

Positive Working Environment Commitments



‘Making working life productive,
rewarding, enjoyable and healthy’

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POSITIVE WORKING
environment



Introduction

During the summer of 2003, the University commissioned The Work Foundation to carry out a staff survey – perhaps the most thorough one ever undertaken here. This highlighted many areas where the University was doing well as an employer.

It also showed that we needed to get better at:

- Developing co-operation and support across different teams
- Developing systems to ensure that managers are aware of issues on the ground
- Explaining how University-wide resources are distributed
- Fostering a stronger sense of the wider organisation
- Developing a pleasant physical working environment
- Addressing levels of stress, workload and work-life balance among some staff groups
- Aligning training and development with team and University goals
- Highlighting career development opportunities
- Developing the skills of managers and the consistent application of good management practice
- Developing and raising awareness of University-wide systems available to support staff, together with policies around diversity
- Addressing issues of bullying and harassment
- Developing further our job evaluation and promotions systems
- Encouraging a different view about flexible working opportunities.

The result was the Positive Working Environment (PWE) agenda.

It is worth emphasising that this is not so much a project or initiative as a process that describes the things we believe are important as an employer and a series of actions to help us deliver them. The PWE agenda can be steered and monitored from the centre, but everyone has a role in taking it forward. It should be an aspect of ‘the way we do things around here’, with all staff playing their part.

A Positive Working Environment at the University of Bristol will demonstrate:

- A high degree of trust and respect between all levels of staff
- A warm and friendly climate in which colleagues feel valued, and have a strong sense of loyalty to the organisation
- High quality leadership and management
- Open discussion that leads to resolution of conflict
- A measure of self-determination over how work is undertaken
- A culture where diversity is respected and valued
- A lack of exclusive clubs and cliques
- Opportunities for personal development and career progression
- A high level of creativity and job satisfaction, arising from teamwork and co-operation.

You should see this environment developing, especially over the next 24 months, as the following five commitments are put into practice.





Staff Support and Development

You will benefit from a supportive environment that helps you develop a rewarding and enjoyable career.

This commitment will be supported through:

- A common job evaluation process and the harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment
- Positive changes to the promotions process for academic staff
- The establishment of a working group to explore the development of a single central resource supporting social activities for all University staff
- The promotion of the concept of flexible working, and the piloting of flexible working approaches in four areas of the University
- Training and development targeted at specific staff groups and linked to the development of career paths
- The launch of an online diversity training package
- The enhancement and further promotion of staff support systems (e.g., counselling, mediation, dignity at work, careers guidance)
- The launch of a number of support groups for particular groups of staff
- The offer to all staff of recreational sport activities and a series of staff 'wellness days'
- A 'PWE week' featuring a series of events for all staff
- An annual conference for research staff
- An annual conference for technical staff
- An annual conference for support services staff
- An action plan to tackle stress at work
- An action plan to address gender issues faced by people at work
- An action plan to reduce excessive workloads
- The recognition of further departments as having met the Investors In People (IIP) standard
- Initiatives to develop, support and enhance staff volunteering
- Initiatives to help staff with their travel-to-work arrangements.





two

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and supervisors will have access to appropriate, tailored, professional development to prepare them for their roles and to support them in achieving strategic and operational goals.

This commitment will be supported through:

- A new senior leadership and management development programme
- An enhanced programme for heads of department
- Focused development initiatives for specific groups of people with management and supervisory responsibilities
- A programme for 'emerging leaders'
- A regional leadership development programme for new Pro Vice-Chancellors
- A conference for University of Bristol leaders and managers (PWE-focused)
- Shadowing and mentoring programmes for new managers
- Tailored one-to-one coaching for senior and middle managers
- Enhanced appraisal processes for leaders and managers
- Team-building and strategic development away days
- Further accredited programmes in supervisory management.

Communication

You will have the opportunity to influence the development of departmental and University practice through efficient internal communication processes, and you will be aware of the PWE support facilities open to you.



This commitment will be supported through:

- A new PWE website
- Departmental representatives for research staff to enhance two-way communication at all levels
- Departmental representatives to enhance communication on issues connected to PWE, equality and diversity
- A 'Diversity and PWE' newsletter (three issues per year)
- 'Positive Communications' leaflets on a variety of PWE-related subjects, attached to payslips
- Departmental PWE commitment statements
- An extension of the direct communications approach currently adopted for research staff and technical staff to other staff groups
- The establishment of a specialist internal communications post.



four

Physical Environment

The internal and external quality of buildings will be maintained at a consistent level across the whole estate. Areas of heaviest wear and tear will be prioritised during 2005/6 and 2006/7, and some of the University's oldest properties will also be brought up to a high structural quality.

This commitment will be supported through:

- Buildings that are both wind and watertight
- Spaces that are maintained at an acceptable internal temperature during the cold months
- Specialist areas that are cooled when necessary during the hot months
- Appropriate active security management controls that restrict the threat of crime
- High decorative standards
- A support system that reacts quickly to physical environment emergency requests
- A support system that encourages a responsible attitude to the environment by making it easy to recycle waste materials and conserve energy
- Physical facilities that promote the philosophy of the Transport Plan, including cycle parking, showers and walking routes
- A support system that encourages alternatives to single-occupant car use
- A programme of building works in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2001.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress towards developing our PWE will be highlighted to all staff at regular intervals.

This commitment will be supported through:

- A further survey of staff views during 2006
- Results that are highlighted to all staff in a PWE Annual Report
- Annual Key Performance Indicators of staff satisfaction built into Faculty / Division quality assessment processes.

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