

MINUTES OF RESEARCH STAFF WORKING PARTY

Friday 20 May 2016

- Present: Professor Alastair Poole, Biomedical Sciences (Chair)
Zoe Clarke, Academic Staff Development (Minutes)
Dr Anthony Croxford, Mechanical Engineering
Guy Gregory, Director of Human Resources
Dr Mike Gulliver, School of Humanities
Dr Patricia Lucas, School for Policy Studies
Dr Paras Naik, School of Physics
Dinithi Wijedasa, Policy Studies
Claire Wrixon, Academic Staff Development
- Apologies: Professor Chris Hawkesworth, Earth Sciences
Dr Athene Lane, School of Social and Community Medicine
Dr Alison Leggett, Academic Staff Development

1. Welcome and announcements (Professor A. Pool)

2. Apologies

3. Minutes of meeting on 28 January 2016

Minutes: AGREED

4. Matters arising and actions

The following items were discussed from the last meeting:

Item 6 (Update from the Chair); the term 'early career researcher'; the group had agreed that the term 'research staff' should be used instead.

The group discussed how to move this forward. Claire Wrixon explained that anything on the website would now say 'research staff'. Within the Researchers14 group, they are trying to define the term 'early career researcher' consistently across all the institutions.

It was agreed that members of the Research Staff Working Party (RSWP) would use the term 'research staff' consistently in conversations outside of the RSWP to embed it in everyday language. It was noted that the term early-career researcher is relevant and beneficial externally particularly in regard to eligibility for funding.

Item 8 (P2 Progression Paper); action is complete. Claire Wrixon and Mike Gulliver tried to create a flow diagram as suggested at the last meeting but after approaching it from various directions it was decided that case studies and best practice guides would suffice.

Item 11 (Research Staff Development Fund); Claire Wrixon updated the group on the last Research Staff Development Fund project. The first event had to be cancelled because of low attendance, the second event is being advertised currently and is due to take place on 13 July. Claire will monitor progress and offer support.

ACTION: Claire to update at the next meeting.

Other action outcomes will be discussed during the meeting.

5. Update from the Chair (Professor A. Poole)

The group discussed Scott Greenwell's request to join to the RSWP.

It was noted that it would be beneficial to join up communications between this committee and the unions. It was agreed that as Scott is a member of the UCU it's important that the group are explicit about the contribution of the UCU rep within the context of the RSWP and define it within the terms of reference.

ACTION: Claire to write a paragraph to be included in the terms of reference that will be shared with the group for comment before responding to Scott.

6. P2 Progression and Promotion Update (Guy Gregory)

Guy Gregory updated the group about progression and promotion. He explained that throughout the consultation process it has remained a key priority of the strategy.

The current strategy has been separated from a detailed action plan and will go to the Board of Trustees on 23 May. It's anticipated that the action plan will follow.

This element is a priority and is expected that it will happen in the first tranche of actions ie within the next 24 months. It was noted that the issue is not specific to Pathway 2, also relevant to Pathways 1 & 3.

This action will fall under the remit of Guy Gregory and he commented that absolutely Pathway 2 staff will be asked for their contributions on this matter. It's clear that the Vice Chancellor is keen to monitor the action plan and following those through.

7. Staff contracts and eligibility for Research Council Fund (Claire Wrixon)

Alison Leggett received a query from a BBSRC Fellow in January 2016 regarding pathway 2 staff contracts and eligibility for research council funding.

The issue arose as; most funding bodies require you to hold an academic appointment to be eligible to apply for funding. However some funding bodies allow pathway 2 staff to apply if they have written formal agreement that the research will be conducted as if the applicant were employed at lecturer level.

The group discussed that it is difficult to get consistency across university as funders have different requirements and school/faculties approach these requests in various ways.

ACTION: Claire will talk to RED to find out their knowledge about different funders requirements and how complex and different it is.

ACTION: Claire will also have informal discussions with Wellcome Trust, BBSRC and EPSRC at the next Researchers14 meeting (11 July 2016)

8. CROS action plan, sub group updates (All)

The group reviewed actions and the progress of them. Focusing on the following:

- Induction (Athene Lane and Patricia Lucas)
- Investigate/pilot a research staff champion role (Mike Gulliver and Dinithi Wijedasa)
- Creation on alumni network that researchers can contact (Paras Naik and Claire Wrixon)

Induction

Currently a lot inductions are done when there is enough staff across pathways to make it viable. It was suggested that creating an induction pack for research staff, to provide them with important information that is specific to them, would be a more effective option.

Academic Staff Development currently send an introduction email to new Pathway 2 staff every month. A link to the info pack can be included within this email.

ACTION: Claire, Patricia and Athene will meet to discuss the content of the info pack. Claire will also talk to ERP team to see how the process can be integrated.

Research Staff Champion

It was suggested that the Research Staff Reps group could appoint a 'Research Staff Champion' who could provide support at a local level. It was noted that it needs to be clear what the remit of this role would be and how it would be incorporated into workload planning.

ACTION: Mike and Dinithi will look in this in more detail and report back at the next meeting.

Alumni Network

Claire Wrixon has been looking into potential benefits we can offer to research staff alumni to encourage them to keep linked to the university. Things such as; access to sports facilities, libraries and student alumni magazine. It was also suggested and a LinkedIn group or website page could be effective.

There is a plan to pilot some exit surveys in physics first to see if anyone wants to keep linked up with UoB.

ACTION: Claire to talk to Development and Alumni Relations Office to understand how they operate.

ACTION: Zoe to add CROS action plan, sub group updates as a standing item on the agenda.

9. Email access update (Professor A. Poole)

Currently, when staff leave the university they no longer have access to their emails. It's beneficial for staff to be able to retain access to their emails for a number of reasons. Their University of Bristol email address will have been published on their work, which cannot be changed. The issue has been presented to IT Service Delivery, Darrell Sturley and Robin Geller and there are legal concerns over ownership of emails of people who no longer work at the institution.

The RSWP have discussed potential solutions; such as Cambridge University's current system.

It was noted that this is an important issue for academic staff, creating a solution will keep networks alive for returning staff and collaborative working.

ACTION: Claire has a contact at Cambridge University, she will contact them for further information about their process. Mike will assist Claire with some research of other solutions.

10. Teaching Policy for research staff update (Claire Wrixon)

Since the last RSWP meeting the teaching policy has been approved by UPARC and now sits on Academic Quality and Partnerships Office website and is linked from the Research Staff Hub.

The group discussed actively promoting the policy. It has already been communicated to Heads of School and Faculty Research Directors.

ACTION: Claire will follow up with Heads of School and Faculty Research Directors in 3 months' time

ACTION: Mike and Dinithi will make the Research Staff Reps aware of the paper and ask that they make research staff aware of it.

11. Research staff development fund applications (Claire Wrixon)

The Research Staff Development Fund is £3000 per academic year, to allocate to 3 sets of applications.

Spent to date (this academic year): £750

Remaining (this academic year): £2250

It was noted that we don't get as many applications as in previous years, if this continues the group will review how it is advertised.

The group discussed the two Research Staff Development Fund applications.

Data Integration and Networking Event, Emily Porter

This event has already taken place in collaboration with Tom Williams. The group decided not to fund this project but to talk to Emily about a future project to set up a 'Bristol Bioinformatics Hub', which will provide a virtual space where research staff from all departments can exchange ideas and where any upcoming events can be advertised. Which was mentioned in her application.

A Picture of Health, Beki Langford and Micky Willmott

The group decided to fund this idea in full (£527.00) as it was novel and raised the profile of research around the university.

ACTION: Claire to provide feedback to Emily Porter, Beki Langford and Micky Willmott.

12. AOB

It was noted that Nishan will be attending the next meeting on Tuesday 20 September 2016.

ACTION: All members to respond via google calendar for the next 3 meetings

Dates for 2016/2017 upcoming meetings

Tuesday 20 September 2016, 11:00-13:00

Monday 16 January 2017, 11:00-13:00

Monday 1 May 2017, 11:00-13:00

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