Supporting Early-Career Researchers: Value and recognition as a catalyst for success

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Abstract

This paper explores the pivotal role of recognition in the career progression of emerging researchers in Higher Education. In an ever-competitive academic landscape, early career researchers (ECRs) face numerous challenges, including availability of resources and the struggle to establish themselves. This reflection highlights how ECRs can benefit from support and recognition, both within their academic institutions and the broader scholarly community. It delves into the various forms of recognition, such as awards, grants, publication acknowledgements and promotional progression as well as support mechanisms such as mentorship, training and their impact on researchers' motivation, professional development, and contributions to their field. Additionally, the paper offers insights into practical strategies and policies that can be employed to better support and empower ECRs on their journey towards academic success. In supporting the ECR community, our future mid-career researchers will be well placed to face future challenges. Recognition, it argues, is not merely a form of validation but a powerful catalyst that fosters innovation, collaboration, and cultivation of a new generation of leaders in research.

Keywords: early career researcher; research culture; career; recognition; value

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Introduction

In academia, early career researchers (ECRs) significantly influence research and innovation. ECRs, generally defined as those transitioning from a Ph.D. to an established, independent investigator, hold roles such as senior postdoctoral researchers, externally funded research fellows, or early-career lecturers. Recognising and rewarding their contributions is vital for fostering an environment conducive to their potential. While 70% of ECRs aspire to pursue an academic career, only 63% anticipate achieving this goal, highlighting a consistent over-optimism, illustrated in the CEDAR's 2023 Survey (**CEDAR, 2023**).

This article explores the strategies and proactive steps taken to foster the acknowledgment and prosperity of the Early Career Researcher (ECR) community within academia. In the UK, researcher careers and development in higher education receive support through the Researcher Development Concordat, also known as the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers ('Concordat'), it plays a crucial role in fostering researcher growth. (**Concordat, 2023**). Utilising data from a systematic search review (**Appendix 1**), Analysis by the authors, based at the University of Swansea concentrated on identifying UK higher education institutions (HEIs) that demonstrated robust and reproducible ECR initiatives aligned with the categories outlined in Swansea University (SU)'s Concordat Good Practice Action Plan, including Awards & Promotions, Mentorship, Career Development, Grants, and Events (**Swansea University, 2023**).

Career Development

Engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) allows ECRs to enhance their skills and work towards personal, professional, and career goals. UK universities and research institutions, like SU, offer various tailored programs for research and innovation staff, covering topics such as narrative CV writing, bid writing, publishing, open access, impact development, communication strategies, podcasting, online presence, and leadership training.

The Concordat sets out 3 key Principles of 'Environment and Culture, Employment', and 'Professional and Career Development', underpinned by clear obligations which are the shared responsibility of researchers, their managers, their employers, and funders. For example, under the principle of 'Professional and Career Development', institutions must 'Provide opportunities, structured support, encouragement and time for researchers to engage in a minimum of 10 days professional development pro rata per year, recognising that researchers will pursue careers across a wide range of employment sectors.' (**Concordat, 2023**).

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The European Commission's HR Excellence in Research Award (HREiR) acknowledges institutions that ensure support for research careers and demonstrate a commitment to favorable working conditions and researcher development by implementing the Concordat, in alignment with UK research degree requirements (**QAA, 2023**). There are currently 714 Institutions (83 UK Institutions) that hold the award (**EURAXESS, 2024**). The platform Vitae stands as the forefront global supporter for the professional growth of researchers, offering extensive expertise in collaborating with institutions committed to achieving excellence, fostering innovation, and making a meaningful impact through research. Vitae's review of HREiR emphasised its role in advancing an institution's strategic goals, including enhancing research quality and impact, fostering excellence in staff recruitment, development, and retention, and preparing researchers for broader employability and economic contributions. The Award serves as a catalyst for positive culture change, elevates the status of researcher development, and supports fundraising efforts, despite low national awareness of its value in supporting research staff in continuous professional development (CPD) and overall career growth. For example, the Culture, Environment and Development of Academic Research Survey (CEDAR) National Aggregate Results 2023, to which there were 9,351 responses from 66 UK institutions, reported that large proportions of staff have not heard of key UK policy documents and initiatives, such as the Concordat and HREiR. Furthermore, CEDARS 2023 reported that engagement in professional development activities is low with only 16% of research staff spending the 10 or more days recommended in the Concordat. Worryingly, a quarter of research staff, and a similar proportion of other academic staff, report spending less than 1 day on professional development activities annually (**CEDAR, 2023**).

It's crucial to bridge the communication gap and raise awareness about the significant impact of CPD on ECRs career prospects. This includes highlighting the availability of staff training within and outside institutions, and the benefits of integrating a career development plan with research excellence, impact, and community expertise. Encouraging ECRs to take ownership of their professional growth is vital. Initiatives like the University of Liverpool's open-access course, focusing on the principles of the Concordat and associated responsibilities, play a key role in promoting staff engagement in CPD (**Liverpool University, 2024**). Vitae promote the Research Development Framework (RDF), which describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers (across four domains), as well as an RDF planner tool for reflecting and mapping current skills and the development of a personal development plan to meet career goals (**Vitae, 2024**).

Queen's University, Belfast, has instituted a university policy granting all research staff including post-docs an entitlement of 10 CPD days. Staff document their utilisation of these days and engage in discussions about their development and CPD planning during their annual Personal Development Review (**Queens University Belfast, 2024**). At SU, CEDARS results mirror the national trend of low CPD engagement among research staff. To boost researcher involvement in career development, we plan to launch a campaign promoting awareness of the 10 CPD day entitlement, providing details on research development, and highlighting available training and resources. Additionally, all SU research and innovation training aligns with the four domains of Vitae's RDF: Domain A, Knowledge & Intellectual Abilities; Domain B, Personal Effectiveness; Domain C, Research Governance & Organisation; Domain D, Engagement, Influence & Impact. In 2024, a pilot mentorship scheme is set to launch at SU, specifically targeting research staff, with a focus on ECRs. The initiative aims to empower ECRs to concentrate on their career goals, build their research identity, and perform personal development plans and training needs analyses. The overall objective is to enhance awareness and confidence among staff regarding the Concordat, RDF, and CPD. The initiative also seeks to encourage staff engagement in developing their professional competencies and experiences to bolster their future careers.

Mentorship

Mentoring and coaching offer both personal and professional advantages, fostering resilience, setting goals, and enhancing a researcher's confidence to undertake tasks such as writing papers, contributing to grant proposals, and presenting at conferences, among other benefits (**Vitae, 2024**). Mentoring is a learning conversation that supports good quality thinking and a positive outlook. Engaging in mentoring brings a powerful and refreshing opportunity to connect to colleagues, participate in discussions with the benefit of new perspectives, navigate the demands of a research role, and find the best way forward, whatever the career stage or future goal ambitions of the researcher.

At SU, we utilise mentoring as a tool for career development, fostering a continuous process where researchers take charge of their careers by seeking professional advice and working towards set goals. A key element of SU's approach is for mentees to establish career development objectives at the beginning of the mentoring program, creating and regularly updating a personal development plan during initial meetings with their mentors. The program includes clear guidance, an induction session, mentor training, online support, and supplementary documentation like a mentoring agreement, mentor and mentee profiling

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forms, and EDI monitoring. Program evaluation involves a survey for participating staff.

We have been inspired by the award-winning Future Leaders Fellows (FLF) Development Network Leadership Mentoring programme, which was recognised in 2022 by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), winning a Global Coaching, Mentoring, Supervision, and Team Coaching Award for Mentoring (**Future Leaders Fellows Development Network: UKRI, 2024).** The FLF Development Network backs the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) FLF scheme, facilitating exceptional support for the next generation of researchers and innovators. The FLF scheme's goal is to nurture world-class leaders in research and innovation, offering four years of funding to address ambitious challenges and foster career development in academia and business (**UKRI, 2024**).

Similarly, the University of Glasgow offers the Catalyst: career and leadership mentoring for research staff (**Guccione, 2023**). Catalyst is a six-month mentoring programme designed specifically for research staff whatever their role or job title, founded on the principles of collegiality and collaboration. Catalyst focuses on ensuring quality mentoring conversations, through training Catalyst mentor volunteers, academic staff, to deliver excellent mentoring. Glasgow advocates that mentoring conversations can help researchers to 'set and achieve small goals, rekindling a feeling of motivation and enthusiasm in (their) role' and to 'consider future career options and a 'best fit' for (them)'. Catalyst Mentoring is designed and led by Dr Kay Guccione, co-author of 'Coaching and Mentoring for Academic Development' (**Guccione & Hutchinson, 2021**).

The Universities of Bath, Cambridge, Kent, Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Sussex, and King's College London have partnered to provide online 'speed mentoring' sessions. These sessions focus on career and professional development, offering ECRs the chance for brief, focused conversations with four different academic mentors. Each session lasts 15 minutes, allowing ECRs to gain various perspectives on specific questions, professional issues, or goals they aim to achieve (**University of Sussex, 2024**; **University of Bath, 2024**).

Speed mentoring sessions provide ECRs with an accessible avenue to explore fresh perspectives on problems or challenges outside their usual work environment. This experience enhances confidence and fosters a support network beyond their immediate team, contributing to future resources. The overarching goal is to encourage ECRs to actively participate in mentoring, dedicating time and energy to personal development and planning.

Awards and Promotions

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of academic research, the recognition of achievements through awards and promotions plays a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of ECRs. Beyond mere recognition, these acknowledgments serve as a testament to the intellectual prowess, dedication, and contributions of young scholars to their respective fields. Awards and promotions not only bolster the morale and confidence of ECRs but also provide them with crucial visibility and credibility within the academic community.

CEDARS 2023 shed light on the prevailing sentiments among ECRs in UK universities regarding promotion and progression. The survey revealed a notable disparity in perceptions between junior researchers and their more established counterparts. Astonishingly, only 29% of ECRs believed that the promotion and progression processes at their institutions were fair, significantly lower than the 58% reported by lecturers, senior researchers, and professors. The survey further underscored a perceived lack of equitable opportunities for career progression, with only 33% of junior researchers expressing satisfaction compared to 50% among more senior staff. Additionally, the merit-based nature of promotions was questioned by 34% of ECRs, contrasting with the 49% t affirmation from established staff, signalling a concerning divide in perceptions of fairness and opportunities within the academic hierarchy (**CEDAR, 2023**).

At SU, the Swansea University Research Staff Working Group overseeing the Concordat Action Plan, is committed to enhancing the career development of research staff. Recognising the pivotal role played by research staff in contributing to the University's world-leading research, the group actively monitors and evaluates the application of the Concordat. Updates on action plan projects, management of the HREiR Award renewal process, and consideration of Research Staff recommendations are integral to their responsibilities. The group engages in benchmarking exercises, comparing the University's performance with other institutions, and holds the authority to propose adjustments to the Concordat action plan (**Swansea University, 2024**).

In response to the concerns raised in the CEDARS survey (**CEDAR, 2023**), SU has implemented impactful measures. Postdoctoral research staff are eligible for promotion at SU. The researcher promotion process has been aligned with the Personal Development Review (PDR) cycle, ensuring synchronisation with academic timelines. To enhance clarity, a specialised University promotion workshop has been designed specifically for ECRs and mid-career researchers. The university's dedication to professional development is demonstrated through impressive participation rates in the Annual PDR. Moreover, substantial resources have been dedicated to

the 'Managers Hub,' offering extensive managerial support and valuable resources. These encompass manager toolkits, targeted courses for honing coaching and managerial skills, as well as assistance for professional development and well-being.

To further support ECRs, Kings College London, in collaboration with UKRI's FLF Development Networks Plus Fund and Vitae, have developed two toolkits aimed at empowering managers to effectively guide the professional growth of ECRs. These resources offer guidelines and strategies for career planning, skill development, and work-life balance, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and satisfaction of researchers under their supervision (**Vitae, 2022**).

A significant aspect of an academic's career advancement stems from acknowledgment and the subsequent attention it generates. This is especially important in the career trajectory of an ECR. The Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences at UCL have established the Faculty ECR Forum Awards, recognising outstanding research, teaching and community building by ECRs. Dr. Louisa Acciari, recipient of the Community Award, expressed her gratitude upon receiving the award, stating:

> *I'm very grateful that the faculty recognises our work beyond our usual academic tasks. Social impact and community work is central to the Centre for Gender and Disaster and our GRRIPP project. The awards are individual, but this was really a teamwork, and it means a lot to us to be receiving it. Thank you!* (**UCL Mathematical and Physical Sciences, 2024**).

As previously mentioned, in addition to offering a moral and confidence boost, recognition serves as stepping stones that can propel individuals forward in their careers. SU annually runs an ECR Impact Award. ECRs are invited to produce a 3-minute video highlighting the impact of their research. This initiative not only lays the groundwork for recognition based on merit but also sparks subsequent discussions regarding the broader impact of their work. As a result, participants have received additional support and funding. As the scholarly journey unfolds, these recognitions open doors to new opportunities, collaborations, and increased impact on the broader scientific community. In essence, the significance of awards and promotions for ECRs extends far beyond personal gratification, influencing career advancement and fostering a culture of excellence and innovation in the pursuit of knowledge.

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Grants

The quest for research funding is an integral aspect of the academic journey for ECRs, marking a critical juncture in their professional development. The ability to secure grants not only provides essential financial support for their projects but also serves as a validation of their research ideas and the potential societal impact of their work. In the competitive landscape of academia, successful grant capture is indicative of a researcher's capability to articulate innovative hypotheses, design rigorous methodologies, and communicate the broader significance of their contributions. Beyond financial sustenance, grants bestow a sense of credibility and recognition, enabling ECRs to establish themselves as valuable contributors to their field and build towards becoming an independent researcher. Moreover, successful grant acquisition facilitates the creation of networks and collaborations, fostering an environment conducive to the advancement of knowledge and the translation of research findings into real-world applications. Thus, the importance of grant capture among ECRs extends far beyond financial considerations, shaping the trajectory and sustainability of their academic careers and contributing to the overall advancement of scientific inquiry.

It does not bode well, therefore, when 34% ECRs feel their contribution to funding applications goes unrecognised, a notable contrast to the 14% reported among established staff, according to CEDAR 2023 (**CEDAR, 2023**).

Several specific grants are targeted specifically at ECRs. The British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship enhances research and teaching skills, aiming to boost the awardee's CV for securing a permanent academic position. The scheme emphasises completing significant research for publication and integrating fellowship recipients into the established scholarly community in their field (**The British Academy, 2024**).

The UK's participation in Horizon Europe (**UKRI, 2024**) has enabled ECRs to apply for the European Research Council (ERC) ECR Starting Grants (**European Research Council, 2024**). There have been studies into the benefit of being awarded a European Research Council grant and as Corrina Ghirelli et al. mention in their discussion article, securing an ERC grant has enduring positive effects on scientific productivity, impact, and the ability to attract additional EU funds (**Ghirelli, et al., 2023**). This holds true across various domains, including Chemistry, Universe and Earth Sciences, Institutions and Behaviours, Human Mind Studies, and Medicine. Furthermore, ERC grantees have achieved remarkable recognition, garnering prestigious international awards such as 14 Nobel Prizes, 6 Fields Medals, and 5 Wolf Prizes (**European Research Council, 2024**).

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Additionally, their impactful research has resulted in the publication of 6,100 articles in leading journals (**Ghirelli, et al., 2023**).

The EPSRC New investigator Grants aim to assist ECRs and academics in establishing independence by gaining experience in managing and leading research projects and teams. These grants not only support the professional development of applicants but also contribute to the skill development of research staff employed on the grant (**UKRI, 2023**). The Leverhulme Trust and Wellcome Trust both offer awards and fellowships specifically tailored for ECRs, aiming to expedite and enhance their career development, propelling them within their respective fields (**Griffiths, 2023, Appendix B**).

The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) has also emphasised the significance of the 'Narrative CV.' These narrative CVs provide a promising avenue for recognising the diverse spectrum of a researcher's scholarly contributions. They function as a tool to shift towards a mindset that prioritizes 'quality over quantity' in career evaluation, addressing the potential overemphasis on journal-based indicators. Moreover, narrative CVs effectively accommodate non-linear research career paths. (**Amanda Akemi; DORA's Policy Intern, 2022**)

The availability of grants becomes significantly valuable when coupled with resources to equip ECRs for successful applications. SU's Research and Innovation team conducts seminars to aid ECRs in crafting and facilitating their grant applications.

SU's Computer Science Departments have established an ECR network 'CORE'. The organisation centers its efforts on arranging grant writing retreats annually. They plan month-long sessions from March to May, followed by a three-day retreat in June. Historical experience indicates the effectiveness of providing dedicated time for colleagues to advance their proposals during these events. Moreover, a dedicated grant writing help folder is maintained, serving as a valuable resource repository. CORE also actively supports new colleagues in CS, assisting them in acclimating to their research journey at Swansea and addressing any questions they may have (**Ahmad, 2024**).

The University of Glasgow, through its School of Health and Wellbeing (SHW) Athena SWAN ECR Career at The University of Glasgow, in collaboration with its School of Health and Wellbeing (SHW) Athena SWAN ECR Career Progression Sub-group, offers specialised training for Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Significantly, they have initiated a monthly ECR grant writing group dedicated to assisting ECRs in developing their own grant proposals (**University of Glasgow, 2024**). This initiative aligns with Athena SWAN's commitment to promoting gender equality and career

progression in higher education and research. Additionally, Appendix 2 provides insights into several grant schemes specifically tailored for ECRs.

ECR Events

In the ever-evolving landscape of academia, the significance of specific, focused events for emerging researchers cannot be overstated. These targeted gatherings provide a unique platform for individuals in the nascent stages of their academic journeys to engage in meaningful interactions, exchange ideas, and build networks within their respective fields. Unlike broader conferences, these events are tailored to address the specific challenges, aspirations, and developmental needs of ECRs, offering a concentrated and immersive experience. By fostering a supportive environment for knowledge exchange and professional development, these events contribute significantly to the growth and success of budding academics. Furthermore, they serve as catalysts for mentorship opportunities, collaboration initiation, and the cultivation of a sense of community among ECRs, ultimately paving the way for their sustained success and impactful contributions to the academic realm.

The Crucible training program that runs from SU engages ECRs from all UK universities and disciplines, providing a unique platform to develop research skills within the digital economy. With opportunities for networking and collaboration, the program aims for societal impact and economic gain. From 2016 to 2019, over 100 ECRs from 35 UK universities participated. Former participants have made significant contributions across various domains, such as influencing policies at the parliamentary and wider government levels, engaging the public through BBC News, securing over £8 million in funding for their institutions since enrolment in the program, excelling in their professional journeys, and embracing an interdisciplinary and co-creation research approach involving users and industry collaborators. The recent online event attracted a global audience, including participants from Canada, Germany, and Mumbai. Conducted over three two-day sessions, topics covered included resilience, media advice, and responsible innovation. A 'Dragon's Den' style pitch on responsible innovation resulted in a winning idea, 'Suss your food' App, developed by a team of ECRs from various universities. The success of the virtual Crucible 2021 has sparked consideration for a hybrid event in the future, enhancing collaboration and inclusion beyond physical constraints. The positive feedback from participants underscores the transformative impact of the experience (**Swansea University: Crucible, 2024**).

UCL organises the annual Festival of Early Stage Researchers (FESR) with the goal of acknowledging and celebrating the substantial contributions of UCL's early-stage researcher community to research and innovation. This

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festival serves as a dynamic forum, uniting researchers from diverse disciplines within the institution. It offers a valuable platform for presenting and celebrating accomplishments, exchanging experiences, and cultivating cross-disciplinary connections. Dr Ned Barker, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, encapsulates the spirit of the festival, stating: 'Presenting our future research provocations to a diverse body of early career colleagues across UCL led to many insightful and memorable exchanges' (**UCL, 2024**). The FESR not only showcases the achievements of ECRs but also actively promotes collaborative dialogue and the exchange of innovative ideas.

The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) Public Engagement ECR Forum serves as a dynamic platform, offering practical advice and support to early career professionals engaged in public outreach. This initiative not only provides valuable insights and guidance on current best practices through the extensive network of academics and public engagement professionals within the STFC community but also fosters peer learning and support among like-minded scientists and engineers. Beyond the immediate term, the forum contributes to the development of a lasting peer support network. It further facilitates access to guidance on practical requirements associated with planning new public engagement initiatives, enhances awareness of support mechanisms from STFC and other organisations, and delves into the realities of delivering and leading public engagement efforts. The forum aims to build an evidence base that informs and influences STFC and, by extension, UKRI's approaches to public engagement, ensuring an effective voice for early-career researchers in the broader scientific community (**UKRI, 2023**).

Conclusions

Developing and maintaining a sustainable career in academic research is the aspiration of most ECRs, however securing a permanent position as an independent researcher is a highly competitive, ambitious, and challenging goal for most researchers. We have discussed several key areas such as personal development and mentorship, that impact the career success of ECRs, and the pivotal role of recognition in the career progression of emerging researchers in HEIs. A major challenge remains to increase engagement of ECRs in their personal development and the benefits for their careers from prioritising this. Mentorship is a valuable to tool to provide ECRs with the opportunity to have meaningful, focussed conversations about their career goals and ambitions.

There are numerous examples of practical strategies and policies that can be employed to better support and empower ECRs on their journey towards academic success. For example, support and opportunities for grant capture, such as SU's CORE grant writing retreats, increase the grant

success of ECRs, and are fundamental to bestowing a sense of credibility and recognition to ECRs to establish themselves as valuable contributors to their field. Similarly, ECR awards, such as SU's ECR Impact Award, serve as a confidence boost, providing recognition that can propel individuals forward in their careers. In addition, ECR events are important for providing a sense of belonging within the ECR community, as well as offering opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, exchange ideas, and build networks.

The research culture (RC) community is extremely forthright at sharing resources, best practice and enabling RC to flourish. Many resources are open access and numerous RC networks have evolved to support the embedding of a positive RC nationally. We would like to thank the FLF Development Network, The University of Glasgow's Research and Innovation services and Researcher Development team, Queens University Belfast ECR Postdoctoral development Centre, The University of Liverpool's Researcher Hub, for their generosity of support and culture of sharing resources and best practice which has helped encourage and assist our plan and approach for researcher development at SU.

Anticipating the future, it is essential to assess the influence of these initiatives on the career progression of ECRs. This can be achieved by establishing a national data capture system. The UK research community should prioritise the design, development, and implementation of such a system to enhance the understanding of its impact on ECR career development.

Research indicates a notable absence of articles examining the ECR community as a whole. To enhance our understanding of what the ECR community requires for success in academia, it is imperative to address this gap moving forward.

Liz Kenny has a strong educational background, combining a BA in History with a PGCE in Primary Education. Her career path has led her to contribute to the academic excellence at Swansea University, specifically within the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Here, she focuses on ensuring the quality and impact of research outputs, playing a pivotal role in the strategic preparation for the upcoming REF submission. Her interdisciplinary experience highlights her commitment to both education and research development.

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Appendix 1: Systematic Review Strategy

The Systematic Review yielded numerous results based on the search query. However, the majority of these were deemed irrelevant to the paper. This was attributed to inaccuracies in ECR acronym data and the exploration of discipline-specific elements of ECR, which fell outside the paper's scope. The most valuable data was obtained from Grey Literature, specifically from websites featuring ECR initiatives. Our selection of examples was guided by benchmarking against institutions comparable to Swansea in terms of size and income. This approach ensures that any initiative or example identified could be reproducible for the majority of higher education institutions.

Table 1: Systematic Review Searches

Source	Search Query	Limits	Results	Relevant
Web of Science	All Fields - (ECR OR "early career researcher*") AND (recognition OR "career development") AND (university* OR institution*) AND (UK OR Great Britain OR GB OR england OR wales OR scotland OR ireland)	Years: 2014 – present Language: English Countries/Regions: England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland	**144**	**Web of Science and Scopus : 15** (search enquiry did not eradicate data from other "ECR" acronyms such as European Cardiology Community etc.,)
Scopus	(ecr OR "early career researcher*") AND (recognition OR "career development") AND (university* OR institution*) AND (uk OR great AND britain OR gb OR england OR wales OR scotland OR ireland)	Years: 2014 – present Language: English Country/region: United Kingdom Number of results: 140	**140**	
Google Scholar Search	(ECR OR "early career researcher*") AND (recognition OR "career development") AND (university* OR institution*) AND (UK OR Great Britain OR GB OR england OR wales OR scotland OR ireland)	Year: 2014 – present	**About 17,800**	
Grey Literature Google Search	(ECR OR "early career researcher*") AND (recognition OR "career development") AND (university* OR institution*) AND	No Limits		Using benchmarks of institutional size and income.

	(UK OR Great Britain OR GB OR england OR wales OR scotland OR ireland)			

Search Enquiry conducted by Ms Rebecca Kelleher.

Appendix 2: Early Career Specific Funding Routes

Table 2: Early Career Specific Funding Routes

British Academy Post Doctoral Fellowship	No fixed Amount Duration: 3 years	*Eligibility:* within 3 years of postdoctoral award
ERC Starting Grant	1.5 million Euro Duration: Up to 5 Years	*Eligibility:* 2-7 years of Doctoral Award
EPSRC New Investigator Award	No Cap, Duration: No Cap	*Eligibility:* No previous experience of leading an academic research group or grant.
EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship	100% salary costs Other non-staff costs associated with the research. No staff costs covered. Duration: Up to 3 years	*Eligibility:* Applicants are expected to hold a PhD qualification or equivalent research experience.
Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship	The Trust will contribute 50% of each Fellow's total salary costs up to a maximum of £25,000 per annum and the balance is to be paid by the host institution. Duration: 3 years	*Eligibility*: Applicants must not yet have held a full-time permanent academic post in a UK university. Candidates must hold a doctorate. Applicants must either hold a degree from a UK HEI or must hold an academic position in the UK for which the contract duration at the time of appointment was no less than 9 months.
Welcome Trust Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences.	Salary costs and Research Expenses. Duration: 3 years	*Eligibility:* Applicants should be awarded a PhD before they apply.
British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grants[i]	Costs of expenses arising from a defined research project (salary payments, computer kit or teaching replacement costs are not funded)	*Eligibility:* Postdoctoral Scholars or equivalent.
Leverhulme Trust – Research Project Grant[ii]	Up to £500,000 Duration: up to 5 years	*Eligibility:* Eligible applicants will already be employed by the eligible institution Applications can be submitted by those holding contract research posts provided that their appointment continues for a period at least equal to the span of the requested award

Sources: (**Griffiths, 2023**).

Endnotes

[i] See: https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/funding/ba-leverhulme-small-research-grants/.

[ii] See: https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/research-project-grants.