

Every Researcher Counts

Resource A

Team management: Important conversations

A1 – Programme leader's manual

Vitae is supported by Research Councils UK (RCUK),
managed by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation
and delivered in partnership with regional Hub host universities



CRAC

with support from



Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

hefcw



Conditions of use

'Every Researcher Counts: Team management: Important conversations' is published by The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited www.crac.org.uk and The Higher Education Funding Council for England.

© 2011 The Higher Education Funding Council for England

Material from this document may be copied and freely reproduced, in any medium, by UK higher education institutions only, strictly for their own non-commercial training and development purposes, provided in all cases the original source is acknowledged as detailed below. Materials may be adapted by UK higher education institutions only, strictly for their own non-commercial use provided that the original source and copyright is acknowledged. Any material relating to the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) or Researcher Development Statement (RDS) is subject to the conditions of use as detailed at www.vitae.ac.uk/rdfconditionsofuse

Intellectual Property Rights

All rights in material from this document shall remain with The Higher Education Funding Council for England and, save as expressly set out in these terms or as permitted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, are reserved. The copyright and any other intellectual property rights in any adapted resources shall belong to and be assigned (by way of present assignment of future rights) to The Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Any reproduction, including by way of adaptation, of these materials shall include the following acknowledgment:

'This resource has been adapted by [name of institution] for our own non-commercial use. It is based on the original resource, [name of resource] developed by Vitae and The Higher Education Funding Council for England, © 2011 The Higher Education Funding Council for England'.

If material from this document is required for any other purpose, including but not limited to (a) reproduction, distribution or communication to the public outside the permission contained in these terms, (b) any commercial use, (c) use outside of the UK or (d) use outside of the UK higher education sector, please contact resources@vitae.ac.uk or write to the following address:

Vitae, c/o CRAC

2nd Floor, Sheraton House

Castle Park, Cambridge, CB3 0AX

Disclaimer

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure these materials are accurate and complete, CRAC or The Higher Education Funding Council for England are not responsible for any errors or omissions, factual or otherwise, and does not accept any liability arising out of any reliance placed on the information contained within these materials.

Variation

CRAC or The Higher Education Funding Council for England may revise these terms of use from time-to-time. Revised terms of use will apply to the use of the materials in this document from the date of the publication of the revised terms of use on our website. Please check www.vitae.ac.uk/resources regularly to ensure you are familiar with the current version.

Acknowledgements

These materials have been developed as part on the 'Every Researcher Counts' project, funded by HEFCE and other UK funding bodies to assist UK institutions in delivering the equality and diversity element of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (www.researchconcordat.ac.uk). The Concordat encourages the recruitment and retention of researchers from the widest pool of available talent with the expectation that the research base will be enhanced by diversity. A commitment to a diverse and non-discriminatory workforce is supported by UK law and builds on good practice in research institutions across the UK.

As institutions review their policies to support a diverse research workforce, this may open up opportunities for research staff to benefit more from practices such as flexible working, career breaks and increased support with issues such as working with a disability and working in a second language. The provision of these resources can contribute to training Principal Investigators (PIs) in the diversity and equality principle of the Concordat (Principle 6), encouraging them to work with a diverse range of researcher staff within their group, where every researcher counts.

The 'Every Researcher Counts' Advisory Board has been instrumental in the development of the project including these resources. Vitae would like to thank them for their input:

Louise Atkin, Vitae

Professor Dianne Berry, REF Equality and Diversity Advisory Group

Dr Iain Cameron, RCUK

Gavin Campbell, DEL(NI)

Hannah Chaplin, HEFCE

Dr Stuart Fancey, SFC

Guy Gregory, UHR

Dr Janet Metcalfe, Vitae

Alison Mitchell, Vitae

Ellen Pugh, ECU

Dr Dimitrina Spencer, UKRSA

Dr Alyson Thomas, HEFCW

The resources have been written, piloted and prepared by Janet Wilkinson, Cheryl Allsop and Louise Atkin.

Materials from Equality Challenge Unit's website, publications and research have informed the development of these materials and direct references are provided.

Vitae would also like to acknowledge the contributions to the development of the resources by participants in development days, and equality and diversity champions throughout our Vitae network of UK higher education institutions.

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	2
Overview of the programme	4
Resources	4
Room and layout	4
Timetable	5
Session 1: Introduction	6
Session 2: Important conversations	7
Session 3: Looking at practicalities	8
Session 4: Reflecting and planning	11
Closing the course	11
Handouts	
A3 – Conversation scenarios	
A4 – Negotiation worksheet	
Other resources	
A2 – PowerPoint slides (available at www.vitae.ac.uk/ercresources)	
A5 – Resources for staff in higher education institutions	

Overview of the programme

This programme is one of three workshops in the series Every Researcher Counts, supporting the understanding of equality and diversity issues amongst those who manage research staff within higher education institutions (HEIs).

The series includes:

Resource A – Team management: important conversations

Resource B – Career Conversations

Resource C – Using the Vitae Researcher Development Framework

The material for each workshop is separate and standalone. It can be used to run one workshop or a series of three workshops and can be incorporated into other, longer, programmes for principal investigator development.

Why should participants come on this course? What's in it for them?

This course is aimed at existing (or potential) principal investigators with responsibility for the management of research grants and research staff. The reasons for attending are:

- to raise awareness of equality and diversity requirements in their role
- to have the opportunity to discuss equality and diversity issues in the context of managing their teams
- to share people management good practice with peers
- to prepare for and enable discussions with research staff about wider work issues.

This course has been designed to help principal investigators navigate their responsibilities towards their research staff with regard to equality and diversity. More generally, the course is part of the overall development of the principal investigator as a manager of others, looking at the attendant responsibilities and opportunities of the role.

Participants are likely to be extremely busy individuals so every activity chosen needs to be engaging and worthwhile. In order to tailor this material to their needs, you need to have a broad understanding of the daily life of a principal investigator/researcher in the specific institutional setting and adapt these exercises to your institution and the audience.

Learning objectives

There are three learning objectives for this session:

- Building awareness of the different needs of different individuals in relation to equality and diversity issues
- Understanding the elements of equality and diversity in practice
- How to prepare for important conversations looking at both the researcher and principal investigator perspective

Programme outline

This workshop comprises three sessions. It is designed for a group of 12-24 participants, working in smaller groups of 3-6 people.

The three sessions cover the following themes:

- looking at diversity in an individual's work place
- the practicalities of work and what important conversations look like
- adapting behaviour and action planning.

Resources

Paper and pen for each participant

Flipchart stand, minimum of 1, and ideally 1 flipchart stand per 4 participants

Flipchart paper

Flipchart pens x 12

PowerPoint slides (A2 - available at www.vitae.ac.uk/ercresources)

Conversation scenario handouts (A3)

Negotiation worksheet (A4)

Resources for staff in higher education institutions (A5)

Room and layout

Room

A room that will:

- comfortably take the number of participants when seated in cabaret style, roughly double the space required for lecture style
- permit flexible working – pairs, fours, sixes, the whole course.

Layout

When participants arrive:

- tables with 4-6 chairs, to encourage discussion as people arrive.

During the course:

- ideally a very large room with fixed or heavy tables, or a smaller room with movable tables.

Timetable

Timings are indicative and can be changed by the programme leader to accommodate participant learning

Programme aim:

To provide participants with an overview of equality and diversity issues involved in managing research staff and to examine the nature of effective conversations between researchers and principal investigators looking at both sides of the conversation.

TIME	ACTIVITY	FORMAT	CONTENT
Pre-course	Programme leader preparation and recruitment of equality and diversity technical assistance and experienced principal investigators to assist		
Up to T0	Participant arrival Tea and coffee available (as appropriate to the institution)		
T0 – T20	Introduction to the session	Plenary pairs	What conversations are important in research? What role do equality and diversity play in this environment? What are participants' experiences of these issues?
T20 – T40	Effective conversations	Four groups of two to six people	Methods for approaching conversations that may be difficult
T40 – T80	Looking at practicalities	Groups of three	Six practical case studies. What is happening here? What are the options? How should a conversation be prepared for by both sides?
T80 – T90	Reflect and plan	Individual or pairs	An opportunity to reflect on three things: 1. What do I need to be better informed about and do differently? 2. What do I need to do differently in meetings that I chair? 3. What do I need to ask others to prepare prior to meeting with me?
T90	Closing the course	Plenary	Recap of the programme and the main learning points.

Purpose

To help participants settle in
To give time for latecomers to join
To get the course started

Process

Led by the programme leader
Discussion activities, in pairs

Structure

Outline the purpose of the session: 5 minutes

Welcome and set the scene for what the course is and is not

Introduce self and establish credibility

Introductions and starting point conversations 5 minutes

Debrief and general discussion 10 minutes

Resources

PowerPoint presentation A2
(Slides 1-6)

Detail

Outline the purpose of the session minutes

5 minutes

Start the course by introducing yourself and your experience in relation to handling equality and diversity issues at work.

If you have some statistics from your institution relating to equality and diversity, you could show them as part of your introduction and use them to frame the themes of the course.

The purpose of the session is to meet with other principal investigators in a similar situation, to discuss a range of issues related to managing research staff in an environment that supports equality and diversity amongst its employees.

Why is the course called 'Team management: important conversations'?

As a diverse workforce in academia there are a wide number of differences between us as individuals – some visible and some not. Being prepared to discuss a wider range of subjects with the staff we are responsible for in a framework that provides confidence to both parties enables more effective (and hopefully) more positive outcomes for a wider range of staff whilst embracing current legislation around equality and diversity. This course will provide the opportunity for you to prepare for and practise conversations involving these issues.

Introductions and starting point conversations

5 minutes

Ask participants to break into pairs or groups of three and introduce themselves to each other. Explain that the purpose of this short introductory session is to introduce themselves to each other and to start to explore some big questions in paired conversations. Allocate the questions to different groups to talk about. There may be more than one group tackling individual questions.

You could write the questions on the flipchart or PowerPoint slides 2-6 refer to each of these questions:

- What are important conversations in the researcher/principal investigator relationship? How do you define them?
- What role does equality and diversity (as a principle) play in this environment?
- What are your experiences of building and working with diverse teams
- What do you understand by the terms equality and diversity?

It would be useful to capture participants' responses to these questions on a flipchart at the front to be able to refer to in the debrief.

Debrief and general discussion

20 minutes

The debrief can be a mix of input from participants and discussion stimulated by slides 5-6 in the PowerPoint presentation (A2).

During this session it would be useful to include details of the resources available directly from your institution and/or to introduce equality and diversity colleagues who are supporting you.

Purpose

To introduce thinking ahead in preparation for important conversations between principal investigators and their research staff.

This session asks participants to consider how best to broach an important conversation with confidence. It is an exercise in 'putting yourself in the other person's shoes' so that you can prepare for the tone and setting of the meeting as well as the topic of the meeting.

Process

Led by the programme leader.

This is a discussion based 20 minutes with a verbal brief and a summary presentation slide at the end. There is an opportunity to move participants to new and larger groups of four or five people to answer these questions and to prepare a flip chart summary of their discussion.

Structure

Introduction 2 minutes

Participant discussion 10 minutes

Group debrief 8 minutes

Resources

Flipchart paper and pens.

PowerPoint presentation A2 (Slide 7)

Detail

Introduction 1 minute

Introduce this session as an 'in their shoes' exercise with strong practical overtones. Ask participants to discuss and record how a principal investigator and researcher should interact with each other and what things a researcher needs to think about before they book a meeting time or ask to see their principal investigator for a discussion of their own personal development, changes to working practices or their research. This is a good opportunity to share good practice in existence or to highlight challenges.

Small group discussion and recording on flipchart 10 minutes

Learning points summary 8 minutes

Ask participants to feedback the points from their flipcharts and comment on specific items that you want to reinforce.

A model for effective conversations is included on slide 7 of PowerPoint presentation A2 to summarise this session.

The main (but not exhaustive) points that should arise from this discussion.

- The need to meet the person without preconceptions to establish what the issues are – they may not be related to equality issues.
- If you are not familiar with the issues raised you may want to organise a further meeting in the immediate future. This will give you time to develop an understanding of relevant institutional policies and who else may need to be involved. It may also be appropriate to refer the person to someone more suitable within the institution.
- Consideration needs to be given to the individual's availability, preferred time of day for meetings, an appropriate place for the meeting to take place and style and length of meetings.

Purpose

The aim of this session is to look at issues existing between six members of research staff and their principal investigator, to consider both perspectives and the way in which each might prepare for an 'effective conversation'.

This session also aims to examine how the relationship can be developed positively through understanding the possible negative implications for both parties in the conversations. It is important to reinforce that these conversations are not about performance. They are about individuals' needs and how they can be most effectively met by both parties within the research environment.

Process

Led by the programme leader.

Participants work in small groups. There is an opportunity to re-size the groups or rotate members of each group to change the dynamic depending upon the needs of the group and facilitator.

This activity is discursive and practical. It involves a set of six scenarios based on possible equality and diversity situations in which principal investigators may find themselves. It encourages participants to think about both sides of the conversation – preparing for it themselves whilst suggesting preparation for the member of research staff.

Structure

Introduction 2-3 minutes

Main discussion in groups 22-23minutes

Debrief of activity and draw out learning points 15 minutes

Resources

Handouts A3 and A4.

The scenarios section of the handouts can be reused and laminated for future use.

Detail

Introduction 2-3 minutes

Effective conversations are based on seeking to understand and find agreement and not on bargaining or positioning. Introduce the exercise as one where participants will consider six scenarios based on real researchers needing particular outcomes in their workplace.

- Ask participants to think about what the issues are, what your obligations are as an employer under equality and diversity laws and policies and what is practical and feasible within your department.
- Where possible isolate the issues. Are the issues unique to the person? Is there precedence for dealing with this or similar issues that can be learned from? How can the equality and diversity teams within your HEI help?
- Focus on the need to find a solution.
- Where possible identify options which benefit both parties.
- Try to be objective although it is recognised that you may have subjective views about particular issues. Be clear on the objectives of conversations and what you hope will be the outcome of the measures that are introduced to manage the issue.

Main discussion in groups 20 minutes

Distribute the scenario handouts (A3) and negotiation worksheets (A4). Give participants 20 minutes to work on the six scenarios and allow for up to 15 minutes debrief depending upon your assessment of the group's need for small group vs. larger group discussions.

The scenarios are also available on PowerPoint slides (slides 9-14 of resource A2) to project to the group as an alternative to printed handouts.

Each scenario is detailed below and is followed by up to five questions that you can ask to start discussions or facilitate greater depth of thinking. The questions are not exhaustive or prescriptive and it is not necessary to use them all for each scenario; they are starting points for facilitating a discussion. There are no prescriptive answers in this session; it is about participants exploring possibilities and sharing their own experiences and opinions, and for you to share facts related to each case from your institution's point of view.

Scenarios

Scenario 1:

Rebecca is struggling with her workload. She has three children aged 12, 10 and 3. She is in her late 30s, has childcare and support at home but always seems overwhelmed with the amount of work she has. Recently members of the department have expressed concern about her ability to meet deadlines.

Rebecca has approached you to talk about her work and flexible working. You think this means part-time working and a reduction in her hours in the department. You are not keen on this option as you haven't had particularly good experiences with part-time research staff and have managed to avoid having anyone working in your team in this way for most of the last ten plus years.

How will you prepare for this conversation?

How would you advise Rebecca to prepare?

Debrief questions:

1. What is flexible working? What might Rebecca be looking for?
2. As her principal investigator what is your attitude towards flexible working? How can it be managed?
3. What are your responsibilities here?
4. How should Rebecca prepare for her meeting with you?
5. How should you prepare for your meeting with Rebecca?

Scenario 2:

Philip joined your department for his first postdoctoral role just over six months ago. Following a spinal accident he uses a wheelchair. Prior to him starting work in your department an occupational adviser made recommendations on specifications for Philip's workstation and adjustments that would be required to be made in the department more generally to enable Philip to get around with ease. Philip has sent you an email asking for a meeting, as he would like to talk about modifications to enable him to work more effectively.

How will you prepare for this conversation?

How would advise Philip to prepare?

Debrief questions:

1. What modifications have already been made?
2. Has Philip's role changed since he started?
3. What further modifications may be required?
4. What are your responsibilities as the principal investigator for the team?
5. What are the responsibilities of your institution as an employer?
6. What could be the range of outcomes here?

Scenario 3:

Marion is a doctoral researcher you are supervising. You are aware that she is gay.

She has produced an excellent paper which you would like her to submit to a key international conference. She has asked you to talk about attending the conference in Dubai as she has not travelled to the UAE before. The paper has already received considerable interest so you know that it is likely to get accepted and it would really help Marion progress her career if she were to present at the conference.

How will you prepare for this meeting?

How would you advise Marion to prepare for this meeting?

Debrief questions:

1. Have you had any experience of this situation?
2. What are the issues here?
3. What can be done to address the issue?

Scenario 4:

Judith is a postdoctoral researcher in your department. She has recently informed you that her partner is pregnant and she would like to take leave when the child is six months old. She is keen to share childcare with her partner who works in a different department within the university and holds a more senior post.

You are very pleased for them both but are concerned about how your research project will be affected if Judith takes more than a month off.

Judith has asked to see you about options for taking extended leave so that her partner can return to work as soon as possible after the birth.

How will you prepare for this meeting?

How would you advise Judith to prepare for this meeting?

Debrief questions:

1. What are Judith's rights here?
2. How would you manage the funding and staffing in your department around Judith's absence?
3. What are the long-term issues that you and Judith will need to sort out? (Maybe not in this conversation but in future ones.)

Scenarios

Scenario 5:

James's mother has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. His father died a couple of years ago and he is an only child. Whilst his mother is very self-sufficient and only lives 70 miles away, she is going to need some help during the period she is receiving chemotherapy and in the recovery period afterwards.

James needs some flexibility in the coming months to be able to provide support to his mother and has asked you if you have time for a chat to be able to discuss the options.

How will you prepare for this meeting?

How would you advise James to prepare for this meeting?

Debrief questions:

1. What are the options here?
2. What would you advise James to do?
3. What does James need to provide as part of your discussions?
4. How will you manage the funding aspect of your research if James takes an extended period away from work?

Scenario 6:

Habib is a doctoral researcher that you co-supervise. He has put in a request to take 4 weeks leave to take part in the Hajj pilgrimage and visit his family who live abroad.

You are concerned because the time of the pilgrimage falls during school holiday time and a number of other staff who are parents have requested leave during this time. You are likely to be at a critical stage in your project and need to ensure that you have enough researchers covering the project.

How will you prepare for this meeting?

How would you advise Habib to prepare?

Debrief questions:

1. What are the options here?
2. How will you manage staffing in your department if Habib takes a block of four weeks leave?

Debrief of activity and draw out learning points **15 minutes**

Summarise the key points you have heard from the group. These might include (but are not limited to).

- There is an awareness of the need to prepare for this discussion (including looking at what resources are available within your institution) from the perspective of both the principal investigator and the researcher. Preparation aids a wider discussion and a broader range of alternatives that both parties can consider.
- More participants now know who to go to for help inside the institution.
- Participants have a wider understanding of what their responsibilities are in the context of equality and diversity.
- Participants feel better prepared for important conversations through the practice they have had in this session.

Purpose

This final session is a reflective and embedding part of the course.

Process

This part of the session brings the activities to a close by asking participants to identify three actions for the next day, week or month to increase their equality and diversity awareness and practise important conversations of the sort highlighted in this programme.

Structure

Action planning 10 minutes

Resources

Individual's notebooks

Detail

Action planning 15 minutes

This part of the course provides participants with the opportunity to consider the 'so what?' part of the training.

Ask participants to work individually or in pairs to think about and write down for themselves three actions that they would like to implement from the course in the next four weeks.

The actions should be specific with an anticipated outcome and should be time-bound to complete within one day, one week or one month of the course.

Emphasise the need to write the actions down so that they become a reality and suggest that participants work in pairs to exchange details of their goals and to reinforce them as practical next steps.

Closing the course

Bring the course to a close by recapping the main themes of the session:

- What are important conversations? Which topics have we missed in this session where we could apply the same learning?
- Preparing for effective conversations
- Sharing our knowledge with others.

Summarise a few of the key points from the discussions and point participants in the direction of your institution's equality and diversity resources (either physical or internet based ones) and hand out the document A5 to participants as a source of further information.