

# Meeting notes & action points

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**Title:** The Career Development of Researchers Working Group - CDR WG

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**From:** Dr Julie Reeves

**Date:** 29 October 2015 meeting  
Senate room 37/4049

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Attendees: Chair - Professor Mandy Fader; Dr Tania Alcantarilla, Ms Eleanora Gandolfi, Professor Dan Hewak, Dr Anna Hickman, Professor Lindy Holden-Dye, Dr Emma Lofthouse, Mr Alex Melhuish, Dr Cheryl Metcalf, Ms Karen Proctor, Dr Emiliano Rustighi, Dr Julie Reeves, Dr Fiona Woollard.,

Apologies: Professor George Attard, Professor Dan Bader, Dr David Cleary, Professor Hugh Davies, Dr Matt Garner, Dr Vadim Grinevich, Dr Roeland de Kat, Dr Lynn Lansbury , Dr Jens Madsen, Ms Kamaljit Kerridge-Poonia, Dr Ash Pringle.

## Meeting notes:

1) **Welcomes & Thanks:** The group wished to extend special thanks to thank Ms Jo Nesbitt for her contribution to the CDR WG.

2) **Outstanding action points** from the meeting on 08 July 2015 were reviewed and discussed as follows:

- 2 & 3: Appraisal system – it was confirmed that the appraisal form can be saved and printed. There is more training being provided for appraisers, but there isn't any training on the system, although FoS can support staff. Request for 'aid memoir' for PIs. Some concern expressed over restricted access to 'boxes' for research staff and that the mentoring link does not work. See new Action Points 1, 2 and 3.
  - The group were reminded to 'save' appraisal information regularly as the system times out.
- 4: Permanency – HR advice and policy is not of practical help, there is a need for a 'how to...' guide for Faculties and PIs. Faculty of Health Sciences are working on such a guide (the Assistant Director of HR is aware of this and interested too) and will bring to the group. See Action Point 4.

Noted: The 'how to' move between career pathways was unclear and needed better signposting. This would be included in the 2020 Action Plan.

- 5.4: Bridging funds and Athena SWAN – there is no reference to bridging funds in the Athena SWAN submissions. There is information on maternity/paternity leave funding. This is all a very local arrangement and we do not have a University level policy on it.
- 5.5: The HR Managers would not be wholly familiar with local policies and variation in practice. The CDR WG need to find other ways of capturing information.
- 5.6: FTC and the right to permanency test case (Dr Ball vs University of Aberdeen 2008), and more recently, on redundancy Stirling University vs. UCU). It was noted that the Trades Unions were keen to pursue this agenda at Southampton. We wait to see how the new VC responds. In the meantime, we need to manage the risks and have a clear and robust system in place, so everyone understands how to manage fixed term contract staff and when and how to move them onto open contracts (see Action Point 4).
  - Eleanora raised the question of support for international staff. Noted, that visa's require more than £29,000 in salary, which could impact on international representation. The group was reminded by Karen that we should only employ the best person for the job, that there were set salaries bands for roles, and everything must comply with UK law.

- 6: The Faculty of Health Sciences was still working on the Professional Development Programme document and Cheryl would bring to the group for discussion when complete. See Action Point 5 below.
- 7: The Faculty of Medicine were reminded to share the 'careers roadmap' (and did so).
- All other actions were closed.

### 3) Concordat implementation plan update

Julie reported that the original 2011 Action Plan had been reviewed and that a new Action Plan for 2020 would need to be produced. Some ideas had already emerged from Research Staff directly (i.e. CPD project and better advice on maternity and paternity leave), from the CDR WG, and the Provosts' open meeting. Mandy reported that the draft document would be sent to REAG for discussion when ready. The key challenge was acknowledged to lay with rolling things out; it was agreed that the Associate Deans -Research could be very useful in this respect.

The group then discussed their vision for 2020 and suggested the following:

- Empowering and connecting postdocs - so they feel part of the University of Southampton
- Valued, engaged and connected - we should be empowering and encouraging - 'they are the life blood of the University'
- Enable them to take charge of their careers - to plan their careers
- Know what opportunities are available to them
- Be supported - financially and in terms of development
- Feel 'at home' - to understand how things work, be involved in the processes that affect them, be represented, be included.
- Look at how we offer guidance; look at our committees (See Action Point 6), where can we engage researchers better? Link to RIS.
- Look at careers support - get employers in (SoNG and Medicine do this), run Fairs similar to UGs, ask employers 'what does your grad scheme do? What do you offer postdocs?' etc. An 'employability module' (a bit like PGCAP for researchers) could be useful if pulled all of the transferable skills together and pitched at right level. Time is critical - should be a short course, and not compulsory.
- Better information on careers in academia and on fellowships, using research to create impact and enterprise. PVC Research wants to understand the cohort better - drill into the career pathway.
- Need for data on cohort - how many leave, how many do we retain and turn into permanent posts (See Action point 7).

Julie to pull all ideas together for 2020 Action Plan - see Action Point 8.

## 4 & 5) Faculty, Research Staff, Union and Professional Services reports

### 4a. Faculty of Business and Law - n/a

### 4b. Faculty of Engineering and the Environment

Emiliano reported that the researchers in the Faculty were continuing their programme of seminars on topics significant to them. The Faculty policy on teaching was 10% and applied to everyone, but not everyone was expected to do teaching. Research staff would still need to agree this and also there was the problem of training i.e. access to ILTeR (Julie reported some progress had been made on ILTeR but there was insufficient capacity to deliver it currently; minded to include it in 2020 Action Plan).

The Dean had reminded ECRs that they could apply for promotion (Karen to send email to Mandy).

Emiliano reported that the Faculty was reviewing their Concordat action plan.

### 4c. Faculty of Health Sciences

Cheryl reported that the Faculty plan had been reviewed and will send the updated plan through. The Faculty have initiated fixed term staff 'drop-ins'. The Athena SWAN agenda has now become the Equality and Diversity action group and the fixed term contract staff issues will sit under the new action group.

It was reported that there had been some work in the Faculty on enabling Research staff to move into Education and vice versa. It was recognised by the CDR WG that the question of how to move between pathways, especially from Research and Teaching only onto a mixed pathway, was becoming a pressing issue. Cheryl indicated that this would be explored in the Faculty 'Professional Development Programme guide' and that the Faculty had produced information and guidance on Fellowships - see Action points 4 and 5 below.

#### **4d. Faculty of Humanities**

Fiona reported that Lee Walters had been very active, i.e. had put on lunchtime sessions, had spoken with the Dean and had got funding earmarked for ECRs. Fiona was still sorting out the mailing list and was planning on doing similar activities to last year, e.g. she was organising a social event. Fiona was continuing her 1-2-1s with staff and capturing their concerns to build up a picture of the Faculty. There were some outstanding issues and Fiona agreed that departments really needed handbooks on 'how to do...things', especially for when ECRs arrive. The Faculty now had ECR champions on a number of committees.

Fiona was revising the Faculty plan in the light of key issues.

#### **4e. Faculty of Medicine**

Emma reported that the Faculty was exploring the question: 'what can we do to improve where ECRs start from'. The Faculty was reviewing the transferable skills programme and Matt Coleman was looking at what was popular and useful on the programme, this also included looking at research integrity and the different needs of researchers in this area.

Appraisal - it was recognised in the Faculty that what an individual researcher could obtain from the appraisal process involved the question of how supportive the PI was. Following on from the Faculty survey on appraisal, this would be the next area to be tackled.

Mentoring scheme - it was reported that mentors were being assigned for maternity and paternity mentoring. This was noted as an interesting development by the group.

#### **4f. Faculty of Natural and Environmental Sciences**

Lindy reported that the Faculty still has a strong steering group and that the membership had just been revised. Each Academic Unit was represented and there was a good mix of ECRs on the group.

The strategy went to FEG in July and there had been a special emphasis on appraisal and induction. The Dean had asked for a distillation of the plan for next year. Induction was a key area of action, and regrading appraisal, although there had been considerable progress in the uptake of appraisal by staff, the experience remained mixed with some still not finding it useful. This had confirmed the need to focus on PI training in the Faculty, and Lindy would talk to PIs about appraisal process and how useful it is. It was recognised that the new appraisal process had largely been designed for academics and not postdocs.

The award of the Dean's Prize and reception would be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **4g. Faculty of Physical Sciences and the Environment - no report**

#### **4h. Faculty of Social and Human Sciences - no report**

#### **4i. Research Staff representatives - nothing to add**

#### **5a. UCU - no report**

#### **5b. Equality and Diversity**

Alex reported that changes to the E&D team and the group congratulated him on becoming the Athena SWAN Advisor. He reported that the Faculty of Medicine had achieved their Silver SWAN - and the group congratulated the Faculty on the achievement - and that other Academic Units would be submitting for the Silver award in November and April.

Governance of the process would change with the departure of Jessica Corner; the VC would now Champion diversity and Nyovani Madise was the new diversity sponsor. The University was developing a proper structure of committees, with a top level one working with Faculty committees.

#### **5c. HR - Karen had nothing more to report**

#### **5d. International Office**

Eleonora reported that interviews were underway for Jo Nesbitt's replacement. The International Office was promoting the WUN and the opportunities it offers to ECRs. Eleonora pointed out that we need to make ECRs aware, not only of the WUN itself, but also of how ECRs can progress through the network to enhance their careers and CVs i.e. one ECR got a small pot of money and then more.

RENKEI - this is a UK, Japanese academic and industry collaborative network that the University of Southampton is a member of. We are looking to promote RENKEI and its opportunities to ECRs as well as PGRs. See link for details:

<https://www.britishcouncil.jp/en/programmes/higher-education/university-industry-partnership/renkei>

QSAT and Legal are working on a database of international business. There is an international development insurance project to ensure that when staff travel they are on the right visa's etc.

The Provost of Penn State had recently visited the University and expressed an interest in staff exchanges, which could provide our ECRs with an opportunity to teach there.

**5e. PD-ILlaD** Julie reported that the ECR programme had been completed for 2015-16, but additional courses would be added if demand was exceptionally high.

## 6. AOB

**CROS** – Tanis reported that there would be a briefing session on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, and that all information was to be posted on a website and that a video would be available too. [Correction – the video was made but, unfortunately, was not of sufficient quality to be made available]

**Careers Service** – it was confirmed that research staff still had access to the Careers Service and career coaching (20 mins) via the drop-in sessions and 1-2-1s with Rob Wood via the referral process.

**NEXT MEETING:** There would be a special meeting 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to consider and refine the submission documents for the review of the 'HR Excellence in Research Award.'

Actions	To be completed by	Person(s) responsible	Status
1) HR asked to produce a 'checklist' for researchers and an 'aid memoir' for appraisers for appraisal process on what kinds of things they can do.	On-going	Karen	Out-standing (not pursued for the time being)
2) HR asked to look into the format of appraisal for research staff so they can record all of their achievements.	Next meeting	Karen – Julie also to raise with HR	DONE – Sarah Hollowbread was looking into. Karen to report
3) Mentoring link does not work – inform Pam Morgan	Next meeting	Julie	DONE
4) Faculty of Health Sciences to share with the CDR WG: a. 'Permanency guide' when complete b. Fellowship support guidance	When available	Mandy	Mandy to report on status of documents
5) Cheryl to share Postdoc Development Programme document when available	Ongoing	Cheryl	IN-HAND. Cheryl to update
6) Compile list of committees for CDR WG to identify ones we should target for research staff membership	By next meeting	Julie to liaise with Building 37 staff and HoFOs	OUT-STANDING
7) HR to provide data on leavers on a monthly basis and for annual rate of turnover.	Ongoing	HR	MOVED TO 2020 ACTION PLAN
8) Produce statement and 2020 Action Plan	By January 2016	Julie to complete draft for University consultation and for CDR WG Special Meeting.	DONE – SUBMITTED 29 January 2016

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