

**Proctor Mark**

**Programme number: A9**

University of Sunderland, UK

**Leading and managing research excellence in a post-92 university (0138)**

This paper will describe the findings of the following project.

This project will comprise three phases. The format and content of the LMRE programme will be developed using benchmarking and a focus group with members of the target audience. The programme will be delivered during the middle phase of the project, followed by an evaluation using a further focus group and an analysis of participants' research plans.

Each university will nominate an agreed number of senior research managers to participate in the project, to a total of 10-15 participants.

In the descriptions below, links between deliverables and Objectives or Outputs are identified as Ob1-6 and Op1-3, respectively.

### *Stage 1: Programme design*

1.1 Audit of leadership and management training offered at up to 5 post-92 HEIs, using questionnaires and follow-up semi-structured telephone interviews.

Deliverables:

- a) list of core themes linked to university strategy (Ob1-4; Op1-3);
- b) list of local practices and/or priorities relevant to participants' research units (Ob1, Ob6; Op1-2);
- c) overview of training currently on offer (Ob2-3; Op1-3).

1.2. Focus group with 10-15 participants to identify their training needs. A deliberative research methodology and modified nominal group technique (Bartunek and Murnighan 1984) will be used, drawing on findings from the audit.

Deliverables:

- a) ranked list of areas for the development programme (Ob1-3; Op1-3);
- b) indication of individual priorities for management development, to be mapped with institutional priorities identified in the audit (Ob1-3; Op1-3).

1.3. Project steering group to determine content of the LMRE development programme using outputs from the institutional training audit and focus group.

Deliverables:

- a) agenda for the development programme (Ob2; Op1-2);

- b) mapping to the Researcher Development Framework (Vitae 2010) (Ob2-3; Op2).

## *Stage 2: Programme delivery*

Four-day programme.

Deliverables:

- a) development of participants' leadership and management knowledge, understanding and skills (Ob3-4; Op1-3);
- b) development of research plans by participants (Ob4).

## *Stage 3: Evaluation*

Participants will produce research plans for their research units and reflect on the impact of the training on their approach to research management. Plans and statements of impact will be reviewed by the project team and senior colleagues (e.g. PVC/DVC, as appropriate).

Deliverables:

- a) feedback on research plans by the steering group (Ob1, Ob4);
- b) participants' self-assessment of programme impact (Ob1-3, Ob5-6; Op2);
- c) commentary by the steering group on the process (Ob1-6; Op2-3).

Focus group with participants and facilitators to evaluate the process, content and impact of the training programme.

Deliverables:

- a) overview of the process (Ob1-6; Op2);
- b) identification of enablers and barriers for research excellence (Ob1);
- c) strategies for future research leader development (Ob1-6; Op2-3).

## ***Objectives and Public Outputs***

### *Objectives*

- Ob1. To identify the enablers and barriers to strategic research leadership posed by the external environment and internal structures.
- Ob2. To define the staff development needs of senior academics in positions of research leadership in relation to the strategic management of high-quality research.
- Ob3. To develop and deliver an appropriate staff development programme for between 10 and 15 participants.

Ob4. To support participants in developing forward plans for their research areas.

Ob5. To identify further staff development requirements for research team managers and members.

Ob6. To identify any structural issues which should be considered further by the University in managing areas of research excellence.

### *Public Outputs*

Op1. An exemplar programme to develop research leadership and management knowledge, understanding and skills at a strategic level.

Op2. A report on the design, delivery and evaluation of the programme and process.

Op3. A toolkit for designing, implementing and evaluating tailored leadership and management programmes for research leaders.

### ***Benefits to partners and the wider HE community***

This project will provide a platform for developing a better understanding of development needs for strategic and operational research management in post-92 HEIs. This will be shared with research leaders and staff developers across the sector to promote wider general knowledge of the available options and effective practices.

The audit will yield a 'snapshot' of the range of research leadership and management development provision (formal and informal) at a group of post-92 HEIs, while an analysis of findings from the focus groups will identify staff needs and priorities. These offer a reference point for benchmarking and 'gap analysis' exercises within the sector.

The toolkit for the design, development and evaluation of the LMRE development programme will be a flexible resource which can be used by institutions to identify training needs and set up bespoke programmes to meet these. This makes it a valuable resource for strengthening the research leadership base within UK higher education.

### References

Bartunek, J.M. and Murnighan, J.K. (1984) 'The nominal group technique: expanding the basic procedure and underlying assumptions', *Group and Organization Studies* **9**, 417–432

Briner, W., Hastings, C. and Geddes, M. (1996) *Project Leadership*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Gower.

Mintzberg, H. (1987) 'Crafting strategy'. *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1987

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