

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

STAFFING COMMITTEE

17/12 A meeting of the Staffing Committee was held on Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 2, Whiteknights House

Present:

Professor R Van de Noort (Chair)
Mrs C L Bennett
Mr J J Brady
Miss C E Eckett
Professor M D E Fellowes
Mrs A Hackett
Dr R J Messer
Mrs J Pich
Mrs J Rowe
Professor D Zaum

Mr A J Twyford (Secretary)

Apologies were received from Professor Dianne Berry, Professor Simon Chandler-Wilde, Mr Ben Cooper, Professor Orla Kennedy and Dr C Tissot.

17/13 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017 were approved.

Arising from the minutes:

**Minute 17/02 (16/20, 16/10, 16/01, 15/22, 15/11, 15/01, 14/25):
Consultation in respect of proposed changes to USS and forthcoming pension changes**

The Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that the next USS valuation was due to be released next month. He indicated that the picture looked gloomy and one possible outcome will be a proposal to increase employers' contributions. He confirmed that following the valuation, the USS pension scheme providers will circulate consultation material. He agreed to keep the Committee informed of progress.

Minute 17/02 (16/21): People Strategy

The Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that the People Strategy was approved by UEB in May subject to costings and further work on the governance arrangements of the projects. He informed the

Committee that the HR Leadership Team was now undertaking scoping work and he was due to report back to the UEB in September.

Minute 17/03: Campus Jobs

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that Campus Jobs was on track to launch on the 18 September 2017 and was pleased to report that Campus Jobs had a stand at last week's Open Days. He informed the Committee that all the Student Ambassadors who worked during the Open Days had been recruited via Campus Jobs and would be paid by the Campus Jobs timesheet process.

Minute 17/04: Staff Survey

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (People and Talent) informed the Committee that the Vice-Chancellor held two staff briefings last week and both sessions were well attended. She confirmed that a series of focus groups would be running throughout June and July, with the first sessions running this week. She reminded colleagues that the focus groups would look at three areas for improvement:

- How we manage change;
- How we communicate with each other, share information and listen to employee views;
- Looking after our wellbeing.

She gave some initial feedback on the focus groups that had taken place including a request to ensure the process is transparent.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director of Human Resources (People and Talent) for the update.

Minute 17/05: Apprenticeship Levy and Apprenticeships

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Planning and Resources confirmed that a Project Board had been established whose remit, at this stage, was to monitor the progress made in the Henley Business School in offering degree apprenticeships, to monitor the progress made in other parts of the University who might be interested in degree apprenticeships, and to explore other ways of optimising the University's own Apprenticeship Levy contributions.

He reminded the Committee that there may be opportunities to fund apprenticeships across the University in areas such as Technical Services and Estates and Facilities, and noted that Schools and Functions might wish to use the Levy as a CPD tool or as a career succession tool.

Minute 17/08: Impact of Brexit on staff

The Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that information sessions held in February 2017 had been well received with about 360 people attending. He reminded the Committee that the University had agreed to fund the cost of residency card applications.

He confirmed that the immigration expert from Mills and Reeves would return at some future point to provide further practical guidance and information to staff and extended family members.

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

Minute 17/10: 2015/2016 Rewarding Excellence

This item was on the last agenda but was not fully discussed so the paper was re-submitted. The HR Manager (Rewards and Benefits) summarised the data relating to the different reward and recognition arrangements for 2015/16. These included:

Reward Committees

A total of 62 cases submitted in 2015/16, 58 of which were successful.

Lump Sum awards

A total of 427 Lump Sum awards made in 2015/16 (275 awards to women and 152 awards to men), totalling £229,825.

Celebrating Success scheme

A total of 649 awards were made in 2015/16 (429 awards made to women and 220 awards made to men)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Planning and Resources asked colleagues in HR to make sure that newly appointed Heads of School were made aware of the reward arrangements for the forthcoming academic session.

17/14 Review of the Personal Titles Process 2016-17

The Committee considered a report from the University Secretary summarising the feedback received following the introduction of a new personal titles process with effect from the 2016-17 academic year and noted the main recommendations arising from this review (summarised below). He confirmed that feedback was received from School Committee's, Heads of School, UCU representatives and the Deans for Diversity and Inclusion, as well as from members of the University Personal Titles Committee and individual academic colleagues.

- (1) The Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and Innovation and for Teaching and Learning, the Deans who sat on the University Personal Titles Committee and two members of the Senate who were involved in the school committee stage, consider the following and make recommendation to the University Executive Board :
 - (a) Whether it should be possible to compensate a low score on one or more with higher scores elsewhere;
 - (b) Whether there should be fewer criteria, and, if so, how they should be reduced;
 - (c) What clarifications should be made to the wording of criteria;
 - (d) Whether there should be any change to the meaning of criterion R5 for Associate Professors;
 - (e) Whether there should be a more precise definition of sustained or continued levels of performance, and, if so, what;
- (2) All staff regardless of contract type be subject to the same number of criteria;
- (3) Each applicant ought to cite evidence for a prescribed number of criteria (that is, there not be a minimum that could optionally be exceeded)
- (4) For staff with T in their contract, they must meet the essential criteria for teaching, however those criteria are defined by the University from time to time;
- (5) For staff with R in their contract, they must meet the essential criteria for research, however those criteria are defined by the University from time to time;
- (6) Otherwise, and in addition to meeting the citizenship criteria, staff can choose to cite evidence against a defined number of any of the remaining teaching and research criteria;
- (7) There be no additional, discrete criteria about leadership;
- (8) Heads of School have discretion not to appoint to their School Committee a member of staff who has a personal titles case to be considered, as long as they consider that a suitable alternate can be found from within the School;
- (9) Heads of School must turn down from consideration by their School Committee any application (including the CV) which is too long or not in the correct format.

17/15 Pay Negotiations 2017/18

The Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that the employers' association had made a final offer of 1.7% on the majority of spinal points with some bottom loading of the lower spinal points. He confirmed the trades unions were currently consulting their members and his understanding was that they would be recommending the offer to their

members. He indicated that a decision as to whether the pay offer would be accepted should be known by the end of July 2017.

17/16 Review of Academic Probation procedure

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Planning and Resources provided the Committee with an update following the decision of the UEB to review the current academic probation arrangements. He confirmed that a working group had been established comprising senior academic colleagues (Heads of School, Deans), the Head of Academic Development and Enhancement and HR Partners.

The working group had consulted widely and several constructive meetings had taken place with UCU. The new procedure provides a clear framework within which managers can work with academic staff to maintain satisfactory performance and sets out what support is available to academic staff to enable them to successfully complete their probationary period. He confirmed that an academic framework had been developed comprising criteria relating to citizenship & leadership, teaching & learning and research against which an individual's objectives would be aligned.

He informed the Committee that the new academic probation arrangements had been approved by UEB and would be effective from 1 August 2017, subject to ratification by Senate and Council.

17/17 Closure days / closure over Easter

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Planning and Resources reported that RUSU had raised a number of student complaints with members of the UEB in respect of the Library closing over Easter and this coinciding with the University's closure days. RUSU pointed out that many students' remained on campus during the vacation periods and often required access to the library during Easter for exam revision and for accessing software packages.

As the Staffing Committee is responsible for the setting of closure days, it discussed at length whether there was still a need for closure days. It was noted that all staff are entitled to six closure days (normally taken during the Xmas and Easter vacation period) and, apart for a small number of staff providing essential services, the University closes on these days.

Colleagues recognised that when setting the closure days it was important to plan and to consult widely to ensure that there was no clash with key student dates. However, it was suggested that closure days were important as they were good for staff wellbeing and were a useful recruitment tool. The Committee also felt that whilst the University could keep the Library

and catering outlets open during closure days, the costs of doing so would be significant.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Planning and Resources thanked the Committee for its views and would feedback to UEB colleagues and RUSU representatives that for now there are no plans to withdraw / alter the current arrangements for closure days.

17/18 Relocation Assistance

The Director of Human Resources reported that a review of the current arrangements in respect of relocation assistance had taken place within HR, including a review of the levels of assistance provided. He reminded colleagues that the funding of relocation assistance was now the responsibility of the recruiting School/Function.

He explained that the proposed arrangements would ensure that relocation assistance is targeted to where it is most needed, rather than having a blanket approach where individuals are entitled to relocation assistance regardless of need.

The Committee welcomed the development of a clear framework and the provision of more guidance for recruiting managers. There was widespread agreement that offering relocation assistance on a discretionary basis was a more appropriate use of resource.

The Committee approved the principles contained in the relocation assistance document and agreed that a low key approach to its roll out was sensible. They also recommended that it would be sensible to continue to monitor the frequency with which relocation assistance is offered as this will help to better understand those roles and areas where relocation is needed.

17/19 Out of Hours / On-call payments

The Director of Human Resources reported that given the increased number of queries from Departments required to operate an “out of hours” service on a regular basis, colleagues in Human Resources had devised an On-Call framework. The framework was intended to provide a consistent approach as and when there is a need for colleagues to provide an out of hours service.

The Committee agreed that a clear and consistent approach to incentivise staff to be available out of hours and where there is a genuine need was sensible. A useful discussion took place as to the type of situation that would fall in scope of the framework and asked that the document be refreshed to make clear the types of situation where the framework would apply.

The Director of Human Resources agreed that the document provided a useful starting point and confirmed that a revised paper would be brought back to a future meeting.

17/20 Appointment to certain Senior Leadership roles

The Committee noted a paper from the University Secretary that provided clarity and structure in respect of the appointment to certain senior leadership roles (Deans, Heads of Function, Heads of School, Heads of Service and Pro-Vice-Chancellors). He confirmed that the UEB would be asked to approve the proposed process and indicated that there would need to be a change to the University's Ordinance.

17/21 Membership

The Pro-Vice Chancellor, Academic Planning & Resources reported that this would be the last meeting for Professor Fellowes and Mrs Pich and on behalf of the Committee thanked them for the significant contributions they had made to this Committee over the years.

17/22 Proposed dates of meetings for the 2017/18 Academic Session:

Tuesday 10 October 2017, 2.00 pm
Tuesday 28 November 2017, 10.00 am (reserve)
Tuesday 13 February 2018, 2.00 pm
Tuesday 1 May 2018, 11.00 am (reserve)
Wednesday 20 June 2018, 2.00 pm