

Recommendations for new Secretariat staffing structure

Mike Sparrow and Colin Summerhayes

Summary

This paper outlines the proposed staffing structure for the SCAR Secretariat. In summary our recommendation is that from February 2010 we have two part time people: a Finance Assistant (FA) for 2 days a week and an Executive Officer (EO) for 3 days a week to replace the current full-time EO.

According to the SCAR Memorandum of Understanding and Articles such changes do not require the approval of the Delegates¹.

Such a change has the advantage that it (a) is more efficient and flexible (b) decreases costs, and (c) allows us to easily expand if necessary (e.g. if we proceed with taking on more of the conference management by the Secretariat or if we obtain more external funding)

The reason for the change

It is our recommendation that the current EO's responsibilities (science coordination and finances) should be split between a part time FA and a part time EO. There are three main reasons for doing so:

A. Increased Efficiency

Someone employed as an EO is unlikely to have much of a financial background. Over the last couple of years the SCAR finances have become more complicated with the addition of several external funding streams (Total Foundation, Martha Muse, Sloan and Memorial University). One of our aims is to increase these external sources of revenue and a single EO can only spend a certain amount of hours each week on the finances. A FA will have a finance background and being part time we will be able to expand their hours if more external grants are forthcoming (see also point C). If expanded hours are needed, the idea would be to fund them out of the management fees attracted by the extra funds.

¹ 1. The Memorandum (item 2) states that the registered office is to be situated in England and Wales, and (item 4.5) that the Charity may employ and remunerate such staff as are necessary for carrying out the work of the Charity.

2. The Articles state (11.1) the Directors shall manage on behalf of the Members the business of the Charity and may exercise all the powers of the Charity.

3. The RoPs state (9.1) the Charity shall establish a Secretariat with an Executive Director and appropriate staff responsible to the Directors.

B. Cost Savings

A FA will be employed at a significantly lower salary scale than an EO:

Current Situation:

ED £50.2k

EO £32.0 (due 2 yr pay rise – call £33.0 3%)

AA £11.1 (due 2 yr pay rise call £11.5 – 3%)

Total: £94.7k

Future:

ED £40

EO (3 days a week – £25.6-35.5k - say starting at 30k full time equivalent) £18k

AA £11.5

Finance Assistant (2 days a week) £8.1k (on same salary scale as AA)

Total: £77.6k

(note above do not include 7% pension)

Saving due to new structure ~ £17.1 or \$27.6k

With a Full time EO and no FA the saving would be ~£13.2 (\$21.3k)

C. Internal Conference Management and Additional Grants

Assuming that after further costing etc. we pursue the internal management of SCAR meetings this will require an estimated 1 day a week (more initially) of staff time. Currently there is no flexibility in the EO's or Admin Assistant's (AA's) work schedule so this would mean employing an additional part time person to take on this role anyway. With a part time FA and EO this could be taken on by either of these individuals (though in preference it would be the FA).

Job Descriptions of new positions

Draft job descriptions for the potential new positions are given in Appendices 1 and 2, including salary ranges and weekly hours. It is envisaged that the FA will be on the same salary scale as the AA. With regard to the likelihood of filling the positions, we have already had expressions of interest for the EO position, with a preference for the part-time position. It is envisaged that the FA position would be particularly attractive to someone with e.g. parental responsibilities.

With regard to hiring for the new positions, the part time FA could be hired directly with the current ED and EO acting to screen and interview the candidates (assisted by the SPRI Director's Secretary, who normally helps interview people at AA level for us). For the part time EO the search committee could consist of the current EO and ED plus one or two members of EXCOM (European to keep travel costs down).

Ramifications and possible disadvantages of the proposed structure

If the new EO is to be part time then they cannot be expected to travel as extensively as the current EO. However, we would have to make it clear that a part-time EO would need to be flexible enough to commit to certain meetings (Delegates/EXCOM, the OSC every other year and the short MM Prize committee meeting). This would likely require the payment of overtime for limited periods up to a budgetary level agreed by EXCOM within the salary envelope.

Currently the EO (with the VP for Finance) is responsible for day-to-day management of all financial aspects of SCAR, under the overall supervision of the ED. Under the new system the FA would take on all the 'routine' aspects of the finance, i.e. processing and payment of claim forms, invoices, salaries etc, and reporting to the ED. The ED, EO and FA would work together to produce end-of-year statements and budgets. The EO would still likely need to be involved in some aspects of finances, e.g. for organizing specific meetings, Martha Muse etc. and also assisting the VP for Finance at Delegates meetings. The ED will need to be more directly involved with the finances than in the past, given that the FA will be a lower level post, but the EO will be free to take on more of a coordination role, in particular assisting the CO of SCATS, for example.

Note that it is quite possible that scientists from both inside and outside the UK may find the EO position attractive, so it should be advertised, as before, in an international journal (e.g. Nature). Allowance should therefore be made in the salary budget for the EO advert (around £1500) and for the possibility of interviewing one or more candidates from outside the UK (around £1500 per head plus the costs of having one or two interviewers from EXCOM).

In contrast, the FA position, being for such a short time per week, being at a relatively low level, and requiring no science skills, is likely to be resourced locally from within the Cambridge area. It would be proposed to advertise for this position in a national newspaper and/or in the Cambridge press (low cost).

Appendix 1: Draft Job Description, Executive Officer (part time)

The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) seeks a part-time Executive Officer to assist in the running of the SCAR Secretariat. SCAR is a body of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and is also registered as a UK Charity. It facilitates and coordinates Antarctic and Southern Ocean research and identifies issues emerging from greater scientific understanding of the region that should be brought to the attention of policy makers. Its objectives and activities are described on the SCAR web site at <http://www.scar.org>.

The primary tasks of the Executive Officer will be:

- to assist the Executive Director in the day-to-day operation of the Secretariat including coordinating programmes, analysing scientific issues concerning the Antarctic region, preparing proposals, and other activities as required. Aside from these duties the Executive Officer will have particular responsibility for:

- Assisting the Chief Officer of the SCAR Standing Committee on the Antarctic Treaty System, and others involved in this work
- SCAR's Capacity Building, Education and Training programme, including the SCAR Fellowship scheme
- Administering the Martha T Muse Prize for Science and Policy in Antarctica (www.museprize.org)
- Assisting the Executive Director and Finance Assistant in preparing end of year finance statements and budgets and presenting these at meetings as required;

- to arrange meetings, prepare agendas and reports of meetings, and circulate meeting documents;

- to represent SCAR at meetings as directed by the Executive Director.

Candidates should preferably have a MSc or PhD degree in a scientific discipline relevant to research in Antarctica or the Southern Ocean, plus experience in international scientific research and collaboration, excellent communication and organizational skills, a high level of skill with word processing and complete proficiency in English. Proficiency in other relevant languages will be an advantage. Some overseas travel will be required. The successful applicant will be expected to work 22.5 hours a week (equivalent to 3 days a week), exclusive of meal breaks, on a flexible schedule. Additional hours worked will be taken as time in lieu, or with the previous agreement of the Executive Director, as paid overtime. The successful candidate will be expected to take up the post by February 2009.

The salary will be in the range £25,623- 35,469 full time equivalent (£15,324- £21,281 for 22.5 hours) plus 7% towards pension. This is a permanent position with the possibility of future expansion of hours by mutual agreement. There will be a 6-month period for probation. Applications explaining relevant experience, listing 3 referees, and including a full CV should be sent by December 31, 2008, to the SCAR Secretariat, Scott Polar Research Institute, Lensfield Road, Cambridge, CB2 1ER, UK (by mail or fax, but preferably by e-mail to info@scar.org). SCAR is an equal opportunity employer.

Appendix 2: Draft Job Description, Finance Assistant (part time)

The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) is seeking a part-time Finance Assistant to handle routine aspects of finances for the organization. This will include managing SCAR's bank accounts and financial records and disbursing funds as approved. The duties of the Financial Assistant may eventually include other aspects of meeting logistics and preparation (with the potential for mutually agreed increased hours).

Applicants should be able to demonstrate experience with Microsoft Office software, particularly Excel and Word. Experience of accounting software would be an advantage. Applicants must be self-motivated, able to work independently, and possess good interpersonal skills to work with scientists from different nations and cultures. An undergraduate degree in business, accounting, or numerical sciences, or equivalent experience, is required. The successful applicant will be expected to work 16 hours per week, on a flexible schedule. The starting salary for the position will be in the range £20,226-26,391 full time equivalent per year (£8,090-£10,556 for a 16 hour week) plus 7% towards pension. This is a permanent position, with a 6-month probation period.

SCAR is a body of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and is also registered as a UK charity. It facilitates and coordinates Antarctic and Southern Ocean research and identifies issues emerging from greater scientific understanding of the region that should be brought to the attention of policy makers. The new Finance Assistant will be part of a small but dynamic team consisting of an Executive Director, an Executive Officer and an Administrative Assistant. SCAR is housed at the Scott Polar Research Institute in the University of Cambridge.