Attendees

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1. **Welcome and Introduction – Dr Tariq Masood, Chair, DPCCN**

Tariq Masood welcomed attendees to the Departmental Postdoc Committees Chairs Network meeting and highlighted attendance of guest speaker Dr Rob Phaal. – *slide 1,2,3*

Attendees were reminded of the networks purpose and priorities and needs. The meetings themes were briefly explained; Research Excellence & Recognition and Strategic Career Plan & Progression. – *slide 4*

The chair notified the network with recent updates; – *slide 5,6,7,8*

- Update to contacts for the Network on the [DPCCN webpages](#). Please let hollie.godden@admin.cam.ac.uk know if you notice information that needs correcting.
- Headshots are needed to add with the contact information, send to hollie.godden@admin.cam.ac.uk
- Minutes and slides from the last meeting are available [online](#).
- Network lunches have been held since the last meeting, Mill Lane on 22nd August and BMC on 6th November – look out for more.

2. **Updates on postdoc matters – Dr James Brown, Assistant Head of Office, Strategy, OPdA and Dr Tariq Masood, Chair** – *slide 10 and Information paper*

   a) **Academic Career Pathways and support for research staff**

   JB informs the network that 2019 is the last year of the current Senior Academic Promotions Scheme which is to be replaced by the new Academic Careers Pathway Scheme. When the Academic Career Pathway Scheme is finalized, a review exercise will be conducted to align the Senior Research Promotions Scheme with the new model for academic progression.

   KP updates that the Senior Research Promotions exercise, which a separate group has been created for, will align with a review of the career progression of teaching staff. The need to include postdocs in the new Academic Career Pathways has been recognised and needs to be discussed.

   b) **Researcher Development funding and opportunities for Departmental Committees**

   DPCCN, with PdOC and OPdA, has launched a [Researcher Development Pitch Competition](#) which gives the opportunity for departmental committees to pitch for funding for a new idea and initiatives to deliver Researcher Development in Cambridge. Open to all postdocs in university departments and colleges as well as partner institutions. Please display posters in your department.

   **Action:** Add guide to organising RD activity, with contacts in schools, to website in new year when finalised.

   **Action:** Circulate call to DPCCN again
c) **Postdoc calendar and UTBS**

A *shared postdoc calendar* has been launched which includes all postdoc events, university wide. Events can be submitted by going to the calendar. If you have any problems or questions please email hollie.godden@admin.cam.ac.uk

d) **Payment rates for teaching activities**

At the last meeting Drs. Robert Pralat and Olga Loblova informed the network of teaching payment discrepancies involving postdocs. Since the meeting, James has discussed the problem with Graham Virgo who will obtain advice. OPdA will update the network.

### 3. Concordat Consultation – Dr Jacek Mokrosinski - *slide 13 to 22*

Jacek informs the network that most people have not heard of the Concordat emphasising the need to change this. He explains the Concordat was first implemented in 2008 so is now going through a review for which a consultation period has opened for responses to recommendations made by the Concordat Strategy Group. Karina tells the network that a working group has been set up to draft an institutional response which Eilish Ferrin and Chris Abell will edit and approve for Karina to submit. Researchers 14, a group of representative from 13 Russell Group Universities, are also coordinating a response and individual responses are also welcome.

Jacek asks the network to look at the 14 recommendations and pick the 3 most important and provide further feedback.

**Results:**

**Concordat Consultation Feedback**

- **Top three recommendations:** 4, 5, 13
- **2, 4, 14**
- **4, 5, 13 (possibly 2 and 10)**

- **Top Three - 4, 5, 13.**
- **experimental costs potentially a big barrier in some fields**
- **flexibility important and conversations between PI and postdoc valuable per se**
- **allow postdocs to apply for small grants as a matter of course – eg engineering**
- **where FEC is recovered at >100% could funds be earmarked for small funding internally?**
- **use of time needs to flexible – teaching? industrial placement? in blocks of time rather than weekly?**
- **allocation of space and facilities – still need dept support, need balance between support and postdoc initiative**
- **evaluation – track record of support by PIs included in future grants assessment? nb welcome trust, Cambridge UCP criteria**
- **use RA environment statements or funding incentives, by using CRITICAL DATA consistent across surveys or combining surveys**

DPCCN November 2018
After the exercise the group discussed questions and points that were raised and included own thoughts.

**Recommendation 4;** How will the 20% independent time work, suggestion that including a statement of career progression at the beginning of the contract or an extra project defined at the start will help implement. Having a staff review career development plan and include the time taken with results in the review will also help however, across the institution there is a 28% review rate for researchers which is only up 10% in four years. Funding for experimental costs is problematic, can there be a method to cover research costs of own project, having time could be useless if unable to conduct research using instruments and equipment and need for own space to work on own project. Postdocs need to be proactive with own projects and own time, taking responsibility of own career.

**Recommendation 14;** Exercises for awards such as HR Excellence and Athena Swann are becoming repetitive in terms of contact being copied from one to the other and becoming costly to institutions for the amount of time it takes. Suggestion that all are merged into one award or response from institutions.

**Recommendation 7;** Agreement that Equality and Diversity should be embedded.

**Recommendation 2;** Hidden researchers are different in all institutions so it is difficult to label who is included. Technicians have own concordat.

**Action:** Circulate open document for comments

4. Break

5. **Senior Researcher Promotions – Dr Tariq Masood and Dr Rob Phaal – slides 25 to 30**

Displaying a table showing the number of PRA’s and DoR’s by school, Tariq explains that PRA’s and DoR are often recruited into roles rather than the role being filled by promotion but promotion should be encouraged. The majority of postdocs fall into the 1-3 years category for length of service with a distinct change in year 3-4 as shown on slide27. The University does not currently use Grade 8 and 10 for RA’s and SRA’s and a researcher must be grade 9 to apply for SRP.

The SRP 2019 exercise has been launched. The general guidance states that two criteria need to be met to be eligible, Tariq highlights that a third criteria is hidden in the launch letter “Confirmation that funding is available to support the higher salary costs for the duration of the appointment will be required.”

Dr Rob Phall described his experiences with SRP to the network.
Rob explains that everyone’s situation is different, he had no academic career background but he managed to find funding and a PI who needed a postdoc team at SRA level. A key part
was funding, Rob made sure he met lots of external people and made himself known. Using a web platform to communicate with the world and industry for references and funding.

Comments and feedback received from the network:

**Senior Researcher Promotions Feedback**

- Need to find a potential solution for SRP to introduce Grade 10 in between G9 and G11

6. **AOB and Next Meeting – Tariq**
   
   Next meeting date to be circulated