

**RESEARCHERS' FORUM**  
**Bringing Researchers and**  
**UWE's Senior Research Managers Together**

**20<sup>th</sup> February 2017, 10.00am – 2.00pm,**  
**Dartington Suite, The Farmhouse (Frenchay campus)**

The UWE Researchers' Forum provides a platform for staff involved in academic research to engage in development activities for researchers and to have a say with those responsible for deciding the research direction of the institution. The Forum has now formally existed at UWE for more than 10 years (attached to this flyer is a brief history of the Forum).

This particular event provides an opportunity to raise and discuss research issues directly with members of UWE's Research Strategy Implementation Group (RSIG)\* and focuses in turn upon the important matter of what form the Researchers' Forum might take in future. Please see overleaf for how to submit questions or raise issues/ideas in advance.

9.30am	Tea/coffee on arrival
10.00am	<b>Introductions</b> (Glenn Lyons) <b>and a reminder of the history of the Researchers Forum</b> (Paul Spencer)
10.30am	<b>Introducing RSIG – its members and its function</b> (Martin Boddy)
10.50am	<b>Questions and Answers</b> (Paul Spencer) <i>Questions and issues raised by researchers (directly or in advance [anonymously] via the Chair) addressed by the RSIG panel</i>
12.20pm	Lunch
1.00pm	<b>Future support for staff development in research at UWE</b> (Glenn Lyons) <i>Examining the question of 'what next' for the Researchers' Forum</i>
1.45pm	<b>Summary remarks</b> (Glenn Lyons)
2.00pm	Close

\* RSIG membership is currently as follows:

Martin Boddy, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Business Engagement – Chair  
 Alison Vaughton, Clerk (RBI)  
 Hazel Edwards, Associate Dean, Research and Innovation (ACE)  
 Nicholas O'Regan, Associate Dean, Research and Innovation (FBL)  
 Glenn Lyons, Associate Dean, Research and Enterprise (FET)  
 Jenny Ames, Associate Dean, Research and Innovation (HAS)  
 Richard Bond, Head of Research Administration (RBI)  
 Tracey John, Head of Research and Business Development Team (RBI)

## **Putting forward your issues and question in advance**

If you wish to raise a matter that you would like RSIG members to respond to, it would be helpful to put this forward in advance. At the event itself we will aim to address as many matters raised as possible within the time available. Time permitting, we will also take fresh questions on the day itself.

Please provide the following to [Paul Spencer](#) no later than Monday 13 February using the following online survey:

<https://uwe.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/researchers-forum-questions-to-rsig>

The use of this survey platform allows you to post details of the matter you wish to raise (this may be as simple as a single question/point or may offer some further elaboration and context) in a way that is anonymous.

Similarly, you are also invited to provide any views in advance regarding the matter of 'what next' for the Researchers' Forum.

The survey also provides a little context around the UWE Researchers' Forum and an opportunity to register for the events itself.

Please note – requests for anonymity will be fully respected. Submissions received by Paul will be collated and circulated more widely (with due care to any sensitive content).

# An Overview of the UWE Researchers' Forum

## Context

In 2003, UWE participated in a national survey of early career researchers that had been piloted the year before – the then called Contract Researchers Online Survey (CROS). It asked the researcher population to answer questions on topics including recruitment, induction, probation, appraisal and ongoing review, development and training, career aspirations and communications.

A report summarising the findings from the CROS survey made a number of recommendations, the principal one to improve communications with researchers in terms of strategic direction and the sharing of good practice with respect to supporting and developing researcher careers.

The UWE Researchers' Forum was created to provide a platform for staff employed on research contracts (often referred to as contract researchers) to voice their queries, concerns and ideas relating to career development to senior managers at the university. The first event ran in May 2005 and was chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) with support from the relevant professional services (Research, Business & Innovation, Human Resources and UWE Careers). The forum collated feedback from researchers on elements of good practice and the areas for development around induction, training and development, appraisal, feedback and mentoring and, career advice and progression. An action plan based on these discussions was drafted and approved by members of the directorate.

## UWE Researchers' Forum

As a result of the action plan, the following year, the Researchers' Forum focused specifically on the topic of mentoring for researchers with two events exploring how such a scheme might be initiated and deployed at UWE. A planning group for future events was constituted with research staff representatives, representatives from the professional services and, an Associate Dean (Research) appointed as convener. The role of the Researchers' Forum became formalised by reporting directly to the university Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and established 3 core objectives, namely:

- To provide a network for research staff to help ensure that they are fully informed of research and knowledge exchange policies at UWE as well as personnel policies and developments which affect them.
- To enable the sharing of good practice and common issues for research staff across all UWE Faculties, Institutes and Research Centres.
- To provide a space to run development events specifically for research staff to help them deliver on UWE's Research and Knowledge Exchange agenda and their own career aspirations.

In 2011 the Researchers' Forum Planning Group was strengthened by ensuring researcher representation from *all* faculties and a fourth objective was added:

- Take forward issues to the University on behalf of staff on research grades

## Topics covered by the UWE Researchers' Forum

The Researchers' Forum has run regularly since and has covered many topics listed here:

**February '16** [Me, My career and the next REF](#)

**November '15** [HR Excellence in Research: Does it work for you?](#)

**December '14** - [Work-life balance](#) (workshop) [Janet Wilkinson]

**May '14** - [Taking charge of your research career \(panel session\)](#)

**December '13** - [Writing an 'internationally excellent' paper](#) and [how to extend your reach as a researcher](#) (UWE experts & social media tools)

**May '13** - [Making sense of UWE Bristol Strategy 2020: What does it mean for researchers?](#)

**November '12** - [Toward a research active lecturing post](#) (Balance between teaching & research) [Janet Wilkinson]

**May '12** - [Managing a research career](#) (institutional career development, REF etc.)

**September '11** - [Get your research noticed](#) (focus on proactivity, publication strategy and panel session) [Kate Tapper]

**May '11** - [Research funding investment – where does the money go?](#) REF and research staff. Analysis of RS needs from CROS

**September '10** - [Balancing individual career progression with research group success](#) (Kate Tapper – metaphors mixing PIs and RS together)

**May '10** – Research review and Grading panel, Workload Model

**November '09** – Outcomes of CROS, institutional priorities and “Career Development Matters” [Vox Coaching]

**January '09** – Q&A with the Vice-Chancellor

**November '08** – The new Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

**June '08** – National researcher policy and “Create your career” [Dr Sara Williams and Vox coaching]

## The future of the UWE Researchers' Forum

For the past decade the UWE Researchers' Forum has provided a platform for researchers to discuss how they are supported, to engage in development sessions tailored to them, to hear about how the strategic direction of the university incorporates their career support and to shape the topics of future fora. It is timely to now reflect on how the Researchers' Forum operates, whether it still achieves the objectives that govern its operation and what would meet future requirements.

Dr Paul Spencer  
Researcher Development Manager