

# Meeting notes & action points

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

**From:** Dr Julie Reeves

**Date:** 13 July 2017 meeting

Building 67 - room E1001

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**Attendees:** Professor Mandy Fader; Dr Roeland de Kat, Ms Eleonora Gandolfi, Dr Shahnaz Ibrahim, Dr Cheryl Metcalf, Ms Karen Proctor, Dr Julie Reeves, Mr Rob Wood, Dr Fiona Woollard.

**Apologies:** Dr David Cleary, Dr Matt Garner, Mr Huw Fryer, Dr Lisa Gould, Professor Dan Hewak, Dr Anna Hickman, Professor Lindy Holden-Dye, Dr Emma Lofthouse, Dr Jens Madsen, Mr Alex Melhuish, Dr Peter Worsley.

## Meeting notes:

**Introductions & Welcomes:** The group welcomed Dr Shahnaz Ibrahim the new Concordat Champion for the Faculty of Business Law and Arts

**1) Actions from previous meeting** on 04 May 2017 were reviewed and discussed as follows:

- 1: Organisation chart for the CDR WG had been drafted and suggestions were made to improve it. It would be revised and circulated around the group.
  - NOTED: The Concordat was not on the agenda of the ED&I committee and should be – Mandy would promote this idea.
  - FEE had no mechanisms to bring the Concordat to the FEG. Question raised about internal representation in other Faculties (see Action Point 1 below) – agreed should be on the agenda three times a year and that Concordat Champions need to talk to FEG.
- 6: Wellbeing. It was reported that UEG had two forthcoming initiatives in this area on first aid and stress. Both were being led by Health and Safety and will be collecting examples. CDR WG will monitor the situation.
- All other actions were closed.

## 2) Concordat/CROS up-date

**CROS:** It was reported that we were waiting for institutional Research to analyse the data and produce reports on the outcome. These were expected at the end of the summer/early autumn.

**Concordat:** The next step was to speak with HR over any revisions to the plan in view of their activities. The CDR WG would continue to monitor the impact of actions for HR e.g. permanency, the quality of appraisals etc. This would be in preparation for the next internal validation in May 2018.

## 3) Discussion: Maternity pay and leave

The group held a vigorous discussion on issues relating to maternity and it was emphasised that maternity pay and parental leave were not a choice for the University. The group wanted to know whether these were being managed and impacting in an equitable way, examples from Health, Medicine and FEE suggested they were not. Questions of who bears the risk for maternity pay in the University and what was the real level of risk were discussed. The CDR WG felt that there were too many assumptions and insufficient evidence on this matter. Whilst accepting that the University's current policy was generous, it was obvious from the data gathered by Medicine that it was not impacting on staff in a fair or equitable way. The group wanted to know if there was a possibility of improving the system. There was a general agreement that, at a minimum, better advice capable of accounting for the subtle

differences between staff was much needed and that the University should keep track of what happens to women on maternity leave. Although pay could be paid (and paid back) on a pro-rata basis, the group believed it would be good to have real examples, and there was a need to provide advice on and evidence of a sliding scale. In sum, the CDR WG's patience with this subject was running out and everyone agreed that the advice given was a real problem and needed to be much clearer.

Following the 'Lisa Gould' action in the Concordat 2020 Action Plan, the group decided to take a pro-active approach and look into writing the policy FTC staff need as well as gather evidence/data internally and of best practice elsewhere. See Action Points 2&3 below.

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

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

Shahnaz reported that she had promoted CROS among the Faculty researchers and teaching fellows. She would also be holding a focus group to follow-up on CROS (probably in September or October)

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

Roeland reported that AD-R Prof. Rob Wood was still looking into the Concordat Champion role in the Faculty, which was still unconfirmed. In the meantime, the 'how to further your career' seminars had continued with 2 sessions held this year. Usually there were several sessions on 2/3 themes, e.g. how do I get funding, how do I find a job. The format brings postdocs together without the line managers but with some external input – the group sits in a circle and has an informal discussion about their experiences (with tea and cake).

Originally there were 10 postdocs who discussed what was wanted but 8 now have jobs around the globe! It was noted that there was some cross-over in terms of approach (and topics) with the Springboard programme.

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

Cheryl reported that a lot of discussion had occurred within the Faculty around maternity, and there had been a specific issue that had caused concern.

The FTC forum was going well – the questions were largely about HR, finance and permanency issues. Good news was the feedback from Athena SWAN was that the Forum was cited as an example of good practice. The Forum met every 2 months and was organised by the coordinator for the Concordat and Athena SWAN. It took a while to get off the ground, but the Permanency policy had given the Forum a topic to work with. The group has had wider impact and a lot more discussion, producing some good case studies e.g. on mortgages. The forum was very useful as a often people can be missed off email lists. (Maintaining a contact list was a big issue and the CDR WG agreed a more robust HR database was needed. There were plans to replace the HR system in 2 years' time, so the CDR WG will monitor the situation)

Cheryl would be on maternity leave from September and was seeking a replacement and ECR rep for the group. The group wished her well and thanked her for her contribution.

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

Fiona reported that the Dean's fund had been set up and was providing additional research funding in the Faculty. Fiona was documenting who was paying for conferences out of their own pocket or turning them down because of lack of funding. Maximum amount people could apply for was £600: Eleonora asked about remaining costs. Fiona explained the conference costs were a big problem – some came from Faculty, some central and some by themselves. NOTED: central funds available for collaborations – could apply twice a year through the WUN. ECRs and ECAs encouraged to be a bit smarter about applications. Eleonora to email information about funding and visiting opportunities directly. The group was reminded that she could also provide briefing sessions and the Concordat Champions were asked to invite Eleonora directly if they would like her to brief their Faculty ECRs and TFs. See AP 4

Fiona also reported that she had held two events in the Faculty and that she was now focussing on the upcoming promotions round, as it was time to think about promotions.

**4e. Faculty of Medicine** – no report

**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** – nothing more to report.

**5a. UCU** – no report.

**5b. Equality and Diversity** – no report.

**5c. HR** – Karen had nothing to add.

**5d. International Office** – Eleonora reported that a new international strategy had been approved and there was a new priority list e.g. the Newton Fund etc. The strategy would focus resources and push partnerships such as RENKEI and WUN. The budget was an issue but in 2 weeks' time the office would be looking at relevant applications and revenue – it was important for all Faculties to apply for funding (and piggy-back other interests if needed). If there is outreach involved in an international trip, Eleonora reminded everyone that it needs to be recognised and can be funded – most outreach focuses on the UK but a huge amount is being done abroad. NOTED: We should think about briefing PGRs 12-18 months before they start looking for a postdoc. Mandy indicated it was important to develop an international profile but how and the things to do were not clear. However the new strategic list should be helpful as reflects Times QS/world rankings and discipline specific priority areas – see AP 5. The problem is that we have lots of partnerships i.e. over 4,000 links and agreements, but how do we focus our attention and maximise these links, for instance if we have a research link can we build education links and exchange students. Eleonora has a database of links – everyone, especially Concordat Champions, encouraged to speak with Eleonora if have or looking for links.

#### **5e. Careers Service**

Rob reported that for the last 2 years' he has been considering how best to support ECRs. Researchers have access to the central space – can use the facilities, drop-ins, and book an appointment. Rob has been running half-day workshops on exploring careers outside of academia as well as providing 1-2-1 coaching. He has visited groups e.g. in NOCs, and given a general talk which was followed with a 1-2-1. The workshops are a bit patchy – sometimes not the right people attend. Rob has found the coaching is best, and it often only requires 2 or 3 sessions to help people who do not want to pursue an academic career. Rob has found coaching very useful, especially for people who are unsure about what to do next career wise. The problem is that this all has to be quantified and there isn't a person entirely dedicated to ECRs. We need to make it known that the coaching opportunity exists and that should be linked to the appraisal process – so PIs know what is available to their staff.

There was a general agreement that key information e.g. coaching and international opportunities need to be promoted better. Suggestion that the Newsletter is revamped and sent out via the Concordat Champions. See AP 6

**5e. CHEP** Julie had nothing to add.

#### **6. AOB - none**

NEXT MEETING: to be confirmed

Actions	To be completed by	Person(s) responsible	Status
1. Concordat reporting structure to be updated – Concordat Champions advised to get themselves invited to their FEGs if not already.  ED&I will include Concordat as an item in the meeting	Next meeting	Concordat Champions - ongoing	Ongoing - confirm updates  DONE
2. A 'campaign' group would gather evidence/data from Faculties and elsewhere and write exemplary advice and guidance on maternity leave and pay on behalf of the CDR WG to present to HR etc. Also extended to include breast/infant feeding issues.	Next meeting	Fiona, Cheryl, Lisa, Jens, Julie - plus other stakeholders	Met, drew up Action plan - partially implemented
3. Julie to ask Jens about the scheme in Medicine. How does the women returner fund operate, how many cases per annum, how did it come about?	For maternity sub-group report – see above	Julie and Jens	DONE
4. Faculties to promote WUN opportunities to ECRs and TFs. Eleonora to send email about up-coming opportunities.  5. Eleonora to send priority list/link when official	Next meeting	Eleonora & Concordat Champions  Eleonora	DONE
6. Newsletter to be revamped and produced collegially, to be sent out via Concordat Champions	Next meeting	Julie, Eleonora, Rob, Karen, Alex and Concordat Champions	outstanding

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