Working Together: A Strategy for Success
Introduction from the Vice-Chancellor

I am very pleased to share with you Working Together: A Strategy for Success. This sets out a new, and positive, agenda for working at the University of Reading. It will be at the heart of the emerging University Strategy which will be completed later this year.

Working Together recognises the crucial contribution that our people make to the achievement of the University’s aims. These are demanding times for the University so we have to enable everyone to make the best contribution they can. It is only by doing so that we will improve our standing as a leading research-intensive university and become an excellent place for both staff and students to work.

The strategy has been refined and informed by the results of the recent Staff Survey. This document shares with you an underpinning vision statement and a summary of the strategy. In the coming months, a body of work will be undertaken to deliver its objectives, much of which will be under the banner of a project called Promoting Excellence.

More details can be found on the Human Resources website. Please visit www.reading.ac.uk/hr to view further information. You can also share your views and thoughts by emailing: workingtogether@reading.ac.uk

Sir David Bell KCB
Vice-Chancellor

Working Together: A Strategy for Success

Achieving our aims and building on our successes requires the best possible contribution from all our staff.

- We aim to be not just an employer but to work in partnership with colleagues to foster a sense of community and achieve our objectives;
- We will enable supportive leadership, creating the conditions that allow colleagues to fulfil their potential within their roles and careers;
- We will encourage a challenging culture, enabling the University to respond to change in good time;
- We will deliver a staff experience that encourages commitment, loyalty and success, engaging with colleagues in a mature and meaningful way and listening to their responses, communicating clear and consistent expectations;
- We will celebrate success at all levels of the organisation, recognising and rewarding achievement at the earliest possible opportunity; and
- We will embrace diversity, recognising the many ways in which colleagues can contribute to the University’s growth, and removing barriers to success.

The Human Resources Strategy sets the tone for the University’s relationship with its staff, and aims to engage with colleagues to maximise performance and enable success. It reflects the serious challenges facing the University, and recognises the essential contribution to be made by all staff in achieving our overall aims.
Embrace diversity

Our aim is to ensure that everyone is valued for their contribution to the University, regardless of their working pattern, status or role. We will go beyond our adherence to our statutory obligations in respect of equality and will provide opportunities for all staff to contribute to the University’s aims and objectives regardless of what they do, and how they do it. Challenging conventional approaches to working patterns and accepting that valuable contributions can be made in many different ways is critical and to be even more successful we need to identify and remove any barriers to individual and collective achievement.

Celebrating success

The sense of pride in belonging to the University community will be enhanced by an unabashed celebration of our successes, collective and individual. Our aim is to encourage staff to be ambitious, and to be recognised and rewarded for their contributions. Communication of expectation, open and frank appraisal of performance, and meaningful reward and recognition of achievement will be at the heart of a culture of success.

Supportive leadership

To enable us to continue to recognise the significant contribution our staff make we will develop managers and leaders who are skilled in both encouraging the best possible performance from each individual, and recognising the well-being of every member of staff. We believe that if we create the right conditions and tools for effective leadership at the University, individuals will understand, acknowledge and respect the need for strong and decisive management to create the right environment in which staff can flourish.

The staff experience

We are aiming to be not just an employer, and equally we want colleagues to feel that they are not just an employee. The experience of being recruited to and employed by the University should be of the highest possible quality, and this attitude should pervade all our interactions with staff.

A challenging culture

The Higher Education environment is changing significantly, and to ensure that the University adapts and competes we need to ensure that there is a more decisive and innovative approach than is characteristic of the University. Our policies and practices should support, rather than inhibit, progress, and we should be bold in reviewing and refreshing our existing arrangements. In addition, individuals should feel confident to speak up and challenge the way things are done to help us to maintain and promote excellence.

Not just an employer

We want to ensure that the University is a great place to work, where individuals are optimistic about the future and where every member of staff has a positive contribution to make. We will seek to foster a sense of community, and our policy and practice will reflect this.

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The Roadmap for 2012–2013

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not just an employer

What we do well

• The Staff Survey 2011 showed that staff feel engaged and proud to work for the University, recommending it to others;
• We have a positive working environment and a Green Flag award for the campus environment; and
• The Staff Survey 2011 showed that staff find their work interesting and individuals have autonomy within their roles to make decisions.

What we will do to improve

• We will develop plans to communicate better and share the purpose and objectives of the University, from induction onwards;
• We will introduce a common set of behaviours that will enable all members of staff to clearly understand the values that the University will celebrate;
• We will develop online tools to help individuals clearly see the connection between their role and the University’s aims and objectives;
• We will create opportunities for individuals to share information and good practice across all Faculties and Directorates;
• We will talk more to staff to understand what steps we can take to improve the feeling that they are ‘valued’ by the University; and
• We will review the ‘personal touches’ that the University makes that help to make the University a special place to work.
The Roadmap for 2012–2013

We will enable **supportive leadership** creating the conditions that allow colleagues to fulfil their potential within their roles and careers.

**supportive leadership**

**What we do well**

- Staff Survey 2011 results suggest that line managers listen and take account of the views of staff members and treat individuals with fairness and respect;
- We are delivering training to all managers at the University on how to prevent and manage work related stress as part of the work on Enhancing and Supporting Staff Wellbeing; and
- Staff Survey 2011 results suggest that the majority of staff feel that their team is well managed.

**What we will do to improve**

- We will develop the support we provide for our leaders and managers, including reviewing our use of coaching and mentoring for those in leadership positions;
- We will develop arrangements for leadership talent management and review the current selection processes for academic leadership positions;
- We will ensure that there are clear performance expectations for all members of staff (including managers) and develop tools to assist with this;
- We will revise the Staff Development Review to ensure that it is a more useful tool to provide insight and direction of both performance and development needs;
- We will provide training and development on delivering constructive feedback on a regular basis;
- We will continue to raise awareness of wellbeing amongst our leaders; and
- We will talk to staff to understand how the Senior Management Board can be more visible and communicate their decisions more clearly.
The Roadmap for 2012–2013

We will encourage a **challenging culture** enabling the University to respond to change in good time.

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**What we do well**

- The Staff Survey 2011 suggested that individuals feel able to raise questions and make suggestions; and
- Staff reported in the Staff Survey 2011 that they feel reasonably well informed about matters affecting them.

**What we will do to improve**

- We will aim to communicate change better, including providing more training on managing change to leaders and managers;
- We will review our current employment policies that are in Statute and aim to move to a single set of policies and procedures for all University staff;
- We will review our approach to Review and Restructuring in the light of feedback and experience;
- We will review the feedback arrangements for staff after suggestions have been made; and
- We will work with the campus Trade Unions to increase their representation, and consider other mechanisms to engage directly with staff.
staff experience

What we do well

• The Staff Survey 2011 suggests that the majority of staff are prepared to ‘go the extra mile’ at work;
• We provide access to a wide range of learning and development opportunities for staff;
• We provide access to a number of Supporting You events, activities and self-development opportunities; and
• The Staff Survey 2011 suggests that colleagues cooperate well.

What we will do to improve

• We will provide more opportunities for colleagues to speak up and give their views and suggestions on the way things are done at the University;
• We will work to communicate better the range of benefits available to staff and will bring forward proposals for a wider range of non-pay benefits for introduction in 2012/13, including more tax efficient ways to make pensions contributions;
• We will act on the outcomes of the Staff Survey and repeat it on a regular basis (every 2 years) and seek other opportunities, such as exit interviews to obtain feedback from staff;
• We will expand the promotion and communication of the University Enhancing and Supporting Wellbeing programme, including the Supporting You activities; and
• We will communicate better the learning and development opportunities that are available and how they can benefit individuals in their careers at the University.
celebrate success

What we do well

- We have taken action to ensure that equality is taken into consideration when making decisions about reward and promotion;
- We regularly publicise the external recognition of individual members of staff’s achievements; and
- We operate the Lump Sum Awards and the Contribution Pay Scheme to reward excellent performance.

What we will do to improve

- We will review the University’s arrangements for rewarding excellent performance to encourage better take up of promotion and reward opportunities, and to ensure that they are meaningful, appropriate and equitable;
- We will re-launch the Lump Sum Award so that it provides a greater range of mechanisms to provide reward and recognition at a local level;
- We will review the University’s pay and grading arrangements to ensure that they are robust, provide equal pay for work of equal value and recognise the links between reward and performance; and
- We will introduce a Celebrating Staff awards day to encourage recognition of achievement across the wider University.

The Roadmap for 2012–2013

We will celebrate success at all levels of the organisation, recognising and rewarding achievement at the earliest possible opportunity.
The Roadmap for 2012–2013

We will **embrace diversity** recognising the many ways in which colleagues can contribute to the University’s growth, and removing barriers to success.

### What we do well

- The Staff Survey 2011 suggests that staff are treated with fairness and respect;
- We have established the ‘Supporting You’ pages of the Staff Portal to provide advice and guidance on the support available to members of staff;
- We have established Harassment Advisors and HARC advisor networks to provide peer support to staff;
- The Staff Survey 2011 suggests that staff have flexible working arrangements available to them, either formal or informal; and
- We have external accreditation for our work to improve the opportunities for women in science through our Athena Swan Awards.

### What we will do to improve

- We will revise the Personal Titles Process for academic promotion ensuring that individuals are promoted on merit regardless of their academic focus to ensure that all academic roles are recognised and rewarded, and will introduce new academic titles to demonstrate equality of contribution;
- We will investigate barriers to career progression amongst non-academic staff to identify more opportunities for individuals to develop their career at the University;
- We will undertake further work to promote the Supporting You arrangements and explore the possibility of introducing a broader Employee Assistance Programme;
- We will launch a new Single Equality Scheme in April 2012 to demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity and review our progress against the objectives on an annual basis;
- We will introduce and promote the uptake of flexible retirement giving individuals a range of options as they approach the end of their careers and review the broader flexible working arrangements to help individuals achieve balance between their work and home lives; and
- We will continue to encourage School based applications for Athena Swan accreditation and participate in an Equality Challenge Unit pilot to investigate the support required to allow women to fulfil their potential across the University.
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