University of Edinburgh

Job Description

1. Job Details

Job title: Staff Development Adviser – Research Staff Development
School/Support Department: Human Resources
Unit (if applicable): Corporate HR
Line manager: Co-ordination of staff development activities – Head of Staff Development; work priorities and appraisal - Roberts Management Group and Director of Human Resources

2. Job Purpose

To provide professional support in research staff development within the University, to meet objectives in the University’s Strategic Plan and in line with funding and development requirements from the ‘Roberts initiative’ and with agreed HR priorities in Colleges and Support Groups.

3. Main Responsibilities

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1. Design, manage, co-ordinate, and review the Researcher Development Programme for the University’s research staff (primarily research-only [AR] staff), ensuring that College needs and priorities are met in addition to meeting the requirements accompanying external funding and control.

2. Research, design and submit proposals for the development and support of research staff (to Roberts Management Group); source and deliver support for programmes, courses, workshops, career review, codes of practice and communications for research staff; provide advice and consultancy support to research staff and Colleges/Schools.

3. Implement within UoE national surveys of research staff and their managers (CROS), analyse and report on survey data, and identify and develop agreed priorities for action.

4. Provide communications support for research staff through dedicated websites, newsletters, induction programmes, email groups, etc

5. Provide reports externally to RCUK on Roberts-related activity and internally to Roberts Management and Steering Groups, APC and Staff Committee.

6. Maintaining an active role in key national bodies in HE, relating to research staff development (UKHERD, LFHE including professional input to events, and committees, identifying and promoting the sharing of best practice.)

4. Planning and Organising

Planning and organising a range of mechanisms in support of research staff to meet training needs identified locally or nationally – programmes, workshops, career reviews, surveys, communications and codes of practice, ensuring that proposals are developed, implemented, and evaluated to time and within budget. Works closely with Transkills Unit (for post graduate
students) to ensure that joined-up working occurs across the Roberts agenda. Planning is normally up to 1 year but can be up to 2 years ahead.

5. Problem Solving
Developing career and personal development support and programmes for research staff involves gaining ownership from academics within the Colleges to ensure that the benefits and practice are embedded and not just ‘another initiative’. Resolves all day to day organisational problems but can refer major issues to Management Group.

6. Decision Making
The jobholder is expected to take forward his/her area of work, on his/her own initiative and to identify issues which need to be referred upwards (to HR Director or Management Group). Much of the work will involve joint policy development or problem solving with senior members of the HR community, with senior academics and other senior managers, and with the Director of the Transkills Unit. Other activity based decisions will be made with the jobholder without referral (on agreed programmes and priorities), such as the detail of course content, sourcing of internal and external practitioners to deliver activities, and course scheduling. Guidance and support is available from the Director of HR (with the former providing direct management support in the specific area of leadership and management development). Overall decisions on priorities and funding are made by the Management Group.

7. Key Contacts/Relationships
Key contacts are with the Management Group (Senior Vice Principal, Vice Principal, HR Director), - the jobholder providing advice on proposals for funding for staff related activities and, together with the Director of the Transkills Unit on ‘Roberts’ activity more generally; with the Roberts Steering Group (wider involvement from academic and research staff and students) in order to develop ideas and strategies for supporting researchers. The jobholder will maintain and develop key internal relationships with senior HR professionals in Colleges, and with professionals across the University who contribute their expertise to the programme of support (eg the Careers Service, ERI). Extensive knowledge of, and contact with, leading training providers in the field and with key HE bodies such as UKHERD and LFHE are essential in order to source appropriate external expertise and in order to ensure that the University is best placed to develop and influence the research staff development ‘agenda’. Relationships with support staff whose priorities he/she will need to direct and co-ordinate on projects or activities (from within Corporate HR team as a group which has been augmented with Roberts funding, in order to provide additional support in this areas specifically).

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
Desirably professionally qualified in HR, essentially qualified in development or developmental subject, established expertise and experience (at least 5 years) in the successful design and delivery of development events and interventions. Broad knowledge and understanding of the HE research staff context (experience of HE research desirable).

9. Dimensions
Budget – Approximately £350,000 pa from Roberts funding, plus £14k pa from Corporate HR staff development budget (expenditure is approved by the Management Group and Transskills Unit monitors overall Roberts ‘spend’ on both staff and students. Number of research staff – approximately 1,350 across all three Colleges.

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
The University has a devolved HR function in a traditional management context, which means that the jobholder has to operate and influence within a complex matrix of relationships, where the needs and drivers of the Colleges and Support Groups have primacy and solutions have to be found which meet the needs of up to six varying business areas in any case. This is
particularly difficult with restricted funding for research staff development held centrally – unlike any other area of activity.