

Action required – for discussion

**Proposal to establish a Research Management Task Force
within the Utrecht Network**

1. Description or activity and the reason for the activity (including value added)

In June 2015 the University of Utrecht hosted a very successful event called 'Research Funding Support' which brought together a group of over 20 research managers from across the Utrecht Network. This provided an excellent learning experience for those involved and one outcome of the event was the agreement that a small group of delegates would work to arrange a second event next year. (This is now the subject of a separate application to the Utrecht Steering Group.)

However, discussions on this quickly developed into the idea to form a new task force within the Utrecht Network for research managers. It was felt this would be an ideal way to address some of the key ongoing issues which were raised through the workshop and create real opportunity for new international research collaborations. For example, two suggestions for initial work were the consideration and potential implementation of a research project partner pool across the Network and the development of a document exchange platform for research managers.

The development of this task force would have the potential to fill a 'gap in the market' in terms of the professional development of research managers across the Utrecht Network. Of course there is the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators which has recently introduced formal qualifications (one member of the proposed task force planning group is on the first cohort of this), but this course is expensive in terms of fees and time. And what we found from the Research Funding Support event, and our collective experiences, is that the real benefit and learning opportunities arise from the discussions amongst people in a network. This taskforce could provide real value to member Universities by creating one of the few possibilities for research managers to gather inspiration, be 'provoked' in discussions and to develop the profession.

It is proposed that the task force would have an annual meeting, hosted at different University campuses, with topical issues for presentation, debate and consideration. In addition it is envisaged that a lot of the work of the task force could be done through sub groups and electronically, once working relationships had been established at meetings.

The work of this task force would contribute to the Network's objective's through the shared research agendas of partner universities. For example the objectives to encourage staff mobility, the potential for joint working and building bridges between continents through mobility could be addressed. This task force would complement the other five established task forces and bring a new dimension to the Network.

The main 'value add' of this task force would be the international perspective it brings to research management, which is extremely valuable when working with international funding opportunities. At a time when universities within the Utrecht Network are aspiring to achieve more international research funding this task force would bring together a unique network of professional and academic staff who work in research in a way that could develop some tangible outcomes.

2. Timing of activity (action plan)

This proposal has been prepared for submission to the January 2016 Utrecht Network Steering Group and subsequently to the AGM in April 2016.

The first formal meeting is therefore planned to take place in June 2016. However, as both the members of the planning group and the initial wider group have already had the opportunity to meet and get to know each other, work could begin immediately through electronic discussions.

3. Who the recipients will be

The 'Research Funding Support' event, as explained in section one above, brought together the team now making this application on behalf of those who attended the event. The wider membership therefore includes representatives from the following universities:

- Aarhus University;
- Complutense de Madrid;
- Eotvos Lorand University;
- Masaryk University;
- Universitat Leipzig;
- University of Bergen;
- University of Bologna;
- University of Coimbra;
- University of Helsinki;
- University of Hull;
- University of Jasi;
- University of Tartu;
- Vilnius University.

The proposed structure of the task force planning group, until the June 2016 meeting, would be as follows:

- Chair - Pam Jackson, Hull University Business School Research and Enterprise Manager, University of Hull, UK;
- Csiki Laszlo, Centre for Innovation and Grant Affairs, Eovos Lorand University, Hungary;
- Eva Ptackova, International Project Support Manager, Masaryk University, Czech Republic;
- Jakob Feldtfos Christensen, Research Support Officer, Aarhus University, Denmark.

During the June 2016 meeting the membership of the task force would be discussed with the wider group and additions may be required at that stage.

4. Provisional budget

It is anticipated that a budget of €7,000 will be required for the Research Management Task Force. This budget would allow for one annual meeting of the full group and smaller sub group work on specific projects.

The task force would, hopefully, develop year on year and will require an ongoing budget.

5. How the activity will be evaluated

It is proposed that the Research Management Task Force would hold an annual meeting in June which would evaluate the previous year's work and action plan for the coming year.

In addition, full reports would be made on specific project work and these would be made available to the Utrecht Network Steering Group.