

# INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH AND INQUIRY: A SCHOLARLY DISCUSSION

## Guidance for Discussion Group Chairs and Reporters

This asks you to act to act as a ..... for one of the discussion groups for this seminar.

### Expanding on the Format

The seminar will emphasise enquiry / investigation / discussion in small international groups. Participants will be allocated by Alan and Mick to groups of 6-8 and each group will have an international mix of participants. These groups will operate right through the day. There will also be times both formally, e.g. the poster sessions, and informally, e.g. refreshment breaks, for participants to meet outside these groups.

We think such an enquiry format is appropriate to the focus of the seminar. We assume all participants bring to the seminar / discussions particular expertise and questions that can best be explored through guided discussion. To express this differently this seminar will *not* be the, perhaps, usual formal lectures with the odd question!

### The role of plenary speakers (re the small group discussions)

Three plenary speakers - Tom Wenzel, Angela Brew, Sue Vajoczki will give short presentations to stimulate small group and plenary discussions on the conference themes (Tom has 20 minutes, Angela and Sue 15 minutes each). The directions to them state:

“Your role is primarily to open up your topic – the nature of undergraduate research, national systems, and institutional practices and policies respectively – to better ensure an informed structured discussion of key issues. Clearly we leave you to decide what to focus on, but *we do ask that you end your talk with say 3-4 suggested questions / issues that you would like the groups to discuss*” (emphasis added). We assume that these questions will form a conclusion to their expected PowerPoint presentation.

### Overall organisation and function of the seminar groups

Before the seminar opens Alan and Mick will have organised seminar participants into seminar groups of 6-8 people with designated chairs and reporters. Exactly how we determine these groups has yet to be decided and will depend on what is possible. Ideally and hopefully practically we hope to have named seminar group members with name tags clearly stating which group each participant is in. Practically we will do what is possible. But participants will be put into groups which ensure international diversity to each seminar group and probably recognising type of institution (research elite, teaching focussed etc).

As is shown in the programme much of the seminar is given over to the small group discussions:

0925-1010	Group work: Introductions, what want to get out of the day. Examination of conceptual posters.	
1030-1100	Group work: Discussion of conceptual issues	
1205-1235	Group work: Discussion comparing national systems	
1435-1505	Group work: Discussion comparing institutional experiences	

On the day the seminar will be chaired and organised by Alan and Mick. They will set up the small group discussions and then hand over to ‘you’ to chair them. In their introductions to the whole seminar and the small group discussions Alan and Mick will clearly emphasise the overall philosophy of the seminar and warn all groups that each small group session will conclude with the reporter from each group being ready to conclude at the end of the discussion period – something like: ‘One thing worth saying to everybody here about our discussion of these issues is ...’. *In each session only one or two groups will be asked to speak*, but over the whole day we will (try to) ensure all groups contribute to the open ‘discussions’.

**You role as discussion group chair** is central to the organisation and philosophy of the seminar. Clearly you are all experienced small group chairs. Here we do emphasise:

- The key role of the discussion groups in meeting the overall aims of the seminar and thus your role is to focus the group during the whole seminar on these issues (see the final programme).
- In each session to focus the discussion on the issues raised by the plenary speakers.
- To manage the time so that the last c5 minutes of each discussion period is available for Alan and Mick to manage a brief plenary discussion at which selected groups report their perspectives.
- To link with the reporter to ensure that they can play their role –see below
- Note we assume and welcome that there will be uncertainties, differing perspective and disagreements. Your role includes bring these to the fore. Such differing perspectives may be what the final discussion / the one perspective focuses on

**Your role as reporter** is likewise central. As the group is discussing you may want to take some part in the discussion, but your central role is to distill from the discussion *one* observation that represents a *group* perspective on the discussion of the issue - viz the nature of undergraduate research, national systems, and institutional practices and policies. It is important that this represents as far as possible a group perspective and not just your own! Such a perspective may indicate something of the disagreements / alternative perspectives in the group, but that is for you to decide..Depending on how the discussion is going before the last few minutes of the session you may have time / opportunity to put that perspective to the group.

#### **Post-conference dissemination**

CUR has agreed to provide a record of the seminar on their website <http://www.cur.org/pre-ISSOTL.html>. This information will then be disseminated internationally as we are sure there will be a lot of interest in the seminar.

#### **A 'record' of your small group discussion**

As much of the seminar discussion will be in these small groups it is vital we get a record of these discussions for posting on the web. We ask the chair and/or the reporter to produce a c500 word report of say 3 key issues or conclusions that came out of 'your' small group discussion during the day. It may or may not be appropriate for one to be from each of the three discussion topics – viz the nature of undergraduate research, national systems, and institutional practices and policies. That is for you to decide, but know we will be asking each discussion group chair / reporter to send their reports to CUR within two weeks of the seminar.

Thank you!