**Notes from the session Women into Research**

**Feb 17 2016**

**Barriers identified (perceived and actual)**

There were several areas discussed by women as they engaged with what could be perceived or actual barriers to getting into research. Some of the points fit across categories, and almost all are field specific, or need some thinking across disciplines.

**PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES in relation to EXPECTATIONS**

Family

Part time status

Work/ life balance

Past career break – feeling the need to ‘catch up’

Field specific

**STRUCTURAL/ HOW THINGS ARE SET UP**

Navigating professional/ academic identities (esp where women have held other roles prior)

Time (this includes pressures from other work commitments)

Need for teaching qual also (takes time away from/ competes with research time)

Juggling roles and responsibilities

**WOMEN’S PREPAREDNESS FOR INITIATING RESEARCH**

Making the initial steps (choices about scope, methods, etc.)

Confidence

Identifying methods

Lack of recognition

**CULTURE OF RESEARCH** (both in the university and the specific school)

Culture of research (in specific disciplines: i.e. – is it usual for independence? What counts/ what is valued?)

Specific subjects/ demographics/ logistics (this is around who does research and how – discussion around specifics of STEM as team based, for example vs Humanities, which is often individual)

Collaboration? Is there an existing culture in the programme?

Doing other peoples’ projects (i.e.: research fellows. Not PI)

Developing own areas

Male dominated fields

**DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE/ TACTICS FOR PROCEEDING**

Mentorship – most participants felt the need for some internal mentorship (not the same as chosen, trusted external colleagues but with a sense of the overarching understanding of the systems and procedures beyond the school level)

Bid writing

funding

Shift from co-I to P-I status

Sense of who to approach for what (i.e.: small pots of money/ how things work across the university)

The longer discussions included the following points as people began to engage with the most important points for them:

1. **balancing acts**: difficult to navigate assumptions that are patriarchal; including timing of meetings/ expectations of those with families/ ability to conduct international research (parents – not just mothers), and how this might exclude people with caring responsibilities
2. **expectations of the role** not clear: eg: ECR status and what that means in relation to REF/TEF/ PGCE. The effects on timetabling, for example, and then how this affects grades of staff.
3. Expectations of the **rate of publishing**/ grants, etc: not always clear
4. **MENTORSHIP**: having a sense of the logistics of things, in particular around ECR status
5. **VALUE**: what approaches, topics, methodologies and journals are valued?

**Summing up:**

There was not always a sense of the immediate action point for several of these points, but perhaps most striking is the need for women to avail themselves of the support networks, including mentorship, which should be set up across schools. There should also be a clear communication of expectations through the ADA procedures.

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