

Guidelines on Learning and Career Development Days for Research Staff

1. Introduction

Queen's is committed to ensuring that researchers have the necessary skills to undertake effective research and to develop for their future career, within the University or beyond. Enhancing the experience of research staff and providing access to learning and career development support and resources is vital to developing a vibrant and ambitious research community.

In order to enable research staff to focus on their personal and professional learning and development, it has been agreed by the University Executive Board¹ that all research staff are entitled to have access to 10 learning and development days per annum.

These guidelines provide an overview of this new initiative that seeks to encourage and enable the development of our research staff. Undertaking learning and development requires a collaborative approach from researcher and manager. These guidelines provide information to support ongoing discussions to review and plan for future growth.

2. Guidance on learning and development days

While delivering their research projects remains the primary objective, research staff should be encouraged to be proactive and plan their own learning and career development. These plans should be discussed and agreed with their manager, including during Personal Development Review meetings. Individual researchers may also wish to discuss these plans with a mentor or professional support colleagues as appropriate.

Suitable development activities ² to enable engagement with **up to** 10 days per year (or a pro rata for part-time staff) may include:

- Attendance at skills and career development workshops
- Participation in mentoring and coaching
- Networking events
- Membership of committees
- Teaching activities
- Development of independent research/fellowship application
- Online learning – use of LinkedIn Learning
- Short external placements etc.

3. Additional Information

- a) A range of opportunities for development will be available in each Faculty. Further services, information, support and development is offered by a wide range of University teams, e.g. Research and Enterprise, People and Culture, Information Services, Centre for Educational Development etc.
- b) Development time can be used when appropriate, provided it does not interfere with important activities related to the research project and that work is at the expected standards. Research Staff must inform their manager when they will be undertaking learning and development activity.
- c) These 10 days are to be used within an academic year and are not intended to accumulate or carry over.
- d) Discussion or agreement for development activities or any additional funding requirements should be appropriate for the Faculty/School.
- e) Many development activities will not require additional funding, e.g., internal training sessions, shadowing colleagues, grant or paper writing etc. In some instances, the cost activities may be charged to a grant when it has benefit to the project as agreed by the PI and the funds are available. Other funding support is at the discretion of the School, Faculty or University, where possible.
- f) It is recommended that researchers are proactive, plan their development activity and keep a record.
- g) All research staff (AC1 to AC3) are eligible.
- h) Personal learning and career development days referred to in this commitment are not meant to be used for activities that are necessary or already part of the researcher's work. Examples here may include: technical training used in the project, license training, meeting partners or collaborators, seminars or project-related conferences.
- i) Part-time, fixed-term and variable hours' staff and those due to leave or retire should have access to 10 days learning and development activity (on a pro rata basis)
- j) Those who are or have been on extended leave or absent due to a disability or long-term condition should also be encouraged to access learning and development. Further, staff who have had absences due to caring responsibilities, e.g. career break to care for dependants, maternity and paternity leave etc³, should not be disadvantaged in their access to learning and development following their return to work. Departments should seek advice from their HR Business Partner (HRBP) as necessary and are reminded to be mindful of all protected characteristics of staff.

4. Continuous Improvement and Assessment

Organisational Development will monitor research staff engagement in learning and development activity. This will include records of attendance at Organisational Development and other centrally organised L&D activity, via the iTrent database, which records staff attendance at workshops etc. Feedback from HRBPs and line management will also be sought

5. General Data Protection Regulation

Records of attendance at centrally co-ordinated learning and development will be retained by People and Culture. Members of staff can access their own records via Queen's Online. It is the University's policy to keep the information confidential, however, staff should be aware that under data protection legislation requests for the disclosure of information can be made via the Registrar's Office.

6. Equality and Diversity

The University values and promotes equality and diversity and will seek to ensure that it treats all individuals fairly and with dignity and respect. It is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Queen's University seeks to provide equality to all, irrespective of gender, including gender re-assignment; marital or civil partnership status; having or not having dependants; religious belief or political opinion; race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, including Irish Travellers); disability; sexual orientation and age. Please click [here](#) to view a copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

7. Section 75 Screening

This policy has been screened out with mitigation as per Equality Commission's guidance on screening with no adverse impact with regard to equality of opportunity and/or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

¹ University Executive Board, Paper UEB/P/19/103, 3 September 2019

² Note: A number of terms may be used interchangeably such as: professional development, training, career development, or L&D. Queen's Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences introduced a policy in 2017 which entitles Research Staff to: 'up to 10 training days per year'. The Researcher Development Concordat refers to 'Professional Development'.

³ Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Parental Leave, Shared Parental Leave, Dependents Leave (including Bereavement Leave)