

Research Staff¹ within MPLS division are entitled to a minimum of ten days per annum for their professional development and training.

Background

'Training and professional development' is anything that enhances researchers' skills and abilities to do their work. It may directly contribute to their current role or to their future career. Much of this training and development will be conducted within research groups or departments and can include amongst others:

- writing up a paper from a previous research project
- training so the researcher can co-supervise a research student
- attending a training course or programme in: the department; the division; a central provider such as the Careers Service, Oxford Learning Institute, ITS; or outside the University.
- being mentored by someone inside or outside the University.
- Outreach / public engagement with research (developing ideas, delivering, sourcing funding).

The entitlement to ten days of training and development is based on the recommendation of Sir Gareth Roberts in his influential report on the supply of people with skills in the STEM subjects, *SET for Success*². There is no intention to count or audit the provision of or take up of the ten days of professional development and training. Nor are PIs expected to set up and establish ten days or equivalent of such professional development and training. Rather, the policy sets out an entitlement for postdocs to ask for time away from the office or laboratory, if needed, for professional development.

Rationale:

Like any employee in any organization, early career researchers need to develop their skills and understanding in order to be more effective and develop their careers. As employers, Universities have an important role in developing the next generation of professional researchers to work in academia, national laboratories or industry. Some early career researchers are hesitant to ask for time out of the laboratory or office for these activities, and some PIs may have little feel for what is a reasonable balance. A statement of the minimum entitlement gives the researcher an understanding of what is considered a reasonable. This and other policies for the development of early career researchers will also demonstrate our approach to this important group of apprentice researchers to bodies such as Athena SWAN and REF panels (through the environment statement), and will be similar to Imperial where the ten day entitlement is included in early career researchers' contracts. The Medical Science Division has recently done the same as Imperial but to the tune of five days per annum.

Process

Whilst researchers are entitled to this time for development and training they should agree a process to arrange this with their PI. The activities should be agreed with the Principal Investigator well in advance (a month is good practice). Ideally these matters should be discussed within the annual Career or Personal Development Review (CDR/PDR). If the latter happens with a mentor, the training and development activities should also be discussed with the Principal Investigator as well. There is no commitment by the University to fund training.

¹ Staff paid on to conduct or assist with research, grades 6, 7 & 8. Typically post-doctoral researchers or research fellows.

² Roberts, Gareth Gwyn, HM Treasury, corp creator. *SET for success : the supply of people with science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills : the report of Sir Gareth Roberts' review*