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Postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers often forgo professional training because they feel unsupported by supervisors and principal investigators in taking it. The University of York's Research Leaders programme seeks to address this by targeting managers directly.

The programme, which includes modules and workshops as well as "360 degree" feedback from all participants' colleagues, familiarises line managers with the importance of career development and support materials available in an effort to make them more supportive of early career researchers. Elements of existing leadership initiatives are brought together so that managers up to a professional level can see the need for professional development in the wider context.

Feedback suggests that the programme has improved both leadership skills and researchers' engagement with support services. Every participant reported feeling better equipped to develop the transferable and career skills of researchers. All agreed that the scheme had made them more aware of national structures such as the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

"York has build on existing resources to create a programme for emerging research leaders that is changing the way principal investigators understand and engage with their teams in terms of leadership and management," said judge Janet Metcalfe, who is chair and head of Vitae, the body that promotes career development among research students and staff.