Designation as a Principal Investigator (PI) in the Radcliffe Department of Medicine (RDM)

Criteria for becoming a PI in RDM[1]

A researcher will be eligible to be a designated as an RDM PI if they meet one of the following criteria:

- Holds an intermediate[2] level fellowship awarded in open competition from a major external funder;
- Holds significant funding in their own name, including as Co-Investigator, commensurate with their field of work and awarded in open competition from external funders;
- Has been awarded the title of University Research Lecturer (URL) or Associate Professor (AP) or holds a more senior appointment.

AND if they can demonstrate via their current CV that they have substantial independent achievements in research (publications and grant funding) and teaching (including supervision), **AND** make contributions to 'good citizenship' within RDM and/or the wider University[3].

Notes

1. NHS Consultants can become RDM PIs if they are awarded the title of Associate Professor.
2. The MRC Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine (MRC WIMM) uses the term Group Leader to recognise those PIs who lead independent groups of researchers within WIMM laboratories. Whereas WIMM Group Leaders will usually be RDM PIs, not all RDM PIs with in the WIMM are WIMM Group Leaders. The criteria and processes for designation as a WIMM Group Leader are set out in the policy document (MRC WIMM network access required to view) titled 'Designation as a Group Leader in the WIMM in the Radcliffe Department of Medicine'.

Anyone wishing to discuss their eligibility to become an RDM PI should contact the Head of Strategic Research Development (funding@rdm.ox.ac.uk) or their Head of Division in the first instance.

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[1] Previously agreed by RDM HoD and Division Heads in September 2020.

[2] Intermediate fellowships are defined as fellowships aimed at supporting researchers to start their independent research programme and group. Examples of intermediate fellowship schemes include, but are not limited to, UKRI Future Leader Fellowship, MRC Career Development Award (CDA), Wellcome CDA, CRUK Career Development Fellowship, BHF Intermediate Fellowship(s).

[3] Where the applicant has recently moved, or is about to move, from another department or organisation 'good citizenship' activities in their previous department or host organisation will be considered to meet this criteria.

What being a PI in RDM means

1. An RDM PI is considered by the Department to meet the "lecturer level or equivalent" eligibility requirement needed to apply for some external sources of funding and will be able to apply to these funding opportunities as the Principal Investigator/Lead applicant, subject to having a suitable contract of employment.
2. An RDM PI will have an independent programme of research that may involve them supervising DPhil students and line managing research staff (research assistants/technicians, postdoctoral researchers etc).
3. An RDM PI is expected to have secured and continue to secure external funding to support their research.
4. An RDM PI may advertise project proposals for DPhil students as part of the Department's process for the direct entry DPhil programme, subject to them meeting the eligibility criteria set out in the MSD Code of Practice for Supervisors including the requirement that they have an appropriate contract of employment to the completion of the student's studies, have sufficient time to supervise students and have completed the DPhil supervisor at Oxford course.
5. An RDM PI may be a supervisor of graduate students from the Department's direct entry DPhil programme (DPhil in Medical Sciences), from Oxford-wide DPhil programmes and other graduate student programmes in accordance with the Code of Practice for Supervisors.

What an RDM PI can expect from the Department

6. Assigned desk space, in accordance with the allocation of desk space by the Division in which they are based. NHS Consultants who are RDM PIs may not be provided with additional desk space.
7. Appropriate bench space for their research will be assigned to them, if required, by the Division in which they are based.
8. Access to shared facilities and infrastructure in accordance with the usual procedures.
9. Administrative support through the Finance/Grant and Human Resources teams in their Division, to support submission of grant applications and enable effective grant management, and for recruitment of staff and advice on HR issues.
10. An RDM PI will be listed in the PI section of the RDM website and can have their own research group page on the website.
11. A regular progress review with their Head of Division, or designate, to discuss their progress, objectives and career development needs.
12. An RDM PI will be supported by the Department to apply for suitable University titles (Associate Professor or Full Professor) when they are deemed to meet the required criteria. Advice on this process can be sought from their Head of Division or the Head of Strategic Research Development.

What the Department expects from RDM PIs

13. Complete a mandatory programme of training within six months of being awarded RDM PI status, see annex 1.

14. Maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of their research and to ensure that those they line manage and supervise also uphold these standards in accordance with the University of Oxford's Code of Practice and procedures on academic integrity in research.

15. Interact with colleagues and carry out research in a safe, respectful and considerate manner in accordance with University and Departmental values and rules on safety and general conduct in the workplace.

16. Support the continuing professional development (CPD) of students and staff working in their group including the commitment for students and research staff to undertake a minimum of 10 days CPD (pro rata) per year

17. Ensure that students that they are supervising develop the research skills, transferable skills and understanding of career options that they will need to progress in their careers in accordance with the MSD Code of Practice.

18. Have regular 1:1s with staff and students in their group and provide research staff with an annual Career Development Review/Professional Development review to discuss their progress, objectives and career development needs.

19. Promote and role model the values of equality, diversity and inclusion in their research group.

20. Take practical steps to promote environmental sustainability in their laboratory and gain sustainability accreditation through the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework.

21. Put in place a handbook for their research group (Lab handbook) setting out expectations, laboratory policies, modes of communication and practical information about how the group works, reviewing and updating at appropriate intervals.

22. Contribute to departmental activities such as internal peer review activity, membership of panels, committees and working groups and take on leadership roles appropriate to their career stage.

23. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of staff, students, and other persons within their area of responsibility; and of anyone else who might be affected by their work activities.

Mentoring

24. RDM PIs are strongly encouraged to identify a suitable mentor to support them. RDM has a mentoring scheme where suitable mentors can be identified.

Process for designation as a PI in RDM

1. RDM will operate an annual call (usually opening in December/January) inviting suitably qualified researchers to apply for RDM PI status. The applications will be reviewed by

RDM's [Academic Career Panel](#) which will make recommendations to RDM's Senior leadership Team.

2. An application for RDM PI status should include:
    a. a one-page cover letter from the applicant setting out how the criteria to become an RDM PI are met covering achievements in research, teaching and 'good citizenship' in RDM and the wider University[2],
    b. a completed application form
    c. an up-to-date CV
    d. A letter from their current supervisor, or other appropriate senior academic within the department, highlighting the applicant's specific contributions to research outputs and grants and contributions to teaching and citizenship activities within the department and/or University
3. Applicants can apply for RDM PI status, without applying for the title of AP.
4. In exceptional circumstances, the panel will have discretion to make decisions on conferring RDM PI status outside this annual round: the same criteria and panel membership will apply.
5. If RDM PI status is granted, the new PI will be provided with a letter from the Head of Department and their RDM Head of Division setting out the role description, expectations and the training programme.
6. If the application is unsuccessful the applicant will be provided with feedback on how their application could be improved. Unsuccessful applicants can reapply the following year.

Process for changing RDM PI status

1. RDM PI designation will be reviewed in the following situations:
    a. An RDM PI leaves, or their formal affiliation with the Department ceases, they retire, or their job role changes such that RDM PI status may no longer be appropriate, or there is evidence that the expectations set out in this document are not being met.
2. Key consideration in determining a change of status include:
    a. Whether a current RDM PI continues to run an independent programme of research and bring in external grant funding such they would be considered research active.
    b. The status of their formal affiliation with the Department and the appropriateness of them being able to apply for external grant funding through the Department, or propose DPhil student projects for the RDM direct entry DPhil programme.
3. Re-conferral of RDM PI status may be possible if circumstances change. Reconferral would be considered through the normal annual application round and process described above.

Version control

Version	Action	Author	Approved
V1.0	Policy created		RDM's SLT Feb 2023
V2.0	Clarification that good citizenship activities in other departments, or organisations, will be considered if the candidate is about to move, or has recently, moved to RDM. The Academic Career Progression Panel will be responsible for reviewing applications and making recommendations to RDM's Senior Leadership Team.	Sarah Ball, Head of Strategic Research Development	RDM SLT 11/12/23
V3.0	Modifications to the guidelines, addition of the change of status process and training programme	Sarah Ball, Head of Strategic Research Development	RDM SLT 12/08/2024
V4.0	Revised to reflect the updated research practice training provisions from the university	Jessica Bassett, Research Facilitator	N/A
V5.0	Updates to links following move to OxIntranet plus inclusion of H&S responsibilities of supervisors	Jessica Bassett, Research Facilitator	RDM SLT 18/11/2025

Review cycle

The guidelines will be reviewed by the Academic Career Panel once every two years, unless changes are required more frequently.

RDM Principal Investigator Training Log

Mandatory modules that must be completed by all RDM Principal Investigators (PI)

Course Title	Course information
Integrity and ethics training	Either the core course or the refresher course if you have already completed the core course Integrity and ethics training	Research Support (OxIntranet)
Bullying and harassment training for employees	An e-learning module for staff to improve knowledge of Bullying and Harassment and effective ways to tackle it Harassment training	Equality and Diversity Unit (ox.ac.uk)
Equality and Diversity briefing	An introduction to what equality and diversity mean and why they are important both to the University and you as an individual. Equality and diversity briefing (eLearning course) (ox.ac.uk)
Information security and data privacy awareness	Information security and data privacy training course	Information Security (ox.ac.uk)
Implicit bias in the workplace	Training & mentoring	Equality and Diversity Unit (ox.ac.uk)
Action Counters Terrorism	Action Counters Terrorism (eLearning course) (ox.ac.uk)
Health and Safety	Training	Safety Office (OxIntranet) Either induction training or on-going training. Supervisors and line-mangers should review the competency framework and undertake relevant role related training.
DPhil Supervision at Oxford	Oxford-specific online courses in Canvas	Centre for Teaching and Learning This course must be completed before you can begin to supervise DPhil students.

Essential courses that all RDM PIs are strongly encouraged to complete

Course Title	Course information
The confident manager	Essentials of people management in research https://pod.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-confident-manager#/
Recruitment training	Recruitment and selection for Chairs of interview panels and interview panel members People Managers' Toolkit	Recruitment (OxIntranet) RDM also provides training which is advertised via email.
Avoiding plagiarism	Integrity and ethics training	Research Support (OxIntranet) See supplementary modules – avoiding plagiarism
Conflicts of interest	Conflicts of Interest: Identifying interests and making declarations Conflict of Interest Training	Compliance (ox.ac.uk)

Definition of a PI in RDM (November 2025)

	Integrity and ethics training | Research Support (OxIntranet)
	See supplementary modules – conflicts of interest
Export controls	Export controls and research collaborations | Research Support (ox.ac.uk)
	Integrity and ethics training | Research Support (OxIntranet)
	See supplementary modules – export controls
Open scholarship: fundamentals of open access	Training is available to book via Open access at Oxford University | Open Access Oxford

Additional modules which should be completed if they are relevant to the RDM PI's research

Course title	Course information
Research involving human participants	Integrity and ethics training | Research Support (OxIntranet) Supplementary modules – research involving human participants
Research involving the use of animals	Integrity and ethics training | Research Support (OxIntranet) Supplementary modules – research involving the use of animals
Intellectual property	Integrity and ethics training | Research Support (OxIntranet) Supplementary modules – intellectual property
HRA and ethics submissions	HRA and ethics submissions training | Research Support (OxIntranet)
Human Tissue Act	Training requirements for the Human Tissue Act 2004 | Research Support (OxIntranet)
Good clinical practice and good clinical research practice	Training for clinical researchers | Research Support (OxIntranet)

RDM PIs should review the research practice guidance, via the link below, for further information, links and advice on steps that they may need to take during each part of their research process to support the highest standard of research practice. Alongside the guidance are a variety of useful research practice training modules which complement the mandatory introductory research integrity training linked in the table above.

Research Practice | Research Support (ox.ac.uk)