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Association of Research
Managers and Administrators

Annual Report 2005/06



Chair's Report

ARMA has enjoyed another busy and fruitful year during which it has reached several significant milestones. Since our re-branding in January 2005, the Association has continued to enjoy a higher profile across the sector, and this has been reflected in our growing membership. At the end of March, membership totalled 986 individuals from more than 190 organisations across the United Kingdom and overseas, an increase of almost 250 within the year.

During this period of growth, the maintenance of ARMA's excellent reputation for quality in all its activities, whilst simultaneously supporting its sustainable development, has been the uppermost consideration of the Executive Committee members. In October, the Executive Officers were successful in appointing a part time Executive Administrator and in the establishment of a physical office. Since then, we have all wondered how we managed before Rosemary Hatch was in post! I am sure the many members who have interacted with her will wish to join me in thanking her for the tremendous work she has undertaken supporting the Executive and the membership over the last six months.

Another consequence of the increasing maturity and diversity of the Association and its membership is that we have been able to implement our plans to expand the range of events and services that we have offer to members. During the past year we have developed some new training and support activities. Some are described in more detail in the training report, but I nevertheless wish to highlight the key developments.

September saw the launch of our new Mentoring Scheme and a flurry of interest has generated our first four pairings. We wish them every success and will be monitoring the development of the scheme. January saw the running of our first two-day residential workshop for experienced managers, which was held at Warwick University. This proved to be very successful and attendees benefited from a combination of

plenary talks and practical exercises, which provided much food for thought and debate. We have also developed a further two-day residential event for experienced administrators, which is to be held in Durham in July and which we expect to be equally relevant and successful.

In addition to these new activities, our core annual events proved as popular as ever. May 2005 saw our annual Conference in Brighton which was the biggest yet with nearly 200 participants, and to which we were pleased to welcome an increasing number of our international colleagues. We were also delighted that for the first time our annual flagship event attracted significant sponsorship. I would like to record my sincere thanks to Distinction (now Agresso) and to Baum Hart for their generosity and support in 2005, and their continuing support in 2006. Our annual induction course for new members took place in September in Loughborough, and as usual was oversubscribed. To address demand we have since been trialling the licensing of such course material for members' institutions to deliver locally. The event also demonstrated our widening membership with new parallel sessions offered on NHS Policy and Funding, and Ethics and Governance in the NHS. No year would be complete without some RAE-related events, and we ran two expert seminars in September in Leeds and London. Topical and timely events were also run on full economic costing as well as on the revised QAA Code of Practice, and of course several highly popular Research Council study tours took place.

All the above activity has lead to a greatly increased level of turnover for the Association as evidenced in the following financial statement. This, combined with other practical financial issues surrounding the booking of our conference venues, the Executive's current personal liability, as well as the Executive Committee's desire to remain entirely transparent in stewarding the Association's assets, has led us to the conclusion that the time is now right to seek the status of Company Limited by Guarantee, which will address these areas and create a clear legal entity. This will be subject to members' agreement at the Annual General Meeting in May.

I cannot end my report without mentioning our increasingly important international links. As a founding member of the International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS), we continue to ensure that we are represented at our sister organisations' conferences, and these have included EARMA's in Genoa in May and the SRA's in Milwaukee in October. We will also be actively participating in and supporting the ARMS conference and first INORMS biennial congress in Brisbane in August 2006. I am very pleased to confirm that ARMA has been chosen to host the INORMS 2008 Congress which will take place in conjunction with our annual conference, in Liverpool. Mark it in your diaries!

It remains for me to thank all my Executive Committee colleagues for their incredible amount of voluntary hard work and commitment from which the Association benefits. I would like to thank those members who have left the Committee during the last year, John O'Dowd, and Helen Stochaj, and I would particularly like to acknowledge Rossana Dowsett and Nigel Bilsbrough, who are standing down as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively.

Finally, as I am stepping down from the Chair at the end of May, I would like to personally thank my fellow Executive Committee colleagues for their unstinting support over the last two years. I am delighted that Ian Carter will be taking over from me as Chair, and have no doubt that he will do a great job in ensuring the continued success and development of ARMA.

Peter Townsend
Chair
ARMA UK
April 2006



Training Review of the Year

The focus of the Training Committee in 2005/06, and continuing into the first half of 2006/07, has been the review and development of residential workshops for research administrators and managers throughout their careers.

This includes addressing the need to deliver core elements of our annual induction workshop to members at other times of year and in other ways, in order to meet demand for the course, which regularly has a long waiting list. We ran our first residential workshop for experienced managers in January 2006; a new workshop for experienced administrators is planned for July 2006, and a revised programme will be offered in the Induction workshop in September. The new programme will draw on comments by participants in 2005 and earlier on the structure and content of the course.

Total attendance at our events exceeded 700 people in 2005/06, an increase of 100 participants compared to 2004/05. The Conference continues to grow in size, presenting new challenges to the organisers each year. The sessions were highly rated by participants in their evaluations, but a number of practical issues arising from the size of the event were noted. Some changes have been made for 2006 to address points raised, notably offering a choice of accommodation to cater for different budgets.

To meet anticipated demand, seminars on the key topics of the Research Assessment Exercise and the introduction of Full Economic Costing ran twice (in London and in Leeds) with strong attendances in both locations. We will continue to use 'North and South' repetitions for our non-residential events where we believe that demand will be high. Our one-day Training Seminar 'Supporting Research Proposals' ran for the third time in March, and we aim to repeat it in the autumn. We also ran a three-day Research Contracts course jointly with Praxis, the national training programme aimed at technology transfer professionals working in universities, research institutions and industry, and are considering future collaborative provision with Praxis in this area.

Our Study Tour programme has developed this year to include a new workshop with ESRC, a second tour to BBSRC, and our first Brussels visit, organised in conjunction with the UK Research Office in Brussels.

Our events continue to be extremely well-received by participants, with the majority of evaluations being 'very good' or 'excellent'. Evaluation forms are reviewed in detail by organising teams and the Training sub-committee, and we are pleased that participants are able to distinguish between matters which ARMA can influence and problems beyond the control of the volunteer organisers. We have developed handbooks for the organisers of different events which are regularly revised in the light of such comments.

Overall, the feedback is very positive and constructive: we receive plenty of helpful ideas and suggestions for new events and different ways of doing things, and we're grateful for members' input into our events programme in this way.



Steff Hazlehurst
Deputy Chair
Chair of the Training sub-committee

Events held in 2005/06

Getting to Grips with Full Economic Costing
14 April 2005, London
18 April 2005, Leeds

The introduction of Full Economic Costing for research in September 2005 has been a key concern for many members in the last year. This seminar provided an introduction to the broad perspectives of the methodology and the issues underpinning the sustainability agenda, a more detailed discussion of specific issues related to project costing, and worked examples of projects, through group work and open discussion of the details and the broader issues.

Research Councils' Research Administration Programme
18 May 2005, Thistle Hotel, Brighton

The Research Councils' Research Administration Programme aims to create common processes and systems to deliver research administration across the Councils, in order to achieve an efficient and effective common user interface for external stakeholders. The Programme includes the Dual Support Reform project; work on common status reporting, allowing research organisations to view the current status of grants held across all the Councils; extensions in the use of the Je-S system; and harmonisation of back-office systems.

The seminar presented an overview of the programme and its component projects, and reviewed progress to date on each area. It included a demonstration of using Je-S to submit a FEC proposal, providing delegates with a preview of the new forms and interfaces.

Conference 2005: All Change! Creating a Sustainable Future for Research
19-20 May 2005, Thistle Hotel, Brighton

The 2005 conference focused on the changing research management environment, especially the implementation of Full Economic Costing in universities and the announcements of the detailed processes of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise; new working methods for the Research Councils through their Research Administration Programme; and the effects of the European Directive on Fixed Term Contracts. Other issues discussed included the Freedom of Information Acts, requirements to introduce risk management procedures, and changes to the QAA Code of Practice relating to Research Degree Programmes and changing relationships between administrators and academics and between research managers in different sectors.

Speakers came from a wide variety of organisations, including the Office of Science and Technology, the Research Councils, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Association of Medical Research Charities, East London Innovations Hub, and universities and NHS organisations across the UK.

Reports from the Conference are available to members on the website.

Implementing the Revised QAA Code of Practice
27 June 2005, London

The QAA Code of Practice relating to Postgraduate Research Programmes was revised in 2004 to provide a single point of reference for good practice in the provision of postgraduate research degrees. This seminar focused on the expectations of the revised Code, and allowed participants to share good practice and identify areas of concern within research student administration.



Induction Workshop: An Introduction to Research Administration
15-16 September 2005, Burleigh Court, Loughborough

This annual workshop is aimed at people with less than one year's experience in research administration, whether in a research centre or departmental position or in a central role. The programme looks at varying roles and responsibilities of a research administrator, gives information on funding for research and how to apply for funds, looks at negotiation skills, and provides an insight into project management and into the financing and administration of research projects. Above all, it offers delegates the opportunity to meet and network with other new research administrators.

As this workshop continues to sell out quickly with long waiting lists, we have been considering ways to meet demand for the course at other times of year. In 2006/07 we are offering a shorter 'Fundamentals of Research Administration' course directly prior to the annual Conference; we are also developing a version of the course which can be licensed to individual institutions to deliver locally.

RAE 2008: Panels, publications and profiles
9 September 2005, Leeds
29 September 2005, London

The Guidance on Submissions and draft Panel Criteria and Working Methods had been published shortly before these seminars, which offered delegates a chance to hear first hand the implications of these guidelines for institutions preparing their RAE 2008 submissions from the RAE Manager, a Panel Chair and a Panel Secretary, and raise their issues direct with them. The programme was the second in a series of Expert Seminars focussing on preparations for the 2008 exercise.

Implementing Research Strategy in a Changing Environment
17-18 January 2006, Warwick

ARMA's first residential workshop for experienced managers took place in January 2006, focusing on issues related to research strategy development and implementation. The workshop was aimed at administrative and academic Research Managers in, or aspiring to, senior positions. It aimed to give participants an insight into developing an institutional research strategy and implementation plan; to reflect on the relationships between current issues in research management, to consider the changing environment in which they and their institutions are required to operate; and to consider their current role and how it might develop in the future.

The course included a mixture of formal presentations, discussions and group activities centring on the production and presentation of a research strategy and implementation plan for a mythical higher education institution. As intended, the mixture of individuals, from central and departmental, administrative and academic positions, small and large institutions, made for a lively mix of views. For the first time with an ARMA course, involvement in the course was by selection from expressions of interest, to ensure relevant experience and a good range of backgrounds.

Supporting Research Proposals
24 March 2005, London

This established one-day seminar is aimed at those wishing to develop their skills in supporting academics in the research proposal process. Building on the Induction workshop, sessions focus on preparing a project budget, supporting academics in the writing of proposals, quality assurance processes, other related issues such as risk management and ethics, submitting proposals, and include an overview of the peer review process. The principles of full economic costing are integrated into the course. It is aimed at recently appointed research administrators, and departmental/faculty administrators involved in the preparation of research proposals. We aim to offer this seminar annually, usually in the autumn term.

Research Contracts (joint course with Praxis)
4-7 October, Bournemouth

This course was our first collaboration with Praxis, whose main focus is on technology transfer training, aiming to bring together research managers and technology transfer professionals to focus on contractual issues. As universities continue to develop their links with industry and as the commercialisation of Intellectual Property Rights increases in importance, the quality of deals struck at the early stage in the development of a research area is increasingly important in promoting or inhibiting subsequent research and IP development depending on the terms and conditions achieved. But with high volumes of applications, creating the right balance between in-depth negotiation, model agreements and standard processes is challenging.

The course was aimed at new or recently recruited staff from Research Contracts offices in academic institutions as well as those seeking to re-visit the scope of the tasks covered by their office and comprised taught sessions, case studies and an opportunity for participants to discuss their own experiences.

Study Tours to funding bodies
BBSRC, 4 November 2005
Brussels, 21-22 November 2005
ESRC, 26 January 2006

Three very different Study Tours took place in 2005/06: our third BBSRC tour, with a larger group than its predecessors and first visits to Brussels and to ESRC. The Brussels visit offered ARMA members a series of 'behind the scenes' insights into key developments under Framework Programme 7, including legal, financial and administrative aspects. Speakers included senior officers of the European Commission and the UK Research Office in Brussels (UKRO). The ESRC visit was equally well-received; attendees appreciated the time many ESRC staff gave to the event and commented on the warm welcome received and the openness of ESRC staff in responding to points raised. ESRC proved exceedingly willing to listen to, and action, concerns raised, and are keen to continue dialogue with research administrators and managers through a smaller interest group, whose creation ARMA is facilitating.

Event type	Title	Delegates
Annual Conference	All Change! Creating a Sustainable Future for Research	160
Expert Seminar	Research Councils' Research Administration Programme	65
Expert Seminar	Implementing the Revised QAA Code of Practice	20
Expert Seminar	RAE 2008: Panels, publications and profiles (Leeds)	70
Expert Seminar	RAE 2008: Panels, publications and profiles (London)	81
Induction Workshop	An Introduction to Research Administration	64
Managers' workshop	Implementing Research Strategy in a Changing Environment	50
Training Seminar	Getting to Grips with Full Economic Costing (London)	50
Training Seminar	Getting to Grips with Full Economic Costing (Leeds)	49
Training Seminar	Supporting Research Proposals	60
Study Tour	BBSRC	10
Study Tour	Brussels	25
Study Tour	ESRC	25
Joint course	PRAXIS contracts course	52

Financial Report

The Executive Committee is responsible for the administration and management of the Association, in accordance with the constitution. The Executive meets formally three times each year; its subcommittees meet up to three times a year as necessary. The Executive as a whole, and its honorary officers in particular, are responsible for the management of the Association's funds and other assets and for maintaining accounts and arranging for them to be independently examined. The Association runs its financial year from April to March, and the accounts are examined following the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting. The accounts presented below are subject to such examination. Copies of the final version of the accounts will be available to members on request following the independent examination.

Financial strategy and risk management

Given the Association's considerable growth in membership and turnover in the previous two years, and the decision to set up and staff an office, the Executive took the opportunity to review its longer term financial strategy during 2005/06, and to implement formal risk management processes. The strategy is still under development, but the risk management framework was adopted during the year and will be reviewed alongside the regular strategic review process.

The Association considers risks associated with staffing (including elected officers and volunteers), finances, premises, information and IT systems, membership and reputation. While some risks were unacceptably high at the beginning of the year, many of these have been mitigated after six months with a staffed office. Risks remain related to the legal status of the Association, which we will address in 2006/07 with the agreement of members.

Organisational status

The Association is an unincorporated association, a status which places significant personal liabilities on members of the Executive, and which makes it extremely difficult to set up credit agreements with suppliers, leading to potential cashflow difficulties. Having company status will go a long way to resolving these problems.

A guarantee company will provide ARMA with corporate status and will offer:

- protection for the Executive Committee and its members, who may be involved on a voluntary basis;
- a clear legal, separate identity for ARMA;
- day to day business run by the Executive Committee, retaining a democratic structure; and
- transparency through the submission of annual accounts and reports to Companies House.

We have taken professional advice, and have chosen this route over charitable status. Whilst we can be sure of acquiring company status, charitable status would be much less certain, and would in addition place certain restrictions

on us which would potentially hamper the way we carry out our business. Therefore we are agreed that company status is the best solution for us at the present time. Formally, we need to ask members to agree to dissolve the current association and transfer its assets into the new company. The Executive Committee will therefore be putting a motion to the Annual General Meeting on 25th May to this effect.

Accounts 2005/06

The accounts are prepared on a cashflow basis: income is accounted for in the period in which it is received (which may differ from the period in which the applicable service is provided) and expenditure is accounted for in the period in which payment is made (not on an accrual basis). In the event of becoming a company, the accounting basis of the Association will change.

Income has increased almost 50% in the year, largely from increased event income, with more events being held and a significant increase in the number of delegates. A similar increase in events expenditure offsets this income. Income not received and expenditure not presented as at 31st March are not shown in the accounts; amounts are estimated in the second table below, relating to events held in 2005/06.

The group membership scheme, which allows organisations to pay for larger groups of individual members on a single invoice and benefit from discounted membership rates, grew in popularity in its second year.

Administrative expenses appear lower than in the previous year, owing to the accounting basis used. Expenditure in the previous year included costs incurred over an 18-month period but paid in the 12-month accounting period.

The deficit of 2004/05 which arose from the rebranding has been covered by the surplus for 2005/06 and the Association's reserves are now restored to a healthier level. The new financial strategy is expected to set a target for reserves of around £75,000 and our average balance over the year has remained slightly above that figure.



Rossana Dowsett
Treasurer

Income and expenditure account

For the year ended 31 March 2006

	2006		2005		Notes
	£	(£)	£	(£)	
Income					
Individual membership fees	29,367		28,810		
Group membership fees	11,685		6,290		
Corporate membership fees	770		525		
Sponsorship and advertising income	5,275		0		
Events income	173,176		104,235		
Interest received on deposit account	439		331		
Total income	220,712		140,191		
Expenditure					
Executive Committee meetings		5,006		3,389	
Executive Committee expenses to events		555		3,713	
Executive Committee training expenses		1,318		1,479	
Miscellaneous Executive Committee expenses		118			
Advisory Group costs and expenses		551		1,244	
Executive Administrator and clerical assistance		12,854		13,282	
General office consumables		1,719		1,047	
Equipment		1,492		1,291	
Premises		100			
Printing		1,368		4,426	
Design, artwork etc.				470	
Professional services		823		1,068	
Other professional services				341	
Miscellaneous expenses		296		867	
Bank charges		1,167		990	
Events expenditure		149,955		86,266	1
Rebranding		848		41,417	2
Total expenditure		178,168		161,290	
(Deficit)/surplus for year		42,544		(21,099)	
Presented by					
Members funds					
Bank balance at 1 April		15,020		36,119	
(Deficit)/surplus for year		42,544		(21,099)	
Bank balance as at 31 March		57,564		15,020	

Notes

1 Venue & catering; speakers fees & expenses; administration; delegate materials. See also table overleaf.

2 Non-recurrent design & implementation costs. Recurrent costs such as printing and domain registration are included in the relevant headings above.



Summary accounts for events taking place in 2005/06

Events	2004/05	2005/06		outstanding (est)		outturn
	net	income	expenditure	income	expenditure	
Annual Conference	-3	74,778	-63,604	2,400	-160	13,411
Expert Seminar: Research Councils' Research Administration Programme		6,175	-2,448	0		3,727
Expert Seminar: Implementing the Revised QAA Code of Practice		1,710	-415	95		1,390
Expert Seminar: RAE 2008: Panels, publications and profiles (Leeds)		8,675	-2,154	575		7,096
Expert Seminar: RAE 2008: Panels, publications and profiles (London)		9,500	-3,118	750		7,132
Induction Workshop: An Introduction to Research Administration		24,405	-17,795	1,935	-3,570	4,974
Managers' workshop: Implementing Research Strategy in a Changing Environment		30,510	-27,684	1,950	-2,100	2,676
Training Seminar: Getting to Grips with Full Economic Costing (London)	1250	5,125	-1,556		-400	4,419
Training Seminar: Getting to Grips Getting to Grips with Full Economic Costing (Leeds)	1625	4,500	-1,878	125	-400	3,972
Training Seminar: Supporting Research Proposals		1,750	-1,035	6,000	-1,738	4,977

Notes

'Outturn' figures include budgeted elements for indirect costs, and should not be interpreted as 'profit'.

Executive Committee 2005/06

Officers

Chair: Peter Townsend
Loughborough University
Deputy Chair, External Relations: Phil Clare
Bournemouth University (C) (to 31st May 2005)
Deputy Chair, External Relations: Ian Carter
University of Liverpool (C, M) (from 1st June 2005;
Chair, elect)
Deputy Chair, Membership Services: Steff Hazlehurst
Institute of Education, University of London (T, C)
Treasurer: Rossana Dowsett
University of Sussex
Secretary: Nigel Bilsbrough
Loughborough University (T)

Special advisers

Lee-Ann Coleman
Association of Medical Research Charities
Gareth MacDonald
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (M)
Nichola Seare
LNR Healthcare Workforce Deanery

Executive Administrator

(appointed October 2005)

Rosemary Hatch

(T) Training sub-committee members
(C) Communications sub-committee members
(M) Mentoring sub-committee members

Members

Kathy Brownridge
University of Leeds
Deborah Froud
Bournemouth University (M)
Claire Gauld
University of Glasgow (C)
Rosemary Hatch
University of Plymouth (T) (resigned September 2005)
Matt Heger
Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine (T)
Ray Kent
Loughborough University (C)
Simon Kerridge
University of Sunderland (Secretary, elect)
Pauline Muya
Birkbeck College (T)
(Deputy Chair, External Relations, elect)
John O'Dowd
University of Glasgow (resigned November 2005)
Hitesh Patel
Royal Holloway University of London (M)
Helen Stochaj
University of the Arts London (T, C)
(resigned November 2005)
Maggy Taylor
Manchester Metropolitan University (T)

Co-opted members

Tony Weir
Heriot-Watt University

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