

Research Staff Representatives Charter

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Welcome to the Research Staff Reps at the University of Bristol!

We represent the research community with an informed voice, influencing University policy and decision-making to improve researchers' working environment, development, and wellbeing.

Why be a rep?

- Be part of positive change: open-ended contracts for most researchers came about as a result of work by the Reps Committee.
- Develop your skills and career: taking on more involved roles as a rep gives you experience and insight into policy and governance right the way up to University management.
- Promotion criteria: being a rep could supply supporting evidence demonstrating readiness for promotion (e.g. under leadership or creating a positive working environment).
- Getting to know people: being a rep allows you to interact with researchers, academics and senior management from across the University.

Who do we represent?

The Reps Committee serves the research community employed on Pathway 2 contracts. Although there is some overlap with issues experienced by Pathway 1 (Research and Teaching) and Pathway 3 (Teaching only) staff, the reps committee approaches problems from the unique perspective of researchers who are predominantly on open-ended contracts with fixed-term funding. In practice, most of the staff we represent are "early-career" researchers (approximately 75% of Pathway 2 staff are either Research Associates or Senior Research Associates).

Role description

Reps are expected to engage with researchers within their School, be a visible and active member of the community and engage with School management to represent the views and issues of their research community. Individual reps may take on leadership roles for issues they have a particular interest in.

Things we do

- Act as a point of contact for research staff, facilitating communication
- Engage with research staff to solicit views and opinions (some reps have found organising social events to be an effective means of engaging with staff)
- Meet with other reps from across the University to share issues and best practices
- Keep informed about University matters that affect researchers
- Attend School management and research committees

Things we do not do

- Advise on employment matters
- Represent individuals
- Administration on behalf of Schools

P2 staff with queries that fall outside the scope of the rep's role should be directed to an appropriate source of information, which might include line management, HR or a union.

Co-chair role

The committee is led by a [small number of co-chairs](#), who are responsible for

- Chairing reps committee meetings
- Attending Research Staff Working Group meetings to feed in key information and issues
- Attending other relevant meetings (such as the Research Culture Committee meeting)
- Liaising with Bristol Clear
- Updating Terms of Reference and Charter annually
- Write and submit an annual report to the Research Culture Committee annually

Research staff representation structure

Across the University, each School has one or more reps who take responsibility at a local level. All reps form part of the Research Staff Representatives Committee (the 'reps committee'). Issues raised at the reps committee are passed to the Research Staff Working Group (RSWG), which is chaired by RSWG members. Members of the RSWG comprise the Reps co-chairs, Concordat Champion chairs, People Development team and the Research Culture Team, other representatives may include the APVC for Research Culture and Environment, HR representatives and Finance representatives. The RSWG facilitates researcher input to policy and decision-making and direct communication of new policy and information to researchers. In turn, the Working Group may take issues to the Research Culture Committee and/or the University Research Committee (chaired by the PVC-Research and Enterprise and attended by senior management and faculty research directors).

[Research Culture Governance](#)



Find out about the committees here:

- [Research Staff Reps Committee](#)
- [Research Staff Working Group](#)
- [Research Culture Committee](#)
- [University Research Committee](#)

Relationships

Head of School, Concordat Champions & School Research Director: Research reps provide a voice for researchers and should have **access to School Committees and meetings**. Reps are encouraged to meet regularly with School management and [Concordat Champions](#) to provide researcher input to School matters.

Bristol Clear: [Bristol Clear](#) provide professional and personal development for academic research staff. They also provide a small amount of admin support to the reps committee. Bristol Clear work closely with the reps committee and co-chairs to create content that will improve career development opportunities for research staff.

Other reps: Interacting with other reps will allow us to work more effectively and efficiently on the issues relevant to researchers. Reps are encouraged to set up semi-regular meetings with other reps in their school.

Communication

- Each month, Bristol Clear sends a welcome email to all new P2 staff, including information about the Reps and how new staff can contact you. Bristol Clear also circulates a list of new P2 staff to the researcher reps. You can use this list to find out new starters in your School and make yourself known to them.
- Once you become a Rep, you will be added to the Reps Committee Microsoft Teams Group: grp-researchreps@groups.bristol.ac.uk. Documentation, including a list of all P2 staff, reps list and key documents, is stored in the group's files section.
- Microsoft Teams also hosts a Teams chat function that can be used to discuss issues among the reps – remember to turn notifications on for this channel, to ensure you can keep up to date with messages.
- The UoB webpage hosts information about [Bristol Clear, Researcher Reps, Concordat Champions and the Researcher Development Concordat](#).

Starting as a rep

You will have received this document because you have been approached to become, or expressed an interest in becoming, a rep. [Existing reps in your School](#) will be able to help you get up to speed with ongoing projects/campaigns.

Once you have decided to become a rep, please **make yourself known** to the [co-chairs](#) and the Bristol Clear admin team (bristol-clear@bristol.ac.uk), who will add you to the Teams group as well as the [Reps Sharepoint page](#).

You will find a lot of information on Teams – dive in and familiarise yourself with what has happened to date. If you have any questions, feel free to approach one of the [co-chairs or a fellow rep](#).

Stepping down

If you are stepping down as a representative, please inform the co-chairs and Bristol Clear admin team. Please also do your best to identify a possible replacement and act as a point of reference.