Hilary term HR briefing

26 May 2022

Agenda

- Leadership team changes

- Policy updates

- Changes to probation policy

- New Ways of Working case studies

- Reward updates

- Grading Service Review

- Equality Report

- Feedback from 2021 data collection exercise

HR team news

- Senior leadership team changes

- Interim arrangements
  - Peter Brook- HR Director
  - Lynne Hirsch - lead on casework

- Appointment of new HR Director in the autumn
  - Dr Markos Koumaditis

Policy updates – policies in development

Ruth Kinahan, HR Policy manager

- EJRA review

- Staff-student relationships policy update

- Amendments/clarifications to the support staff disciplinary procedure

- Review of sickness guidance

- Additional guidance on visitor agreements

- Student ambassador casual contracts

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

New: open-ended externally-funded contracts for support staff

- To date O-E externally funded contracts only available for academic-related staff where:
    - the post is externally funded and there is a reasonable prospect that external funding will continue from whatever source for the foreseeable future,

    AND
    - the work is central to the future plans of the department and therefore such that department will wish to continue to support it for at least as long as external funding is available.

- Small number of support staff posts meet the same criteria and therefore new template drafted for use for support staff who meet the same criteria.

Probation for internal movers/transfers

Kathryn Fairhurst Jones, HR Policy Officer (Governance)

- Policy has changed for staff transferring between departments

- For internal movers who have already successfully completed a probationary period at the University they should not have a probationary period.

- In very exceptional circumstances (a substantially different role) departments should contact their HRBP before making the job offer if they think that a probationary period is required.

- Improved guidance on induction, support and regular reviews for internal movers.

- Making existing guidance on taking up and giving references for internal movers more visible from the main recruitment pages.

Coming soon - Menopause guidance

Kate Butler, Policy Officer

- **New guidance** for staff and managers on the negative effects of menopause in the workplace – to be published in June

- Launch and awareness raising events – **18 October (World Menopause day)**

- 'Mainstreaming'/removing taboo by building references across our guidance (sickness, flexible working, etc)

- Work towards menopause 'cafes'/networks and allyship / champion schemes over next couple of years (please get in touch if you already have these in your area)

- **Case studies to support the guidance** – if you have experience you are willing to share, or know anyone who would, please contact us: sarah.wilcox-jones@admin.ox.ac.uk or kate.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk

Personnel Security Policy

- **New policy**: https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/personnel-security-policy-0

- Over-arching framework: sets response by ref to strategic threat level

- Expectation- pre-employment checks must be **proportionate** and part of a holistic **risk assessment, mitigation and management** approach

Update to Horus

- Advance notice: **V3** of the portal will be launched on **27 June**

- V2 will remain available to progress existing cases only

- Current users will receive new login details from Horus around 20 June, including contact details for their support team for assistance

- Any issues – contact University Security Services at screening@admin.ox.ac.uk

- On-line briefing session on new policy and the Horus update on 21 June – details to follow

Feedback from data collection exercise

- 46 (67%) of departments had begun, or completed, implementing the NWW Framework
- Of the departments who had completed:
  - 93% agreed more than 75% of requests for new working patterns
  - Only 1 able to agree fewer than 50% of requests
  - 71% felt they had sufficient guidance
- Of the departments who are yet to implement 78% plan to do so by the end of the long vacation 2022.
- A support session was held in Hilary term and further support session will be offered, if required
- Key request for additional guidance from case studies

Case studies added to the website

Upcoming in Trinity term

Pulse survey for professional services staff
- Expected to be launched early June 2022
- Will gather data on working patterns, satisfaction levels, benefits and disadvantages of NWW, impact on equality and diversity (particularly disability and caring responsibilities)

Trinity term support session
- To be provided if enough demand – short survey on what you would like to be included is available at https://forms.office.com/r/RcQ00Cb8qM, also included in Trinity term HR newsletter

Questions?

nww@admin.ox.ac.uk

Reward updates

Sarah Kilgour, Head of Reward

- Update on **pay negotiations**

- Reminder – **Awards for Excellence 2022**
  - To be completed between Feb and August
  - Review period Jan to Dec 2021
  - Awards to be implemented in August payroll
  - Full information : https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/reward-and-recognition-scheme

HR Grading Service Review

HR briefing session

26/05/2022

Objectives and benefits

- identify expected future requirements of the grading service

- identify ways to increase understanding of the grading policy, criteria and its purpose

- identify service improvements that reflect stakeholder requirements, support progression to agreed service levels, and high-level proposals for implementation

- Improve operational efficiency

- Improve satisfaction with the grading service overall

Grading service review – scope

- grades 4 -10 across all academic divisions, departments and UAS

- new posts, re-gradings, restructures and speculative grading requests

- end-to-end process from development of job description to authorisation in PeopleXD

- Parties with formal and informal involvement in the process

- Review ends with recommendations for improvements

Not included:

- Grades RSIV, ALC6, clinical and academic grades

- HERA evaluation scheme

Engagement
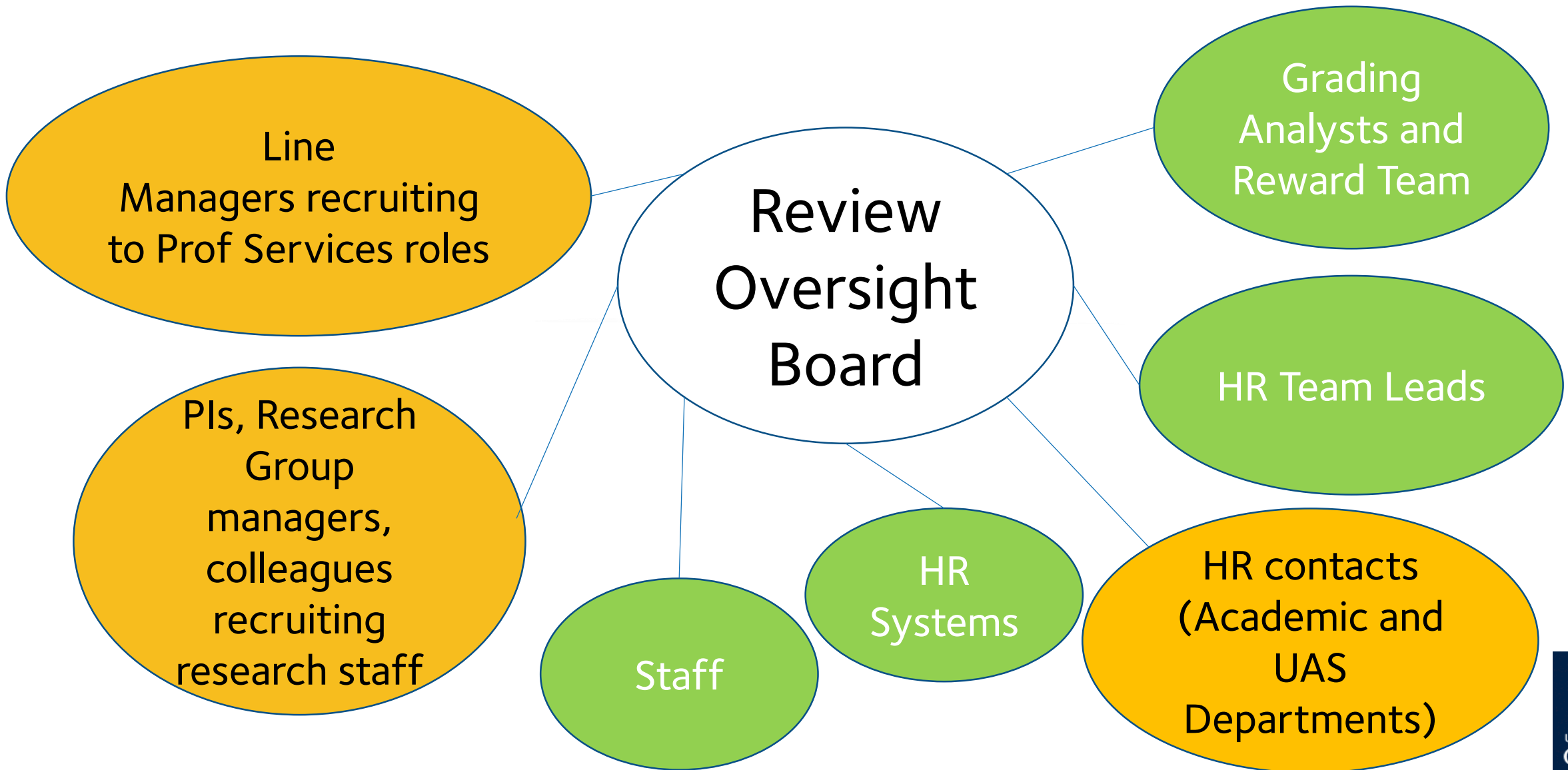
Questionnaire

- At what point do you think the grading service begins?

- What currently works well in grading?

- What are the greatest opportunities for improvement in grading?

- What ideas do you have for improvements in the grading service?

- Who else can we speak to?

HR Briefing
26 May 2022

University of Oxford Equality Report
for 2020/21

Sara Smith
Equality and Diversity Unit

Key priorities for Oxford

Diversity in decision-making and governance structures

Representation of women and minority ethnic staff in senior roles

LGBT+ visibility and inclusion

Undergraduate access and attainment

Staff targets for 2029
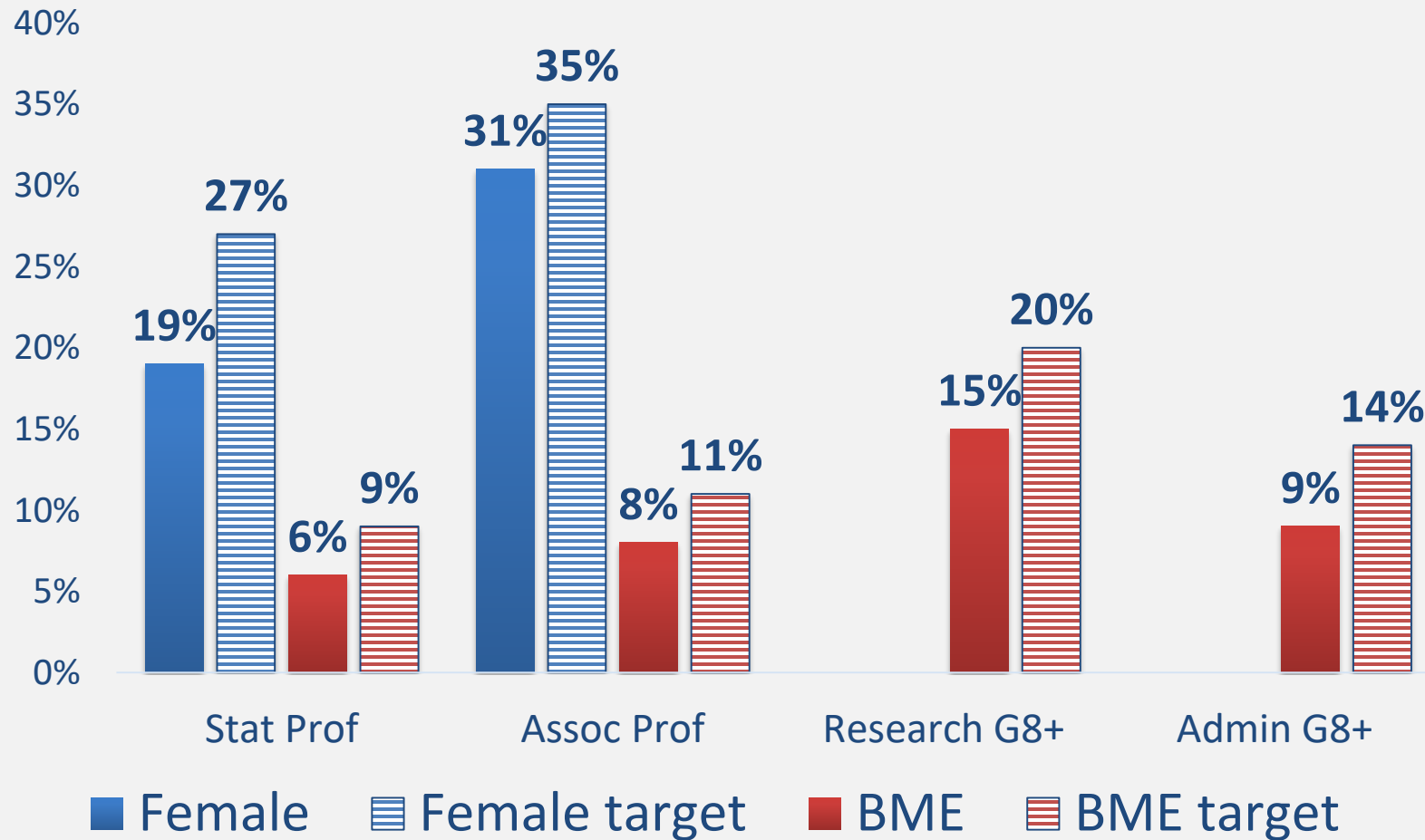
Inclusion, Wellbeing & Workload

Survey question	S & T	P & M	Research	Academic	Assoc Prof
I feel able to be myself at work	77%	79%	79%	76%	75%
My health and wellbeing are adequately supported at work	75%	72%	62%	52%	50%
I…regularly work excessive hours	25%	45%	58%	82%	86%
Experienced mental ill-health (12 mo)	26%	24%	20%	16%	16%
Experienced bullying / harassment (12 mo)	10%	11%	8%	10%	10%
- Reported it formally or informally	45%	47%	47%	41%	45%

Our data quality needs to improve!

	Declared	Prefer not to say	Blank
Ethnicity	85%	4%	10%
Disability	85%	5%	10%
Nationality	89%		11%
Sexual orientation	46%	6%	49%
Religion or belief	46%	6%	48%
Gender identity	13%		87%
Trans status	10%		90%
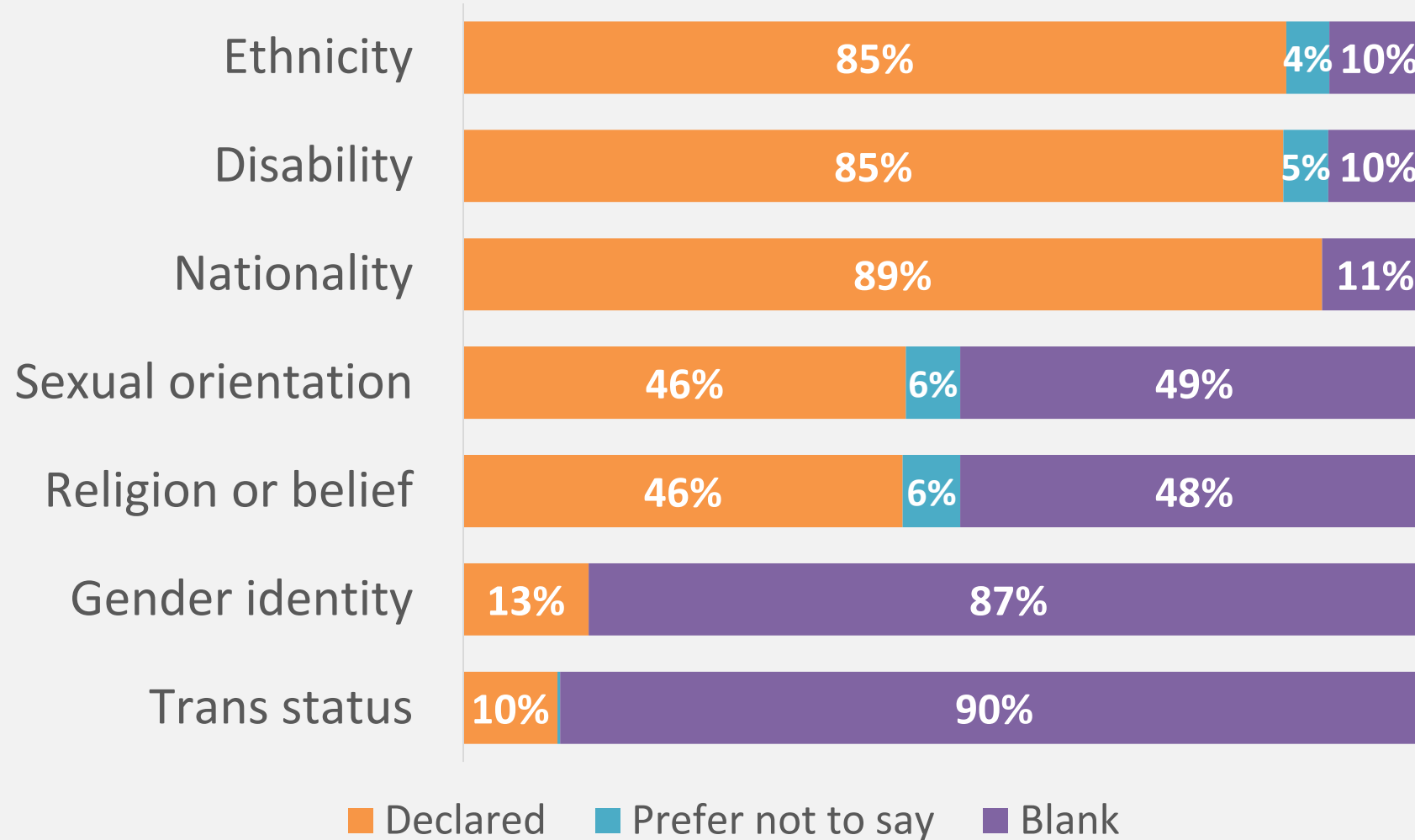
Any questions?

Equality Report and supporting data:
edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-report

Gender Pay Gap Report:
hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/gender-pay-gap-reporting

Staff Experience Survey:
edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-experience-survey

Race Equality Task Force:
edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/task-force

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Equality Report 2020/21
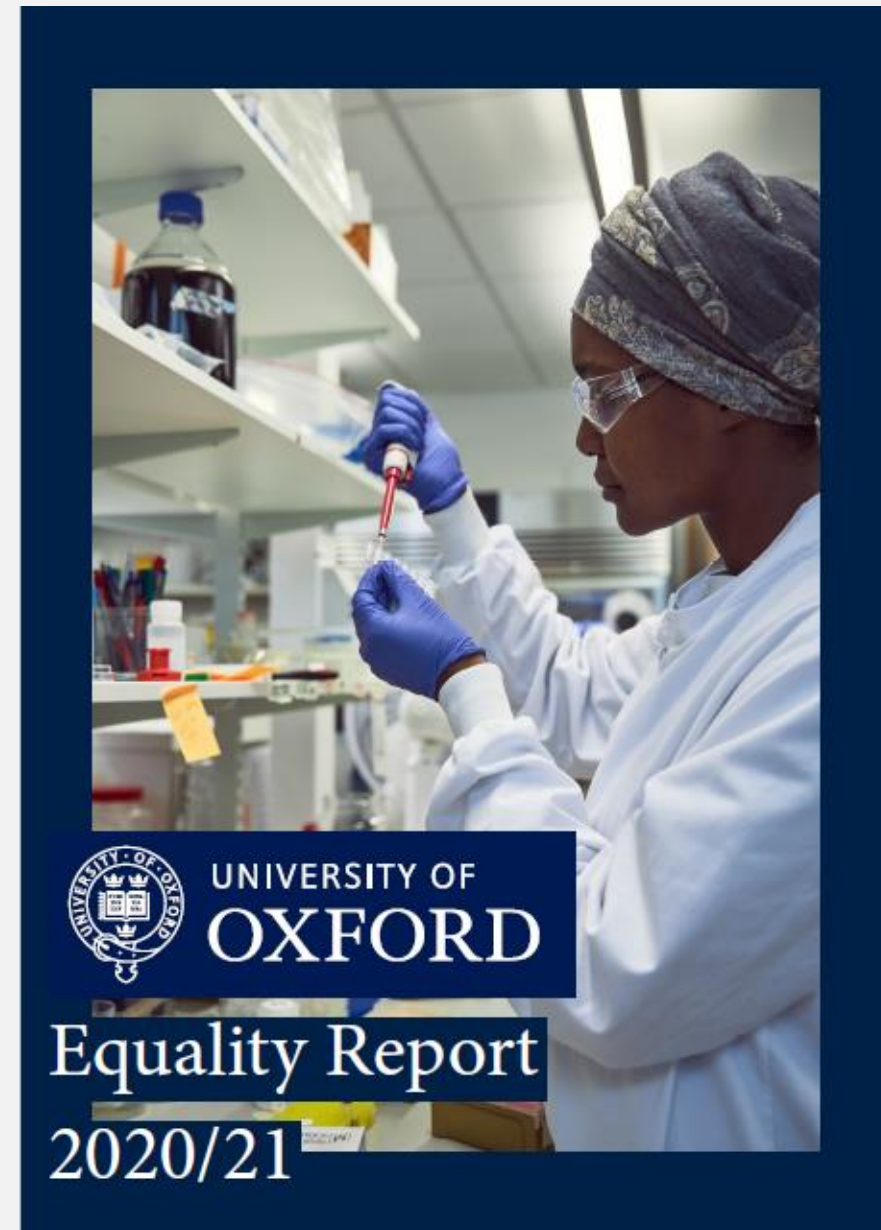
Self-assessment and data collection exercise – feedback

Kate Butler, HR Policy Officer

- Thank you to everyone who submitted a response!

- Covered period Jan – Dec 2021

- 2 parts
  - self-assessment covering some of the key elements of regular HR practice
  - Data collection exercise which gathers information that we share widely and use for a range of projects and reports across the year

Your responses shared with….

- **Personnel committee** (summary report each year)

- **HR SMT** (General comments/feedback)

- **HR Business Partner** teams (everything!)

- **EDU** team (harassment and bullying, follow-up from the staff experience survey, family leave, PDR, and adjustments made for disabled staff and initiatives to support staff experiencing mental ill-health)

- **POD** (take up of PDR and CDRs and departmental people/organisational development plans)

- the Director of **Occupational Health and Safety** (Wellbeing related - work-related stress, mental-ill health, sickness, and use of EAPs)

- **Staff Immigration team (**areas related to right to work and immigration issues)

- Head of **Recruitment** (recruitment and retention issues)

- **HRIS** team relating to recording of sickness data

- **EJRA** review group (impact of the EJRA on recruitment and retention)

- **Reward** team (list of requested new generic job descriptions and staff benefits)
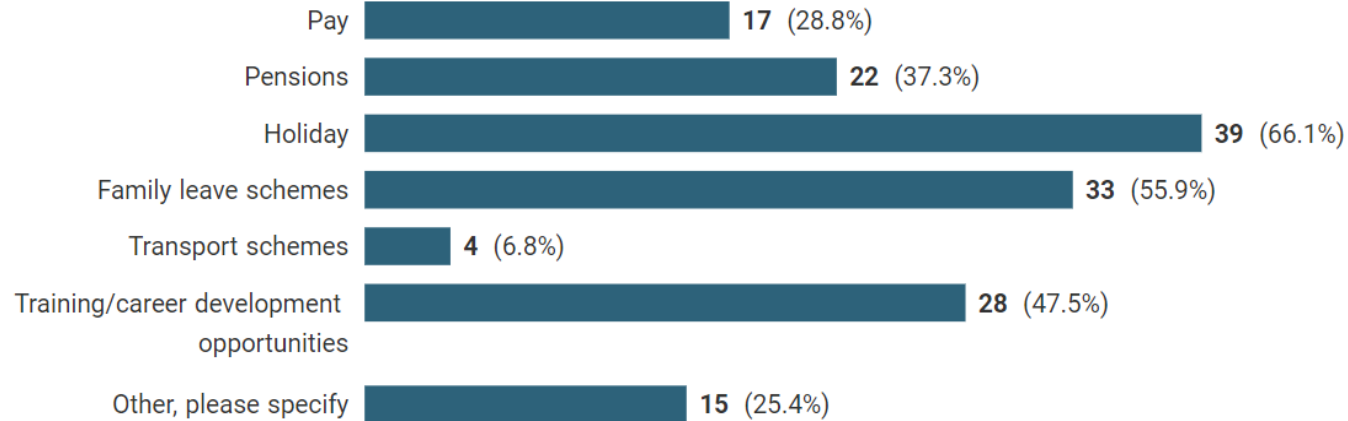
Some headline outputs

- Lots of departments report **usefulness** of exercise, particularly for new HAFs & HR managers
- 66% of departments (variable by division) continue to have **difficulty recruiting** - key reason =uncompetitive pay
- Over half of departments still have problems with **retention** - key reasons: pay and lack of development opportunities, but workload now cited more often as a reason for leaving.
- **Flexible working** is starting to be seen as a key recruitment/retention benefit
- The new requirement for **visas** for European staff is causing both **workload** issues for HR teams and recruitment difficulties
- No increase in reported cases of **bullying and harassment** but actual number of issues likely to be higher due to reluctance to raise formal complaints
- **Sickness absence** in some areas lower during the pandemic when staff were working remotely, but concerns about presenteeism (too easy to keep working when sick)

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Recruitment difficulties

- Variable by dept (Med Sci 77%, MPLS and Soc Sci 66%, Humanities 33%, GLAM 75%)

- Difficulties at all grades but most difficult in grades 5-8. Most cited roles:
  - postdoctoral researchers;   research nurses and radiographers;   clinical trials co-ordinators;   research facilitators/project managers;   facilities and technician roles; IT roles at all levels including software and data handling roles; specialist roles such as major gift fundraisers, lawyers, engineers; bio-informaticians and statisticians

- After pay, lack of/low numbers of suitably qualified candidates most frequent reasons

- New reasons: lack of flexible working options, Brexit and visas for Europeans

- 66% departments report job offers turned down: most common reasons are better offer elsewhere and local housing costs

Most attractive employee benefits

Benefit	Value	Percentage
Pay	17	(28.8%)
Pensions	22	(37.3%)
Holiday	39	(66.1%)
Family leave schemes	33	(55.9%)
Transport schemes	4	(6.8%)
Training/career development opportunities	28	(47.5%)
Other, please specify	15	(25.4%)

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

Other: flexible working/NWW, reputation of the University, job security

Missing: accommodation assistance, travel discounts for p/t, parking, private healthcare

Adjustments to support staff with disabilities

Examples of physical support

- a quiet office or agreed 'closed door' periods

- specialist equipment and furniture such as sit-stand desks

- building adaptations including provision of accessible teaching space and adapting lighting and dedicated storage space

- specialist software (such as voice-activated software, read-write software) or screen filters

- office moves

- taxis

- removal of allergens

- dyslexia assessment and equipment

Adjustments to support staff with disabilities

Examples of practical support

- working from home, much more frequently cited as adjustment

- proof-reading and pre-written templates

- training and coaching

- adjustments to working arrangements such as frequent breaks or flexible start/end times

- increased level of 'acceptable' number of sick days or additional period of paid sickness

- parking permits to accommodate individual requirements

- access to treatment and counselling support

- phased return to work for academics (eg removing teaching or clinical duties for period of time)

Mental ill-health

- 67% of departments implementing activities/initiatives to support mental ill-health
  - 28 depts have mental health first aiders
  - Running a wellbeing week and having a wellbeing working groups
  - Implementing department-wide mindfulness training
  - Running workshops on Mental Health in the Workplace
  - Adding wellbeing resources to departmental websites and staff newsletters.

Wellbeing

- 44% of departments implementing activities/initiatives to support wellbeing
  - Running yoga, Pilates, meditation and mindfulness sessions
  - Purchasing 'Calm App' subscription or Headspace app accounts
  - Neurodiversity training
  - Wellbeing sessions at 'away days'
  - Virtual coffee breaks
  - No email weekends
  - Lunchtime walking clubs
  - Use of Employee Assistance Programmes to provide staff with support from professional counsellors and legal advisors
  - Increasing the number of informal get-togethers of staff.

Bullying and Harassment

- Case numbers stable but 22 departments had noted trends/themes:
  - the behaviour of academics towards research and administrative staff cited as problematic
  - concerns that real numbers of cases are likely to be higher but reluctance to raise issues due to fear of negative impact on complainant, and lack of belief that action will be taken, particularly against academics
  - Pandemic-related issues leading to bullying inc: isolation and mental health impacts; impact on research delays; difficulty in delivery of feedback whilst working remotely. However, working from home was also noted as a protective factor in other areas ("reduced cases during covid with increased working from home").

Departmental activities to address B&H

- As previously, lots of activities such as highlighting policy during induction, emails from HoD, newsletters, posters, compulsory training, role modelling, events to mark anti-bulling week

- New themes for 2021

  - Development of behaviour charter / core values and behaviours policy / respectful behaviours framework

  - Importance of bystander and other training

  - Offering coaching on best practice

  - Local departmental E&D forum

  - Addressing the issue through the staff survey action plan

Sickness

- Reporting and record- keeping remains inconsistent between staff groups (100% for support staff, 30% for academics, 58% for research staff)
- But 41% of departments noted trends:
  - 10 departments noted significant **reduction** in sickness absence during lockdowns or periods of working from home which then increased again on RTOSW
  - 6 departments noted **increased stress-related** absence
  - 4 departments noted **increased mental ill-health** related absence
  - 3 departments are seeing **Long COVID cases** as a growing trend
- WFH has positive effect on absence, but concerns that it's more difficult for staff to take needed sick leave when it's so easy to log on from home.

Retention

- 54% departments report losing staff they wished to retain (stable numbers for last 5 years)

- Across all grades (inc academic, and ALC6) but G7/8 most frequently cited

- Salary and lack of opportunity to progress/development highly cited

- Cases where workload cited has more than doubled since 2019 exercise

- 'Other' category reasons:
  - 'perceived lack of engagement with questions of race and decolonisation'
  - the inability to arrange a fully remote working arrangement overseas
  - culture in the working group
  - merger related concerns
  - uncertainties over fixed term contracts.

Policies and demands and other feedback

- Concern at University's relocation officer post being discontinued without consultation - resulting in additional load falling to departmental teams

- Requests for better guidance on:
  - academic visitors
  - managing disability in the workplace
  - hybrid working
  - How to deal with bullying when no complaint is formally made
  - informal process stages (informal counselling, informal resolutions on bullying);

- Finding a process so that where more than one good candidate is interviewed they could be routed to other University vacancies

- Concerns that overly rigid approaches to requiring on-site working they may lose staff

Feedback (cont'd)

- Request for an in-house mediation service (currently a bought-in service)
- Request for more training on pre-employment screening
- More support needed from POD
- Questions about areas which are complex but infrequently tackled by departments and which could potentially be more efficiently centralised (examples: overseas working, Marie Curie students, visitor visas)
- Concerns about lack of resource in areas such as the overseas working team, HR Business Partner and Staff Immigration Team
- Concerns about the increased workload arising from increased number of visa applications post-Brexit.

Our Mental Wellness webinar series
Understanding and managing troubling mental images

- **Thursday 9 June, 10:00am – 10:45am (via Zoom)**

- Troubling mental images, such as bad memories, fearful 'flashforwards' and negative images of the self can impact our mental health and sense of self. In this talk from the Department of Experimental Psychology, **Hannah Murray** will explore how negative mental images can affect us, how psychological therapy can help, and how, in our day-to-day lives, we can transform our own troubling mental images. A Q&A will follow, chaired by **Cathy Creswell**.

- **Find out more and register**: https://talks.ox.ac.uk/talks/id/fd901ef3-d237-48a1-808a-8262f7b260f5/

- **Catch up** on previous talks in the series via YouTube: https://bit.ly/2VTSDNT

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

New: Welfare guide in New Manager's toolkit

- A new Welfare guide has been added to POD's suite of New Manager toolkit guides . It summarises:

- support available through the University such as our staff disability advisor, staff networks, Work+Family Space, Togetherall, Carefirst, Staff top-up fund, etc

- some of the Ts and Cs and benefits that support staff such as generous annual leave and flexible working options, as well as facilities such as sports

- key policies/guidance such as on Bullying and Harassment, Safeguarding, and Prevent (the arrangements to support those at risk of being drawn into terrorism)

- Please bring this new guide to attention of line managers, where appropriate.