

Appointments Committee

24/01 A hybrid meeting of the Committee was held on Thursday 1 February 2024 at 3.30 pm in Committee Room1 and via Teams.

Present: Lay Member of the Council, Kate Owen (Chair)
Lay Member of the Council, Sian Butler via Teams
Vice-President of the Council, Kevin Corrigan via Teams
The President of Council, Helen Gordon via Teams (Chair for first part of 24/06)
Lay Member of the Council, Sue Maple via Teams
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor via Teams (recused for Minute 24/07)
An elected member of the Council, John Jack

By invitation: University Secretary
Director of Human Resources
Head of Governance (*Secretary*)

24/02 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee approved the minutes of the last meeting, held on 13 October 2023, as a correct record.

24/03 Matters Arising

The Committee noted that the report submitted to Council on 22 November 2023 had been accepted, including all changes to membership.

All other matters arising were covered below.

24/04 Committees of Selection

There were no reports on this occasion.

24/05 Report of the University Executive Board on matters relevant to the Committee

There was no report on this occasion.

24/06 Membership of the Council in Class 2

The Committee received and noted membership of the Council in Class 2.

[Kate Owen was recused for this part of the meeting]

The Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that Kate Owen be reappointed to the Council as Vice-President for a further three years (up to 31 July 2027), and that her membership of or attendance at committees be extended to the same date. The Committee agreed that this would provide continuity at a time of considerable change. The extension of term did not preclude the Council from appointing other Vice-Presidents. The Committee recorded its thanks to Kate.

[Kate Owen returned to Chair]

In regard to vacancies it was noted that the Council at its meeting in July 2023 had approved a recommendation from the Committee that replacements would be made for Moses (resigned) and Egan (reached maximum tenure on Council in December 2024). The Committee was required to recommend to the Council the process to be followed for making these appointments. The process should follow the approved statement on recruitment of lay members.

Given the ongoing success in recruiting highly effective lay members whilst also increasing the diversity of lay membership, it was proposed that recent practice was continued. That is, the usual form of advert put in the same places as before (The Reading Chronicle, The Guardian, The Times, Reach Volunteering, BAME Recruitment, and the CUC website). Previously the University had used The Sunday Times too, but as the most expensive place to advertise (c£5k) and the one with the longest lead in time for adverts; it was agreed not to use this publication.

The offer would, as before, be extended to interested applicants to talk to the University Secretary (and visit the campus if particularly interested). Interviews would take place in person, with an interview panel of the President of Council (Chair), the Chair of the Appointments Committee, the Vice-Chancellor, a RSU officer who was also a member of Council, and a further lay member. Recommendations would be made by the panel to the Appointments Committee who would in turn make recommendation to the Council.

Council in making appointments has had due regard to the skills matrix of current and outgoing members, and the skills that it judged it had most need of. The Committee was asked to consider what particular skills areas, if any, it wished to recommend were prioritised.

Adverts would be placed in late March with interviews in May or June, in time to make recommendations to the Council in July. Induction would take place over the summer with both new members attending Council from September, though one would be shadowing rather than a full member until Egan completed her term of office on 31 December 2024.

The Committee discussed the lay member skills matrix and relevant knowledge/skills that it would be helpful to specify in this round of recruitment. It was suggested that: business transformation/change management, digital skills, land/investment were important. The

Committee noted that University colleagues had strong embedded networks with peers, so experience of the HE sector was not necessarily so important. It was agreed that diversity of thought, from different sectors would be helpful in bringing in different perspectives to Council's deliberations.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council the approach to be taken in recruiting lay members and that recruitment would commence after the March Council meeting.

24/07 Process for Appointing the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation

[Deputy Vice-Chancellor was recused for this item]

It was noted that the six-year term of office for Professor Parveen Yaqoob would end in July 2024.

Given the importance of the Research and Innovation portfolio to the University as a research-intensive institution, it was vital that there was senior leadership of this portfolio on the University Executive Board.

Priorities for this role included research income, impact and reputation, planning and delivery of the next Research Excellence Framework (REF), and accountability for a growing portfolio of strategic research partnerships. This role also oversaw work on translational research including knowledge exchange activities. The PVC would also line manage the Research Deans and the newly appointed Director of Research and Innovation.

The PVC appointment was a board level appointment and as such the PVC Research and Innovation would be accountable for collective board decisions and the progress of the University Strategy. As PVC, they would become an Officer of the University and undertake the various duties associated with this role as outlined in Ordinances and custom and practice. The successful candidate might also be appointed as a board champion for one or more D&I priorities. A full job description would be developed as part of the recruitment process.

It was proposed that this appointment followed the same appointment process as other recent PVC recruitment. The role would be advertised internally in the first instance and job shares would be welcomed.

It was proposed that the recruitment panel be as follows:

President of Council (Chair)

Vice-Chancellor

Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary

A Member of Council

A Reading SU sabbatical officer

A Head of School

A Research Dean

The Director of Research and Innovation

An HR Partner

The recruitment process would include presentations to a wider group of stakeholders, followed by a panel interview.

The Committee recommended the appointment process to the Council.

24/08 Code of Conduct and Fit and Proper Person Policy

The Committee received a Code of Conduct and Fit and Proper Person Policy for approval.

It was noted that the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had a Code of Governance which set out key values and elements to enable HEIs to demonstrate their commitment to good governance. Many universities had now adopted their own Codes of Conduct. A Code of Conduct had been developed, it was intended to provide guidance to Council members on the standards of conduct and accountability expected on them in their role as governors of the University and charity trustees.

In addition, as a charity and as part of continued registration with the Office for Students (OfS) the University was required to demonstrate that our members of Council were 'fit and proper persons.' The Policy outlined what it meant to be 'fit and proper' as per the OfS guidelines and required members of Council and its sub-committees to sign a declaration to confirm that they believed themselves to be a fit and proper person. Members of Council would be required to sign the declaration on an annual basis.

The Committee:

- approved the Code of Conduct, which would then be circulated to existing members of Council. Any new members appointed to Council in future would be provided with the Code.
- approved the new Fit and Proper Person Policy. Any new members appointed to Council in future would be required to sign a declaration that they were a fit and proper person to serve on Council, and existing members would be asked to sign this declaration on an annual basis. The University Secretary or his nominee would carry out relevant and available checks to ensure there was nothing in the public domain that fell within the policy that it should be aware of, that had not been declared.

24/09 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 12.00 pm