

## Minutes from the Exeter ECR Liaison Forum

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at Streatham Campus

Amory B316 10am-12pm

### Attendees:

- Dr Helen Fones, ECR, rep to DCSB (nee Eyles) (CLES Biosciences) - Chair
- Dr Tim Wikinson, ECR (Politics)
- Dr Rebecca Wyatt, ECR (College of Medicine and Health)
- Dr Tristan Snowsill, ECR (College of Medicine and Health)
- Kate Foster, Doctoral College (Careers Coach)
- Charlotte Juggins, Doctoral College (PGR and ECR Experience Officer)
- Emma Stephenson, Doctoral College (Assistant Director of Research - Doctoral College)
- Dr Chris Wood, Doctoral College (Researcher Development Manager)
- Nicola Nye (present for agenda item 4), Library Services
- Lorna Barnes (present for agenda item 5) Research Services
- Prof Andrew McRae, (Dean of the Doctoral College)

### Apologies:

- Dr Karen Leslie (Head of Researcher Development & Research Culture)
- Dr David Ross, ECR (UEBS)
- Dr Ben Gardner, ECR, rep to DCSB (CEMPS, Physics)
- Dr Zoltan Gombos, ECR (CEMPS)
- Dr Yolanda Hill, ECR (Living Systems Institute)
- Dr Colleen Deane, ECR (CLES, Sport and Health Sciences)

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### 1 Welcome & Introductions

Helen Fones welcomed those present to the meeting and introductions were made.

### 2 Matters arising from the last meeting held 12.11.18 and not covered on the Agenda

- 2.1 Chris Wood has spoken to Charlotte Woollan and Andrew Johnson, which resulted in update meetings being given to ECRs surrounding Brexit support from the University. There is also an institutional webpage which has a list of FAQs for further reference.
- 2.2. Karen Leslie has spoken to Clive Betts re: would we be allowed to have an ECR representative on the Concordat steering group. The group is next meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, Chris Wood to check if this includes an ECR rep.

**Action: Chris Wood to check with Clive Betts that there will be an ECR representative on institutional the Concordat steering group.**

- 2.3 Chris Wood has submitted an explanatory paper on the institutional ECR feedback to the consultation on the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Early Career Researchers to the Doctoral College Strategic Board.
- 2.4 Chris Wood will contact Rachel Burn about the Navigator Programme, in Karen Leslie's absence.

**Action: Chris Wood to approach Rachel Burn re: 'Navigator' promotion.**

- 2.5 Helen Fones invited the new academic leads in Biosciences to today's ECR LF; they were not in attendance.
- 2.6 The proposed ECR 'induction' was taken to the Doctoral College Strategic Board and its development was approved. This has now taken place as part of the 'Welcome to the University' event, which took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February and is entitled the 'Early Career Research Staff Orientation'. It constitutes a welcome, familiarisation with ECR programme, representation and 'ECR Hub' as well as an opportunity to meet the RD team, ECR careers coach and the ECR reps.
- 2.7 Chris Wood reported back that a paper on the Concordat was presented at REIG.
- 2.8 Chris has not yet invited Clare Wydell to the ECR liaison forum to discuss fellowships, but will invite her to the next meeting.

**Action: Chris Wood to invite Clare Wydell to a future ECR LF to discuss fellowship training.**

- 2.9 Andrew to contact Chris Lindsay regarding and ECR Senate Rep.

**Action: Andrew McRae to contact Chris Lindsay regarding and ECR Senate Rep.**

- 2.10 Chris Wood wrote the update paper for the Doctoral College Strategic Board, which was approved by Helen Fones, Ben Gardner, Neeltje Boogert and MD Sharma. It was submitted and accepted at the last board meeting.
- 2.11 Chris Wood reported that he had been in contact with the Wellbeing Team in regards to the broken links on the University's wellbeing pages.
- 2.12 Chris Wood will check with Clive Betts about the results of the SWARM review, in Karen Leslie's absence.

**Action: Chris Wood will ask Clive Betts about the outcomes of the SWARM review and report back to the next ECR Liaison Forum.**

- 2.13 The lunchtime 'DC Drop-ins' have been planned and scheduled and the first one will take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> March.

**3 Networking 'in our own words' and updates from the ECRNs**

- 3.1 Tim reported back on the HASS ECR network. Tim and Rebecca have had two HASS ECR networks which took place last year. Items discussed included tailoring the training ECRs receive and lunchtime half hour walks. Tim is following this up with organising writing sessions and leadership training. Tim is currently writing a blog for the Doctoral College about the visit he made with Chris Wood to the Office for Postdoctoral Affairs at Cambridge University, last year. Tim has also been in contact with Zoltan Gombos about hosting a session at the 'National Post-Doc Conference' which would relate to non-academic careers and skills.

Tim also raised a question concerning accommodation; a new colleague and fellow ECR has less than a month to find somewhere to live and is keen for any information that can be supplied.

**ACTION: Chris Wood to talk to HR about what support we can give new ECRs with regards to accommodation, information about the different areas of Exeter and where to live etc.**

- 3.2 Helen Fones reported back from the Biosciences ECR network. As a result of two academics being appointed to give ECR support, they have managed to get training on editing the ECRN website and are ongoing with further website developments. They also now have a committee, with 6-7 people. A blog linked from the website has also been constructed which details informal social events. Biosciences are taking on 40-80 new people including postdocs from Aberdeen, which will be integrated into the socials. The ECRN with others is looking into some of the issues with regards to hot desking and the knock-on effects this may have.
- 3.3 Tristan Snowsill reported back from the Medical School ECR network. In the Institute of Health, things are going well. They are having a meeting once a month to encourage better attendance as the current bi-monthly meetings are dropping in attendance. They are also moving the days around of these meetings, to accommodate as many people as possible. They have just set up a SharePoint for useful information etc. Three people within the network are running RLLs. Tristan is also hoping to appoint a new rep to take on some of his work.
- 3.4 Rebecca Wyatt reported back from the new BioMedical ECRN. The first meeting took place last week and they currently bi-monthly. The subject areas they are initially covering include collaboration and setting up an agenda for people to present what they are doing for 5 mins, to get to talk and hear from others. They are also looking to get a more experienced colleague to present with regards to careers issues and career paths. This is a new network and the development will be ongoing to deliver support over the three campuses.

#### **4 New ECR 'LibGuides' resource**

- 4.1 Nicola Nye reported on the new ECR LibGuides set up by the library, which is now part of the 'ECR Hub'. The guide contains all the information that might support ECRs with regards to the library and their resources including help with searching the library and the various databases we have. Databases are updated all the time.
- 4.2 Nicola also explained the Digital first policy. When someone requests for a resource, the library will buy in digital print first before buying in print unless there is an accessibility or teaching requirement.
- 4.3 Nicola ended by letting forum members know that if colleagues are unable to find resources they can arrange to have a 1-to-1 appointment with a member of the library team, who will be able to help.

**ACTION: All - Any feedback please email library help or Nicola Nye and she will continue to improve the ECR LibGuide.**

#### **5 Research & Innovation Strategy Consultation**

- 5.1 Lorna Barnes presented on the research and innovation strategy, this will run from 2020-2025, we are currently still in the last strategy (2015-2020). Key things that come out of the 2015-2020 strategy included the creation of the Doctoral College, the Research Institutes and Innovation Impact and Business (IIB).
- 5.2 Currently in the early stages of the new strategy, it will take a little over a year to develop. Currently in the initial collection of information stage, the plan has four supporting pillars, which include: (1) Distinctive Research Portfolio, (2) Addressing world grand challenges, (3) Regional, National and global partnerships and (4) Research inspired learning.
- All of which are underpinned by Supportive Communities, Responsible, Ethical, Resilient Research Culture and Research and Education ecosystem.
- 5.3 There is a consultation timeline, with the preparatory phase taking place from December '18 to January '19, a framing phase - from January to March '19, construction of a green paper- February to May '19, the full strategic consultation occurring - May to October '19 with the Formal Approval – scheduled for Oct to Dec '19. Chris Wood noted that the ECR Reps for the Doctoral College Strategic Board had already contributed to the 1<sup>st</sup> open discussion meeting.
- 5.4 There is an [online feedback form](#), which colleagues can respond to for those unable to attend today's meeting or if colleagues have anything else to add.

**ACTION: Chris Wood to add a link to the R&I strategy to the ECR hub and continue to promote in the ECR newsletter.**

#### **Break for Coffee/Tea and networking**

- 5.5 Lorna Barnes asked for feedback on the following questions on:
- How should we continue to nurture interdisciplinary research at Exeter including through existing structures/entities (e.g. our PGR offer, institutes and centres)?
  - What additional measures can we take help cultivate a vibrant and positive research culture?
  - How can we motivate, empower and prepare our ECRs and other staff to respond to large and ambitious funding opportunities (e.g. through leadership, mentoring etc)?
  - What other questions should be posed as part of the consultation process?

A discussion took place on the questions above for which Lorna Barnes will feed into the strategy consultation.

**ACTION: Lorna Barnes to share these points with Chris Wood who will circulate the presentation as part of the minutes of the meeting.**

**ACTION: All to add to the consultation process, and let colleagues know about it across their ECRNs.**

## **6 Items from the Doctoral College Strategic Board (DCSB)**

6.1 The Strategic Board held in January decided on the following:

- To add more infographics to the 'ECR Hub' so that ECRs could see the landscape of colleagues they work with and enable enhanced communication;
- To liaise with Research Services to investigate whether or not it was possible to send a message to Principal Investigators, ECRs and other relevant staff, potentially from the DVC (Research and Impact), with regard to raising awareness of Concordat responsibilities and ECR rights;
- Liaise with relevant staff to investigate the inclusion of pro-forma wording in research grants with regard to building in allowances for ECR training and development;
- Undertake further work on the proposals within the paper relating to induction of ECRs in collaboration with relevant services such as People Development;
- Investigate the inclusion of a marker in e.g. Trent to identify ECRs in order to setup mailing lists for communication with ECRs, noting however, that this had been tried unsuccessfully in the College of Medicine and Health;
- Review the support provided to ECRs by the University in making applications to the GW4 crucible programme to see whether the proportion of successful University of Exeter applications to the programme could be improved.

**ACTION: Chris Wood and Charlotte Juggins to add the infographics information to the 'ECR Hub' via an online ECR Flyer.**

**ACTION: Chris Wood to ask Astrid Wissenburg and Neil Gow if the commitments to the Concordat and wording in research grants can be re-emphasised to relevant staff. The R&I review may serve as the perfect opportunity for these discussions.**

**ACTION: Chris Wood to talk to colleagues in the GW4 to see if additional coaching of applicants to the GW4 Crucible is appropriate and offer this service in the next round.**

## **7 Items to take to the DCSB**

- 7.1 Update on the Early Career Networks and the new network in Biomedical sciences.
- 7.2 Details of the new Early Career Research Staff Orientation Event.
- 7.3 Update of the ECR development programme and associated support.
- 7.4 Update on the HR Excellence report and institutional review.

**ACTION: Chris Wood to draft a paper and circulate to the ECR reps for approval ahead of the DCSB paper submission date of 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

## **8 Update from the Doctoral College**

- 8.1 Chris Wood updated the meeting with details of how the ECR provision of support and development programme was continuing to be aligned with the 'Exeter Academic'. Yolanda Hill the ECR rep for the LSI is also now an official representative on the Exeter Academic Steering Group.
- 8.2. Chris Wood updated members with the work that has be ongoing re. the University's 'HR Excellence' award. This is given to institutions that have a dedicated and realistic plan to support their ECR community in accordance with the Concordat to Support Early Career Research Staff. Chris Wood and Clive Betts have put together an 8 year review paper and action plan for going forward. There will be an institutional call on the 13<sup>th</sup> March, which will involve Chris Wood, Clive Betts and Tim Wilkinson as the ECR representative.
- 8.3 Chris Wood reported that the first 'Early Career Research Staff Orientation' event took place as part of the 'Welcome to the University' morning on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. This seemed highly successful with 15 new ECRs in attendance and was supported by Helen Fones and Ben Gardner. New ECRs were introduced to the development opportunities, the ECRN, the 'ECR Hub' as well as gaining some general welcome and careers advice. We will be discussing the options for Cornwall based new starters at the ECR Liaison Forum in Penryn on the 15<sup>th</sup> March.
- 8.4 Chris Wood reported that the ECR support, networks, Liaison Forums, careers support and development programme has been reported to the 'Wellcome Trust' institutional audit, which has been led by Clare Wydell and Steve Popham. Chris Wood and Gail Seymour reported on these activities and how they linked to research governance support across the University.

## **9 Any other business**

- 9.1 Emma Stephenson informed the group that she is leaving her position and the University in April, so this will be her last attendance at an ECR Liaison Forum.
- 9.2 Emma Stephenson reminded members that the results of the Employee Engagement Survey are now out and there are multiple opportunities to feedback comments.
- 9.3 A question was raised about if there is a way to nominate ECRs in the Guild Teaching awards.

**Action: Charlotte Juggins to investigate if there is a way to nominate ECRs within the Guild Teaching awards.**

## **10 Close of Meeting (date of next meeting: TBC)**

- 10.1 The meeting closed at 12pm.

## Exeter ECR Liaison Forum - Action Points Summary

Item No	Action Point	Assigned to	Completed
2.2	Chris Wood to check with Clive Betts that there will be an ECR representative on institutional the Concordat steering group.	CW	
2.4	Chris Wood to approach Rachel Burn re: 'Navigator' promotion.	CW	
2.8	Chris Wood to invite Claire Wydell to a future ECR LF to discuss fellowship training.	CW	
2.9	Andrew McRae to contact Chris Lindsay regarding and ECR Senate Rep.	AMcR	
2.11	Chris Wood will ask Clive Betts about the outcomes of the SWARM review and report back to the next ECR Liaison Forum.	CW	
3.1	Chris Wood to talk to HR about what support we can give new ECRs with regards to accommodation, information about the different areas of Exeter and where to live etc.	CW	
4	Any feedback please email library help or Nicola Nye and she will continue to improve the ECR LibGuide	All	
5	Chris Wood to add a link to the R&I strategy to the ECR hub and continue to promote in the ECR newsletter.	CW	
5.5	All to add to the consultation process, and let colleagues know about it across their ECRNs.	All	
6.1	Chris Wood and Charlotte Juggins to add the infographics information to the 'ECR Hub' via an online ECR Flyer.	CW/CJ	
6.1	Chris Wood to ask Astrid Wissenburg and Neil Gow if the commitments to the Concordat and wording in research grants can be re-emphasised to relevant staff. The R&I review may serve as the perfect opportunity for these discussions.	CW	
6.1	Chris Wood to talk to colleagues in the GW4 to see if additional coaching of applicants to the GW4 Crucible is appropriate and offer this service in the next round.	CW	
7	Chris Wood to draft a paper and circulate to the ECR reps for approval ahead of the DCSB paper submission date of 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2019.	CW/HF/BG	
9.3	Charlotte Juggins to investigate if there is a way to nominate ECRs within the Guild Teaching awards.	CJ	