

# SOAS

## Human Resources Committee

10.00am on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October in room 116

### Agenda

Items marked with an asterisk are formal business, not intended for discussion. If members wish to discuss any issues arising from these items they should inform the Chair by 9.00am on the day prior to the meeting.

I	Terms of Reference To note	Appendix A *
II	Annex XIV of Standing Orders – Conduct of Meetings To note	Appendix B *
III	Minutes To approve: minutes of the meeting held on 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2008.	Attached
IV	Matters Arising  i. Hourly-paid teaching staff proposals ii. HR Policies and Procedures iii. HR Systems and Processes	
V	HEFCE Self Assessment Tool (SAT)  To Note the Report & Outcome	Appendix C
VI	Annual Report to Resources & Planning Committee  To Note the Report	Appendix D
VII	HR Strategy Update  i. Report on progress to date ii. Rescheduling of priorities  Any Other Business	Appendix E

These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the Committee.

## SOAS

### Human Resources Committee

10am on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in Room 116

Mr Donald Beaton, Registrar and Secretary (Chair)  
Mr Peter Mitchell, HR Director (Secretary)  
Ms Marva De La Coudray, Head of Widening Participation  
Professor Matthew Craven, Dean of Faculty\*  
Dr Barbara Pizziconi, Senior Lecturer  
Dr Ted Proferes, Programmes Convenor & Director of Studies  
Mrs Barbara Spina, Head of Teaching and Research Support  
Dr Julia Strauss, Senior Lecturer  
Ms Deb Viney, Diversity Adviser  
Ms Zoe Weaver, External Adviser  
Ms Serena Yeo, Staff Development Manager  
Ms Martine Baraket, HR Manager  
Mr Charles Perry, HR Manager  
Ms Seema Sanyal, HR Manager

\*Those whose names are marked with a single asterisk were unable to attend the meeting,

#### **1. Terms of Reference**

The Committee NOTED the Terms of Reference.

#### **2. Annex XIV of Standing Orders – Conduct of Meetings**

The Committee NOTED the Standing Orders.

#### **3. Minutes of meeting 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

The Committee AGREED the accuracy of the minutes.

#### **4. Matters Arising:**

Page 5: Item 21. (ii) Service Level Agreements - clarification requested by new committee member

Page 2: Item 16. Committee Review 2009/10 - NOTED action carried out  
The Committee was provided with the results of the 2009-2010 Academic Promotions for information.

#### **5. Business Agenda for HR Committee 2010 / 2011**

The updated Human Resources Strategic Objectives and Action Plan 2010/11 were circulated to the Committee. The HR Director set out the milestones for HR Committee business in 2010 / 2011. The next HR Committee should agree the priorities in May 2011 and approve an annual report which will go to the Resources and Planning Committee.

HR Director raised his concern on the number of objectives that HR has been set for this session, which has recently been added to. The impact of the Browne Review makes the Directorate vulnerable to continuous shifts in priorities. This will mean that some agreed work may not be completed. Work will also be required to respond to the staff survey.

HR Director said the risk register would have to be updated at each HR Committee and needed refinement to reflect the link between performance indicators and the risk.

The Directorate will target some of the key questions in the staff survey to measure on an annual basis. For example, the equality and diversity staff report would monitor the trends about how we are retaining our staff.

The HR strategy should help support faculty plans. A review of faculty plans will be needed as these papers were drafted some time ago. Such reviews would take place after the HFCHE funding letter is received in March 2011.

Chair noted the concern about priorities and the need to be ruthless about top priorities for the School. Work that we might like to do may have to be delayed.

## **6. Preliminary Result of Staff Survey**

HR Director presented preliminary outcomes of the SOAS staff survey. The PowerPoint presentation from Capita has been shown to some Heads of Departments and SOAS trade union representatives.

In summary there were seventy eight issues that showed improvement and sixteen issues that showed deterioration. The presentation included: survey facts and figures; comparisons with the 2007 survey; employee engagement; negative perceptions; bench marking; top issues; areas of strengths and other key findings.

Discussion followed around some of the contradictions between different aspects of the survey results. For example staff agreeing with the statement "I feel proud to work for SOAS" but less likely to agree positively to "Would you recommend the School to a friend as a place to work?"

Other discussion focussed on dissatisfaction over noisy working environment (was this related to building work that took place in April to June this year?) and on negative perceptions, specifically around communications

Top issues to address include:

- Managing change - helping managers and staff to cope better with change;
- Bureaucracy and workload: need to refine understanding;
- Procedures with reference to stress at work (insufficient staff, work demands and personal workloads etc);

The Committee also noted positive responses, including: Job satisfaction; Pay and conditions; Role and responsibilities.

HR Director also highlighted planned actions which included: a review of internal communications, including a survey on communications issues across the School; ensuring managers are comfortable and able to use SOAS policies and procedures effectively (with better provision of training and management guidance relating to specific policies and procedures).

The following was NOTED by Committee members:

- There has been significant improvement since last survey in 2007;
- Health and safety: Action urgently needed. A priority issue for the H&S committee;
- Key aspects of the staff survey corresponds with DAPs findings and the student survey results;
- The critical need to improve the IT service which surely has an impact on how staff perceive their day to day working experience.

The Chair thanked the Committee for all their contributions to the discussion. The Chair observed that there was a difficult balance between becoming more compliant and the individual freedom to organise work that suits that individual. Having internal systems that are affordable and deliver a quality overall service may mean sacrifices in other areas.

The Chair underlined the importance of ensuring that the issues that the staff survey highlighted should be reviewed and actions to address the issues communicated to staff on a regular basis (i.e. "This is what you said and this is what we are doing about it"). The aim must be that participation in the next survey in 3 years time is better as staff will see it as a way of really making a difference.

## **7. Report on the Equalities Act 2010 - "What's new and what's changed?"**

HR Manager, Seema Sanyal, facilitated a power point presentation giving an overview of the Equality Act 2010, particularly drawing to the committee's attention the summary of the ACAS guide on "What's new and what's changed: at a glance".

Equality legislation has been in existence since 1970 with the Equal Pay Act. This Equality Act consolidates all equality legislation. Although the Act was given royal assent in April 2010, some aspects of the legislation have not been implemented, and some aspects may never be fully implemented, depending on this current government decision.

The Committee noted that there was a requirement to hold "sincere belief" under religion and belief. Also the extension of protection for those who feel that they have faced discrimination by association (for example protecting carers of those who are disabled).

## **8. Any Other Business**

*i) Key Performance Indicator for SOAS staff*

The Chair noted the request by Governing Body for a meaningful KPI for staff to be implemented by the end of the year. This item will be placed on the next HR Committee agenda.

Meeting ends 12 noon.