

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

STAFFING COMMITTEE

6 May 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: 8 April 2020

Agreed: to approve the minutes of the April 2020 meeting.

2 Matters Arising

Noted: that there were no matters arising.

3 Update on the Impact of Coronavirus

Noted: an oral update from the President and Vice-Chancellor on the University's response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic, and in particular:

- a) a range of pay saving measures were currently under consideration;
- b) while promotion and grading review would take place as normal, it was anticipated that there would be a freeze on the 2020 pay award;
- c) staff recruitment would focus solely on a small number of essential strategic appointments.

4 Update on the Reduction in Roles in Radiochemistry (Wolfson Molecular Institute) and the Student Experience Programme

Noted:

- a) an oral update from the Director of Human Resources regarding the voluntary severance schemes for these two areas;
- b) all required role reductions in Radiochemistry had been secured via voluntary severance, and 46 applications for voluntary severance were being considered in the Student Experience Programme.

5 Voluntary Severance Scheme

Received: a paper requesting Staffing Committee to recommend to the Board of Governors the termination of the existing targeted Voluntary Severance scheme (VS), and its replacement with a University-wide VS scheme.

Noted:

- a) the establishment of the scheme represented an approach to saving staff costs at a time of great uncertainty and very likely loss of significant income in 2020-21 due to a marked reduction in international students impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic;
- b) major take up of the scheme was not currently anticipated, but it would be an important device, along with other voluntary measures in generating savings and thus partly offsetting

- the need for more radical measures which would be likely if the University experienced the predicted loss of student registrations in Autumn 2020;
- c) the proposed terms of the scheme were less generous for reasons of affordability;
 - d) approval of applications would be strictly at the recommendation of line managers and referred to the core budget holder for approval in each case;
 - e) it was anticipated that a compulsory severance scheme may need to be introduced early in academic year 2020-21, but that the need for this, and the scale of pay savings would not be determined until the University had more certainty regarding student recruitment and its income for academic year 2020-21;
 - f) appropriate communication and messaging to staff regarding the proposed scheme and related voluntary measures could maintain staff buy-in for action to address the challenges of the Pandemic;
 - g) although successful applicants would not generally be eligible to re-join the University or an Associated Employer in any paid capacity (including agency work) for a period of at least 3 years from the Termination Date, settlement agreements under the scheme would include the provision to re-employ individuals in the future on the basis that they paid back a proportion of their severance package.

Agreed:

- a) to recommend to the Board of Governors the termination of the existing targeted VS scheme and the introduction of a University-wide VS scheme subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions; **(Action: Chair)**
- b) to delegate authority to the Director of Human Resources to finalise proposals for the parameters of the scheme prior to consultation with trade unions and approval by the Board of Governors. The parameters to be informed by points raised in discussion regarding differentials in the offer to staff based on length of continuous service. **(Action: Director of Human Resources)**

6 Additional business raised in the meeting

Noted: communication and messaging regarding the University's forecast surplus for the 2019-20 academic year would helpfully clarify the significance of measures to conserve cash and delay expenditure in determining the surplus. University spending would increase once the campus was re-occupied, and delayed expenditure measures regarding capital projects and Long Term Maintenance were anticipated to lead to inflationary costs over time.