



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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Minutes of the Human Resources Committee

**Wednesday 10th May 2023, 2pm to 3pm
Online Via Zoom**

PRESENT:

Ms. Rachel Mathews-McKay (Board nominee, Stand in Chair)
Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Director of Human Resources)
Ms. Orla Cunningham (COO)
Ms. Louise Ryan (Chief Financial Officer's nominee)
Prof. Derek Nolan, (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering,
Mathematics and Sciences)
Mr. Andrew Duffin (Group of Unions Nominee)
Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green (Vice Provost / Chief Academic Officer's nominee)
Dr. Tomás (Eoin) O'Sullivan (Senior Dean)
Mr. Peter Donohoe (External Representative)
Ms. Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary)
Ms. Orla Cunningham (Chief Operations Officer)
Prof. Gareth Brady (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences)
Prof. Lorna Carson (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities
and Social Sciences)

APOLOGIES:

Prof. Ross Mc Manus (Chair)
Prof. David Shepherd (Senior Lecturer)
Ms. Sinead Mac Bride (Equality Committee Representative)

VACANT:

Undergraduate/Post-Graduate Student Representative

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Megan Josling (Human Resources)
Ms Eimear Reilly, (Deputy Director of HR)

Items for specific Board attention are denoted XXX

Section A1

HRC/22-23/34

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of 9th March 2023 were approved by the Committee for signing by the Chair via email and had been submitted to the 26 April 2023 Board.

Section A2

HRC/22-23/35

Matters arising from the Minutes

Action items from previous HRC meetings were reviewed by chair.

Section A3

HRC/22-23/36

Director of Human Resources Report

The HR Director thanked Rachel Mathews-McKay for Standing in as Chair for the May 2023 Human Resources Committee meeting. Afterwards, she provided updates on the following:

I. Dignity & Respect Policy & New Sexual Misconduct Policy Update

Final amendments are being made to the two policy documents following feedback from various committees at the start of the academic year. The policies will be brought to the next HRC meeting following presentations at Planning Group and EOG, once approved it will then proceed to Board in June. Policies are being presented to Planning Group to secure funding for the new roles. Funding for the training and communication campaign will also have to be sourced. IT Services, specifically the Web Design office are helping with a webpage to make the information accessible and easy to follow for students and colleagues.

II. Blended Working Pilot Update

The Blended Working Pilot was due to be reviewed this year.

However, the legislation around the Right to request remote working was only passed by government in January this year, and the Work Place Relations Commission has been asked to put a framework together to assist its application. This framework is not in place yet.

As a result, the HR Director is requesting that the Blended Working pilot be extended for another 12 months. HR are also planning to carry out a “temperature check” of blended working. A proposal to this effect will be brought to the next committee meeting.

A question was raised by a committee member regarding what the “temperature check” will comprise of. In response it was noted that this will be in the form of a questionnaire and will ask for some contextual information e.g., what is working, how is blended working being used in the community etc.

III. *Cultural Transformation Group Update*

The Cultural Transformation Group has spent the last year working on distilling cultural values for the University. While this is still a work in progress, the aim would be to roll out the values in the new academic year.

IV. *Senior Academic Promotions Process Review Update*

The Senior Academic Promotions process review has been initiated. The external lead on the project is Professor Bert Overlaet who is the convenor of the LERU CARE Group. There will be 3 phases to the review with the first phase underway in the form of engagement sessions. Four colleagues from each school will be invited to attend these engagement sessions.

V. *Reward, Recognition & Successful careers for Professional services staff (update)*

The initial draft report from the citizens assemblies has been compiled by the external facilitator. The HR Team will work on this report and its findings over the summer with the objective of drafting a proposal for consideration.

HRC/22-23/37

Deputy Director of HR Updates

Recruitment numbers have increased significantly with 22/23 figures having surpassed 21/22 numbers already. There is a focus on process improvement

with attention on pre recruitment engagement, building stronger targeted advertising, and providing advice to Hiring leads throughout the selection process.

The HR team has seen increase in volumes across all areas and the implementation of pay awards in March created a significant uplift in activity, with further pay awards in October, volumes and activity are expected to continue to increase. There is a plan being developed to adjust the monthly payroll instruction cut-off date to reduce risk associated with tight processing times. This will be communicated with the University community shortly.

ELeave rollout is continuing with new areas being targeted through the HR Partners. There is an expansion on the types of leave that can be captured on the system (e.g. sick leave, family friendly leave) which will support the University in its data capture requirements for Athena Swan.

Research nominations forms project is ongoing with testing of a new online form with two areas underway. This form is being provided through Flowforma. The objective of the online form is to reduce administration time for all stakeholders involved. Once testing is concluded a fuller pilot of these forms will take place in June with a roll out planned for the new academic year.

Section B1

Oversight of Policy Matters

HRC/22-23/38

B1.1 Junior Academic Promotions – Amendment for Consideration and Approval

Presented by Ms. Fidelma Haffey

The HR Committee were asked to consider and approve changes outlined to the existing Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor grade (Procedure No. 46a). It was highlighted that the changes were being proposed in response to recommendations that the Junior Academic Progressions Committee received from the Ad Hoc Appeals Committee.

The proposed changes included:

- (1) to remove the requirement from the existing policy for the Junior Academic Progressions Committee (JAPC) to give feedback on Accelerated Advancement given that an Assistant Professor may

only apply for Accelerated Advancement once, regardless of the outcome of that application.

and

- (2) to replace Special Circumstances with Personal Circumstances in Section 12 and Appendix 2 of the Policy and (2b) to insert a new line at the end of Section 12.5 to clarify for applicants that employment on a part-time basis does not of itself qualify as a personal circumstance.

It was mentioned that EOG considered and approved these changes to the existing procedure on 2nd May 2023 and the revised procedure will proceed to Board for approval after HRC considerations.

During discussion it was noted that the change in labelling from “special circumstances” to “personal circumstances” is very welcome as the terminology much more open and inclusive.

OUTCOME: The committee considered and approved the proposed changes to the Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor grade (Procedure No. 46a).

HRC/22-23/39

B1.2 Role Grading Review – For Consideration and Approval

Presented by Ms. Gwen Turner, Head of HR Strategic Planning & Process Improvement

The Role Grading Policy has been operational on a pilot basis since March 2022. As per Board approval, the policy was subject to review after one year in operation.

A review had been undertaken, collating feedback from staff, managers, unions and committee members. A survey had been sent out to staff as a component of the review with a majority of respondents in favour of role grading continuing. The committee were advised of key changes proposed through the review. It was stated that discussions have concluded with union representatives from SIPTU, UNITE and IFUT and that the Unions were conducting a ballot on the review, with a recommendation for acceptance.

Further notes from discussion include:

- a) Financial data which was included in the presentation by EOG recommendation should either be left out or robustly contextualised when put forward to board as promotions were present before role grading, and that this is not an additional cost to the University per

- se. Rather that this process aims to make sure that people are paid accurately for the work they do.
- b) It was confirmed that there is no pattern in the types of roles which have been submitted and re-graded. Detailed data cannot be provided as the data set is too small and could lead to the identification of specific colleagues.
 - c) Briefing sessions would be provided to managers and staff in the new processes.
 - d) Overall, the numbers of cases being submitted had been consistent, with applications generally being addressed within one month of receipt however, it was confirmed that there has been a recent surge in applications in response to the pilot coming up for review.
 - e) During the committee discussion, it was noted that role grading would need to be put in the overall context of a career framework which would include development and performance conversations which will help colleagues develop their careers
 - f) It was confirmed that the Head of Area reviews and signs off an application before submitting to the role grading committee.

OUTCOME: The committee approved the revised Role Grading Policy with recommendation that the finance slide is either removed or significantly contextualised before presenting to Board.

Section B2

Any Other Business

HRC/22-23/40

B2.1 HR Analytics Report – For Information

Presented by Ms. Gwen Turner, Head of HR Strategic Planning & Process Improvement

The committee were presented with the People Metrics Report for 2022 which had been brought to Board for Consideration and approved in 26 April 2023 Board. During the presentation Ms. Turner highlighted 6 key topics and their associated metrics including (i) Recruitment, (ii) Attrition & Movement, (iii) Fixed Term Work & Contract types, (iv) Promotion & Career progression, (v) Occasional Staff, (vi) Research Staff.

Further discussion points during the presentation included:

- The work of Working Group on Employment patterns and conditions will touch on some of the metrics brought forward in the report, for example, regarding casual pay. The working group is looking at

employment data across academic, research, professional and casual domains.

- Attrition is relatively low within the University and that colleagues were availing of job opportunities across departments and within their own departments.
- The Gender Pay Gap report will be run again in June and there is a plan to reach out to the University community to raise awareness and collectively come up with solutions to reduce the gap

Points and comments made by the committee included:

- a) Having a metrics report and narrative is a welcome data driven approach
- b) There was a question raised around the Core HR system and how it is providing the data we need to run these reports. It was noted that while the team are trying to maximise on CORE functionality for data there are also sources of supplemental data such as additional trackers and in house data.
- c) Regarding Research Assistants and Research fellows, a question arose around using the IUA scale. It was clarified that the IUA scales are guideline rates, that there is no obligation to use them. However, there is a strong case to use them as the scales are beneficial in providing transparency/clarity for individual while also creating standardisation and fairness through the system
- d) The suggestion was made to supplement the wording around promotions or to clearly signpost and define what promotion by way of progression means.

OUTCOME: The committee thanked Ms. Turner for bringing the HR Metrics Report to the meeting.

HRC/22-23/41

B2.1 Institutional Athena SWAN Silver application: For updating and noting

Presented by Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green, Equality Officer

In late 2021, Advance HE launched the new Athena Swan Ireland Framework which broadens out the scope of the Charter. It is a Higher Education Authority (HEA) requirement that each Higher Education Institution secures and maintains an Athena SWAN Award in order to meet our obligations under the HEA Compact and to be eligible to apply for research funding from Irish government funders (IRC, HRB, SFI, etc.). Since 2021, the European Commission also requires us to have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in place to meet eligibility requirements for Horizon Europe research funding. The Athena Swan Action Plan serves this purpose. Trinity's draft AS Silver

application has been through an initial review and is now making its way through the appropriate approval chains.

Previously, the focus was on academic staff only and took a gender equality lens, the new Ireland framework requires us to consider all staff and to report on our progress with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives across the grounds covered by Irish equality legislation. There is now also a requirement to report on how we tackle behaviours and cultures that detract from the creation of an institutional campus culture that is safe, respectful and supportive. We are required to present evidence driven SMART actions in our application that we commit to work on over the coming four years.

The committee were told there are also 2 schools working on their Athena Swan applications and that the full institutional application document is available for anyone on the committee who would like to read it. Finally, it was noted that the document is on its approval and refinement journey to make the 16 June submission deadline.

A brief discussion followed Dr. O'Brien Green's presentation and the following main discussion points were raised:

- That both institution and school level applications are ongoing as initially Athena Swan was a school level initiative which expanded to institutional level. To gain access to research funding the institutional award is paramount.
- The diversity data of the University is only accessible by the Equality Officer. It is hoped that a HEA data call will help close out some of the gaps from self-reporting on the Core system.
- The application opens a frank discussion around what initiatives have worked when working on the action plan, but also showing what might not have worked and how that will be addressed
- Investing in staff and their development is also on the action plan

OUTCOME: The committee noted the update presented on the TCD Institutional Athena Swan Silver Application.

Section C

Items for Noting

HRC/22-23/42

C1.1 Technical Staff Committee – Creation of Chief Technical Officer II and Experimental Officer, CRANN for Noting

Submitted by Ms. Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent

The HR Committee were notified that the Technical Staff Committee considered and agreed to the creation of two posts, one Chief Technical Officer II post and one Experimental Officer post in CRANN. The Human Resources committee were asked to note the creation of the two posts for onward endorsement by board.

OUTCOME: The Human Resources Committee noted the creation of the two posts. Mr Andrew Duffin's opposition for the creation of Experimental Officer post was also noted.

HRC/22-23/43

C1.2 Update on approval for Garda Vetting Policy - for Noting

Submitted by Ms. Fidelma Haffey, Head of Talent

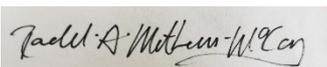
The Human Resources Committee were asked to note an update to the Garda Vetting Policy having previously approved the changes on 9th March 2023. EOG considered and approved these changes to the existing policy on 2nd May 2023. The reason why this came back to Human Resources Committee was to ensure the changes are approved through the approval process in the correct order. The revised procedure will now proceed to Board for approval.

OUTCOME: The Human Resources Committee noted the approval from EOG and noted their March 2023 approval for the policy update.

HRC/22-23/44

Finally, a committee member asked why multiple HRC minutes were submitted to the February 2023 board. It was noted that due to handover between new HRC secretaries the requirement for submission to board had been miscommunicated which was rectified with the submission of all outstanding minutes to board in February 2023.

No further items were raised, and the meeting was concluded.

Signed: 
Date: 13/5/23