

Board of Management

MINUTES of the MEETING of the HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 10 March 2022

PRESENT:	Innis Montgomery, Chris O'Neil, Sally Blyth, Samantha Cribb, Gillian Galloway, Jane Rhodes
CHAIR:	Innis Montgomery
APOLOGIES:	Professional Development Manager
ATTENDING:	HR Manager Assistant Principal – Student Experience and Quality Assistant Principal – Operations and External Relations Board Secretary Robin Turnbull, Anderson Strathern
OBSERVER:	Dee Bird

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new members.

There were no declarations of interest noted.

1. MINUTES

The Chair highlighted an omission within the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2021 where the date of the next meeting within item 15 had been excluded.

Decision: Pending the above amendment; the Meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 11 November 2021 was **AGREED** as a correct record and was **APPROVED**.

2. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST

- Board Induction Training – The Board Secretary advised that the new induction pack would be updated and inductions for new members of the Board of Management would be carried out within April 2022.
- Employee Relations – the Principal provided the Committee with a verbal update advising that an offer of Health and Safety training for union representatives had been raised during the JCC. The Committee noted that this offer will be further promoted to union representatives.

3. TALENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

The HR Manager provided the Committee with a verbal update on our Talent Management Framework highlighting that:

- Our HR Consultant has prepared the Talent Management Strategy.
- Succession planning will be prioritised within the strategy.
- A contractual probationary period has been prepared for all new employees and will be introduced to identify potential talent at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff will be able to utilise the UHI Coaching Toolkit.

The Committee noted that these initiatives will now commence the approval and consultation process, with a view to concluding this by the end of this academic year.

The Committee questioned the linkage between the contracted probationary periods and succession planning within the Framework and the HR Manager advised the Committee that this would sit behind the mechanisms which will be in place to support members of staff and that by managing this at the very first stages of employment that we will be able to recognise talent early within a supportive framework.

Action: The Assistant Principal – Operations and External Relations will provide the Committee with a copy of the Talent Management Framework presentation.

The Committee discussed the 6 key focuses which sit behind the Talent Management Framework with the HR Manager highlighting that the induction and engagement area of the framework will drive our succession planning and will play an important part in identifying staff needs. The Committee welcomed the proactive approach this framework and the Distributed Leadership Model will bring to the College.

4. NATIONAL BARGAINING/JOB EVALUATION

National Bargaining

The HR Manager spoke to her report providing the Committee with an update on the latest developments in pay and conditions in relation to national bargaining in respect of Academic Staff Pay Claim 2021/22, the EIS/FELA pay dispute and the Professional Services Staff Pay Claim 2021/22.

The Committee discussed the reasons behind the rejection of the national bargaining offers, noted the dates which any pay claim would be backdated to, the potential for industrial action and the amount which had been budgeted for in respect of pay increases.

The Committee discussed the sector wide considerations with regards declining student numbers, declining demographic and the prospect of compulsory redundancies and noted that Inverness College are continuing to develop our work-based learning offering and our Curriculum Plan review to combat the impact of these sector wide concerns.

Job Evaluation

The HR Manager provided the Committee with a background to the National Job Evaluation Process highlighting the expected timescales for completion of first and second scoring was December 2021.

The Committee was advised that the Project Team are currently working with the Job Evaluation Working Group to conduct the final quality assurance checks prior to presenting the outcomes from the evaluation process to College HR Departments.

The Committee noted that there has been a delay to ranking being released due to final quality checks being completed. The Committee was advised that no update on timescales had been provided to the Sector.

5. HYBRID WORKING

The Assistant Principal – Operations and External Relations advised the Committee that we have now rolled out our Hybrid Working pilot which commenced on 28 February 2022. The Committee noted that this pilot had been developed and published in May 2021 but that the roll out had been delayed due to the successive variants of Covid-19 and the ongoing guidance from the Scottish Government on Working from Home.

The Committee noted that a Working Group has been set up to support the roll out of the pilot and that this group will contribute to how we make better use of our Estate.

The Committee discussed how the sector is addressing hybrid working, the impact on staff mental health both in respect of working from home and returning to Campus, the impact of hybrid working on the student experience and prospective changes to the estates and impact to capital budgets.

Dee Bird left the meeting.

Jane Rhodes left the meeting.

The Committee welcomed Manager's ability to set the parameters and expectations for their team and noted the aim of 30% occupancy in the upcoming months.

The Committee commended this thorough piece of work and gave their thanks to the Assistant Principal – Operations and External Relations, the HR Manager, and the HR Team for all their work on the pilot.

Dee Bird joined the meeting.

6. REPORT TO COMMITTEE ON CONFIDENTIAL HR MATTER

A confidential discussion on a HR matter took place (CN-01HC-032022).

7. SHARED FINANCE SERVICE

The HR Manager spoke to her report providing the Committee with an update on the Shared Finance Service highlighting:

- The development of the shared finance service model.
- The appointment of two senior roles within the finance team namely the Assistant Principal – Finance and Audit and the Finance Manager.
- The next phase of changes with 4 posts having been newly evaluated based on the updated job descriptions and role responsibilities. The Committee noted that these roles were subject to JCC consultation and was advised that in November 2021 formal JCC meetings were convened to commence consultation with local support staff Trade Union Representatives at both Colleges. The Committee noted that during November and December 2021 open finance team meetings were convened with all Shared Service Finance Staff from both Colleges and local Trade Union representatives in attendance.
- That following interviews we have appointed to the roles of Shared Service Accountant, Shared Service Finance Team Leader, and Shared Service Payroll Team Leader.
- That job descriptions for the Senior Finance Assistants, Finance Assistants and Trainee Finance Assistant have been developed and have been subject to discussions within Staffing Resource Panel meetings. The Committee noted that following completion of the job descriptions these roles will then be subject to job evaluation.

The Committee was provided with an update in respect of a formal dispute which had been raised by unions in relation to this matter and noted that as we have sought legal advice and followed this advice that there has been no failure to consult on the development of the Shared Finance Service and that there has been no reduction in the number of roles and no redundancies are planned as part of this process. The Committee noted that the Chair of the Board of Management has been involved in meetings with the unions over this issue and has reiterated our commitment to working with unions to agree this process.

The Audit Chair provided the Committee with an update to the observations made during the private session with the External Auditors on 08 March 2022 which had raised concerns with regards the resources available within the Finance Team and the pressure which senior members of the team were under. The Committee welcomed that the final stages of this process had begun and noted the importance of the Shared Finance Service to both Colleges but again highlighted their concerns over capacity within the service.

Action: A meeting with the Chair of the Board of Management, Audit Chair, Finance and General Purposes Chair and Principal to be set up to further assess the role of the Shared Finance Service and further convergence work.

8. EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

Robin Turnbull joined the meeting.

The Committee welcomed Robin Turnbull, Anderson Strathern who provided them with an employment law update highlighting:

- Intended legislative updates with regards workplace harassment.
- Intended legislative updates to the UK Employment Bill.
- The UK and Scottish Government paths towards 'living with Covid-19.
- Extension of right to work checks being carried out remotely.
- Changes to the national minimum wage and national living wage.
- Increases to compensatory awards and redundancy payments.

Robin Turnbull left the meeting.

9. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Assistant Principal – Student Experience and Quality spoke to the Professional Development Manager's report providing the Committee with an update on:

- Support for professional learning and qualifications; highlighting the increase in applications for funding to attend short courses and conferences.
- The launch of a new Learning and Teaching Induction programme which now includes a focus on digital pedagogy.
- Delivery of the PDA Teaching Practice in Scotland's Colleges and the new UHI TQFE.
- Registration of lecturers with General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS). The Committee was advised that a UHI GTCS validation event took place in November 2021 and that whilst GTCS commended us on several aspects the overall feedback to UHI included several requirements which have yet to be clarified. The Committee noted that we continue to seek a positive outcome as part of the UHI verification process.
- The re-launch of the Learning and Teaching Review programme.
- Scottish Mental Health First Aid training.
- Digital Skills Training Survey.

The Committee noted that the Professional Development Team had begun to design the Annual Staff Conference Programme.

The Committee congratulated the Professional Development Team on the progress which has been made within the second quarter.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES – QUARTER 2 REPORT 2021/22

The HR Manager spoke to her report which provided the Committee with qualitative analysis of the key HR measures surrounding staff turnover,

headcount and FTE, leavers, starters, staff changes, PRD completion and absence.

11. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

The HR Manager advised the Committee that staff can now access additional mental health support from Able Futures.

Dee Bird left the meeting.

12. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS – CONFIDENTIAL

The Committee noted the contents of the minutes of the meeting of the JCC held on 09 November 2021 and the EDIC held on 30 November 2021.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday 09 June 2022 at 08.30am.

Signed by the Chair:



Date:

09.06.22