Research Staff Development and Concordat Shared Practice Event

9 June 2016

Shared Practice session for DRCs and Dept Concordat Reps

1. **Highlights from Rowena Jacobs’ presentation** ‘Centre for Health Economics (CHE): Career development of researchers’ *(attached to minutes)*
   - Career development a high priority
   - All research staff located in a research team
   - All have staff have the same research contract regardless of grade
   - All new staff allocated a ‘buddy’ of the same grade
   - 100% performance appraisal rate (plus informal reviews)
   - Line managers meet regularly to ensure best practice
   - Administrative/citizenship roles rotated fairly
   - Bridge funding provided in between contracts and all moved to open contracts once promoted to grade 7
   - Bank of CVs available to match/review for those looking for promotion
   - Focus on ‘grow our own’ rather than recruiting at senior levels
   - Regular celebration of promotion and career success stories

2. **Department of Archaeology**
   - Department provides postdoc fellowship prize – money to go towards writing a grant
   - Currently interested in partnering/mentorship scheme – peer to peer
   - Challenge with community being spread out including some at King’s Manor. Post-doc researchers are invited to away days but there is still a sense that they are not viewed as full members of staff
   - PI responsibilities rewritten
   - Grant application advice sessions
   - Concerns and focus now rest on induction, inclusion and mentoring.

3. **Department of Biology**
   - Discussed scheme for post-docs to run a project which involves them writing a grant application and being awarded money to employ a student over the summer. The Post-doc Society has an annual meeting at which there is a presentation made re the projects, how they went and what was achieved. One post-doc who took advantage of this scheme has achieved a Wellcome Trust Sir Henry Dale fellowship and this success has been promoted to other post-docs.
   - Has a process in place to fund additional two years for successful applicants to five-year fellowship schemes
4. Department of Chemistry
- Researcher Issues Action Meeting attended by research champion and post-doc reps from various groups attend.
- Department is currently trying to address the issue of recognition of value. As such, recently introduced a post-doc poster competition with 3 prizes awarded. A Symposium then takes place where each winner gives a presentation and goes for dinner with the sponsor.
- Pushing post-docs to put themselves forward to look after vacation bursary students over the summer.
- Royal Society of Chemistry annual conference around diversity and career development for under-represented groups is being hosted in York this year and the department is funding 20-25 places for post-docs to attend.
- Department funded one fellowship and encouraged applications from those with an alternative career path.

5. Department of Computer Science
- Has been considering expanding the post-doc forum with TFTV and L&M and queried the worth of a Heslington East post-doc forum
- Focus currently on trying to continue to employ as many RAs as possible due to current funding difficulties
- RA-led forum helps post-docs to keep each other informed of their rights and opportunities within the department
- Skills development and grant writing course
- Entrepreneurship 2-week course with ‘dragons’ den’ element
- Induction and mentoring for ECRs now in place (peer to peer)

6. Department of Electronics
- All research staff are now engaged in and invited to the research away days
- Included and involved in grant writing
- New HoD very proactive in making everything transparent to all staff and building up a pipeline of female talent
- In addition to full staff meeting the department now has different meetings for the various staff groups (research, admin) with the HoD
- All involved in Performance Review

7. Environment Department
- Redefining ToR for research groups
- Recruiting an ECR Deputy Chair for each of the four different research group meetings
- ECRs meet monthly and invite a range of guests to speak on topics
- Are hoping to match new ECRs with ‘Buddy’s’ as part of the induction process and to introduce a more structured process to enable ECRs to be mentored by someone more senior after 6 months in post.
• Looking to develop a series of workshops based on requests from ECRs on grant funding and career development

8. Department of Health Sciences
• Major part of department action plan revolved around setting up a forum which has been done and now has its own ToR, reporting structure, elected co-chairs.
• Now tasked with a training and development plan, in addition to a pastoral and support role – to launch in July.
• PR training now includes the Concordat
• Re Citizenship, in addition to 18 committee roles created by the Contract Research Forum, all committees’ ToR are now organised in one place so people can see eligibility – previously perceived to be a lack of transparency in the process
• New process for teaching opportunities much more transparent and equitable
• Reporting and monitoring structures related to contract researchers and the departmental Concordat Action Plan have been formalised. Training and development issues are reported through the Training and Career Progression Committee and monitoring of the DoHS Concordat Action Plan is through the Departmental Research Committee.

9. Department of History
• Department has been trying to raise profile of the 10-15 research staff and include them more in the department and in decision-making. As such they now have a Postdoc rep on the Departmental Research Committee. In February they had a Research away lunch for all research staff including research administrators which included asking them how the department could improve on things and include them more. They also receive minutes from departmental management team meetings and departmental research committees. Another meeting will be held in September. All are invited to department away days and the annual away day as well as the Christmas party. All involved in the PR process and have the opportunity to have it with someone other than their line manager.
• Induction – provided with orientation info, mentoring, staff handbook, teaching opportunities
• The department currently submitting a bid to Athena Swan so looking at research staff recruitment, promotion, career support, etc as part of that.
• For REF, research outputs are being looked at and research staff to be included in the process.
• While a lot has been done to improve the culture, there is still more to do. Many work away from York and department is inviting them to attend events and offering to pay for train fares.

10. Department of Mathematics
• The Department of Mathematics has a small number of postdocs spread around various departments.
• Those that sit in Maths currently have lots of informal gatherings but there is no need for a more formal system at the moment.
• All activities and social events are open to postdocs, including staff meetings. There is an expectation that they teach, so they come to Board of Studies, have a postdoc rep on DRC and are involved in Research Away Days where they present material at the same level as academic staff.
• New for this year is a fellowship development bursary competition which pays for people to visit York to help write fellowship applications - also open to existing postdocs.
• Induction and mentoring (peer to senior) already in place.
• Mentoring (equality and good practice)
• Queried value of a research forum at faculty level (and reference back to the Hes East forum)

11. Department of Language and Linguistic Science
• Guidance notes provided for postdoc RAs to develop their careers more broadly
• Issues with regards to space – been working hard to locate postdocs near PIs to enable them to work together
• Teaching very specific so can’t always be advertised to everyone
• Postdocs included in access to material on the VLE related to Research Committee and have the opportunity to attend departmental staff meetings. They remain unable to attend DRC because of the confidential nature of items

12. Department of Physics
• Fellowship scheme – it was identified that finding time to write a fellowship proposal was problematic. Postdocs can now apply for funding to ‘buy’ time to write a proposal. This has been running for a couple of years and has brought quite a few fellowships into the department
• In 2016/7 will be introducing for post-docs interested in teaching and who show independence from their PIs the opportunity to be ‘paid’ for their teaching – not as a salary but into a fund that they can use to source and develop some independent activities for career development
• People from local companies invited in to talk about their research career outside of academia – this is new but has been well-received so far.

13. Department of Psychology
• Recent re-organisation
• Inclusiveness and Development Committee recently set up
• Active ECR forum with a recently appointed faculty-link person (now to be called a Research Champion!)
• Specific induction material for post-docs
• Research fund scheme which post-docs can apply for
• No mentoring scheme currently but would like to introduce one - department does have a list of people willing to be contacted who can give advice on particular topics (ie career development, writing a grant)
14. Centre for Reviews and Dissemination – research only (like CHE)
- Research-only department with around 30 members of staff
- Gone through a major restructure and rebuild and worked hard to get in more research income.
- Grade 6 researchers in particular are encouraged to apply for funding to ‘buy out’ research time resulting in conference presentations and publications.
- In the process of setting up a department staff training and development group which will be led and chaired by Peter Coventry and will look across all grades within the department.

15. Department of Theatre, Film and Television
- There are 2 researchers in the department, both of whom are working on projects with the HoD and Deputy Head, as such the department has been able to address issues around the Concordat and embed it centrally.
- Both members of research staff will be doing some teaching next year. In addition the department has a number of associate lecturers on fixed term contracts also being mentored with a view to them balance teaching with research in the future.
- Procedures can be rolled out as the number of postdocs grows.

Social Policy and Social Work- provided update following the event:
- SPSW has had a fundamental review of funding arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity – the stress being on the continued employment of researchers wherever possible with bridging arrangements in place to facilitate this. New arrangements ensure that, where possible, existing research staff are allocated to projects across all three units of SPSW in order to maintain their % funding levels.
- Researchers are provided with a departmental induction and are fully included in the life of the Department. Relevant training is available where requested by PIs and researchers – the Departmental Administrator now has responsibility for overseeing training.
- Regular mentoring and PI support ensures that researchers are properly managed and new funding opportunities identified where possible.
- Performance review has been upgraded in accordance with university guidelines and involves systematic attention to career development through the careful setting of realistic targets for researchers.
- Researchers have the opportunity to feed into Departmental strategic planning and policy making – each unit has regular staff meetings and the HoD frequently sends out newsletter-style emails to inform staff about current financial status, possible future plans and so on.