

# 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:** 21 April 2016 meeting  
34/4005

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**Attendees:** Chair - Professor Mandy Fader; Dr Tania Alcantarilla, Dr David Cleary, Dr Roeland de Kat, Dr Lisa Gould, Dr Vadim Grinevich, Dr Jens Madsen, Dr Cheryl Metcalf, Ms Karen Proctor, Dr Julie Reeves.

**Apologies:** Professor George Attard, , Ms Eleanora Gandolfi, Dr Matt Garner, Professor Dan Hewak, Dr Anna Hickman, Professor Lindy Holden-Dye (and Dr Russell Minns), Dr Emma Lofthouse, Mr Alex Melhuish, Ms Kamaljit Kerridge-Poonia, Dr Emiliano Rustighi, Mr Rob Wood, Dr Fiona Woollard (and Dr Lee Walters).

## Meeting notes:

**1) Welcomes & Thanks:** The group wished to extend special thanks to thank Dr Lynn Lansbury, Professor Hugh Davies, Dr Ash Pringle and Professor Dan Bader for their contributions to the CDR WG.

The group welcomed Dr Lisa Gould and congratulated Dr Cheryl Metcalf and Dr Jens Madsen on being appointed as the new Concordat Champions for their Faculties.

**2) Outstanding action points** from the meeting on 29 October 2015 were reviewed and discussed as follows:

- 1 & 2: Appraisal system – Request for ‘aid memoir’ for PIs and confirmation of whether or not restricted access to ‘boxes’ for research staff had been removed. Karen to follow-up at next meeting (see new Action Points (AP) 1a and 1b below).
- 3: The Mentoring link – reminder had been sent to ILlaD (subsequent to meeting it was confirmed as working).
- 4a: Permanency guide – This was on its 3<sup>rd</sup> version, but group informed that the new Head of HR Employee Relations was also considering this. Faculties needed to know the HR timeframe and how to deal with the issue in the meantime, as it presented a risk to the Faculty if people are overlooked. Karen to speak with HRM for Health Sciences about the document and then Johan Mouton about HR plans (see AP 2).
- 4b: Fellowship Support Guidance – FSH would send the link around and FEE have a buddy/mentor system where one is paired with someone who has a fellowship and a Fellowship Champion, and potential applicants are tapped on the shoulder to apply. Roeland would send a sample email to the group. (see APs 3a and 3b).
- 5: 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 AP 4).
- 6: The list of committees was still outstanding (see AP 5).
- All other actions were closed.

## 3) Concordat implementation plan update

Mandy and Julie reported on the institutional review and referred to the notes Sarah Hollowbread had taken during the call. It was felt the call had gone well, but that we will probably be asked for further information and better signposting. Several issues had stood out from the call:

- We needed to explain the variation in the role of the Concordat champions and how everything fits together better.
- An explanation of the changes, especially on the development side and how things had 'morphed' was probably required.
- We should consider the possibility of a conflict between Faculty and University concordat plans and how we would manage that.
- The reviewers seemed impressed with the evaluation system once it had been explained, and a link to the evaluation policy should probably go into the 2016 plan.

The group discussed briefly ways in which the Athena SWAN and Concordat agendas could be made to work together more effectively, and how we might institutionalise the CDR WG activities. Economies of scale might be mutually beneficial and the possibility of using the E&D governance and meetings as an umbrella for the CDR WG was considered. See AP 6 below.

Julie would pull the 2020 Action Plan into a programme of activity for the group. See AP 7 below.

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

### **4a. Faculty of Business and Law –**

Vadim reported that things have been relatively quiet lately. He had been working on the Action plan and making sure the Faculty had delivered on the plan against a checklist. He reported that it looks like the Faculty is doing ok, they have a good machine in place. Appraisals are going ok, and Vadim will continue to work with other Faculties on events and to share resources.

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

Roeland reported that the ECR sessions on 'how to further your career' were continuing, although the numbers of attendees had dropped somewhat i.e. 15 out of 100. This was thought due to the change in the postdoc population as result of the split between Boldrewood and Highfield.

There was an extended discussion around fellowships. Roeland reported that Tiina Roose was the Fellowship champion for the Faculty and that she had organised the Faculty Fellowship and Leadership seminar. Roeland recommended Floyd Woodrow on 'elite leadership' i.e. on being the best you can be, which was inspiring advice from the seminar.

There were 10 New Frontiers fellows in the Faculty, which were funded by using established posts differently, and were modelled on the Roberts Fellows. It was noted that in Health Sciences all but one of the original Roberts fellows had stayed at the University. The problem of the affordability of research, when an education role was needed, was acknowledged to affect some Faculties more than others.

### **4c. Faculty of Health Sciences**

Cheryl reported that the Fixed Term Contract forums will still be run with a small group of people. The Faculty had overhauled their implementation plan – it was useful to do this as it had highlighted some issues. Cheryl wanted to make it useful – with live links etc. A lot of work had been done with Jess Comper on the Professional Development Planning document, but there was still a lot to do. The group would be informed of the progress on the document.

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

#### **Received via email: ECR Humanities Report**

Development Sessions: We are continuing with our programme of lunchtime development sessions. The next session is on the 4th of May. The topic is EU funding and will include presentations by Bridget Trezise from the EU funding office. Helen Farr will also be attending to talk about her experience in COST action and how networking can help in EU grants.

ECR drinks: We will be holding another ECR drinks event to allow ECRs to network informally in May or June (date tbc).

Representation: At the next FEG committee, I will be asking HoDs to nominate an ECR Rep for each department. Once the ECR reps are nominated, we shall arrange our first meeting. The idea of having ECR representation on committees has been discussed with the Dean and approved in principle.

Research Funding: A continued issue for ECRs is funding for research. There is considerable disappointment regarding the closure of the Adventures in Research Scheme. I've passed this on to the Associate Dean of

Research and Enterprise for Humanities and he indicated that he would pass this message up. I'd like to suggest that this committee pushes for the return of this, or a similar scheme.

ECRs were very worried about changes to the funding for research trips etc. within the Faculty as the Faculty Small Awards were mostly divided directly between departments. I brought this up at the Research Committee and several measures were put in place to ensure that ECRs were supported including: recommendations to HoRs to prioritise ECRs and the retention of a fund specifically earmarked for ECRs controlled by Simon.

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

Jens demonstrated the MRC interactive career framework, which everyone thought was excellent. Jens had asked for £7k to develop a local version. Cheryl reported that she was interested in the model and had met with Jane Willoughby and Julie to discuss possibilities, and it was noted that OES/FNES were also interested in creating a local version. Roeland suggested it could be used as a promotional tool for the University, Karen suggested that the career pathways could overlay it and it could link to the generic job descriptions. There was much interest in and enthusiasm for the model and it was agreed that a University level project would be the best way forward. It was agreed that there should be a University template/system that the Faculties or Academic Units could then customise. See AP 8.

#### **4f. Faculty of Natural and Environmental Sciences – no report**

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

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

#### **4i. Research Staff representatives –**

Dr Lisa Gould described her research into women who had maternity leave during their fixed term contracts and what their experience had been. Overall the women had found it exceptionally difficult to sort out and reported that the HR policies were not transparent, and advice was variable. A key problem had been identified as knowing who to talk to and where to find accurate advice, especially when the cohorts change so much and one may need to negotiate with the funders as well. The group agreed that it was very disappointing to know that postdocs had faced this exact problem 10 years ago and that very little or no progress had been made in this area subsequently.

It was noted that the Faculty of Medicine now have 'maternity champions' and provide an annual talk on the subject. As part of the 2020 Action Plan there would be a larger project on this matter and Lisa wanted to look at the overall Postdoc experience of maternity/parental leave and how this affected retention rates. Karen expressed interest in linking into HR – See AP 9 below.

#### **5a. UCU – no report**

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

It was reported on behalf of E&D that there had been a lot of work on the University's Athena SWAN silver submission, which would be submitted that week.

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

#### **5d. International Office – no report**

**5e. PD-ILlaD** Julie reported that, sadly, Hugh had stepped down as the Director of ILlaD. The group wished him well.

It was also reported that Professor Tim Elliott, interim PVC Research, had expressed a wish to get ECRs more involved with the REF. A brief discussion followed and it was agreed that what happened now would affect the next REF. The group would advise Faculties to look at the staff contracts, and plan years ahead (i.e. carry out talent management). Mandy suggested that we all need to get better at planning in advance and preparing people to apply for posts etc. The problem with the REF, she indicated, was that people come at it too late and there was previously a lot of last minute shuffling about that upset people – we need to avoid it in the future.

Roeland asked if staff needed to be in a permanent post for the REF. Mandy said, no. Staff did not need to be on an open (i.e. permanent) contract but they need to be a PI. The question was raised as whether a Fellowship was a PI.

Mandy suggested that Faculties should be able to plan for the REF better. It came down to good career management and knowing the staff. We should be able to help people and plan out who could potentially contribute to the REF.

Jens noted that in Medicine one could only submit a paper once, yet there would be numerous authors – including postdocs. It was noted that some senior staff claim the paper and squeeze junior staff out – the group agreed this was unfair practice.

Mandy suggested an author list and higher level strategic approach, where a paper is used for someone else if not being submitted to the REF by an author, would help the situation. She was very clear that good planning should mitigate poor and exclusionary practice.

#### 6. AOB – none.

NEXT MEETING: 30 June 2016

Actions	To be completed by	Person(s) responsible	Status
1) a) 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.  b) HR asked to confirm if research staff have access to all 'boxes' so they can record all of their achievements.	Next meeting	Karen	<b>In progress</b> /DONE – Karen & Julie to work together to agree how this could be communicated to PI's. The tabs on the on-line appraisal document cover development, career aspirations, etc – which were all the areas of concern.  DONE – Karen confirms that researchers have access to all boxes including education.
2) HR asked to confirm timeframe and their plans on advice to Faculties on permanency	Next meeting	Karen to speak with Liz and Johan	<b>In progress</b>
3) a) FSH to send Link Fellowship Support Guidance  b) FEE to send sample email from Tiina Roose.	Next meeting	Mandy  Roeland	<b>In progress</b>  DONE
4) Cheryl to share Postdoc Development Programme document when available	Ongoing	Cheryl	<b>In progress</b>
5) Compile a list of committees for CDR WG to identify ones we should target for research staff membership	Next meeting	Julie	<b>O/S</b>
6) Minutes from Athena SWAN committee to be sent to CDR WG	Next meeting	<b>Karen/Alex</b>	<b>Alex to send round</b>
7) Schedule of work to be made from 2020 Action Plan	Next meeting	Julie	DONE
8) Project group to be set up to develop local versions of MRC road map	Next meeting	JR Karen to take back into Reward	<b>In progress</b>
9) Maternity project underway - need to find ways to engage with HR	Next meeting	Karen, Lisa and Julie	<b>In progress</b> <b>Meeting set up</b>

Dr Julie Reeves

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