

People and Remuneration Committee

25/21 A meeting of the Committee was held on Tuesday 14 October 2025 at 2.00 pm via Teams.

Present: Vice-President of the Council, Kate Owen (Chair)
The President of the Council, Helen Gordon
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
Director of Human Resources
Director of Governance (*Secretary*)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

25/22 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on 3 June 2025 as a correct record.

25/23 Matters Arising

25/12 Productivity statistics/data

The Director of HR informed the Committee that a new Workforce Data and Analytics post had been recruited to, once in post a plan of action would be brought back to the Committee. In the longer-term it was the intention through the Professional Services work to build up data maturity within a single team.

The Chair enquired whether the timescale for longer-term work was dependent on the introduction of a new system. The Director of HR confirmed that was partly correct, but that there was still a lot of data work that could be developed without the introduction of a new system.

The Director of HR asked the Committee whether there was anything in particular they would like to include in the action plan.

The Chair suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee to look at how the University measured productivity and performance. The Director of HR noted that there was a separate project ongoing at present to look at the Academic Workload Model. The Vice-Chancellor noted that the TRAC return already existed – this was a finance-based analysis comparing the productivity of academic staff with other universities. The return was quite broad in its scale but could be a good starting point for a conversation around productivity.

Action: Vice-Chancellor

Sue Maple enquired whether [Redacted S40] could be given an action to develop a range of dashboards.

25/12 Staff Voice – Staff Engagement Survey and institutional actions

It was noted that UEB had discussed at its recent Away Day a range of institutional actions, particular around:

- Community, Purpose and Belonging – University Strategy update, leadership development programme, EDI related activity
- Reward and Recognition – new rewards platform, review of budgets, review of terms and conditions for colleagues on lower grades
- Workload, Systems and Processes – planning work, governance review, professional services work, academic workload model

The finalised list of institutional actions would be shared with Heads of School/Directorate so they could develop their own action plans.

The next full survey was planned for the start of the next academic year – this would allow time for some of the institutional actions to embed.

It was intended that the President and Vice-President (Kate Owen) would meet with colleagues from UCU and the Staff Forum ahead of the Council meeting on 18 November 2025.

25/16 Summary of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme

The Committee received and noted a summary of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme undertaken in 2024/25.

It was noted that the Consultation Group remained active and that two small scale restructurings had been recently proposed. The voluntary redundancy terms would continue to be used as appropriate.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that as the Professional Services Programme progressed that there could be future redundancy rounds but on the academic side there were currently no further plans for redundancies in Schools.

25/19 Mandatory Training

The Committee noted that the Audit Committee had requested information on what mandatory training was required by the University, completion rates, where responsibility sat for completion, and how/when training was refreshed. The Director of HR confirmed that HR were working on a paper on this matter. The Vice-Chancellor added that it would be important for the Audit Committee to have clarity on what guidance was available from HR on sanctions/disciplinary action if training was not completed. It would be important to be clear what the steps were, for example: training completion rates given to Heads of School/Directorate, 2 reminders given, then disciplinary action commenced.

The President noted that the issue of training appeared to be raised on a regular basis in a number of areas and enquired whether there was a timescale for completing the work. The Director of HR confirmed that some actions would be completed earlier than others. Further consideration would need to be given to what training was absolutely mandatory and what was more highly recommended.

The President noted that Audit Committee had seen a patchiness around training in some of its reviews. It would be important that line managers had guidance that could support them in dealing with non-completion.

25/24 Disclosures of Interest, Risk Register and Terms of Reference

The Committee received and noted a paper from the University Secretary in regard to Disclosures of Interest and noted its terms of reference. The Committee agreed to reconsider risk at its next meeting.

25/25 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Presentation

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of HR in respect of EDI. The Committee noted that a different approach had been taken to reporting, along with the recent appointment of Tanya Lines as Head of Equity Diversity and Inclusion. The presentation highlighted:

- Progress and achievements in the 2023/24 Annual Report
 - Sector Recognition: shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Awards in the category of Outstanding Contribution to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, reflecting national recognition of our institutional efforts.
 - Sector Leading Gender Equality: Women now represented 36.1% of the professoriate—exceeding the sector average by four percentage points—and 57.3% of associate professors, supporting long-term gender balance in senior academic roles.

- Award gap closing: the University had exceeded closing of the award gap between disabled and non-disabled undergraduates who achieve a First class or 2:1 degree.
- Inclusive Teaching: launched Decolonising the Curriculum resource. The Working Group received the 2024 University Collaborative Award for Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning
- Equality Charters:
 - Silver Athena Swan Award recently reconfirmed
 - Technical Services team were the only professional service team in HE to have achieved the Silver Athena Swan award
 - Bronze Race Equality Charter Award
- Awarding gaps:
 - Match sector performance on closing the gaps between disabled and non-disabled graduates
 - Slightly behind the sector by 3.5 percentage points regarding closing the award gaps between BAME and White graduates (our gap stands at 14.2% the sector's is 10.7%)
- Staff diversity representation:
 - Notably higher proportion of Asian, Black, and Chinese staff than the Advance HE 2023 staff statistical report
 - Higher proportion of female staff than the sector average (59.8% at UoR compared to sector 55%)
 - Exceed sector average for BAME representation in Professor and Associate Professor roles
- EDI current position assessment:
 - Good progress on charters and networks were active but there were inconsistencies in how networks operated and communicated with their communities
 - Strong engagement from EDI active staff however not all staff engage with networks so relying on them alone limits reach and inclusivity
 - Awareness was inconsistent across the wider University staff community
 - Some leaders lacked confidence in discussing and addressing EDI, particularly with impact of freedom of speech
 - Intersectional issues could be lost in the current structure especially with our reliance on networks

- EDI and Employee Relations: increasing complexity of ER work particularly around supporting neurodiverse colleagues and potential claims of harassment/discrimination
- Importance of maintaining links and cohesive working with Reading Students' Union
- EDI roles in Schools lacked consistency and visibility
- Priorities and actions for 2025/26:
 - Using a framework to measure EDI maturity – clearer benchmarks, strategic alignment and cultural integration
 - Scope Gaps: Current charter work focuses mainly on race and gender, with recent focus also on disability and LGBTQIA+, religion and age under-represented
 - Focus on Intersectionality
 - Leadership engagement and accountability, supported by refreshed learning & development
 - Strategic Alignment
 - Governance Structures
 - Cross cultural EDI collaboration
 - Charter Actions linked to wider strategic plans
- There were five stages of maturity on the EDI Journey

A number of questions and comments were made on the presentation:

- Where did the University feel it was on the maturity model and where did it want to be?

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor informed the Committee that the University was currently at stage 3 (of 5) but could be higher – there were a couple of examples where the institution was definitely sector leading, for example: leadership and ownership of EDI with the new post embedded in HR whilst UEB members remained as champions of the protected characteristics; proactively implementing the Supreme Court ruling and undertaking the University's legal obligations in a trans inclusive way.

It was noted that further work on maturity would also need to be linked into the new University Strategy

- It would be helpful to have a presentation from the Head of EDI at Council (6-12 months' time), covering: overall assurance of activities being undertaken, direction of travel, areas to highlight (particularly where the University is doing things differently), challenges. In the meantime, the Vice-Chancellor could report on any items to highlight in his general update report.

The Committee thanked the Director of HR for the presentation.

25/26 Update on the Professional Services Programme

The Director of HR informed the Committee that a significant amount of work was being undertaken on the Professional Services Programme. A Programme Board had been established which was working on a business case. It was hoped that it would be brought to the Council at its next meeting in November, but that would be dependent on the views of the new Chief Operating Officer.

25/27 KPI Update

The Committee received and noted the KPI update.

In regard to KPI 5 (Cashflow from operating activity) it was noted that the draft figure of 2.4% was up from -0.7% the year prior, this had led to an improvement in the budget. A meeting had been held earlier in the day with the President and Vice-Presidents to explain the upturn in the variance.

In regard to KPI 4 (THE World University Rankings) it had recently been confirmed that the University had slipped from 26th to 27th.

25/28 UEB Remuneration

[Professor Yaqoob left the meeting for this item]

The Vice-Chancellor submitted to the Committee a paper in respect of remuneration for UEB members.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that he agreed specific targets with each member of UEB. He reminded the Committee of the set of principles used for the remuneration of UEB members; these principles were:

- Salary adjustments were based on performance against the University's top-level KPIs and on taking on new responsibilities or extensions of remit.
- Award payments were based on cases where individual UEB members could provide evidence of contributions that exceed what could be expected in the delivery of activities, projects, or key processes.
- Shadow salary adjustments considered the full workload of the PVCs and DVC who retained their permanent position in an academic School.

It was noted that salary adjustments were postponed in 2024. The Vice-Chancellor had therefore provided a longer-term assessment of UEB members in the recommendations presented. All reward and promotion processes had now recommenced.

It was noted that the academic year 2024/25 started with a shock to the system. In the context of government policy decisions that had led to a significant reduction on

international students coming to the UK, high-tariff universities significantly lowered their entry tariffs and retained many more of 'our' insurance students. This resulted in a c. £12m adverse impact on the University's budget. Much of the year had been focussed on reducing the deficit, the development of an alternative plan and budget, and implementing a series of 'mitigations' aimed at accelerating the reduction of the deficit, whilst maintaining and protecting the reputation of the University.

Looking back at 2024/25, and how the changes made had played out in the 2025 recruitment round, the Vice-Chancellor concluded that the University had been successful in these:

- The end-of-year financial statement showed a significant beneficial variance on the budget approved by Council in November 2024.
- The six areas of mitigation were all progressing to plan (mostly on time) and the Global Sustainability Leaders scholarship programme had been a resounding success in its first year, attracting 240 AAA+ students (on average).
- Student recruitment in August 2025 delivered to financial target in another very challenging recruitment round.

The University's global reputation had been protected, retaining a Top 200 ranking in the QS, but domestic league tables showed deteriorations due to a slightly declining scores in the NSS 2025, whereas the rest of the sector improved. The Times/Sunday Times named Reading University of the Year 2026 for Scholarships and Bursaries – the second time the University had won an inaugural University of the Year award.

Progress was also made with partner institutions, with the construction of the ECMWF HQ and Natural History Museum's Research and Digitisation 'Unlocked' Centre now well underway. The University continued to work with Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, to relocate their herbarium to TVSP, and the partnerships with the British Museum Archaeological Resource Centre and Shinfield Studios continue to mature and show tangible benefits, respectively in terms of research grants and student employability opportunities.

Finally, the University has submitted the Outline Planning Application for Loddon Garden Village, with continued close alignment with Wokingham Borough Council. This provided now a clear and timely route for the development of Loddon Garden Village, the extension of TVSP by 30 acres, the creation of a new Country Park in the Loddon Valley and re-confirmation of four other University and NIRD-owned sites for housing development.

The following recommendations were made:

Function	Name	Salary adjustment (£)	Award payment (£)	Shadow salary
DVC and PVC R&I	Parveen Yaqoob	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
PVC R&I	Dominik Zaum	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
PVC E & SE	Elizabeth McCrum	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
PVC E & SE	Peter Miskell	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
PVC I	Caroline Baylon	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
CSO & US	Richard Messer	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
CFO	Vin Wijeratne	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]
Total for UEB		25,000	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]

The President noted that members of UEB had worked hard to improve the University's position. She enquired whether an overall budget had been set for the salary increases? The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that no budget was set other than for the national agreed pay award, but the increase was affordable.

The Vice-President (Mr Corrigan) enquired whether the Vice-Chancellor thought about the contribution of UEB members individually or whether he was trying to keep the awards equitable. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that he did think about awards individually but given the collective effort this year he felt that an equitable adjustment was more appropriate. The Committee agreed that it would expect to see differential awards in the future.

The Committee noted that the [Redacted S40] was a maximum that the Vice-Chancellor had determined since 2019, but that it was at his discretion to change. The Committee agreed that if the Vice-Chancellor wished to extend this figure, he would have the Committee's support.

It was noted that the Vice-Chancellor and Director of HR had access to bench marking data for senior salaries across the sector.

For the Dean of the Henley Business School, Professor Elena Beleska-Spasova:

Function	Name	Salary adjustment (£)	Award payment (£)	Shadow salary
Dean HBS	Elena Spasova	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]	[Redacted S40]

The Committee agreed to support the recommendations proposed.

25/29 Vice-Chancellor's Remuneration

In respect of the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration, the President confirmed that his appraisal had not yet taken place. An outcome would be agreed outside of the meeting.

25/30 Severance Payments and Early Retirement Arrangements

There was no report on this occasion.

25/31 Out of Cycle Salary Increases

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

25/32 Any other business

It was noted that a recent Personal Titles appeal had been upheld. Sue Maple informed the Committee that had the process been clearer, simpler, and given more scrutiny the issues would not have arisen. The Vice-Chancellor and the Director of HR would speak about the appeal and any lessons learned to improve processes for future years.

25/33 Dates of meetings 2025/26

Thursday 29 January 2026 2.30 – 4.30 pm

Tuesday 2 June 2026 9.30 – 11.30 am