

University of Cambridge
PdOC Society and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
Departmental Postdoc Committee Chairs Network

Minutes of the meeting in the Postdoc Centre @ 16 Mill Lane

18:00 Wednesday 13 June 2018

Attendees

Department/Institute	Name	Email
Biochemistry	Neil Rzechorzek	njr48@cam.ac.uk
Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology	Jason Brenker	jb2155@cam.ac.uk
Chemistry	Mike Casford	mtlc2@cam.ac.uk
CRUK CI	Shalini Rao	Shalini.Rao@cruk.cam.ac.uk
	Sankari Nagarajan	Sankari.Nagarajan@cruk.cam.ac.uk
Divinity	Hjoerdis Becker-Lindenthal	hb462@cam.ac.uk
Engineering	Mark Ainslie	mark.ainslie@eng.cam.ac.uk
	Tariq Masood	tm487@cam.ac.uk
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies	Shai Heijmans	sh827@cam.ac.uk
Gurdon Institute	Przemyslaw Stempor	ps562@cam.ac.uk
Institute Metabolic Science/CSPC	Jacek Mokrosinski	jm972@medschl.cam.ac.uk
MRC-LMB	Charlie Morgan	cmorgan@mrc-lmb.cam.ac.uk
Music	Charlotte Bentley	cab96@cam.ac.uk
OB/GYN	Francesca Gaccioli	fg327@medschl.cam.ac.uk
OB/GYN	Ulla Sovio	us253@medschl.cam.ac.uk
Physics	Paul Bennett	wpb22@cam.ac.uk
Physiology, Development and Neuroscience	Andrea Dimitracopoulos	ad865@cam.ac.uk
Plant Sciences	Katrin Geisler	kg404@cam.ac.uk
Psychology/GRASP	Nicole Horst	nh382@cam.ac.uk
	Olga Loblova	ol264@cam.ac.uk
	Robert Pralat	Rp422@cam.ac.uk
Zoology	Sarah Luke	Shl47@cam.ac.uk
OPdA	Hollie Godden	Hollie.Godden@admin.cam.ac.uk
OPdA	James Brown	James.Brown@admin.cam.ac.uk

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 new representatives at their first DPCCN meeting. – *slide 1*

Attendees were reminded of the meeting's agenda and papers with a brief introduction of Robert Pralat from Sociology and explained the focus for the second half of the meeting will be on network priorities. – *slide 2*

The chair also covered the purpose of the network. – *slide 3*

- Provide a representative postdoc 'voice'.
- Share best practice, ideas and experiences between departments.
- Provide face to face advice, support and training for existing departmental postdoc committees.
- Provide guidance and support for postdocs and departments in setting up new departmental postdoc committees.

Showing a visual of the network priorities, the chair explained 13 DPCCN priorities were established in May 2014 with the addition of number 14 in May 2016. Now it is time to look at and think about 2017/2018 priorities, particularly new priorities which haven't been raised before. – *slides 4 to 7*

Updates given by the chair – *slide 8*

- Vice Chancellor's EU Advisory Group - Dr Tariq Masood
University rethinking giving PI status to postdocs.
- University Postdoctoral Matters Committee - 3rd meeting held on 15/03/2018
Academic Promotions
- New DPCCN Administrator - Hollie Godden
- DPCCN Vice Chair role - We're looking for 1-2 new vice chairs for the network!
Contact Jacek Mokrosinski (jm972) if interested or for further information.

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 consultation

The need to include postdocs in the new Academic Career Pathways has been recognised and needs to be discussed.

Encouragement of postdocs or postdoc representative's involvement in promotions committees is very important during early stages.

Tariq and members responded in support of 'Postdoc Prizes'.

Any feedback is welcomed and needs to be sent to Tariq in preparation for further meetings and discussions.

b) Researcher increments scheme

Members were advised the current round of the Contribution increment scheme is now open and were asked to promote to other postdocs who may not know.

During a brief discussion, positive and negative feedback was expressed which included the scheme working well in bigger groups and unconfirmed reports of HR being worried about finding the money from grants.

It was questioned if money should be earmarked for promotions when grant applications are submitted. This could positively help with the scheme knowing money will be available.

Any feedback from those who have used the scheme before would be greatly appreciated.

c) Senior Researcher Promotion

Senior Research Promotions to be reviewed for alignment with new ACP system.

Members were advised that a representative at PRA level, who has been through the process, will be invited to provide a presentation for discussions about the process, providing clarity and advice.

Postdocs have a good opportunity to highlight any areas which could be improved with a review due in the new term.

During a discussion it was mentioned that there needs to be more transparency and consistency on how postdocs can achieve eligibility for promotion and PI status.

Nicole Horst reported knowing what to do and what is expected is a 'murky' area.

Charlie Morgan suggested making a working group in the new term to review what is working, what isn't working, peer analysis.

d) Visiting research staff

Members were told about the problems visiting research staff face when arriving to Cambridge, including no access to information and resources, no CRSiD, no University ID card plus more.

The University does not currently hold a central visitor's record as this is handled at a departmental level.

Over the summer period, OPdA will aim to gather data from the departments to establish how many visiting researchers they have, what they have access to in the department, if they are given inductions etc.

With Matias Acosta (PdOC University Representation and Policy Officer) a survey can be created to obtain first hand experiences, highlighting areas for improvement.

James reported that EU working groups are concerned those who will need to obtain a visa will instead be processed as a visitor by PI's.

e) Costs for professional development on grants

The university are enforcing PI's to put money onto their grants for professional development of research staff.

Feedback reported during a discussion indicate confusion from departmental administrators about availability of money on grants for trainings and development.

Also, reports of PI's rejecting requests for money from grants for development. Members are advised if they are having problems to contact OPdA. Once more data is received over time we will be able to establish if this is working and if not, find out why. Tariq clarified that if it is a postdoc related training or event for development it should be covered but if it is for a project it is not covered. Guidance to be written up for clarity but keep the guidance not too prescriptive to keep options open.

f) Shared postdoc events calendar

Members informed that a shared postdoc event calendar will be launched very soon. The idea of the calendar is to centralise activities relating to postdocs to save checking numerous calendars and avoiding event clash. Email Hollie Godden with events to be added. If a lot of events are run regularly by a particular department or group, it can be arranged to give them access to the calendar to add events directly.

g) UKRI Future Leaders Fellows scheme

UKRI scheme aimed at helping postdoc transition, providing a job at the end of the scheme to keep postdocs in the UK. Of attendees only 6 had heard of the scheme, 2 of those heard through their department. The University is worried about finding permanent positions and therefore are indicating it is a bad scheme as someone could be a postdoc for 7 years on the scheme and still be a postdoc after. During discussions it was suggested that the University plan ahead, if they know who is retiring, recruit postdocs into the scheme in line with the retirement. Tariq informed that in IfM, 4 lectureships were taken by grant postdocs.

h) Revised Concordat

New version of the Concordat will be published before September 2018. Members informed that the network will think about the new Concordat in the Michaelmas Term. Significant changes include recommendation for protected time for individual research in which PI's should agree sub-research and include costs of this in their grants. Also, a 'PI Principle' clarifying the responsibilities of a PI to their research staff.

3. Payment for Teaching related activities – Drs. Robert Pralat and Olga Loblova from Sociology. - slide 12 to 18

Robert explained the teaching payment discrepancies involving postdocs. Some teaching is paid for by Colleges and other teaching is paid for by the University. Payment from Colleges is based on an increasing rate whereas the University rates have remained the same since 2008. This has created a substantial discrepancy in how the different kinds of work are valued.

During a discussion it was pointed out that some of the work is completed during normal hours. For example, while an experiment is running work can be marked, therefore the postdocs are in a sense being paid for their time already, with the extra for teaching on top. It was also raised that not all SRA's are aware of teaching responsibilities available.

Others reasoned that some departments work around the issue by providing the postdoc with a title which they can use in a C.V such as 'Teaching Fellow' or 'Affiliated Lecturer' and in some cases obtaining the title after holding a certain amount of lectures.

All members agreed the value to the postdoc of teaching is a factor to consider. For example, a postdoc is unlikely to mark a 5000 word essay for £10 as it will not be as valuable to them as other teaching is.

James to take the issue back to OPdA to be further looked into.

4. Break

5. Network Priorities and Planning - slide 21 & 22

Attendees were asked to split into 4 groups to think about the current priorities of DPCCN, new priorities for 2018/2019 and challenges faced explaining specifically what, why and how.

After 25 minutes in groups, thoughts, challenges and identified priorities were shared.

Priorities identified in task:

1. Identify future unknown needs of postdocs -
2. College Affiliations
3. Identifying groups who may miss out on inductions etc.
4. Priorities at School level
5. Guidelines for departments and university
6. Permanent Staff Scientist Positions
7. Representation of postdocs at department meetings
8. Recognition – childcare
9. Representation at committees
10. Access to RDP funding
11. Wellbeing – accommodation costs at Eddington
12. Teaching / Research Development

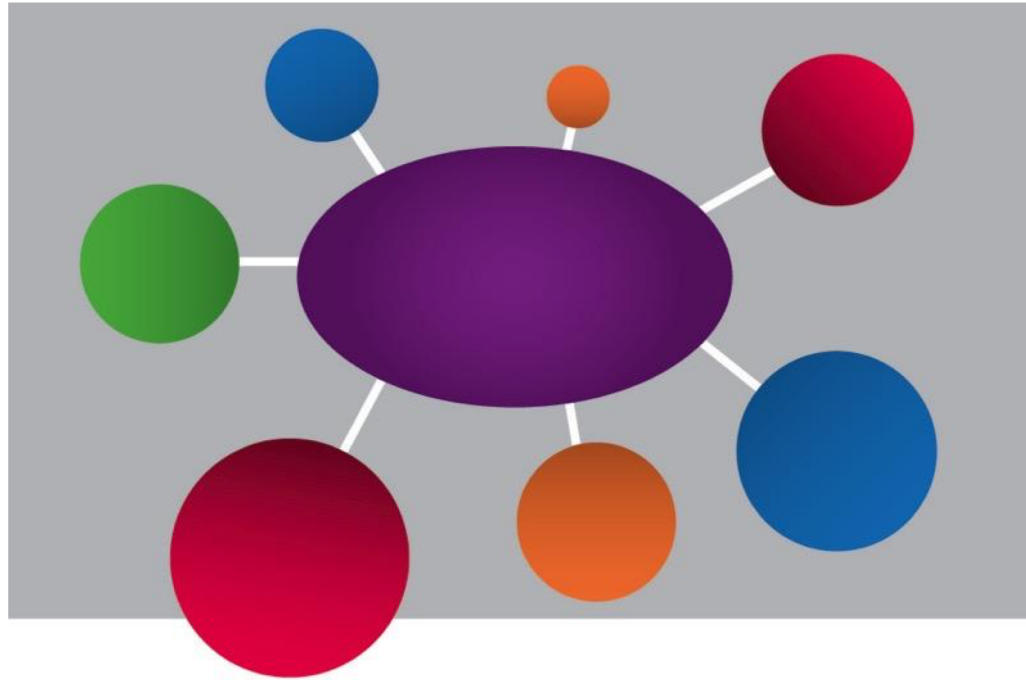
A discussion took place regarding Guidelines. The University does have guidelines set out, such as being notified 6 months before the end date of a contract that the postdoc will be shortlisted for any vacancies for which the postdoc is suitable however, from experiences shared it appears the guidelines are not being used in some departments.

6. AOB and Next Meeting – Tariq

The next meeting will be scheduled for September 2018, the date is to be confirmed. Trainings at previous meetings included 'leadership' and 'committee set up'.

Contact email for Hollie Godden (Postdoc Societies Administrator) is hollie.godden@admin.cam.ac.uk

An idea which will be progressed over the summer is lunchtime network lunches. Initially focusing on holding these at BMC, Central Cambridge and West Site as a chance for postdocs to network in an informal environment. Further information will be circulated in due course.



Departmental
Postdoc Committee
Chairs Network

Wednesday 13th June 2018

Agenda

- 1. 18:00** Welcome and introduction (Dr. Tariq Masood, Chair, DPCCN)
- 2. 18:05** Updates on postdoc matters (Dr. James Brown and Tariq)
- 3. 18:35** Payment for teaching & related activities (Drs. Robert Pralat, Olga Loblova & Jacques Wels, Sociology)
- 4. 18:50** Short break
- 5. 18:55** Network priorities and planning (Tariq)
- 6. 19:55** AOB and next meeting (Tariq)

Purposes of the Network



Provide a representative **postdoc 'voice'**



Share best practice, ideas and experiences between departments

Provide face to face advice, support & training for **existing** departmental postdoc committees



Provide **guidance and support** for postdocs and departments in setting up **new** departmental postdoc committees

Network priorities

(Updated, May 2016)

Postdocs need opportunities / support / access to following:

1

Research
Excellence &
Recognition

2

Strategic
Career Plan &
Progression

3

Leadership
Opportunities

5

Representation
at Dept. &
University

4

Teaching
Opportunities

6

Appropriate &
Timely
Mentoring

7

Meaningful
Professional
Review

8

Personal &
Professional
Development

9

Moving to
Careers
Outside
Academia

10

Networking
(Professionally
& Socially)

11

Timely
Induction &
Welcome in
Cambridge

12

Alumni
benefits on
leaving
Cambridge

13

College
Affiliations

14

Wellbeing and Family support

2017/18 Priorities

2

Strategic
Career Plan &
Progression,
Mentoring

6

14

Wellbeing and
Family support

?

Other priorities



2017/18 Priorities

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Other priorities



Updates

- Vice Chancellor's EU Advisory Group
 - Dr Tariq Masood
- University Postdoctoral Matters Committee
 - 3rd meeting held on 15/03/2018
- New DPCCN Administrator
 - Hollie Godden
- DPCCN Vice Chair role
 - We're looking for 1-2 new vice chairs for the network!

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Updates on postdoc matters

- a)** Academic Career Pathways consultation
- b)** Researcher increments scheme
- c)** Senior Researcher Promotion
- d)** Visiting research staff
- e)** Costs for professional development on grants
- f)** Shared postdoc events calendar
- g)** UKRI Future Leaders Fellows scheme
- h)** Revised Concordat

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Payment for teaching and teaching-related activities

Departmental Postdoc Committee Chairs Network meeting
13 June 2018

Robert Pralat and Noémie Merleau-Ponty
on behalf of Sociology Postdocs

Teaching payment discrepancy

- Postdocs, including those on full-time research-only contracts, are doing an increasing share of teaching work
- Some teaching (i.e. undergraduate supervisions) is paid for by **colleges**
- Other teaching and teaching-related activities (i.e. postgraduate supervisions, lecturing, marking, etc.) is paid for by the **university**

Teaching payment discrepancy

- Problem: whereas teaching paid for by **colleges** is based on **steadily increasing rates**, teaching paid for by the **university** is based on **rates that have remained the same since at least 2008** (when these rates were last revaluated)
- This has created a **substantial discrepancy** in how different kinds of teaching and teaching-related work are **valued**

For example...

- A postdoc supervising an **undergraduate dissertation** gets paid **£172.26** for the expected **six hours** of supervision

6 hours x £28.71

- A postdoc supervising an **MPhil student** gets paid **£165.00** for the expected **eight hours** of supervision

3 terms x £55.00

For example...

- This is despite the fact that supervising MPhil students is often more demanding
 - more advanced knowledge
 - being a student's sole supervisor for the whole course
 - more overseas students who may need help with English
- Other kinds of teaching-related work are also paid based on disproportionately low rates
 - for example, payment for marking a 5000-word essay is £10

Therefore...

...it is a priority for us to urge the university to **revalue** its non-UTO payment rates

Next steps

- What is the experience in other departments?
- What is the best way to address the problem?
- What can PdOC and OPdA do to help us?

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Wellbeing and Family support

Network priorities exercise

[Identify at least **top three**]

- **What** are the specific priorities of the network (short/medium/long term), and at **what** level?
[needs, issues, challenges, opportunities, support, access], [univ, dept]
- **Why** are these priorities for the network?
[rationale]
- **How** are these tackled currently? [current procedure, unknown, not tackled]
- **How** can the priorities be resolved / achieved in future? [actions for x, x = network, univ, dept]

Planning for next meeting

AOB and next meeting

- Hollie Godden, Postdoc Societies Administrator
 - hollie.godden@admin.cam.ac.uk
- Next DPCCN meeting
 - September 2018 (exact date tbc)
- Summer lunchtime network lunches: Central, West, BMC