

# Research and Innovation Role Profiles

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## 1. Introduction

The mission statement of Newcastle University is

- To be a world-class research-intensive university
- To deliver teaching of the highest quality
- To play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England.

In accordance with the mission statement, the University's activities divide into three core functions: research, teaching, and engagement. The academic structures of the University are the three Faculties, each of which divides, for line management purposes, into a number of academic units, typically Schools or Institutes. There are three academic career pathways: Teaching & Research, Teaching & Scholarship, and Research & Innovation.

The success of the University depends upon the skills, expertise and dedication of its colleagues. Every colleague is expected to contribute towards the realisation of the University's mission and the plans of their academic or service unit. Researchers share the responsibility for and need to proactively engage in their own personal and career development and lifelong learning, and the University is committed to supporting them within the context of our institutional strategic plan.

The University strives for parity of esteem between its three core functions, and every academic colleague is expected to contribute to this aim. The University recognises that engagement differs from research and teaching. Engagement is not normally a separate third activity, but in the main derives from our research and teaching activities. The University engages with civil society as an educational and research institution, and therefore the expectation is that engagement activities will be carried out not just in the sense of good citizenship, but specifically based on our academic expertise and experience.

Although the standard academic job at Newcastle University, located in the Teaching & Research pathway, involves a combination of teaching and learning, research and innovation, engagement, and administration and management, the University employs a large number of academics in roles which are focused wholly, or mainly, on research and innovation related activity. At higher levels such roles are likely to include more significant related administration, management and/or leadership duties. Researchers may be involved in some teaching and/or research supervision and such involvement may increase in higher level roles (dependent partially upon the conditions imposed by any funding body involved).

For some researchers, there will be the opportunity for a career based wholly or mainly in research related activity, moving into more responsible and leadership positions until achieving the status of

Reader and then Chair. However, others may wish to move into a post which combines teaching and research related activity and they should be encouraged to build up a portfolio of teaching experience.

This document contains three Research & Innovation role profiles. They set out the levels of contribution by academic colleagues, whose roles are focused wholly or mainly on research related activity, covering the roles of Research Assistant, Research Associate and Senior Research Associate. Appointment or promotion at Level H will be to Principal Research Associate (equivalent to Senior Lecturer) or Reader; the route to Level I will generally be via a Professorial appointment or promotion.

Each level within the researcher role profiles subsumes the competences of any lower levels. These profiles set out firstly the generic competences and responsibilities expected of role holders at each level and secondly the general qualifications and experiences needed for entry at a particular level. It is unlikely that any single individual will be applying all these competences at any one time but they would be expected to display most of them over a period of time. Care should be taken by academic managers to ensure quality of opportunity in relation to the allocation of roles and responsibilities to ensure that the appropriate competences and experience can be acquired for progression to the appropriate higher level post.

Given the wide variety of research projects undertaken within the University and the different regimes established by the various Research Councils and other Funding Bodies, the actual activities and research outputs of researchers at similar levels may vary substantially. The role profiles have been broadly drawn, so that the basic competences and responsibilities expected of researchers at a particular grade will be broadly similar across the faculties. The role profiles are designed to describe the basic competences and responsibilities expected of researchers at each level, and should sit alongside the specific job description and person specification for the post.

In addition to the relevant role profile and expectations outlined in the job description and person specification, all researchers have the following generic responsibilities under the Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers:

### **Generic Responsibilities**

- Conduct research and disseminate research results in an honest and ethical manner, and contribute to the wider body of knowledge.
- Exercise and develop increased capacity for independent, honest and critical thought throughout their careers.
- Recognise that the primary responsibility for managing and pursuing their career is theirs. Researchers should identify training needs and actively seek out opportunities for learning and development to further that career and take personal responsibility for their choices.
- Keep a record of personal development planning and CPD activities. Recognise that the skills and achievements required to move on from a research position may not be the same as the skills and achievements which were displayed to reach that position.
- Ensure that career development requirements and activities are regularly discussed, monitored and evaluated throughout the year in consultation with their research manager and mentor, and that they commit themselves fully to all such activities.

- Develop the skills of knowledge transfer and exploitation and use them in policy making and the commercialization of research for the benefit of the University as well as the wider society and economy as a whole.
- Maintain a close and professional understanding of current developments in scholarship in their subjects.

## **2. Research Assistant – Level F (below the bar)**

### **Role Summary**

Role holders at this level are concerned with assisting an individual research leader or team to conduct a particular study (or group of studies). They will generally be involved in data generation and/or collection using standard and well-defined methods developed by others. Examples may include the acquisition and interpretation of research data and results, running analyses and tests using specified and agreed techniques and models, or gathering and analysing information such as literature searches or surveys. They will be working under close supervision by, and direction from, a more senior researcher, who will be ultimately responsible for the project. This may be the entry level for some colleagues who are expected to train and/or develop to take on more senior researcher roles as their career progresses. Role holders will be provided with academic and pastoral support within the School/Institute (including counselling on realistic career goals and opportunities) and training will be available which is designed to develop their competences and to prepare them to take on more responsibilities associated with a higher grade.

### **Responsibilities**

- Contribution to the research programme of the School/Institute under the clear guidance of an academic colleague or Principal Investigator.
- Use initiative and creativity to analyse and interpret research data and draw conclusions on the outcomes.
- Co-ordinate own work with that of others, deal with problems which may affect the achievement of research objectives and contribute to the planning of the project(s).
- Present information on research progress and outcomes to a Principal Investigator or groups overseeing the research project.
- Write up results from own research activity and provide input into the research project's dissemination, in whatever form (report, papers, chapters, books).
- Work to deadlines and manage, with support, competing priorities.
- Ensure that personal knowledge in relevant fields of study is kept up to date.
- Use research resources (including, where required, laboratories, workshops and specialist equipment) as appropriate.
- Maintain academic standards and freedom, and work in accordance with university policies (e.g. equal opportunities, health and safety policies).
- Possible supervision and demonstration duties within undergraduate laboratories and example classes or in teaching small seminar classes.
- Undertake relevant training and development activities to develop capacity for taking on wider responsibilities.
- Develop, with advice, an awareness of own professional development needs and a personal development strategy.

## **Key working relationships**

- Closely managed by a senior academic or Principal Investigator.
- May work with other researchers in a team and actively participate in collaborative research.
- Liaise with research colleagues and support colleagues on day-to-day issues.
- May provide guidance as required to any support colleagues and/or research students.
- May in some parts of the University work alongside, and help informally, students working in the same laboratory.
- May be starting to develop internal and external contacts with researchers in related areas of study, in order to assist the work of their research project(s).

## **Qualifications, skills and experience required**

- Good honours degree (or equivalent) with some subject knowledge in the relevant area.
- May possess (or be working towards) a higher research degree.
- Good level of analytical skills and the ability to communicate complex information clearly, both orally and through the written word.
- The ability to work collaboratively with colleagues.
- The ability to use personal initiative and creativity to solve research problems.
- Non-graduates will be expected to have other equivalent qualifications or relevant experience.

### **3. Research Associate – Level F (above the bar)**

This profile assumes that all the qualifications, skills and experiences required of Research Assistant have been acquired. It also assumes that the responsibilities of a Research Assistant will have been fulfilled satisfactorily. Only the additional requirements are detailed below.

#### **Role Summary**

Role holders at this level will be experienced and professional researchers (or have considerable professional experience) and will be subject specialists in a particular area or methodology, drawing upon knowledge gained from postgraduate research and/or working as a Research Assistant. They will be associated with a particular project (or projects) and will contribute ideas, and/or enhancement of techniques or methodologies. They will be expected to conduct writing for dissemination outside the School/Institute. They will still be working under supervision, but will be expected to take significant initiatives in their own work and consult with the academic or Principal Investigator over the details of the project. More experienced researchers at this level will also develop their own research objectives and proposals and will conduct individual and collaborative research projects, writing up the research work for publication. Research Associates may, where practical, contribute to the School/Institute's teaching, through supervision of projects, overseeing practical classes, or taking small group classes, and more experienced Research Associates may be involved in the supervision of postgraduate research students. Research Associates will be provided with academic and pastoral support within the School/Institute and training will be available designed to develop their competences (including counselling on realistic career goals and opportunities) and prepare them to take on more responsibilities associated with a higher grade. They may also be responsible for the supervision of one or more Research Assistants.

#### **Additional Responsibilities**

- Although working under the general guidance of an academic or Principal Investigator, they will contribute ideas, including enhancements to the technical or methodological aspects of their studies, thus providing substantial 'added value'.
- Determine appropriate methodologies for research, with advice and support where required.
- Assess research findings for the need/scope for further investigations.
- Contribute to the writing up of their research and its dissemination, either through seminar and conference presentations or through publications.
- Present research findings, either at conferences or through publications in reputable outlets appropriate to the discipline.
- Contribute to grant applications submitted by others and in time develop own research objectives and proposals for funding.
- May (consonant with the terms of their funding) contribute to the teaching of students in the School/Institute on a small scale, usually within their own field of expertise and knowledge of research methods.

- May (consonant with the terms of their funding) identify personal research objectives, develop a plan for personal research and initiate research that leads to the development of knowledge and theoretical understanding.
- Start to develop an awareness of University structures, policies and procedures and relevant issues in the higher education, research, social and political environment.
- Begin to write, with appropriate support, proposals for individual research funding or, where funders to not permit this, contribute to the writing of collective bids.
- May contribute to events celebrating the public engagement of science/social sciences/humanities.
- Where the research is apposite, begin to develop entrepreneurial links either with external organisations or with University spin-out companies, and to contribute surplus income through consultancy activities.
- Where appropriate, register patents to protect intellectual property.

### **Key working relationships**

- Usually line managed by an academic or Principal Investigator.
- May work within teams and should contribute to the academic life of the School/Institute through participation in research seminars.
- Will need to work with the support colleagues and, on occasions, with undergraduate and postgraduate students, and interact intellectually with other academic members of the School/Institute.
- Will begin to interact with researchers in other institutions and start to develop research networks to share information, form relationships for future collaboration and identify potential sources of funding.
- Will communicate with users of research.

### **Additional Qualifications, skills and experience required for appointment to Research Associate**

- Experience of research with clear transferable skills and some experience or awareness of the research environment.
- A PhD or the equivalent in professional qualifications and experience in the research area required.
- Detailed subject knowledge in the area of research.
- Likelihood of advanced skills directly related to the research projects.
- High level of analytical and problem solving capacity.
- Ability to communicate complex information with clarity and to encourage the commitment of others.
- Presentations at conferences and/or high quality publications.

- Aware of the ethical issues involved in their research work.
- In a position to bring individuals skills and insights to the research.

## **4. Senior Research Associate – Level G**

This profile assumes that all the qualification, skills and experiences required of a Research Associate have been acquired. It also assumes that the responsibilities of a Research Associate will have been fulfilled satisfactorily. Only the additional requirements are detailed below.

### **Role Summary**

Role holders at this level will have substantial experience of research. They will initiate and take responsibility for research projects and may be Principal Investigator or, where a funding body does not permit this, act as though they were Principal Investigator. They will be involved in project management including the preparation of proposals for research funding, managing other researchers and monitoring research budgets. They will be expected to be undertaking research individually and/or collectively and to be advancing the stage of knowledge and understanding within their particular area of expertise. They will regularly publish high quality research outputs. They are likely to provide some teaching support for the School/Institute (consonant with the terms of their funding). They will be expected to be establishing a growing reputation within their particular research field and academic discipline and to be developing and demonstrating intellectual independence.

### **Additional Responsibilities**

- Independently identify research objectives and potential funding sources and prepare and write proposals for funding.
- Play a leading role in research teams to which they belong, including progressively larger and/or more complex projects, or as an individual researcher in their specific research area.
- Play a major part in the dissemination of their (or the team's) research findings, presenting at conferences of international quality or exhibit potential for international quality (in part through strong national quality publications) at the frequency appropriate to the discipline.
- Ensure intellectual rigour and adherence to ethical standards in the research for which they are responsible.
- Help colleagues in interpret their data, to manage competing priorities, and to develop their research skills.
- Ensure that knowledge and methodological/technical skills in their own, and related, areas of scholarship are extended and inform research activities.
- Monitor and, where appropriate, manage research resources (e.g. time, materials, finance, laboratory space, equipment) effectively.
- Play a leadership role in mentoring junior colleagues and co-ordinating the work of research and support colleagues.
- Supervise postgraduate research students and take responsibility for their training.
- Participate in the selection of colleagues working on their own projects, take on some specific responsibilities within the School/Institute, become involved in University governance (e.g. representing the School/Institute on faculty committees).

- Contribute (consonant with the terms of their funding) to the teaching if the School/Institute (e.g. giving lectures in the specialty, supervising final year undergraduate research students, taking small group classes, participating in short course teaching or workshops to update professionals).
- Play an active part in research networks, develop contacts with external bodies including funding bodies, and actively seek out and develop opportunities for interdisciplinary research.
- Begin to referee papers and grant proposals for external bodies.
- Begin to chair sessions at conferences.
- Contribute to School/Institute meetings.
- Be aware of their own professional needs and take the initiative in fulfilling them.
- They may make a major contribution to events involving the public engagement of science and engineering/social sciences/humanities.
- They are likely, where appropriate, to take a leading role in developing entrepreneurial links either with external organisations or with University spin-out companies, and in engaging in consultancy activities.

### **Key working relationships**

- Will usually have an identified line manager within the School/Institute.
- May line manage Research Assistants and/or Research Associates and will help to co-ordinate research projects within the School/Institute.
- May liaise with teaching colleagues and be responsible for some support colleagues.
- They may be external examiners for research students and are likely to interact with external examiners of their own students.
- Likely to operate across the Faculty to help build strong interdisciplinary research alongside other academic and research colleagues.

### **Additional Qualifications, skills and experience required for appointment to Senior Research Associate**

- In-depth subject knowledge in their areas of scholarship and well developed technical and methodological skills, and some experience in designing and delivering research projects.
- The ability to assess and evaluate concepts/theories in order to develop original solutions and particular knowledge of, and expertise in, research methodologies appropriate to their area of scholarship.
- Ability to provide leadership to small research teams.
- A strong publication record for the discipline, showing evidence of work of at least national quality.

- Ability to contribute to broader organisational and management processes and to provide leadership, co-ordinating the work of other colleagues, and supervising the work of postgraduate research students and/or final year undergraduate and MSc projects.
- The potential to mentor junior research colleagues.

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