



MINUTES OF RESEARCH STAFF WORKING PARTY

Thursday 3rd October 2019

Present: Professor Tim Peters, Faculty Research Director Health Sciences (Chair)
Dr Celine Petitjean, UCU Rep
Dr Neil Davies, Bristol Medical School
Professor Ana E Juncos Garcia, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies
Dr Kris Magee, Co-Chair of Reps Committee
Daisy Gaunt, Co-Chair of Reps Committee
Dr Paras Naik, School of Physics
Claire Buchanan, Chief People Officer
Dr Simon Swales, Acting Head of Academic Staff Development
Dr Mike Gulliver, Academic Staff Development
Claire Wrixon, Academic Staff Development
Rachel Dill, Academic Staff Development (Minutes)

Welcome and announcements

Apologies: None received

Changes to membership

Tim Peters (TP) welcomed Ana Juncos Garcia (AJG) and Claire Wrixon (CW) to the group.

CW will attend meetings as the ASD representative.

CW confirmed that Mike Gulliver (MG) will be going on a career break as of 1st January 2020, and that Claudia Gumm has been appointed to take up the Research Staff development role in Academic Staff Development. Claudia will attend the January RSWP meeting. MG will attend future meetings to speak about the CROS data and action plan.

Paras Naik (PN) had been invited to attend as a representative of the reps committee while a new Co-chair is being found.

Minutes of last meeting on 29th May 2019

Previous minutes from 29th May were agreed.

Matters arising and actions

Rachel Dill (RD) confirmed that ongoing actions from the action log will be circulated as part of the pre-meeting paperwork, and that a hard copy list of all actions that have been completed will be available at the meetings.

Action log summary

- **Expectations document** – see agenda item below
- **Search for new members of RSWP** – Following a request for suggested names of new members, CW confirmed that she has a list of names who she will be contacting and is aware of the need for a PI balance across the faculties.

ACTION to be closed

- **IT issue** – Currently when staff leave the university, their email accounts are deleted and immediately return only an error message. Due to their mobility, Research Staff are asking for a temporary 'gone to' message to be put in place. TP has raised this matter at URC including when senior IT services staff were present, but it is still an ongoing issue to resolve. CW suggested that this could be something that Claudia can pick up when she starts.

ACTION - MG to hand this over and send a summary email to Keith Woolley and copy in CB, TP and CW. CW will pick this up and hand over to Claudia in January.

- **fEC Tool** – MG confirmed that a new research grant costing tool will be replacing the fEC Tool and work on this is underway. MG has been working to make the project team aware of the wider impact of the tool on research staff employed on grants costed through it – in particular, the impact of designating researcher roles as 'non-progressable' – so that the new tool (and associated guidance) best supports researcher career development.

ACTION – MG to pass this work over to Simon Swales (SS)

- **Terms of reference** – There was a query about changing the text to reflect a change in the way that the Research Staff Development Fund applications are assessed. But the working party agreed that the statement reflects this already so there was no action for MG to carry out.

ACTION to be closed

- **Document outlining role of RSWP members** – MG drafted a document and sent this via email to Tim Peters (TP) who has checked and approved this.

ACTION closed.

Rep's business update – Kris Magee & Daisy Gaunt

Access to Senior meetings

Since the last meeting Daisy Gaunt (DG) and Kris Magee (KM) have gathered information from the reps regarding their levels of access to the Senior Managers and committees. DG gave a brief summary of the findings, noting that many reps have access to School management (in their capacity as a school rep), however access levels to School Research

Committees varies greatly between the reps. In fact, some reps have been denied access to School Research Committee meetings for a number of reasons (a summary of these responses can be made available to the working party on request). DG shared that some reps have been given a seat at their EDI committees and whilst this is an important committee to have research staff representation on the RSWP felt it should not be instead of representation on School Research Committees.

In summary the working party agreed that reps should be granted access to School Research Committees, at least for part of the agenda, so that communication channels exist between the School Research Committee and the research community. It was also noted that the Concordat supports this and states that institutions must *'Consider researchers and their managers as key stakeholders within the institution and provide them with formal opportunities to engage with relevant organisational policy and decision-making.'*

ACTION - Tim P (as FRD) to remind SRD's that reps should have access to Senior Research Committee meetings and that communications channels should be open, referring to the phrase in the Concordat. (above)

ACTION – TP to raise this at URC with PVCR and other Faculty Research Directors.

ACTION – KM and DG to feed back findings at next meeting.

Teaching / supervision discrepancies

The opportunity for research staff to teach varies greatly across schools. KM summarised the teaching commitment discrepancy findings that he had gathered from reps, noting that across pathway 2 there appears to be a mixture of 1) research staff who are required to teach, 2) research staff who are able to teach voluntarily when the opportunity arises, 3) research staff who want to gain teaching experience but have no opportunity to, and 4) research staff who are not allowed to teach.

The working party acknowledged that opportunities to access teaching courses (for example Starting to Teach & Small group teaching) are available and are mentioned in the teaching policy, and perhaps greater communication about this is needed.

A suggestion was made for the policy to be recirculated (to School Education Directors also) to raise awareness, but it was noted that updates to the content may need to be made to reinforce the information regarding training and teaching opportunities. Another suggestion was to add a link to the teaching policy on all school webpages.

ACTION - Simon Swales (SS) and CW to speak to Tansy Jessop to see if the teaching policy is still fit for purpose, adjust it if needs be and then to see how awareness of the teaching policy can be raised with School/Faculty Education Directors and Research Directors.

ACTION (agreed after the meeting) – TP as RSWP Chair to inform the PVE (Education) and the interim PVC (Research and Enterprise) of the concerns RSWP and PW2 staff generally have about these issues.

ACTION - KM to send the completed Psychological Science document to the RSWP.

Expectations document

Reps have observed the need for a document to be made as a guide for new research staff starting at Bristol, containing 'frequently asked questions' about research roles and the research community. KM noted that there is one being developed in School of Psychological Science to be issued to new staff.

DG requested some support in writing this document and gathering questions.

The working party discussed the need to distinguish between a set of questions that were deemed as general and applicable to staff regardless of school affiliation(s), and the inclusion of more school specific questions. The observation was made that specific questions would require input from Heads of Schools or School Managers, and that more general questions could possibly be answered in the HR policy.

ACTION – KM and DG to send a draft of generic questions to RSWP to review

Updates

CROS analysis & Concordat – Mike Gulliver

MG will analyse the CROS data and produce a proposed action plan that he will present at the January meeting. (It will be circulated beforehand in preparation for the meeting.)
MG will identify key researcher profiles and themes.

MG has shared some of the results of the CROS survey in recent Bristol Clear blogposts and Staff bulletins, and has also sent an email out to all research staff containing the Concordat, and explaining its significance. The suggestion for Concordat champions at School Research Director level was made, perhaps to be discussed at a later date.

ACTION - MG to discuss with SS about ways to ensure that PIs are made aware of the Concordat.

Progression and Promotion for P2 staff – Simon Swales

Simon Swales gave an update. The [new academic Promotions Framework](#) that was endorsed by Senate on 10 June 2019 is designed to ensure that we have a fair and effective promotions process that better recognises the full academic contribution, rewarding research, education, engagement, leadership and citizenship. The new framework for promotion to Associate Professor and Professor will be ready for the 2020/21 promotions cycle.

Following on from the 2017 Promotion and Progression review, all Pathway 2 and 3 roles have been reviewed by the Faculties to determine which should be progressable and which should be fixed roles. The progressability of roles is also a component part of workforce planning within the Integrated Planning process. The progression process will also be changing for the 2021/22 academic year based on the Promotion and Progression review recommendation of going to progression on the basis of readiness. The work will include

developing versions of the Promotions Framework for each academic profile level to be used across all three pathways. For this work, input will be sought from researchers.

Research Staff Development fund update – Claire Wrixon & Tim Peters

CW confirmed that 9 applications for the RS Development fund had been received and that a decision had been made to award the fund to two projects. No specific details were given at the meeting.

ACTION - CW to update the members on the successful applications via email

AOB

Update on interim PVC and them attending RSWP meeting

The intention is still to invite the interim PVC Research and Enterprise to attend a couple of meetings once they have been appointed.

Communications, Equality and Diversity and Staff Wellbeing implications

Communications – n/a

EDI – Promotions procedure mentioned EDI

EDI committees have research staff representation but there is a need for research staff to sit on other committees.

Wellbeing – n/a

Thank you to Mike Gulliver

TP thanked MG for his contribution to and involvement in the RSWP and wished him all the best for his career break.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 30th January 10-12pm Verdon Smith Room, Royal Fort House

Please respond via Outlook calendar or email:

Rachel Dill, ASD Administrator. Rachel.dill@bristol.ac.uk