

Meeting notes & action points

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

From: Dr Julie Reeves

Date: 30 June 2016 meeting

Building 37, room 4051 (VCs Boardroom)

Attendees: Chair - Professor Mandy Fader; Dr Tania Alcantarilla, , Dr Roeland de Kat, Huw Fryer, Eleonora Gandolfi, Dr Matt Garner, Dr Vadim Grinevich, Dr Anna Hickman, Professor Lindy Holden-Dye, Dr Julie Reeves, Dr Fiona Woollard.

Apologies: Professor George Attard, Dr David Cleary, Dr Lisa Gould, Dr Jens Madsen, Karen Proctor, Professor Dan Hewak, Dr Emma Lofthouse, Alex Melhuish, Dr Cheryl Metcalf, Dr Emiliano Rustighi, Mr Rob Wood.

Meeting notes:

Introductions & Welcomes: The group welcomed Angela Harrison for Karen, and Huw Fryer as the new UCU representative

1) Actions from previous meeting on 29 October 2015 were reviewed and discussed as follows:

- 1: Appraisal system – It was still felt that as people were not used to the new system that a document on tips for postdocs and line managers would be useful. Some sections were clear but others less so, guidance on use of ‘free text’ would also be helpful. The group agreed that training on appraisals could be better and that HR would be advised of this.
- 2: Permanency document. This had opened a can of worms, however the document would focus on the limitations and benefits and the process. Greater transparency of the process was required and presented in a way that is easy to understand. There was a financial risk to the Faculty of Health Sciences, but the broader question of what Faculties need to be put in place was raised. Mandy to take to UEB to agree it as a University wide system.
 - There was a discussion about different kinds of funding and which routes could be pursued depending on the type of funding. Angela confirmed that it did not affect international visa applications. Everyone agreed that the HR database was not reliable and needed to be checked at Faculty level. The research community was not adequately informed about their rights – it was suggested information on the process should be included in induction packs for all new starters and at renewal letter stage.

Noted: Everyone agreed it was important for those on FTCs to know what was going on. The fact that there was more work for the University in the redundancy process was not a sufficient reason not to pursue the matter of permanency. Everyone agreed there had to be a University wide solution. Suggested that Faculties should be more pro-active in offering permanency.

- Actions regarding the list of University level committees and Maternity advice were ongoing, but all other actions were closed.

2) The group welcomed the interim Pro-VC Research, Professor Tim Elliot's to the meeting.

Tim explained to the group that there were three key issues at the moment:

- 1) HE White Paper
- 2) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

3) Brexit

The HE White Paper on how education is assessed and about widening the market. Two new offices are proposed: the Office for Students and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) – for research. UKRI will comprise the 7 research councils, plus Innovate UK and research England (i.e. HEFCE). This will make interdisciplinary research easier and UKRI has been set up for this. The TEF is being phased in – we are in, so can raise fees but from year 3 onwards there will be a quality assessment (see THE dummy run – the Russell group will need to do better).

GCRF – this is rebadged overseas development funding. £1.5 billion open to competitive bids but all bids need to be ODA compliant, assist developing countries and increase research. Open calls by all Research Councils: the EPSRC has a block grant for building new partnerships, expertise and skills. Not clear what the rules are yet.

BREXIT – Tim acknowledged that there was uncertainty around H2020 but urged us not to stop bidding. He was clear that we mustn't put breaks on partnerships. The UK won't be excluded from funding but there might be restricted access. Disappointingly we will be excluded from the intellectual discussion that decides the framework for H2027. We must not let the quality of our work slip.

3) Concordat implementation plan update

It was reported that we had not immediately retained the award and that we had been asked to provide further evidence. The group was asked for examples of progress and links to information that would support the resubmission and to send them to Julie. The group agreed there were lots of examples of things having an impact at Faculty level, in particular:

- Where we have shared and extended good practice in Academic Units and research committees
- Where we have changed policies and practices in Faculties
- Where mentoring has been introduced/extended to ECRs

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

Reports were shortened because of Tim's visit

4a. Faculty of Business and Law – no report.

4b. Faculty of Engineering and the Environment

Roeland reported that the Faculty had submitted for an Athena SWAN silver. The Faculty now had an E&D committee and Roeland is the ECR rep on that. Mentoring seen as important and being promoted.

4c. Faculty of Health Sciences

Mandy reported that the permanency issue was the focus of attention. There had been a Fixed Term Contract forum meeting which was well attended. Cheryl will be working with Jess Comper on this.

4d. Faculty of Humanities

Fiona reported that she had made good progress with representation within the Faculty and had agreed a list with the Dean of committees for ECRs to sit on. Fiona had successfully devolved some of the management to an ECR representative who was now reporting to Fiona. Fiona planned to have extended representation for the new semester.

There had been a social event, which was the Dean's idea. There had been end of year presentations and a presentation on the research presenting day.

Fiona offered case studies for and to help with the HRS4R award process.

4e. Faculty of Medicine – no report

4f. Faculty of Natural and Environmental Sciences –

Lindy reported that it had been quiet but things were still bubbling away. Good to see Action Plan and structures in place. The Faculty would not be holding a PD conference this year, rather it was better to have it every other year; the next conference will be in 2017. This year the focus had been around fellowship proposals and grants. The Faculty group missed the support of Selina.

Anna agreed that there had been a burst of activity to set up local groups and that things had plateaued – but it was good to have the structures in place. Even things like the email list had seen a massive improvement.

Lindy offered case studies for and to help with the HRS4R award process.

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

4h. Faculty of Social and Human Sciences – Matt reported that the Mentoring portal in Psychology would be extended in the Faculty. Work had been carried out on better signposting to sources of funding and support. Matt suggested we could task all PIs to fill in the mentor matrix so that ECR's can get access to people.

4i. Research Staff representatives – nothing more to report.

5a. UCU – Huw had been recently elected. The group congratulated him.

5b. Equality and Diversity – no report.

5c. HR – Angela had nothing more to report on Karen's behalf.

5d. International Office – Eleonora reported that an interim director, Sheila X had been appointed to replace Jo Doyle. Jo Nesbitt's replacement was Keith Johnston. The office were looking at engagement, particularly with regard to recruitment, publications and funding. Germany, France and Italy were in our top 8 countries, and there was some concern over what impact BREXIT would have – we need to look strategically at our priority Universities and create a new approach.

5e. PD-ILlaD Julie reported that ILlaD was being restructured (again).

6. AOB

The group congratulated Mandy on her appointment as Dean, but this raised the question of who should chair the group and if the Chair should report into REAG. There was a brief discussion as to whether the CDR WG should become more formal and perhaps merge with E&D. Mandy was clear that we need to embed our activity and that it should be a business priority for the University similar to E&D. Lindy said the CDR WG was a good discussion platform and conduit. Everyone could see the overlap with E&D but there was a view that we didn't want to stop the group rather it needed to become more powerful. Fiona asked if a rep from the CDR WG could sit on Athena SWAN University-wide similar to the way many CDR WG reps sit on the local committees. The question arose, that as there is a Dr.College for PGRs could there be something similar for ECRs? The group agreed that the importance of the work was not quite understood and that perhaps we needed to hit UEB over the head – everyone agreed that was Mandy's job! – and that we need to ensure we are compliant.

NEXT MEETING: to be confirmed after HRS4R and ILlaD restructure.

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. HR to be informed that appraisal training needs to be revised and improved.	Next meeting	Karen Julie and Angela/Karen	Ongoing Done
2) Advice to Faculties on permanency to be produced, piloted, and agreed at UEB	Ongoing – affected by People Plan	Mandy, Karen and Julie	Ongoing
3) Compile a list of committees for CDR WG to identify ones we should target for research staff membership	Outstanding	Julie (the COO has a list of some committees)	This project will be revisited in 2017
4) Maternity project underway - need to find ways to engage with HR	Ongoing	Karen, Lisa and Julie	This project will be revisited in 2017

Dr Julie Reeves

Direct tel: +44 (0)23 80598763 | Internal: 28763