



Promoting Rigorous Social Science Research

Association of Research Centres in the Social Sciences

Survive or Prosper? A Workshop on Directing Research Centres

British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH

Thursday 14th December 2006

University research centres have their own ecology and demography, to a degree separate from the development of their host institutions and aware of the existence of counterparts in the independent non-profit and commercial sectors. This Workshop explores key issues relevant to creating, sustaining and, ultimately, making a research centre prosper. It is intended especially for those who direct such centres or who are experienced researchers who may well become directors in the future, or senior administrators of centres. It is also of potential interest to those with corresponding roles in other types of centre in the independent sector or those who manage large collaborative social science networks or projects.

The Workshop is a highly concentrated and interactive exercise which will draw on the experiences of participants.

The Workshop will be led by Professor Robert Lindley, Director of the Warwick Institute for Employment Research and Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Warwick and facilitated by Peter Woodward of Quest Associates.

This event has been prepared jointly by ARCIS and the University of Warwick. The latter contribution is part of the work on 'Managing Research Projects: Supporting Researchers in Collaborative Project Management' being conducted at the University and funded under the ESRC's Researcher Development Initiative (www.rdi.ac.uk). This involves collaboration between the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), the Institute for Employment Research (IER) and the Centre for Academic Practice at Warwick (CAP).





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- 10.00 Registration
- 10.30 **Welcome and Introduction to the Agenda and Work Method**
Professor Robert Lindley (Warwick IER, University of Warwick) and
Peter Woodward, Quest Associates (Facilitator)
- 10.40 **Research Centres – Creating and Sustaining a Centre**
Robert Lindley
- 11.00 **Identifying Topic and Issue Discussion Areas**
Participants consider suggested areas and identify those they
particularly want to cover and any other key areas to be included.
- 11.20 **‘Learning Exchange’ Parallel Session A (2 x 40 minute sessions)**
Participants choose to attend two sessions from:
 1. Relations with the host institution
 2. Cross-subsidising areas of work
 3. Financial conditions
 4. Staff development in uncertain demand conditions
 5. Collaboration with other organisations
- 12.40 **Lunch**
- 13.30 **Centre Futures – Prospering Rather than Surviving**
Emerging trends in internal and external environments
Robert Lindley
Plenary discussion
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14.00 **'Learning Exchange' Parallel Sessions B** (2 x 30 minute sessions)

Participants choose two sessions from:

1. Commissioning environment
2. Ensuring quality of research work
3. The evolving scope of your research centre
4. Strategy development – process and outcome
5. Sustaining your own research work
6. Implications of multi-disciplinary strategies

15.15 **Pulling It All Together**

Final plenary discussions on outstanding issues and potential future meetings

15.45 Close

Robert Lindley is the founding Director of the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick and a professor in the Faculty of Social Studies. His principal fields of research are the labour market; the roles of education, training and knowledge production in economic development; and European integration. He also has a special interest in the role played by social science evidence in the policy system. He has served on many UK and EU advisory and related bodies. These include rapporteur to the EU Competitiveness Advisory Group appointed by the Commission President, joint chair of the EU Round Tables on the Social Dialogue, advisor to the Portuguese Presidency of the EU during the development of the 'Lisbon Strategy', and consultant to the Commission on the evaluation of the National Action Plans. He chairs the UK Association of Research Centres in the Social Sciences and is a member of the Economic and Social Research Council's Strategic Forum for the Social Sciences. He is also a member of the Research Careers Committee, chaired by Sir Gareth Roberts and set up by the Research Base Funders' Forum.

Peter Woodward is a Director of Quest Associates Limited. The West Midlands-based consultancy helps clients achieve outcomes through the design and facilitation of effective participatory processes. He works with national and local government, government agencies as well as the corporate, NGO and community sectors. Commissions include strategy and organisational development, problem solving, evaluations and partnership working. Peter is one of the small number of specialist facilitators operating in the UK who have certified status from the International Association of Facilitators. Peter trained initially as an urban and regional planner and is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.