

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of a Meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 26th February 2020 at 1.30 pm in M60, Main Building.

Present: Mr M Thomas - Chair
Mr P Nixon
Mr D Wong
Mrs A Haycox
Mr M Simcock
Dr D Llewellyn
Mrs C Snell (via telephone)

In attendance: Dr C Baxter
Miss D Crowther (Secretary)

Members were reminded to update their entry in the Register of Interests if required.

19/18 Terms of Reference

Reviewed: the Terms of Reference were reviewed and it was confirmed that they accurately reflected the purpose and structure of the Committee. It was noted that membership had been updated to include Mr D Wong as a new member.

19/19 Minutes

Approved: the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th November 2019 (19/01 – 19/17).

19/20 Matters Arising

Received: a report from the Head of HR on matters arising.

Noted: that since the launch of the new PDR process at the end of November 2019 there had been limited feedback from staff and in the main the amendments seemed to have been received well. Lydia Arnold and Abigail Hind had subsequently asked for further expansion on teaching and learning elements, specifically in relation to Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) preparations, which Peter Mills was taking forward with Heads of Department. One AHoD had queried the timescales for completion by 31st August 2020 in a recent Line Managers' Meeting, however, following discussion with a colleague attending the same meeting this had been resolved.

19/21 Risk Management

Received: a report from the University Secretary on risk areas monitored by the Committee.

Noted:

- i) that following the large-scale annual review of risk at the Board Meeting held in November 2019, there had been only minor amendments made to the risks associated with this particular Committee. There remained no major risks.
- ii) that with regard to the format of the report, there was now an additional column, which transparently showed how the final risk rating had been arrived at. This had been a recommendation from the review by internal auditors.

- iii) that a meeting would be held with Peter Mills, Catherine Baxter and Dawn Crowther week commencing 2nd March to progress particular actions in the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, which related to academic staff.
- iv) that interviews would be held on 25th March 2020 for the Director of Academic Services and Academic Registrar, following Abigail Hind's decision to retire.
- v) that following Dawn Crowther's decision to leave the University, there would be a recruitment process for the Head of HR post. It was likely that the role would be filled initially on an interim basis, whilst recruitment was taking place for the newly created Deputy Secretary post.
- vi) that with regard to senior staff appointments, Mrs Haycox enquired about progress with the Head of Animals post. Dr Llewellyn confirmed that this remained in hand following the initial round of interviews. Dr Llewellyn also confirmed that there was also recruitment to three Professorial posts currently in hand – a Director of Research post, which had been previously advertised as Research Co-ordinator, a Professor of Public Engagement and a Professor in Beef.

19/22 Policies and Procedures

- Noted:
- i) a new Menopause Policy and Guidance Document. It was confirmed that the new Policy and Guidance Document would be communicated via the Weekly Diary and via Line Manager Meetings in due course. Potential workshops for members of staff and line managers would also be explored.
 - ii) a new Secondment Policy. It was confirmed that secondments did not occur regularly at the University, but that this policy would provide a useful framework for times when they did as it documented current custom and practice.

- Agreed:
- i) to approve the new Menopause Policy and Guidance Document.
 - ii) to approve the new Secondment Policy subject to paragraph 7 being expanded slightly to confirm that substantive terms and conditions remained in place during the course of the secondment, but that working arrangements such as start times may differ temporarily; and paragraph 8.2 being expanded slightly to confirm that a reasonable portion of annual leave should be taken during the course of any external secondment.

DC

19/23 Pay and Negotiation – 2019/20 Pay Round

Received: the Committee received an update on the continuing dispute in respect of the 2019/20 JNCHES Negotiating Round.

- Noted:
- i) that although Harper Adams was not one of the 74 universities where UCU had been successful in securing a ballot for action, as a member institution we would be required to commit to the wider positive proposals that were being presented. These were around contractual arrangements; workload and mental health; and gender pay gaps and ethnicity pay.

19/24 **Pay and Negotiation – 2020/21 Pay Round**

Received: the Committee received an update on initial engagement from UCEA on the 2020/21 Pay Round, along with a Negotiating Round Briefing Paper.

Noted:

- i) that universities were in a unique position, with negotiations commencing on the 2020/21 Pay Round at a time when the 2019/20 Pay Round was still in dispute.
- ii) that projected increases to the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage would directly impact the lower paid grades on the Single Pay Spine for HE Academic and Support Staff.
- iii) that these increases, alongside cuts in HE budgets next year, rising pension costs and no increase in student fees, would undoubtedly prove difficult to balance.
- iv) that the UCEA Negotiating Round Briefing Paper should also be made available for the next meeting of the University's Remuneration Committee in June 2020.

DC

19/25 **Management Development Programme for 2020**

Received: a brief paper detailing the planned Management Development events for 2020.

Noted: that effective PDR would be covered in Module 1 – Managing a Team.

19/26 **Casual Worker Process Review**

Approved: the Committee approved the proposed terms and conditions for a) casual workers, b) minimum hours employees and c) student ambassadors.

Noted:

- i) that a considerable amount of work had been involved with this project in having to review all current casual workers who were engaged via oral contracts only.
- ii) that in relation to NEST an opportunity to postpone contributions for 12 weeks should always be given. It was noted that based on indicative earnings levels, it would be unlikely that these kind of workers and employees would reach the necessary boundaries would be reached for auto-enrolment.
- iii) that work would progress to issue circa 230 statements of written particulars by 1st April 2020.

DC

19/27 **E-Recruitment Update**

Received: a brief report on the introduction of the e-recruitment module in iTrent for recruitment requests and approvals.

Noted:

- i) that following the decision by the Project Steering Board to retain Stonefish for advertising, applications and shortlisting, the iTrent e-recruitment module had been launched across the University on Monday 17th February 2020. This meant that the need for a paper-based recruitment request had now disappeared, with all requests for recruitment being made electronically through the system.

- ii) that the recruiting manager can now easily check progress with their request as it moves along the various stages of approval.
- iii) that a shorter approval process is now in place for recruitment requests which are cost neutral, which should shorten the time to fill vacancies in some cases.

19/28 Deletion of Spine Point 2

Received: a report providing an update on work to delete spine point 2 of the Single Pay Spine for HE Academic and Support Staff with effect from 1st April 2020.

- Noted:
- i) that work was progressing to plan and that letters would be issued to all affected staff at grades 1, 2 and 3 well in time for the 1st April 2020.
 - ii) that a meeting would be taking place this week to ensure systems and payroll changes were in hand.
 - iii) that meetings had taken place with both UCU and SCG in respect of the changes, with no major issues having been raised.

19/29 Induction Effectiveness Survey

Received: a report providing a breakdown of the survey results from the University's Induction Effectiveness Survey from November 2019 – February 2020.

Noted: that the response rate had been relatively low at 50%. Checks would be made to ensure that new staff, who do not necessarily utilise IT regularly in their role, have been given every opportunity to engage with the survey.

DC/AA

19/30 Any Other Business

Mr Thomas gave warm thanks to Miss Crowther for her strong contribution to the Staffing Committee, as this would be her last meeting before leaving the University at the end of May 2020.

19/31 Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 11th June 2020.