How to set up a multidisciplinary research group

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Aims

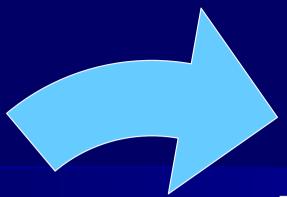This session will introduce the key requirements to establish a multidisciplinary research group.

Key requirements

- Staffing
- Leadership
- Funding
- Location
- Vision
- Timeline
- Achieving stability
- Managing change
- Publicity and the media

Staffing

- People are the most important resource.
- How many?
- What skills and experience?
- What disciplines and backgrounds?
- Length of contracts

Administrative, clerical, technical support staff

Research and academic workers

Training posts
Post-doctoral research Fellows
PhD students
Master and other students

Leadership

- Inspire and motivate team
- Management skills
- Human resource management skills
- Negotiation skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Budget and financial management skills
- Personal credibility and standing.

Who do you think will be needed in a research group?

List the top 3 characteristics for the leader.

Funding

- Core funding
- Competitive money
- Sources of funding
- Bidding for money
- How much does it cost?

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Location

- Universities
- Hospices
- Hospitals
- Charities
- Commercial
- Space and facilities depend upon type of research.

How will your research group be funded?

Where will your research group be located and what facilities will it require?

Vision

- Mission statement
- Strategic plan
- Be clear about focus of activities and effort
- Be specific about goals and outcomes
- Review and revise strategic plan

Timeline

- Establishing a research group takes time to:
- Make the 'right' appointments – head hunt!
- Build team identity and team working
- Achieve grant income success
- Achieve outputs

What will you research?
How will you research these things?
What will you NOT research?

List what you think your research group will achieve at:
- one year
- three years
- five years

Achieving stability and managing change

- Key appointments
- Permanent contracts
- Career development
- Building team cohesion
- Sustainable funding stream
- Good facilities
- Managing change effectively

Publicity and the media

- Group name and identity
- Finding a 'niche'
- Flyers and corporate cards
- Visual identity – on letterheads, presentations, etc.
- Website
- Annual report and research reports
- Media releases – working with the media

Challenges to setting up a multidisciplinary research group

- People –attracting the 'right' people, staff retention, getting the right skill mix.
- Research career develop is poorly organised and funded.
- Working in teams – conflict, time consuming
- Multidisciplinary – professional boundaries and values
- Leadership - attracting the 'right' person.
- Funding – little and competitive, changing whims of funders.
- Managing changes in personnel, focus and responding to social and political changes.

What are the likely threats to your research group?

How will you deal with these challenges?