

TUS Newsletter

December 2012

Research Councils UK (RCUK) was established in 2002 as a strategic partnership of the seven UK Research Councils charged with integrating Council activities aimed at enhancing their overall economic impact and efficiency.

Administration efficiency reports by Sir Peter Gershon^{1,2} recommended the consolidation and centralisation of back room functions such as procurement, HR and finance. These reports, amongst others, steered RCUK to undertake a project resulting in the establishment of the RCUK Shared Service Ltd, finalised in 2011. However, this and a number of other Public Sector shared service centres have been criticised by the Commons Public Accounts Committee³ as anticipated savings have not materialised.

It is against this background that RCUK has identified areas for further harmonisation between research council functions. One such project within this overarching agenda is employment terms and conditions. The NTUS are meeting with RCUK management to discuss proposals to harmonise, across the Research Councils, the HR and employment policies that form part of the staff contract with the MRC. The NTUS consider this untimely given the current programme of organisational change and are unconvinced that the business case supports an increase in operational efficiency and effectiveness. The on going negotiations are largely based on the existing MRC policies and some key areas, for example, consultation during reviews, redundancy, pensions and pay have been excluded from the management proposals. MRC policies are contractual so any negotiated position, other than the *status quo*, will be subject to a ballot of union members.



Research Councils UK, Polaris House

Footnotes

1. [Releasing Resources to the Front Line](#)
2. [Efficiency, Efficiency, Efficiency](#)
3. [Efficiency and reform in government corporate functions through shared service centres – Public Accounts Committee](#)



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Pay

The MRC submitted their formal pay remit to BIS in August and, as anticipated, BIS have since instructed they are unable to approve the pay remit as it is above the 1% guidance on public sector pay set by Treasury. The MRC have therefore requested that the remit is sent to the Treasury for their consideration. It is unclear when a response will be made on the remit, however, any award made will be backdated to the 1st April 2012.

The NTUS have recently negotiated and agreed with management revisions to the non-consolidated Special Award Scheme. The scheme will be implemented for the next round of awards and, following implementation, the NTUS will discuss the distribution of awards with corporate MRC. Local Trade Union Sides are encouraged to discuss both the mechanisms and award distributions with their local management.

Members are reminded that the upcoming annual PDR exercise is an opportune time to discuss career aspirations with their line manager, including A to B promotions and SAS.

University Units

Council will, in December, consider the progression of a number of MRC units towards MRC University Unit status.

The Gateway 2 considerations will include the business case, the agreement reached with the university and the extent of the concordance with the principles that govern such transfers. The *Social and Public Health Sciences, Protein Phosphorylation, Epidemiology and Cell Biology* Units are all due to be considered at this stage.

Council will also be asked to consider delegating responsibility to Management Board for finalising the agreements with the

University of Southampton and implementing the transfer of the *Lifecourse Epidemiology Unit* (Gateway 3).

The Centre for Virus Research has now passed Gateway 3 and is expected to transfer to the University of Glasgow in the New Year.

The NTUS are playing a leading role in coordinating staff consultation on the consideration and terms of these transfers.

The Francis Crick Institute

The building completion date has slipped slightly until late summer 2015, which is not unexpected for such a complex project. It is anticipated that the migration of staff from the NIMR and Cancer Research UK's London Research Institute into the Francis Crick Institute will take between 6-12 months.

The NIMR Local Trade Union Side has set up a subgroup of Unite, UCU and PCS members representing scientific, technical, support and administrative staff. It meets once a month with NIMR senior management and the Corporate HR Director to deal specifically with the issues surrounding the move. It is expected that consultation on the terms of a transfer under TUPE regulations will commence early in the New Year. Union officials from Unite and UCU will join the group for these discussions.

Further information on what is happening at the Crick institute can be found in their latest eCrick bulletin which can be found at <http://ecrick.crick.ac.uk/issue-06/>

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On behalf of the MRC Trade Unions

(BMA, FDA, PCS, UCU, Unite)

