

Remuneration Committee

20/01 A meeting of the Remuneration Committee was held in Committee Room 2, Whiteknights House on Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Present: -

The Vice-President, Mr R. Evans (in the Chair)

The President, Dr P.R. Preston

The Vice-President, Mrs K. Owen

Member of the Council, Mrs S. Maple (via phone)

Member of the Council, Mrs S. Woodman

By invitation: -

Member of the Council, Mr J. Taylor

The Vice-Chancellor

The University Secretary

The Director of Human Resources

Head of Governance (Secretary)

20/02 **Minutes of the last meeting**

The Committee received and approved the Minutes of its meeting held on 21 October 2019.

20/03 **Matters arising**

19/28 Trustee Appointments

It was noted that no progress had yet been made on this action. The Director of Human Resources agreed to raise this matter again at the next trustees meeting in February.

19/32 Salaries

It was noted that objectives had been set for the Vice-Chancellor.

Extract from the Minutes of Council held on 27 November 2019

The Committee received and noted an extract from the meeting of Council held on 27 November 2019.

The Committee agreed that Vice-Chancellor's salary and the appropriate salary range for the position should be considered annually and be reported in the annual report.

The Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that there appeared to be the start of a small but steady downward drift in Vice-Chancellor salaries across the sector.

Matters for Discussion

20/04 Update on Pay and Pensions (Item 3)

The Committee received an update on national pay bargaining and pensions. In particular it was noted that:

- The Reading branch of UCU achieved a mandate for industrial action that resulted in 8 days of strike action between 25 November and 4 December 2019.
- During that 8-day period the maximum number of colleagues participating in strike action on any one day was 214. This represented less than one-third of UCU's membership locally. This figure was consistent with the pattern of activity across the other HEIs affected by the industrial action – according to UCEA reports there was an average turnout of 28.3% of UCU members during the 8-day strike period.
- A local Contingency Operations Group had monitored the impact of the industrial action regularly during the strike period, with a particular interest in ensuring that all reasonable steps were taken to minimise disruption and make up for students' lost learning.
- As with previous disputes there were concentrations of strike action in particular Schools but overall the impact was at a very low level. There had been very few student complaints received to date and take up of the University's offer to reimburse travel expenses (where students had incurred costs only to find classes cancelled) had been low.
- Deductions from pay for strike action were made, as indicated in advance, from December salaries. The total amount deducted in December was £203,614.
- The Director of Human Resources had written to those staff who had declared at least one day of strike action with a request that they inform their Head of School of action they had taken, or were planning to take, to make up for lost learning that arose as a consequence of their strike action.
- The local industrial action also included action short of strike (ASOS) on a continuous basis until April 2020. It was too early to see any real impact of this at this stage in the dispute, and the action did not, as yet, include an assessment and marking boycott which the ballot mandate allowed for.
- At its recent conference the UCU proposed 14 further days of strike action to take place on dates between 20 February and 13 March 2020 – this has yet to

be ratified by their higher education committee, a decision was expected at the end of January.

- The current industrial action related to two broad disputes, pensions and pay, with the latter being further defined as “four fights” (UCU’s terminology) relating to pay, gender pay gaps, casualisation and workloads. There had been developments at the national level in respect of both disputes.
- In respect of the ongoing dispute relating to the USS, the most significant development has been the publication of the second report of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP) which was made public just before the Christmas break.
- The JEP2 report made a series of interlocking recommendations covering the governance of the Scheme, the valuation methodology and the way forward.
- UUK had confirmed that talks with UCU in respect of the JEP recommendations would begin in January. Five days had been set aside in January for initial discussions. Given the current circumstances it was clear that there was an imperative on all parties to respond positively to the report’s recommendations.
- The absence of any consideration of benefit changes within the scheme remained the “elephant in the room”. However, the prevailing narrative was firmly rooted in short to medium-term considerations, and as such it was thought that there would be little choice but to broadly support the proposed recommendations. Given the proximity to the next USS valuation the timescale for making progress on this front would be very challenging.
- In respect of the “four fights” dispute concerns had been raised regarding UCEA’s proposed way forward with UCU. There was particular concern that UCEA risked opening a door to national agreements in respect of terms and conditions of service (particularly in respect of workload) and over-promising in respect of sectoral responses to, for example, reducing gender pay gaps.
- Feedback to UCEA from relevant HEIs appeared broadly consistent with the University’s response, and UCEA had modified their position accordingly. UCEA had now entered into discussions with UCU with a view to reaching agreement on a series of proposed principles and expectations that would be discussed collectively and promoted as good practice within the HE sector.
- There were a number of areas where the University had already taken, or were progressing, action consistent with the proposed discussions at national level.
- UCEA had been clear that there was no mandate from employers to re-visit the 2018-19 pay settlement, and this might prove a significant impediment to any early resolution of the core dispute.

The Committee noted the University had been meeting with UCU regularly as part of the local pay and equality claim. A number of issues had been discussed during these local meetings (see Minute 20/05) which had been helpful in enabling progress to be made on a number of areas.

20/05 UCU - Local pay and equality claim (Item 4)

The Committee received an update on the UCU local pay and equality claim. In particular it was noted that:

- The Reading branch of UCU submitted a pay and equality claim in September 2018 with a request to open negotiations on three topics of interest: precarious contracts of employment, gender pay gap and “grade drift”.
- An initial special meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) was convened to better understand the claim, and subsequently a sub-group of the JNC has since been meeting at regular intervals to address the issues raised.
- Although described as a local claim the issues raised were consistent with a number of UCU national campaigns, particularly in respect of “casualisation” (reflected strongly in the current round of national industrial action).
- For practical reasons it was agreed to prioritise work on precarious contracts (in effect the arrangements for sessional staff). As a first step UCU worked with HR to extract relevant data to better understand the use of sessional staff across the University. Finance colleagues also provided useful data in respect of the School by School spend on sessional staff.
- A reasonable degree of consensus emerged quickly amongst the JNC members as to agreed principles. The JNC were close to a final agreement in respect of the future arrangements for the appointment of sessional staff, and the terms of their employment.
- The agreement would see the creation of a more consistent framework for the appointment of sessional teaching staff, an hourly rate of pay aligned to the University’s grade structure, a multiplier applied to the hourly rate to reflect the full range of sessional duties (broadly preparation, delivery and assessment), and conversion to fractional contracts where a regular pattern of work has been evidenced.
- The agreement also addressed the use of Teaching Fellows at Grade 6. A common understanding of the scope of activity that could reasonably be expected at Grade 6 had been established and a revised Role Profile that reflected this had been developed.
- A jointly agreed questionnaire would be issued to all current G6 Teaching Fellow colleagues to establish the extent to which their current responsibilities match or exceed the agreed role profile. Where it was agreed that colleagues were now exceeding the new profile, they would be converted to a Lecturer role, with a teaching-intensive classification.
- Joint work on addressing the University’s gender pay gap had remained on hold and would follow in due course. UCU representatives had already been briefed on how the formal gender pay gap report was constructed, and importantly the various elements that were required statutorily that combine to produce the publicly available headline figures.

- Once the final agreement with UCU has been signed joint communications and guidance would be issued to colleagues to introduce the revised arrangements.

The Committee thanked the Director of Human Resources for the update.

The Director of Human Resources outlined the Campus Jobs scheme and its pay framework.

The Committee agreed that it was important to be aware of developing Government policies around employment, for e.g. 0-hour contracts, as well as the broader zeitgeist. It was suggested that the University should be proactive in its communications, both internally and externally, setting out the University's various employment arrangements.

20/06 Gender Pay Gap Reporting (Item 5)

The Director of Human Resources tabled the first draft of the Gender Pay Gap Report; the final report would be published in March.

It was reported that:

- The mean gender pay gap was 18.33%, compared with 20.51% in 2018
- The mean bonus pay gap was 24.59%, compared with 29.34% in 2018
- Over the past 3 years, the proportion of women in the upper quartile has grown from 42% to 49%
- 40.27% of the workforce was male and 59.73% female
- if Campus Jobs were excluded from the figures then the University would be at the sector norm
- the gender pay gap was different to Equal Pay. The University was committed to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and has robust processes including the use of job evaluation to determine the appropriate grading of roles within the framework structure.

The Committee noted that the draft of the document would be discussed with UCU and the Deans for Diversity and Inclusion.

The Committee noted a range of actions and key priorities that were already in place to address the gender pay gap, some of which would take time to progress.

The following comments were made:

- There was a need to also prioritise BAME and disability
- National and local level talks with UCU would also focus on the gender pay gap
- The Gender Pay Gap report did not include statistics on Equal Pay. The University could produce these figures for publishing
- It would be helpful to break the figures down into occupational groups in order to identify where issues were occurring

- There was a danger that the Gender Pay Gap report could focus on getting women into senior roles, when part of the solution was also getting more men into lower grade roles
- The University had generous family friendly policies which went well beyond statutory requirements

The Committee urged the University to be radical in its actions to address the Gender Pay Gap where it would be the most effective, but not to be too driven by the statistics.

The Committee asked the Director of Human Resources to produce on a twice-yearly basis a dashboard setting out total staff numbers, staff turnover and trends.

Action: Director of Human Resources

Matters for Report

20/07 Severance Payments and Early Retirement Arrangements (Item 6)

The Committee received and noted the severance payments and early retirement arrangements that had been agreed since the last meeting.

20/08 Out of Cycle Salary Increases (Item 7)

The Committee received and noted the out of cycle salary increases that had been agreed since the last meeting.

20/09 Report of the University Executive Board (Item 8)

The Committee noted that there was no separate report on this occasion.

20/10 Dates of Meetings in Session 2019-20

Tuesday 9 June 2020 at 10.30 am