

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

STAFFING COMMITTEE

20/01 A meeting of the Staffing Committee was held on Tuesday 11 February 2020 at 2.00 pm in Room 101, Henley Business School

Apologies were received from Professor A Bell, Professor D C Berry, Miss M Cleaver, Professor C Harty, Professor O Kennedy, Dr A Laville, and Mrs J Rowe.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2019 were approved

20/03 Lecturer Unavailability Forms

The Director of Human Resources introduced _____, _____ and provided some background and context to this item. He reminded colleagues that in recent years, given the pressures with teaching space and the T&L timetable, a process was developed to make sure the teaching space was being most effectively used during the full teaching week – the assumption being that all teaching staff will be available to teach during the working week unless there are genuine and legitimate reasons (e.g. a reasonable adjustment made for disability-related reasons or there is a contractual flexible working agreement in place) for making a request not to teach at certain times.

_____ confirmed that in recent years teaching staff have been asked to complete a Lecturer Unavailability form if they were not available to teach on a given day / time (with priority given for those reasons stated above), and Heads of School were required to sign off the form before it was sent to the Timetabling and Room Booking team.

She indicated the process for the 2020-21 timetable had now been revised – only contractual Lecturer unavailability will be taken into account before

scheduling the timetable, and any completed forms will not need to be signed off by the Head of School. She stated that all other unavailability requests would be considered as soon as possible after the draft timetable had been scheduled, and indicated that the Timetabling team would use its best endeavours to accommodate such requests.

also confirmed that Heads of School are asked to let the Timetabling and Room Booking team know about teaching staff who maybe unavailable due to research commitments (e.g. on research leave).

The Committee recognised that in previous years Heads of School may have adopted different approaches when considering unavailability requests from their teaching staff.

The Committee were content with the process for the 2020-21 timetable, and thanked for her attendance at the meeting.

20/04 Pay and Pensions Update

The Director of Human Resources provided the Committee with an update on matters relating to pay and pensions, particularly the UCU industrial action, likely further action and related developments at the national level that may provide an opportunity to resolve the disputes.

He reminded colleagues of the 8 days' of strike action taken by UCU

He confirmed that consultation in respect of the 2020-21 pay round will commence shortly.

20/05 UCU Local Claim update

The Director of Human Resources reminded members of the committee of work being carried out via a local University and UCU Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) in respe

20/07 Annual Diversity and Inclusion report

20/08 Employment law update

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Advisory Services) reported on a number of employment legislation changes being introduced on 6th April 2020. These relate to:

Parental Bereavement Leave

This will give all employed parents the right to 2 weeks leave if they suffer the death of a child under the age of 18 or a still birth from 24 weeks of pregnancy. The right to leave is available from day one of employment and can be taken as one block or 2 single weeks up to 56 days after the death of the child.

She confirmed that Human Resources is currently in the process of updating policies and processes in relation to this new right. It is noted that the background to the legislation was driven in particular from parents in employment sectors with far less generous absence and compassionate leave arrangements.

Holiday Pay reference periods

The reference period to calculate a 'week's pay' for holiday pay purposes for those staff who work flexible and variable hours across the year will be extended from 12 weeks to 52 weeks. The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Advisory Services) indicated that this will only affect a very small number of holiday pay calculations as the majority of staff are not paid holiday pay in this way, but we are currently reviewing procedures where it may apply.

Lastly, there are requirements in terms of the information to be included in written statements, the majority of which are already covered in the University written statements. One however is that written statements should be “explicit about the hours and days of the week the worker/employee is required to work, whether they may be varied and how”. Current written statements do not provide this information although we capture working patterns as part of the recruitment and appointment process.