

People and Remuneration Committee

25/10 A meeting of the Committee was held on Tuesday 3 June 2025 at 10.00 am via Teams.

Present: Vice-President of the Council, Kate Owen (Chair)
The President of the Council, Helen Gordon
Lay Member of the Council, Sian Butler
Lay Member of the Council, Kevin Corrigan
Lay Member of the Council, Sue Maple
An elected member of the Council, John Jack

By invitation: Vice-Chancellor
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
University Secretary
Director of Human Resources
Director of Governance (*Secretary*)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

25/11 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on 30 January 2025 as a correct record.

25/12 Matters Arising

25/03 Matters arising

The Committee were reminded that it had previously discussed the need for productivity statistics/data. It was noted that data was available in regard to research income earned by academics that could be used as a starting point. Other pieces of work such as the professional services Transformation Project would report to Council later in June. It was agreed that this topic would be revisited again at the next meeting.

25/04 Staff Voice

The Director of HR informed the Committee that this action had been deferred awaiting the outcome of the Staff Engagement Survey results. The survey results would be used to inform topics for discussion. The Director of HR would work with the President and Vice-President of Council to get dates into the diary.

Action: Director of HR

25/13 Staff Engagement Survey

The Committee received and noted the headline results of the Employee Engagement Survey.

The Director of HR gave an update to the Committee, and members raised a number of questions and comments:

- The University was pleased with the process and partner used in the Survey; People Insights were now a leading provider for the sector – this allowed benchmarking of the results across the sector
- The results had been shared with UEB, Heads of School, and Heads of Directorate. They had also been given full details to their relevant team results to allow a more detailed deep dive
- The headline results had also been shared with the whole staff community, with an online Staff Portal article and infographic highlighting where the University scored well/poorly
- The overall response rate was disappointing, particularly the response rate from Schools. People Insights had commented that lower response rates had been seen more recently across the HEI sector
- The Committee discussed whether completion of future surveys could be made mandatory, or whether more could be done to encourage completion especially within the Schools. It was suggested that the survey could become a ‘tick box’ exercise if made mandatory
- Sue Maple noted that the low response rate plus high rate believing that no action would be taken indicated sentiment around the survey. It would be helpful to understand more where the break was between those colleagues not engaged/disinterested and those who were more engaged with the Survey – that would enable more focussed actions
- It would be helpful to focus actions in a small number of areas, as well as targeted actions for Schools and Directorates
- Sian Butler noted that the response rate was a measure of engagement in itself – it might be that some of the responses were based on historical surveys. It would be important to have conversations at both institutional and local levels so that colleagues felt engaged
- The Director of HR noted that now Heads of School had seen the data they might be more motivated to push future response rates
- Where response rates were low, it was important for Heads of School and Heads of Directorate to further check with their teams before agreeing actions
- Three broad areas of action were being considered at institutional level:
 - Purpose, Community, Belonging

- Reward and Recognition
- Change, Workload and Systems – a number of projects were already underway in this theme
- Detailed institutional actions and full costings would be submitted to UEB for consideration – these would also be discussed with Senior Leadership Group
- It was noted that some of the results were not unsurprising given the deferral of the national pay award
- UEB had recently discussed the culture wheel and in particular that colleagues' experiences reflected a strong nurture culture. The Board would consider as part of the University Strategy refresh how the culture should change in the future, for e.g. more 'Create or Win' on the culture wheel. The Board had noted that continuous change needed to become part of University culture
- The President noted comments raised around processes and red tape – it would be important that actions addressed these issues quickly. Council would be interested in what actions the institution was taking, and how these fitted into wider institutional change
- The Vice-President (Kevin Corrigan) noted concerns around colleagues not feeling listened to, and a disconnect between leadership and staff that needed to be addressed. The Committee discussed how senior leadership could be more visible
- Sian Butler noted how critical it was to engage with line managers so they could enthuse their colleagues, particularly around change – line managers would need support
- The Director of HR confirmed that actions would be developed to 1) link with the cultural piece and to drive the new University Strategy, and 2) specific actions to address issues raised in a more immediate time frame
- The President noted that change/workload/systems/processes had been spoken about for a number of years; she enquired as to when an action plan would be produced
- It would be interesting to learn of good practice from other HEIs or organisations
- The Committee queried as to whether the University had the right skill set to implement the changes required
- With the University Strategy refresh this was a good time to think about the messaging the leadership team wanted to put forward
- UCEA had recently published a report in conjunction with People Insights highlighting how universities had used their survey results to engage change
- HR Partners and Heads of School and Directorate were working to drive local action. Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Zaum was working with Heads of School to learn from each other

- The Committee noted that it was important to link the survey results in with projects already in train e.g. academic workload model

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Committee for their comments. UEB had received a similar update at its meeting on 2 June 2025 and would take time to consider actions linking in with the University Strategy refresh; the cultural piece was clearly a critical part and would be integrated into wider holistic thinking around the strategy.

The Chair noted that members of the Committee would be willing to offer their advice and expertise if needed by UEB.

25/14 Professorial Salaries Annual Review

The Committee received a report and recommendations from the Professorial Salaries Advisory Group payable with effect from 1 August 2025 in respect of Professorial Staff. Following the pause in senior reward processes in 2023/24 Professorial staff were asked to complete a statement covering the period from January 2023 to December 2024.

A total of 150 Professorial colleagues had submitted the proforma setting out their recent activities and achievements. A total of 166 did not submit – this year there was not a requirement for all professors to submit, nor for colleagues within the first 12 months of their appointment.

In particular it was noted that:

- The process this year departed from recent years when it has been a requirement for all Professors to submit to the Annual Review. No decisions had yet been made as to whether this approach would continue in future years or whether the requirement to submit would be re-instated. The Director of HR noted that were advantages and disadvantages to not making the process compulsory.
- It was agreed that where an individual had reached the top spinal point for their zone and had not requested to advance to a higher zone, they could only be considered for a Lump Sum Award. The amount of the Lump Sum Award would remain at £2,000.
- There were 52 cases for zone advancement: 34 cases seeking an advance to Zone 2, 13 cases seeking an advance to Zone 3, and 5 cases seeking an advance to Zone 4. [Redacted, section 40].
- The Deputy Vice-Chancellor highlighted a similar success rate of 34% in 2025 compared with 38% in 2023.
- The total cost of the proposed adjustments to salaries for 2025 was £219,376.00 (excluding on-costs). There were 97 reward recommendations for salary adjustments. This cost took into account of the deferred pay award which would be paid in July 2025. The salary adjustments would be effective from 1 August 2025. In 2023, the total cost of adjustments to salaries was

£312,214.00 and 102 awards were made. In 2022, the total cost of adjustments to salaries was £266,271.00 and 119 awards were made.

- The total cost of the proposed Lump Sum Awards for 2025 was £18,000. In 2023, the total cost of Lump Sum Awards was £28,000 and 14 awards were made. In 2022, the total cost of Lump Sum Awards was £41,800 and 22 awards were made.
- Reflections on the process included:
 - To help clarify any questions around eligibility which arose this year with the appointment of project-specific Associate PVC roles, it would be helpful for the Reward Coordinator, to check for additional positions, and depending on the FTE, determine whether they should submit to the Professorial Annual Review or the Senior Salaries Annual Review process.
 - As in previous years, the Advisory Group will have a wash up meeting at the end of Summer to reflect and plan for the next annual review process. Specific discussion topics for the Advisory Group this year included:
 - Reflecting on the number of non-submission and the feedback from the People and Remuneration Committee as to whether the process should be compulsory or not for forthcoming years
 - How to assess fractional contracts
 - How to deal with frequent non-submissions
 - Guidance for when to award double increments
 - Developing a Zone 4 Pay Structure
 - Discussing if there were any concerns around Zone 4 professors not submitting given their high salaries if the process remained non-compulsory.
 - For note, there was evidence of positive work in some Schools to align PDRs with the Professorial Annual Review process.
 - If a non-compulsory process remained, the Advisory Group would consider whether Professors could be asked to confirm their reasons for not submitting each year the process was run, with HR monitoring those who do not submit for two consecutive years.

In regard as to whether the process should be compulsory or not, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor noted that there were considerable advantages in reducing the workload for the Advisory Group in not requiring compulsory submissions, as well as for applicants for whom it was difficult to show step changes over a one-year period in the higher professorial zones. Any disadvantages around non-submissions could be dealt with by other means, for e.g. non submission cases were discussed with Heads of School and if

this occurred over a number of years would be dealt with as a performance issue. The Committee noted that there were a number of colleagues who had decided not to submit a case, given the University's financial challenges.

Sue Maple, as nominated lay member of the Committee, had attended meetings of the Professorial Salaries Advisory Group to observe the process and had pronounced herself content with the application of the stated procedures, that the process had been fair, and that there was no bias in decision making. It was noted that, whilst she was impressed with the due diligence, discussion and analysis at the Group, a considerable amount of time and effort went into the process and further streamlining might be helpful. The Committee endorsed the value of having lay member of Council on the Advisory Group to ensure that due process was followed, and thanked Sue Maple for her work in this regard.

The Committee approved the recommendations outlined in the report and thanked all those involved in the annual review process. In regard as to whether the process should be compulsory or not, the Committee endorsed the approach taken this year, and provided that there were measures to track non-submissions was content that the process not be compulsory.

25/15 Senior Salaries Annual Review

The Committee received and approved a report and recommendations from the Senior Salaries Advisory Group payable with effect from 1 August 2025. Following the pause in senior reward processes in 2023/24 Professorial staff were asked to complete a statement covering the period from January 2023 to December 2024.

The response rates for Heads of Schools and APVCs was 82.61% for 2025 [redacted, section 40]. The response rates for Grade 9 Professional & Managerial Staff was 78.05% for 2025 (9 out of 41 did not submit a case – [redacted, section 40]).

In particular it was noted that:

- It had remained an expectation for Senior Staff to submit a case.
- There were clear links with the cases to objectives and PDR outcomes.
- Of the [redacted, section 40] Heads of School/APVCs who submitted [redacted, section 40] received some form of award.
- Of the [redacted, section 40] Grade 9 Professional and Managerial colleagues who submitted [redacted, section 40] received some form of award.
- Shadow salaries were applicable in some cases where colleagues (particularly academic colleagues) moved to a leadership role from a lower salary point, including where they might not yet have been promoted to Professor. [redacted, section 40]. The recommended adjustments to shadow salaries would not have an immediate impact on the pay bill as they would not be effective until the individuals returned to their substantive roles.

- The total cost of the proposed adjustments to salaries for 2025 was £44,775.00 (excluding on-costs). These salary adjustments would be effective from 1 August 2025.
- The total cost of the proposed Lump Sum Awards would be £28,000.
- In terms of reflections, it was noted that:
 - It was reported that there was some confusion around whether a member of staff who was leaving could submit or not. They would be welcome to submit since the reward process looked back at achievements over the preceding period. However, subject to the agreed leave date and the reward recommended, they might not benefit from a reward if this was recommended by the Advisory Group. Updating the Guidance Note would avoid any confusion in the future.
 - The Director of HR had been improving access to external benchmark information on senior pay across the Higher Education and comparable sectors. This information was available to consider appropriate benchmarks for leadership roles. The Director of HR agreed to submit a paper to UEB in the coming months regarding appropriate benchmarks and senior pay within the University and the sector.
 - The Advisory Group had requested some additional information to show both additional positions and wider reward history, and for the shadow salary information to be tidied up. This would also help clarify any questions around eligibility which arose this year with the expansion of the number of Associate PVC roles. For example, where a colleague had a Professor and Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor role – if the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor role was a smaller FTE, they should submit to the Professorial Annual Review instead of the Senior Staff Annual Review.
 - Sue Maple noted it was evident the process had improved considerably since it was first introduced. Sue was impressed with the level of thoughtful debate and focus amongst the Advisory Group members and noted the time and effort that had gone into reviewing and discussing the cases.
 - Sue Maple highlighted the importance of the quality of submissions. There was considerable discussion around how well a case was written, but when a case was not well written, this impacted on the likelihood of the Advisory Group recommending a reward. Sue suggested the paperwork emphasise the importance of clearly setting out all achievements to allow the Advisory Group to make a clear judgement on cases.

It was noted that consideration would be given to cases where the Advisory Group did not agree with the recommendation of the Head of School or Head of Directorate, particularly as there was no appeals process.

The Committee noted that as part of the Governance Review there would be a shift towards more responsibility and accountability sitting with Heads of School and Heads of Directorate. In future, the direction of travel might be towards some reward processes being determined by the Heads rather than via committee.

25/16 Update on the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme

The Director of HR informed the Committee that the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme run in Chemistry and a small number of Schools (determined by SSRs) had now completed. Settlement agreements had been signed, and colleagues would leave the University over the Summer. A short summary paper on the process could be shared with the Committee.

Action: Director of HR

The voluntary severance package agreed would be retained for any future restructures; the Consultation Group would remain in place for 2025/26.

25/17 Severance Payments and Early Retirement Arrangements

There was no report on this occasion.

25/18 Out of Cycle Salary Increases

The Committee received and noted out of cycle salary increases since the last meeting.

25/19 Any other business

It was noted that Audit Committee had asked the Director of HR to consider what was meant by mandatory training and a report would be brought back to the next meeting of People and Remuneration Committee.

25/20 Dates of meetings 2025/26

Tuesday 14 October 2025 2.00 – 4.00 pm

Thursday 29 January 2026 2.30 – 4.30 pm

Tuesday 2 June 2026 9.30 – 11.30 am