



# Research transferable skills development in the UK and at the University of Bristol



Dr Alison Leggett (Academic Staff Development Manager)

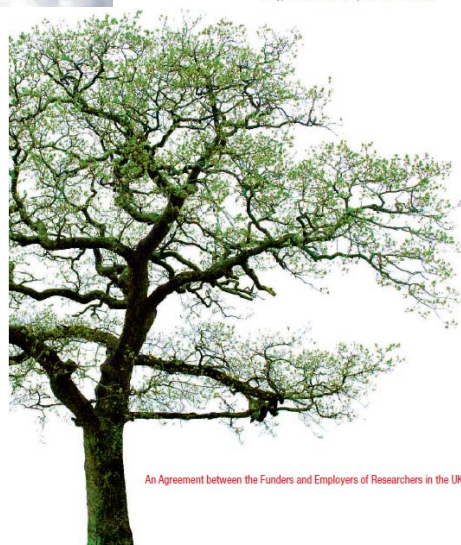
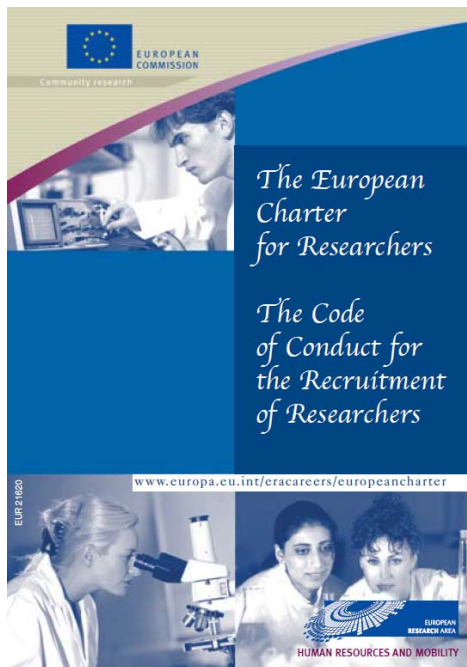
# *Researcher transferable skills development in the UK*



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# Roberts funding

- SET for success (2002) – Sir Gareth Roberts:
  - Lack of transferable skills in PhD graduates so not prepared for careers in business or academia
  - Lack of career structures and development for research staff
- Roberts funding (2004)
  - All HEIs with significant numbers funded by RCUK
  - For transferable skills training
- Focused attention
  - Researcher development specialists
  - Vitae programme and network
  - National development programmes eg. GradSchools



An Agreement between the Funders and Employers of Researchers in the UK

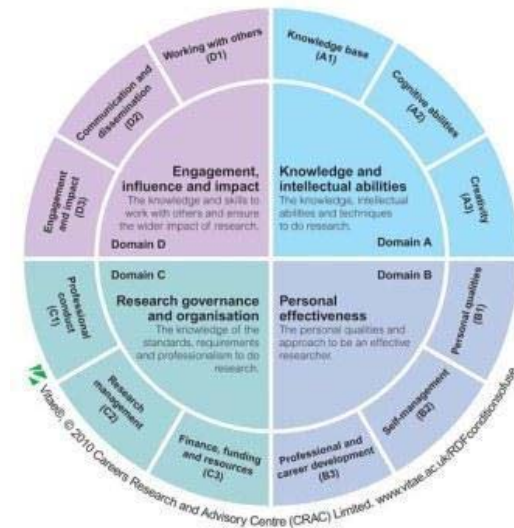






*“UK organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes.”*

- Network for sharing practice and ideas
- National overview providing a collective voice for researcher development
- Coordination of research and national projects such as surveys and RDF





# *Research staff development at the University of Bristol*



Dr Alison Leggett (Academic Staff Development Manager)

# University of Bristol



- Research intensive
- 5379 Staff (2208 academic)
- ~2150 research postgraduates
- ~13,000 undergraduates

## Research staff – our strategy

- Central to University's research success and business plan
- Research staff skills development embedded in central people strategy
- Dedicated staff and budget
- Research Staff Working Party chaired by Faculty Research Director



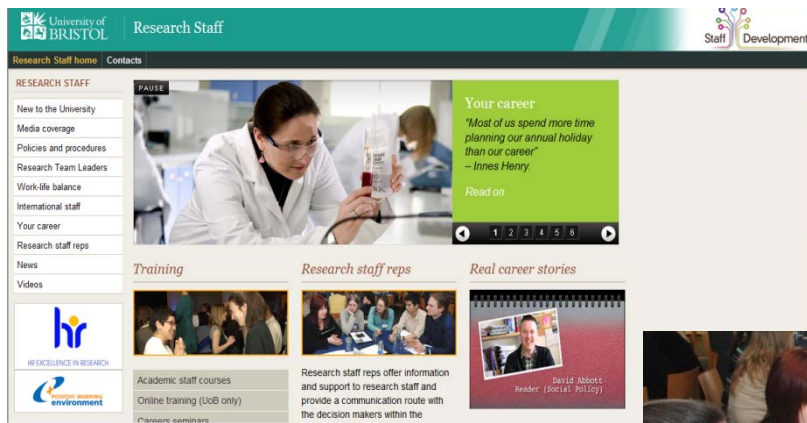
HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH



# 🔥 Engagement in training 2011/12

- 27 short courses specifically for research staff
  - Attended by 305 people
- 47 short courses open to all academic staff
  - Attended by 376 people
- 2 longer leadership programmes
  - Attended by 40 academics (incl. research staff)





**“The career coaching gave me new ideas of how to achieve my career goals”**



## Mentoring Circles

**Seven Suggestions for Developing your leadership**

Leadership is the process of engaging other people to join together towards a shared purpose. There are many definitions of leadership as there are writers, psychologists and consultants. The insightful view that only a few can lead is fast becoming obsolete as there is growing recognition that leadership can come from many places and not just from the top. If you need to bring others with you to achieve something, then you need to develop leadership.

- 1 Be yourself**  
Forget the idea of taking a leadership role. Nothing alienates people more quickly. There are things that you will want to do in a field that you would not choose to do, but you can still try to do it yourself. When you do them, they will be your own. When you do them, they will be your own. When you do them, they will be your own.
- 2 Inspire rather than motivate**  
Traditional concepts of motivation involving carrots and sticks have limited usefulness in academia. Inspiring you need people to be inspired to achieve their best in teaching and research. The truth is that inspiration comes more often from within than from another person. Do your role as this is not to give inspirational speeches but to support others to achieve their own inspiration. Help people to find others that share energy, creativity and passion to work together to solve the problems that will be productive and helpful for everyone concerned. Ask questions like 'what ideas are you thinking particularly emerging now?' and be open to what comes.
- 3 Lead and Follow**  
Effective leadership requires that you respond to each unique situation that presents itself. Sometimes you will lead the others, using their own and combined about the direction and where to go. At other times, when someone else is best with inspiration, have the courage to follow. Allow the following of others to take, and support them to lead. You need to be able to give your own to be inspired by the team. Share the vision of leadership.
- 4 Keep learning**  
The capacity and power of anyone have made you a successful academic. To be a successful leader requires you to become a leader for your own. Developing greater self-awareness will develop how you lead and how you respond to it. Take the time to reflect on your own performance and your own personal performance, and seek feedback from your colleagues to help you to improve your strengths and weaknesses. You need to be able to give your own to be inspired by the team. Share the vision of leadership.

There is always a way to be honest without being brutal! Arthur Debon

**Seven Suggestions for Managing staff on short-term funding**

The short-term nature of research funding presents the challenge of getting people into and out of speed as part of a constantly shifting team. In recent years there has been much more recognition of the value of researchers doing contract work and significant efforts to support them in this. Changing times in their careers. As a manager of someone on short-term funding you have a vital role in supporting their development whilst making sure the demands of the project are met.

- 1 Balance competing demands**  
When you employ a researcher to work on a project there is always a need to balance your needs for the project with their needs to develop their own career. There are not many opportunities, the success of the project will bring benefits to the researcher but that they will also need to be developing their own portfolio. If you can negotiate and find other ways or opportunities to support your researcher's portfolio you will have a more engaged and motivated person working with you. You will have a right to ask for the project work to be delivered. There is a saying that 'workforce needs to know the earth with a passion'. If you don't have a passion then you won't be happy. If they don't have a passion they won't be happy. And unhappy people don't give their best work.
- 2 Review performance from the beginning**  
All new staff are required to complete an Initial Review (IR) at the end of their first year. This is a review of how they have done in the first 12 months of their job. It is a good opportunity to provide an opportunity for you to give your own opinion of the person and to give them a chance to give their own opinion of the project. It is a good opportunity to provide an opportunity for you to give your own opinion of the person and to give them a chance to give their own opinion of the project. It is a good opportunity to provide an opportunity for you to give your own opinion of the person and to give them a chance to give their own opinion of the project.
- 3 Take an interest in each individual**  
It can be hard to get to know people when there is a lot of turnover but it is very important to treat each person as an individual and not just a number. Get to know each person and what their interests, passions and future plans are. Not only does this create a more meaningful working relationship, it also helps to build a team where people are more likely to stay. When people give the project work must be met with their interests and passions and they will be more motivated to do it.

**The Role**

Research staff representatives provide the link between research staff and the central University structure.

They facilitate communication - both locally where they work, and across faculties between research staff and the wider research and academic community.

**Welcome**

to the Research Staff Representatives Committee (RSR Reps Committee)

University of BRISTOL



# Leadership and Management

- Skills development and culture change
- 2 programmes (PTM and LRT)
- 4 workshops, 4 action learning seminars over 3 months



*“A truly excellent investment of time – nothing like you think management training will be”*

- Collaborative with UWE and University of Bath
- To introduce researchers to new ways of thinking and working and create a long-term shift in attitudes
- 3 residential ‘Labs’ followed by research funding
  - **Lab 1: Looking outwards**  
Considering the role of researchers and research in society.
  - **Lab 2: Interdisciplinarity and grand challenges**  
How to collaborate and what are the cultural/infrastructure challenges?
  - **Lab 3: Individual skills: innovative and creative researcher**  
Becoming a more innovative, enterprising and creative researcher.
- Research funding





## Speed networking & Collaboration wall



***“...based on fostering good networking and representation of research staff as much as on career development opportunities, training, mentoring and funding”***

Professor Nigel Thrift, VC Warwick, Report for Government: Research Careers in the UK: a Review. 2008

*Thank you*



# References

- **SET for success report:**

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set\\_for\\_success.htm/](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set_for_success.htm/)

- **Vitae (with info about UK Concordat, RDF, QAA code etc.)**

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

- **University of Bristol:**

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/researchstaff/>

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/academicstaff/>

<http://southwestcrucible.org/>

Annual reports: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/researchstaff/policies/annual-reports.html>

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