

Managing a Research Team

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Questions



What are UCC's expectations of you as a Research Leader?



How do you know what is expected of you?



What aspects of these expectations fall into leadership or management activities?

Manager v/s Leader:

Focuses on the present -----

Prefers stability -----

Orients toward the short term -----

Focuses on procedure -----

Asks "what" and "how" -----

Prefers to control -----

Is happy in complexity -----

Uses the rational mind -----

Works within the context of the
organization and the business

Looks toward the future

Appreciates change

Orients toward the long term

Engages in a Vision

Asks "why" and "what"

Knows how to delegate

Prefers to simplify

Trusts intuition

Takes social and environmental
contexts into consideration

On the ground for Research Leaders

Complex legislation brings uncertainty
compounded by uncertain funding streams
which leads to more uncertainty....

“Managing the Unmanageable” John Taylor

So many policies....

Haddington Road/(Lansdowne Road)



Employment Control Framework

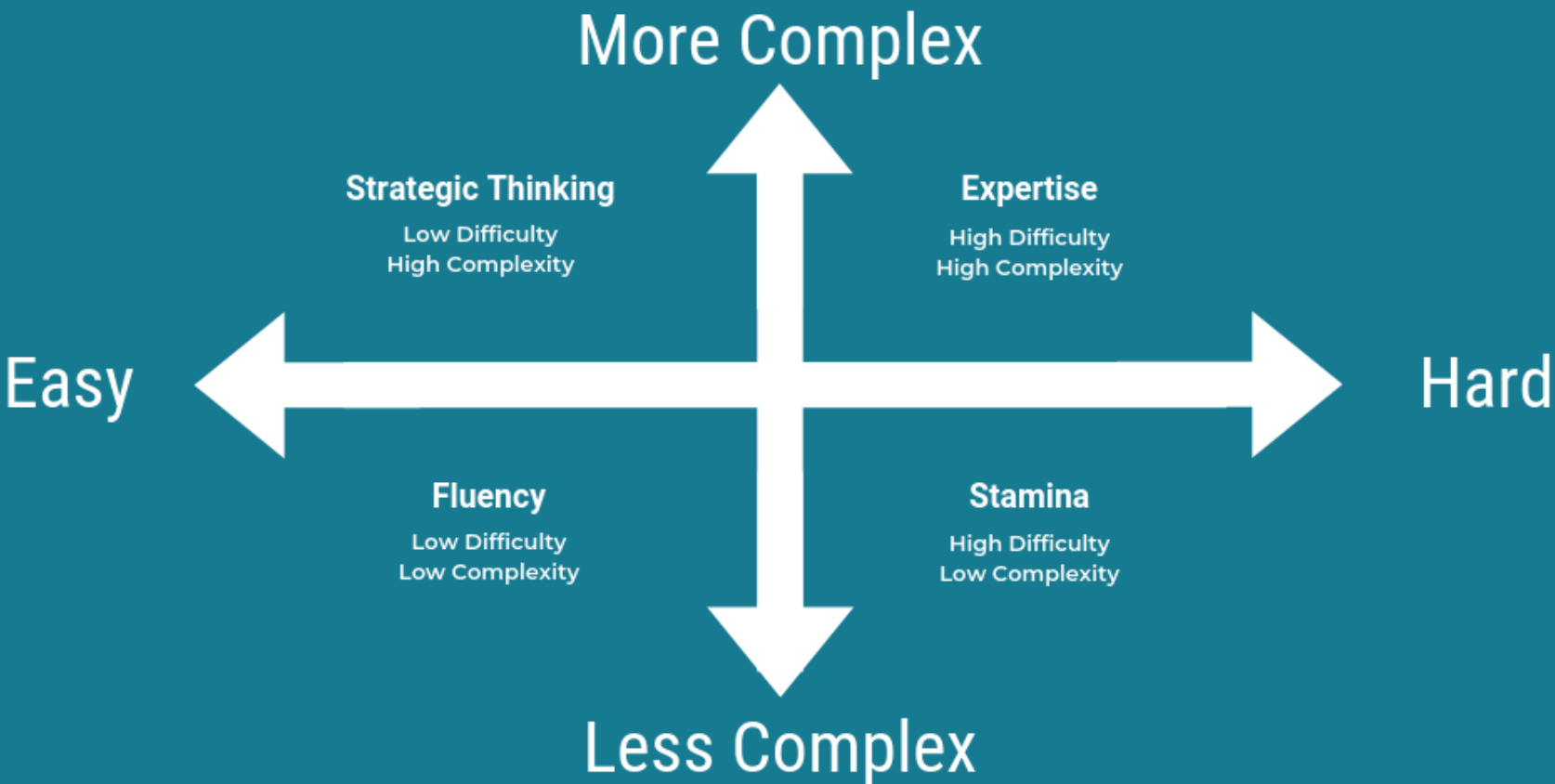


Contradictory Funding Policies from funders at National and EC Level



Protection of Employees 2003 Act

DIFFICULTY and COMPLEXITY



Monitoring and reporting



“Researchers are often compelled to monitor and report their performance, but constant competition and regular evaluations of projects and positions require researchers to anticipate how their work will develop and, in particular, which accountable outputs it will deliver.”



(Felt, 2017; Müller, 2014; Murphy, 2015; Ylijoki and Mäntylä, 2003).

Uncertainty



Research encapsulates the entanglement of intellectual uncertainties and social uncertainties related to funding and careers.



(Fochler et al., 2016; Sigl, 2016; Ylijoki, 2010).

Remember....



Institutions do not do research: individuals do. Research is personal!



Get to know UCC's policies.

UCC Researcher Career Management Structure



Career Structure for Researchers at UCC



- Post Doc



- Senior Post Doc



- Research Fellow



- Senior Research Fellow



Progression to each level is through open competition - definition of roles included in circulated document

HR Operational Processes UCC

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/hrresearch/recruitment/>



What else?

EC Human Resource Strategy 4 Researchers



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

Research Team Leadership

The Organisation (UCC) - Context

Career Progression for your team

Funding sources

Research Strategy

Research Output

Decision Making

Communication

Uncertainty



Research Teams

A group of people with *different skills and different tasks*, who *work together* on a *common project or goal*. (Kirwan, 2015)



Building Blocks for Developing an Effective Team

- Clear objectives
- Balanced roles
- Effective processes
- Good communication
- Appropriate leadership
- Support and trust
- Openness and conflict
- Mutual cooperation
- Individual development
- Sound inter-group relations
- Regular review

What is a Research Team?

...think of it as a continuum...

Level of Interaction and Integration

Low-----High

Independent Research

- Investigator works largely independently on a research problem within his or her lab/or writing alone as in humanities

Collaboration

- Each group member brings expertise to address the research problem.
- Group members work on separate parts of the research problem, which are later integrated.
- Data sharing or brainstorming among lead investigators varies from limited to frequent

Integrated Research Team

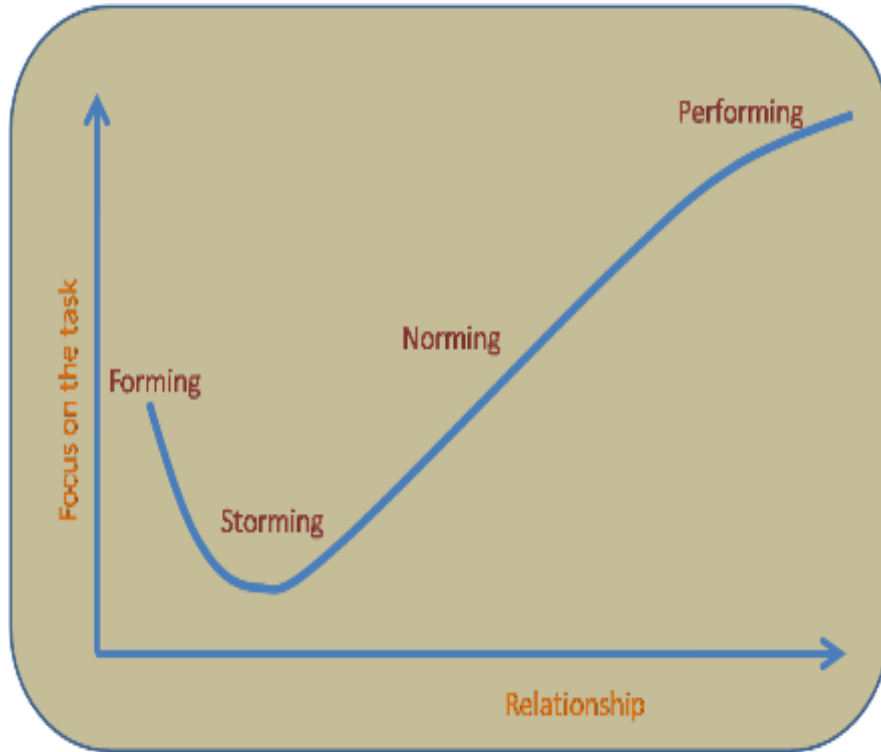
- Each team member brings specific expertise to address the research problem. Team meets regularly to discuss team goals, individuals' objectives, and next steps.
- Team shares leadership responsibility, decision-making authority, data, and credit

Tuckman's Team Development

Bruce Tuckman's is the best known model of Team formation (1965). He described team formation in terms of a series of stages that when completed result in:

- Growth
- Ability to face challenges
- Ability to tackle problems & find solutions
- Effective work planning
- Delivery of results


Stages of Team Development




5 stages of team development:


- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Adjourning


Forming – what happens?

 Members focus efforts on defining goals, developing procedures for performance tasks


 Social aspects – deals with feelings and dependency on each other

 Getting acquainted, understanding leadership and other member roles

 Individual members might keep their feelings to themselves until they know the situation

 Act more secure than they actually feel; experience confusion and uncertainty about what is expected of them

 Nice and Polite – non-hostile

 Weighing up the personal benefits versus cost of being in the group

Forming – what helps?



Manage introductions and ensure that quieter participants are included.



The work to be done needs to be communicated in a way that helps the team understand what needs to be achieved without overwhelming them with detail.

Storming – what happens?



Conflicts emerge over task behaviours, priorities of goals, responsibility, task related guidance and direction from the leader



Social behaviour – mixture of expression of hostility and strong feelings.



Competition over leadership role and goal conflict dominate



Some members may withdraw and isolate themselves from the emotional tension

Storming – what helps?



Managers need to assert their role and help draw out and resolve differences that might otherwise persist causing continuing team cohesion problems



Work goals may need to be clarified along with individual role and objectives.



Team rules such as collaboration and sharing may also start to be developed

Norming – what happens?



Sharing information, acceptance of different opinions, positive attempts to compromise



The group sets the rules by which it will operate



Social empathy, concern, positive expressions of feelings leading to cohesion



Cooperation and sense of shared responsibility develops

Norming – what helps?



The focus turns towards the task and what needs to be done.



Objectives are clarified and the detail of work is laid out.



Feeling more as a team, people start to help one another.



Group rules/norms need to be developed and refined.

Performing – what happens?



Team shows how effectively and efficiently it can achieve results.



Roles of individual members are accepted and understood.



Members know when they should work independently and as a group.



How to maintain performance?

Maintaining performance – what helps?



Performance management



Motivation



Need to sustain an effective task-people balance

Adjourning – what happens?



Adjourning involves dissolution. It entails the termination of roles, the completion of tasks and reduction of dependency.



Some commentators have described this stage as 'mourning' given the loss that is sometimes felt by former participants.



Some groups have well defined adjournments, e.g. cross functional teams. Some teams may go on indefinitely and detrimentally!!

Adjourning – what helps?



Celebrating the successes of the past.



Steadily revealing the future focus.



Rituals can help people cope with the changes of ending, e.g., in relation to grieving the loss of the team or former members and the special relationships within it

Applying this at work



Do we sometimes simply watch, or do we offer to help each other and accept help from others?



When we do offer and accept help, what makes this process effective? What would make it even more effective?



What kind of feedback is the most effective? Why?

How does it all go wrong?

Lencioni:

5 Dysfunctions of a Team



Strategies to overcome:

- **Build Trust**
- **Master Conflict**
- **Achieve Commitment**
- **Embrace Accountability**
- **Focus on Results**

Build Trust



Identify and discuss individual strengths and weaknesses, e.g. Undertake MBTI together



Spend time in face-to-face meetings and working sessions



Undertake a team diagnostic together

Master Conflict



Achieve commitment

Remember

Remember: Buy-in doesn't require consensus – only a team commitment to the decision made

Review

Review commitments at the end of each meeting to ensure all team members are aligned*

Cascade

Cascade communication – have team members communicate decisions to their own teams within 24 hours of meetings*

Embrace accountability



Explicitly communicate goals and behaviour



Regularly discuss performance versus goals and standards

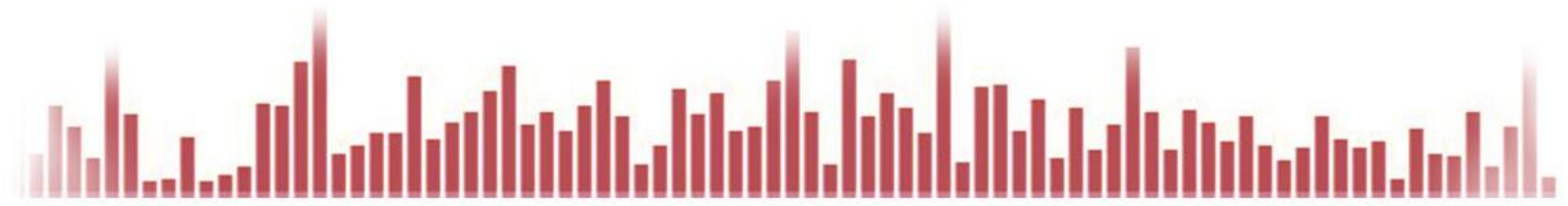


Team members have to be willing to confront each other on behaviour (*because behaviour is what produces results*) – this requires the skill and willingness to give critical feedback *

Focus on results

Keep the team focused on tangible **group** goals – have a visible scoreboard (?) with one or two objective measurements for success

Reward individuals based on team goals and collective success



Thanks for Listening

