

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

University of Reading

And

University and College Union

And

University of Reading Staff Forum

Date: 13 August 2020

Introduction

1. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between University of Reading, UCU and University of Reading Staff Forum is to set out an agreed programme of actions arising from the Consultation Group Final Proposal.
2. This MoU will specify the objectives of agreed joint work, by reference to the text in the Final University of Reading Proposal.
3. This MoU will also set out the anticipated timetable of agreed additional joint work. All parties to the MoU will use best endeavours to complete the identified tasks on the identified timeline, but this can be varied by agreement of parties to this MoU.

Voluntary Measures

4. This section of the MoU sets out planned action in relation to the following sections of the University of Reading Final Proposal:

16. We very much welcome the constructive ways in which both UCU and the Staff Forum have sought to engage with the University, and the importance to them of minimising or avoiding any overall impact on colleagues. Therefore, the University will agree to offer the following measures:

- A. A time-limited voluntary redundancy offer. Given the over-arching need to achieve savings there is limited funding to support this, but it may provide some colleagues with a preferred alternative to a period of pay reduction and pay freeze. The precise details of the proposed voluntary redundancy offer will be subject to further discussion.
- B. An opportunity to apply for a voluntary reduction in FTE, at a level at least equivalent to the relevant pay reduction for the grade concerned for a one year duration, subject to local agreement with relevant line managers. The process would mirror the normal arrangements in applying for flexible working and the University would seek to approve applications subject to review of business needs, but further guidance would be made available to ensure consistency of decision-making across the University.
- C. An opportunity to apply for an extended period of unpaid leave, subject to local agreement with relevant line managers. In such circumstances the University would guarantee continuity of service and protection of associated employment rights.
- D. A facility to purchase additional annual leave entitlement.
- E. Promotion of the opportunities available for early or flexible retirement.

F. A review of current reward and bonus schemes to identify further possible savings.

5. The parties to the MoU will enter into consultation about the time-limited voluntary redundancy offer. This will include consultation on the terms of the voluntary redundancy offer to staff, conditions on the voluntary redundancy scheme and the mechanisms used to enact a voluntary redundancy scheme.
6. The parties to the MoU will aim to conclude consultations on a voluntary redundancy offer in September 2020, with the objective of a scheme being opened to University of Reading staff by 1 October 2020.
7. The parties to the MoU will enter into dialogue about a mechanism in which staff could apply for a voluntary reduction in FTE, at a level at least equivalent to the relevant pay reduction for the grade concerned for a one year duration. The parties will seek to agree further guidance on how this could be enacted, based on the established process for flexible working applications.
8. The parties to the MoU will seek to conclude these discussions on the mechanisms for staff to apply for a limited duration reduction in FTE by 30 November 2020. This mechanism should be agreed prior to the implementation of Element B (pay reduction) which will not take place prior to the completion of the first review on 1 February 2021.
9. The parties to the MoU will enter into consultations about the proposals to allow staff to apply for an extended period of unpaid leave. This will have particular focus on maintenance of accrued employment rights and demonstration of the University's existing commitment to promoting equal opportunities and non-discriminatory treatment for all members of its community. The parties to the MoU will seek to complete this work by 30 November 2020.
10. The parties to the MoU will engage in further consultation on a facility to allow staff to purchase additional annual leave. This will include details of an application process, and how such requests will be considered by University of Reading. The parties to the MoU will seek to complete this work by 30 November 2020.
11. The University will conclude a review of current reward and bonus schemes to identify further possible savings by 31 October 2020. The University will consult with UCU and the Staff Forum about any changes identified in November 2020.

Review of Identified Measures – Including Date of implementation, and date of withdrawal of cost saving measures.

12. This section of the MoU sets out planned action in relation to the following sections of the University of Reading Final Proposal:
 13. For the reason given above we need an agreement now which will allow us to set out a sensible route forward based on the information that we all possess. However, the application of measures (with the exception of voluntary ones where appropriate) will not occur before the first review on 1 February 2021 (see (16)), if

indeed they are then still considered necessary, in full or in part, as a consequence of the University's recruitment of students

18. The UCU and the Staff Forum have both stressed the importance of keeping the proposed measures under review, not least because of the extended duration of the period of sacrifice being called upon, with regular opportunities to assess the impact of the voluntary measures noted above. The University also welcomes the opportunity to keep the proposed temporary measures under review and therefore proposes as follows:

- An interim review in line with the recently announced requirement to provide a statement to the OfS of the University's financial position by 31 October 2020, followed by:
- A formal review on 1 February 2021, taking into account the savings accrued from any of the voluntary measures noted above and key metrics in relation to student recruitment (i.e. total fees income from Home and Overseas students) and any revised University income projections (to be presented in an open and defensible manner, with an ongoing commitment to respond positively to reasonable requests for relevant management information).
- Formal reviews would continue on a three-monthly basis thereafter, and be in place for three years.
- For reasons of consistency, the University proposes that the reviews are conducted jointly by the existing Consultation Group and representatives from UCU and the Staff Forum.
- The duration of measures in the table on page 2 of the final proposal is intended to outline the anticipated duration of the measures, which will not be exceeded.
- For the avoidance of any doubt it is stressed that amendments to the proposed temporary changes to terms and conditions will be prioritised should the anticipated shortfall in income be less severe than projected, reflected in commensurate reductions in the duration (or a combination of both should circumstances allow) of proposed pay reductions in the first instance.
- In respect of the proposed pay freeze, the University commits to maintaining a shadow pay structure mirroring salary adjustments agreed through the JNCHES process for the period 20-21 to 22-23, and at the end of the three-year period to restore salaries to the level applicable across the sector (subject to further discussion at the relevant time and with the possibility of phasing).
- The University also commits to continue to engage with any non-pay initiatives agreed via the JNCHES process, e.g. actions to address the gender pay gap.

13. The parties to the MoU will take part in an interim review in November 2020, which will take into account the recently announced requirement to provide a statement to the OfS of the University's financial position by 31 October 2020.

14. A formal review involving all parties to the MoU will take place on 1 February 2021, taking into account the savings accrued from any of the voluntary measures noted above and key metrics in relation to student recruitment (i.e. total fees income from Home and Overseas students) and any revised University income projections.

15. The application of measures (with the exception of voluntary ones where appropriate) will not occur before the first review on 1 February 2021. Any measure judged to still be required after the completion of the review on 1 February 2021 will be implemented as soon as practicably after the completion of the review, on the basis set out in the University of Reading Final proposal.

16. The formal reviews will commence on 1 February 2021, and continue on a three monthly basis for three years to 1 February 2024. These meetings should be organised on a date as near as possible to the first of February, May, August and November each year.

17. A standing item for every formal review meeting to review the progress against saving targets with a view to seeking to restore any cuts to income, terms or conditions of University of Reading staff as circumstances allow.
18. Throughout the period of review, the University will provide parties to the MoU with open and transparent access to wider financial information both directly and indirectly relevant to the application of the savings measures, subject to reasonable restrictions in respect of commercial sensitivity. Requests for information will be given with additional explanation as to their relevance and context. Suitable confidentiality will be maintained where this is necessary.
19. For the avoidance of doubt, in the absence of any earlier agreement arising from the formal review process, all elements of the savings measures set out on page 2 of the University of Reading Final proposal will expire on 1 February 2024.
20. With regard to the proposed pay freeze, discussions will take place the end of the anticipated three-year period, on 1 February 2024, to restore salaries to the level applicable across the sector.

Review of Workloads

21. This section of the MoU sets out planned action in relation to the following sections of the University of Reading Final Proposal:

A review of workloads, to be conducted jointly with representatives of the UCU and Staff Forum, with a view to establishing a common understanding of concerns and potential solutions. For staff in grade 6 and above, UCU will be seeking an agreement with University of Reading on high level principles for balanced workloads, which would include a new approach to workload management, which would be implemented through local action plans.

22. The objectives of the review of workloads, to be conducted jointly with representatives of the UCU and Staff Forum, is to establishing a common understanding of concerns and potential solutions. UCU will be seeking an agreement with University of Reading on high level principles for balanced workloads, which would include a new approach to workload management, which would be implemented through local action plans.
23. The review of workloads identified in the University of Reading proposal will be implemented in phases across the 2020-21 academic year.
24. Between 1 October 2020 and 11 December 2020 there will be a light touch review between all the parties of the MoU to identify issues of concern, potential solutions and a prioritisation process for further work in later phases.
25. Between 11 January and 26 March 2021, there will be a process of negotiations between UCU and University of Reading concerning workload for staff on level 6 and higher grades. UCU is seeking to reach an agreement on high level principles for balanced workloads, which would include a new approach to workload

management, which would be implemented through local action plans. There will be parallel continuing discussions between University of Reading and the Staff Forum about potential workload changes for staff on grades level 1 to 5.

26. Any changes to workload planning and management arising from these discussions will be rolled out in between 19 April and 11 June 2021, to ensure that changes can link into established timetabling and workload planning processes.

Proposals to encourage greater engagement with, and access to, key University business and proposals

27. This section of the MoU sets out planned action in relation to the following sections of the University of Reading Final Proposal in appendix 1:

The University, in accordance with its strategic principle of Community, will encourage colleagues across the University to access and engage with key University activities. The University of Reading will seek to engage with staff and stakeholders about ways to improve University governance.

This will be facilitated in a number of ways including:

- Ensuring ease of access to papers of the Senate and Council and encouraging colleagues to keep abreast of key developments. Confidentiality will be suitably observed.
- For the purposes of the annual Sustainable Planning System, Heads of School and Heads of Function are required to provide a plan setting out key objectives. There will be a formal requirement to engage in internal discussion and consultation prior to submission of their plan.
- The UCU and the Staff Forum will be provided with an opportunity, in common with other key stakeholders, to have sight of and comment upon key proposals (ranging from minor to major as defined by the Planning and Change Board) using the pro-forma developed for this purpose (example form to be attached)
- The Senate Agenda Setting Group will be provided with a regularly updated list of significant matters with a view to extended discussion at the Senate.
- All new proposals in excess of £10m will be discussed at Senate, the Joint University and UCU Committee and the Staff Forum, and the minutes of these respective discussions will be provided to Council to inform its discussion and decision-making.

28. The parties to the MoU will engage in further discussions with University of Reading on proposals to encourage improvements in transparency and University Governance.

29. These discussions will take place according to the established employment relations forums. For UCU, this refers to the University of Reading and UCU Joint Committee. For the Staff Forum this refers to the regular meetings between the Staff Forum and University.

30. The parties to the MoU will seek to agree the details and dates for commencement of the measures identified in annex 1 by 30 November 2020.

31. This parties to the MoU will continue to maintain dialogue on ways to improve transparency and University Governance after the execution of the identified measures, through the established mechanisms for consultation and negotiation with UCU and the Staff Forum.