

Finance and Human Resources Unit

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The Finance and Human Resources Unit (FHR), has a staff of 16 who are responsible for not only the day-to-day, smooth running of the Institute but also for longer-term assessments and planning. The Institute has more than 350 staff who are an integral part of the organisation and SCRI recognises that the performance of the Institute is dependent upon its success in developing and realising the full potential of staff at all levels, and at all stages of their careers. Staff costs also account for more than 66% of the Institute's recurrent expenditure, which is the single largest category of expense and an important factor in the financial performance of the Institute.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the work of the HR section within the Unit is vital to the success of the Institute. The section co-ordinates the recruitment of Institute staff (during the year 25 posts were advertised, attracting 361 applications from external and internal sources), and carries out the administrative induction for new members of staff as well as supervising probation procedures during their first year of employment. It is responsible for monitoring absences, with particular emphasis on those attributed to ill-health. HR handles requests for job evaluation at the request of both individuals and Institute management, and administers the training budget, which is maintained at 1% of the Institute's salary costs to reflect the importance of staff training and development, on behalf of the Institute Training Committee. In addition, it collates training requests from staff and arranges training with the appropriate training providers. HR are also involved in monitoring the progress of the 36 research students based at the Institute, and in providing assistance to new staff, visitors and students with accommodation and other wel-

fare related matters. Throughout the year, HR staff were involved with the Institute's Investor in People Initiative, and it is planned to achieve IIP status by the end of 2001.

Each month, the Finance team within the Unit pays in excess of 350 members of staff, processes in excess of 1100 purchase invoices from suppliers, and raises over 20 sales invoices. The Institute is project driven and over 200 projects are maintained and monitored at any one time. Institute staff are also involved in co-ordinating projects, including the finance, with other research bodies throughout the world. The team also maintains over 2100 items on its fixed asset register, ranging from PC Computers to laboratory buildings.

The Institute has invested in new computerised Financial, HR and Payroll systems, and has implemented the BACS payment system to reduce the number of cheque payments, in an effort to streamline systems and improve the quality and quantity of information provided to staff, customers and suppliers.

The Institute continues to operate under considerable financial pressure as the Grant-in-Aid that it receives from the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD) has declined in real terms. The control of the Institute's finances is therefore a critical activity to aid in the continuing production of successful science by the Institute. Capital grant received from SEERAD is still an important source of finance, but the Institute has to attract an increasing proportion of its funds from other, 'external' sources to provide the necessary infrastructure to maintain and expand the quality and quantity of science within the Institute.