

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

STAFFING COMMITTEE

15/20 A meeting of the Staffing Committee was held on Tuesday 27 October 2015 at 2.00 pm in Room G72, Philip Lyle Building

Present:

Professor R Van de Noort (Chair)
Professor M J Almond
Mrs C L Bennett
Professor D C Berry
Mr J J Brady
Miss C E Eckett
Professor M D E Fellowes
Mrs A Hackett
Dr E McCrum
Dr R J Messer
Mrs J Pich
Mr O Ratcliffe
Mrs C Rolstone
Mrs J Rowe

Mr A J Twyford (Secretary)

Apologies were received from Professor A R Bell and Professor R H Ellis

The Committee welcomed Professor Almond, Dr McCrum, Mrs Hackett and Mr Ratcliffe, to their first meeting.

15/21 Membership, Terms of Reference and Disclosure of Interests

The Committee received a copy of its membership and Terms of Reference and a copy of a memorandum from the University Secretary in respect of Disclosure of Interests and the Committee's obligations in respect of the University's Risk Register.

15/22 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015 were approved.

Arising from the minutes:

Minute 15/11 (15/01, 14/25): Consultation in respect of proposed changes to USS

The Director of Human Resources reported that the statutory consultation period with relevant employers in respect of proposed changes to USS had now closed and confirmed that the implementation date for the proposed benefit reforms was 1 April 2016.

The Director of Human Resources reported on two further pension related changes, namely i) contracting out (National Insurance costs) and ii) auto re-enrolment with an effective implementation date of 1 July 2016.

He confirmed that a small steering group had been established to coordinate these pension changes and that staff would be communicated to in the forthcoming months.

Minute 15/15: National Pay Bargaining

The Director of Human Resources reported that the pay award for 2015/16 had now been agreed following the decision of UCU to withdraw the threat of national action. He confirmed that staff would now receive the uplift of 1.00% on all pay spine points save for the eight lowest spine points where increases will be as follows:

Point	% increase
1	2.65%
2	2.4%
3	2.2%
4	2.0%
5	1.8%
6	1.6%
7	1.4%
8	1.2%

He stated that staff would receive the pay uplift in their November pay and would be backdated to 1 August 2015.

Minute 15/18 (15/08): Personal Titles Arrangements – further proposed amendments to the process

The Committee noted that the Committee Secretary forwarded the report from the University Secretary and the recommendations of the Staffing Committee to the UEB for approval.

15/23 The Living Wage

(Mr Matt Austin, Archaeology student attended for this item)

Professor Van de Noort reminded colleagues that at previous meetings RUSU had reported on the University of Reading Living Wage campaign and had asked the University to become a Living Wage employer. It had been agreed that further work was required to determine the impact to the University of becoming an accredited Living Wage employer. A paper had now been generated for consideration by the Committee.

He reported that the purpose of the Committee was to debate this matter, collect opinion for onward transmission to the University Executive Board (UEB), the Finance and Strategy Committee and ultimately to the Council.

A comprehensive discussion took place and the following comments were made:

The University of Reading Living Wage campaign is a student led campaign, not a RUSU led campaign and a key component of the campaign is for the University to become an accredited Living Wage employer;

RUSU recognises that it does not pay the Living Wage for its employees and the main driver for this is affordability;

Arguments against implementation of the Living Wage:

- In budgetary terms the additional cost to the University of paying the Living Wage as currently set would amount to £170K (an additional £107.5K for casual staff and an additional £62.5K for staff on the University's pay and grading structure). The Committee discussed whether the University should treat casual staff in the same way as staff on the University's pay and grading structure – noting that many casual staff are students?;
- The Living Wage Foundation is an independent body and could increase the Living Wage by more than the nationally negotiated pay award – the University would have no control over future pay increases to the Living Wage and could be signing up to an unknown future cost;
- If the University became a Living Wage employer, it would mean that all contracted staff, as well as all directly employed staff, would need to be paid the Living Wage. This would particularly impact Estates and Facilities due to the services contracted out;
- Estates and Facilities already face financial challenges including the need to find significant efficiency savings – becoming a Living Wage employer would increase the Function's costs and this in turn could result in the need to employ fewer staff (a proportion of which would be students);
- Implementing the Living Wage would require us to change the pay and grading structure and would impact on costs and the differentials between staff at the lower end of the structure;
- Should the University become a Living Wage employer at a time when it is being asked to make significant efficiency savings (PAS)?;
- The University has a strong benefits package so the total of the reward and benefits package is much greater than basic pay;

Arguments for implementation of the Living Wage

- It is the right thing to do – the University has a moral duty to treat its staff fairly;

- Becoming a Living Wage employer would enhance the University's reputation as an ethical and fair employer – many employers including other Higher Education Institutions pay the Living Wage and are accredited Living Wage employers;
- It would enhance engagement with the local community, from which most of the lowest paid staff are drawn;
- Reports of reduced absenteeism and increased productivity and engagement amongst staff from accredited employers;

The Committee discussed various options including making adjustments to Grade 1 on the University's pay and grading structure – this included removing the bottom spinal point 1 and/or deleting Grade 1 altogether.

Professor Van de Noort thanked Oli Ratcliffe and Matt Austin and confirmed that the UEB would now be asked to consider whether the University should become an accredited Living Wage employer and pay the Living Wage for its staff.

Action: The Committee Secretary to forward the report and the extract of the minutes to the University Executive Board and ask them to consider whether the University should become an accredited Living Wage employer and pay the Living Wage for its staff.

15/24 Efficiency and Effectiveness (PAS) update

The Director of Human Resources reported on the progress made with the review of its professional and administrative services (PAS).

He informed the Committee that formal consultation with the UCU and the Staff Forum had commenced on the 28 October 2015 and that in the forthcoming weeks a comprehensive series of PAS briefings / communications would take place including:

- The VC to brief the Leadership Group (10 November);
- Function Heads to brief all staff within their Function (between 11 November and 20 November);
- The VC to brief non-academic staff in schools (week commencing 16 November);
- All staff communication from the VC (week commencing 23 November);
- Work stream leads to lead briefings on their work stream proposals (week commencing 23 November);

He confirmed that the briefing sessions and communication updates were intended to give staff a sense of the new structures and delivery and some idea about the implementation timeline.

The Director of Human Resources indicated that he would continue to keep the Committee updated.

15/25 Rewarding Excellence

The Committee considered a report summarising the University's arrangements for recognising and rewarding staff during 2014/15 including:

- Celebrating Success Vouchers;
- Lump Sum Awards;
- Accelerated incremental progression;
- Contribution points; and
- Merit based promotion

It noted the following:

Reward Committees – a total of 102 cases were submitted in 2014/15, all but one of which were successful. There were 74 cases submitted for women and 27 cases submitted for men. There were 8 cases submitted for staff whose ethnicity is recorded as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, all of which were successful.

Lump Sum Awards – a total of 440 Awards were made in 2014/15 (310 awards to women and 130 awards to men). The average award for women was £504 and the average award for men was £545. The highest number of awards by job family, were made to Professional and Managerial staff (144), followed by Academic and Administrative Support (Clerical) staff (139).

Celebrating Success scheme – 639 awards were made in 2014/15 (compared to 600 awards made in 2013/14). 418 awards were made to women and 221 were made to men.

Miss Eckett reported that for this year's Professorial Pay Review, all Professorial staff were asked to submit a pro-forma to give a more consistent structure to submissions. The return rate for 2015 was 86.74% compared to 68.46% in 2014. She also reported that the Remuneration Committee had approved the introduction of new pay arrangements for Grade 9 staff, consisting of a four zone structure, which would enable the University to act fairly, consistently and transparently.

Professor Van de Noort, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Ms Eckett for the report.

15/26 The Personal Titles arrangements

Dr Messer reported on the progress made by the group established by the Vice-Chancellor to review the Personal Titles procedure to ensure the process was fair and consistent.

He reported that the group had sought the views of the Deans and Heads of School on the planned changes to the process. He confirmed that once in receipt of their comments the group would put forward proposals to both the UEB and the UCU with

the intention of implementing the new process in time for the 2016/17 academic session.

The Director of Human Resources sought the Committee's views on an individual case following this year's Personal Titles process. He indicated that the effective date for any one promoted following this year's Personal Titles process was 1 August 2015 and confirmed that this was a change from previous years when the effective date had been 1 October.

He stated that one member of Academic Staff who had been promoted this year with an effective date of 1 August 2015 had felt unfairly treated and was insisting that he should also receive a further increment on the 1 October 2015.

The Director of Human Resources believed the University had two choices – it should revert back to the original effective date of 1 October or should leave the effective date as 1 August.

The Committee discussed the matter in some detail and decided, by a majority show of hands, to revert back to the original effective date of 1 October. The Committee took the view that they were rectifying an anomaly as no due process had been followed when changing the effective date from the 1 October to the 1 August.

The Director of Human Resources thanked the Committee for their views.

15/27 Sabbatical Leave

The Committee considered a paper from the Director of Human Resources on the arrangements for sabbatical and study leave. He brought to the Committee's attention two documents, the first setting out the arrangements for Study Leave and the second addressing Sabbatical and Extended Leave, and highlighted somewhat contradictory statements.

The Committee agreed with the Director of Human Resources' proposal that the University Study Leave Scheme is confirmed as the definitive document with regard to study/sabbatical leave, and the reference to sabbatical leave is removed from the other document and is simply re-designated as Extended Leave.

The Committee asked that a further review of the University's Extended Leave arrangements be undertaken as the current arrangements focused on academic staff.

Action: The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Advisory Services) to undertake a review of the University's Extended Leave arrangements and to report back to a future meeting.

15/28 Diversity and Inclusion Development update

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (People and Talent) provided the Committee with a Diversity and Inclusion Development update.

She highlighted one recommendation contained in the Equality and Diversity Information Report published in January 2015 stating that diversity training would be embedded into all activity, focusing on an inclusive environment. She reported that the University continued to run the Aurora programme to increase women in senior roles and continues to roll out unconscious bias training, both on the open programme and in Schools/Services as required.

She reported on the UEB's mandate that all staff should complete the Diversity and Inclusion online module and the initial teething problems with launching the online module. She confirmed that these issues had now been resolved and that a re-launch of the module was planned to take place by the end of the calendar year.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (People and Talent) reported on wider diversity development across the University including the continuation of the Springboard programme, the development of a mentoring programme and the progress made in respect of Athena SWAN.

The Committee thanked Mrs Hackett for her report.

15/29 The GTA scheme update

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Operations) reported on the progress made with the development of the University's Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) scheme. She explained that the scheme had been developed to provide opportunities for postgraduate research students to gain teaching and learning experience during the course of their doctoral studies and was widespread in universities in the USA and continental Europe.

She said Heads of School and Deans had been asked to comment on the proposed scheme and the plan was to then consult with RUSU and UCU before requesting approval from the UEB.

Professor Van de Noort, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mrs Bennett for the update.

15/30 Remaining dates of meetings for the 2015/16 Academic Session:

Tuesday 1 December 2015, 10.00 am (reserve)
Tuesday 16 February 2016, 2.00 pm
Tuesday 3 May 2016, 2.00 pm (reserve)
Wednesday 22 June 2016, 2.00 pm