

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Employment Policy Committee
14 February 2024
8.30am
Remote Meeting – Microsoft Teams**

Present	Sally Mitton David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor (Principal)
Attending	Julie Howlett Jules Bridges	Head of Human Resources Head of Governance

No.		Action
	The Chair opened the meeting noting that the decision had been made to continue the meeting, although not quorate, given the work that the Head of HR had put into the papers and the preparation for this meeting. Each agenda item would be considered recognising that there were no decisions to make and that decisions couldn't be made because the meeting was not quorate.	
1	Apologies The absence of Chris Ashman will be recorded.	HoG
2	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting – 4 October 2023 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 were agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting. The Chair noted that the minutes referenced that the college had been in dispute and questioned if this had been resolved. The Principal/CEO commented that there was national action and dispute with UCU. CWA was on the list but at local level there was good dialogue around pay and no resulting ongoing dispute.	
4	Matters Arising The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report. There were no items to carry forward. The completed items are to be removed from the table. The feedback document from the CWA Community Conference Programme had been included in the pack of papers for the meeting. In summary there were 44 activities across the college, each with 8 sessions throughout the day, and all were fully attended.	
5	Policy Update – Recruitment and Selection Policy The committee considered the amendments proposed by the Chair of the committee that had been incorporated into the next iteration of the policy. These were highlighted yellow and included references around reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities and equal opportunities when shortlisting candidates and to ensure that vacancies will be recruited promptly. It is fair to say that the aim of the policy and changes in process is to reduce the time to hire. It was noted that staff who are involved in recruiting staff are on board and understand why the changes are necessary and managers are clear about the benefits of improving and streamlining systems and processes to recruit swifter.	

6 Legal Updates

This item was deemed confidential.

The government has overruled the Supreme Court ruling in the case of Harpur v Brazel to reinstate the principle used by many employers to calculate holiday pay for irregular and part-year workers using the hourly rate of 12.07%. This takes effect from 1 April 2024 and is subject to 28 days each year. CWA is unaffected as the college continues to pay using the rolled-up rate for casual staff.

The Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Act 2023 will come into force on 6 April 2024. This expands the current laws protecting pregnant employees or those on, or returning from, maternity/adoption/shared parental leave facing redundancy.

Also, on 6 April 2024 a new entitlement under the Carer's Leave Act 2023 of one week of unpaid leave annually for employees who care for dependants with long term needs will be granted and available to all employees from day one of employment. The college will need to update and release a policy to cover this change in legislation.

Under the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 with effect from 6 April 2024, employees can request flexible working from day one of employment (currently after 26 weeks service) and can make 2 requests in any 12-month period. The college policy has already been changed and implemented to accommodate this legislative change.

Other legislative updates included changes around smaller scale TUPE transfers, new statutory right for workers to request a more predictable working pattern, and an amendment to the Equality Act 2010 to introduce a duty on employers to take 'reasonable steps' to prevent sexual harassment of their employees by a third party. It was noted that the TUPE change has no impact for the college as CWA is unionised.

Members received assurance from the report that the legislative landscape was understood, and that the college was prepared to manage policy and practice to achieve compliance.

7 HR Curriculum Impact Report

This item was deemed confidential

Regarding the new suite of interview questions the Chair commented that competency-based questions can be particularly difficult to answer at interview for some candidates and would advise notifying applicants that competency questions could be asked at interview to enable them to prepare for example-based questions. The Head of HR will consider introducing this approach.

8 Apprenticeship Workforce Growth Approach

The report provided an update on the college's approach to increase the number of apprentices working at the college and utilisation of the apprenticeship levy. The college levy is around £77,100 per year which represents £6,425 per month which the college is accessing to provide apprenticeship training opportunities for existing and incoming employees. The current levy fund available to spend is £118,205 and the college currently has 10 apprentices employed.

The college continues to actively encourage managers to take the long-term view that employing apprentices enables them to develop skills according to their needs and create a sustainable talent pipeline of the best new talent.

The Chair commented that it was difficult to understand from the report what the college is doing to grow apprenticeships other than promoting the opportunity. The Head of HR commented that this model is for long term growth of the college rather than filling immediately needed vacancies. This is a longer-term strategy and consideration of future departmental need and factoring these opportunities into budgetary staff costs. It is disappointing as a large employer that the college doesn't employ many apprentices but there are some barriers that prevent some teams feeling confident to appoint and of course

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budgetary challenges. There are positive and productive opportunities that we need to take advantage of and increase apprenticeship posts across the college.

9 HR KPI Report

The statistical report in summary showed a decrease in external recruitment campaigns but an increase in repeated campaigns for those hard to fill posts. These are the hard to fill mainly due to competitive industry pay. A new approach by the college is to introduce internships where a younger generation of workers can learn, and progress into permanent opportunities. A (funded) Recruitment Manager will be appointed to manage this new strategy.

There continues to be a reluctance from staff leaving the employment of the college to complete an exit interview. The team are working on a Microsoft Form which can be anonymised and submitted online which may remove some barriers to not completing or contributing to this process.

This item was deemed confidential

10 Strategic Targets Progress 2023/24

All targets are progressing well apart from, as discussed above, sickness absence. There is an increased focus on this target and improvement and a cultural change is expected to soon start to get traction.

11 Any other business

The Chair mentioned that a proposal will be presented to the corporation to disband the work of the committee and redistribute its responsibilities. This will be considered by the corporation at the meeting to be held on 20 March 2024.

The Principal/CEO thanked the Chair for the work that the committee has overseen and the work of Head of HR to bring the strategic oversight of employment related items to the attention of governors.

12 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Impact of the recruitment policy
- Impact of the national minimum wage on recruitment
- Focus on sickness absence

13 Date and time of next meeting

Dependent on decision of Corporation to disband this committee.

Meeting ended at 9.35am