

# Report on progress following 2015 Member Convention and Conference

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In 2015 we held a Member Convention in March, running up to the General Election, and a Conference in November titled "Enhancing organisational performance through reward". Full reports and papers from these events are available on our website at <http://www.ecc.ac.uk/events/annual-conference-archive/2014--15-conference/> and <http://www.ecc.ac.uk/events/annual-conference-archive/2015-2016-annual-conference/> where you will also find video interviews with our November 2015 speakers.

Four themes for ECC action emerged:

- 1. ECC Online software and related developments**
- 2. Service developments**
- 3. Networking and sharing**
- 4. Financial sustainability of the consortium**

These themes built on earlier priorities arising from our conferences in 2013 and 2014, and this short report covers progress during 2016. Performance against all our business and financial objectives is reported in each Annual Report, and we continue to communicate with members throughout the year.

Do please contact me with any questions, comments or ideas.



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## 1. ECC Online software and related developments

### In 2015 you said

Members felt strongly that the implementation of the new ECC Online software and its future development should be our top priority in the months ahead. ECC Online users were unanimously impressed with the new interface and functionality. Members now want ECC Online to be as good as it can possibly be. Ideas included:

#### Integration

- Potential for ECC Online to link with other systems, e.g. enabling a request triggered within another HR system (such as authorisation for new role) to be fed automatically into ECC Online as a task or flag for action

#### Uploads

- A repository of documents in formats such as Word, Excel and PDF showing how a role has changed over time, e.g. applications for regrades

#### Links with Labour Market Data (LMD) service

- Potential to cross-refer to surveyed roles on the Capita LMD website
- Potential to complete LMD surveys within ECC Online

#### Support for job descriptions

- Practical help to support managers in creating good practice job descriptions, e.g. guidance; templates; competency-based questions for interviews; or induction / onboarding guidance

#### Reporting

- A query function to pull out all roles in a certain department, identifying the key competencies for that area so that L&D colleagues could target the right support to that department

#### **We are doing**

*All members were migrated to ECC Online and individual member databases were released by 18 June 2015.*

*More than 125 new databases were created, containing 131,025 roles.*

*Since migration a number of system improvements have been made:*

- *Amending the 'role notes' field so that it is fully editable*
- *Enabling the system administrator to make values obsolete in look-up fields*
- *Changing the 'share query' permissions to allow all users access, and*
- *Refining reports and adding a new report*

*There has also been additional 'invisible' work behind the scenes to improve continuity and speed of service and system backup activity, as well as refinement of the login/password process.*

*We are now in Phase 2 of ECC Online development which will include adding the ECC*

*competency framework to the system and exploring options for job description templates.*

*In the meantime we are continuing with a programme of system improvements driven by member feedback:*

*Uploads – This is fully functional. ECC Online can accept documents in a variety of formats including Word, Excel, PNG, Jpeg and PDF. There is no limit to the number of documents that can be uploaded.*

*Reporting – This particular report is now available (Element Rank Order Comparison). In addition, we are regularly reviewing and amending reports as well as gathering data on further reports required.*

*Integration/LMD/Job descriptions – These are all areas that will be included in discussions around the scope and timetable for future software development.*

*ECC Online Phase 2 is one of the team's key development priorities during 2015-16.*

## 2. Service developments

### 2.1 Making best use of role analysis

#### In 2015 you said

Although members recognise the need to continue to maintain the HERA scheme over time to ensure its sustainability and relevance, no radical changes should be made. Some members shared their experience of having used additional organisational factors and competencies with HERA. There was a strong feeling that although role analysis has often remained tied to recruitment and reward, there is a real potential to return to the other uses that ECC first identified as best practice some years ago (e.g. appraisal or organisational development), and that perhaps the time is now right to help people make full and best use of their role analysis and design.

#### **We are doing**

##### Reviewing the role analysis process

*We worked with members during 2014 and 2015 reviewing current practice and giving advice on how to streamline their role analysis processes. Those members found the review a very useful means of auditing processes and drawing attention back to what they have been to ensure consistency of approach. All those members we have worked with confirmed that HERA remains a very robust and time-effective scheme and process. Each review follows a similar structure but the advice given is bespoke, reflecting the different processes and cultures within each organisation.*

*In April 2016 we released revised versions of the HERA Questionnaire and Notes for Guidance, refreshing language, improving formatting and adding practical examples to aid scoring. We were careful to avoid any changes to the scoring scheme itself, in line with member feedback.*

##### Consistency checking

*Consistency remains a very topical issue, and always arises during role analysis process reviews. The need to ensure equality in pay and reward is still as relevant as it was during the initial implementation of HERA some 10 years ago.*

*With the new requirement for employers to provide evidence of carrying out pay gap audits, it is likely that consistency checking will become even more important as a means of ensuring that there is a sound analytical basis for determining role size and reward. Even where a matching process exists, there is still the need to carry out some analytical evaluation. ECC consultants continue to provide guidance and advice to members about best practice.*

##### Competency framework

*Our work to redevelop the ECC competency framework was deliberately deferred whilst we focused on the migration to ECC Online. With the migration complete, we will re-assess what is needed to make the competency framework easier to apply to support human resource and people management practice. Watch this space!*

## 2.2 Equal pay

### In 2015 you said

Equal pay has not 'gone away' and some organisations are at risk. Assistance is needed to help members move on from Equal pay audits to action. Connections were made with other themes in the sector such as professorial pay, Athena Swan and gender inequality in career paths.

#### **We are doing**

*ECC consultants have completed a number of Equal pay audits for members during the last couple of years.*

*Our consultants remain available to provide guidance and advice on best practice and, in particular, help members to draw up action plans following audits to ensure change takes place to create fair reward structures for the modern diverse workforce.*

## 2.3 Senior reward

### In 2015 you said

Members noted the potential decline of service-based increments and increasing links between performance and pay in the sector. These were felt to be particularly relevant to senior roles, with a need for transparent methodologies for determining senior reward and understanding performance.

#### **We are doing**

*We are evaluating our Senior Staff Pay matrix (SSPm), developed during 2014.*

*We have completed four major senior pay projects in the last 18 months: three in member organisations and one for a non-member. All these projects were successful and well received. Some of the project work included profiles and behaviours to enable the organisations to implement a more performance-based approach to valuing and rewarding roles. Feedback from all projects is now being harvested to help us publicise the work we have done and how this might prove useful for our members.*

*During 2016 we aim to draft a guide capturing what we have learned, with tips for members when they are contemplating work on senior roles. In future, we would like to expand some guidance and advice on performance management and the role it has to play for senior staff for our members.*

*Senior reward service development is one of the team's key priorities for 2015-16.*

### 3. Networking and sharing

#### In 2015 you said

More should be done to foster the sharing of knowledge and experience between members; events like the Member Convention have proved invaluable. Members would like ECC's help in gathering intelligence about trends and issues within the sector (e.g. what the current 'hot roles' are and how things are changing) and then sharing that with the wider membership.

#### We are doing

*Our JISCMail group remains very active, allowing members to share problems and practical solutions in an informal and very immediate manner. The development and rollout of the ECC Online software also created valuable opportunities for the ECC team and members to meet and work together. We anticipate further development of the software benefiting from similar collaborative working.*

*Since 2014 we have supported the Pensions Universities Group, and we continue to support very active network groups in Scotland and the North of England (NURG). We have begun to work with members in the South East of England and in January 2016 inaugurated a new reward network (South Eastern Reward Network) SERN. This network has now met twice and another date is to be confirmed for July 2016.*

*We are also exploring how we might systematically identify wider labour market and employment trends that will impact HE and FE now and in the future.*

### 4. Financial sustainability of the consortium

#### In 2015 you said

ECC needs to continue to manage resources prudently. Investing in the development of the new software has depleted ECC's reserves, and these need to be rebuilt over the next 18-24 months. The team should continue to pursue income streams, providing those do not undermine or divert from the consortium's core activities.

#### We are doing

*We have nurtured our financial reserves over a number of years, which enabled us to invest in the ECC Online software development without seeking additional funds from members. During this period we have managed to hold subscriptions level, so that members have been protected from inflationary increases for three years.*

*A small overdraft enabled us to manage cash-flow through the end of the 2014-15 financial year, and it is likely that this will be required again as we approach year-end in July 2016. Our financial position is sound however and we will begin to build up appropriate reserves over the next few years.*

*Our 3-5 year financial plan sets out achievable growth aspirations for income, whilst controlling costs and building up reserves required for future service development. We will continue to pursue non-member income where this fits our mission and skill set, and does not divert attention or resources from our core business of actively supporting consortium members.*