



Welcome to the first edition of FOCUS – a ‘termly’ publication from Personnel Services and Staff Development, with input from the Equality and Diversity Manager. FOCUS is part of the overall Positive Working Environment (PWE) agenda and offers a direct way for you to find out about employment developments and issues relevant to all University colleagues. We aim to make it interesting, relevant and readable. Articles will be short and informative, and provide details of where you can get more information if you feel you need it.

Please send any feedback you may have on this first edition, including information on what you might think we have missed! to: pwe-feedback@bristol.ac.uk.

Guy Gregory

Director of Personnel and Staff Development

Positive environment gathers pace

‘Well done the UoB for PWE week. I have just had the opportunity to browse through the events, many of which look interesting’

‘I’ve found the series of positive communications leaflets on email & leadership very helpful’

Just a couple of the many positive comments from colleagues as work towards creating a more positive working environment (PWE) continues to gather pace. Tangible outcomes so far have been:

- The publication of a leaflet for all staff outlining the University’s PWE ‘Commitments’
- The publication of advice sheets in the ‘Positive Communications’ series, addressing the use of internal e-mail, effective leadership, time management and workplace bullying
- Promotion of the PWE agenda as part of the recruitment process

(Continued page 2)



FOCUS

'THE NEW SITE (PWE WEBSITE) IS ABSOLUTELY SPOT-ON. PACKED WITH INFORMATION'

Positive environment gathers pace continued from front page

- The launch of a PWE website featuring information and latest news
 - Support Services and Research staff conferences run under the PWE banner attended by over 300 people
 - Two new websites specifically for Research and Technical Staff
 - Increased training and career development provision for Research and Technical staff
 - The promotion of the University's flexible working policy with associated training for managers
 - A Research Staff Careers Adviser
 - Free enrolment on a selection of Part-Time and Short Courses organised by the Public Programmes Office (*subject to availability of spaces*);
 - The launch of a new technical trainee scheme;
 - Increased resources to, and the promotion of, the staff counselling service;
 - Launch of the 'Staff wellness programme' by the Centre for Sport, Exercise and Health.
 - A Head of Department event run by Professor Eric Thomas, Vice Chancellor, at which he stressed the importance of PWE to senior members of the University
 - Significant resources earmarked for Management Development
 - 'PWE week' 12 – 18 Sept featuring a programme of development, information, and leisure activities (*80 in total*) for all staff attended by over 1200 people
- Further information:
www.bristol.ac.uk/pwe

A rewarding agenda

Real progress is being made towards the introduction of a new pay and grading structure and harmonised terms and conditions for all members of staff. 72% of support staff are already signed up to an accurate description of their role, and 50% of support staff roles have now been to an evaluation panel. The Academic role profiles are now finished and ready for use.

Quite naturally, the question on many colleagues' minds is, 'When will I know what my pay and grade will be under the new set-up?' The answer is that the University is committed to an implementation date of no later than 1 August 2006, however we aim to let everyone know where they stand in advance of this.

Whilst we predict that many members of staff will find that their pay stays broadly the same, some people may find that their pay goes up, and four years' pay

protection will be given to anyone whose pay would otherwise go down. There will be an appeals process for those who wish to challenge the pay and grade proposed for their post.

The Reward Agenda is something we want to do and are also required to undertake, along with every other Higher Education institution. Will it be worth all the effort? Undoubtedly! We will have a transparent pay and grading structure; terms and conditions that are fair to all; better job design; more distinct career

pathways; and a stronger foundation for individual and organisational development.

Work has also been taking place to 'harmonise' terms and conditions across the various categories of staff. This means that staff on the same grade should receive broadly comparable terms and conditions.

Further information:
www.bristol.ac.uk/personnel/reward
or Rick Glover Head of Reward Strategy and Development
rick.glover@bristol.ac.uk

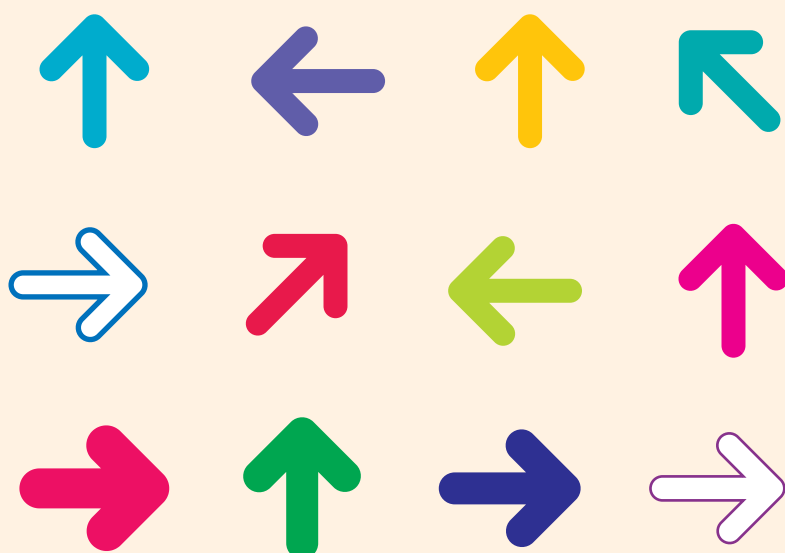


‘Enabling the achievement of excellence through people’

FORMATION, NOW VERY EASY TO ACCESS, LOOKS GOOD – GREAT JOB!’

Academic career pathways take shape

Consultations are underway with academic staff across the organisation, regarding the creation of new ‘career pathways’ for academic staff.



The proposals are, we believe, innovative and potentially far-reaching, and their aim is to provide an environment in which academic staff can clearly see their career options, can expect to achieve a certain degree of progression along their chosen route, and can expect to be treated fairly and effectively in promotion. One very significant element of the scheme will be the implementation of a new Academic Development Programme through which academic staff will receive appropriate training, support, coaching and mentoring as they pursue their career at Bristol.

The scheme as proposed will provide three pathways incorporating all clinical

staff as appropriate: It is expected that the majority of academic staff will follow Career Pathway One, which provides progression and promotion for staff who undertake teaching, research and administrative duties. There will be a research career pathway for staff who undertake research and associated administrative duties. There is also a new pathway for a relatively small minority of staff who undertake teaching and administrative duties within academic departments.

The aim is to introduce the new pathways to coincide with implementation of the University’s new pay and grading scheme later this year.

FOCUS 1

Contents

Positive environment gathers pace	1
A rewarding agenda	2
Academic career pathways take shape	3
Contacts	3
Improved employment procedures for all	4
Developing Managers	4
Diversity matters	5
Age and new law	5
Research Staff	6
Technicians – ‘Making Things Happen’	7
Fixed term contracts reduce at Bristol	7
Services here to help	8

Contacts

PERSONNEL SERVICES

Web: www.bristol.ac/personnel

POSITIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Web: www.bristol.ac.uk/pwe

Email: pwe-feedback@bristol.ac.uk

FOCUS

FROM OCTOBER 2006, FOR THE FIRST TIME, DISCRIMINATION

Improved employment procedures for all

The University is about to implement a new suite of employment procedures for all staff, covering:

- Fixed Term Contracts
- Redundancy Procedure
- Conduct Procedure
- Capability and Performance Procedure
- Procedure for Dismissal for Some Other Substantial Reason
- Ill Health Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Removal from an Additional Post
- Dealing with a clinical academic contract where the Honorary NHS contract has been compromised

So why is the University doing this? Well, Academic staff have the main aspects of their terms and conditions of employment laid down in what is known as 'Statute 32'.

Statute 32 dates back to the late 1980's and much has changed in employment

law since that time. As a result in 2003, at a national level, work was undertaken to bring the Statute 'up-to-date'.

Universities have been able to choose whether to adopt this revised 'model statute'. We have taken the view that we wish to ensure that our staff work within a modern and relevant employment framework. As a result throughout 2004/5 a small management working party worked with the AUT to revise the Model Statute into a form that is appropriate and acceptable for us at Bristol, and to draft a suite of Ordinances (*employment procedures*) to support the Statute. More recently, discussions have also taken place with support staff trades unions.

In line with the University's drive to harmonise terms and conditions, we wish to adopt this new suite of procedures to cover all staff across the whole university. The creation of a single set of employment procedures will, we

believe, be a real step forward in further reducing the old 'two tribes' culture.

It also represents a significant and positive step forward in ensuring the availability of a fair and appropriate range of procedures for dealing with employment issues. In particular, separate procedures have been developed to deal with issues of conduct; capability/performance; and ill health.

We aim to finalise and implement the new procedures during the Autumn term, and we will notify colleagues when they take effect. For those currently subject to any relevant existing procedures, we will be discussing transition arrangements with individuals and their union representative as appropriate.

Further information:
Your Personnel Manager
www.bristol.ac.uk/personnel

Developing Managers



Roffey Park (*an independent, educational charity, operating as both a research institute and training provider*) has been selected by a panel of academic and support staff managers to work with the University's senior leaders and middle managers on current issues, to provide tailored leadership and management development. Roffey Park's research wing generates some of the leading research in this area, so both the style and content of facilitation will be drawing on the latest thinking in the field.



DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF AGE WILL BECOME ILLEGAL

Diversity matters



STAFF NETWORKS LAUNCHED

Several staff networks have been established where members of staff from under-represented groups will help formulate initiatives to encourage greater diversity among our staff. The networks will meet once a term and provide an opportunity for staff to come together and share their experiences of working in higher education. Networks have been established for disabled staff, black and minority ethnic staff and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff.

GENDER EQUALITY

In the April 2005 issue of University News, the Vice-Chancellor reflected on the challenge of achieving gender equality at the University. He explained that a working group was being established to 'draw up clear recommendations for action on policy, practice, training and organisational culture'. Such a group – called the Professional Parity Group – has now been set up by Council and is chaired by Pro-Chancellor Dr Stella Clarke.

The Group has an informal format and no fixed membership so that a wide range of views may be expressed. Its remit is to identify and investigate concerns of staff, and of women staff in particular, about the broad issues of progression, promotion and pay and grading. It has particular, but not exclusive, reference to senior staff promotions and appointments. Recommendations will be made to University Council in November 2005.

Further information:

Sarah Potts, tel: **17311** or email: **Sarah.Potts@bristol.ac.uk**

Age and new law

From October 2006, for the first time, discrimination on the grounds of age will be become illegal. This new legislation could have far-reaching consequences, and perhaps the most significant area of impact is around retirement.

It will provide all members of staff with a 'right to request' to carry on working beyond normal retirement date, with the onus being on the employer to justify a refusal of any such request (*in much*

the same way as the current 'flexible working' request system operates).

In addition, whilst the government has proposed in the short term to retain a default retirement age of 65, they will review the situation in 2011, at which point it is quite possible that retirement age will be abolished altogether. The University needs therefore to consider a number of points:

- Whether to retain the current retirement date (31st July after 65th birthday) in the short, medium and long term

- How to implement the new 'right to request' procedure
- The implications for pension benefits/schemes
- The impact on other policies/procedures of the new discrimination legislation and retirement provisions

Colleagues will be kept up to date regarding progress via FOCUS and the Personnel Services web site.

Further information:

Web: **www.bristol.ac/personnel**

FOCUS

BRISTOL WAS VOTED THE '5TH BEST

Research Staff

Information | Training | Support

The three words (*our mission statement*) above sum up what the University is striving to offer to all Research Staff, and the last 12 months have seen a number of tangible achievements.

- Appointment of a full time Research Staff Career and Development Manager (*Sarah Musson*) with 241 appointments with research staff over the last 12 months.
 - Appointment of Departmental Research Staff Representatives to aid communication and consultation in 48 departments.
 - Significant increases in targeted training activity for research staff with 774 research staff attending a range of 50 workshops specifically developed for them.
 - New and innovative approaches to the marketing and communication of initiatives to Research Staff including a new Research Staff Web site.
www.bristol.ac.uk/researchstaff.
 - 2nd Annual Bristol Research Staff Conference – 'Bristol & Beyond' attended by over 150 people (*pictured right*), with 100% of delegates saying that they would recommend the event to others.
- Research Staff contacts scheme to allow an information exchange with former Bristol researchers.
 - Development of new approaches to fixed term employment to improve skills retention and employment security with 475 researchers (44%) moving to an open-ended contract of employment
 - Launch of an 'academics with families' group to provide a combination of information and support to Research Staff.
 - Further development of the UK on-line staff opinion survey of Research Staff entitled the Careers in Research On-line Survey (*CROS*) by Personnel Services at Bristol, and the Bristol Institute for Learning & Research Technology (*ILRT*). This year 3446 Research staff expressed their views across the UK, 209 of which were from Bristol. Since the first survey in 2002 a total of 15876 Research Staff,
- across 55 different Universities, have taken part in the survey to help shape the environment in which researchers are employed. www.cros.ac.uk
- Articles in appropriate media highlighting positive action at Bristol, these include the BBC Web site, Bristol Evening Post, Times Higher Education Supplement, The Scientist (*Bristol was voted the '5th best place to work' for Postdocs outside the US by readership*), and The Independent.
 - Production of the 2004/5 Research Staff Working Party Annual Report promoting these developments inside the University and to funding organisations (*available on RS website*).

Further Information:
www.bristol.ac.uk/researchstaff

Research Staff
UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL





PLACE TO WORK' FOR POSTDOCS

Technicians – 'Making Things Happen'



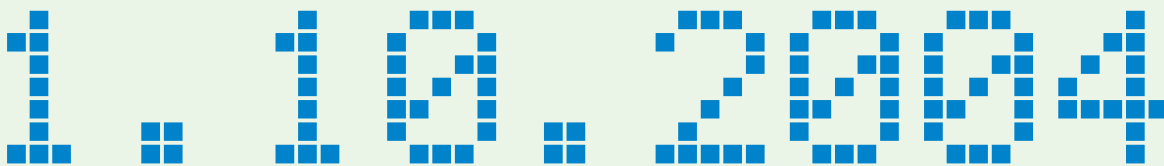
Professor Eric Thomas, the Vice Chancellor is to open the first Bristol Technicians conference entitled 'Making Things Happen' on 9th December at Bristol Zoo.

The conference is an opportunity to celebrate the unique contribution that technicians make to teaching and research and is a key action in the

PWE agenda. Contributions from Bristol technicians will include the secrets of the anatomical world, insights into the human brain and how digital technology is being used in medicine. There will be plenty of networking opportunities and information on training, development and qualifications for HE technicians.

Further information can be found on the Technicians website:
www.bristol.ac.uk/personnel/technicians

Fixed term contracts reduce at Bristol



It is now a year since the introduction of the Fixed Term Contracts agreement for academic and related staff.

This has not been an easy transition towards the objective of a more secure employment environment for many. In some cases it has served to increase general feelings of insecurity rather than as we had hoped decreasing such feelings. The impact on managers having to work through the procedures has also been significant.

That said, the numbers of those who have been dealt with through formal procedures leading to redundancy is just 82. By comparison the number of staff actually leaving at the end of a fixed term contract last year (2003/4) was 238. Since the agreement was reached 622 staff reached the end of fixed term funding, and may well have left the University under the 'old system'.

In line with plans to ensure that as far as possible employment terms and conditions are consistent across all

staff groups, it is being considered how to roll out the principals and practice behind the fixed term contract agreement to support staff. Discussions with managers and trade unions are underway to identify the key issues and how we should approach these, applying our learning from our experience with academic and related staff where we can. We hope to have an agreement and mode of operation agreed during the first half of this academic year.

FOCUS



A CONFIDENTIAL, NON-JUDGEMENTAL PROCESS THAT SUPPORTS PEOPLE

Services here to help

Three services, open to all staff, are here to help you.

MEDIATION

Mediation is a confidential, non-judgemental process that supports people in conflict or dispute in trying to reach a satisfactory resolution. There are five staff mediators in the University who have been specially trained in the skills of mediation. The mediators are all members of staff but have very different jobs within the University.

The mediation process is voluntary: all parties must be willing to participate in the process. The mediator(s) will firstly meet with each party individually for about an hour to learn how each of the parties views the problem. Then, providing that all parties are happy to proceed, a joint mediation meeting is arranged with everyone involved. The role of the mediator is to remain neutral, and not to impose solutions, but to act as a facilitator and provide an environment where parties can communicate openly and confidentially and try to reach their own solutions.

Further information: www.bristol.ac.uk/pwe/supporting

Counselling
A free, confidential and independent counselling service available to all university staff members

Advice
Help you address and resolve specific problems, decisions, or traumatic crises

Performance & development coaching
An action-oriented, future-focused process based on the goals that you set for yourself

University of BRISTOL

Staff Counselling Service
www.bristol.ac.uk/staffcounselling
Tel: 0117 9300261

Positive Working Environment

COUNSELLING

This service can be used for personal as well as work-related issues such as stress, relationship and family issues. Confidentiality is paramount. Any staff member can access the service directly. The premises are on the main campus but in a quiet location, completely separate from the Student Counselling Service.

University of BRISTOL

**Whether you are 5 or 55...
bullying and harassment
causes harm and distress**

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect at work
The University's Dignity at Work and Study Advisers are trained to listen to victims of bullying and help them decide a way forward. They can also listen to those who find themselves accused of bullying.

This service is confidential
www.bristol.ac.uk/staffcounselling/dignity-at-work
Tel: 0117 9300261

Positive Working Environment

DIGNITY AT WORK AND STUDY ADVISERS

Advisers are members of staff from across the organisation who have volunteered and trained to undertake the role. They provide a confidential and informal advice service for anyone subjected to bullying or harassment or facing allegations about their behaviour. They support people in reviewing their options and deciding what action, if any, to take.

www.bristol.ac.uk/pwe
pwe-feedback@bristol.ac.uk

