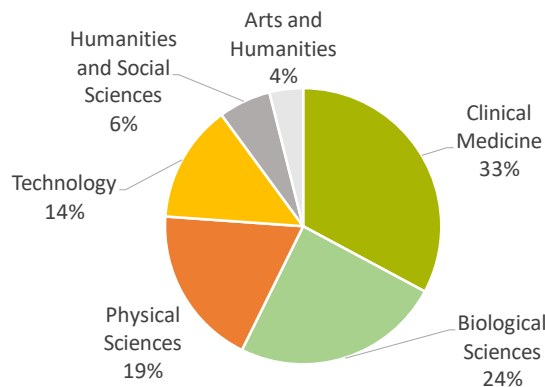


Postdocs in Cambridge

As of January 2019, more than 4,000 early career researchers are employed across Cambridge University and its Partner Institutes. They come from more than 90 countries and represent 35% of total University staff. Each of them has achieved excellence in academic studies, and the majority have Doctorate (PhD) level qualifications. They are critical to the effectiveness of research in Cambridge across a broad range of fields, as shown in the graph below.



The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs (OPdA)

The OPdA enables each individual postdoc to realise their potential in their own ambitions, and in contributing to the University and society as a whole. The office was established in 2013 as the lead University organisation supporting postdocs, and was the first office of its kind in the United Kingdom.

The mission and activities of the OPdA are represented in the graphic below, and described in more detail in the following sections.



Professional Development

Early career researchers are the engine room of advanced research. They have already built deep technical competence through their education, and work at the forefront of their respective fields. Nonetheless, to progress further in an academic career, or to branch out into commercial or non-profit employment, they need to continue to build their capabilities. The OPdA co-ordinates and facilitates a rich programme of training and development activities, working closely with the University's professional development and careers offices. These include classroom and online courses and mentoring, with mentors from both within and outside academia.

Entrepreneurship

Innovation happens when people identify problems, then solve them in new and effective ways. The OPdA provides a range of activities to connect researchers to companies in the Cambridge Cluster and beyond to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and translational activity. These are focused on developing early awareness and access to the wider research ecosystem, and overcoming the lack of understanding of how entrepreneurial skills can support future research careers in all sectors. Our flagship programme is the Postdocs to Innovators (p2i) network, an international collaboration of higher education institutions and major companies. Since 2017, p2i has engaged 354 postdocs across the network, sponsored the creation of three new entrepreneurial postdoc societies, held four enterprise fairs, three business plan competitions and 20 other events. The OPdA supports the Entrepreneurial Postdocs of Cambridge Society, runs 'meet the company' events and facilitates secondments with external organisations.

Leadership Fellowships

The Fellowships provide structured support for outstanding researchers and future leaders to develop their skills and networks, and optimise the opportunity of independent research. Fellows undertake an intensive 18-month programme, starting with a series of training workshops and activities intended to broaden their horizons, challenge their thinking and make high-impact connections in research, policy and business. With support from the Centre for Global Equality, the Fellows also collaborate on projects addressing UN Sustainability Challenges. For the final six months the Fellows have the opportunity to pursue an independent project or venture.

Policy

Traditionally, early career researchers have received limited support or representation within Universities across the United Kingdom, in spite of their crucial contribution to the successful growth and results of the academic research sector. The OPdA seeks to redress this through collaboration with other national institutions and funding bodies. In particular, we are a key supporter of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, UK 2008, and are contributing to the continued development and deployment of this critical agreement.

Postdoc Networks

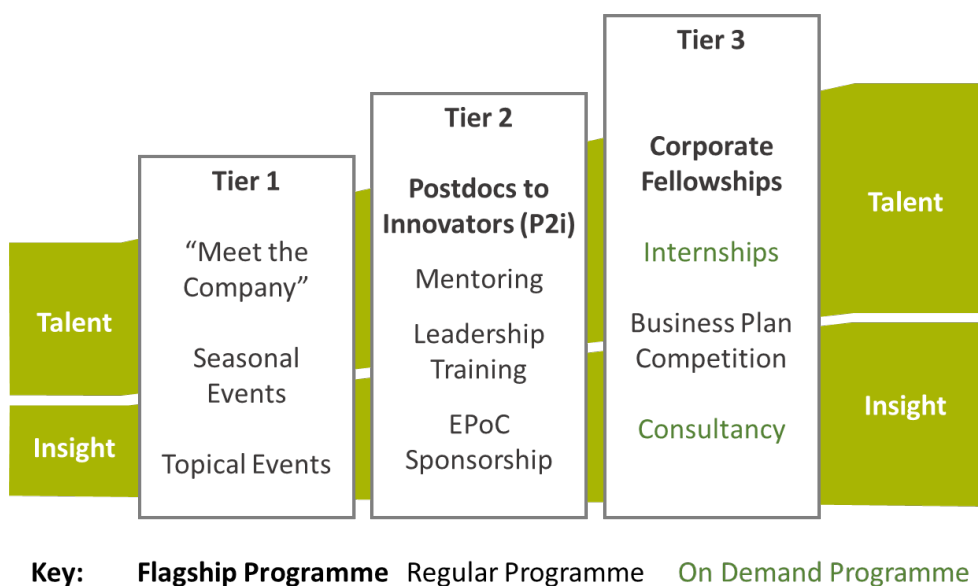
The OPdA supports a number of groups organised by and for postdocs themselves, a vital part of building the networks that support interdisciplinarity, collaboration and embedding postdocs into the overall life of the University. These include the Postdocs of Cambridge Society, the Departmental Postdoc Committee Chairs Network, the Entrepreneurial Postdocs of Cambridge Society and the Colleges Postdoc Network, a forum to support activity of postdoc groups, exchange ideas and good practice and build networks between different Colleges

Leadership Training

The OPdA is developing a unique new training programme in research leadership to be targeted at Fellows and other researchers with the aspiration and potential to achieve research leadership positions in academic, public or commercial organisations, or as entrepreneurs. The programme will be accredited as a PgCert (Level 7) through the University's Institute of Continuing Education to meet a clear need shared by funders, the University and researchers themselves as the first accredited, in-depth programme in research leadership for postdocs. It will be available to both University and College postdocs, funded through the Apprenticeship Levy, and represent a significant enhancement to the career development opportunities available to the overall postdoc community and research environment of the Collegiate University as a whole.

Corporate Engagement

Many of the OPdA's programmes are prepared and delivered in collaboration with companies who benefit through developing the skills of their own staff, connecting to the latest advances in key fields, and recruiting their company's future stars. This engagement enables us to provide valuable opportunities for career enhancement and innovative new programmes for the postdoc community. The OPdA enables companies to engage with postdocs through a structured framework of programmes illustrated in the graphic below.



Communication

The OPdA provides a clear point of information and regular updates through its weekly email bulletin with more than 3,500 subscribers, through Twitter to more than 1,500 followers, and through the Postdoc Calendar which collates information on relevant training and events from across the University's services, Departments, societies and Colleges.

Colleges

The OPdA works closely with all 31 colleges, and affiliation opportunities have expanded 33% since 2016 with more than 25% of the overall postdoc community now holding affiliations. 22 colleges receive funding to run facilitated activities and benefit from a network of college postdoc convenors.

Pastoral Services

Postdocs are hugely diverse and often new to Cambridge or the UK. Offering those with families support and access to the wider networks of the University and the city is vital to helping them flourish and succeed here. The OPdA welcomes new postdocs to Cambridge through regular Getting Connected inductions, which orient them to the wide range of opportunities and support available in the University beyond their own Departments and Institutes. We work with Newcomers & Visiting Scholars, a volunteer group in the University, to host and promote dedicated events for partners and families. The University's new Eddington district provides modern, affordable homes for University staff, the majority of which are postdocs, as well as services and facilities for the community.

Centres

The three Postdoc Centres at Eddington, the town centre, and the Biomedical Campus offer a unique space dedicated to postdocs. They offer a clear point of contact for any postdoc needing help or advice, and free access to hotdesking workspace and meeting rooms for professional and social events. Last year the centres hosted nearly 900 events including trainings, networking sessions, careers events, seminars, conferences, and wellbeing and family events.