

People, Culture and Engagement Committee

TIME /DATE / VENUE	1300, Wednesday 24 May 2023 in Room 0.32, Unit 1, St Andrew's Court
PRESENT	Claudia Iton (Chair) David Wilding David Willan, Chair of the Board
IN ATTENDANCE	Becky Miles, Professional Services Staff Governor Professor Richard Thelwell, Academic Staff Governor (to Minute 27) Dr Andy Dixon, Deputy Director (Environment and Strategy) Research and Innovation (Minute 27 only) Peta Tattersall, Faculty Manager, Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries (Minute 28 only) Carol Carter, Senior HR Business Partner (Minute 29 only) James Morris, Head of Reward and Recognition (Minute 30 only) Professor Jeremy Howells, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation and External Relations) (Minute 31 only) Chris Chang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life) Minute 32 only) Yvonne Howard, Director of Race and Equality (Minute 32 only)
SECRETARIAT	Claire Dunning, Executive Director of Corporate Governance Jacqui Bryden, Senior Governance Officer

To facilitate the attendance of staff for specific items, some items were taken out of the order designated in the agenda.

24 Welcome, Quoracy, Conflict of Interest and Apologies

- 24.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 24.2 Apologies were received from: External Governor, Christopher Williams; Professor Graham Galbraith; Bernie Topham, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor; Fiona Hnatow, Chief People Officer and Wayne Bowen, Head of HR Strategic Planning.
- 24.3 The Executive Director of Corporate Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could proceed to business.
- 24.4 There were no conflicts of interest declared.

25 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record.

26 Matters Actioned and Matters Arising

- 26.1 Action was reported within the agenda papers on two items; one action for note and one item which would be received later in the agenda.
- 26.2 There were no other matters arising.

27 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers – Annual Report

Dr Andy Dixon, Deputy Director (Environment and Strategy) Research provided the annual report on the progress of the action plan that commenced in 2021/2022 to address the principles and priorities of the Researcher Development Concordat.

27.1 The key points noted were:

- i. The Concordat had been established to address the concern that due to the nature of working on externally-funded projects and finite funding, researchers felt isolated in the workplace and not part of the community. It was important to consider external and internal research requirements to ensure there was no duplication and to maximise opportunities and resources.
 - ii. The Concordat provided a framework to improve researcher employment and support although universities were able to take their own approach. The University had set out six key priorities in an action plan to address issues identified through a gap analysis on 2021.
 - iii. The RAG report in the action plan identified initial actions and progress against the six priorities. Good progress had been made and the next step would be to evaluate the outcomes.
 - iv. A national survey was carried out in March 2023 for which there was a response of approximately 25%. The results were mixed and it was important to understand the reasons for the results. A detailed analysis would be undertaken shortly. Two internal focus groups were attended by three of a potential 108 attendees.
 - v. The issue was the lack of engagement and researchers not identifying activities as personal development. Engagement activities through wider staff networks were in development.
 - vi. A series of activities and events had been incorporated into Induction, Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) and career planning. In the last year, PDR completion had gone down as had those researchers taking the full 10 days allocated to development time. In 2021, 19% of researchers took 10 days development time which had reduced to 11% in 2023.
 - vii. Equality, diversity and inclusion was been one of the six key priorities but was intrinsically linked to all of the priorities.
 - viii. The action plan had been updated and could be circulated to committee members on request.
- Action: Senior Governance Officer**
- ix. The Festival of Research provided a platform for knowledge exchange with business and research opportunities.

27.2 In discussion, Committee noted:

- i. Researcher contracts of employment were predominantly fixed term because they were linked to the availability of the research funding. This was not addressed directly in the Concordat although some universities sought to address the type of contract locally. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) recognised the vulnerability of researchers' employment and had provided follow-on funding when available.
- ii. Development was a key element in obtaining research funding but could not guarantee continuity of employment.
- iii. The focus group had identified that open-ended contracts would be helpful in long term personal financial planning. Some HEIs had provided bridging grants between funding but were an expensive option and increased risk to the university.
- iv. Other schemes to support research careers included the provision of a strong support network, direct emails to advertise opportunities, regular meetings with Faculty representatives, becoming a named researcher on a bid, engagement with the International Office and the use of career-based social media platforms such as LinkedIn.
- v. Collaborations and partnerships with other universities to provide research career pathways for similar research projects or subject areas should be investigated.
- vi. Funding allocation was partly based on the REF results and tended to concentrate on PhD students and less on post-doctoral researchers. Principal Investigators could facilitate more engagement and investment in researchers.
- vii. It was important to secure engagement in the right way to the right audience and opportunities for career progression could be sought externally through other HEIs.

27.3 The Committee noted the report and looked forward to seeing progress during the next year.

28 People, Culture and Engagement: Creative and Cultural Industries Faculty Office

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was deferred to the next Committee meeting with the agreement of the Chair.

Action: Senior Governance Officer

29 Policy Review – Rolling Calendar

Carol Carter, Senior HR Business Partner presented a report on the scheduled reviews of HR policies to plan for Committee approval of policies where necessary.

29.1 Key points noted were:

- i. An HR Business Partner had been appointed to manage HR policy development and improvement through their regular review.
- ii. A review of 49 current documents had identified differences in language, content and purpose. Subsequently, the documents had been re-designated as either a policy or as guidance. There were fewer policies and the number of guidance documents had increased. Each document was scheduled for review between June



2023 and September 2024 and prioritised according to statutory compliance and business need.

- iii. It was important that the documents were compliant, easily understood and incorporated best practice, standardising language, format and content. The aim was that HR policies and guidance would be a helpful and easily accessible tool for managers to manage their teams effectively.
- iv. The documents had been set out so that the process for review could be tracked at each stage of its review. The review process included union consultation, staff network review and feedback and UEB review and feedback.
- v. HR policies and documents would be supported by training, templates and toolkits online as well as support from the HR Business Partnering team.
- vi. Policies were designated as being statutory and guidance was designated as best practice.

29.2 In discussion, it was noted that:

- i. The Protocol for Approval of HR Policies and Procedures had last been reviewed in 2016 and should be updated, in particular, because there was no requirement for direct involvement from Board members.
- ii. The time required to review the policies and guidance varied depending on their complexity and consultation. It was important to schedule dates for presentation to the Committee for approval where necessary.
- iii. Board members were no longer involved in the appeal stage of formal HR policies.

29.3 The Committee noted the report and that a draft of the updated Protocol for the Approval of HR policies would be presented at the meeting in September.

Action: Executive Director of Corporate Governance and Senior Governance Officer

30 Gender Pay Gap Update - confidential

31 People, Culture and Engagement: Research and Innovation Delivery Strategy

Professor Jeremy Howells, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Innovation and External Relations) presented an update on the implementation of the Research and Innovation Strategy.

31.1 Key points noted were:

- i. The new Research and Innovation Strategy defined four strategic priorities to 2026 and had been developed in alignment with the University Strategy and to ensure that the University was enabled to access quality-related (QR) funding allocated through the Research Excellence Framework (REF).
- ii. The next REF scheduled for 2028 was in preparation. The research themes had been updated and partnerships strengthened with Portsmouth City Council and Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust.

- iii. It was important to review internal research and innovation processes with Finance and HR and to create engagement across the University. Five task and finish groups had been established for specific projects including the Medical School.
- iv. Research and Innovation Services consisted of 30 staff, centralised within the University that supported bids and grants.
- v. Associate Heads and Associate Deans were appointed within each Faculty with responsibility for research and innovation. Research Transformation workshops were visiting the Schools to create engagement and promote opportunities.

31.2 In discussion, it was noted that:

- i. It was important to have a framework for research and innovation to attract funding and create a teamwork approach through engagement and improved communication channels.
- ii. The research transformation workshops would be held with academics in the first instance, then with support staff and finally in combined groups. A project manager would facilitate the workshops.
- iii. There were four pathways to Associate Professor and Professor roles: Academic Leadership; Enterprise and Innovation; Research; Teaching and Innovation; or a mix of these.
- iv. Research contracts tended to be fixed term based on funding availability and it was important for Teaching Fellows and Lecturers to be able to move between pathways to create an academic career.
- v. The aim of the task and finish groups would be to: develop research talent; improve recruitment and retention; incorporate equality, diversity and inclusivity into all research activity; provide mentoring opportunities; training; and network with stakeholders and communities.
- vi. Quality related funding is a baseline for research funding allocation. The University is number 27 in the table for funding and it was important to have structures, processes and governance in place to support improvement and growth at all levels.

31.3 The Committee noted the update and the development of the Research and Innovation Strategy.

32 EDI Framework and Agenda Update

Chris Chang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life) and Yvonne Howard, Director of Race and Equality presented an update on the progress and positive impacts of the EDI Agenda.

32.1 Key points noted were:

- vi. The annual data reports for staff and students would be carried forward to the next meeting in September 2023.
- vii. The team had been focused on collating data and reports for the Athena Swan submission in early September 2023.

- viii. The review of the Gender Expression and Recognition Policy was complex and necessitated engagement with multiple stakeholders, consideration of wide-ranging views and the protection of privacy to facilitate those staff and students who wished to transition. It was important to ensure that there was a single point of contact to update the University.
- ix. The 'Let's Talk' series had been launched to discuss equity on topics such as racism and neurodiversity. The aim was to start the conversation to address the issues that students and colleagues encountered that would lead to tangible outcomes.
- x. Six staff network groups had been re-established with a named UEB sponsor for each group. The network groups were: Neurodiversity; Parent and Carers; Women; LGBTQ+; Multicultural; and Disability.
- xi. An accessibility audit had been conducted to inform the Estates Masterplan to create an inclusive environment. The University would consider specific requirements such as breast-feeding space and gender-neutral toilets.
- xii. EDI considerations would be embedded in the Student Services review to connect the provision of services into a new Student Life team and ensure that students are supported fully for their specific needs. It was important to involve the local community in student support.
- xiii. The draft submission for Athena Swan would be submitted to Advance HE shortly for feedback. The focus until the final submission in September would be on the action plan and for teams to own the actions and to refine the submission accordingly.
- xiv. Engagement across the University was positive and schools and departments would seek to attain their own Athena Swan award within the next three years.
- xv. Specific issues to address in the action plan included: addressing bullying and harassment; dealing with inappropriate behaviour; maternity leave arrangements; and promotion to Professor and Associate Professor, in particular for women.
- xvi. The Aurora Programme is a leadership development initiative for women in collaboration with Advance HE. On completion, promotion rates for women in the University were favourable. It was acknowledged that everyone had different learning needs and Aurora provided a learning pathway for leaders alongside iLEAD (Inclusive Leadership, Exploration and Discovery), which superseded the Inclusive Leadership Programme.

32.2 In discussion, it was noted that:

- i. The University would report internally on the ethnicity pay gap from 2024 and modelling the number of women in Professor roles and the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in senior roles would provide data to identify what was necessary to narrow the gap.
- ii. It was important to provide career support and progression to Associate Professor and Professor roles including application submission.
- iii. The aim of the University would be to achieve a silver award for Athena Swan.

32.3 The Committee noted the update and that the EDI Agenda was integral to the work of the University through encouragement and engagement.

33 Indicative Committee Business

33.1 Committee noted the 2023 indicative programme of work to the end of 2023.

33.2 There were two items to be carried forward to the next meeting in September and two new reports to be received in September in addition to the standing agenda items.

Action: Senior Governance Officer

33.3 There would be an update on student wellbeing and disability support in November.

34 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 27 September 2023.

Confirmed committee dates for 2023:

- 30 November 2023

The dates for 2024 were to be confirmed.

35 Staff Representative Recruitment

The Chair provided an update on the progress of the recruitment of the staff representative on the committee to replace Kim John-Williams, who had left the University. There had been five expressions of interest and the new appointee would join the committee at the meeting in September.