



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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**Minutes of the Human Resources Committee**

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 2.30pm to 4pm**

**Trinity Boardroom, TBS**

**PRESENT:**

Prof. Ross Mc Manus (Chair)  
Ms. Rachel Mathews-McKay (Board nominee)  
Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Director of Human Resources)  
Ms. Orla Cunningham (COO)  
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. Lorna Carson (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities  
and Social Sciences)  
Ms. Sinead Mac Bride (Equality Committee Representative)

**APOLOGIES:**

Prof. David Shepherd (Senior Lecturer)  
Prof. Gareth Brady (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences)  
Ms. Louise Ryan (Chief Financial Officer's nominee)

**VACANT:**

Undergraduate/Post-Graduate Student Representative

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms. Megan Josling (Human Resources)

**Items for specific Board attention are denoted XXX**

## Section A1

**HRC/22-23/45** Ms. Rachel Mathews McKay was thanked for standing in as Chair for the 10 May 2023 HRC meeting and Professor Ross McManus was welcomed back as Chair to the Committee.

**HRC/22-23/46** **Minutes of the Last Meeting**  
The minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were approved by the Committee for signing by the Chair.

## Section A2

**HRC/22-23/47** **Matters arising from the Minutes**  
No action or follow up items from last meeting

## Section A3

**HRC/22-23/48** **Director of Human Resources Report**

The HR Director provided the following updates:

I. *Dignity & Respect Policy & New Sexual Misconduct Policy Update*  
It was highlighted that the draft Dignity & Respect Policy & New Sexual Misconduct Policy were on the agenda for the current meeting.

II. *Role Grading update*  
The committee were notified that since the 10 May 2023 HR Committee meeting, the Unions had conducted their ballots on the Role Grading Policy review. The outcome of the Unions' ballots was in favour of Role grading continuing.

III. *Reward, Recognition and Successful Careers for Professional staff update*  
It was stressed that the work on Reward, Recognition and Successful Careers is ongoing in the background and that the team will be working on refining colleague inputs over the summer. The HR Director mentioned that an email note will be sent out to the University Community informing everyone that this remains a priority.

*IV. Blended Working Pilot Update - Push out review for one more year*

The Blended Working Pilot note to postpone review of the policy for a year was brought forward in the current meeting. The HR Director noted that HR have partnered with Dr. Adele Grazi from TCD and Professor Finian Buckley from DCU to conduct research around the impact of blended working within the University.

A committee member asked whether the government bill regarding remote working had been passed. It was noted while the bill has passed it has not been enacted yet. The Workplace Relations Commission have been asked to write a code of practice on it.

**Action:** Present the Research proposal at a future committee meeting

*V. SAP Review Consultation Sessions*

The Senior Academic Promotions phase 1 consultation sessions are due to start 8 June 2023. Each school had the opportunity to nominate four representatives to join the consultation workshops. The workshops will consist of three half day sessions on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2023.

*VI. Junior Academic Promotions*

The committee were informed that the changes to the Junior Academic Procedures for Promotion, which were noted and approved at the 10 May 2023 HRC meeting, have not been able to progress to board yet. This is due to a request from IFUT for an additional change to the policy. Specifically, IFUT are seeking a change to the procedures for merit bar Review to remove the requirement that Assistant Professors must present for merit bar review in the academic year before they reach this point on the scale. A committee member suggested the wording could comprise of: “the colleague can elect to present themselves for review”. It was highlighted that while HR are the custodians of the Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor grade, the content is owned by the VP/CAO’s office. The group were notified that if another amendment is proposed for the procedures, that the HR committee will be asked to consider and approve the additional change electronically.

VII. *Working Group on Employment Patterns and Conditions (EPC) Update*  
The Working Group on EPC are currently reviewing “deep dive” quantitative data in domains of (i) Academic Staff, (ii) Research staff, (iii) Professional staff, (iv) casual payroll. These first working group meetings center around identifying where to focus further evaluative attention. Contextual data and qualitative insights will be collected over the summer months for working group consideration. The objective of the group is to develop a proposal towards the end of the calendar year on how potential employment irregularities can be counteracted within the University.

VIII. *HR Operations*

HR activity volumes are up 20-30% in all areas. The committee were notified that the note on the change of payroll cutoff date mentioned in the previous HRC meeting (HRC minute: HRC/22-23/37) had been circulated. The new cut off dates will help minimize risk associated with tight processing deadlines.

The committee were also notified that there had been a bank processing error in the May payroll. This occurred due to a system error in one of the banks which lead to an incorrect processing of the TCD instruction file on their part. As a result, some colleagues were paid twice and one TCD colleague was not paid. The colleague who was not paid has since received their pay and the bank is liaising with those who received double payment. The bank is working with TCD to explain the system error.

**Section B1**

**Oversight of Policy Matters**

**HRC/22-23/49**

**B1.1 Draft Dignity and Respect Policy & Draft Sexual Misconduct Policy for Consideration and Approval**

*Presented by Ms. Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources*

*Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green, Equality Officer*

Two policies were presented to HRC for approval. This included an updated Dignity and Respect Policy (previous version May 2016), and a new Sexual Misconduct Policy. The two draft policies had progressed partially through the approval process in October 2022 before being paused pending some

clarifications and identification of funding. Ms. Antoinette Quinn, Director of HR, presented on the revised proposals.

The Policy Revision was instigated by the 2019 Framework for Consent in Higher Education which directed Universities to tackle sexual violence and harassment. TCD's Action Plan to Tackle Sexual Violence & Harassment is based on 4 key pillars including institutional culture, institutional processes, policies, and targeted initiatives. The two proposed policies cover the Institutional Policy pillar while also supporting the University culture and the development of targeted initiatives (e.g., training). Key areas of change within the policies include: concerns can be addressed even in the absence of a formal complaint having been lodged; introduction of a screening panel; proposed introduction of dedicated advice and support staff; and the policies cover staff, students and non-college personnel.

Further details which were presented to the committee included clarifications within the policy documents such as (i) Ways of Addressing Concerns has been expanded; (ii) increased clarification on the screening panel, Members of which will include Junior Dean, HR Director and the Associate Vice Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; (iii) incorporation of clear Route Maps for both Students and Staff to guide them through the process; (iv) introduction of Cultural Assessments to address situations in specific areas of college where problems are believed to exist, although where there are no formal complaints. Also, further detail was provided regarding the extensive planning into the setup of the Dignity, Respect and Consent Support Advisory Service; a preview of the D&R webpage which aims to be clear and user friendly (IT services were thanked for their assistance with the webpage).

The HR Director also presented some information on Speakout data. This is the anonymous electronic tool for TCD staff and students to record issues around bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct. The data indicated that students predominantly disclose occurrences of sexual misconduct issues while staff disclose more instances of bullying and harassment issues.

#### Discussion points

- (a) It was noted Is it that the route maps shown at the meeting described the process/route to be taken if the complaint is about a student or staff

member. Also, that the appropriate route for an external/non college personnel person would be the formal staff route.

- (b) Some wording alterations were suggested by Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green for the Sexual Misconduct policy.
- (c) It was clarified that the Speakout Tool is anonymous thus individual cases cannot be addressed directly. However, the tool allows the University to identify trends which can be addressed through action plans and proactive planning to mitigate these circumstances
  - a. The incidence rate of reporting was flagged as a concern by a committee member. It was noted that unfortunately the incidence rate is not unusual for the university sector which is why getting the policies and their implementation including raising awareness and education is so important.
- (d) It was clarified that a complaint will first pass through the screening panel before any action is taken. This is to ensure the D&R and or Sexual Misconduct policy are the appropriate policies for the issue at hand.
- (e) It was noted that the screening panel is composed of senior staff members. In response it was proposed that while the panel might be high profile starting off, that this can be re-evaluated once the processes are well established.
- (f) It was highlighted that the Dignity, Respect and Consent Support Advisory Service will support and advise students and staff. The office location is still to be confirmed but will not be in HR, rather it will be somewhere discreet on Campus.
  - a. The unit will advise and support students and staff on possible resolution routes. If a complainant wants to stay outside the formality of the screening panel, the unit will help guide staff and students in the informal resolution route.

**ACTION:** Consult with Dr. Siobán O'Brien Green for minor wording changes to the Draft Sexual Misconduct Policy before submitting to Board.

**OUTCOME:** No objections were noted from the committee and policies were approved for consideration at board.

HRC/22-23/50

**B2.1 For consideration and noting of process to implement the decision of the Labour Court in LCR CD/22/131 (AO3 grade progression to AO2 grade) and to approve the committee composition**

*Submitted by Ms. Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations and Presented by Ms Siobhán O’Shea, Strategic HR Projects and Ms. Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources*

Procedure 47 was stood down on foot of the Board’s decision in 2016/17 to cease all promotions and progressions for professional and technical staff.

The committee were asked to note the process to implement the outcome of the Labour Court in LCR CD/22/131 to apply the recommendation for providing a mechanism for those staff on the AO3 grade on 14 Oct 2022 to be assessed for progression to AO2 grade. As it’s a ‘continuation’ of Procedure 47 for those staff in AO3 posts on 14 Oct 2022, the process which is introduced should be as close to the previous process as possible. It is not proposed that procedure 47 in its entirety be re-established, only the part that provides for assessment of AO3 applications for progression to AO2 for this group of staff and to cease its operation thereafter.

SIPTU recently balloted their affected members on the Labour Court recommendation, which was carried in favour of acceptance. Other grades that have progressions are Library grades and Technical grades which were both historically addressed. This was by a Labour Court decision in the case of Library grades and a sectoral agreement in the case of Technical staff. There is no outstanding issue there. The Memo to HRC dated 23 May 2023 also proposed the review committee structure.

EOG noted and approved the item in their 30 May 2023 meeting. the HRC were asked to (i) to note the process proposed to implement LCR CD/22/131, and (ii) to approve the makeup of the review committee to be reconvened for the sole purpose of implementing LCR CD/22/131.

Main committee discussion points included:

- (a) There should not be a link between role grading outcomes and A03-A02 progression
- (b) An assessment/notification to all departments on the likely financial impact would be beneficial.
  - i. It was noted that HR partners are already working on notification on the numbers per area which are eligible for this progression and the potential financial implications
- (c) This progression pathway may assist addressing the Gender pay gap
- (d) A question arose around how this process will be communicated to the wider University Community
  - i. In response, it was stated that once the preliminary work has completed (such as the committee approvals and identification of those eligible for the process) that those impacted will be notified.

**OUTCOME:** The committee noted the process proposed to implement LCR CD/22/131 and approved the makeup of the review committee to be reconvened for the sole purpose of implementing LCR CD/22/131.

## **Section C**

### **Items for Noting**

#### **HRC/22-23/51**

#### **C1.1 Blended Working Pilot Policy Extension for Consideration and Noting**

*Submitted by Ms. Mary Leahy, Head of Employee Relations and Presented by Ms. Antoinette Quinn, Director of Human Resources*

The University introduced a Blended Working Policy on a Pilot basis in March 2021 to 31 August 2023. A review is due to be undertaken in 2023, however it was proposed that this review be postponed. Legislation on the right to request remote working has recently been enacted but has yet to be commenced. Part of the requirements of that legislation is for the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) to produce a Code of Practice to assist employers; this work is still in progress by the WRC. It was proposed that instead of a review a “temperature check” will be taken from employees and managers on the implementation of blended working in their areas. The committee were asked to note the extension to the Pilot Blended Working Policy to allow for legislation to be fully commenced and the WRC to produce the Code of Practice on remote working.

Main points made during discussion included:

- (a) A member commented that they had noticed through recruitment competitions that the most asked question is whether blended working was available. They noted that it suggests people are looking for flexibility and work-life balance when applying for new jobs.
- (b) A question was raised whether Flexitime will be reconsidered during this extension period as other public sector institutions may have re-introduced Flexitime. In response it was noted that other government/public departments have different policies. TCD's policy was written in the spirit that one size does not fit all. That is, that there is enough flexibility in the policy which considers that different arrangements work for different areas i.e., the number of suitable home vs office based working days, flexibility in start/finish times. That people can make flexible working arrangements, but that this does not cover Flexitime. The Group of Unions Representative objected to the point that we cannot offer flexitime while working remotely.

**OUTCOME:** The HR Committee noted the extension for the to the Pilot Blended Working Policy.

**HRC/22-23/52**

Ms. Rachel Mathews-McKay flagged that the 6 June 2023 committee meeting was the final HRC meeting. This is due to the restructuring of the Board and the principal committees. It is planned that the HRC committee will be replaced by a "People and Culture Committee". It was noted by the HR Director that draft Terms of Reference for the new proposed committee had been circulated the week prior to the final HRC meeting and that the Registrar and Secretary to College have started consultations on refining the draft ToR.

The Chair thanked members and those who have attended the HRC for their time and dedication to the committee over the past year.

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

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....