

University of St Andrews

Research and Teaching Staff Forum

Report on the meeting of the Research and Teaching Staff Forum held on Wednesday 8 November 2017

Attendance: Professor Derek Woollins, Ms Louise Milne, Dr Diane Munday, Mr Sukhi Bains, Mr Tom Jones, Dr Michael Morrissey, Professor Len Thomas, Dr Fiona Fox, Dr Elyse Allender, Dr Graham Smith, Dr Duncan Robertson, Dr Sarah Bennison, Dr Catherine Barbour, Dr Jennifer O'Meara

Apologies: Dr Tracey Gloster, Dr Bela Bode, Dr Ruth Bowness, Dr Charles Lovatt

1 Approval of previous minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13 April 2017 were approved with no amendments.

2 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

3 Equality and Diversity/Athena Swan Update

The Schools of Computer Science and Management both received their Bronze award in late September.

The University has also been awarded the LGBT Charter Award, mainly focused on students rather than staff. The University of St Andrews is the only University in Scotland to hold this charter. Derek Woollins thanked Sukhi Bains for the time and effort that he has spent working on submission of these applications.

The University is currently reviewing its policies on trans guidance. Sukhi would like to focus on a policy for non-binary staff and students who don't define themselves as one gender. This is difficult because in current times terminology is changing so fast that the policy would need to be reviewed every 6 months.

Early Career Women's Network

Sarah Bennison (Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies) informed the committee that herself, Dr Camilla Rotsvik (Art History), Dr Stephanie Yardley (Mathematics and Statistics) are launching an Early Career Women's Network. The network launch will be held on 30 November 2017 and will be followed by a Christmas social event.

LGBT Staff Network

Sukhi Bains currently runs a LGBT Staff Network which started with 9 staff members and now has 20. This offers a valuable support mechanism. Sukhi will send out network information annually and would appreciate it if members could circulate around the School.

Maternity Query – Minutes 13 April 2017

Sukhi Bains addressed the maternity query that was raised in the previous minutes regarding the provision for Research staff for maternity/long term leave which does not seem to be equal to that of other substantive posts within the University. There is no movement currently as it is dependent on funding. Sukhi is currently trying to build a case and gain evidence of good practice in the sector and it will remain on the Agenda for the Athena Swan Committee until this is resolved. Len Thomas had asked if the University could lead the field with this maternity change rather than following other institutions. Sukhi will keep the Forum up to date with progress.

Childcare

Diane Munday would like to set up a working group for employees with responsibilities as carers. Sukhi confirmed that this is an action plan that is supported by Athena Swan and they would like to set up 2 Forums, a Carers Forum for employees caring for a relative who is elderly or disabled and a Parents Forum for employees caring for young children.

The lack of childcare in the University has an impact on engagement, inclusion and the loss of experience and skills at events within the University.

It was confirmed to the committee that the University does now have a childcare facility, Roseangle Nursery is open and is being used to capacity. Sukhi circulated the nursery's details to the Forum members on 9 November 2017, as attached. (Appendix 1)

Sukhi does also want to mainstream the provision of a mobile crèche provider, Sukhi had recently used a company in Dundee which he found to be extremely helpful. This was covered by the Diversity budget. There were queries on whether this company could be used for Staff Induction and for events within the Schools, Sukhi asked that anybody interested contact him directly for details.

4 Update on contractual profile for Research Fellows and Associate Lecturers (Education Focused)

<i>Research</i>	<i>Gender</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
347	141 (40.6%)	206 (59.4%)
256 – Fixed	114 (44.5%)	142 (55.5%)
91 – Standard	27 (29.7%)	64 (70.3%)

<i>Teaching</i>	<i>Gender</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
104	58 (55.8%)	46 (44.2%)
38 - Fixed	24 (63%)	14 (37%)
66 – Standard	34 (51.5%)	32 (48.5%)

There has been considerable improvement in the number of standard contracts for teaching staff, the culture is changing. However, there will always be a need for core fixed term staff to cover maternity/sick/research leave.

There was a discussion on the practical differences and psychological impact on the use of standard contracts because they are usually still dependant on external funds.

Louise Milne noted that Human Resources are making it known when redundancy notifications are sent out that there is bridge funding available. There has to be a strong case that there are further funds forthcoming that will be committed to that particular staff member.

There are a small minority of researchers on standard contracts who the PI considers to be invaluable and who also have standard funding. Len Thomas made a request for the numbers for this portion of staff to be brought to the next Forum meeting.

Relocation Costs

Sarah Bennison had asked why relocation expenses were not reimbursed for staff on contracts over 1 year with external funding. There was a discussion on whether this was stereotyping research staff in comparison to academic staff, in that they were thought to be younger and therefore had less assets and family commitments. Derek Woollins confirmed that there was no provision in external research funds and that this was a pragmatic financial decision due to the number of research staff employed.

5 Update from CAPOD

The Staff Survey results have been published within In the Loop, there was a 42% response.

The CROS Survey results have been received, 23% response rate, and CAPOD are currently analysing the results. Diane Munday gave an overview of the results which appear positive and informative. CAPOD are currently using the information as an outline for use in the HR Excellence Program. Items to work on are the concerns over opportunities for promotion and progression, staff do not appear to know what structures are in place to assist them and these need to be clear.

Staff Appraisal

There was a discussion on how the University can improve the staff appraisal process, the paperwork for the Academic Review and Development Scheme is ready and in place but is not used. Forum members thought that they needed a trigger, tied in to a calendar, to increase the use of the annual ARDS scheme. Louise confirmed that Human Resources do not have the resources to be able to put an email notification into practise for the annual review for every School/Unit.

It was noted that the annual ARDS Scheme needs to be promoted from above and Derek Woollins offered to send out notification to Heads of Schools to encourage a commitment to the Scheme for REF and HR Excellence. Derek and Louise agreed to hold a strategy meeting to discuss ways the Scheme can be promoted.

HR Excellence Group

Diane confirmed that the HR Excellence Group will be meeting on 28 November 2017 and will be looking at the process for the induction of Research staff. Looking at their engagement with the University, professional development and their satisfaction with their work/life balance. CAPOD would like to encourage PIs in a culture of supporting research staff with their professional development rather than it being seen as a burden.

In particular, CAPOD are looking at ways to engage men better, any ideas for initiatives that would be of interest and supportive to men at the University would be welcome.

6 Research Integrity

The University now has a new Unit, Research and Innovation Services, formally the Research Policy Office which will be responsible for research integrity, professionalism and misconduct. Aspects of misconduct are:-

- Methods of storing data - fabricating interviews, manipulating data;
- Transferring data;
- Not referencing or giving credit to previous research;

The UK has recently changed their guidance and now the University is required to report any allegation as soon as it is made, prior to investigation.

The current guidelines the University has on research integrity is considered to be vague, not helpful, transparent or fair. Derek Woollins is working with the new unit to produce new guidelines which will deal with misconduct, they are ready to go out for consultation and new documents with new procedures should be available in Spring 2018.

Diane Munday noted that CAPOD also has links with several professional bodies and is working closely with Dundee University who are more advanced in this area due to a high profile case they experienced in 2016. CAPOD are working on training staff in good practise to produce a supportive culture so that people have an understanding of what is expected of them in the UK with regard to research integrity, recognising problems and that they know who to go to as soon as they recognise an issue. Pressures to deliver are so intense that staff need clear guidelines for support. CAPOD will be training staff, especially in areas of work with humans/animals/ethics. Staff will have direct training and will have 1 year to complete modules online.

7 CROS/PIRLS surveys results

CROS/PIRLS are online surveys which are run in HEIs throughout the UK every 2 years and they gauge the views and feelings of Researchers and PIs which in turn help to drive the objectives for projects such as the HR Excellence Action Plan.

The response rate for PIRLS was 23% which was down from the 25% in 2015. 33% of this percentage was the Arts/Divinity Faculty which was encouraged to take part this year as leaders in research.

When PIRLS took place in 2015 the University did not have the ARDS Scheme in place and only 54% of returns noted having had any kind of review. The 2017 Survey has reported that 88% of participants have had a review which is a positive increase, although the UK average is 90.75%. The Forum asked if it was possible to report on the age range of the returns that have completed a review.

77% of participants felt that the appraisal review was important, however only 58% felt that the appraisal was valued by this institution which was discouraging. There was a discussion relating to how to promote the importance of the ARDS Scheme which relates back to the discussion in section 5.

Louise will be comparing the results and benchmarking the University against the Scottish/UK Universities and the Russell Group.

Diane Munday is currently working with a Development Coordinator in benchmarking the work/life balance with other institutions throughout the UK. Results should be available for the Forum in March. The Forum asked if information could be provided on the percentages by age.

8 Research staff membership on Forum/responsibilities of representatives

Diane Munday would like to refresh the staff membership on the Forum, as some of the Arts Schools now have more than 3 research staff, and could be invited to attend.

Diane and Louise would also like to produce a role profile which outlines what is expected of members attending the Forum.

It was suggested that members are given more responsibilities, such as:-

- mentoring;
- more involvement in championing professional development;
- building a community for research and teaching staff;
- promoting engagement with University life;

The provision of funds was discussed for social events to assist with networking. Derek Woollins would be happy to host social events if the Office of the Principal is willing to provide funds. Derek invited Diane to meet with him to further discuss ideas/suggestions.

Diane confirmed that CAPOD's long term plan would be for the provision of a Research Staff Association.

9 Revision of Fixed Term Workers Agreement

Following on from the meeting of 13 April 2017, Louise confirmed that the Fixed Term Worker Agreement is currently under review. Lisa Stewart, HR Officer, is currently working on developing a new up to date, straightforward policy that will incorporate the move to standard contracts. Louise handed out a template for the revised paper based on the University of Strathclyde's policy. (Appendix 2). Louise requested comments back by the end of November. Tom Jones was also willing to take comments on behalf of the UCU via email: tej1@st-andrews.ac.uk, if members did not want to take their comments to Louise. Members were encouraged to share the document around Schools and take comments.

10 General teaching and research matters

No general teaching and research matters were raised.

11 General update from Vice Principal (Research)

Derek Woollins had attended a Court Away Day where the Senior Management of the University was extremely positive about the future of the University,

Derek had attended a 1 day event for the Daphne Jackson Trust. The University does not currently sponsor the Daphne Jackson Trust, Derek intended to discuss the possibility with the Principal.

REF

The University is awaiting the next set of guidelines for REF, expected within the next 2 weeks. These should offer information on outputs expected and who will count in the University's submission. Final confirmation of the rules will not be issued until approximately January 2019.

The Principal will shortly be sending out a questionnaire looking for opinions on the University's Strategic Plan. Derek requested that members encourage staff to engage and complete the questionnaire and offer any suggestions/ideas they may have.

12 AOCB

There was no further care of business.