

Minutes from the Cornwall ECR Liaison Forum
16th November 2018, Tremough House Board Room, Penryn (1pm-3pm)

Attendees:

- Dr JJ Valetta, ECR (CEMPS, Mathematics)
- Dr Clemens Ullman, ECR (CEMPS, CSM)
- Dr Camille Coye, ECR (CLES, Biosciences)
- Dr Carmen Falagan-Rodriguez, ECR (CEMPS, CSM)
- Dr Anne Leonard, ECR (UEMS, Truro Knowledge Spa)
- Dr Edward Mackay, ECR (CEMPS, Physics)
- Dr MD Sharma, ECR (CLES, Biosciences)
- Dr Alejandro Roman-Gonzalez, ECR (CLES, Geography)
- Dr Luke Palmer, ECR (CEMPS, CSM)
- Dr Oscar Fitch-Roy, ECR (CLES, Geography)
- Dr Chris Wood, Doctoral College, Researcher Development Manager (Chair)
- Dr Karen Leslie, Doctoral College, Head of Researcher Development and Researcher Culture
- Charlotte Juggins, Doctoral College, PGR and ECR Experience Officer
- Prof Andrew McRae, Dean of Postgraduate Research and of the Doctoral College

Apologies:

Dr Ajit Pillai, ECR (CEMPS, Engineering)

Prof Kim Soin, Associate Dean of Postgraduate Research and of the Doctoral College

Drs. Astrid Wissenburg, Director of Research

Emma Stephenson, Assistant-Director of Research (Doctoral College)

1. Welcome

Chris Wood welcomed those present to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Matters arising from the last meeting, held 05.10.18, not already covered on Agenda

Chris Wood reported the following:

- 2.1 It has been confirmed that MD Sharma and Neeltje Boogert will represent ECRs from the Cornwall campuses on the Doctoral College Strategic Board.
- 2.2 JJ Valetta is working closely with Juliet White to provide the details of the next set of starts training that will take place in the Spring term.
- 2.3 Chris Wood has spoken to Kitty Adhamy-Nichol and requested that if the 'IIB Essentials' are run again, that they also be rolled out in Cornwall.
- 2.4 Chris Wood passed on the concerns raised in the last Cornwall ECR Liaison Forum regarding 'Brexit'. As a result, information and dedicated sessions about Brexit have now been held on the Penryn campus.
- 2.5 Concordat Review – Four ECRs attended a meeting to discuss the proposals to the Researcher Concordat and their comments were fed back to Clive Betts and Astrid Wissenburg, who are organising the institutional response. Clive Betts has prepared a draft response and Chris Wood has agreed to look through. Colleagues were reminded that further comments can be given individually as a call to all staff will be announced before the final institutional response.

Action: Chris Wood to finalise ECR feedback to the consultation and draft an explanatory 'cover note' for DCSB.

3. Networking ‘in our own words’ and updates from the ECRNs

Chris Wood explained the thought process behind this new format. It is mainly an opportunity for not only updates from the constituent ECRNs, but for anything else to be raised/brought to the table, to simply meet colleagues and understand and ask questions about the strategic process of the ECR Liaison Forums and DCSB representation.

Updates from the ECRNs

Clemens Ullman will be replaced by Carmen Falagan-Rodriguez as the ECR LF rep for CSM.

It was reiterated that the membership of the ECR liaison forum is open to anyone who wishes to attend and is not limited to the reps.

A discussion took place about what the term ‘ECR’ means at the university, due to the variation across different departments.

A discussion was held about ECRs having to justify time doing DC work (e.g., ECR Liaison Forums, Researcher-led Initiative’s, etc.) as it is an expectation that this should be done in their own time (100% of time should be spent on the funded project). Andrew McRae reminded all present that the Concordat states 10 days/year to be spent on personal training/development and that the University has an HR Excellence Award based upon its measures in place to fulfil this. It was felt that a copy of the Concordat should be given to each person who receives a grant and to new PI’s. It was felt that there was not a good enough understanding around what the Concordat represents. A suggestion of a paper via REIG and Astrid Wissenburg may help. The subject of ECR Reps sitting on the Concordat Steering Group which Clive Betts is chairing was raised. It was highlighted that the Annual Staff Survey is open and would be a good channel for comments relating to these issues.

Chris Wood also commented that some of these issues should be covered in a newly developed ‘ECR Induction’, which he was planning with Clive Betts and Karen Leslie.

Action: Chris Wood to report back about the developments of a dedicated ECR Induction.

Action: Andrew McRae to enquire with Astrid about a paper on the Concordat for PIs at REIG.

There was a discussion, about the definition of ECR being tricky and often meaning different things to different people and different groups. This led onto a longer discussion regarding the ePDR; what exactly the process is meant to achieve, how it affects grading and if the ePDR is used in different ways? A particular focus of the conversation was how the ePDR links to progression. How does the change in status process for research fellows work and if you meet the criteria for progression, who pays if there is no additional money in the research funding? Clarity on these issues is needed.

Action: Karen Leslie to see if any information can be provided and determine if this can be included in the proposed ECR inductions or individual sessions.

The subject of communications and networking was raised and suggestions for how the Doctoral College can ensure it has better links with the ECR community in Cornwall. Suggestions included - direct contact with ECR colleagues, a specific ECR Cornwall mailing list, with all ECRs and discipline specific. Rotation of meeting around the Cornwall campuses, posters/leaflets outlining the recommendations and rationale of the Researcher Concordat, space in buildings for a ECRs to have poster boards.

4. Items from Doctoral College Strategic Board (DCSB) and Representation

As this is the first meeting of the Cornwall ECR Liaison Forum since DCSB representation has been agreed, there are no items to come from the DCSB, except for those detailed in sections 2 and 6 of these notes.

5 Items to take to the DCSB

Based on the discussions around item 3 of the agenda, it was felt within the group that an ECR definition was needed across the board, along with information about what the Doctoral College takes on, with recognition that across the board the definition might change and vary outside of the Doctoral College and ECR Liaison Forum.

It was agreed that a diagram of what an ECR is and our definition would be useful and this could be achieved by amending and updating the Doctoral College infographics.

Action: Chris Wood and Charlotte Juggins to look at adding more facts and figures and contacts to the DC website.

Action: Chris Wood to include these requests in the next paper for DCSB.

6 Update from Doctoral College (Vitae Concordat Group, Doctoral College Action Plan, Training)

Exeter Academic Steering Group – recognises teaching work that is being done at the University. There is currently a conversation taking place whether or not there are routes for professional recognition. Alternative route is LTHE which includes unpaid teaching. Academic Professional Programme (formerly PCAP) was mentioned as being available to all staff for whom academic practice is a key part to their role. It was highlighted that people on short term contracts should be better supported.

Karen Leslie reported that the staff wellbeing team links into the Concordat. Ben Gardner (Exeter DCSB Rep) reported that the self-assessment stress links were not working on the University web pages. Chris Wood reported that the ECR Wellbeing 'tile' on the 'ECR Hub' has been updated to link to all aspects of wellbeing support for ECRs and that the links from the DC have been checked and are functioning. Jackie Marshall is undertaking a review of SWARM and it was highlighted that time for training and development should be mentioned in the SWARM review. There needs to be a place to record teaching hours formally (ePDR was suggested however there is a feeling that comments are not taken seriously by line managers). Teaching, exam marking are undertaken on a voluntary basis to prepare individuals for the next level. Krystal Warmoth reported that there is no formal record of student feedback from teaching. Helen Fones (Exeter DCSB Rep) said that there is an expectation to teach ad-hoc and questioned the SWARM points system.

Action: Chris Wood to ask Wellbeing about the pages that are not working.

Action: Karen Leslie to ask Clive Betts about the outcomes of the SWARM review and report back to the next ECR Liaison Forum.

7 Any Other Business

Chris Wood reported that there is now a new DVC for Research, Prof Neil Gow, and suggested a focused open meeting for ECRs. Neil is keen on PI development and it is hoped that he can progress ECR support in the future.

Action: Chris Wood to ask Andrew McRae about a focused open meeting for ECRs and to progress the planned DC lunchtime networking events with Charlotte Juggins.

8 Close of Meeting (date of next meeting: 15 March 2019 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Penryn Campus).

Meeting closed 3 pm.

Cornwall ECR Liaison Forum - Action Points Summary

Item No	Action Point	Assigned to	Completed
2.5	Finalise ECR feedback to the consultation and draft an explanatory 'cover note' for DCSB.	CW	
3	Report back about the developments of a dedicated ECR Induction.	CW	
3	Enquire with Astrid about a paper on the Concordat for PIs at REIG.	AMcR	
3	To see if any information can be provided and determine if this can be included in the proposed ECR inductions or individual sessions.	KL	
5	Add more facts and figures and contacts to the DC website.	CW/CJ	
5	Include these requests (ECR definition, etc) in the next paper for DCSB.	CW	
6	Ask Wellbeing about the pages that are not working.	CW	
6	Ask Clive Betts about the outcomes of the SWARM review.	KL	
7	Ask Andrew McRae about a focused open meeting for ECRs and to progress the planned DC lunchtime networking events with Charlotte Juggins.	CW/CJ	