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Career Progression

You said: we want professional staff to be offered the same career development opportunities as academic staff

The career paths for Academics and Professional Services staff are different, reflecting the different requirements and context of each. Addressing career development opportunities for Professional Services staff is important, to enable people in these roles to feel fulfilled in their career and be satisfied with their reward for the job they do.

We will continue to monitor the re-grading process, which is open to all staff, details of which can be found here: Promotions and grading

The grading process does allow for senior technical or professional experts and we will review your suggestion of how to incorporate these into the existing grading structure.

The University is a wide and varied employer, and all advertised vacancies are open for applications from all suitably skilled and/or qualified staff. However, there are occasions when roles cannot be filled by staff who would be developing in their role and experience is needed to deliver immediate requirements. In these instances, all staff should ask for feedback after applying for roles, so they can target their development in line with their career path.

To support you further, we have some useful toolkits within our learning and development webpages which can support you with the identification and self-development of specific skills:
- Planning your development
- Learning and development courses and resources

For grades UE06 - UE10, the University has a competency framework which can be used to understand the attitudes and behaviours for successful performance. More information can be found here: Competency Framework

You said: There should be a wider range of criteria for promotion that recognises teaching excellence, as well as publishing in core journals

The University has clear, balanced Grade Profiles for academic staff that match individuals’ activities and achievements to grades UE06 - UE10, with respect to teaching, research and leadership/management.

The Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education aim to assist both colleagues preparing a case for promotion/reward focussed around teaching and those evaluating such cases as members of promotion panels. They provide concrete, illustrative examples of excellent performance in and contribution to, student education. The Exemplars are not exhaustive and will change and evolve over time for example, as the nature of student learning evolves.
Staff Support

You said: the induction experience is not consistent and sometimes falls short of expectations.
Induction is key to how staff experience the University as an employer from the beginning and your insight is invaluable to ensuring this is as good as it can be. Feel free to share any feedback or suggestions for improvements to your local HR team.

Contact your local HR teams

You said: I think it would be very helpful if all staff were offered either a mandatory or optional re-induction every few years, so that they can catch up with the latest strategies and directions for the University
This suggestion picks up on the basis for communication events such as the Principal’s events and the various college and school communication events but we currently do not offer a formal re-induction style event. We do continually review the content of central communication events and will add this suggestion into the next review.
Wellbeing

You said: workload allocations in Moray House need to be reviewed. Staff well-being is compromised by the need to work substantially beyond the contractual working week and often by an inability to take breaks during the working day.

Moray House School of Education has undergone three consultations with staff on workload models. The first was in 2012, the second was in 2015 which sought to review and evaluate the model that was agreed in 2012. In 2014, CAHSS agreed a College wide workload model. Moray House embarked on a third staff consultation at the end of 2018. This consultation sought both opinion and rationale for adjustments to College tariffs. The outcome of the survey has been shared with staff within the school. Further discussions are ongoing about the rationale for adjustments to the College tariffs. We hope the discussions will allow us to come to a finalised workload model that meets the needs of Moray House as well as gives due diligence to the College tariffs.

The health and wellbeing of staff is a priority for the School. Where staff feel work load is impacting on their health and wellbeing they should discuss this with their line manager to allow action to be taken following consideration of all contributing factors.

The School management will continue to monitor workloads and will seek discussions with staff who are more than 15% over or under individuals contracted hours by end of the 2018/19 academic session, to agree actions to address this and achieve parity across colleagues. The School has also responded to the University staff survey with a draft list of actions which is currently being consulted on, to assist address issues of workload, of lifework balance, of staff development and of bullying and harassment. The addressing of workload requires a package of actions that moves beyond the issue of tariffs.
Pay and reward

You said: University pay scales are not competitive and needs to be reviewed
Pay rates are negotiated nationally by the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA). Through this, we ensure we have parity and consistency.

The University also has provisions in place in the form of the Market Supplements Policy to address situations in which the usual pay scale for a role is insufficient to attract applicants or retain existing employees.

Our staff are also recognised for their contribution annually through the various different reward process and policies such as Contribution Reward, Grade 10, Academic Promotions and Voucher Rewards.

You said: Grade UE10 internal candidates are not paid equally with Grade UE10 external candidates.
During the recruitment process, recruiting managers are provided with anonymised internal and external benchmarking comparators (Russell Group, UCEA and Xpert HR salary surveys) to aid salary decisions. This data is also provided for the Grade 10 Review and Central Academic Promotions Process.

The policy relating to Grade 10 pay is the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee, in terms of Governance, to ensure pay decisions are fair and equitable and consideration should be given to the impact of the salary decisions on gender and equal pay and responsive in a highly competitive market.

You said: continuous service awards should start at 5 years to recognise commitment.
Staff are recognised for their contribution annually through the various different reward process and policies such as Contribution Reward, Grade 10, Academic Promotions and Voucher Rewards. Therefore, we currently have no plans to introduce long service awards starting at 5 years’ service.

You said: Why are annual leave entitlements and probation periods different for grades UE01-05 and UE06-10?
The reward packages, overtime and leave allowances are designed to recognise the different accountabilities and expectations within the roles at grades UE01-05 and UE06-UE10. Details of the reward packages available to staff can be found here: https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/staff-benefits

All staff at all grades are employed subject to a probation period which provides staff and the University with the opportunity to confirm their capability and suitability for their role. Again, reflecting the different accountabilities and expectations of the grades, the duration of probation is 6 months for UE01-05 and 12 months for UE06-UE10.
Promoting good news

You said: Make students' stories a priority and start a poster/billboard campaign with pictures of inspiring students and their stories.

The Inspiring Students campaign has been running for two years, celebrating student success, along with staff and alumni.

We've been working with our Schools Communications Network to showcase a wide range of award winning students across the University and publicising opportunities that are available to our students, with hoardings and clingz appearing across our campuses, on our website, social media channels and eNewsletters.

Examples can be found at https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/inspiring-students

We're now working on how best to communicate improvements to the student and staff experience, and will continue to celebrate our students, staff and alumni as part of these ongoing campaigns. As well as students hearing news directly through their School channels, we continue to promote student stories and news across our Student News channels at https://twitter.com/edinunistudents and https://www.facebook.com/EdinUniStudents, and through our official University channels at https://www.ed.ac.uk.
Excellent support

You said: I suffered issues with my mental wellbeing. My manager and team as a whole were exemplary in their support. It was their kindness and understanding that meant I could return to work when I did and I can only hope that if anyone else struggles as I did, that they receive the same support. Thank you for your feedback, we will send this comment onto your manager (not named) and team.

Mental health and wellbeing is an important issue within the workplace and it is important that staff understand what services the University has in place, either to support you in the event you are experiencing mental health problems, or to provide direction to managers and colleagues helping a staff member return to work.
You said: when will the text comments be made available from the Staff Survey? Due to the personal nature of some of the comments provided, there were concerns about breaching anonymity if the comments were made public.

Therefore the Principal and his senior team made the decision that the comments reports should be shared with identified managers (mostly Heads of School, Directors of Departments, Registrars and Directors of Professional Services) to allow them to identify areas of focus, and to support and/or challenge the consolidated data in the survey reports. There are no plans to share them with all staff.
Equality and diversity

You said: there is a lack of gender diversity on interview panels in certain areas of the University

We are working across the University to create an inclusive work environment. The concern around gender balance within our interview panels in certain parts of the College of Science & Engineering has been recognised by the management team who are exploring how this can be improved. If you have any concerns about representation at your interview panel, you can raise this with your HR team.
PhD support

You said: I'm a member of staff studying part time for a PhD. I'd like to know how the University supports staff who study and what support I should expect from my line manager.

As a learning institution, the University is highly supportive of staff seeking to gain further qualifications, from skills-based qualifications through to Doctorates.

Working whilst studying does significantly compound the pressure staff will be under, and your manager is your first point of contact to discuss this further.

As you indicated in your suggestion box comment, there may be some flexibility available to allow you to attend meetings or to study, however this remains at your managers’ discretion and it is your responsibility to ensure you are able to complete the requirements of your role successfully.
You said: The Fringe is too disruptive to our working lives

We understand that the impact of our Festival collaboration can bring disruption to some of our colleagues. The Festivals team aim to hold meetings with central area staff in advance of every Fringe and we very much appreciate their support through this intensely busy time.
Annual leave

You said: As a result of the University no longer closing for bank holidays, apart from Christmas and New Year, you can never take a day’s leave without coming back to work to a backlog of e-mails. Can the University bring back a Spring Break (closing for a Friday and Monday) and do the same in the Autumn?

The University’s leave policy is designed to provide as much flexibility for staff as possible. Some benefits of this include enabling colleagues who want to save their leave for travelling outside of school holidays to do so and providing flexibility for longer periods of leave to be taken.

In the meantime, if you are experiencing a backlog of work on your return from leave, ensuring you put on a well-worded out-of-office message informing your colleagues of your holidays, and including the reasonable timescales for expecting your reply could help with managing any pressure to respond immediately.
Annual Review

You said: we want behaviour and values included on the annual review form, in addition to the academic and research focus.
The way we work together and how we engage with each other is as important as what we achieve by working together. The Principal has initiated a number of listening sessions to build a set of core values upon which the University will stand.

The values will underpin the University’s position on ways of working and staff behaviour, and we will continue to improve our processes for annual review to reflect these values when they are launched. We will provide further information about this in the coming months.
Environment

You said: The University should ensure that lights and computer monitors are turned off at the end of the day

The University has over 100 ‘Energy Coordinators’ acting as local champions within Schools promoting appropriate energy efficiency actions within buildings. You can submit suggestions via:

https://www.ed.ac.uk/estates/what-we-do/energy/contact-us

Any suggestions on lighting and equipment efficiency opportunities will be communicated to the local Energy Coordinators to review and re-enforce local policies and practices. Opportunities for technical interventions are communicated to Estates Services by the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Engagement Manager.

Over £1.5M has been invested in improving lighting control across the estate, often as a direct result of student and staff feedback on local issues and opportunities.
Facilities

You said: Sports pitches and courts should be available at each campus for staff to use, socialise and interact

The main constraint currently is available facilities. Within the city centre, we offer a range of 'Intra-mural' and similar departmental sporting opportunities for staff and students to enjoy. This is centred at Pleasance and encompasses the likes of squash ladders, indoor football, and basketball. More 'team' games are planned, though this has to be managed in the context of the huge weekly demand placed by student clubs for training and competition space, as well as the insatiable appetite for group exercise classes too.

There was a plan to redevelop the sporting offer at King’s Buildings Campus though this been put on hold for now as a result of the on-going capital prioritisation discussions. In the meantime, our Sports Union (the custodian of Intra-mural sport) is looking at how we might increase the number and type of sporting activities, though the lack and quality of suitable/available space is a challenge.

The new pitches and multi-use games areas at Peffermill (based 10 minutes away from KB) have proved hugely popular with staff and students. This will be developed further in the year ahead. We are also advancing a transformational investment plan into Peffermill which, if successful, will see a brand new Sports Complex built and this will create a plethora of new indoor and outdoor sporting exchanges for the University community to enjoy.

The Easter Bush Gym was opened 18 months ago and we are now working on developing a trim-trail and outdoor MUGAs to enhance the recreational opportunities at this campus - especially within a group-based focus.

Group-based activity, often undertaken in formal and/or semi-structured teams, creates a unique way of promoting physical well-being, mental health, social interaction, community spirit and local identity. Its positive impact on the lives of students/staff, as individuals and groups, is irrefutable. We are very aware of the positive benefits arising from sporting interaction and are working very hard to do more, and do it better.

You said: make Amazon lockers available at King's Buildings

On average throughout 2018, 6 parcels per day were delivered to the University. This level of volume does not support the installation of Amazon lockers at this time. The volume will be monitored on a regular basis and reviewed as required if the volume increases.
HR forms

You said: can you make it so that documents in the new HR SharePoint can be dragged and dropped into emails? Also the naming convention of documents is very time consuming.

Unfortunately documents in SharePoint cannot be dragged and dropped into emails. In order to email a document from SharePoint, you must first open the document in SharePoint, save a copy of it (ideally as a PDF to prevent editing) then attach it to an email. The saved copy of the document should then be deleted from your drive/desktop. We appreciate this is not ideal and will work to continuously improve the process within the limitations of the system.

A naming app is currently being developed as part of the File Digitisation project to make the naming of documents quicker, easier and more accurate. This will be available in the next two weeks. Further information on this will be sent to system users soon.
Review of student support

You said: please ensure that all levels of staff are consulted as part of the student support review and not just senior staff.

The review which we are launching, led by Charlie Jeffrey, will be looking at the whole “ecosystem” of student support. It will include a thorough look at the Personal Tutor system, which has been in place for 7 years now, but also at other support structures that sit alongside Personal Tutors, for example Student Support Teams, as well as the role of specialised services that support students with their mental health and wellbeing, employability, etc.

In terms of governance, it’s a small oversight group and there are indeed a number of senior staff on it, but some of them are also student facing, for example a senior tutor, a school-based head of student services - and very importantly we also have the student voice, represented by two sabbatical officers from the Students’ Association.

More importantly still, the oversight group will be ensuring that the project team consults as widely as possible with students and staff at all levels, academic and professional services, about the challenges with current arrangements and the best way to enhance support in the future.

It’s too early for us to be able to announce the detailed plans and timescales for consultation, but when we do, we really hope you will take part in the consultation, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.
You said: review plans for Edinburgh Futures Institute

The team designing the EFI has been working over the last 2 years to develop the vision for the Futures Institute, drawing in nearly 100 people from across the University and working with colleagues in Estates to manage the transformation through renovation of an important building at the heart of the University that will live up to the motto above its door - Patet Ominbus (Open to All).

There is much still to be done before the new facilities open in September 2021, and the Director, Professor Lesley McAra and her team are currently hosting a number of events designed to draw more people further into the discussion to shape the Institute:

EFI events

A communication plan has also been drawn up to increase the news about their plans being circulated not only to staff across the University but also students and local communities.
You said: EUCLID is too slow and alternative ways to get staff the information they need about their students quickly are needed

Due to the size, scale and complexity of EUCLID we are aware of performance issues. The Student Systems Partnership have begun to address the underlying architecture, with a first set of changes being released for admissions processing in February 2019

These changes are being monitored and analytics collated to ensure they create the desired impact. If this is successful, this new architecture will be rolled out to further areas of EUCLID. Changes to EUCLID will be prioritised by the appropriate user group.
Timetabling

You said: Timetabling should aim to ensure that pre-Honours classes start no earlier than 10am to support differing circadian rhythm of teenage students
The University’s official teaching day (as determined by the relevant policy) is 9am-6pm. Constraints on the teaching estate means the 9am slot does need to be used to ensure a full room allocation but, with the exception of very large lecture classes, Schools still largely determine the days and times for course teaching, so are able to prioritise scheduling accordingly.

Although there is scope for Schools to drive forward the initiative in question, it may be that a recommendation to prioritise the way in which pre-Honours classes are scheduled should be submitted to Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (owner of TT policy) to ensure formal incorporation within the policy. Any request should be submitted through the appropriate academic representation on the committee. However, it should be noted that the more constrained the timetabling rules, the more difficult it is to ensure a successful scheduling outcome.
Staff benefits

You said: the new staff loan scheme is not competitive
Our aim is to provide staff with a more accessible, affordable option as an alternative to First Scottish University Credit Union. In order to establish the offer, we undertook full due diligence and market analysis before selecting Salary Finance, the company that provides the new staff finance offer. The representative rate of 9.9% as outlined on payslips in November guarantees that 51% of eligible. Accepted applicants will be offered a rate of between 3.9% and 9%. We included a note on the November payslip to capture staff without regular access to email or the internet.
Service Excellence Programme

You said: Could information be published on how much money the Service Excellence Programme has saved us and how the projects have benefited staff and students?

Communication around Service Excellence is a top priority for us and something we’re working hard to improve. Currently, the main channel for sharing information is SEP’s website where there’s also a link to subscribe to our monthly newsletter.

However as the programme has grown, a number of different areas to access information have also been created which at times can make it tricky to find info fast. For that reason, we’re working to develop a new one stop shop SharePoint site where all relevant SEP information, news and updates, including what has improved for staff and students, are stored. We hope to have this in place by mid-May. Shelley Maxwell, Change Communications Manager, manages SEP’s Communications and is always happy to share or discuss our forthcoming plans and communication improvement ideas and activity.

In terms of savings, the overall aim of Service excellence is to make it easy for students to join and study with us and life easier and simpler for staff. That means easy to access to info, consistent systems and policies, clear roles with smarter ways of working and less duplication. And importantly increased support and training with more opportunity to develop new skills. All in turn, helping us work smarter, not harder. Naturally, in some areas, that will help us reduce and maintain lower costs and mean we can focus investment. We will be tracking this at Board level.

We will certainly be using the new SharePoint site to demonstrate the benefits of the programme and I will take the specific idea regarding money saved to the Board.
Transport and parking

You said: can we work with Lothian Buses and create an Edinburgh University Student Bus Pass that provides free travel on all of their services during teaching times during the semesters?

The topic of student transport to and between our University campuses is currently the subject of a study and report by an external consultant following their successful work in a similar area with Glasgow University. The report will look at existing arrangements, Edinburgh specific situations, comparisons with other UK cities and institutions and present options for consideration for University senior management in the first half of 2019.

You said: part time staff should be able to pay pro-rata for an annual parking permit.

Rather than pro-rata permits, the B pay-as-you-go type permit is our available option to ensure that part-time staff are able to only pay for parking on the days/half-days they are use the facilities. This, we felt, would ensure fairness to all. However, a few years ago we were presented with an issue for a very finite number of staff at the King’s Buildings who advised us that the B pay-as-you-go permit did not work for them due to more sporadic working patterns or them not fitting with the half day cut-off times.

Therefore, unofficially, and in order to resolve the issue promptly at the time (The Parking Management System wasn’t designed to issue this type of parking permit) this method of permit issue was accepted to ensure they were not paying for a whole day when only parking just over half a day. Presumably due to word of mouth, this option was being requested by significantly more applicants at KB and by those who could and should be making use of the B type permit, we believe, purely as a preference to purchasing scratch cards and so the decision to stop issuing this (unofficial) permit type as a matter of course was taken. This way of issuing permits to staff is fairly tricky to administer and for us to ensure to we are being fair and consistent to all staff, including those who are applying and paying for a full A permit at £93.00 per year or full pay-as-you-go B users. For example, there is no way for us to police how many hours a week the permit is actually in use, as the system wasn’t designed with this type of permit in mind.

We will offer to provide full day scratch card permits at the cost of a half-day permits for those users working slightly over the cut-off times, so that they would not be penalised and have to pay the full day rate of 44 pence for KB parking when working only slightly more than an half day. If there is a valid reason even this alternative will not work for a user, we will work around that case by case and absolutely resolve without it being to someone’s detriment financially.

If you would like to apply for this, please contact transport@ed.ac.uk and provide us with further details of your issue, including your core/contracted hours. We will then contact you directly and make special arrangements for full day permits at half day prices, as described above.
Graduation

You said: the Principal's graduation speeches should focus more on student achievements and less on facts and figures about research

Thank you for the feedback on the graduation speeches. It has been passed to Professor Peter Mathieson who will consider it when preparing speeches for this year's ceremonies.
You said: “Centres” in CAHSS – why does everything have to look the same?
We have a number of different types of research groupings - networks, groups, centres and institutes. Centres and Institutes generally receive institutional support from their School(s) and/or College in terms of a Director's time and some administrative support and as a result there are clear guidelines for how these are established and reviewed.

However the many other research groupings do not have formal criteria for establishment and governance and there is no need for colleagues to establish a Centre if this is not appropriate for the activities being conducted.