



**UNIVERSITY OF  
LIMERICK**  
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

# Research Contract Management Policy

<b>Document Version</b>	Version 1
<b>Document Owner</b>	Human Resources
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date</b>	19 October 2022
<b>Approved by</b>	Finance, HR & Asset Management Committee
<b>Date</b>	07 November 2022
<b>Consulted with</b>	Unite
<b>Date</b>	07 June 2023
<b>Approved by</b>	People & Culture Committee
<b>Date</b>	20 September 2024
<b>Approved by</b>	Governing Authority
<b>Date</b>	24 September 2024
<b>Effective Date:</b>	24 September 2024
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	24 September 2029

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the policy document is to set out the University of Limerick's approach to the management of research contracts of employment.

## 1.2 Scope

### 1.2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

This policy applies to the employment of research staff within the University of Limerick.

### 1.2.2 In what situations does the policy apply?

This policy applies to all research staff employed on The University of Limerick Researcher Career Development & Employment Framework by the University of Limerick.

### 1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

It is the responsibility of the Director, Human Resources Division to ensure implementation of this Policy as approved, with the relevant Principal Investigator /Head of Department/School / Dean / Divisional Director playing a key procedural role.

# 2 Context

## 2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

The Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003 applies to employees employed on fixed-term contracts. The Act provides that fixed-term employees cannot be treated less favourable than comparable permanent employees unless the employer can objectively justify the different treatment.

The Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2015 contains a provision aimed at ensuring that successive temporary contracts are not used in order to avoid that legislation.

## **2.2 Other Context**

This policy aligns with the National Research Careers and Development Employment Framework.

# **3 Policy Statements**

## **3.1 Principles for Research Contract Management**

The University of Limerick values its research staff and their contribution to the University. A key principal of this policy is that a contract of employment should be issued for the longest possible duration relative to the organisational research requirements. Ensuring that research contracts of employment are of the longest possible duration provides the researcher with as much security of employment as possible and ensures that the University of Limerick is in the best position to attract excellent researchers to the University of Limerick.

# **4. Procedures for Management of Research Contracts of Employment**

**4.1** It is University policy to offer as much security of employment as possible and to ensure that the optimum duration of contract is determined at the outset relative to the actual need and/ or the term of the research project. The University will also offer as much clarity as possible in relation to contract status to the researcher, in as timely a manner as possible.

**4.2** Appointments to research contracts of employment will be to fixed term contracts which are normally non-renewable or specified purpose contracts which cease upon completion of the specified purpose.

**4.3** Fixed-term contracts (specifying the cessation date) will only be used for researchers where the cessation date can be precisely determined at the outset.

**4.4** Where it is not possible to determine the exact length of time for which the researcher will be employed at the initial appointment stage, the University will issue the employee with a specified purpose contract. This contract will clearly stipulate the specific purpose for which the staff member is employed and the specific event which will bring about the contract's termination.

**4.5** As researcher appointments are offered on a fixed term /specified purpose basis, in accordance with Irish law, the reason why appointment is not being offered on a permanent basis will be stated in the contract of employment.

- 4.6** Roles at post-doctoral researcher levels are defined as professional development roles and as such their employment will have dual goals, in terms of the completion of the research project and the professional development of the researcher. Professional development will be completed within the period of the contract, which is issued and is supported via the University of Limerick Researcher Career Development Programme. It is a legitimate aim of the University of Limerick to provide post-doctoral researchers training opportunities, which are for a fixed duration. This allows for the progression over many years of research staff through these training posts.
- 4.7** Noting the University policy objectives to provide intergenerational training in the methods and practice of research and scholarship to post-doctoral researchers and to ensure Open Transparent and Merit based Recruitment (O-TMR), the University aims for the requisite professional development activities to be completed within the period of the contract, which is issued. The researcher's professional development will be supported via the University of Limerick Research Career Development Programme. The Researcher Career Development Programme assists the researcher in planning their career and identifying their individual training needs together with their PI, supporting the researcher to select relevant training modules from the Researcher Development Programme.
- 4.8** The recruitment process for research posts will take place under the relevant University of Limerick recruitment policy and procedures.
- 4.9** Researcher terms and conditions will be standardised in accordance with the level of the position in the researcher salary and grading structure.
- 4.10** Certain additional or supervening terms and conditions may apply to employment contracts based on the requirements of certain funders e.g. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Fellowships.
- 4.11** Research Projects which specify a secondment for the researcher as part of project requirements will be given a secondment agreement in accordance with the University of Limerick Secondment policy.
- 4.12** Contract renewals/extensions may only be sought in certain limited exceptional circumstances. The type of circumstances where a contract renewal/extension may be approved would relate to the research task purposes of the position, such as e.g. where a no cost extension has been received and the project/specified purpose continues.

## 5 Related Documents

*Policy for the Recruitment of Staff*

*Procedure for the Open, Transparent & Merit Based Recruitment of Researchers  
(OTM-R)*

*University of Limerick Research Career Development Programme*

*The University of Limerick Researcher Career Development & Employment  
Framework*

*Research Staff Role Profiles*

*Secondment Policy*