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Decentralisation – never a dull moment

DARMA Meeting
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National Overview

UK Funding 2009/10	UK £m
Teaching	5,076
Research (core QR)	1,508
Research External (RGC)	4,345
Other	1,224

UoM External Research 2009/10	UK £m
Oxford	360
Imperial	296
UCL	275
Cambridge	267
Manchester	195
Edinburgh	185

Manchester Overview

- Total Staff 11,226
- Total Academic staff 3,846
- Total Research staff 1,829

- 39,438 students, including 3,573 Post Grad Research Students

- Total Research Income £278m
- Total core research funding (QR) £83m
- Total Research Grants & Contracts Income £195m in 2009/10

RGC Source	Amount £m	Percentage
Research Council	75.6	40%
UK Charities	43.8	22%
UK Gov/NHS	39.5	20%
UK Industry	14.1	7%
Overseas	20.5	10%
Other	1.1	1%

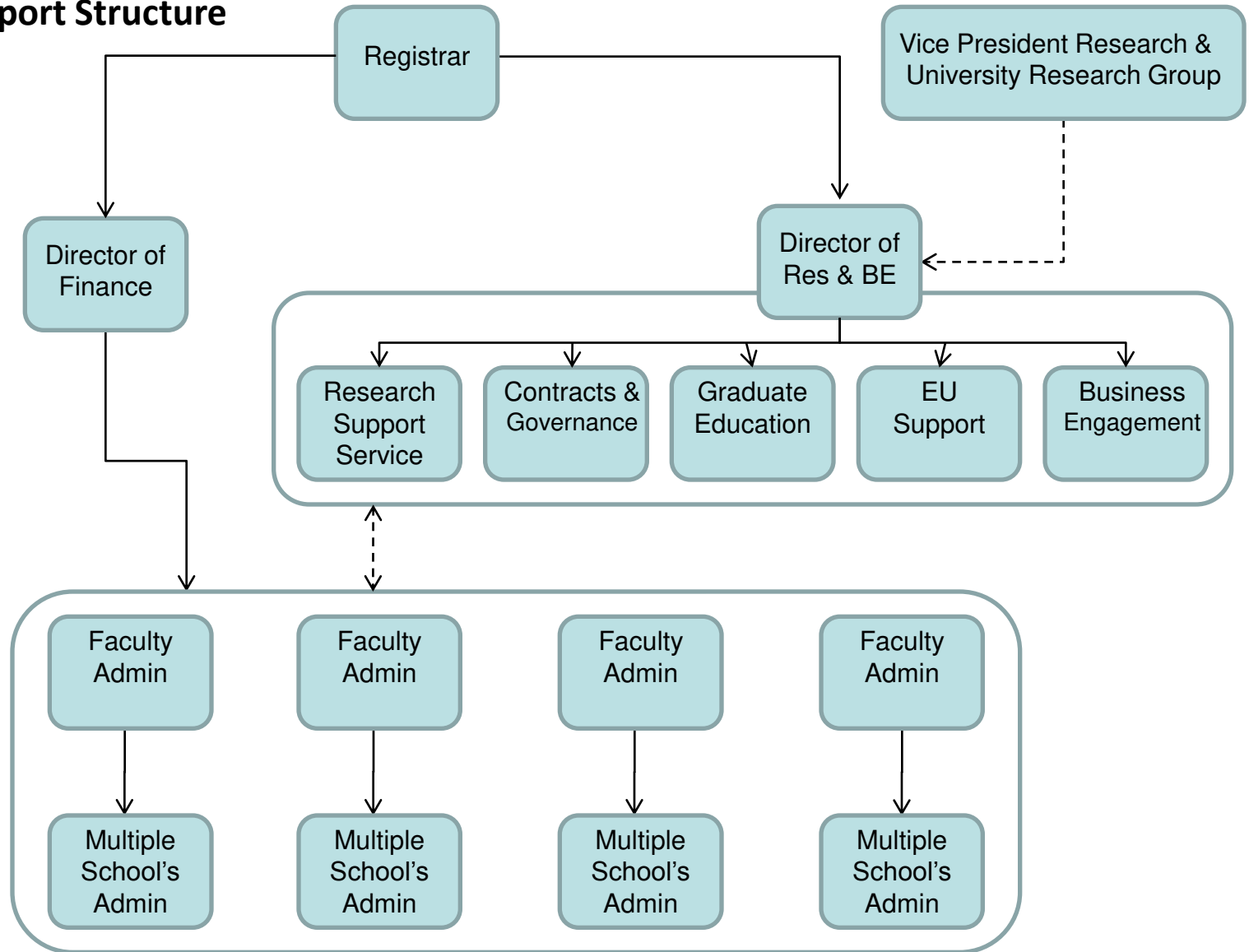
Manchester Structure

- 26 Schools within 4 Faculties; Engineering & Physical Sciences, Life Science, Medical & Human Sciences and Humanities.
- Only 5 budget holders across the University, President, Registrar and the 4 Deans of Faculty
- Fully devolved administration down to School level.
- Fully devolved budgets down to School level e.g. all research income passed to Schools with no top-slicing at the University level.
- Research Support Service (RSS) within the Directorate of Research and Business Engagement responsible for the quality of service to investigator (pre-award and project management)
- Post-award financial management sits within the Directorate of Finance

Research Support Resources

- 73 FTE within Research Support Service colleagues split between the University Research Office and Faculty/School.
- 57 Research Finance colleagues across campus.
- Highly devolved structure with the majority of support delivered at the School level.
- Research Support Service within the Directorate of Research and Business Engagement is responsible and accountable for the processes and service level delivered throughout the devolved structure.
- Only operational aspect retained centrally is Research and EU Contract negotiation and sign-off and some Research Governance activity.
- Each Faculty has some freedom to structure Research Support to suit their needs and all four have organised Research Support slightly differently.
- Post award management of research retained within the Finance Directorate following the same devolved model.

University of Manchester Research Support Structure



The View From Within - 1st Oct 2004

- All hell breaks loose!
- Previous models of centralised research support cease.
- Faculties and Schools set-up local research support with no formal handover.
- In the absence of any rules of the game, local innovations in service delivery take place and bespoke support proliferates.

The View From Within - Today

- Full review of Research Administration and Finance in 2010.
- New Directorate set-up and a Head of Research Support Service, Faculty Heads of Res Support and Faculty Research Accountants appointed in early 2011.
- Re-organisation of School level research support service in progress.
- On-going programme of process harmonisation.

View From Within – Pros

- Local support is very popular with Academic and Research colleagues.
- Devolution enables local research support staff to view research activity in the round.
- Flexible structures enable services to develop inline with local need.
- Operational problems are tackled quickly.
- Researchers' much more likely to approach local research support at an early stage.
- Builds a sense of ownership at the local level.

The View From Within – Cons

- Duplication of effort can occur.
- Accountability and responsibility can be difficult to pin down if line management and policy development/implementation become detached.
- Recruiting staff with the right skills can be problematic.
- Strategy and policy development can slow down.
- Clarity of roles can be problematic in large complex structures.
- A geographically widespread set of local offices can raise cross communication problems.
- Conflicts of interest between what's right for the University and what's required by individuals or groups arise more often.

Strengths & Opportunities

- Better service provision, stronger relationships and ownership of support produces experienced and committed staff.
- Building internal networks both formal and informal proves a useful way of maintaining crucial communication routes and enables staff at all levels to contribute to research strategy and policy development.
- Opportunities abound for further development of the role of research support and the individuals within it.
- Local support for academic colleagues reduces the admin burden on them and frees up their time for research.

Weaknesses & Threats

- Major external changes in policy or procedure are resource intensive and can be difficult to manage effectively in a highly devolved structure.
- There is the potential for Governance issues, sign-off authority etc. to slip.
- Structure can become over reliant on individuals and their expertise.
- Any failure in the development and communication of policies and procedures can take a long-time to surface and rectify.
- Devolution without adequate resources is potentially damaging to service levels over the longer term.

Future Gazing

- Reductions in national investment and increasing competition brings additional challenge to devolved research support.
- Quality Assurance check will be a way of illustrating improvement in the future.
- Electronic Research Management will play a role for us as it does for many Universities.
- Constant change is inevitable.

Summary

- Devolve or Not?
- Some Elements for consideration:

Be clear on what needs to be achieved.

Size does matter.

What are the change management issues.

What else is happening inside and outside your organisation that affects how you structure your research support.

Its not a cheap option.

- We would devolve again?