

University of Manchester
Registrar and Secretary : Core Brief for June 2005

1) Review of Devolution

The structural changes outlined in the Review of Devolution (published towards the end of May) are in the process of being worked through, with it being intended that new structures be formally in place by the start of the new financial year on 1st August 2005. Taken with the associated detailed external review of External Relations and Marketing and the high-level review of Manchester Computing, the new structure (based on directorates and divisions) is not expected to change in any significant way for some time. It will therefore provide a sound base on which to involve administrative staff across the University in reviews of core business processes with the aim being to improve levels of service in all areas, whether it be the University Centre, Faculties or Schools.

Budgetary implications of the new structure are still being discussed. They will certainly be challenging but not impossible for the Central Administration.

2) HR Issues – Pay/Grading

Further to the section in last month's core brief, the Director of Human Resources has provided me with the following update:

Work is proceeding jointly with the University's trade union group to deliver the new pay and grading arrangements and associated harmonised terms and conditions.

If progress continues as planned, it is the joint intention of management and trade unions to advise staff during August of the proposed agreed structure for pay and grading, together with the unified terms and conditions.

As the approval of staff to the new structures and terms/conditions is a pre-requisite for their introduction, the Campus Trade Unions will then make necessary arrangements to ballot staff. Given a positive outcome, staff will be advised on an individual basis what this means to them personally. While the timing of this advice to individual staff is dependent on the ballot process, the expectation is that it will take place later in September, with salary changes being made in time for the payroll run in October.

In that connection, staff are reminded that changes to salary will be backdated to 1 October 2004 – or to the appropriate date where new responsibilities were adopted by individual members of staff.

Around the time that details of the new arrangements are being made known to staff, another series of HR Roadshows will be conducted on campus, to offer explanations to staff, and provide answers to questions.

During July, and until the proposed new arrangements are publicised, various forms of regular communication will be provided via the University's website and via hard copy for staff without easy access to a computer. The appropriate URL for the website will be circulated to staff as soon as it 'goes live'.

While timings for the introduction of the new pay and grading structure have slipped from the hoped-for date of July 2005, I hope that staff will understand that the processes involved in its development are complex and depend on co-operation and goodwill between Trade Unions and Management, as well as a good deal of hard work on the part of staff who have volunteered to help with the development process.

Manchester is still significantly ahead of many other universities with the new structure and, while it may be cold comfort for staff who have waited patiently since the merger to be recognised and rewarded, the end of the process is now firmly in sight. While impatience and frustration at what must seem like a monumentally slow process are wholly understandable, I would stress that Management and Trade Unions are concerned to ensure that while we will move forward with all appropriate speed, it must not be at the expense of compromising the quality of the structures to be established for the future. We will, after all, expect to work with them for a good number of years.

3) Online Directory

The Online Directory is a web searchable database of telephone numbers, email addresses and other information about staff and students at the University. A cause of significant frustration is that it is hard to find a person if the role is known, but not the name. For example, it is not possible to search for the Finance Officer in a particular School. The cause of this problem is related to poor data quality. Although individuals have the ability to update some fields in their own entry there is a lack of consistency and also detailed structure below the School/Admin Unit level. IT Services have made available a tool to allow management of the Online Directory to be devolved to School/Admin Unit level. A person will be nominated and trained in each School/Admin Unit to manage local data within the Online Directory.

4) University Web Development Project

Professor Alan North, Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences, has agreed to Chair a Project Board which aims to re-develop and develop further the University's web-site. As all staff around have received an e-mail from Alan on the Project Board and on its terms of reference, I would simply emphasise its importance and encourage all staff to support the work of the Project Board and the implementation group.