UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR RESEARCH STAFF

A meeting of the Steering Group was held on 16th August 2016

Present: Professor Tim Newman (Convener), Dr Lisa Anderson, Dr Amy Cameron, Mrs Alison Cartwright, Dr Wendy Moncur, Dr Sandra Oza, Dr Lynsay Pickering, Dr Clive Randall, Mr Ajit Trivedi

In Attendance: Miss Nicky Millar

Apologies: Dr Victoria Cowling, Dr Shona Johnston, Mrs Gillian Jones, SLSRSA-Chair

Conveners Comments

Members were welcomed by the Convener to the first meeting of the 2016/17 academic year. The Convener highlighted that it was part of the University’s mission to include all groups of staff with regards to decision making at the University, with the aim of this Steering Group being to ensure that overlooked members of staff such as technical staff and Post Docs, are included and engaged with more productively.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2016

The Steering Group approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2016.

2. Matters Arising;

i. CDRS Membership

The Convener alerted the group that Dr Sam Swift (Head of Centre for Advanced Scientific Technologies (CAST) and Director of Imaging, School of Life Sciences) would be joining the Steering Group and queried whether technical staff from elsewhere in the University should be invited.

It was noted that a mid-career researcher and Post Doc from the ‘arts’ would be good additions to the Steering Group (Dr Vicky Cowling and the SLSRSA-Chair currently represented the ‘sciences’).

Action Wendy Moncur to make enquires regarding a mid-career researcher and Post Doc from the ‘arts’ to join the Steering Group.

A discussion took place regarding the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). It was confirmed that the focus of the Steering Group was on research staff however it was discussed whether there should be a parallel group for TEF, or whether a joint approach should be considered as TEF develops, especially as it can be difficult to separate staff members between teaching and research if they are on T&R contracts.

ii. Breakdown of research staff across the nine schools

It was noted that Gillian Jones was leading on this item, pulling together this
information for the next CDRS meeting. It was agreed that a breakdown of full time and part time staff would also be helpful, and to have a breakdown of which permanent staff members were submitted to the last REF.

3. **CDRS plan for 2016/17 (HR Excellence Action Plan)**

Following discussion it was agreed that key stakeholders would be contacted a month before each CDRS meeting and asked to prepare a one page document regarding progression of their actions to the group. It was also suggested that a one page document containing key activates for this group to focus on should be produced.

**Action** Lisa Anderson, Head of Organisational and Professional Development to coordinate correspondence to key stakeholders regarding ‘high level actions’ update and CDRS key activities document.

4. **Correspondence to research staff**;

   i. **Technicians**
   
   ii. **Post Docs (to include PURE details from LLC)**

It was agreed that correspondence to both technicians and Post Docs would need to be meaningful and provide information, perhaps including details of training opportunities / professional development opportunities.

A discussion took place regarding the career progression and encouragement of Post Docs and technical staff. It was suggested that where appropriate, consideration should be given to naming Post Docs as Co-Is on grant proposals where they have been joint lead with a PI. Similarly, naming/thanking technical staff on papers if they have contributed to the work on the paper. Steps such as this would help greatly with staff morale and career progression.

5. **Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) Report: 2015 – Summary**

The Researcher Development and Projects Officer led discussions on the CROS executive summary that had been circulated. CROS runs biennially; the 2015 summary indicates a fairly good response however CROS is now aligned with the University of Dundee survey and as a result is competing for responses.

It was suggested that in order to encourage engagement from research staff, associations / forums should be considered. It was noted that Medicine and Life Sciences already run research conferences, however are career specialised therefore thought should be given for an alternate forum for researchers from varying backgrounds to engage with.

A discussion took place regarding a University wide Post Doc association and whether such a forum should be relooked at. However, a few members raised the point that School associations already exist and work well, therefore they may be hesitant to engage if this would just produce duplicate forums. Essentially, a University wide association would require an enthusiastic individual to lead it.

**Action** Steering Group to consider and investigate demand for University wide Post Doc association.

6. **Recognition of ‘day to day’ supervision by research staff**

The group discussed the recognition of day to day supervision by research staff, particularly
with regards to Post Docs. It was noted that Post Docs act as the day to day point of contact for most students/PhD students, relieving PIs of these duties, and yet are not always recognised for taking on this role. It was suggested that duties such as these should be raised and noted during the OSAR process, feeding into the HERA process if significant.

Discussion took place regarding management, noting that a good manager would normally detail such duties in letters of recommendation for example, to ensure credit was given to Post Docs where appropriate.

7. **REF**

A discussion took place regarding the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The Convener briefly updated the group following publication of the Stern review, alerting them that more definitive details will follow in the lead up to the next REF.

8. **AOB**

No other business was raised.