

## Minutes from the Exeter ECR Liaison Forum

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at St Lukes Campus

EMS S09 (Catherine Masterman Room) 11 am – 1 pm

### Attendees:-

- Dr Helen Fones, ECR, rep to DCSB (*née* Eyles) (CLES Biosciences) - Chair
- Dr Ben Gardner, ECR, rep to DCSB (CEMPS, Physics)
- Prof Andrew McRae (Dean of the Doctoral College)
- Dr Tristan Snowsill, ECR (College of Medicine & Health)
- Dr Sarah Walker, ECR (College of Medicine & Health)
- Dr Krystal Warmoth, ECR (College of Medicine and Health)
- Dr Karen Leslie, Doctoral College (Head of Researcher Development & Research Culture)
- Juliet White, Doctoral College (ECR Administrator)
- Dr Chris Wood, Doctoral College (Researcher Development Manager)

### Apologies:

Dr Tim Wilkinson, ECR (Politics)

Dr Zoltan Gombos, ECR (CEMPS)

Dr Oluwafunmilola, ECR (CEMPS, Engineering)

Dr Colleen Deane, ECR (CLES, Sport and Health Sciences)

Dr Luke Pilling, ECR (College of Medicine and Health)

Dr David Ross, ECR (UEBS)

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)

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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 24.09.18, not already covered on Agenda**

- 2.1 Chris Wood confirmed invitations had been sent out to different groups (HR, Vitae Concordat Group and Exeter Academics), inviting them to attend future ECR Liaison Forum meetings.
- 2.2 Karen Leslie to look at governance structures and how effective representation into the right structures can be improved.
- 2.3 Chris Wood working on a draft paper for circulation before the next Doctoral College Strategic Board in January 2019. Additional information to be collected from the next Cornwall ECR Liaison Forum on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2018.
- 2.4 Update from Cornwall ECR LF - two representatives from Cornwall have now been appointed to sit on the DCSB (Neeltje Boogert and MD Sharma). They will rotate who would attend Strategic Board Meetings in the same way as those representing the Exeter Campuses. RDRC are financially supporting the running of some Statistics training events at Penryn to be cascaded to post-docs/PhD Students. Following concerns over options for European staff post-Brexit, there will be Briefings about Settled Status for EU colleagues in Penryn taking place 16 November 2018. These are also to be rolled out in Exeter the following week. There was some discussion regarding an assurance from the University to EU member of staff in Exeter as there is a feeling of insecurity. Andrew McRae reassured those present that

provisions were in place should a Brexit deal fall into place however, it is acknowledged, a no-deal result will leave more uncertainty.

**Action: Chris Wood to contact Charlotte Woollam and Andrew Johnson re: communication/update from the Concerns re. Brexit to be circulated to relevant cohort.**

- 2.5 Karen Leslie reported that she had not yet met with Kate Lindsell re. ECR Representation on Concordat Steering Group. Karen reported that Kate has now left the University and she would take this up with Clive Betts.

**Action: Karen to approach Clive Betts re. ECR representation on Concordat Steering Group.**

- 2.6 Concordat Review – Four ECRs attended a meeting to discuss comments on the review of the Researcher Concordat. 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.**

- 2.7 REF – Rules of Engagement – to be raised later in meeting.
- 2.8 ECR Springboard/Navigator Programmes – Karen Leslie has spoken to Cathy Todd who has been asked to run specific Springboard session for the Medical School and ECRs. Karen is not sure if a Navigator programme will be running as it has not proved very popular. However, it was agreed that promotion could be improved – Karen agreed to speak to Rachel Burn. Sarah Walker stated that a Springboard Programme at St Lukes could be well supported.

**Action: Karen Leslie to approach Rachel Burn re: 'Navigator' promotion.**

### **3 Networking 'in our own words' and updates from the ECRNs (format introduced by Tim Wilkinson)**

In Tim's absence, Helen Fones 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.

#### ***Helen Fones (CLES, Biosciences)***

Helen attended a meeting held during the summer re. 'How to improve Biosciences'. Focus groups had met to find out ECRs requirements. Two new ECR academic leads have been appointed in Biosciences who may believe that they now have responsibility for the ECRN in Biosciences, replacing the previous lead who Helen was not aware had stepped down. Going forward, Helen hopes that the two new academics will be helpful and she is having a meeting with them later in the week to discuss the ECRN, the ECR Liaison Forums and their roles. She will also be collaborating with Yolanda Hill over the coming months re. ECR wellbeing. Some discussion followed regarding the use of language 'ECR'. Helen reported that when the term 'Research Staff' is used in Biosciences it is often exclusive of post-docs.

**Action: Helen to invite one or both new academics along to the next ECR LF in March 2019.**

***Sarah Walker (UEMS, College of Medicine and Health)***

Reported that she has to justify time spent doing DC work (e.g., ECR Liaison Forums, Researcher-led Initiative's, etc.) as it is an expectation that this should be done in her own time (100% of her 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 was made of a paper being sent via REIG and Astrid Wissenburg, may help. An attendee asked if there were any ECR Reps sitting on the Concordat Steering Group which Clive Betts is chairing. Helen reiterated that more linking up is required on this matter. It was highlighted that the Annual Staff Survey is open and would be a good channel for comments relating to these issues. Sarah explained that there had been a good attendance at a recent Focus Day.

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.**

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

Helen Fones felt that there is little support for fellowships. Chris Wood reported that a training session 'Applying for Fellowships' is due to run in the spring term. Issues such as, who is allocated to what work; costing support required; no support from line manager or PI were raised. It was thought that Clare Wydell from Research Services should be invited to a future ECR Liaison Forum and it was re-iterated that Steve Popham is going to be running sessions on some of the areas raised.

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

Tristian Snowsill asked if a designated ECR would be illegible to sit on Senate. Andrew McRae agreed to contact Chris Lindsay as a first approach.

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

### **4 Items from Doctoral College Strategic Board (DSCB)**

Again, a feeling that ECRs are not listened to was raised and Karen Leslie recapped that both Exeter and Cornwall campuses had ECR representation and a place on the Agenda for them to make their voices heard. Sarah Walker reported that there is no expectation that the Doctoral College supports anyone other than students. The term 'Early Career Researcher' includes those that have been a researcher for many years and may be later in life. Karen Leslie said that People Development, Academic Development and RDRC are working across boundaries to meet these challenges and be as inclusive as possible. Helen Fones stated that labels and boundaries are not helpful for ECRs and portrays a feeling of not being valued.

### **5 Items to take to the DCSB**

Helen Fones agreed to draft a paper and link back to the Concordat (language/feeling valued/member of research staff/hierarchy). Chris Wood agreed to amend the draft, making it clear to the DCSB that ECRs have contributed to the Concordat Review, before circulation.

**Action: Helen Fones and Chris Wood to draft 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 route 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 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 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**

Andrew McRae 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: 11 March 2019 10 am – 12 noon – Streatham Campus).**

Meeting closed 1 pm.

## **Exeter ECR Liaison Forum - Action Point Summary**

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Assigned to:</b>	<b>Completed</b>
2.4	Contact Charlotte Woollam and Andrew Johnson re: communication/update from the Concerns re. Brexit to be circulated to relevant cohort.	CW	16.11.18
2.5	Approach Clive Betts re. ECR representation on Concordat Steering Group.	KL	
2.6	Finalise ECR feedback to the consultation and draft an explanatory 'cover note' for DCSB.	CW	
2.8	Approach Rachel Burn re: 'Navigator' promotion.	KL	
3	Invite one or both new academics along to the next ECR LF in March 2019.	HF	
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	Invite Claire Wydell to a future ECR LF to discuss fellowship training.	CW	
3	Contact Chris Lindsay regarding and ECR Senate Rep.	AMcR	
5	Draft paper for DCSB.	HF/CW	
6	Ask Wellbeing about the pages that are not working.	CW	
6	Ask Clive Betts about the outcomes of the SWARM review and report back to the next ECR Liaison Forum.	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	