Department of Health Sciences Research Group Lead Responsibilities

- Research groups are defined by the University (in distinction from Research Institutes and Research Centres, which are more formal) as “less formal associations of researchers who share a research interest and pursue common goals; they may be set up without formal University approval. They will typically hold regular seminars, supervise postgraduate researchers and make applications for grant funding, but might not have a continuing or sustained programme of activities. They do not generally have substantial direct external funding or directly employ staff. Staff are affiliated with the Group but are based in a department and any grants they win are attributed to their department. Review and establishment or closure of Groups is managed by departments.”
- Within the Department of Health Sciences, there are six research groups, each of which has a designated lead (or co-leads). Although (as above) research income as attributed to the Department, not the individual research groups, a share of overheads from external grants is distributed to investigators. Using this income, some research groups also have dedicated administrative support.
- The research group lead role is recognised with a time allocation in TAP (currently 100 hours per annum). Research group leads sit on the Department’s Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), which is the main body with which the executive team (the Departmental Management Group, DMG) consults on issues of operational or strategic significance.
- Research group leads will be appointed/selected by the DMG, in consultation with the research group in question.
- Each research group lead position will be reviewed every 3 years in consultation with the Head of Department. When succession planning there should be equality of opportunity for staff to take on the role.
- To date, the research group lead role has not been formally set out in writing, and while this has not posed major problems to date, the DMG considered that it would be useful to set out the responsibilities that would usually fall to a research group lead, as distinct from other academic members of staff, and members of the DMG.
- The draft list of responsibilities, for consideration by the DMG and the SAG, is as follows:
  1. Research group leads are the initial point of contact for administrative and leadership staff in the Department in relation to issues of operational and strategic importance pertinent to the research group around the Department’s research, teaching and enterprise.
  2. In collaboration with their colleagues, research group leads seek to shape the research focus and strategic direction of their groups, for example by considering staffing needs, opportunities for income, organising seminar series, internal and external communications, and so on.
  3. Research group leads seek to ensure that plans for research and enterprise income generation meet the group’s future needs and align with Departmental plans and targets.
  4. Via the SAG and through direct discussion with the Head of Department, research group leads seek to ensure alignment between the Department and group’s strategy, so that Departmental Area Plans account for each group’s objectives and capacity requirements.
  5. Research group leads are responsible for ensuring that the staff within their group are treated fairly in terms of recruitment, promotion, retention, appraisals, development, training, conference and other opportunities.
  6. Research group leads are responsible for the stewardship and deployment of any Department Development Funds (aka DDFs/SIOs/MIFs) held at the research group level, in consultation with the Department’s administrative staff.
  7. Research group leads are responsible for ensuring good communications with the Department’s administrative staff, Head of Department and other leads regarding current or
anticipated issues facing the research group, e.g. finance, personnel, space, capacity, equipment, etc.

8. Via the SAG, research group leads have an important ‘citizenship’ role in the effective and cordial running of the Department, for example in ensuring equitable distribution of administrative and leadership roles across research groups, and providing oversight and scrutiny of Departmental decisions in relation to issues of equality, diversity and staff development.

9. Research group leads are **not** responsible for individual project grants on which they are not the principal investigator, or for staff employed on grants other than their own (unless they happen to line manage those staff). However, they should liaise with colleagues within their groups to identify any issues that may arise, and with a view to anticipating research and administrative staff contract end dates in a timely manner, to facilitate possible redeployment where appropriate.

10. In collaboration with the Head of Department, research group leads advise on and support allocation of teaching and administrative duties among the members of their research group.