Professionalisation of the Outreach Officer Role

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22 November 2012
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Background

● The ‘outreach officer’ role can be:
  ● Taken on by anyone from head of dept to new post doc to full time paid post
  ● Called anything from ‘widening participation’ to ‘science in society’ to ‘public engagement’ to ‘schools liaison’
  ● Based in a group or dept or faculty or institution
  ● Low status and lacking influence

● What does it mean to be a ‘professional’ outreach officer?
What does ‘professional’ mean?

- Defined role?
- Accredited training?
- Suitable rewards and recognition?
- Anything else?

- What support can IOP provide?
The role

- Is there a need to:
  - Identify a core set of tasks?
  - Identify the core skills and experience needed?
  - Produce a model job description?

- How do all the variants fit in with this?
Training

- Is there a need for training for OOs?
  - Does any already exist?
  - Is it effective?
  - What should any training include?
  - Should IOP accredit people who’ve attended training?
Reward/Recognition

• Is there a need to raise the status of OOs?
  • What would work in your organisation?
  • Is external recognition needed?
  • Are there issues to do with how posts are paid for?
Summary for discussion

The role
• Identify core sets of tasks, skills and experience needed?
• Produce a model job description(s)?

Training
• Does any already exist?
• Is it effective?
• What should any training include?
• Should IOP accredit people who’ve attended training?

Reward/Recognition
• Is there a need to raise the status/profile of OOs?
• What would work in your organisation?
• Is external recognition needed?
• Are there issues to do with how posts are paid for?

What does ‘professionalisation’ mean to you and how can IOP support you?
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