



**Trinity College Dublin  
The University of Dublin**

**DRAFT Minutes of the Human Resources Committee**

**Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, 2pm – 4.25pm**

**West Theatre Board Room, Front Square, College Campus**

**PRESENT:** Prof. Deirdre Ahern (Chair), Ms. Antoinette Quinn (Director of Human Resources), Ms. Patricia Callaghan (Academic Secretary), Prof. Celia Holland, (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics and Sciences), Ms. Stephanie Farrell (Board nominee), Ms. Victoria Butler (Equality Committee Representative), Ms. Breda Walls (nominee of the Chief Operations Officer) and Mr. Peter Donohoe (External Representative)

**APOLOGIES:** Prof. Kevin Mitchell (Senior Lecturer), Mr. Michael Slevin (Vice Provost / Chief Academic Officer's nominee), Prof. Catherine Comiskey (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences), Prof. Anne Fitzpatrick (nominee of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Histories and Social Sciences), Ms. Áine Mulcahy (Chief Financial Officer's nominee) and Graduate Students Union President.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ms. Fidelma Haffey (Senior Talent Manager) for item 12  
Ms. Gwen Turner (Head of Strategic Planning and Process Improvement) for item 13  
Prof. Christopher Morash (Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer) for items 14 and 15  
Mrs. Cathy Gibson (HR Partner for the Academic Services Division) for items 14 and 15  
Ms. Paula Kennedy-Hogan (Deputy Director of Human Resources) for all items  
Ms. Cora Mullins (Human Resources) for all items

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

**Section A**

**HRC/18-19/09 Minutes of Last Meeting**

A member of the Committee observed that a concern raised under AOB on permanent contracts and contracts of indefinite duration for academic staff of long-standing was not reflected in the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018 meeting. A further discussion ensued on the topic.

The Director of HR advised that changes were made on foot of a guidance note received from the Department of Education and Skills on the preference for issuing fixed-term contracts to staff in the Administrative, Library, Technical and Support Grades up to and including Administrative Officer 1 and equivalent grades.

Posts in the grades noted above can now be advertised and filled on a permanent basis in instances where the need for the post is identified as permanent and ongoing, in the Divisions.

In respect of historical posts reviewed on an individual basis, as put forward by the respective Unions, the same consideration was applied. If the post was deemed permanent and ongoing, the post holder was confirmed as being permanent following the assessment.

It is envisaged that posts in the same grades referred to above may also shortly be filled on a permanent basis where the need for the post is identified as permanent and ongoing in the Faculties. Posts in new and developing areas will continue to be advertised and filled on the same basis as currently.

For Researcher staff, the Director of HR confirmed that a contract of indefinite duration issues by operation of the Fixed Term Workers Act in circumstances where the employment satisfies the requirements.

The Director of HR indicated that incoming and existing Assistant Professors on the tenure track who meet all the requirements set each year under the policy will be converted to a permanent contract on completion of a successful tenure.

**ACTION:** The Director and Deputy Director of HR advised the Committee that they would bring statistics and further information concerning academic permanent and contracts of indefinite duration to a future meeting for information purposes.

#### **HRC/18-19/10**

##### **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chair advised the Committee that Board approved the Meeting Hours Policy, which has been communicated to Committees and will be fully operational from the commencement of the next academic year.

**ACTION:** The necessary arrangements will be made for the policy to be published on the relevant University website(s).

#### **HRC/18-19/11**

##### **Director of Human Resources Report**

The Director of HR updated the Committee on the progress of key projects and the next priorities in the three main areas of focus under the HR Strategy.

### **1. Talent Management and Performance**

The Leadership Development and the Management Development Programmes will progress to the next meeting of the Committee, pending EOG approval in the interim. In addition, a Researcher Development Programme and an Early Career Academic Development Programme will progress to the Committee at a future date once completed.

### **2. Efficient Administration**

The Committee was informed that the processes in the Recruitment, Payroll and Pensions Sections were being currently reviewed and streamlined. The revised Recruitment Procedures will progress to the next meeting, pending EOG approval in the interim.

The recent upgrade to the Core Platform along with another upgrade in the near future is envisaged to enable the possibility of a Manager Toolbox being deployed which will be necessary to facilitate online Performance Management, Time and Attendance, form processing and Probations.

It was noted that data management, especially within HR, is becoming increasingly important with specific information now being required for Athena Swan application process and accreditation.

### **3. Staff Engagement**

As part of the upcoming Dignity and Respect campaign, a number of focus groups from across all areas of the University community are currently underway.

The Committee was advised that wellness seminars and talks are scheduled to take place over the summer and the Online Wellness Portal available through the University's Employee Assistance Programme provider, Inspire offers a dedicated online resource where staff can access useful information, self-assessment tools, articles, e-zines and much more.

The Director of HR advised of the intention for a staff engagement survey to be conducted with a view to moving forward with 'people first' approach in the future.

## **Section B**

### **XXX HRC/18-19/12 Draft Probationary and Review Procedures for Academic Staff**

The Committee was advised that the purpose of the review is to align Academic Probation Procedures with the Tenure Track Policy, the new

Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor Grade, best practice in Universities and employment-related legislation.

For Assistant Professors, the main change is a reduction of the probationary period from four years to twelve months. There is no change to the probationary period for Academics at Associate Professor and above.

Assistant Professors who have successfully passed probation may apply for accelerated advancement to the Junior Academic Promotions Committee ('JAPC') whenever they wish. There is no longer a requirement to present to the Faculty Review Panel.

The Head of School, who is responsible for the people management in their respective School, is also responsible for the probation review of all Academic staff in all grades.

There was an expression of concern about the move from a panel to an individual approach and the Head of School conducting probationary reviews for Academics with very specific disciplines. The Committee recommended inserting the sentence *'The Head of School may consult with the Head of Discipline, as required'* in section 5.3 - Probation Assessment on page 3 to remedy this concern.

It was noted that there is no appeal process in the probationary procedure. The Committee was informed that the same applies to the Probation Procedures for Professional, Research and Support Staff and advised that the relevant grievance procedure is available.

To ensure clarity in instances where the probation is not successful, the Committee recommended that the wording *'and feedback will be provided'* be inserted under section 5.3 – Probation Assessment on page 4 for the sentence to read *'the decision will be communicated to the academic staff member by the Head of School in writing and feedback will be provided'*.

**ACTION:** The Committee approved the Draft Probationary and Review Procedures for Academic Staff. The procedures, incorporating the Committee's recommendations will progress to the next meeting of Board for its consideration and approval. On receipt of confirmation of Board approval, arrangements will be made for the procedures to be published on the relevant University website(s).

### **XXX HRC/18-19/13 Career Framework**

The Committee was apprised of the Career Framework for Professional, Administrative & Support staff which is a foundation for effective personal and organisational performance. It centres on

‘activating talents’, the fourth goal in the Trinity Strategic Plan 2014-2019.

The key principles underpinning the Career Framework were explained to the Committee after viewing a promotional video. These include a cohesive organisational framework with fairness and transparency across the University, determining the requirements and value of a role before filling it and planning for the future needs of an area rather than basing needs on the past.

The Committee was advised in detail of the four elements of the Career Framework for their consideration. These were the Competency Framework, revised format & processes including job descriptions, salary spine with split of Executive Officer and the Administrative Officer 1 scales and the sizing of vacant posts, which will be done by staff in HR who have been trained professionally to do so.

The Career Framework was welcomed in general but a particular concern was raised about the impact of the split for existing staff on the Executive Officer scale. However, assurance was given that there would be no change for those staff who currently have scope to increment through the Executive Officer salary scale to the top point. The importance of bringing staff along with the Career Framework was also noted.

**ACTION:** The Committee approved the four elements of the Competency Framework presented to them. They will progress to the next meeting of Board for its consideration and approval.

**XXX HRC/18-19/14 Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor Grade**

The Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer informed the Committee that the purpose of the review was to increase transparency and provide clarity on procedures for the applicants and the Committee. It will also align with the Senior Academic Promotions Procedures for consistency of process at each level.

The key changes arising from the new procedure include the introduction of threshold scoring to mirror the Senior Promotions process. The JAPC will consider and interview for the Merit Bar review and the Final Tenure Review for Tenure Track Assistant Professors at year four. They will also consider Accelerated Advancement but it will be a paper-based exercise going forward with no interview.

The JAPC will meet over the course of three to five days in Trinity Term each year and carry out all reviews in a block period. Applicants will therefore know the outcome in approximately two to three months.

With the new procedure, all Assistant Professors who have passed their probation may apply for Accelerated Advancement, although they may only apply once whilst on that grade.

The Committee recommended that 'evidence of professional development in teaching and learning' be added to Appendix 1 under Teaching Measurement. It was also recommended that 'nominated' be used instead of 'appointed' under 'Note regarding members 7-9 of the Committee' on page 9 for the sentence to read *'these members will be nominated by IFUT/ASA in consultation with the Vice-Provost/Chief Academic Officer...'*.

**ACTION:** The Committee approved the Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor Grade. The procedures, incorporating the Committee's recommendations will progress to the next meeting of Board for its consideration and approval. On receipt of confirmation of Board approval, arrangements will be made for the procedures to be published on the relevant University website(s).

#### **HRC/18-19/15**

##### **Amendments to Tenure Track Policy for new Assistant Professors**

The proposed changes in the draft new Procedures for Progression within the Assistant Professor Grade require some interlinked amendments to the Tenure Track procedures.

The Final Tenure Review in year four will be carried out by JAPC instead of the Final Review Panel and the provision for the Final Tenure Review Panel to make recommendations for accelerated advancement is to be removed. These amendments were approved by the Executive Officers Group at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

**ACTION:** The Committee approved the amendments to the Tenure Track Policy for new Assistant Professors. The policy, as amended, will progress to the next meeting of Board for its consideration and approval. On receipt of confirmation of Board approval, arrangements will be made for the policy to be published on the relevant University website(s).

#### **HRC/18-19/16**

##### **Any Other Business**

The Committee observed a moment's silence as a mark of respect for the previous Chair, Prof. Richard Timoney.

#### **HRC/18-19/17**

##### **Items for Noting**

The Statutory Instrument from the Pensions Section, Human Resources was noted by the Committee. The only change from the existing rules arising from the SI is allowing members of the Model Pension Scheme who joined the Public Sector before April 2004 to retire at age 60 without a reduction applying to their benefit.

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....