

People and Remuneration Committee

26/01 A meeting of the People and Remuneration Committee was held on Thursday 29 January 2026 at 2.30 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

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

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Sian Butler and Professor Parveen Yaqoob.

26/02 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee approved the Minutes of the last meeting, held on 14 October 2025 as a correct record.

26/03 Matters Arising

25/23 Productivity statistics/data

This item was taken under Minute 26/04.

25/23 Staff Voice – Staff Engagement Survey and institutional actions

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

Both the President and Vice-President had welcomed the opportunity to hear directly from colleagues and thanked the Director of HR for arranging the meetings.

It was noted that:

- The President and Vice-President found the meetings helpful and would be happy to repeat them
- UCU had requested observer status at Council meetings
- UCU had requested a different level of redaction to the internally available published Council papers

- UCU were keen to understand where discussion items were verbal
- UCU requested papers earlier than currently issued and queried whether there were delays
- Both the Staff Forum and UCU would be keen to have further meetings
- The Staff Forum had recently appointed a new Chair
- Support was in hand to help the Staff Forum with their meetings and to raise their profile

The University Secretary noted that there was no delay in issuing papers to UCU, and issuing of papers would not be brought forward. It was noted that UCU had requested documentation issued in a paper format, for accepted reasonable adjustments, that would either be collected or distributed by post which was slower than electronic methods.

The Committee noted that the Director of HR was now having monthly informal liaison meetings with UCU.

The President and Vice-President confirmed that they would be willing to meet with colleagues again.

26/04 Benchmark of Academic Productivity Data

The Committee received a presentation which highlighted some benchmarking on academic productivity using TRAC.

Using publicly available HESA data the Finance team had calculated academic productivity for HE institutions in the University's TRAC peer group (Group B). The calculations demonstrated that:

- The University was mid-tier amongst its TRAC Group B comparators 8th out of 23 (23/24 data)
- It outperformed some HE institutions in TRAC Group A
- Over the time frame 2015/16 to 2023/24 it tracked slightly above average of TRAC Group B - 9th out of 23

The following comments and questions were raised by the Committee:

- It was recognised that the data was not a whole answer, but what was provided was a way of understanding how the University operated through academic income divided by number of academics
- TRAC data was available going back 20 years
- It was difficult to compare institutions like for like as certain disciplines, such as Medicine, skewed results
- The 2024/25 TRAC return had just been submitted – the comparator data from that year would be published much later
- The presentation highlighted increased productivity over the last 8 years – a 3% year on year increase in money generated from academic activities

- The data showed how institutions were growing income, and that few institutions were outperforming inflation
- The data did not include professional services colleagues
- The TRAC data was quite backwards looking, and was viewed through a specific financial lens that did not capture the whole picture
- Was there any sense of whether the University had the right resource to deliver its activities and how did this align with the results of the Staff Engagement Survey
- It would be interesting to disaggregate teaching and research particularly in thinking about the University Strategy
- More information was needed to gain a better insight into people related issues
- 'So what' - what should be done with the data, what conversation did this prompt?
- Given the aspiration to have the attributes of a top 100 university was there anything to be learnt from the data, and if the University improved in this metric would it be at the cost of anything and/or what would the University gain? Could it help with what we want to achieve in terms of overall direction and the University Strategy?
- The data provided was as granular as the University could get in comparison to other universities
- TRAC had its advantages and disadvantages. The upcoming meeting of Council on 9 March 2026 would have a presentation on TRAC from an external speaker that would provide more context
- There was no similar readily available metric for support areas. The Chief Operating Officer was currently investigating commissioning some external benchmarking services for the professional services – that would need to be purchased at some cost
- It was noted that many external companies charged significantly for benchmarking services – was it possible to contact other institutions and use free survey tools as a start?
- If an external firm was used, it would probably only be used once to gain access to a large amount of data quickly. Other institutions were using such services
- A People Strategy should detail how the people resource base was planned and how data could be used to track progress

26/05 Discussion on what people and workforce data the Committee wants to receive

The Committee noted that discussions were continuing on a people enabling strategy and strategic workforce planning. The Director of HR informed the Committee that HR now had a dedicated role who could support the production of in-depth dashboards for senior leadership.

The Committee viewed a live mock-up (using Power BI) which illustrated:

- Number of employees by area
- Number of core employees/current occupants
- Number of positions by grades
- Number of employees FT/PT Academic/Professional Services
- Demographic data – e.g., age, nationality, ethnicity, disability
- Change in staff numbers over time

It was anticipated that the dashboard would be fully rolled out by the next meeting. Once more data was available this would be fed into the People Strategy. Heads of School and Heads of Directorate would be encouraged to use the data in their decision making and planning, as well as to embed culture of using data.

The Committee welcomed the approach shown, whilst there was more work to be undertaken this was a move in the right direction. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have data on headcount, turnover, stability, talent moves, EDI, capacity and skills linked to University Strategy and goals, early warning indicators for risk areas – further consideration would be given to what high-level data was received at each meeting.

26/06 Corporate Risk Register and People Related Risks

The Committee received an update from the Director of HR on the Corporate Risk Register and people related risks (Risk 1 and Risk 4). The Director of HR highlighted existing controls/mitigating actions as well as current challenges and further mitigations required.

Corporate Risk 1 - Failure to recruit, retain and develop both Professional Services and Academic staff due to competitiveness of recruitment market alongside challenges of sector pay and benefits package and rising workloads.

Existing Control/Mitigating Actions were:

- Flexible working/smart/hybrid working options available for some staff;
- Ongoing improvements to recruitments processes to diversify advertising and speed up time to hire;
- Retention and market supplement policies in place (available to be used where necessary);
- Making more use of apprenticeship and development opportunities;
- Improving allocation of resources to areas of strategic importance or higher demand;
- Review and allocation of workloads;
- Prioritisation of strategic and local projects to ensure consideration of available resource;
- Improving provision of staff data and management information

Current Challenges/Further Mitigations included:

- Workloads – and impact on wellbeing continued to be challenging – although there was no evidence that it was directly leading to retention issues
- Academic workload model project ongoing; Professional Services workloads embedded in PS transformation work
- Flexible and Hybrid working was well embedded where it was available, recognising that this could also impact on team culture and ways of working as well
- Pay challenges were well known within the framework grades; have and continue to adjust grading structure and review benefits; Senior pay processes to be reviewed aligned to strategy/culture/KPI work

- Labour market continued to be buoyant for senior professional roles and in some academic disciplines; improving time to hire was critical to secure candidates and aligned to work on employer brand with wider brand/strategy
- Improved workforce planning; Redesign and positioning of development and career progression pathways

Corporate Risk 4 - *Lack of staff capacity to deliver change programme results in delay/failure to deliver change on time/within budget.*

Existing Control/Mitigating Actions were:

- Change governance process should consider effects upon staff at onset of change proposals;
- UEB reviews of the Strategic Portfolio;
- Active workload management (PDRs, monthly reviews etc);
- Prioritisation of projects and workloads;
- Project governance;
- Annual strategic planning process;
- New programme of change resources is available on UoR Learn and an ongoing project to review/improve people aspects of change.

Current Challenges/Further Mitigations included:

- Lack of strategic programme and project prioritisation which was being addressed through recent changes led by COO, including creation of PMO
- Change management toolkit, training and resources; but colleagues report that change is not managed well with a lack of clarity about the reasons for change and colleagues often feeling uninformed or insufficiently consulted; wider embedding of change management principles and mindset
- Governance Review and changes to strategic planning processes
- Increasing senior leadership visibility and trust; embedding leadership competences and new development programme
- Focus within strategy development on cultural change required

The Director of HR highlighted to the Committee that consideration was being given to including a new risk on management of work-related stress in response to increasing reports from School and Directorate risk registers. As follows:

Further People Related Risks Identified – Management of Workplace Stress

- Risk of increasing workplace stress was raised in the engagement survey, in School/Directorate planning and had been raised by UCU
- Some HE Institutions reported to HSE by UCU in relation to workplace stress management
- Pro-active steps being taken included:
 - Development of institutional stress risk assessment is underway; supported by School / Directorate plans

- Improved absence data
- Manager training co-delivered by Health & Safety Services and HR/Occupational Health;
- Stress awareness resources and training available to all staff, including HSE stress indicator tools
- Work to align to earlier mitigations on strategic planning, programme and project prioritisation, change management and alignment of resources
- Consideration of pulse survey to all staff covering wellbeing
- Improving communication and senior leadership awareness
- EAP, peer support and wellbeing initiatives

The Vice-Chancellor noted that workloads had increased along with the increase in student numbers, and that there was a need to tackle differentiation.

26/07 Staff Engagement Survey and Institutional Actions

The Committee received an update from the Director of HR on the Staff Engagement Survey and Institutional Actions. The Committee noted that Institutional Actions would focus on the areas identified below; where possible actions would be embedded with existing activity/projects and linked to wider strategic developments. In addition to embedding specific actions into HR/People strategies and projects, people and culture would be a core part of the University Strategy development.

Survey Theme - Purpose, Community and Belonging

Specific institutional actions in this area would focus on linking the development of the new University Strategy with the people, culture, values and leadership required to support the delivery of the strategy. To include:

- Improving how individual / existing strategies and priorities align (Corporate Plan work underway)
- Ensuring strategic objectives and ambitions were clear and progress was reported
- Considering the effectiveness of current channels in communicating strategic progress
- Aligning the University Strategy with the culture and people leadership needed to deliver it, including developing new leadership and management development programmes
- Refresh and reinforce the University Values, Behaviours and 3Rs
- Using the strategy development and implementation to bring together colleagues across structural or School/Directorate boundaries to create a shared sense of community and belonging
- Work with UEB and other senior leaders to improve leadership visibility
- Continuing to develop wellbeing support for colleagues
- Continuing and reinforcing our commitment to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion
- Strengthening a shared sense of purpose

Survey Theme - Reward and Recognition

It was recognised that the survey was conducted during the period of pay deferral and the pause in the University reward and recognition processes. However, this theme was wider than solely pay and improving mechanisms to recognise colleagues' contributions were also important. Reviewing the demographic data reflected particular concerns in grades 2-5 regarding pay and benefits and career progression and development. Action areas under this theme included:

- Improvements have been made in grade structure recently, but further changes would be needed (new national living wage rates). The University would maximise opportunities to improve the information available to colleagues on national pay processes and on their total reward package, which was often misunderstood.
- Recently launch of a new UoR Rewards platform, which has provided an opportunity to take some more immediate actions in this focus area and to launch new rewards and recognition schemes. UEB had agreed an increase in the UoR Rewards budget of £200k from this financial year which would be used to develop new recognition rewards. This would be supported by a focus on developing managers skills in recognising and celebrating the achievements of their teams and colleagues.
- Further work was also underway on:
 - Terms and conditions for Grades 2-5. HR were collaborating with the Staff Forum to consider improvements in benefits for staff in Grades 2-5, e.g. annual leave allowances, other benefits
 - Improving information and support for colleagues on career development; supporting managers but also encouraging colleagues to be responsible for their own personal and career development
 - Recent changes to create resource hubs for Academic and Professional Services Career Development
 - Support for skills development workshops; career coaching; mentoring and coaching
 - Webinars and Senior Development Masterclasses
 - Development of career pathways in professional services

Survey Theme - Change Workload and Systems

There was already considerable work underway which addresses the issues raised in this theme, including:

- Academic Workload Management Project
- Governance Review
- The programme of work for Professional Services, which included focus on systems improvements, automation and continuous improvement in process and procedures.

It is not proposed to commence any new projects or set any new actions in this area but to remind colleagues through communication and engagement that these projects were being implemented exactly to address concerns in these areas.

School / Directorate Actions

Change Management & Communication

- Whole School Town Halls and enhanced communication on strategies with updates.
- Improved clarity on change with wider consultation and leadership visibility.
- More structured directorate-wide communications and transition documentation.

Workload, Work-Life Balance & Resourcing

- Introduction or review of workload allocation models across multiple Schools.
- Addressing high student–staff ratios, resource gaps, and infrastructure investment needs.
- Use of automation to reduce administrative load and improve efficiency.

Career Development, CPD & Talent Management

- Strengthening mentoring, line management and succession planning within teams.
- Guaranteed CPD and scholarship time for academic staff in some Schools.
- Improved access to training and development opportunities and funding.

Leadership Visibility & Trust

- Regular VC/PVC visits and improved leadership presence at School meetings.
- A commitment to more transparent updates on finance, staffing and strategy within the School/Directorate
- Local leadership engagement in wellbeing and stress risk assessments.

Community, Culture & Engagement

- Support for wellbeing initiatives, recognition of achievements, and celebration of success.
- Improved inclusion through new collaborative groups and community-building events.
- Encouraging in-person interaction where possible to strengthen cohesion.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

- Actions to improve gender progression and leadership opportunities.
- Listening spaces and race/anti-racism training.
- Improvements to reporting confidence around bullying and harassment.

Strategic Alignment & Role Clarity

- Aligning PDR objectives more clearly with School and University strategy.
- Improving understanding of organisational structures and decision-making routes.
- Better planning, documentation, and communication of strategic priorities.

The Committee thanked the Director of HR for the update on actions.

26/08 Severance Payments and Early Retirement Arrangements

There was no report on this occasion.

26/09 Out of Cycle Salary Increases

The Committee received and noted an out of cycle salary increase since the last meeting for a retention case.

26/10 Any other business

25/29 Vice-Chancellor's Remuneration

In respect of the Vice-Chancellor's remuneration, the President confirmed that his appraisal had now taken place. The Committee had approved a lump sum payment in line with that awarded to others on the University Executive Board.

The Committee was assured that policy and process had been followed and that a set of objectives had been agreed informed by feedback from the President and Vice-President. The Director of HR had shared with the President data on the national picture in regard to VC remuneration. The Committee was mindful of the Vice-Chancellor's views on the appropriate remuneration of a Vice-Chancellor.

Supreme Court Ruling

[redacted S40]

26/11 Dates of meetings 2025/26

Tuesday 2 June 2026 9.30 – 11.30 am