

Annual Report: 2000-2001

Chair's Report:

2000-2001 has been another good year for RAGnet. Activities and events were focussed in the first half of the year - as many members were occupied with preparations for the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise in the latter half. The two RAE2001 Expert Seminars held last year ensured all members were well informed on key aspects of the process.

Training events held this year began with the Spring Workshop in May, which was held in Scotland for the first time. 85 members attended the event and had the opportunity to both network with colleagues and hear top speakers in the field. The Introduction to Research Administration was held at Loughborough once again and was again extremely well received. This year a new 2 day training course was introduced, European Research Funding for Beginners, in conjunction with UKRO and HEURO. We hope to run this event again in future. A full review of training is given later in this Annual Report.

Membership remains stable at 350, representing 93 universities in the UK and Ireland together with 15 other higher education institutions and 20 other organisations. Fifty-eight per cent of our members are in central offices with 42% in faculties, departments and research centres. Of those in departments, research centres and specialist institutes, 46% work in the social sciences, 24% in science and engineering, 19% in medicine and 11% in arts and humanities.

Following advice from the Advisory Group the RAGnet committee has recently reviewed its relationships with different external organisations and as a result has now introduced Corporate Membership and Partner Organisations and is developing an extended mailing list of relevant organisations.

Corporate membership will complement the usual Ordinary Membership of individuals, and distinguish commercial bodies from other members. Current corporate members include Community of Science, STCS (developers of RACE-2), Info-Ed and Research Fortnight.

A number of organisations with which RAGnet collaborates were formerly known as Associated Organisations, and in order to better recognise the nature of the relationship, these organisations are now called partners. They include AUA (Association of University Administrators), EARMA (European Association of Research Managers and Administrators), HEURO (Higher Education European Officers), UKRO (UK Research Office) and ARCISS (Association of Research Centres in the Social Sciences). Discussions on collaboration with AURIL (Association for Research and Industry Links) are underway.

Finally, in order to promote RAGnet and research administration more widely, we are creating an extended mailing list to include learned societies, the education press, major research funders and higher education bodies such as Universities UK.

This year has seen Charlotte Wellington resigning - first as Chair, and then from the committee - after ten years. Although this is a great loss to RAGnet, we congratulate her on her new appointment as Secretary of the Medical School at the University of Birmingham. Peter Rosenberg and Sue Ellwood also resigned from the committee during the year. We are very grateful for all their contributions.

Two assistants have been seconded part-time to support the committee, who have to juggle input to RAGnet with their full-time jobs. The assistants are Ann Hill at the University of Kent at Canterbury, and Sharon Lawson at the Institute of Education in London.

A further two copies of RAG Times have been produced, under the new editorship of Kerry Wilding. The second of these celebrates the first ten years of RAGnet (the anniversary of the actual founding meeting takes place in November 2001) and includes a specially commissioned history of RAGnet. A more detailed history is also available to members.

The website has been further developed, and policies on Privacy (to comply with the Data Protection Act) and Electronic Trading and Contracts have been developed.

As we come to the end of the first decade of RAGnet, we can reflect on another successful year, and look forward to the goals and opportunities of the next year and next decade with excitement.

I would like to thank all those who have served as committee members during this year, and all members who have participated in RAGnet through attending events, using the email list or contributions to RAG Times. The experience and expertise of members, and their willingness to share this with others, is what ensures RAGnet continues to be so successful.

Jacqui Forsyth, Chair
May 2001

RAGnet Training Review of the Year 2000-2001

Spring Workshop, 4-5 May 2000

Glynhill Hotel, Glasgow: The Price of Research

Eighty-five people attended RAGnet's tenth Spring Workshop which explored some of the issues raised by the RAE and the Transparency Review as well as looking at the price and terms of research contracts, and asking whether the increasing commercialisation of research in Universities is part of the answer we need. Speakers came from HEFCE, CVCP, EPSRC, AHRB and JM Consulting amongst other organisations.

Websites for Research Expert Seminar

31 May 2000, Institute of Education, London

This seminar was attended by 26 people and looked at issues of information provision, design and potential use of databases in websites for research offices and research centres.

European Research Funding Workshop

1-2 June 2000, Burleigh Court, Loughborough University

This workshop was run for the first time in conjunction with RAGnet's Partner Organisations, UKRO and HEURO, and attracted 37 participants. Aimed at European officers or research administrators with relatively little experience of European funding, as well as academics who wished to obtain an overview of funding opportunities available in Europe, it provided a comprehensive overview, covering EU institutions, information sources and funding opportunities, along with an expose of application procedures, project management processes, Pro-Tool for electronic submission of proposals. Participants were provided with a comprehensive manual for reference back at the office.

Electronic Research Administration Expert Seminar

23 June 2000, Bournemouth University

Twenty-eight people attended this seminar which took a general look at developments in electronic research administration and then looked in more detail at two of the systems being implemented by the research councils.

Personnel Issues for Contract Research Centres Expert Seminar

13 July 2000, Institute for Fiscal Studies, London

This seminar was attended by ten people who were able to look in detail at personnel and funding issues relating to staff in contract research centres, and to identify areas of best practice in relation to employment of staff on fixed term and rolling contracts.

Third Induction Workshop: An Introduction to Research Administration

25-26 September 2000, Burleigh Court, Loughborough University

This interactive workshop was attended by 46 delegates and was aimed at people with less than one year's experience in research administration, either from a research centre or from a central position. The programme looked at varying roles and responsibilities of a research administrator, gave information on funding for research and how to apply for funds, looked at negotiation skills and gave an insight into project management and into the financing and administration of research projects. Above all it offered delegates the opportunity to network with other new research administrators.

Financial report: April 2000 - March 2001

Current account			
Start balance 1/4/2000			£16,755
Expenditure			
Committee costs and expenses	-£2,557		
Advisory Group costs and expenses	-£1,095		
RAGnet Executive Assistance (1)	-£1,249		
General consumables	-£542		
RAG Times	-£2,563		
Professional fees (accounting, data protection, website)	-£915		
Bank charges	-£404		
Surplus/deficit on events			
<i>Expert seminars:</i>			
Electronic Research Administration		£704	
European Funding (2)	-£593		
Contract Research Staff		£3	
Websites		£130	
RAE seminars (London and Preston) (3)	-£1,393		
Spring workshops 2000 (4)	-£4,423		
Induction 2000 (5)	-£2,163		
Spring workshops 2001	-£350		
Membership fees (6)		£10,046	
Total expenditure/income	-£18,247	£10,883	
End balance 31/3/2001			£9,391
Deposit account			
Start balance 1/4/2000		£26,448	
Interest earned		£631	
End balance 31/3/2001			£27,079
TOTAL ASSETS AT 31/3/2001			£36,470

Notes

(1) General assistance on recruitment, website, committee business etc. Assistance with specific events is charged against the events.

(2) £500 fees still outstanding. £450 paid in 2001/02. Net surplus should be £357.

(3) Most income came in 1999/2000. Net surplus was £197.

(4) Most income came in 1999/2000. Net surplus was £4,392

(5) £480 paid in 2001/02. Net outcome was -£1,683

(6) Mostly from 2000/2001 renewals. Some from 2001/2002 renewals and new memberships

The accounts for 2000/01 have been passed to an accountant for independent review.