Operation of a Recruitment freeze and Redeployment Protocol

Introduction

Given the unprecedented financial uncertainty due to Covid 19, with an expected loss of income and continuing and growing expenditure there is a need to consider measures to control costs.

It has been agreed that a recruitment freeze is implemented immediately and that a redeployment protocol is introduced to manage costs and support the redeployment of current staff whose jobs would otherwise be at risk.

Background information and rationale

The Recruitment freeze and Redeployment Protocol is a means to manage University-funded staff numbers and salary costs, by controls on recruitment, in response to the increasingly challenging external financial environment.

In the first instance the protocol will not apply to research posts graded 1-10 that are wholly funded from external grants. Departments will be asked to apply extra scrutiny to the costing and operations of grants to ensure that they are not adding extra costs to the departmental budget.

This position will be reviewed every three months.

The proposed protocol will apply to all other posts and will

(i) halt all recruitment that has not progressed to the point of an offer to a candidate;
(ii) complement the current headcount cap arrangements;
(iii) only allow the creation of new posts and extensions of fixed-term contracts under particular circumstances with central approval; and
(iv) require central approval for the external advertisement of any post.

The expectation is that all professional, administrative and support posts are advertised internally, to maximise the opportunities for redeployment for staff at risk of redundancy, including staff coming to the end of a fixed-term contract. Only if the internal advertisement (having been ‘live’ for at least two weeks) does not result in the identification of a suitable candidate, and with authority from the relevant approving body, may these posts be advertised externally to the University.

All vacant posts should be offered to staff in the collegiate University at risk of redundancy where they meet the essential criteria for the post or could do so with reasonable training or a short period of experience in post, in accordance with the University’s established redeployment policy. Departments are expected to ensure that all staff at risk within the department are made aware of any internal posts before they are advertised and, where they express an interest, that those members of staff are assessed for their suitability, before the advertisement is posted.

Particular arrangements apply for statutory professorships, for other academic posts, and for senior research and administrative posts (grades RSIV and ALC6).
Recruitment freeze and redeployment protocol

The following arrangements will apply for an initial period of 12 months, to all staff recruitment.

1. **Recruitment currently in train**, and which has not yet reached the point of making of an informal or formal offer of employment, should be suspended unless/until the new conditions below are met.

**Academic Appointments**

2. It is anticipated that academic appointments will be made on an exceptional basis only.

3. Divisions may only approve the replacement of leavers or the creation of any new posts where there is a strong case supported by academic strategy that:
   (a) there is clear evidence of overwhelming academic imperatives to fill the post; AND in the case of APNTF posts and Statutory Professorships and RSIV posts partially or fully funded by the University one or more of the following conditions is met;
   (b) there is evidence that the post will be fully externally-funded (including posts that are fully endowed); or
   (c) there is evidence that not to recruit will result in demonstrable overall financial loss to the University; or
   (d) the proposed new post will lead to increased income.

4. **All cases for Statutory Professorships and RSIV posts approved by divisions will be considered by the Senior Appointments Panel (SAP).** All cases for Associate Professorships will be considered by a recruitment panel chaired by the PVC (People). If approved, the normal recruitment process will apply, with external advertising of the post.

**Professional services, support staff and internally-funded research appointments**

5. Divisions may approve the replacement of leavers only if there is a strong case that the work in question cannot be halted, delayed or absorbed within the existing staff complement across the division.

6. Divisions may only approve the creation and filling of any new posts, including the extension of fixed-term contracts, where there is a strong case that:
   (a) the work in question cannot be absorbed within the existing staff complement across the division; AND one or more of the following conditions is met:
   (b) there are overwhelming operational imperatives to fill the post; or
   (c) there are safety risks to the University if the post is not filled; or
   (d) there are legal requirements to fill the post; or
   (e) there is evidence that the post will be fully externally-funded; or
   (f) there is evidence that not to recruit will result in demonstrable overall financial loss to the University; or

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1 This protocol applies to all departments of the University, other than OUP, and to the subsidiary companies of the University. It does not apply to colleges or to the Permanent Private Halls.
(g) the proposed new post forms part of a restructuring proposal which has demonstrated that its filling is necessary to produce overall savings or to significantly increase income.

7. All cases for new Professional Services and support appointments and extensions of fixed-term contracts approved by divisions will be considered by a recruitment panel, chaired by the Registrar. All cases for new internally-funded research appointments and extensions of fixed-term contracts will be considered by a second recruitment panel chaired by the PVC (People).

8. Any professional, administrative and support posts that might be approved for filling should in the first instance be advertised internally within the collegiate University only, with a view to filling them with existing employees of the University or the colleges if possible. Approval from the Registrar’s Recruitment Panel will be required to appoint college employees as this would increase the headcount and add to the salary budget.

9. In all cases of recruitment to professional, administrative and support post departments are expected to follow the University’s procedures in support of those in a redundancy situation. Departments should consider priority candidates in their department before advertising any role. Priority candidates who meet the essential criteria or who could do so with reasonable retraining or a short period of on-the-job experience should be interviewed before other candidates and offered the role. No further interviews should be conducted unless there is more than one priority candidate.

10. Where it is cost-effective to do so, departments should consider developing existing staff and creating internal promotion opportunities to fill posts.

11. The operation of these arrangements will mean that some staff may be required to assume greater responsibility. It is important to motivate and recognise the contribution of such staff in this difficult period and reasonable requests for additional payments may be granted within existing human resources policies and procedures (e.g. Recognition Awards, acting-up payments, or re-grading), though this will be monitored. Advice on reward policies and procedures should be sought from the Reward website, your local HR contact or your HR Business Partner in University HR.

12. Casual staff and staff recruited via the Temporary Staffing Service may continue to be recruited but maybe engaged for no longer than 12 weeks (there is a 12-month time limit for casual teaching staff).

13. Any contractor appointments will go through the protocol and will be considered by the appropriate panel.
Implementing the protocol

Governance will be provided by the following groups:

1. The Senior Appointments Panel (SAP) will oversee the cases for statutory professorships, RSIV and ALC6 posts.

2. A new Recruitment Panel chaired by the PVC (People) will oversee the creation and external advertisement of Associate Professorships and those research posts which are funded internally. The panel will include divisional representatives and a representative of the Conference of Colleges (for associate professorships).

3. A second new Recruitment Panel chaired by the Registrar will oversee the creation and external advertisement of professional, administrative and support posts. The panel will include heads of services and a Divisional Registrar.

Quarterly reports will be prepared for PRAC and Personnel Committee that track:

(i) The vacancy numbers across divisions;
(ii) Staff numbers and costs (as above);
(iii) The number of externally advertised roles; and,
(iv) The number of non-employed casual workers and contractors who received pay in the period.

Upon implementation all staff recruitment for Professional Services, Support and internally-funded research roles will require counter-signature by the head of division or divisional registrar before it can be actioned by the Finance Division in payroll terms.