



Pathways to the future: the early career of researchers in the UK

A report by the Council
for Science and Technology

October 2007

“To maintain the UK’s leading position over the next 20 years, researchers currently at the start of their careers must be effectively trained and managed to become world class leaders and scientists.”

“The revision of the concordat is an ideal time to set out some changes...”



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Community research



*The European
Charter
for Researchers*

*The Code
of Conduct for
the Recruitment
of Researchers*

www.europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter

EUR 21 620



EUROPEAN
RESEARCH AREA

HUMAN RESOURCES AND MOBILITY

The European Charter and Code for Researchers:

- ✓ adopted by the EC.
- ✓ aims to make research an attractive career ... to stimulate economic and employment growth.
- ✓ gives individual researchers the same rights and obligations ... throughout the EU.
- ✓ counter fragmentation of research careers at local, regional, national or sectoral level,
- ✓ allow Europe to make the most of its scientific potential.



RESEARCH
COUNCILS UK

The European Charter and Code for Researchers

- Sector mapping exercise (led by RCUK/UUK) showed that in most cases the UK already met the 'requirements' of the Charter and Code.
- UK awareness of Charter and Code is low
- Concern if UK perceived not to be 'signed up to Charter and Code principles
- New Concordat for careers management of researchers planned to incorporate Charter and Code

A champagne bottle is shown at the bottom left, with its cork popping and a large splash of white foam erupting from the neck. The background is a deep blue, filled with numerous small, out-of-focus white circles, creating a bokeh effect. The overall scene conveys a sense of celebration and excitement.

A New Concordat for Career Management of Research Staff

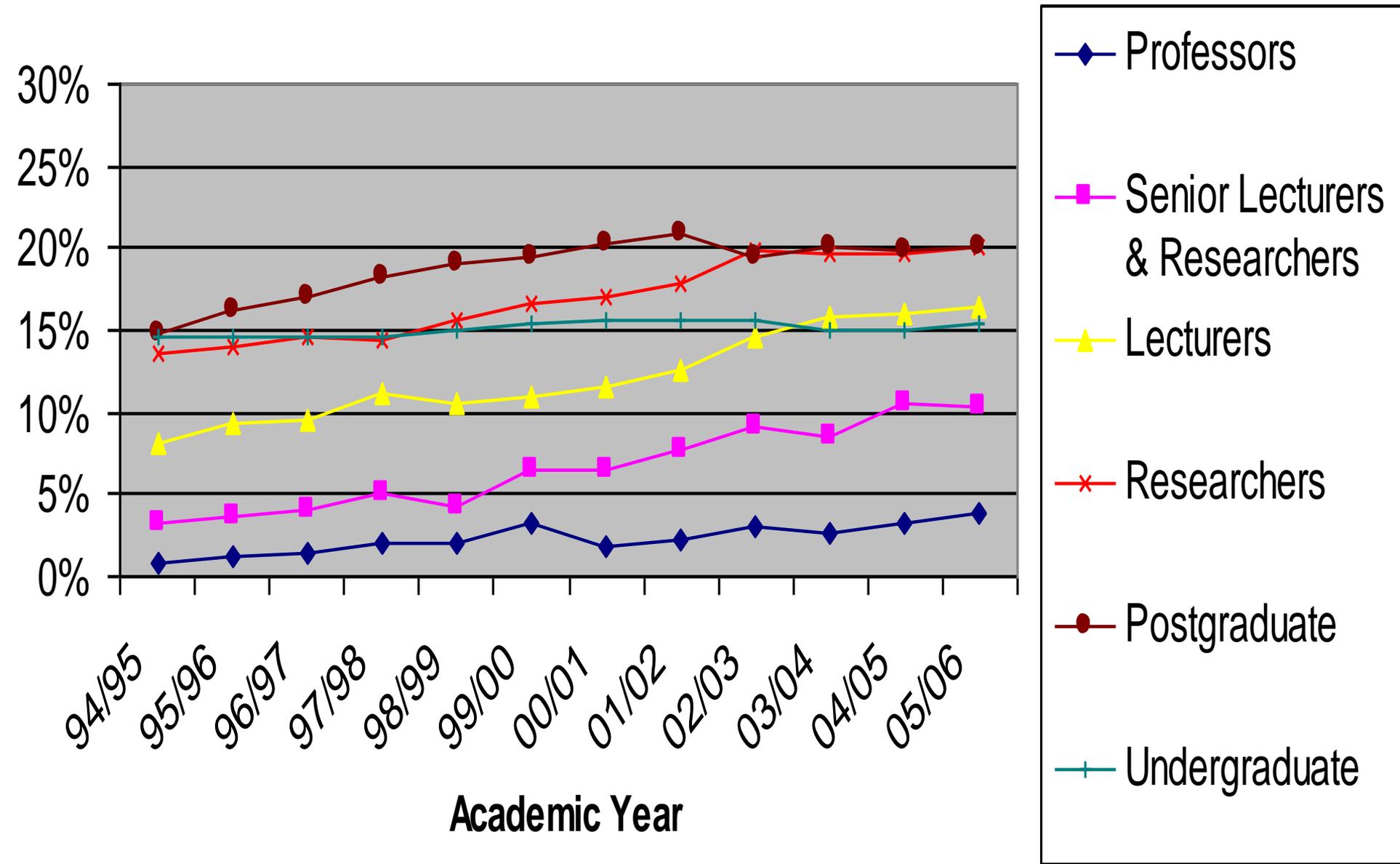
National Launch
25 June 2008

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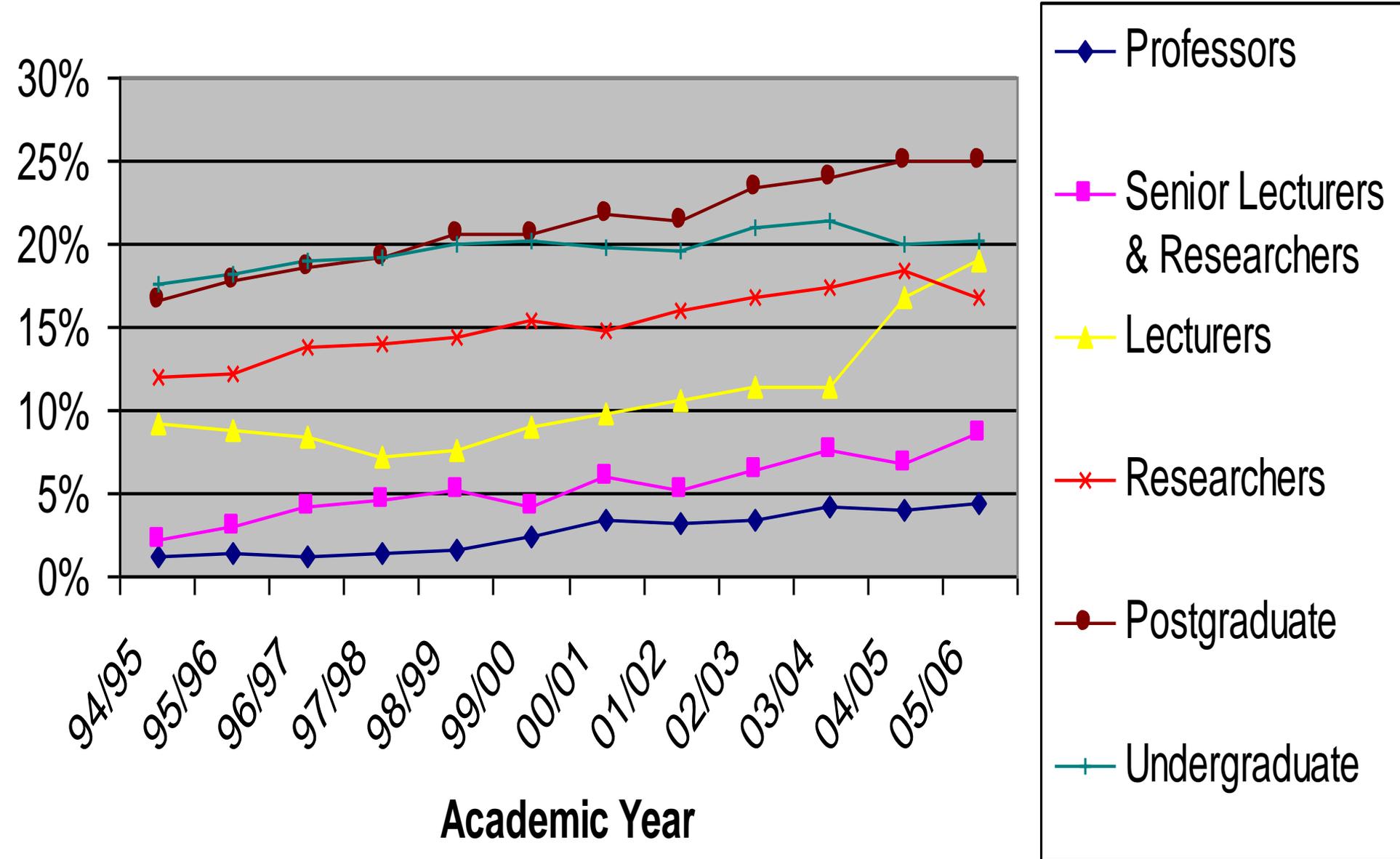
> Encourage people from all groups of society to take up research careers



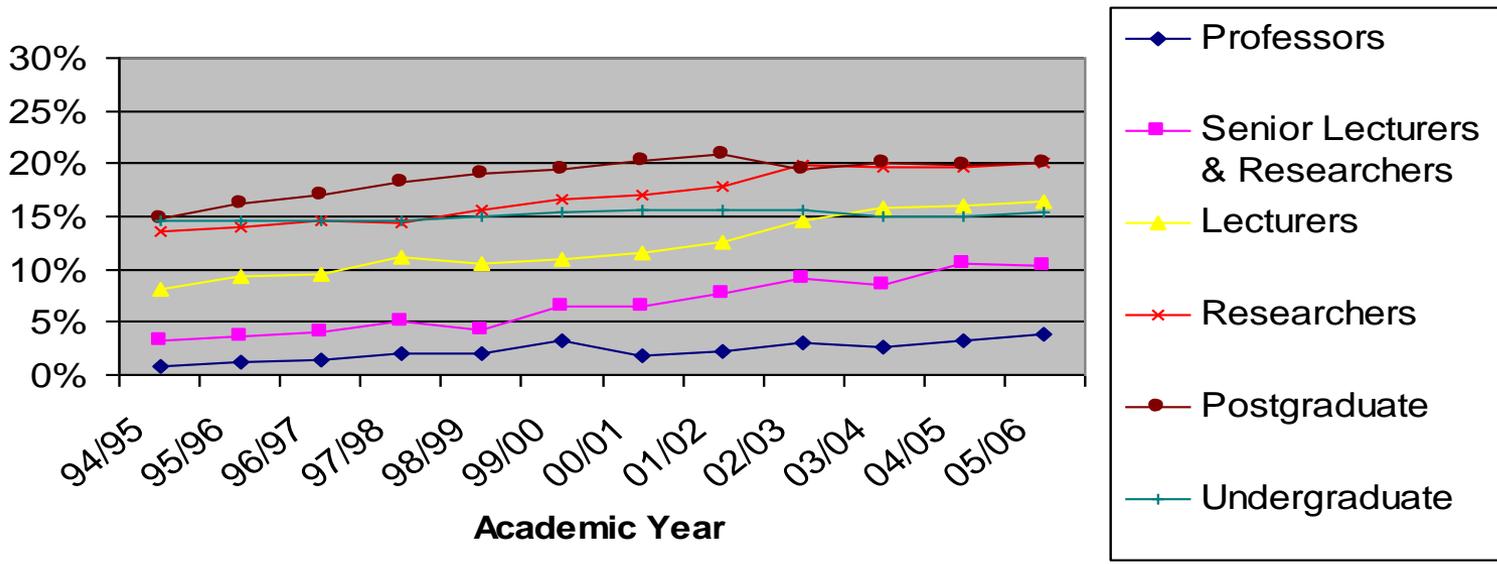
% Female Staff - Engineering



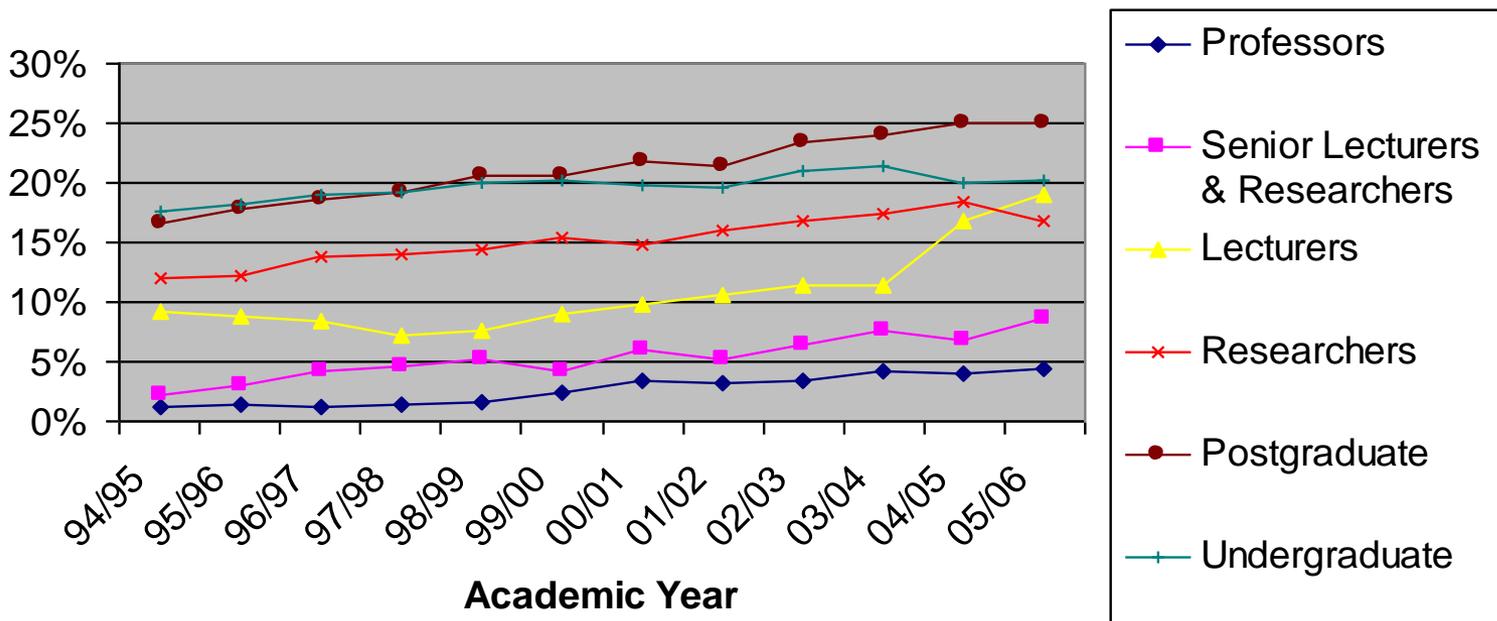
% Female Staff - Physics



% Female Staff - Engineering

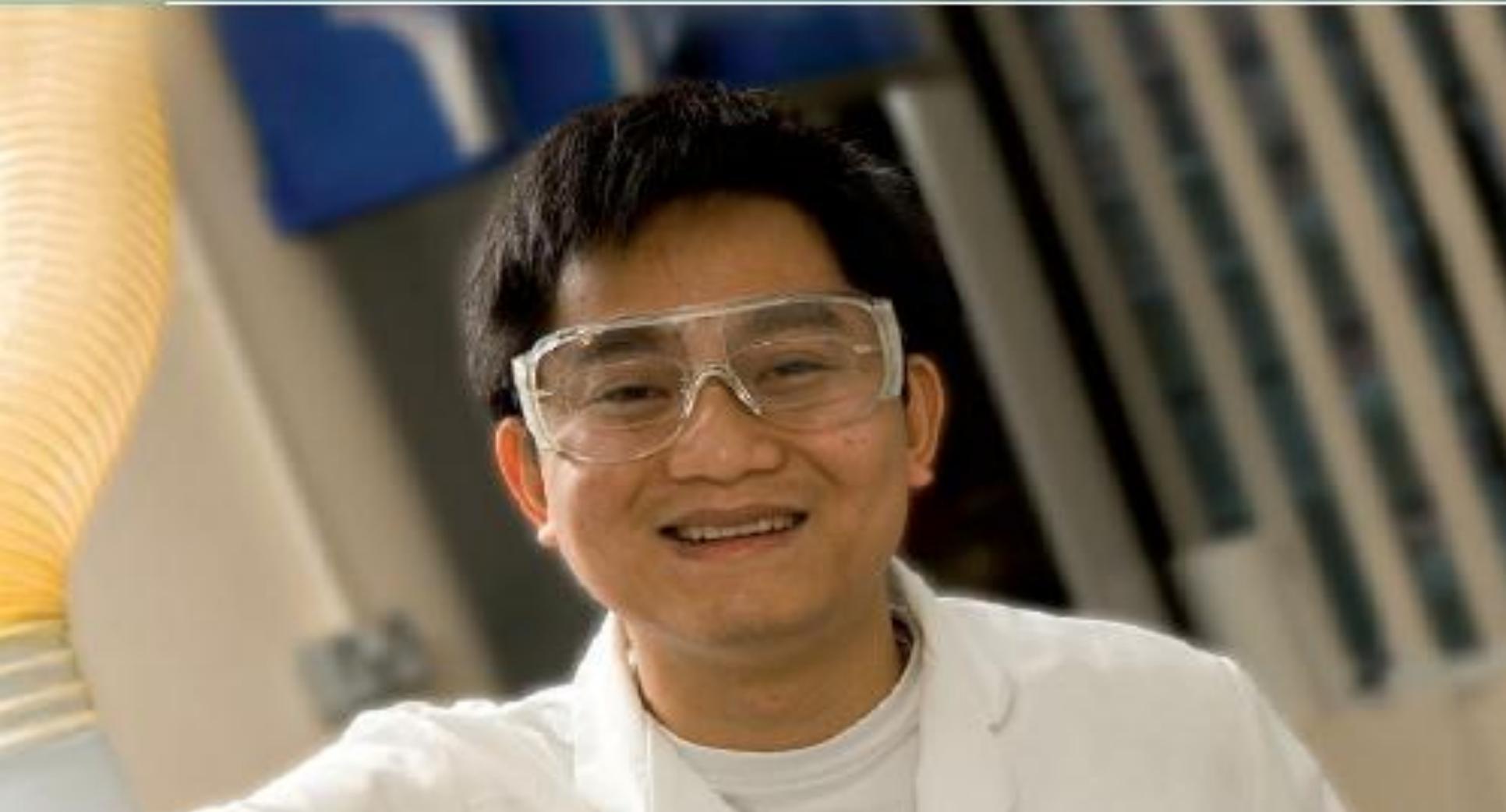


% Female Staff - Physics



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> Enhance the international reputation of UK research training



Aim 5: Enhance the international reputation of UK research training.

- Work with the sector to ensure that the views and needs of the UK research community are represented in European forums.
- Ensure that the UK incorporates the principles of the European Charter and Code for researchers into the revised Concordat for Research Careers so that the UK is seen to be fully engaged in the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area.
- Support and develop schemes that enhance the ability of the UK to attract the best researchers from abroad.
- Act on the findings of international reviews of disciplines in the UK HE sector.
- Learn lessons from other countries to enhance existing mechanisms used by Councils.

RCUK and Bologna

“The Councils’ interest has extended significantly since the Berlin ministerial summit identified research as an integral part of European HE and the doctoral level was incorporated as a third cycle within the Bologna Process.”

“...improving the status, career prospects and funding for early stage researchers are essential strengthen research capacity...”

London Bologna Summit 2007



Disciplinary Diversity in Doctorates

Research Council	Typical/dominant Higher Education Path
Arts, Humanities & Social sciences (AHRC and ESRC)	3-yr Bachelor's + 1-yr Masters + 3-yr PhD
Life sciences (BBSRC)	3-yr Bachelor's + 4-yr PhD
Environmental and Medical sciences (NERC and MRC)	Variable by HEI/discipline (MRC and NERC allow HEI discretion leading to longer than 3 year average PhD)
Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPSRC and PPARC)	4-yr integrated Bachelor's/master's + 3-4 year PhD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - STFC considering 4-year PhD; - EPSRC has 4- year EngD – PhD flexibility in DTAs)

RC's Bologna Concerns

- Masters degree as a necessary step to a PhD could have major funding implications
- Problem for the standing of UK doctorates if the entry level were perceived to be lower than rest of Europe
- Potential impact on mobility if students cannot progress directly from a UK Bachelor's degree to other European PhD

“The Councils perceive flexibility to be a strength of UK HE and do not support a single model of doctoral training in the UK...”

Status of UK doctoral candidates

- Typically students unlike some EU countries
- EC Marie-Curie funding now expects students to be employees
- Student status is not generally regarded as a disadvantage in the UK

“The UK HE sector believes it is important that doctoral candidates are treated as professionals but that their status is a matter for each country to decide”

Issues from the green paper

- Attractive careers and mobility are far from a reality
- Work is required at all levels (public and private)
- Voluntary approaches result in slow progress (e.g. European Charter and Code)
- Portability of social security
- Improving education and training of researchers

RCUK Research Careers Strategy

three main aims:



> Attract the most creative minds into research.



> Encourage researchers to get the training they need.



> Help research organisations manage their staff and develop their careers.

RCUK Research Careers Strategy

cross-cutting aims:



> Encourage people from all groups of society to take up research careers.



> Enhance the international reputation of UK research training.

Thank you for your attention!



RESEARCH CAREERS



A strategy for success
