

HR policy briefing

3 November 2022

Agenda

- Meet our new HR Director – Dr Markos Koumaditis
- Meet the new Senior Communications manager for HR – Lois May
- Wellbeing/staff counselling service update – Jo Mason
- EJRA changes
- Industrial action
- Reward updates
- Policy updates



THRIVING AT OXFORD

Contact us:

wellbeing@admin.ox.ac.uk

“Everyone is supported to feel and perform at their best as part of the University community”.

WHY

Online Resources
Online Training
Workshops and Events
Pilots

WHAT

Services including Staff Counselling

Wellbeing Champions
Staff Wellbeing Survey
Wellbeing Network

HOW

Staff counselling provision

Launched on 1st October

Counselling available for personal and work related issues

Occupational Health and SWSS working together to deliver the service

Self-referrals in addition to referrals from line managers, HR or Occupational Health

Triage system in place

Waiting list may be applied

Employer Justified Retirement Age – changes

- 10-year review of the EJRA now complete
- Proposals approved by Congregation and now being implemented.
- Reduced coverage – wef **18 October 2022**:
 - Staff in grades **8-10 and ALC6** are no longer subject to the EJRA and may choose the age at which they wish to retire
 - Academic staff and academic-related staff at grade RSIV (and clinical equivalents) continue to be subject to the EJRA
- Increase in age of retirement wef **1 October 2023**
 - The EJRA rises by one year to 30 September before the 70th birthday

How it affects staff near retirement

- Academic and RSIV staff and clinical equivalents:
 - with **EJRA of 30 September 2023** retire as planned
 - With **EJRA after 30 September 2023** retire on 30 September before their 70th birthday i.e. age 69
- All academic-related staff except RSIV, E62 and E82 can now choose when to retire
- Any staff currently engaged on an EJRA extension set up as a FTC:
 - If they are academic, RSIV, E62 or E82 and wish to stay on longer, the EJRA processes apply
 - If they are grades 6-10 or ALC6, the end of FTC process should be followed but can be extended (or redeployed) without further EJRA application

What has been updated?

- Retirement pages and standard retirement letters (ML1-6)
- EJRA pages and forms. 2nd extension forms renumbered as EJRA1B/2B/3B
- Process maps
- Academic-related contracts – off system (Global Talent visa clause added to length of contract)
- Academic contracts
- All job description/further particular templates (inc footer)
- Manual (off system) application forms
- PXD updates – system contracts to be updated next week. Application form, scenario fact sheet, reports to be updated soon

Questions?



- Email ruth.kinahan@admin.ox.ac.uk

Industrial action

- UCU ballot has secured mandate for industrial action on both pay and USS pension disputes
- UCU holding HE Committee meeting today (3 Nov) to consider next steps
- Action could include strike action and action short of strike action (ASOS)
 - Small-scale strike action in late November?
 - Escalated strike action in February?
 - Marking and assessment boycott?
- Any action will require 14 calendar days written notice

Reward updates

- Clinical consultant pay uplift (PERS(22)04) published
- Grading Service Review - key recommendations:
 - to introduce a triage approach to remove requests where a JE is unnecessary
 - a central, pre-application advice service for departments
 - a longer-term, strategic project to introduce a standardised approach to job descriptions
 - improved communications, training and documentation to improve visibility and transparency.

Student Ambassadors

- Following the successful TSS trial with Zoology and UAO, the student ambassador casual letter of engagement is now available for Departments to use.
- The letter of engagement enables student ambassadors to work for up to 30 days between now and the end of April 2023 (without the normal 12-week limit for casuals).
- The letter of engagement will be reviewed next Spring but it is expected we will have a new 12 month version available then.
- It is available from HRBPs on request.

Staff harassment procedure - updates due

Minor changes to the Harassment Procedure for complaints *against* staff, being made in response to the OfS 2021 Statement of Expectations.

Including:

- Clarifying the circumstances in which time periods can be extended
- Clarifying what is meant by a reasonable perception of bias
- Expressly stating that the standard of proof is “on the balance of probabilities”
- Clarifying the circumstances in which the reporter may be informed of subsequent disciplinary steps taken in relation to the member of staff
- Stating that a student’s request for redress to the Proctors may be made after notification of the harassment decision or the student’s appeal decision (rather than having to wait for the outcome of any appeal by the staff member).

[Harassment Procedure - University staff | Equality and Diversity Unit \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Coming soon

- Revised staff-student relationship policy
- Revised and restructured support staff disciplinary and grievance procedures (handbook chapter 8)
- Guidance on visitors

Annual Audit – coming in January

- Self-assessment and data collection exercise
- We are reviewing and updating the question sets
- As usual, the exercise looks back over the previous calendar year so we will circulate in January/February
- Really valuable exercise:
 - Serves an important compliance function
 - But also, the data collection outputs are used across the HR teams throughout the year
- Plan to use the same off system self-assessment and online data collection format – any thoughts/questions email kate.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk

Holiday pay (Harpur V Brazel)

- Principle
 - WTR statutory 5.6 weeks paid leave can be pro-rated for part-time hours staff, it cannot be pro-rated for those who are part-year workers where there is an underlying contract for a full year or more
- Complex: we are still discussing with legal advisors but likely that:
 - Short-term casual workers, TSS staff, and those variable hours employees who work all year round – little impact
 - Term-time only staff - potentially additional holiday pay due
 - variable hours staff who only work for part of the year, casual teaching staff who are engaged for more than one year – potentially significant impact
 - Finance division (and div financial controllers) aware.

Menopause in the workplace

- Guidance now available:
 - For individuals experiencing negative effects of menopause
 - For line managers and colleagues

[Menopause in the workplace | HR Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

- Case studies
 - would like more: particularly researchers or academics
- Awareness raising workshop 13 October.
 - Recording available until 12 November
 - To be re-run 7 February 2023
- Slide deck introducing guidance, for departmental use-
contact kate.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk
- Next steps, working with wellbeing and EDU on networks

General updates

Prevent Duty

The duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”

Briefing run in October by Rotimi Akinsete. Watch at:

- [Prevent briefing recording](#)
- [Prevent briefing slides](#)

COVID self-isolation and Long COVID sickness absence management

- Self-isolation – no longer a Government requirement. Encourage wearing masks or home working, where possible, if people are infectious.
- Long COVID – treated as other long-term, chronic, illnesses.
 - No blanket approach
 - OH assess each individual and their clinical presentation, functional ability etc, as for any referral and offer recommendations based on findings.



NWW pulse survey

- Professional Services staff surveyed 22 June – 5 July 2022
- 1282 responses received (c. 21% of PSS) of which 491 were line managers
- Largely positive responses from both individuals and managers
- Downloadable from [Feedback tab of the NWW website](#)
 - summary of the key findings
 - summary of the free text comments

Questions?