



POSTDOCTORAL **TRAINING & CAREER** **DEVELOPMENT** **SCHEME**





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1. Introduction:

The Postdoctoral training and career development scheme, is a new scheme within BBSRC. It represents an exciting opportunity to support Postdoctoral scientists in a period of early or changed career training. The aim of the scheme is to provide new scientists with training in both research and transferable skills, in preparation for the broader requirements of a scientific career in general or in alternative careers either in or outside of the BBSRC.

We believe that Postdoctoral training and career development contracts will be an important element in our strategy to achieve two of our key organisational aims, these are the delivery of:

- Innovative and internationally competitive research programmes within the framework of BBSRC's quinquennial cycle of funding assessment and qualitative peer review.
- A pool of trained researchers for the benefit of the wider UK scientific community

Funding for the Postdoctoral training scheme is separate from and does not affect the normal budget for training.

2. Scheme Overview:

2.1 Definition:

The scheme entails a training and development programme consisting of work on a defined scientific project and participation in a range of transferable skills training, designed to assist the professional development of postgraduate scientists.

2.2 Entry criteria:

2.2.1 This scheme is for entrants that satisfy one or more of the following criteria:

- The appointment must be within three years of completing a PhD
- They must be in need of new research skills to establish themselves in a field or discipline different to the one in which they have been operating in previously (e.g. clinically qualified individuals moving into research).

2.2.2 The further particulars for these training posts should specify both of the following:

- The generic skills the trainee will expect to gain by the end of the scheme
- The specific skills/experience related to the project that the trainee will obtain

It is expected that the applicant most likely to be successful is the one who will most benefit from the training in the generic and project-based skills offered and will display the potential to make a significant contribution to the scientific research community.

2.3 Duration:

2.3.1 It is anticipated that the norm for completion of the PDT scheme will be 3 years, however, in certain circumstances it may be possible to complete the training scheme



in 2 years, i.e. where the trainee has previous experience of some of the skills offered and there is a suitable project of this length available.

2.3.2 At the end of the scheme the training contract with BBSRC will terminate. PDT contracts cannot be renewed, although in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if the training programme has been interrupted, such as, by maternity, special leave etc. or there are important training objectives not yet achieved, they can be extended for up to 12 months.

2.3.3 Although a limited-term grant or other funding may finance the position, should that source of funding be withdrawn then the Institute is responsible for underwriting the cost of the training remaining under the scheme. The one exception to this would be where a site is closing or there is a partial closure and the work is unexpectedly ending.

2.4 What does the scheme involve?

The objective of the scheme is for eligible Postdoctoral scientists to develop their careers by gaining experience working in a high quality research environment, where they will independently develop a specific research project under the direction of a senior researcher. Running alongside this will be a structured programme of training and development, gained both through the research project (i.e. on the job learning) or by attending training courses, specifically tailored for Postdoctoral scientists.

2.4.1 In addition each Postdoctoral trainee will be assigned a ‘mentor’, who will be responsible for ensuring that they are receiving the training both generic and specific associated with the programme. The mentor will not be a member of the trainee’s line/project management.

2.4.2 At the start of the contract, each PDT will develop a Personal Development Plan, (PDP). The PDP will be reviewed at least annually by the Supervisor and Mentor together with the PDT.

2.4.3 The ethos of the scheme is to help new scientists develop the knowledge and skills (field specific, analytical and transferable) necessary for their development as a research scientist, whilst allowing them the opportunities to attain personal development pertinent to chosen career pathways.

2.5 Career Development:

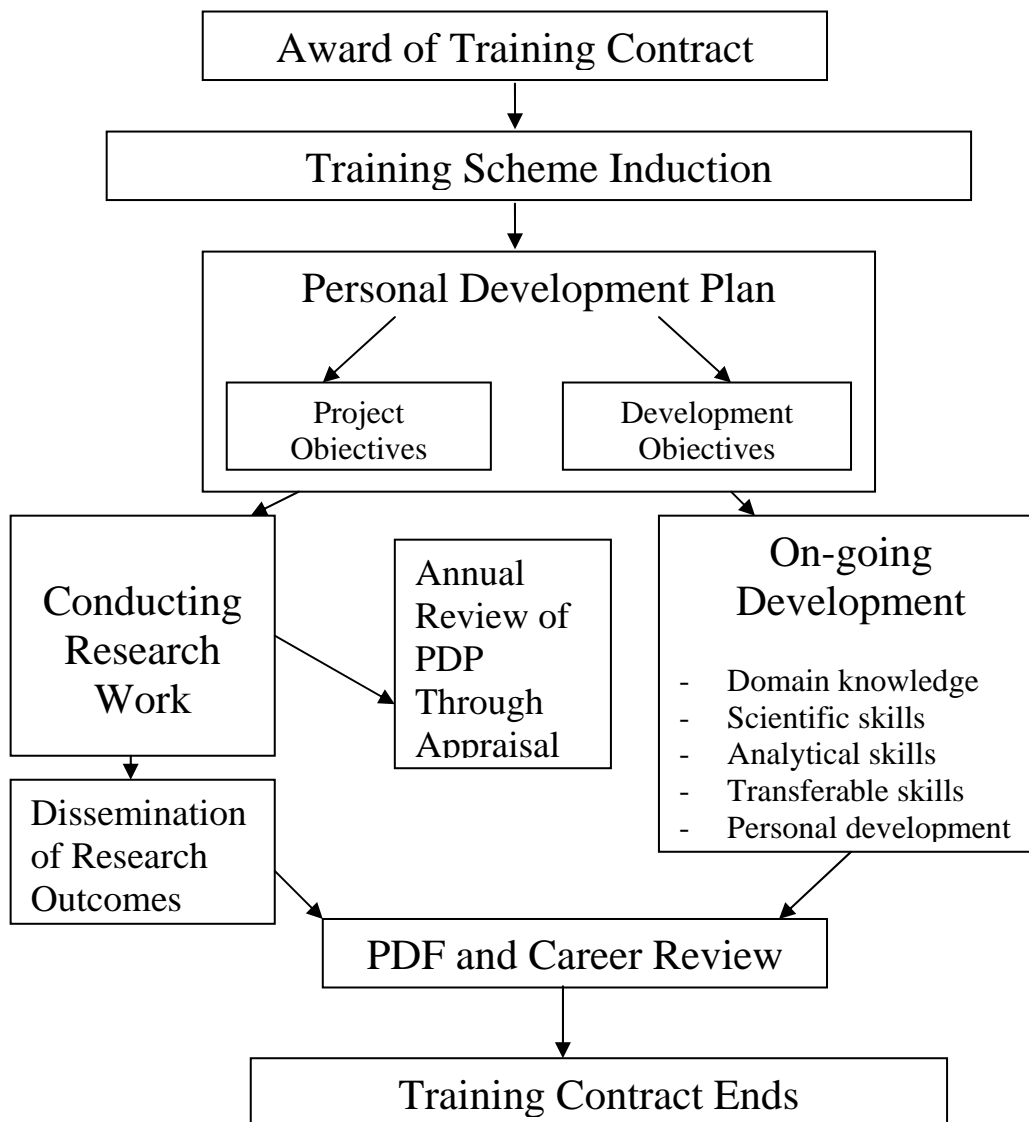
2.5.1 During the final year of the scheme the trainee will receive feedback on their progress and an honest assessment of their long-term potential. The trainees can then apply in open competition for any other positions available in the BBSRC, except another PDT. Alternatively, they might choose to develop their career in another research organisation, industry, academia or elsewhere.

2.5.2 Exceptionally, where there is evidence that the trainee is an outstanding scientist, the supervisor and mentor can make a case to a management body, requesting permission to include him/her on a research grant application as a ‘named



researcher'. If permission is granted, and the grant is awarded, the trainee will be given an indefinite contract.

Fig.1 Postdoctoral Training Scheme (Overview)



3. Postdoctoral Training Procedure:

3.1 Recruitment:

3.1.1 Information will be distributed explaining the scheme so that individuals can clarify their personal development objectives within the scheme. Standard wording must be included within the advert to ensure consistency across all sites for PDT positions. The further particulars for these training posts should also specify both of the following:

- The generic skills the trainee will expect to gain by the end of the scheme
- The specific skills/experience related to the project that the trainee will obtain



It is expected that the applicant most likely to be successful is the one who will most benefit from the training in the generic and project-based skills offered and will display the potential to make a significant contribution to the scientific research community.

3.1.2 Training contracts are normally for a period of three years but exceptionally can be extended for a period not exceeding twelve months, (see paragraph 2.3.2). The total duration of a Postdoctoral training contract cannot exceed four years.

3.1.3 Appointment on entry will be at band 6 level.

3.1.4 Postdoctoral training contracts are non renewable. There is no expectation of further employment with BBSRC beyond the expiry date of the contract, (except as outlined in paragraph 2.5.2), and post holders do not qualify for redundancy entitlements.

3.1.5 Directors and Personnel Officers must ensure that appointees offered Postdoctoral training contracts satisfy corporate entry requirements and are offered the appropriate contractual terms.

3.2 Induction:

Half-day Seminar covering scheme overview is including:

- Explanation of the scheme
- Information on how to use and develop the Personal Development Plan
- Guidance on personal development

Attendance is mandatory.

3.3 Personal Development Plan, (PDP):

3.3.1 This is the formal working document and records:

- The research project undertaken
- Associated developmental activities

3.3.2 Following discussion with the supervisor and the mentor, the researcher completes the PDP. It should be signed off by the Director (or nominee) who is responsible for ensuring all PDTs have PDPs within 3 months of arrival.

3.3.3 Project Objectives:

This involves development of specific research proposals under the direction of a supervisor and discussion with relevant Director/Programme Leader to ensure its alliance with the research groups aims. This should be summarised on the PDP.

3.3.4 Development Objectives (See also Section 4):

The development objectives, like the project, are individually determined. These may typically include improvements in:

- Domain knowledge
- Scientific skills
- Critical thinking and analysis skills



- Transferable skills
And personal development

3.3.5 Research with continuous assessment and feedback:

As the project and the researcher develop, the researcher will be expected to take an increasing lead in the project's direction and management. Review and assessment of both project and developmental progress forms a fundamental part of the supervisor/researcher relationship.

The PDP is intended as a working document, which should be kept up to date by the researcher by completing brief project updates, activities undertaken and learning achieved (including details of attendance on relevant courses). The PDP is formally reviewed as part of the probation and annual appraisal process.

3.4 Reporting of Research Outcomes:

A key part of the development contract is developing skills in reporting research outcomes through presentation at relevant conferences of international standing and production of papers for peer-reviewed journals. Formal courses are provided to support this and attendance is encouraged.

3.5 PDT and Career Review:

6 months prior to completion of the contract the supervisor and mentor will undertake a formal review with the individual to assess achievements in line with their learning objectives and to discuss career options. In the later stages of the contract, a course specifically on writing research proposals and a more general career workshop are available.

3.6 End of Contract:

Graduating Trainees choose to apply for a position either within BBSRC (if posts are available), HEIs or to pursue science or science related positions in the Public/Private Sector, (see Career options chart).

4. Guidance on Development Objectives:

4.1 Within the personal development plan, individuals need to be explicit about the learning they hope to achieve during the scheme. Development objectives will be personal drawing on the following areas:

4.2 Domain knowledge and scientific skills:

This area is centred on the scientific subject – when a greater depth of understanding of the field is required. Specific areas of new knowledge, expertise and/or techniques to be learned are to be detailed on the PDP, (these to be updated annually).

4.3 Analytical and transferable skills:

Analytical and core transferable skills selected as appropriate to the individual Fellow's development:

- Managing research
- Good research practice (research ethics, IP, health and safety)
- Time management



- Verbal communication and influencing
- Managing colleagues
- Presentation skills
- Critical analysis and project review
- Writing scientific papers and reports
- Writing project proposals

Individual requirements should be tailored ensuring that by the end of the scheme, Trainees have had the opportunities to identify their relevant skills gaps and to develop them to the standards required for competition for a further scientific appointment.

4.4 Career development:

It is important that all trainees in the scheme enhance their understanding of career options available. A career development workshop is available, ideally attended during the second or third year.

General experience/skills for personal development should be included, whether relevant to particular chosen pathway or to broaden career opportunities. Examples might include:

- People management skills
- Finance and resource management
- Teaching skills
- Business experience (e.g. visits etc.)
- Project management

Scheme effective from 01 September 2004.
(01 December 2004).

Fig. 2 – CAREER OPTIONS FOR PDTs

