ESRC End of Award Report

For awards ending on or after 1 November 2009

This End of Award Report should be completed and submitted using the grant reference as the email subject, to reportsofficer@esrc.ac.uk on or before the due date.

The final instalment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is completed in full and accepted by ESRC.

Grant holders whose End of Award Report is overdue or incomplete will not be eligible for further ESRC funding until the Report is accepted. We reserve the right to recover a sum of the expenditure incurred on the grant if the End of Award Report is overdue. (Please see the ESRC Research Funding Guide for details.)

Please refer to the Guidance notes when completing this End of Award Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Reference</th>
<th>ES/J022276/1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Title</td>
<td>Reframing Resolution - Managing Conflict and Resolving Individual Employment Disputes in the Contemporary Workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Start Date</td>
<td>1 October 2012</td>
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<td>Grant End Date</td>
<td>30 September 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Amount Expended:</td>
<td>£17,433.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant holding Institution</td>
<td>University of Central Lancashire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Holder</td>
<td>Dr Richard Saundry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Holder’s Contact Details</td>
<td>Address: School of Management Plymouth Business School Cookworthy Building Drake Circus Plymouth PL4 8AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Richard.Saundry@plymouth.ac.uk">Richard.Saundry@plymouth.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone: 01752 585594</td>
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Co-Investigators (as per project application): Institution

| Professor Paul Latreille | Swansea University |
| Professor Paul Teague    | Queen's University of Belfast |
| Professor Peter James Urwin | University of Westminster |
| Professor Charles Clouston Irvine | University of Strathclyde |
1. Non-technical summary

Please provide below a project summary written in non-technical language. The summary may be used by us to publicise your work and should explain the aims and findings of the project. [Max 250 words]

The seminar series ‘Reframing Resolution’ brought together, for the first time in the UK, academics, policy makers and practitioners to explore workplace dispute resolution and the management of conflict.

The first seminar at the University of Strathclyde, explored the nature of individual conflict. This was followed by a seminar held at the University of Central Lancashire that focused on employee voice and representation within resolution. The third seminar, at Swansea University, examined workplace mediation. At Queens University Belfast, the fourth seminar explored innovative ways in which organisations both in the UK and internationally, seek to manage conflict. University of Warwick hosted seminar five which appraised the impact of legislative and policy reforms. The themes and findings from the series were then brought together in a final seminar at the University of Westminster, which debated the implications for policy and practice.

The series, which was sponsored by Acas and mediation providers, CMP Resolutions, Consensio Partners and the TCM Group, involved contributions from a wide range of employers, HR practitioners, trade union officials, employer representatives and policymakers including the Department of Business Innovation and Skills, CBI TUC, CIPD, FSB, UNISON, EEF and the IPA.

The series developed new insights into the nature of individual workplace conflict, and has also informed on-going policy debates over the legal regulation of employment and workplace dispute resolution. By encouraging leading practitioners and policy-makers to share knowledge, it has identified key innovations in conflict management and developed networks to enable future research and knowledge transfer.

2. Project overview

a) Objectives
Please state the aims and objectives of your project as outlined in your proposal to us. [Max 200 words]

The objectives of the seminar series were to:

i) Develop new theoretical and conceptual approaches to the understanding of the nature of individual workplace conflict and the pattern of individual employment disputes;
ii) Explore the ways in which organisational approaches to conflict management and dispute resolution are shaped by broader management strategies and structures of employee representation and voice;

iii) Examine the potential impact of innovative systems of conflict management and alternative dispute resolution processes;

iv) Provide key insights into ongoing policy debates over the regulation of employment dispute resolution and the implications of this for economic performance, fairness and diversity;

v) Facilitate knowledge exchange between academics, policy-makers and practitioners and the development of mutually beneficial networks through which future research and knowledge transfer can be developed;

vi) Define a future research agenda and underpin the development of increased research capacity in this area.

b) Project Changes

Please describe any changes made to the original aims and objectives, and confirm that these were agreed with us. Please also detail any changes to the grant holder’s institutional affiliation, project staffing or funding. [Max 200 words]

There were no changes to the aims and objectives of the seminar series.

Richard Saundry left the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) in June 2013, but remains the PI. His colleague, Gemma Wibberley, at UCLAN, has been administering the series since with his support. This change was discussed and agreed with the ESRC.

Professor Paul Latreille moved from Swansea University to University of Sheffield in January 2013, but seminar 3 was still hosted by Professor Latreille at Swansea in February 2013 as planned.

The order of the seminars as proposed in the case for support was amended due to staff sickness. Consequently the seminar hosted by UCLAN was brought forward to December 2012 and the seminar hosted by University of Warwick was held in June 2013.

Professor Lisa Bingham from Indiana University who was due to appear at the Swansea seminar (and was identified in the original case for support) was sadly unable to contribute to seminar 3 as planned. However, an additional overseas speaker, Ariel Avgar from the University of Illinois was added to the roster of seminar contributors.
c) Methodology
Please describe the methodology that you employed in the project. Please also note any ethical issues that arose during the course of the work, the effects of this and any action taken. [Max 500 words]

The series comprised of six seminars as follows:

1) Understanding individual employment disputes (Strathclyde) - 11th October 2012

2) Resolving workplace disputes – employee voice, engagement and representation (Central Lancashire) - 12th December 2013

3) Mediation and alternative dispute resolution – outcomes and impacts (Swansea) - 14th February 2013

4) The management of workplace conflict – structures, systems and strategies (Queens Belfast) - 18th April 2013

5) The changing face of legal regulation – rights, resolution and efficiency (Warwick) - 5th June 2013

6i) Managing conflict and resolving disputes - synthesising research, practice and policy (Westminster) - 6th September 2013

Objectives were met by the series in various ways. In particular, seminar one provided a basis for the development of new conceptual approaches by providing analyses of the trajectory of individual workplace conflict and the pattern of individual employment disputes. By inviting leading academics from the UK and overseas, new theoretical approaches were presented and discussed.

The importance of employee representation and voice was specifically explored in seminar two, with ideas and best practice shared through the involvement of academic researchers and representatives from the TUC, UNISON, Acas and the CIPD. This was also a recurring theme throughout the rest of the series and the subject of an expert panel discussion at the final seminar held at Westminster.

International academics presented new research findings into innovative systems of conflict management at seminars 4 and 6, and the potential impact for the UK was debated. Alternative dispute resolution processes featured throughout the series, particularly at seminar three, and the participation of Acas, private mediators and companies who have played a central role in utilising these processes provided important and unique insights.

Expert panels at both Warwick and Westminster provided key insights into ongoing policy debates over the regulation of employment dispute resolution and the implications of this for economic performance, fairness and diversity. This included representatives from the CBI, EEF, FSB, UNISON and the TUC.

Knowledge exchange across stakeholder groups was achieved by inviting a wide variety of
speakers and delegates. Networks were established through encouraging the sharing of contact information and providing attendees with opportunities for interaction. All seminars provided space for discussion and in which key contacts were established. The involvement of PhD students also facilitated the creation of key links between early career and more established researchers, and aimed to build future research capacity.

The series generated significant interest among key stakeholders. Overall the series attracted around 300 participants including leading academics both national and international, HR practitioners, managers, representatives from employers’ organisations, senior figures from policy organisations, trade union officials, mediators, lawyers, early career researchers (funded by our sponsors’ bursaries).

Seminars were publicised through a variety of channels including: social media; press releases; universities’ marketing departments; direct mail; dedicated webpages; existing networks of the investigators and partners; newsletters; ESRC seminar series webpages and ‘outputs’; posters; conference packs; relevant mailing lists; stakeholder and partner websites and communication channels.

d) Project Findings

Please summarise the findings of the project, referring where appropriate to outputs recorded on the ESRC website. Any future research plans should also be identified. [Max 500 words]

The outcomes of the series (to date) have been as follows:

i) The evidence base in relation to the subject area has been extended with new research presented by a range of academics, both from the UK and overseas. In this way, the series has produced a range of outputs which have provided an important and unique resource for academic and practitioners interested in conflict management. This has comprised of presentation slides from all speakers that participated. In addition, at all but one of the seminars, keynote presentations were filmed. These resources have been made available both through the ESRC and also dedicated webpages hosted by UCLAN. These have been accessed and utilised by a range of practitioners, policy researchers and academics.

ii) New networks have been created which will create the basis for sustainable research capacity in this field and also create opportunities to build a new research agenda. 19 travel bursaries were awarded to PhD students to allow them to attend the series, providing the opportunity to present posters of their research and to make valuable contacts with established researchers and key practitioners. The students provided reviews of the seminars which have also been published on the ESRC ROS and the series’ web-pages.

iii) The organisers produced summaries of each seminar which have been circulated to delegates and published through the ESRC ROS and the series’ webpages. Individuals who were unable to attend, including those who were located internationally, have also been
provided with seminar materials. The findings from the series were summarised in a discussion document provided to delegates at the final seminar held at Westminster and designed to frame and inform the discussions.

iv) There was significant demand for all of the seminars. Registration for each seminar exceeded the initial target. For example, for our final seminar we doubled our original plan of 55 people to over 100. Overall, the series attracted approximately 300 participants. In particular, the series was successful in reaching into the practitioner and policymaking communities.

v) Feedback received from those attending the seminars was overwhelmingly positive. Delegates found the seminars interesting, informative and thought-provoking. In particular, attempts by the organisers to provide space for debate and interaction were welcomed. The following comments (provided in seminar evaluation questionnaires) were typical:

“a fantastic, interesting seminar, delivered by very knowledgeable presenters”

“interactive, relevant and current”

“[Westminster was a] very enjoyable day at the end of an enjoyable series…very useful for practitioners”

Academics also welcomed the opportunity for greater interaction with practitioners which in turn provided the potential for future research and collaboration. For example in one evaluation questionnaire a senior practitioner commented that the seminar had provided:

“the recognition that there are multiple research pieces underway that we need to connect with”

More broadly feedback illustrated that the series’ aim of bringing together academics and practitioners had been largely achieved. For example one delegate praised the seminar they attended for:

“bringing together practitioners and academics, and the creative energy, lively discussion about the direction mediation is travelling in”

e) Contributions to wider ESRC initiatives (eg Research Programmes or Networks)

If your project was part of a wider ESRC initiative, please describe your contributions to the initiative’s objectives and activities and note any effect on your project resulting from participation. [Max. 200 words]

n/a
3. Early and anticipated impacts

a) Summary of Impacts to date

The early impacts of the series can be summarised as follows:

i) The series has created increased interest in the practitioner and policy-making communities. Ed Sweeney, then Chair of Acas and Richard Saundry (PI) published an invited article entitled, “Is it time to see conflict management as a strategic issue?” in leading practitioner HR journal, Personnel Today, in October 2013. This was based on their contributions to the final seminar held at Westminster. [http://www.personntoday.com/articles/01/10/2013/59680/is-it-time-to-see-conflict-management-as-a-strategic-issue.htm].

ii) Key findings from the series have been summarised by research organisers in a series of papers which have been published on the ESRC ROS. This together with other materials from the seminars has produced a resource which is already informing policy, practice and teaching. For example, materials have been used by researchers from Employment Research Australia who were compiling a major report for the Australian Fair Work Commission into the use of mediation in bullying and harassment cases. In addition, the MSc in Mediation and Conflict Resolution at University of Strathclyde integrates this resource into its module on Employment Mediation.

iii) Key Acas personnel were involved in the design of the series, attended a number of seminars and also contributed as panellists and speakers. Acas’s Director of Strategy has commented that the series ‘has been an extremely powerful tool in unpacking the core issues associated with conflict management (embracing legal, practitioner, policy dimensions, and international comparisons) and importantly in raising the profile of this debate’. Furthermore, the series has played a part in shaping Acas’s own strategic objectives to emphasise the benefits of conflict management alongside dispute resolution.

iv) Across the 6 seminars approximately 200 practitioners either attended or requested materials related to the series. This has resulted in the establishment of informal networks which have the potential to underpin future collaborative research and maximise impact. Moreover, feedback from practitioner delegates suggests that their involvement in the series has led them to change or review their approach to conflict management, presented examples of best practice and provided opportunities for reflection upon their existing behaviours.

iv) The series has provided the basis for improved research collaboration. Two successful bids for funding for ‘Acas Research Partnerships’ have been concluded which developed from new contacts made between academics and also between academics and practitioners. Indeed, cross-national partnerships have been formed to extend research themes developed in USA to the UK context.
b) Anticipated/Potential Future Impacts

Please outline any anticipated or potential impacts (scientific or economic and societal) that you believe your project might have in future. [Max. 200 words]

Acas have commissioned a paper to present the series findings and the implications for future policy and practice implications. This will ensure that the series taps into the main channels of policy debate and formation.

A proposal for a special issue of the Human Resource Management Journal has been submitted, providing a potential showcase for the research presented at, and generated as a result of the series. In addition, a proposal is being drafted for an edited book, offering broader examination of the issues examined during the seminars.

The series has brought together new groupings of academics to develop further research into dispute resolution. For example (as noted above) successful bids have subsequently been made to Acas. The results of this research will be published in 2014, providing an important addition to the evidence base. In addition, key contributors to the series (academic and research users) are exploring future bids to develop the research agenda.

In terms of building research capacity, the sponsorship of PhD students’ attendance during the series developed a nascent community of early career researchers. This will be built upon by holding a PhD symposium in 2014, providing opportunities to discuss their work more fully.

You will be asked to complete an ESRC Impact Report 12 months after the end date of your award. The Impact Report will ask for details of any impacts that have arisen since the completion of the End of Award Report.
4. Declarations

Please ensure that sections A, B and C below are completed and signed by the appropriate individuals. The End of Award Report will not be accepted unless all sections are signed. Please note hard copies are not required; electronic signatures are accepted and should be used.

A: To be completed by Grant Holder

Please read the following statements. Tick one statement under ii) and iii), then sign with an electronic signature at the end of the section (this should be an image of your actual signature).

i) The Project

This Report is an accurate overview of the project, its findings and impacts. All co-investigators named in the proposal to ESRC or appointed subsequently have seen and approved the Report. ☒

ii) Submissions to the Research Outcomes System (ROS)

Output and impact information has been submitted to the Research Outcomes System. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted as soon as they become available. ☒

or

This grant has not yet produced any outputs or impacts. Details of any future outputs and impacts will be submitted to the Research Outcomes System as soon as they become available. ☐

iii) Submission of Data

Data arising from this grant have been offered for deposit with the UK Data Service. ☐

or

Data that were anticipated in the grant proposal have not been produced and the UK Data Service has been notified. ☐

or

No datasets were proposed or produced from this grant. ☒