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## People and Operations Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 28 January 2025, 11.00 – 12.00  
Room GC22, William Gates Building

### MINUTES

#### Attendance:

Dr Fermin Moscoso del Prado Martin, Faculty Member (Chair)  
Jo de Bono, Wellbeing Advocate (for PSS)  
Celia Burns, Faculty Administrator (Secretary)  
Dr Evangelia Kalyvianaki, UTO  
Professor Thomas Sauerwald, Deputy Head of Department  
Dr Sue Sentence, Wellbeing Advocate (for research staff and UTOs)  
Dr Ajay Shankar, Research Staff Forum Representative  
Caroline Stewart, Departmental Secretary  
Alicja Zavros, HR Manager

#### 1. Welcome

New members, Dr Sue Sentence and Dr Ajay Shankar, were welcomed to the committee.

#### 2. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Professor Anil Madhavapeddy.

#### 3. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

#### 4. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 30 October 2024 were approved.

#### 5. Report on Actions from the Last Meeting

##### (i) Terms of Reference

It was noted that Faculty Board had approved the draft terms of reference and membership (available on the Committee [website](#)).

#### 6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I)

The Committee considered ED&I issues as follows.

- (i) The Committee noted that the Athena Swan application which recently received a Bronze award can be found [here](#). It was noted that there had not been a department notice about the award.
- (ii) The Committee concluded that the Committee's terms of reference are sufficiently inclusive of ED&I matters.
- (iii) The Committee discussed sending reminders to department members about cultural events in order to be more inclusive.
- (iv) The Committee discussed several suggestions around recruitment which could be flagged to the University:
  - the inclusion of a 'We welcome applications from certain groups ...' sentence in applications to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
  - the removal of applicant names from applications to mitigate unconscious bias.
  - the removal of the question about whether the applicant requires a visa because it is discriminatory.
  - the addition of a box on the MPhil application form where applicants from countries that have no research opportunities can indicate that that is the case.

Although the issues above are central University systems and the Committee could only flag them, it was thought that for the latter point, it would have more impact if the Postgraduate Education Committee (PEC) and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) discussed this issue and made the suggestion to the University.

**Action:** Caroline to ask PEC and EDIC to address the 'no research opportunities' issue.

- (v) The Committee discussed how it might contribute to the Athena Swan award action plan in terms of HR and wellbeing matters and agreed to identify from the action plan which actions are relevant to this Committee, to schedule those actions in, and to advise EDIC which items we are addressing; and to discuss family leave policies at the next meeting.
- (vi) The Committee suggested that other committees should be made aware of the People and Operations Committee and invited to bring relevant matters to our attention.

**Action:** Fermin to bring this up at the next Wednesday meeting and Jo to notify Committees.

- (vii) The Committee suggested having one UTO member on both this Committee and EDIC, given the overlap between them.

**Action:** Thomas and Caroline to discuss this in terms of role assignment.

## **7. Wellbeing**

### **(i) Request for an Outdoor Table Tennis Table**

The Committee considered a request from the Reception Team for an outdoor table tennis table (similar to [this example](#)) for use by staff and students. The Committee were divided on this request, with the main issues being noise factor and location (suggestions being the north courtyard, the front of the building, outside the café area, and the West Hub grounds). It was suggested that it might be useful to gauge people's interest in the idea and opinions on location and noise, and Fermin agreed to bring this up at the next Wednesday meeting. Sue noted that she could include a question about wellbeing initiatives in the wellbeing survey for research staff that she plans to circulate soon (see item 9 (i) below).

**Action:** Fermin to bring this up at the Wednesday meeting and Sue to include something in her survey.

## **8. Priorities**

There was not sufficient time in the meeting for the Committee to consider priorities.

## **9. Any Other Business**

The Committee discussed the following items:

### **(i) Wellbeing Survey for Research Staff**

Sue noted that, in her role as Wellbeing Advocate for research staff and UTOs, she plans to circulate a wellbeing survey for research staff. Following the discussion about the table tennis table (item 7), Sue suggested that, in order to gauge interest in this type of thing, she could include in her survey a question about wellbeing initiatives. Sue will be circulating the survey soon and agreed to circulate it to the Committee for information.

**Action:** Sue to share her survey with the Committee.

### **(ii) Department Handbook**

The conversation about Sue's survey prompted a discussion about a Department Handbook. Alicja noted that she has started work on a Handbook and would be pleased to receive any ideas for what should be included.

### **(iii) Operational Tasks**

Jo noted that she will be addressing operational tasks (she is currently reviewing email groups and will be working on a Department Policies and Procedures intranet page next) and could bring these to the Committee at the next meeting.

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place in the Easter term, date to be arranged via meeting poll.