. An early aspect of this secondment will involve exploring how better to define and identify our research staff so we can tailor support for distinctive groups and needs under this umbrella term.

The secondee also has the opportunity to connect with the [Evidence-Base research team](https://evidencebase.org.uk/) as an associate. The team is working to promote and execute a systems-based approach to problems of equality, diversity and inclusion in STEM.

This is one project from the SFC COVID-19 spending. All four projects will be based in IAD and will link to and support our Concordat Action Plan. The projects include:

1. Establish the Research Staff Hub (detailed work plan available – includes review website framework, liaise with services for relevant resources, produce website content, create single events calendar, develop communication strategy)
2. Improve redeployment of existing staff (detailed work plan available – includes review of data on research staff usage of talent register, interviews with staff and recruiters, development of best practice guides, training for research staff on profile building and adaptability to new projects, exploration of flexible funding options with research funders)
3. Strengthen support for managers and PIs of research staff through training and online resources (detailed work plan available – includes development of online “Managing Your Research Team” training with focus on EDI and research culture, production of videos and training materials, train the trainer for local College and School HR, delivery of training)
4. Develop careers resources and offer training to mitigate career impacts of COVID-19 (review of impact of COVID on researcher labour market, development of career development and management workshops and supporting learning materials, engagement with employers to identify best practice for researchers planning career transitions)

This specification focuses on the second project *‘Improve redeployment of existing staff’*.

The project will involve:

1. Working with HR contacts to review engagement with and effectiveness of the current Talent Register for research staff
2. To review wider initiatives aimed at addressing the repeated use of short fixed-term research contracts
3. To develop new resources to help researchers and their prospective recruiters use the Talent Register more effectively

**Person Specification:**

To undertake research into the current usage of talent register by research staff, and propose solutions to supporting this staff group to using it to better effect. Improving the redeployment processes more widely, and support research staff to create quality University profiles. To conduct interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g. HR, other Russell Group institutions) around experiences and good practice in this area. Liaising closely with Schools/Colleges around supporting research staff with this process and colleagues working in Research Culture / Research funding roles, IAD and HR to develop models for supporting research staff in their career development.

**Main responsibilities:**

* Review data on research staff usage of the Talent Register
* Carry out research and conduct interviews with University staff in support services, Schools/Colleges and research staff at the University and those that have changed career direction
* Based on outcome of research/interviews, develop training/resources for Research Staff on profile building and support around being flexible and adaptable to new projects.

**Knowledge/skills and experience needed for the job:**

* Although you don’t have to have personal experience as a researcher, understanding of the research environment and opportunities for development available is desirable
* Experience of recruitment and HR will be an advantage
* Project management and organisational skills to ensure activities/projects are delivered to a high standard within defined timescale.