

APRIL 2014

1. YOUR VIEWS ARE NEEDED ON WELCOME AND INDUCTION FOR NEW STAFF

For this month's Discussion topic, we would like to get your views on "Staff Induction" and the type of information and support that we provide to people when starting work in the University or moving to a new job in a new area. We are particularly keen to identify how things happen within the PSS, but we also want to hear your views on how we support new members of academic staff.

In particular, we want to identify how available and effective some of our University-wide documents, events and processes are, such as: the Staff Induction Checklist, the New Staff Information Booklet and invitations to attend University Induction Training or meet with Directors and the Registrar, Secretary and COO.

We also want to identify examples of good practice that exists within individual Directorates or teams

We would like to hear from new members of staff about how your own welcome and induction felt and what you wish that you had been told earlier. For those of us who have been here slightly longer, we would like you to cast your mind back - and try to answer the same questions.

The aim of the exercise is to judge how effective our current arrangements are and to produce some pointers for further action that can be taken forward under one of the work streams arising from the Staff Survey Action Plan.

Alison Wilson, Head of School Administration in the School of Law, raised the issue as a possible future Discussion Topic, so I have asked Alison to review the feedback that we receive from these discussions on my behalf. I will report back to you in a couple of months on what we discovered and how I plan to act on the findings.

You should send the feedback from your discussion to your Director who will collate the findings and return them.

2. THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE EMAIL DISCUSSION TOPIC

We received some robust and lively feedback to our Discussion Topic in February about the way that we use email across the University. The general feedback indicated some support for the results of the earlier research that email volume was an issue for those in senior roles and that poor email practice was a problem for many colleagues.

In terms of the specific – provocative – proposals that we asked for your views on:

1. There was very little support for the idea of one email free day per month
2. There was little support the idea of only 'ccing' when people were required to take action, but there was a call for guidelines to address the issue of "reply to all" and people "ccing" in order to "cover their backs".
3. There was support for guidance around maximum length of emails and 500 words seemed about right .
4. There was no support for banning emails between colleagues in the same office, but people should be encouraged to talk and use alternatives before resorting to email
5. Widespread support for some short training on the effective use of email, but this should not be mandatory

These finding have been discussed by the email Working Group, Chaired by Kay Day, Director of Faculty Operations in MHS, and will be used to inform a set of short University Guidelines and a campus-wide training programme that are being developed and will be available later in the year.

3. PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY CONFERENCE

The Board of Governors' Planning and Accountability Conference was held on 18 -19 March 2014 and covered a range of important issues. As usual, there was a detailed review of performance against the Strategic Plan and a valuable debate on the future strategic direction of the University, particularly around its ambition, focus and distinctiveness.

While no formal decisions were made by the Board, a number of important themes emerged around:

- the work needed to clarify and define our ambition to be among the world's leading universities (top 25)
- the need to develop the University's reputation and profile, both in the UK and globally,
- the role the University could play in the wider development of Manchester as a "second city",
- the need to develop the University's distinctiveness, especially our commitment to Social Responsibility,
- the importance of strategic recruitment and a performance-oriented culture in raising our quality profile
- the need to generate additional discretionary income streams to finance plans to realise our ambition

There was a general acknowledgement that the University had been rightly prudent in its financial assumptions in recent years and that there might now be an opportunity to consider the case for some significant strategic investment in some of these areas where a strong business case could be presented for the benefits that could be realised

A detailed Action Plan will be drawn up and presented to the Board of Governors to carry forward all the key strands of work identified above and I will report back on progress.

Thank you to everyone from the PSS who worked so hard to make this important Conference a success.

4. STUDENT EXPERIENCE INTERNSHIPS

The Directorate for the Student Experience is launching a new student internships programme for summer 2014. Most of the 160 internships in this pilot year will be based across the University and within the Library and its cultural institutions. They are designed to help improve the employability of our students, and thanks to a University Prize and Scholarship fund, all the internships will be fully paid.

The scheme, managed by the Careers Service, is aimed at undergraduates: a small number of First-Year students will undertake short, three-week internships, but the majority will be Second Year undergraduates in eight-week internships.

There are four types of internships:

- **Student Experience Internships.** Each academic School will have four interns to support the student experience by working on employability and welcome period initiatives;
- **University Project internships (ring-fenced for Widening Participation students).** Second Year WP students will be working on projects throughout the University. A university department which would like an intern would have to bid for one through a formal process.
- **Social Responsibility internships.** Internships based within charities and not-for-profits in Greater Manchester.
- **Q-Step internships.** A HEFCE/Nuffield initiative aiming to increase the quantitative skills of social science students.

There are ambitious plans to grow the programme significantly over coming years. For more information contact anne.milligan@manchester.ac.uk at the Careers Service.

5. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS AWARD

Our School Governor Initiative, a Social Responsibility Signature Programme delivered in the Directorate of Student Experience, has been shortlisted for the prestigious Guardian Sustainable Business Awards. These awards seek out "the most inspirational work that demonstrates innovation and impact in corporate sustainability". We are the only University to make a shortlist of 44 organisations that includes international brands such as Unilever, Tesco, Nike and Vodafone. More information is at <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/shortlist-2014-guardian-sustainable-business-awards>

6. NEW UNIVERSITY WEBSITE

Colleagues from across the PSS led by a team from the Division of Communications and Marketing have been working together for the past eight months on a project to redevelop the corporate pages of the University website to better demonstrate the University's distinctiveness and enhance our reputation.

The new website - which will go live on 30 April - will be optimised for use on all desktop and mobile devices and will have a new site structure and more intuitive navigation to improve user journeys to our key content. There will be new photography and design to reinforce the University brand and, for the first time, content will be optimised so that our pages will rank as highly as possible in search engine results.

7. MANAGING IN THE ROUND

The Staff Training and Development Unit (STDU) is continuing its highly successful "Managing in the Round" management development training course. Each programme consists of five sessions which cover: an initial briefing on the programme and 360 degree feedback process; a personal development planning workshop; and review sessions to help participants take forward their personal development. There is also a separate dedicated course for Senior Managers

To book or for more information please visit - <https://app.manchester.ac.uk/TMS55> or- for senior managers <https://app.manchester.ac.uk/TMS55A>

Will Spinks
Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer