

UCU/University Negotiating Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 5 November 2018

Present: Dr Gregory Lane-Serff (G L-S) [in the Chair], Dr Lawrence Benson (LB) [for items 1 to 4], Professor Linda Davies (LD), Dr Kamie Kitmitto (KK), Professor Wendy Olsen (WO), Professor Luke Georghiou (LG), Patrick Hackett (PH), Karen Heaton (KH), Andrew Mullen (AM),

Apologies: Professor Philippa Browning, Dr Adam Ozanne

1 Welcome

Patrick Hackett was welcomed to his first meeting of the Negotiating Committee. As this was also the first meeting attended by LB and LD, colleagues introduced themselves.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2018

The minutes were otherwise accepted as a true record.

3 Matters arising

3.1 Academic Probation

It was noted that UCU had been sent details broken down by School for 2018 of cases where decisions had been taken that probationary lecturers in Humanities had been required to serve a fourth year of probation or where they had not been confirmed in post at the end of the fourth year. It was noted that of the 25 cases, 14 fell into a category where their confirmation in post was pending completion of the Faculty New Academics Programme (NAP).

WO suggested that in her experience some of the issues in completing NAP arose because events were sometimes scheduled at the same as teaching. This meant the Lecturer had to miss the NAP event and wait for a year to attend the same event.

It was agreed that this matter would be investigated with the Faculty NAP Coordinators.

AM

It was agreed that the same academic probation data would be supplied for the other two Faculties for 2018 with a breakdown by gender and ethnicity if possible. It was noted that this analysis was only helpful if referred to the potential pool of probationers in the same year by gender and ethnicity.

AM

University representatives noted that in some subject areas such as Economics, the time in which it took to meet norms and demonstrate the necessary progress in terms of research outputs was longer than in most disciplines and hence staff in those areas often served a fourth year. Whilst the University has initiated discussion with UCU about seeking to change the length of probation for Lecturers in some academic subjects, UCU raised concerns about such an approach. It was suggested that:

- Longer probation periods could mean that the University would suffer reputational damage which would put off potentially good candidates and persuade some current staff to leave;
- The University should recalibrate its expectation in these subject areas rather than extend the normal length of probation;

- It presented issues of equality of treatment with staff in these areas being treated less fairly.

In response, University members of the committee refuted that the proposal represented an issue of equality if the standards of output in terms of quality and quantity were broadly the same as in other areas.

G L-S suggested that one positive proposed change to academic probation, from UCU's perspective, was to start it from the date the employee joins rather than to count year 1 as the current academic year regardless of which time of the year they start.

3.2 M2020 and workload

UCU asked if, in areas where staff had left as part of M2020, the departures had created workload issues for staff remaining. Anecdotally, UCU had received reports from AMBS in particular that departures had led to increases in the workload of colleagues. LB cited issues in AMBS where he reported that over 30 staff from across the School had been asked to take on additional UG students in their role as academic advisers. Typically, current advisers were now being asked to take on 16 or 17 students rather than the normal maximum of 15. LB suggested that these measures had been taken in response to complaints from UG students who were finding it difficult to contact an academic adviser.

LB added that this along with greater use of PGR students as TAs to supplement UG teaching was having an adverse impact on student experience, notwithstanding that TAs do a good job.

LG responded that some of the turnover in AMBS could be attributed to normal churn rather than M2020 VS departures.

G L-S reported that in FBMH, though not attributable in any direct way to M2020, former FLS staff in the School of Medicine and Health believe their teaching workload is greater than other colleagues in BMH. Some staff had also reported to UCU that teaching load data is not transparent. The same staff also felt a sense of injustice because of a perception that colleagues in other areas were being promoted more easily.

It was agreed that the matters raised by UCU would be investigated further.

AM

3.3 Use of Unit Evaluation (UEQ) Questionnaires

It was noted that as requested UCU had received information about reference to UEQs in promotion processes. UCU had been informed that UEQs were required in Humanities as part of a range of data and information relating to teaching, but that there was no such requirement in the other Faculties.

4 General University Update

4.1 Augar review and future government policy on student fees and funding

LG highlighted that reports in the press over the weekend suggested that the Augar Review of post-18 education, which is due to make recommendations to the DfE in January 2019, will propose that UG tuition fees could be cut to a maximum of £6,500. Under this scenario, universities would face a cap on numbers and a large drop in revenue unless fees were otherwise made up. Any change may require legislation and, if that is the case, would not be implemented until 2020.

At the same time, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is reviewing the treatment and classification of student loans, which, at present, are not treated as public debt. It is thought possible that, by the end of the year, the ONS will recommend that the loans are added to the deficit. Under this scenario, the deficit would increase by tens of billions of pounds.

The Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer has reiterated the Labour Party's commitment to abolish student fees with no guarantee of revenue to replace the associated income. This would necessitate a return to student number capping.

It was noted that although the threats of disruption to the sector were potentially very significant, it was not at present possible for the University to undertake any firm scenario planning to address them.

4.2 Student numbers

LG reported that although the final position was subject to confirmation, the University's student number intake for 2018/19 was overall on target in financial terms.

PH noted that increases in pension costs and other operating costs already require the University to be more strategic in its deployment of staff to be more efficient as well as effective. If Augar results in the changes reported in the press, then that need will only increase and some difficult decisions will be required. Part of any efficiency drive is to do more with less.

WO responded that she was concerned that the University would expect staff to do more with less. She reported that discussions in which she had been involved as part of *Our future* suggested that staff already feel overworked.

PH replied that investments such as SLP and associated process changes are designed to make it easier for staff to do their jobs. PH noted that the University had underinvested historically in its IT systems and so this sort of change presented opportunities to make efficiency gains.

4.3 Estates Masterplan

LB asked why the University didn't stop building projects in response to this need to cut costs, particularly when the increase in distance learning would mean a reduced need for a physical campus. LB also suggested that the University use some of its cash reserves to put staff on fixed term contracts on to permanent contracts.

In response, University representatives noted:

- The University will aim to maintain and possibly increase its students registered on traditional study arrangements requiring physical attendance whilst at the same time developing its transnational students and distance learning through UMW. They are not either/or options.
- It was not true to suggest that the University is investing more in buildings than people given that around 54 per cent of the University's annual income
- Is spent on staff and that the figure had increased from 50 per cent in the last three years.
- It was not feasible or sensible to use reserves for recurrent expenditure.
- Much of the University's building programme had been either wholly or partly externally funded, for example, GEIC, Sir Henry Royce Institute, NGI, AMBS, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester Cancer Research Centre, Schuster Annexe, Square Kilometre Array (SKA II).

- The cost of MECD development will be significantly less than that of remaining on North Campus with the adaptations that would have required

LD suggested that the University should consider issues relating to longevity, common space and usability in designing new buildings. She cited the Hickman Restaurant in the Manchester Incubator Building as an example of poor design.

5 P&DR forms: FBMH expectations for research, teaching and social responsibility; performance management

GL-S noted that although he hadn't stipulated UCU's specific issues about the suitability of the P&DR form, he remained concerned that it was inappropriate for academics. In addition, he didn't feel it was framed in a supportive way and was concerned about the use of supplementary information, particularly in FBMH.

KH replied that two years ago the University and UCU had agreed changes to the form and process. The process had since been rolled out in phases using a basic online system. It will be rolled out to academic staff in 2019. The scheme had a single form, a Senior Reviewer role and the option for local supplementary guidance to be added at Faculty level. KH noted that the process looked back at the previous year's performance and considered future objectives in a supportive way that also took account of development needs and career aspirations. It was not a vehicle for dealing with any significant underperformance issues.

It was agreed that UCU would meet with KH to discuss these issues further.

KH/UCU

LD raised an issue regarding staff in FBMH on research contracts being asked to undertake teaching duties. Though it was recognised that this may be an expectation of research council and other funding bodies, it was agreed that the matter would be investigated further.

AM

UCU was concerned about the "expectations" directed at FBMH staff and also with an increasing number of academic staff in all Faculties being subject to processes to address purported underperformance. UCU was not clear what the basis is for these expectations or processes, since it was agreed "Research Expectations" (for example) would not apply at the individual level and the University has no established performance management process (although they are negotiating a Capability Procedure).

LG responded that while the Statement of Research Expectations (as agreed by Senate) did apply to all on contracts involving research, it was recognised within the statement that contributions could be made in other ways than publication, specifically through achieving impact.

AM noted that the absence of an agreed Capability Procedure did and could not prevent the University from seeking to address issues of underperformance through the existing Disciplinary Procedure as it had done for some time and using the same principles as included in the draft Capability Procedure. It was recognised that the Capability Procedure framed the issues of underperformance in a way that was less fraught and that the Disciplinary Procedure was not an ideal vehicle to address such matters. At the same time, the University couldn't have a moratorium on addressing issues of underperformance until the Capability Procedure was finalised and implemented.

UCU suggested that Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) to which some academic staff were subject included allocation of unreasonable volumes of work, assignment of work not previously required and unrealistic timescale for meeting targets. UCU also asserted that the University had undertaken not to apply research output expectations at an individual level.

Given that this matter had not been raised previously and that there were clear differences in positions and perspectives, it was agreed that further discussion would take place on the issues raised.

KH/AM/UCU

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) matters

Academic promotions

UCU asked when it would be sent the EDI data for the 2018 academic promotions round showing application and success rates for each Faculty by gender and ethnicity. It was agreed that UCU would be sent the data following its consideration by HR Sub-Committee on 27 November 2018 as part of the APR process.

Plans to address BAME representation

UCU asked whether any action plans have been developed to address issues of underrepresentation of BAME staff. It was noted that the University had an action plan at institutional level associated with its Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM) application. (It was noted that UCU had a representative on the RECM Working Group). There may also be separate actions associated with each of the Faculty's and PS's annual EDI objectives. These were currently under review. It was agreed that all the relevant action plans would be sent to UCU.

AM

Starting salaries

UCU requested information relating to average starting salary by gender and ethnicity at each grade for the previous year. AM undertook to investigate whether there was a recent report available and, if not, to check how long it would take to generate such a report.

AM

7 USS review

UCU asked if the University will be expressing its support for the recommendations in the Joint Evaluation Panel's (JEP) report and agree this gives a basis for establishing good pension arrangements for staff. UCU acknowledged that the University to share its response to the latest UUK consultation on the planned increases in USS contributions from April 2019.

PH replied that USS has stated that universities would have to take on more risk if there are to be changes to the current proposals and that cannot be resolved at a local level. Manchester's position is that it cannot take on more risk than it was carrying previously. It would nevertheless be preferable if a way forward can be found at national level that satisfies all parties.

8 Changes to Statutes and Ordinances (S&Os)

It was reported that there had been some confusion at a recent meeting with UCU where LD had raised the issue of the difference between the version of the S&Os being used for the negotiation against those now on the University's web site with a date of April 2018.

It was noted that the latest version on the web site had been updated in April to reflect a change to Ordinance VIII 1.(c) agreed by the Board of Governors in February 2018. This change was in relation to the composition of Remuneration Committee, following the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) guidance. It recognised that the President and Vice-Chancellor is not a member of the Remuneration Committee, though they “*may attend meetings of the Committee at the invitation of the Chair of the Committee, provided that he or she is not present for any matters relating to him or herself.*”

Other differences in the versions being considered may have arisen as a result of version control and this would be addressed as part of the ongoing negotiations.

9 UMUCU claim regarding Teaching Assistants (TAs)

It was noted that a meeting took place between University and UCU representatives on 31 October 2018. UCU had confirmed that it was *not* seeking to renegotiate the 2013 agreement with the University relating to pay, terms and conditions of TAs, who were mostly also PGR students, but was concerned about its application. Specifically, it raised issues about:

- Timeliness of issuing of contracts and payment;
- Lack of information provided about how payment relates to hours allocated for preparation, contact hours and marking time respectively;
- Lack of paid time allocated for preparation and marking;
- Payment for compulsory training.

The University had agreed to examine these concerns and to respond to them at the earliest opportunity, though it was recognised that it would take time to gather information about preparation and marking arrangements in each subject area.

10 Peer review of teaching forms

UCU raised the issue of the School of Social Sciences (SoSS) using indicative scoring for staff on Peer Review of Teaching forms, which was contrary to an agreement reached in 2017 not to do so. It was not clear whether this matter had been raised within the School.

AM responded that he was unaware of the use of scoring in SoSS and the reason for it, but was seeking to find out more and would contact UCU when he had spoken to relevant colleagues in the School.

AM

11 Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 25 March 2019 at 11.**