**International working and pension contributions (USS)**

USS has recently clarified its position regarding international workers. Prior to 1 January 2021, contributions to USS for staff based in an EEA state were not possible due to the EU cross-border pension regulations. The cross-border regulations were repealed following the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December 2020. Staff based permanently in an EEA state may therefore be eligible to re-join USS, provided that there are no legal restrictions in that location. The departments affected by this change will be contacted to discuss any implications and next steps.

**Reward updates**

**Pay awards**

The pay negotiation process for 2021/22 has now concluded. All **non-clinical staff** will receive a pay increase of at least 1.5% (higher percentage uplifts will be made to the pay points below national spine point 22). The pay uplifts have been implemented in the September payroll and backdated to 1 August.

The pay award for **clinical consultant staff** is progressing and further information will be provided for departments which employ clinical staff shortly.

Information regarding the negotiations and key updates can be found on the [reward website](https://hr.web.ox.ac.uk/reward#/).

**Salary sacrifice – Cycle to work scheme**

In addition to our current loan scheme and discounts at local retailers we will be introducing a new salary sacrifice scheme later this term for staff who wish to purchase bicycles. Further details will be announced via the Bulletin in due course.

**USS contribution increase**

From 1 October 2021 contributions will change to 9.8% for members and 21.4% for employers.

The employer contribution on salary over the threshold for enhanced opt-out/Voluntary Salary Cap members will increase to 6.3% in line with the new rate of deficit recovery contributions.

USS emailed a member update to all USS members on or around 9th September advising them of this change to the previously proposed increase.

Find out more on the [USS website.](https://www.uss.co.uk/for-members/articles-for-members/2021/09/09092021_proposed-changes-to-your-contributions-and-benefits)

**Top Apprenticeship Employer 2020-2021**

We are thrilled to announce that for the second year running, the University of Oxford has placed within the Top 50 for [Rate My Apprenticeship’s Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers Table 2020-21](https://www.ratemyapprenticeshipawards.co.uk/)!

The awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of apprentices, schools & colleges, employers and training providers in Apprenticeships.

***Message from Julian Duxfield, Director of HR***

Welcome back to Michaelmas term. I hope that you were able to have a good break over the summer and are feeling refreshed at the start of what is typically a busy term for many of us.

I know that many of us have now returned to on-site working for at least part of the working week and it’s great to see more faces around and to start to re-connect with colleagues in person. Many departments are also already working on implementing the [New Ways of Working Framework](https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/you-and-work/new-ways-of-working#tab-2999376).

I hope you all have a productive and successful academic year.





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# Race Equality Task Force Consultation: Michaelmas term 2021

## All Oxford University staff and students are invited to take part in a consultation to provide their feedback about the recommendations and proposed measures of the Race Equality Task Force.

##

## The Task Force will consider the response to the consultation in Hilary term. Based on this input, they will develop a final University-wide strategy and funded business plan for approval by Council at the end of the 2021/22 academic year. Its outputs will also feed into the University’s next Race Equality Charter submission in 2022.

## You can find out about the consultation on the [Task Force website](https://edu.web.ox.ac.uk/race-equality-task-force-consultation-mt21)

## The deadline for responses is 5pm on Wednesday 1 December 2021.

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**Shared Parental Leave**

Shared Parental Leave is a scheme which allows a mother, or primary adopter, to choose to cut short their period of maternity or adoption leave and convert the balance of the entitlement into leave that can be shared with their partner.

In January 2020 the University changed the eligibility criteria for its family leave schemes and new starters are now eligible for family leave benefits from the first day of their employment, even if they don’t qualify for statutory benefits such as statutory maternity leave. Unfortunately, it has come to light that it is only possible to offer Shared Parental Leave from day one if both parents work for an employer, such as the University, who offers a day one scheme. Anyone considering using Shared Parental Leave is therefore encouraged to seek advice as early as possible to see what options are available.

For full details of Shared Parental Leave please read the [guidance on the HR Support website](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/shared-parental-leave-spl).

**Return to on-site work and Occupational Health advice**

Where clinical advice is needed to help individuals with returning on-site it is recommended that a management referral is made to OH. The self-assessment ALAMA tool is no longer available as it is likely to be inaccurate in the current situation.

Self-referrals can still be made if there is a pressing need but staff wishing to use this route are advised that such consultations will not result in any management advice.

**Our Mental Wellness webinar: Grief after bereavement**

The Department of Experimental Psychology is continuing its series of online lectures entitled "Our Mental Wellness".  These practical talks for staff and students aim to increase understanding of mental health issues, break down myths, and help promote the mental wellness of ourselves and those around us.

This is a great opportunity for staff to hear world-leading researchers from the University of Oxford share their expertise about mental health conditions and effective evidence-based treatments.

It is also a chance to have your questions answered about how we can look
after each other’s mental wellness in our community.
Talks run twice termly and are open to all staff at the University.

**Registration is open** for the next webinar:

* [Coping with Grief After Bereavement](https://talks.ox.ac.uk/talks/id/5e658157-ad0b-4137-9f96-1aca2516644d/) on Thursday 18 November

Previous talks can be viewed on the [Our Mental Wellness Youtube channel](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMfAfjAWEyuOBtviJSn1o9YbBnEHTDHh1)

