



**HRC 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 – DRAFT MINUTES**

**UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN  
TRINITY COLLEGE  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Human Resources Committee was held on Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2015 at 10.30am in Room 2026, Arts Building, College.

**PRESENT:** Mr Dermot Frost (Chair), Professor Sylvia Draper (Board nominee), Ms Louise Ryan (Deputy Chief Financial Officer), Professor David Ditchburn (Head of School of Histories and Humanities), Professor Eoin O’Sullivan (Head of School of Social Work and Social Policy), Ms Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), Mr Peter Donohoe (BMG, External Representative), Professor Gillian Martin (Senior Lecturer), Ms Sinead Mac Bride (Equality Committee Representative), Mr Sean O’Driscoll (Interim Director of Human Resources) and Ms Aveen Batt (Deputy Director of Human Resources).

**APOLOGIES:** Professor Linda Hogan (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer), Professor Clive Williams (Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Science) and Mr Domhnall Mc Glacken-Byrne (Student Union President)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ms Joanne Smith (Human Resources) and Ms Victoria Butler (Assistant College Secretary) for Item 30 only

**NOTE:** The Deputy Director of Human Resources and Senior Lecturer were not present for items 28-34 below as they had retired from the meeting.

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

**Section A**

**XXX HRC/14-15/25 Minutes of last Meeting**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015 were approved and signed.

**HRC/14-15/26 Matters Arising from the Minutes**  
The Head of School of Histories and Humanities requested an update on the Action Item in relation to increasing the Relocation Fee. HR confirmed that there was no update to report at this meeting and that the action item will be carried forward to the next meeting at which time an update will be provided.

**HRC/14-15/27 Interim Director of Human Resources Report  
HR Strategy**  
The Interim Director of Human Resources presented the HR Strategy by way of PowerPoint presentation. The Chair confirmed to the committee that a formal

written HR Strategy document will be drawn up and circulated to the committee for approval in due course.

The committee welcomed the new HR Strategy but had some slight concerns that the deliverables and timelines were very ambitious and overall was this strategy achievable. The Interim Director of HR acknowledged these concerns and reassured the committee that HR is confident that they can deliver on this strategy.

The external representative commended the strategy, although agreed with fellow committee members that it is very ambitious but felt it was a positive and modern approach for HR.

The Chair welcomed the emergence of a Research Career Framework and the Head of School of Histories and Humanities welcomed the new Head of School induction process.

**ACTION: Interim Director of Human Resources to draft final written HR Strategy document and circulate to HR Committee for approval.**

#### **PMDS Update following Sub-Group meeting**

The Interim Director of Human Resources advised the committee that the subgroup met on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 to review a draft proposal for a revised PMDS. He thanked the subgroup for their participation and feedback to date and advised that a further meeting will be convened in due course to continue to work on a draft policy.

#### **HR Customer Service Project**

The Deputy Director of HR gave a broad overview of the project to the committee and confirmed that HR is implementing this service desk using existing resources. The Interim Director of HR acknowledged that HR needs to improve overall customer service and this centralised approach will help to achieve this goal.

Concerns were raised by the committee in relation to the expertise and capability of the team on the service desk and their ability to respond to the queries of the customers. The Deputy Director of HR confirmed that sufficient training will be provided to the team in relation to customer service and all relevant HR policies and procedures. The Deputy Director of HR provided reassurance to the committee that the approach to customer service being adopted is consistent with current best HR practice in many organisations and implementation is designed to improve the level of service to all customers of HR.

#### **Mentoring**

The Interim Director of Human Resources presented a paper to the committee in relation to Mentoring for Early Career Academics. A review of the University's Academic Mentoring programme was undertaken in 2014 and the HR committee was asked to note the recommendations.

Concerns were raised by the committee in relation to the number of different mentor programmes ongoing across college and the need to have a consistent approach.

The Deputy Director of HR highlighted the challenge HR have in getting staff to act as Mentors and would encourage all members of the committee to ask their staff to get involved with mentoring.

The Head of School of Histories and Humanities made a suggestion that Heads of School who are coming to the end of term could be approached and asked to mentor.

Following a query from the external representative in relation to training, the Deputy Director of HR confirmed that training is provided to all new mentors.

The Board nominee referred to the Ussher Scheme and the obligation to nominate mentors at the stage of application for the post forced the Schools to have a mentor selected prior to advertising a post and reference to this mentor was included in the job advertisement. She would recommend that this approach is applied for all academic posts in college.

**ACTION: Where possible, reference to a mentor should be included in the job specification when advertising a post.**

#### **Dashboard**

The Interim Director of HR presented the HR dashboard to the committee for information purposes only. The committee commended the presentation of the data and asked could they circulate further if required and the Interim Director of HR agreed.

#### **XXX HRC/14-15/28 Revised Maternity Leave Policy**

The committee were broadly in favour of the revised maternity leave policy but requested some minor changes to the wording including the use of the word “confinement” and replace “female Staff” with “all staff”. The Academic Secretary requested that the language used in the paragraph on Breastfeeding is reviewed to ensure it is up to date.

Some members of the committee felt that a lead in period of 26 weeks continuous service before maternity benefit is available was still very generous and suggested that it should be 1 year. However, the committee agreed to the 26 weeks lead in period.

The Head of School of Social Work and Social Policy questioned if this new policy was applicable to new and existing staff and the Interim Director of HR confirmed that it would be applicable to all employees. It was agreed that the policy would be applicable to new staff from the date of approval by Board, however it would only come into effect for existing staff 26 weeks after this date.

#### **ACTION:**

**HR Services Manager to update the policy and circulate to the committee for review and final approval. Once approved, HR to send final procedures to Board.**

**XXX HRC/14-15/29 Payment of Professional Subscription Policy for Administrative Staff**

The Interim Director of HR presented the new policy that has been created as a result of a C&AG audit recommendation and is applicable to all Professional, Administrative and Support Staff. The Academic Secretary queried the list of Eligible Professional Subscriptions and how it was derived. The Deputy Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the HR Services Manager conducted focus groups to identify subscriptions that were mandatory for Professional, Administrative and Support Staff. It was acknowledged that some departments require staff to have a subscription with other Professional Organisations / Associations but it was agreed that these were optional subscriptions and not mandatory. The policy was approved by the committee with no recommended changes.

**ACTION: Policy to go forward to Board for approval.**

**HRC/14-15/30**

**Employee Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy**

Following a recommendation by the Provost to review the existing alcohol policy for staff, the Assistant College Secretary presented a new policy *Employee Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy* that will replace the existing policy titled *Alcoholism Programme*.

Overall the committee felt the policy was too comprehensive and would recommend a more condensed version. Specifically, the committee requested the following amendments:

- Remove the “Specific Organisations” listed as part of Appendix 1 and refer them to the College Health Centre for advice and a list of support services.
- Section 1.1: remove the sentence “reception scheduled for early evening”.
- Recommend that the guidance notes for alcohol intake are removed.

The Academic Secretary asked if this policy was aligned to the new College Alcohol Policy for Students approved by Board and the Assistant College Secretary confirmed that it was.

The Equality committee representative has a number of suggested amendments and it was agreed that she would work with the Assistant College Secretary and the Employee Relations Manager to amend this draft policy.

**ACTION: Equality committee representative, the Assistant College Secretary and the Employee Relations Manager to amend this draft policy and revert to the committee with an updated version for approval.**

**Section B**

**HRC/14-15/31**

**Equality Committee**

The Equality Committee Representative advised the committee that the equality officer is working in conjunction with the Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer and the Chair of the equality committee on a report on gender equality across all academic and administrative grades in relation to recruitment, promotion and retention. This report will be brought to board and it is expected that recommendations may arise that will impact Human Resources including the

introduction of exit interviews. The Equality Committee Representative will revert to HR on this item if this recommendation is proposed.

**HRC/14-15/32**

**HRC Sub-Committee activity summary**

The HR sub-committee activity log was noted. An amendment to the record for the Secretarial, Executive/Senior Officer, Executive progressions and promotions committee membership was requested as follows:

- Include the Academic Secretary's nominee Ms Roisin Smith (Quality Officer)
- List the Chief Financial Officer's nominee Ms Louise Ryan (Deputy Chief Financial Officer)

**ACTION: HR to update the sub-committee activity log**

**XXX HRC/14-15/33**

**Any Other Business**

**Professional, Administrative and Support Appointments – Contract Type**

Members of the committee were dissatisfied with the approach that has been implemented whereby appointment to Professional, Administrative and Support roles may only be on a fixed term basis.

Discussion on this item included the following concerns;

- Ability to attract and retain high calibre talent
- Perception of unfair treatment toward staff in non-academic roles
- Majority of staff likely to be affected by this are female, it could be perceived as being potentially discriminatory

The committee queried the provenance of this directive. During discussion, the following responses were offered by way of explanation;

- Fixed term contracts are a pragmatic solution when an organisation is experiencing a reduction in funding
- A view within the University that fixed term contracts assist in managing the probation process for new staff

The Deputy Director of HR acknowledged that there had been a problem in the past with the management of probationary processes, however, since the appointment of a manager in HR with a dedicated focus in the area significant process improvements have taken place.

The committee expressed concerns that this change had not been presented as a change in policy to the committee as would normally be the case for employment related policies.

**ACTION: Chair of the committee to raise this item at the next Board meeting and report back to the HR Committee on any developments**

**Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Committee**

The Chair advised the committee that the Registrar has requested that HR Committee review and update the current Terms of Reference.

**ACTION: Chair and HR to update the Terms of Reference and circulate to the committee for approval.**

**Partnership Committee**

The Interim Director of HR noted that the partnership committee no longer exists as a sub-committee of the HR committee and recommended that this committee is re-established and/or a trade union representative join the HR committee.

**ACTION: Interim Director of HR to follow up with the Registrar on this item.**

**Clinical Academic Titles**

The Interim Director of Human Resources advised the committee that a paper has been prepared in relation to amending the Clinical Academic Titles and asked could we reconvene this meeting to review the amendments. The Chair requested that the paper is circulated by email to the committee in the first instance for review and comments. A meeting will be convened if required but preference would be to agree the changes by email.

**ACTION: HR to forward the paper to the committee for review and comments. If agreed, final paper will go forward to Board and Council.**

**HRC/14-15/34**

**Date of Next Meeting**

The Human Resources Committee schedule for 2015/2016 will be:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Thursday 22nd October 2015	11am – 1pm	Board Room, House 1
Thursday 11th February 2016	11am – 1pm	Board Room, House 1
Thursday 21st April 2016	11am – 1pm	Board Room, House 1

**SIGNED:** .....

**DATE:** .....