

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

STAFFING COMMITTEE

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Chandler-Wilde

19/27 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.

19/28 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 were approved

Arising from the minutes:

Minute 19/17: Attending Conferences – reimbursement of childcare costs

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that HR colleagues were still gathering information and would bring forward formal recommendations to a future meeting of the Committee.

The following proposed actions were considered:

GPG1:

The Committee thanked the Dean for Diversity and Inclusion for providing such a comprehensive paper and enabling the Committee to be able to discuss and debate very difficult and complex issues.

19/30 Athena SWAN Action Plan on Gender Equality

The Dean for Diversity & Inclusion and Dr Karen Henderson, Director of Technical Services outlined the progress made in preparing for the next University Athena SWAN submission, due 30 November 2019, and sought the views of the Committee on a number of the proposed actions.

Flexible working (FW5): Work to encourage all senior managers, starting with the leadership group, to become positive about flexible working.

It was noted that improved technology would greatly improve / enhance flexible working. For example, one Committee member reported the challenges and restrictions when working from home and being required to dial into a meeting. The Committee endorsed the need to enhance awareness and training in this area and improve communications. It was also noted that collecting data in respect of flexible working was not straightforward with many arrangements being informal in nature. There was a suggestion that the University should consider changing the language used. Rather than describing it as flexible working it might be more appropriate to call it agile working.

Family leave (FL5): Increase the length of paid paternity/partner/adoption leave from 2 weeks to 4 weeks to bring it into line with other sector leading universities.

The Committee debated the proposed increase in leave, and was broadly supportive. However, they noted that this would result in an additional cost to the University. Dr Henderson reported that over the last 5 years the average uptake of paternity/partner/adoption leave had been approximately 35 individuals per year.

The Committee suggested that in the first instance the University should consider increasing paternity/partner/adoption leave from 2 weeks to 3 weeks.

PDRs (CD1): carry out an in-depth review with reviewers and reviewees to determine barriers to PDR completion and culture relating to regular manager and employee conversations. Outcome to lead to either a move away from PDRs or a move to invigorate the PDR process.

The Committee recognised that the approach to undertaking PDRs varies across schools / functions, and agreed that having a process that enabled greater flexibility for having regular manager / employee conversations was important.

changes to the Cycle2work scheme, and MyCar scheme.

In respect of the Cycle2work scheme, the Committee agreed to the proposal to increase the limit on the scheme from £1,000 to £2,500, thus opening up a much wider range of bikes, including e-bikes.

In respect of MyCar, the Committee noted the changes introduced by HMRC in 2017 on salary sacrifice schemes and the impact this has had on the car scheme. In light of these changes, the Committee carefully considered the three suggested options and agreed to:

- x Continue to offer a car leasing scheme salary sacrifice scheme, but limit this (or give greater promotion) to ultra-low emissions vehicles (ULEVs), so that staff can obtain an electric or hybrid car and this will support the University's carbon reduction targets. It was noted that ULEVs attract the full tax and NI savings available.

19/33 Pay and Pensions Update

The Director of Human Resources reported that the 2019 pay bargaining

award, whether this was a consolidated award, or a non-consolidated award.

19/36 Brexit

The Director of Human Resources updated the Committee on the work being undertaken by the University in respect of Brexit. He reported that a working group had been established - chaired by the Chief Financial Officer. The main purpose of the working group was to raise awareness and provide relevant colleagues with the latest information and advice.

The University has provided information (including the latest advice from Universities UK) on the implications of a no-deal Brexit, including the implications for staff who may be travelling to the EU around the 31 October 2019 and/or are on secondment to any country in the EEA.

19/37 Remaining dates of meetings for the 2019/20 Academic Session:

Tuesday 26 November 2019 at 10.00 am (reserve)

Tuesday 11 February 2020 at 2.00 pm

Tuesday 28 April 2020 at 11.00 am (reserve)

Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 2.00 pm