# People and Talent Strategy Advisory Panel Researcher Subgroup

BBSRC recognises the need to support researchers in academia, industry or elsewhere to maximise an individual’s research effectiveness and potential.

The People and Talent Strategy Advisory Panel (PAT SAP) has a Researcher Subgroup to focus on issues related to researcher careers and development. This Subgroup maintains a close relationship with PAT SAP to ensure a two-way conversation and ensures that there is consistency amongst discussions and a researcher perspective is given to PAT SAP.

For the purpose of this group, we define researchers as *“-individuals whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and who are employed specifically for this purpose by a higher education institution or research institute. Within this group, it is recognised that these staff often have different contract types, levels of training, experience and responsibility, as well as different career expectations and intentions. Disciplinary and institutional context can also mean a broad range of job titles fall within this definition.[[1]](#footnote-1)”*

For further clarity, BBSRC defines researchers in reference to this Subgroup as including:

* Postdoctoral researchers, (academia or industry).
* Early career researchers, (academia or industry).
* Early career fellows such as BBSRC Discovery Fellows.
* Individuals employed mainly/solely to conduct research whether that be in academia, industry, policy, enterprise, business or innovation sectors.
* Individuals who are in the first years of their career after their PhD (academia, industry, policy, enterprise, business or innovation sectors).

BBSRC recognises that career paths vary but for the purpose of this Subgroup, BBSRC does not include the following under the definition of ‘researcher’:

* David Phillips Fellows or UKRI Future Leader Fellows.
* Individuals who have established an independent group or lab.
* Individuals employed in a position where managerial responsibilities are the primary responsibility of their employment rather than research.

The Subgroup provides advice on a range of issues relating to researcher careers, training, and development. The objectives of the Subgroup and the issues to be discussed, are set out in the below Terms of Reference.

## Objectives

1. To work closely with PAT SAP to contribute a researcher perspective on a wide range of issues related to bioscience skills and careers including:
	1. The skills pipeline: ensuring an appropriate flow of talented people into bioscience training to benefit research communities and the wider economy.
	2. equality, diversity and inclusion, along with recognising the need for widening access and opportunity to research and industrial early career opportunities.
	3. researcher mobility, including collaboration, interdisciplinary working, and movement between sectors.
	4. research culture and the implementation of the Concordat for the Development of Researchers.
2. To provide advice on issues that are specific to researchers, including how BBSRC can:
	1. support the effective career planning of researchers,
	2. aid early career researchers in the transition to independence.
3. Support researchers in accessing the training and development opportunities they need
	1. best engage with the researcher community in a fair and equitable way.
4. To seek input from the community and provide advice on the current and emerging skills needs of researchers
	1. To consider and advise on the impact of BBSRC policies and activities on researchers.

## Ways of working

* Meetings are currently held online via Zoom. The group will aim to have one meeting per year in-person.
* One meeting will be aligned with the PAT SAP meeting, to ensure cross-talk between the two groups.
* Members of the Subgroup will attend and present to the PAT SAP group when appropriate.
* Members are expected to communicate and continue discussions between meetings via the dedicated Microsoft Teams site.
* Meeting frequency will be determined by agenda items put forward by Subgroup Members and those suggested by BBSRC staff

**Membership**

Membership is expected to last for 1 year minimum. At BBSRC’s discretion, this can be extended up to a maximum of 3 years by offering 6-month rolling extensions.

Members based in **academia** should be working on one or more of the below:

* A BBSRC-funded grant.
* Working at a or in collaboration with BBSRC-funded strategic institute.
* Undertaking research within the BBSRC Portfolio remit at the time of application to the Subgroup *(please see* [*Our portfolio - BBSRC (ukri.org)*](https://bbsrc.ukri.org/research/science-remit/) *to search BBSRC Portfolio or contact* *bbsrc.remit@bbsrc.ac.uk**, for clarification around Remit areas.)*

BBSRC **Discovery Fellows** will be expected to gather input from other fellows to feed into conversations at the Researcher Subgroup meeting. Past BBSRC Fellows are invited to apply however we do encourage current fellows to be involved in this opportunity.

Members working in **industry** should be working for a company with which BBSRC has an established relationship or a company with intent to develop a collaborative partnership with BBSRC, and/or as an individual were supported by BBSRC during their PhD.

Members that have moved out of the traditional academic career route into **policy/enterprise/business or innovation** should have experience of working on a BBSRC-remit related project either during their PhD, postdoctoral researcher position or on a BBSRC-funded grant at their institution. This can include, for example, working in a Technology Transfer Office at a university or at an Innovation Centre which may have applied for funding from BBSRC.

**All members** should have experience of employment, working at or with, or having been funded by BBSRC or a Research Council including Innovate UK and Research England.

Members are expected to inform staff in the event of a **career change**. When moving into a new role that does not fit the eligibility criteria stated above, BBSRC may choose to allow the member to continue to serve their current membership term, after which no extensions will be offered, and the member will be asked to retire. When appropriate, BBSRC may also chose to invite the member to attend the next scheduled meeting, after which the member will be asked to retire.

## Membership Objectives

The Subgroup aims to have approximately **15** members (including the Chair, who is a member of PAT SAP, as well as a Deputy Chair), and will consist of:

* **Chair**
* **Deputy Chair**
* **Researchers based in academia**
* **BBSRC Discovery Fellows**
* **Researchers based in industry**
* **Researchers in the early stages of their career who have moved from traditional academic routes into policy/enterprise/business or innovations sectors.**

We will ensure equality and diversity in the group including diversity of individuals through career, demography, and location alongside diversity of thought. We aim to have a representative group of the biological sciences sector and aim to work proactively to ensure representation and inclusivity of opportunity.

## Current members

* Rebecca Boulton, University of Stirling
* Emily Breeze, University of Warwick
* Jordan Cuff, Newcastle University
* Fatima Madugu, University of Manchester
* Cynthia Okoro-Shekwaga, University of Leeds
* Jack Rowbotham, University of Manchester
* Svenja Tidau, University of Plymouth
* Claire Colenutt, The Pirbright Institute
* Santosh Kumar, Diamond Light Source/Imperial College London
* Stephen Marshall, University of Oxford
* Joseph Sallmen, John Innes Centre
* Hamish Symington, University of Cambridge
1. <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy/concordat> and <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-071020-ConcordatToSupportTheCareerDevelopmentOfResearchersFunderActionPlan.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)