

Career Framework and Strategic Workforce Planning for a Scottish University

A Hay Group case study

A Scottish university employs 1,500 staff providing graduate and post-graduate programs in engineering, health and business to over 17,000 students. They were seeking to extend their research activity, develop their portfolio of academic programs and open a third, US based campus. They turned to Hay Group to provide a career framework and strategic workforce planning toolkit to plan and manage the future academic and professional support staff requirements to deliver this strategy.

They needed the right staff to support a growth program

The university has two main campuses with around 17,000 students and 1,500 staff (around 50% of staff in academic roles). They are a significant size institution with revenues of over £100m. The majority of academic activity is teaching related with around five per cent research related. In 2010 they moved beyond their Scottish base to develop a London campus that provides courses in banking and finance, risk management, fashion, luxury brand management, HR management, public health and international project management.

Implementing ambitious international targets, including the establishment of a New York campus was part of the university's 2015 strategy. Alongside these developments, they were seeking to increase successful research grants by around thirty per cent by focusing on the right opportunities against the REF evaluation framework. The aim was to focus on a few, high quality bids to achieve this goal. The university was also undertaking a review of their portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate courses to better address the market – maintaining their UK market share and potentially increasing postgraduate provision.

The key to achieving the aims of this growth plan was in ensuring they had the right academic and professional support staff to deliver these ambitious plans. In common with the sector, over half of the University's income is spent on staff and educational outcomes rely on well trained staff with the right skills. The right future staff would need to:

- Have the right balance of research and teaching academics;
- Have subject expertise in the right areas to support the future teaching program;
- Be able to interact more closely with the business community to secure private research and teaching funding;

“Hay Group provided us with a systematic framework to manage and develop the workforce. They partnered closely with us to ensure it met our particular needs and challenges”

Director of people

- Ensure a high quality student experience through the right mix of professional and academic support;
- Have an appropriately diverse profile of senior and junior staff in terms of age and gender to reflect the wider community and needs of students.

We provided a career framework and workforce toolkit

The Director of People needed a systemic approach to ensuring that the right workforce was in place to deliver the university's growth program. This included a framework that gave clarity to academic and professional support career pathways so staff were clear what they needed to develop into future roles. It also included a supporting toolkit that enabled the People Services team to assess development support requirements, provide clarity of succession into key roles and undertake longer term planning of the workforce. Hay Group was selected to provide this support.

Staff across the university were engaged to create a career framework and supporting **university career guide**. This practical guide covers four career paths – academic / research, service delivery, business support and technical support. This career guide was supplemented by a **career review survey** undertaken on an annual basis against the skills, behaviors, academic focus required in roles. It also identified the career progression intentions of staff. This information was validated through an accompanying line manager survey.

Alongside this, Hay Group developed a supporting toolkit and process for HR that included the following elements:

- **Strategic Workforce Planning toolkit** – a five year future workforce planning scenario tool to model future staff requirements required for the future course program and planned research
- **Succession Planning toolkit** – an interface through which departmental heads and HRBPs can review the coverage of key posts, potential promotions and the changing shape of the staff profile in a given department two years ahead

“With Hay Group’s help, we have been able to provide a practical and comprehensive solution to the university to ensure the right staff are in place for the future.”

Deputy Director of People

Benefits of the solution

As a result of Hay Group's work, the university is now able to undertake a full development assessment of its staff profile and give staff tailored development in line with their future career plans. Staff have clarity about the career options open to them, creating commitment and engagement. Department heads are now able to put in place detailed succession plans for the key roles in their departments, in line with staff career intentions. The university is able to model the staff impacts of their growth program.