

## THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

### STAFFING COMMITTEE

8 April 2020

*The meeting was conducted remotely via video-conference*

**Present:** Mrs Ann Barnes (Chair), Mr Michael Crick, Professor Danielle George, Dr Reinmar Hager and Ms Bridget Lea.

**In attendance:** Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell (President and Vice-Chancellor), Patrick Hackett (Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer), Karen Heaton (Director of Human Resources), Sara Sawicki (Employment Solicitor) and John Marsh (Senior Governance Manager) (minutes).

#### **1 Minutes of the previous meeting: 4 February 2020**

**Agreed:** to approve the minutes of the February 2020 meeting.

#### **2 Matters Arising**

**Noted:** an update on the University's response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic, and in particular:

- a) the majority of the University was currently closed (except for essential facilities), with teaching and research having moved online;
- b) while the majority of University staff were working from home, options were being considered for accessing the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in order to furlough those staff who were unable to work from home;
- c) Finance Sub-Committee and an informal joint meeting of Audit Committee and Finance Committee would consider the financial implications of the Pandemic, which were anticipated to include a substantial reduction in the numbers of international students at the University;
- d) dialogue with UK Government was ongoing. Fortnightly meetings with recognised trade unions had been initiated at the University. It was anticipated that possible sector-wide responses to the Pandemic would require formal dialogue with trade unions;
- e) Staffing Committee would continue to give full and proper consideration to any proposals notified to it to dismiss members of academic and academic-related staff on grounds of redundancy. The Committee would also continue to be regularly updated regarding activity to address the anticipated financial impact of the Pandemic on the University;
- f) as of 8 April 2020, one member of the University staff was believed to have died of Covid-19. The relevant Head of School was in contact with the family of the deceased.

#### **3 Report from the President and Vice-Chancellor: Fixed-Term Employees and those on Open-Ended Contracts with finite funding**

**Received:** a paper asking Staffing Committee to consider those contracts at risk of termination due to redundancy for the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021.

**Noted:**

- a) the reasons for the risk of redundancy were:

- i. the end of an individual's open-ended contract where this was supported by finite funding which was likely to cease or where the specific project on which they were working was coming to an end;
  - ii. the end of an individual's open-ended contract where this was supported by finite funding which was coming to an end and exceeded four years in duration and where there was no objective justification to refuse converting the contract to open-ended;
- b) that although 380 staff had been identified as at risk of redundancy for this period, it was likely that the employment of many of these staff would not be terminated as there were a number of potential alternatives to redundancy;
- c) the University would seek to avoid dismissal by reason of redundancy until the following actions had been pursued:
  - i. redeployment opportunities within the University;
  - ii. retraining of affected individuals where this was practical and reasonable;
  - iii. seeking extensions to the existing funding stream or securing alternative sources of external funding;
- d) analysis of the following key themes in relation to the paper's proposals:
  - i. relationship with the University Strategic Plan;
  - ii. financial considerations;
  - iii. impact of the proposed redundancies on activities within affected units and in other units within the University;
  - iv. consultations with affected Schools and units;
  - v. impact on the workloads of remaining staff;
  - vi. consultation with recognised trade unions.

**Agreed:** having given full and proper consideration to the issues presented:

- a) to recommend to the Board of Governors that it approves proceeding with the process outlined in the Contracts Procedure to deal with those staff considered to be at risk on open ended contracts linked to finite funding for the period from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021;
- b) to recommend to the Board of Governors that the University continues to take all steps outlined in the report to avoid the need for redundancy wherever this is possible .

#### **4 Report from the Director of Human Resources**

**Received:** a report providing updates on the following matters:

- a) the Contracts Working Group and ongoing collective consultation with the Trade Unions;
- b) the implementation of the Contracts Policy and Procedure (CPP);
- c) the number and nature of formal grievances, appeals and tribunal claims as a consequence of the implementation of the CPP;
- d) an overview of the analysis of the CPP outcome data;
- e) legislative changes which impact on collective consultation, individual consultation or the implementation of the CPP.

#### **5 Update for Staffing Committee (withdrawal of funds by Manchester BioGel Ltd)**

**Received:** an update regarding Manchester BioGel Ltd's intention to terminate its contract with the University for the Research Associate post citing financial insecurity, and recommendations for Staffing Committee regarding the holder of the Research Associate post.

**Noted:**

- a) the termination of the contract had placed a member of staff 'at risk' of redundancy;
- b) Faculties would be asked to identify potential similar scenarios, as it was possible that further instances of contract termination would occur due to the Pandemic;

**Agreed:** noting that decisions taken by Staffing Committee in relation to the Manchester BioGel Ltd contract would not set a precedent for future cases, and that the provision of appropriate supervision and support to the five CASE PhD students (who would continue to be supported by Manchester BioGel Ltd) would be verified, to recommend the following to the Board of Governors :

- a) that the postholder is served with three months' notice on their current contract;
- b) that the University funds the shortfall in the post-holder's salary once the revised budget takes effect, thus ensuring that they receive a full 3 months' notice.

**6 Additional business raised in the meeting**

**Noted:**

- a) an update on applications received for voluntary severance in relation to the Wolfson Molecular Imaging Centre;
- b) the Student Experience Programme had been paused due to the Pandemic. The associated Section 188 notice had therefore also been paused. HR colleagues would continue to engage with staff regarding voluntary severance applications in relation to the Programme.

**Agreed:** that in view of the need for the committee to consider staffing-related matters in response to the Pandemic, it would be helpful to retain the option to meet on 6 May 2020