

# PI Code of Practice

Your responsibilities as line-manager  
of Early Career Researchers at  
Imperial College London



**POSTDOC AND FELLOWS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

Tailored support and development for postdocs, fellows and clinicians

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# PI Code of Practice

To support **managers of researchers** to fulfil their Concordat responsibilities, the Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre (PFDC) have developed the PI Code of Practice. By building on Imperial's definition of the role and responsibilities of a PI, this code of practice focuses on expectations of PIs' **management responsibilities** towards ECRs in their research teams.

It is based on the Imperial values and fully aligns with the three principles of the Concordat: Environment and Culture, Employment, and Professional and Career Development. It also takes into account the UK Research Councils' guidance on supporting people in research and innovation and considers the enhanced emphasis on people management of funders.

## How is the PI Code of Practice structured?

The PI Code of Practice has been divided into three based on the principles of the Concordat: Environment and Culture, Employment, and Professional and Career Development. For each principle, the expectations have been grouped according to four categories of responsibilities relating to:



CONCORDAT PRINCIPLE:

# Research Environment and Culture

Managers of researchers are expected to:

## BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Encourage [networking opportunities for ECRs](#), such as:

- [Imperial Postdoc and Fellows Enterprise Network \(IPFEN\)](#)
- [PFDC Parents Network](#)
- [PFDC Postdoc Reps Network](#)
- [Diversity Staff Networks](#)

Ensure that contributions of ECRs to research projects and any wider departmental or institutional activities they have undertaken are [recognised and appropriately accredited](#), including their role of lead author or co-author of scientific publications.

## POLICIES AND PROCESSES

Promote and support ECRs' [wellbeing and mental health](#), including reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct via the Imperial [Report and Support tool](#). Ensure that ECRs know about this tool.

Signpost to [ECR wellbeing resources](#).

Draw the ECRs' attention to the College's Guidelines for [Proper Scientific Conduct in Research](#) and the Policy and Procedures for [Investigation of Allegations of Scientific Misconduct](#).



## PI'S OWN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Be informed of issues related to [equality, diversity and inclusion](#), so that you can be an effective mentor to ECRs of all backgrounds and ensure that in all activities (recruitment and mentoring) you are equipped to do the very best by the individuals and the groups you work with. This includes fostering a healthy group dynamic and having open discussions about respect, tolerance, and behavioural expectations.

Be familiar with the guidance on

- [Supporting ECRs with disabilities](#)
- [Harassment and bullying support](#)
- [Managing neurodiverse ECRs](#)
- Guidance for managers regarding [family leave](#) and [keep in touch days](#)

Undertake training on [research integrity](#) to ensure that they and their researchers act in accordance with the highest standards of professional conduct.

## MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF OTHERS

At all stages of the ECRs' employment:

- Be respectful and supportive to the ECRs, both academically and personally in their role.
- Encourage the ECRs to maintain a healthy work-life balance and good wellbeing. Encourage them to take their annual leave and to keep to reasonable number of weekly working hours.
- Support the ECRs when taking [family leave](#) and direct them to sources of information on how and what accommodations will be made [during leave](#) and following their [return](#).
- If ECRs are physically or mentally unwell, take suitable reasonable adjustments according to their circumstances and point them in the direction of further help (e.g. [occupational health](#)) and support to suit the nature of their illness or personal circumstance.

# Employment

Managers of researchers are expected to:

## BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Ensure compliance with:

- Relevant [employment legislation](#) at Imperial
- HR policies and procedures on [inclusive, equitable and transparent recruitment](#), equal opportunities and fair selection

## POLICIES AND PROCESSES

Familiarise themselves and work in accordance with:

- Managers' guidance on [probation](#)
- Imperial policies on [promotion and reward](#)
- Policies related to [terms and conditions of grant funding](#)

Consider fully the statutory rights and institutional policies at Imperial with regards to [flexible working](#) requests. Support reasonable requests for flexible working arrangements.

Ensure that ECRs can take their full [annual leave](#) allowance.

Review and respond to annual leave requests in a timely manner.

## PI'S OWN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Undertake [training and development opportunities](#) so that they can recruit and manage ECRs effectively and fulfil their duty of care.

## MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF OTHERS

Cover the following with new starters:

- Ensure that the ECR is equipped with [Imperial induction materials](#) and all relevant departmental resources, and that they undertake all mandatory training and receive appropriate Health and Safety training, relevant to their research.
- Provide a copy of the grant proposal on which the ECR is employed.
- Clarify the job description and explain expectations and available support regarding output and progress.
- Understand the ECR's own aspirations and clarify their freedom to carry out the research objectives.
- Explain specifics of publication conventions (authorship, contributions).
- Discuss teaching opportunities and/or obligations, and teaching development needs.
- Draw the ECRs' attention to the College's guidelines and policies on [Research Integrity](#)
- Signpost to the [Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre](#) (PFDC). Suggested PFDC activities for new starters include:
  - [PFDC Welcome booklet](#)
  - Attending a PFDC Welcome Induction
  - Meeting the [departmental PFDC postdoc rep\(s\)](#)
  - Setting up a College [Professional Web Page](#)
  - Awareness of the [PFDC Course Directory](#)
  - Becoming a [mock interview panellist](#) to experience the interview process

During the first year, set up regular constructive meetings with the ECRs to set, discuss and review project objectives and progress, as well as any professional development needs.

Hold formal [reviews](#) mid-way through the probation period and before the end of the probation period to discuss performance, mutual expectations about a career trajectory and a professional development plan.

Ensure that the annual [Personal Review and Development Plan \(PRDP\) meeting](#) takes place in a planned and managed way in line with College guidance.

Towards the end of their contract, ensure the ECR is aware of College [procedures](#) and available support to avoid redundancy.



CONCORDAT PRINCIPLE:

# Professional and Career Development

Managers of researchers are expected to:

## BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Support ECRs to balance research and other commitments, and their own professional development.

Ensure that ECRs allocate their contractual [10 development days](#) pro rata, per year, to engage with professional development opportunities including courses, departmental and external training, conferences, outreach activities, coaching and mentoring, postdoc rep activities, writing, etc.

## PI'S OWN PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Engage in leadership and management training to enhance their personal effectiveness, and to promote a positive attitude to professional development.

## MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF OTHERS

Engage in regular career development discussions with ECRs, regardless of the length of the ECRs' contract, to help them reflect on their [skillset](#) and plan their [career goals](#).

Provide the ECR with appropriate guidance about the nature of the research and about standards expected for each milestone, to help them to plan their research accordingly.

Work with the ECR to ensure the goals of the project are met within the allocated timeframes, supporting the ECR to develop a workplan that addresses the strategic aims and objectives of the project.

Ensure the ECR has adequate space and resources to carry out their research. Allow time for them to pursue appropriate research and technical skills training, relevant to their research where necessary.

Encourage ECRs to publish their work, where appropriate.

Encourage ECRs to take part in activities that aim to develop interdisciplinary research collaborations, such as e.g., the Faculty of Engineering [Dame Julia Higgins Collaborative Fund Award](#).

Support ECRs' efforts in outreach, dissemination, and networking.

Officially recognise any teaching and supervision assigned to the ECR within the bounds of their contract. Signpost to the [STAR framework](#) for accreditation.

Support ECRs where appropriate, to apply for research funding and independent Fellowships.

Signpost to [Academic Career Paths](#), which includes information on [Funders Showcases](#) and [Fellowship opportunities](#).

Where appropriate, to introduce the ERC to other staff who may be of relevance to them or their research project.

Support and encourage ECRs to identify a suitable mentor and establish [mentoring relationships](#).

Support ECRs in exploring and preparing for a diversity of careers, for example, through [opportunities provided by the PFDC](#) such as [Pathways for Postdocs](#), the use of [mentors](#), and [secondments](#).

Identify opportunities for ECRs and encourage them to develop broader leadership skills.

Signpost them to [training and development opportunities provided by the PFDC](#).





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