

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY

2015 - 2019

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1. The RVC's Vision, Mission and Values

HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY 2015 - 2019

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The aim of the RVC's Human Resource Strategy is to align its people with the College's Strategic Plan. In order to do this successfully, we need to attract, develop, retain and reward the best possible staff from a range of diverse backgrounds in order to become the employer of choice for those seeking to work in the veterinary biosciences and One Health Higher Education Sector.

It interacts and is compatible with other College strategies, including those for Learning and Teaching, Research, Widening Participation, Finance, Estates and Clinical Services.

The Strategy assumes continued funding in the region of £277,575 year on year, £272,425 less than at the start of the 2009-14 HR Strategy.

It has been developed and will be implemented against a background of consolidation in HR as work continues to improve transactional efficiency whilst contributing strategically to the life of the College. An appropriate balance between these, sometimes competing, demands will need to be regularly assessed during its lifetime. For this to be achieved, core staffing levels within the function, and the funding to support them, must be maintained.

The Strategy covers a four year period and will be adapted to respond to the changing needs of the College as well as taking into account HE funding developments, emerging employment trends, legislative changes and best practise in HR and higher education.

2. BUSINESS CONTEXT

The College continues to develop in response to changing academic and commercial needs, and the HR Strategy takes account of the need to support the planning and implementation of such change.

2.1 The Internal Context

Turnover in 2013/14 was £75.61m. In the same year, 56.6% of the College's expenditure related to staff costs. The College currently employs 836 Staff on open-ended or temporary, full or fractional contracts (209 academic and clinicians, 83 research, 291 clerical and professional, 194 nursing and technical and 59 Ancillary). This represents an increase in staff numbers since 2007 of 27%.

2015-2019 is likely to be a further period of change for the College as it reviews its provision in response to developing market needs and the implication of any potential, significant funding cuts to the government departments, agencies and councils associated with higher education. The need for the sector to address the USS pension position, as well as the general

election and Comprehensive Spending Review are also likely to impact on the College. The HR function will need to manage the impact of these pressures for the staff affected and ensure that appropriately skilled staff can be deployed to deliver the College's expanding portfolio.

Following the positive outcome of the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF), the College intends to revisit and define its research focus and priorities in line with the strategy submitted to the REF. The HR Strategy will need to support this process and ensure that staff are adequately supported throughout.

The College remains committed to its capital programme – including, but not limited to, new and refurbished teaching facilities, on both campuses. Such major capital works will impact on staff and HR will need to provide support to affected staff to ensure morale is not adversely affected and services maintained.

The HR Strategy will need to support the planned programme of growth in both the diversity and numbers of students. Communication and efficiency of business processes will be key to ensuring the expansion in student numbers can be achieved whilst improving student satisfaction levels.

If approved, movement towards the creation of a School of Veterinary Medicine, including veterinary nursing, and a School of Biological Sciences all part of RVC, University of London, will need to be carefully managed by the Senior Management Group in order to ensure cohesion between the schools. HR will have a key role to play in this process by ensuring effective communication throughout and providing relevant training, support and guidance to managers.

2.2 The External Environment

In terms of the wider context in which the College will have to operate during the lifetime of this Strategy, the 2014-19 Strategic Plan describes how the RVC, as a distinctive specialist institution, will require targeted growth in a highly competitive but uncertain marketplace and this will only be achievable through greater agility and adaptability and a strong commercial edge.

Although the outcome of the next General Election is uncertain, the College must expect further reductions in HEFCE funding while continuing to meet students increasing expectations in terms of academic and non-academic provision.

The effect of any potential cuts to funding are likely to impact on Industrial Relations (IR) in the sector and the HR Strategy will need to take account of this and ensure that the benign local IR climate is sustained.

The proposed changes to the two Occupational Pension Schemes will impact on staff financially as will the increase in employee national insurance contributions. All of these changes are likely to take effect from 1 April 2016 and will need to be considered when assessing the effectiveness of our Pay and Reward package.

The increase in employers' costs, both Pension and National Insurance, will impact on the Financial Health of the College and the effectiveness and cost of existing business processes will need to be reviewed to ensure value for money.

In order to support the College's strategic aim to broadening its portfolio of international students, the HR Strategy will need to ensure that staff are fully equipped to attract, develop and retain such students.

Fuelled by the internet, the pace of Globalisation will remain undiminished. As new institutions emerge, particularly in developing countries, competition for the best students and staff will intensify. However, the scope for international collaborations, both at the individual and institutional level, will increase.

The operational consequences of RVC's commitment to promote sustainable development and attempt to reduce the environmental impact of its operations will need to be managed. The College will need to demonstrate that it understands the impact of climate change, particularly in its work with developing countries, but also to respond to opportunities as they arise, for example, the shift in its research aims towards vector borne diseases.

Finally, the legislative and regulatory demands on the College are likely to grow still further in this period. RVC must continue to ensure it engages both with the spirit and the letter of the legal requirements placed upon it, for example in respect of the Equality Act 2010. At the same time, the difficult task of balancing financial, strategic and operational priorities with this commitment must be maintained. Actions listed across all six priority areas show how this will be supported.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2015-19 HR STRATEGY

There are three key drivers behind the Strategy:

- a) Development of a role for HR as strategic partner in the delivery of the Strategic Plan.
- b) Continuous improvement of operational and transactional services.
- c) Striking an effective balance between (a) and (b).

The key priority areas of the HR Strategy are as follows:

- A Pay, Reward & Recognition;
- B Performance Management & Career Progression;
- C Leadership, Management and Skills Development;
- D Workforce Agility;
- E Management Information;
- F 'One College'

4. TOWARDS AN HR STRATEGY 2015 - 2019

Priority Area A: Pay, Reward & Recognition

Our capacity to attract and retain talent at every level of the organisation from the local, national and international markets in which we compete will remain fundamental to our success.

This area of the HR Strategy supports the following aims of the 2014/19 Strategic Plan:

- Review and refresh our undergraduate and postgraduate student provision in light of the changing needs of society and the professions.
- With the Student Union, continue to build a diverse culture and environment where our students' experience is paramount in our recruitment and educational activities and which is promulgated across traditional and social media networks.
- Provide a high-quality suite of programmes, which result in RVC graduates being recognised as highly employable individuals with an embedded spirit of enquiry, committed to, as well as talented, in self-directed learning.
- Develop a programme of strategic research fellowships and PhD studentships, aligned to our major strengths.
- Develop the greatest breadth and depth of innovative, customer focussed first-opinion, speciality and diagnostic veterinary clinical services of any institution
- Broaden the portfolio of our international student recruitment.
- Establish a network of international and regional champions for the RVC to act as local foci for recruitment, marketing and in-region champions.

Aims:

- To attract, engage, consult and appraise our staff at every level, encouraging them to take ownership of their development and career progression, and to realise their full potential.
- Implement Schemes that seek opinion and assess contentment in all staff groups, and formulate and implement realistic actions based on the results of these opinions
- Invest additional effort and resources in facilitating change management, at the same time as modernising reward and recognition, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to market pressure.

We will:

- Review the locally determined reward structures we have established in order to ensure they remain competitive and are fair, equitable and transparent and are seen to be so. To include a comprehensive review of regular supplements and allowances; review of the current Recognition Scheme; review of the HERA job evaluation process.
- Complete the assimilation of Grade 9 staff onto the modernised pay arrangements introduced for this group in 2014/15.
- Demonstrate to employees the true value of their total reward package by providing them with Annual Reward Statements.
- Review and, whereby financially viable, extend non-pay benefits, including health assistance schemes.
- Review the current pension provision on offer to staff in light of the measures to be taken to address the deficit in the USS and SAUL schemes.
- Conduct and communicate the results of two Equal Pay Audits during the lifetime of the strategy.

Key Measures of Success & Impact:

- At least 85% of advertised posts attract the appropriate calibre of applicants and are filled following a single recruitment campaign.
- Improvement in staff satisfaction rates in relation to total remuneration package.
- Increased diversity profile in areas that currently show under representation.
- Increased awareness of all staff of their total remuneration package.
- Maintenance of staff turnover within the range of 10-15% annually.
- Full implementation of the new Pay, Grading and Progression arrangements for Grade 9 staff.

Priority Area B: Performance Management and Career Progression

As well as understanding how the manner in which they are rewarded reflects the value of their contribution, clarity about how that contribution can be developed, and careers progressed in line with the aims and objectives of the institution, is another key determinant of staff satisfaction.

This area of the HR Strategy supports the following aims of the 2014/19 Strategic Plan:

- Develop the greatest breadth and depth of innovative, customer focussed first-opinion, speciality and diagnostic veterinary clinical services of any institution.
- Set and attain the highest standards of clinical practice and innovation within a strong framework for clinical governance.
- Promote multidisciplinary teamwork and personal professional development.

Aims:

- To attract, engage, consult and appraise our staff at every level, encouraging them to take ownership of their development and career progression, and to realise their full potential.
- Consolidate the College's professional service functions towards a unified collegiate structure.
- Invest additional effort and resources in facilitating change management, at the same time as modernising reward and recognition, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to market pressure.

We will:

- Complete the implementation of new arrangements for induction, probation and promotion of academic staff, to ensure they each have a clearly identified career path.
- Develop and implement complimentary processes for non-academic staff at all levels
- Review and integrate annual appraisal arrangements with these processes.
- Embed RVC Behaviours Framework in order to reinforce College values and create a culture of professionalism and collegiality across the organisation.
- Integrate these with our developing framework for the management of career progression as the basis of our professional relationships with each other.
- Use this framework as appropriate to help manage under performance.
- Launch the RVC Management Development Programme.
- Overhaul and modernise both the content and methods of delivery of the RVC Management Toolkits to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Key Measures of Success & Impact:

- Individual Career Profiles agreed with all academic staff on grades 6-8 in accordance with the new Probation and Promotion processes by the end of the Strategy.
- Acceptance and application of the RVC Behavioural Framework across the College.
- Working towards 100% appraisal return rates by the end of the Strategy.
- Increase in diversity profile within senior academic roles.
- Retention of Vitae HR Excellence in Research Award.
- Achievement of Athena Swan Silver Award.

Priority Area C: Leadership, Management & Skills Development

The scope, quality and delivery of our staff development provision remain critical to individual and organisational effectiveness. During a period of intensifying competition for scarce resources, we must ensure sufficient investment is maintained to consolidate existing capability and equip all our people with the additional skills they need to respond to changing role requirements and expectations in the future.

Making best use of emerging technologies to ensure we maximise our return on our investment, we must build on the management development programmes which were such a successful component of the last HR Strategy; and aspire to the step change necessary in leadership development if we are to equip our managers and leaders with the skills, confidence and resilience needed to drive the institution forward at this challenging time.

This area of the HR Strategy supports the following aims of the 2014/19 Strategic Plan:

- Establish strategic partnerships, where appropriate, that will defend and advance our position in animal health and veterinary science, locally, nationally and internationally within the framework of One Health.
- Through discussion and consultation establish a “Student Charter” that will bring professionalism, respect and collegiality to the core of all our activities and where all our students feel equally valued by their peers, by those who educate them and by the College as a whole.
- Provide a high-quality suite of programmes, which result in RVC graduates being recognised as highly employable individuals with an embedded spirit of enquiry, committed to, as well as talented in, self-directed learning.
- Develop a programme of strategic research fellowships and PhD studentships, aligned to our major strengths.
- Commit to strategic partnerships with medical schools, social and environmental scientists, physical scientists and veterinary practises.
- Commercialise intellectual property where appropriate.
- Develop the greatest breadth and depth of innovative, customer focussed first-opinion, speciality and diagnostic veterinary clinical services of any institution.
- Promote multidisciplinary teamwork and personal professional development.
- Contribute to the financial security of the College.
- Seek to enhance the reputation of the College with external stakeholders and the public by raising awareness of our clinical activities.
- Seek international endorsement through overseas governments and intergovernmental organisations, complementing our recognition by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

Aims:

- To attract, engage, consult and appraise our staff at every level, encouraging them to take ownership of their development and career progression, and to realise their full potential.
- Increase our focus on communication and feedback to all of the College community, ensuring that strategic and operational direction of the RVC is accessible to all.
- Consolidate the College's professional service functions towards a unified collegiate structure.
- Invest additional effort and resources in facilitating change management, at the same time as modernising reward and recognition, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to market pressure.

We will:

- Review the content of our staff development programme to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. To include: a review existing and potential providers to ensure quality provision and value for money; review methods of delivery to ensure they meet the needs of the delegates; optimise use of technology by collaboration with eMedia to ensure maximum return from available resources; identify and resource relevant new materials and resources.
- Continue to support the principles of the Research Concordat and develop further our growing staff development provision for Early Career Researchers.
- Investigate with Registry ways in which our programmes can assist in careers guidance and planning for undergraduate students.
- Investigate opportunities to collaborate with Bloomsbury and other institutions in the delivery of staff development programmes and maximise the return on our investment in staff development provision.
- Overhaul and modernise both the content and methods of delivery of the RVC Management Toolkits to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- Source relevant new material for the Toolkit, in particular, material relating to financial awareness and financial management.
- Align the Management Toolkits with the RVC Behaviours Framework, integrating it with the new probation arrangements for academic and non-academic staff.
- Identify role models at senior and middle management levels to promote the RVC Behaviour Framework.
- Investigate and propose solutions to succession planning issues, and in particular identify and develop in a coherent way, potential new members of the Senior Management and Vice-Principal's Group with specific focus on under-represented groups in line with our Equality and Athena Swan action plans.
- Utilising the modernised RVC Management Toolkit, develop and implement a Leadership Development Programme for this group.

Key Measures of Success & Impact:

- Alignment of all development processes with the RVC Behavioural Framework
- Retention of Vitae HR Excellence in Research Award.
- Senior Management Group succession plan in place.
- Achievement of Athena Swan Silver Award.
- Increased diversity profile of Senior Management Group.
- Measureable improvement in satisfaction scores in second survey in relation to leadership and management.
- Increase in the number of e-learning courses offered.

Priority Area D: Workforce Agility

As the College responds to the challenges that lay ahead, our current contractual arrangements and staff and the key employment policies underpinning them will need to become more flexible. The more agile workforce we require will need to be recruited more creatively, and if we are to achieve the aspirations to global citizenship set out in the Strategic Plan, we must find ways to maintain our capacity to source outstanding international talent in the global market. In short, we must balance the risks associated with legal regulatory compliance against those associated with failure to attract, develop and retain the workforce we need.

This area of the HR Strategy supports the following aims of the 2014/19 Strategic Plan:

- Review and refresh our undergraduate and postgraduate student provision in light of the changing needs of society and the professions.
- Expand our distance and blended-learning taught provision based on “trajectories of learning”.
- Expand our professional training portfolio to include industry-relevant and career-accessible routes to professional doctorates.
- Establish strategic partnerships, where appropriate, that will defend and advance our position in animal health and veterinary science, locally, nationally and internationally within the framework of One Health.
- Commercialise intellectual property where appropriate.
- Promote multidisciplinary teamwork and personal professional development.

Aims:

- To attract, engage, consult and appraise our staff at every level, encouraging them to take ownership of their development and career progression, and to realise their full potential.
- Increase our focus on communication and feedback to all of the College community, ensuring that strategic and operational direction of the RVC is accessible to all.
- Invest additional effort and resources in facilitating change management, at the same time as modernising reward and recognition, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to market pressure.
- Consolidate the College’s professional service functions towards a unified collegiate structure.

We will:

- Complete the simplification of our recruitment processes initiated, but not completed in the last HR Strategy.
- Align the simplified processes with the new probation and promotion arrangements introduced in 2014/15.
- Review our flexible working arrangements and family leave policies to ensure they are fit for purpose.
- Review terms and conditions and employment contracts across all staff groups, ensuring compliance, whilst incorporating sufficient flexibility to meet strategic, operational and commercial needs.
- Conduct an audit of all employment policies to ensure legal compliance, ease and speed of application.
- Continue to support organisational change which promotes business efficiency, services to students, clients and other stakeholders; or which is driven by the impact of new technology.
- Maintain and develop constructive local relations with the recognised trade unions.

Key Measures of Success & Impact:

- Improved recruitment process both from a manager and applicant perspective.
- Reduction in time taken to recruit to key posts.
- Legally compliant and flexible employment contracts and terms and conditions.
- Improvement in staff satisfaction rates in relation to probation and promotion.

Priority Area E: Management Information

Improvement in the quality and application of management information across all areas of its activity will be a further characteristic of the College's response to change over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan. There has already been a step change in HR, both in the use of IT and the scope of information produced; but this now needs to be channelled more effectively into decision making and planning processes.

This area of the HR Strategy supports the following aims of the 2014/19 Strategic Plan:

- **Contribute to the financial security of the College.**

Aims:

- **To attract, engage, consult and appraise our staff at every level, encouraging them to take ownership of their development and career progression, and to realise their full potential.**
- **Increase our focus on communication and feedback to all of the College community, ensuring that strategic and operational direction of the RVC is accessible to all.**
- **Consolidate the College's professional service functions towards a unified collegiate structure.**
- **Invest additional effort and resources in facilitating change management, at the same time as modernising reward and recognition, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to market pressure.**
- **Implement Schemes that seek opinion and assess contentment in all staff groups, and formulate and implement realistic actions based on the results of these opinions.**

We will:

- **Develop the new College Establishment as the basis of a suite of reports to Senior Management Group which will enhance control and monitoring of staff costs.**
- **Use the College Establishment suite of reports to promote effective workforce planning across all staff groups which supports the achievement of the College's strategic goals.**
- **Collaborate with relevant colleagues in the development and implementation of 'Staff Activity Profiles' which can be used consistently across the College to maximise available resources in course delivery and support accurate monitoring and control of costs.**
- **Develop appropriate metrics against which to benchmark organisational performance to help maintain our competitive position, both commercially and in relation to people issues specifically.**
- **Review and implement revised HR business processes, making best use of emerging technologies and in collaboration with other departments where relevant.**
- **Increase collaboration with other departments prior to submission of statutory reports in order to ensure consistency and accuracy.**

Key Measures of Success & Impact:

- Timely provision of effective management information to aid in the control of costs, in line with 52% of turnover target in the Strategic Plan.
- Set of metrics developed and used in relation to people issues.
- Comprehensive suite of staffing related reports produced on a regular basis to support informed decisions by management.
- Process established to ensure statutory return data is collectively agreed across missions and departments prior to submission to ensure accuracy.

Our Strategic Plan sets out the road map through which we will navigate the challenges ahead and secure the RVC's position in the global HE market place of the future. If we can achieve our goals, we can be confident in that future; but the changes this will require of our people, whatever their role in the organisation, are likely to be as far reaching as any they have faced in their careers to date. There is a responsibility therefore to explain and make the case for what is required before it is implemented; to listen and, where possible, respond to genuine concern. In short, we must take people with us rather than work against them. We must break down organisational silos and create the sense of common purpose we will need to reach our destination.

This area of the HR Strategy supports the following aims of the 2014/19 Strategic Plan:

- Establish strategic partnerships, where appropriate, that will defend and advance our position in animal health and veterinary science, locally, nationally and internationally within the framework of One Health.
- Through discussion and consultation establish a "Student Charter" that will bring professionalism, respect and collegiality to the core of all our activities and where all our students feel equally valued by their peers, by those who educate them and by the College as a whole.
- Commit to strategic partnerships with medical schools, social and environmental scientists, physical scientists and veterinary practises.
- Promote multidisciplinary teamwork and personal professional development.

Aims:

- To attract, engage, consult and appraise our staff at every level, encouraging them to take ownership of their development and career progression, and to realise their full potential.
- Increase our focus on communication and feedback to all of the College community, ensuring that strategic and operational direction of the RVC is accessible to all.
- Consolidate the College's professional service functions towards a unified collegiate structure.
- Invest additional effort and resources in facilitating change management, at the same time as modernising reward and recognition, ensuring transparency and responsiveness to market pressure.

We will:

- Integrate the RVC Behaviours Framework into the relevant management processes in order to underpin professionalism and collegiality across the organisation.
- Working with the new Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications, take specific actions to improve 'top down' and 'bottom up' communication and measure the effectiveness of such measures.
- Take specific measures to develop cross-functional and cross-campus understanding, formalising these where appropriate through role exchange and management trainee programmes.
- Integrate, wherever possible, measures to communicate with staff and students and actively promote the notion of the 'RVC' family.

- Take specific measures to build individual understanding of the organisation, its place in national and global markets and how this impacts directly on individual roles.
- Working with the Senior Management Group, move from a compliance driven approach to Equality of Opportunity, to one which actively uses the College's Single Equality Scheme to promote the benefits of a diverse and dynamic workforce.
- Source effective mechanisms to measure and report on staff satisfaction, and implement two staff satisfaction surveys during the lifetime of the HR Strategy.
- Ensure that the outcomes of the staff satisfaction surveys are translated into appropriate measures and results are communicated back to staff.

Key Measures of Success & Impact:

- Acceptance and application of the RVC Behaviours Framework across the College.
- Measurable improvement in staff satisfaction scores in second survey, particularly those relating to communications.
- Measurable improvement in staff satisfaction scores in second survey, particularly those relating to the understanding of the organisation and impact in individual roles.
- Established cross-functional and cross-campus initiatives.
- 30% response rate to first staff satisfaction survey.
- 45% response rate to second staff satisfaction survey.

The RVC's Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

"To be the place of recommendation for education, clinical care, expert opinion and employment in veterinary medicine and science"

Our Mission

"To provide inspirational leadership and excellence in veterinary science through innovative scholarship and pioneering clinical activity"

Our Values

"For any organisation with a commitment to health and welfare, one must expect that the values associated with care and compassion will be writ large. Indeed, there is no shortage of words that we might associate with our day-to-day activities. What defines us is the combination of professionalism and commitment, manifest in a culture of compassion and caring that speaks to others of our respect for our heritage, our dedication to quality and innovation, our devotion to the advancement of knowledge and the alleviation of suffering"