

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

1) Review of Devolution

Further to last month's report on the Review of Devolution, the Review Group has almost completed its work and (at the time of writing) is about to publish its report. As a reminder, the primary task of the Group can be summarised as follows:

- i) to clarify the principles of devolution and delegation which should inform a review of the University's administrative arrangements;
- ii) to review in line with the principles the appropriateness of current administrative structures and attainment patterns of resource allocation;
- iii) to identify any structure changes immediately required to improve the quality, responsiveness and cost-effectiveness of administrative support across the University;
- iv) to ensure that such structural changes achieve real and significant improvements in the quality and cost-effectiveness of administrative support across the University, secure savings in the cost of the Central Administration, retain centrally only those functions that cannot be better devolved to Faculties and Schools and over time progressively shift resources from paying for the cost of administration to developing the core academic functions of teaching and research.

The review has led to a clear re-statement of the main delegations and relationships between the Centre and the Faculties, where the Deans are the key clients in relation to administrative services, whether delivered centrally or locally in the Faculties. The Registrar and Secretary, as Head of the Administration in the University, delegates responsibility to Directors and Heads of Faculty Administration, for example, who will manage staff delivering Estates, Finance, Human Resources and Information Services and other service functions in the Faculties. Such staff, though, will continue to have important central linkages, maintaining a professional relationship with the appropriate director in the Centre, who will ensure that all staff in, for example, Human Resources are involved in and benefit from work undertaken on policy development in the general area of HR. One of the proposed benefits of this reaffirmation of delegated responsibility should be the removal of any doubts or ambiguities that may exist currently about this matter and so lead to a better mutually supportive relationship between the component parts of the Administration.

The budget for the Central Administration in 2005/06 and thereafter will see both a cash-limit cap and a straight transfer of funds to the Faculties, in addition to budgetary transfers for administrative posts transferred to Faculty baselines. Further work will be undertaken during the year to examine current processes and structures with the aim of saving another significant sum to be transferred to the Faculties.

The longer-term aim is to have a Central Administration which is essentially strategic or which fulfils corporate functions difficult or expensive to deliver at the level of individual Faculties. The presumption will be that operational activities are devolved unless there are compelling legal or value-for-money reasons why that should not be the case.

Further details of both the Review and of the consequent and very challenging budgetary implications will be included in a supplementary brief to be published after the Review Group's Report is published.

2 HR Issues – Pay/Grading

While I am acutely aware that the University is presuming heavily on the continued patience of its staff in relation to issues such as a virtual moratorium on non-academic staff promotion, I hope that the progress being made in benchmarking jobs in the job evaluation exercise means that the end is now definitely in sight. The University has previously made a clear commitment to new pay and grading structures being in place in August 2005, with any changes to salary resulting from the introduction of the structures being backdated at least to 1st October 2004. That commitment very much still stands, although the sheer diversity of academic-related jobs means that some compromise will have to be made between the wish to benchmark a large number of jobs (which will add significantly to the time taken for the job evaluation exercise) and the equally strong wish to move forward on issues such as ensuring that staff working in more responsible jobs are properly recognised and rewarded. I would stress that there is a clear wish on the part of the relevant Campus Trade Unions and the University to make as rapid progress as possible. Human Resources will shortly be providing updated guidance on timescales and details for managers.

3 Administrative Staff Conferences

I apologise for the fact that the one-day staff conference which we had announced for June will now be held in September. The main reason for the change is to allow the outcomes of the Review of Devolution to be published and then to allow some reflection on their implications. A provisional date will be circulated to staff as soon as possible. **Because of pressures of work and other diary commitments the Senior Administrative Staff Conference scheduled for 28th June will not now go ahead but we will develop a series of events and briefings for administration staff over the next two/three months, beginning to implement them in the new academic session.**

4 Car Parking

Work has now started on the new multi-storey car park which means that the number of available spaces on the campus has been significantly reduced. The independently scrutinised ballot for the reduced number of spaces has also recently been held. For those staff who have opted for the park and ride option, the difficulties with extended journey times for some staff in Travis Street will be investigated by Estates. Some people have raised security concerns regarding Travis Street and these are being addressed with Greater Manchester Police. It is also planned to increase the security presence at the Travis Street car park, particularly during the winter months.