

UCU/UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 8 December 2022 (via Teams)

Present:

Patrick Hackett (PH), Registrar, Secretary and COO
Adèle MacKinlay (AMM), Director of People and OD
Andrew Mullen (ASM), Deputy Director of People and OD
Professor Nalin Thakkar (NT) [in the Chair], Vice President for Social Responsibility
Michael Platt (MP) [minutes], People and OD Talent Acquisition & Transformation Manager
Carol Platts (CP), Head of Employee Relations
Dr Simeon Gill (SG), UCU
Nicola Hutchings (NH), UCU
David Swanson (DS), UCU
Dr Umit Yildiz (UY), UCU

Apologies:

Dr Molly Geidel, UCU
Professor Philippa Browning, UCU

1. Minutes of meeting held on 18 July 2022

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters arising and Action Log update

AMM noted that the completed action log would be circulated after the meeting, but in the meantime provided a verbal update.

2.1 Civic Engagement/Social Responsibility

UCU will be invited to attend the Strategy Group from January 2023.

2.2 People and OD/EDI Strategies

AMM will send UCU copies of the current Year 1 implementation plan for both strategies, though noted that both were dynamic due to the process for their operationalisation (see also 3.1 below).

2.3 Sustainability

AMM would send an example of a senior colleague's sustainability target as stipulated in their P&DR record.

A discussion followed about the University's approach to sustainability. It was noted that:

- The University would be launching an initiative relating to lower carbon travel for business travel.
- Manchester's relatively low classification in the People and Planet league of universities based on environmental and ethical performance was surprising to the University's leadership given its radical goal to be zero carbon by 2038.
- The University believed that this ranking reflected that we are large, research-intensive university which operated a significant number of student residences.
- The University also believed that these factors placed Manchester at a significant disadvantage based on the methodology applied to the rankings.

- UCU suggested that the University might consider adopting a different approach to the issues by engaging with interest groups, including staff and students who have a more radical perspective on how we should address the climate emergency.
- It was highlighted that a multitude of stakeholders, including students, have a voice on the various committees and fora that shape the University's approach.

2.4 Disability Charter Marks

AMM noted that the University was adopting the Government's Disability Confident Charter which evaluated organisations at three levels from 1 to 3 with three being the highest standard. The University was currently accredited at level 2 with an ambition to achieve level 3 as soon as possible. Professor Jackie Carter has recently been appointed as the new Academic Lead for Disability.

UY suggested that the University should consider adopting the independent Disability Employment Charter and undertook to send details.

AMM agreed to consider and respond.

Action: AMM

2.5 Workload

It was noted that the University and UCU needed to finalise the terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group so that it could initiate its work.

2.6 ID Manchester

Responses to UCU's questions were being prepared by Diana Hampson and would be circulated as soon as possible.

2.7 Graphene

In response to UCU's suggestion that UCU's question as to Graphene was benefitting the University financially, it was noted that:

- The NGI received £250m worth of funding;
- UMIIF had overseen the founding of a number of spin out companies involved in commercialising Graphene.
- There were a range of applications and developments through the GEIC, including sportswear.

It was acknowledged that the University could perhaps do more to highlight its achievements in this area.

3. Update from Director of People and OD

3.1 People & OD and EDI Strategies

AMM reported that work had commenced on implementing the first year deliverables, and that she and Banji Adewumi would be holding a series of meetings with colleagues in the New Year to discuss progress and how the plans would impact on staff. There will be a particular focus on engagement with frontline staff through fora such as breakfast meetings.

There would be an update at the Board of Governors meeting in March 2023 with details of KPIs and targets being shared.

Consideration will be given to UCU's suggestion of inviting colleagues as observers into leadership team briefings / discussions about the strategies. These would be staff who do not hold leadership roles, but who comprise "rank and file" colleagues, UCU felt this would better display the commitment to broad engagement.

Action: AMM

3.2 People and OD service update

AMM noted that there had been a tactical service improvement workstream in place for one year with measures aimed at improving the speed and quality of transactional services. This included the recent automation of the PCM vacancy approval process as part of an initial stage to automate the staff recruitment life cycle. This has already reduced the time for vacancy approvals and for job adverts to go live.

3.3 Policies

It was noted that a revised policy update schedule would go to People and OD Sub-Committee in January 2023 with a number of policies due to be reviewed and a number of new ones planned. The schedule will be shared with UCU once agreed by the People & OD Sub-Committee.

Action: AMM

3.4 Recruitment

It was reported that the University was facing a number of challenges in filling vacancies at present with the vacancy rate at 10 per cent, which is more than double the historical rate. In addition, there are particular hotspots in ITS and the Strategic Change Office, amongst others. The University is acutely conscious of the impact on colleagues and service and is supporting these areas and others with new methods of talent attraction and measures to ensure we can fill roles as quickly as possible. UCU raised the need to ensure that the University remains an attractive employer, especially with these pressures on recruitment.

4. Future meetings format and location

It was agreed that all future meetings would be in person (or hybrid) as this helps foster a more productive dynamic and provides an opportunity for informal communication and engagement.

AMM noted that we needed to be alert to the possibility of excluding anyone from the in-person format. It was also noted that a second session was to be scheduled on relationship building between UCU and 'management' with the external facilitator already used for session one

Following a discussion about some colleagues' inability to attend in person meetings in circumstances where they have to isolate due to health conditions, ASM agreed to review our current guidance and practice in this area and get back to UCU.

Action: ASM

5. Health & Safety and Wellbeing

UCU raised concerns on the following:

- Adherence to recommended practice to schedule meetings between 10 and 4 while avoiding lunchtime periods;
- Colleagues do not know how or when to report work-related stress.

It was agreed that ASM would discuss these matters with NH, though the University would also look at its current arrangements for signposting the support available.

Action: ASM/NH

There was a discussion about the impact of the recent tragic death of a colleague in Physics. Recognising that a number of students and staff need some ongoing support, it was agreed that SG and AMM would talk further in order to understand how best to:

- Engage and communicate further with students and colleagues;
- In so doing, address any misinformation circulating;
- Deal with the issues as sensitively as possible.

It was agreed that this was a very sensitive matter and that the wishes of the colleagues' family had to take primacy in these circumstances.

Action: AMM/SG

6. Welcome event

It was noted that on the evening of 6 December there had been an in-person event with SLT members to welcome new staff. Approximately 100 colleagues attended. They were asked about their experiences of what worked and what did not work at the University; it was clear that the majority of colleagues attending felt a deep sense of pride in working at UoM.

It was agreed to consider UCU's request to attend further events of this nature and to share feedback from the event.

Action: AMM

7. Promotions process and documentation

UCU noted that it had reviewed academic promotion documentation and arrangements in each Faculty and had a number of observations.

- The appeals process is not currently fit for purpose and require immediate review and changes;
- Staff who sit on academic promotion panels have little to guide them in considering cases.
- There is inconsistent practice in considering cases at Faculty, School and Department level across the different areas of the University.

UCU requested that there is some consistent guidance and best practice adopted across the University and this is implemented as soon as possible.

AMM noted that there were already plans to review academic promotions policy and processes and that she and ASM would meet with UCU separately to seek to agree a way forward.

It was noted that there were established processes to review the rate of application and success of BAME colleagues compared to other ethnic groups.

Action: AMM/ASM/UCU

8. SEP

UCU noted that some members have anonymously shared their opinions with UCU on their experience of SEP. An overarching theme was a concern that lessons learned from large scale projects such as SEP are reviewed appropriately, and outcomes communicated to staff. There were also ongoing concerns about workload, though it was noted that 100 + colleagues were joining in January, which would help to address areas of workload pressure.

It was agreed that CP would convene a meeting between UCU representatives and SEP colleagues in the New Year to ensure that feedback can be discussed in more detail and appropriate measures taken.

Action: CP

9. Disability matter

UCU requested a meeting with its Disabled Staff Representative to discuss the experience of a disabled colleagues raised within our networks. It was agreed that the details should be sent to Banji Adewumi in the first instance.

Action: UCU

10. Date and time of meetings in 2023

- Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 10.30am (in person)
- Tuesday 4 July 2023 at 3pm (in person)
- Monday 27 November at 1pm (in person)