

September 2012

Discussion Paper Framework for Steering/Operational Project Groups

Purpose of the Framework

The University is committed to managing change in an effective and consultative manner and wishes to take an inclusive approach when discussing and subsequently implementing change. Following discussions with the Trade Unions and Managers, who have recently undergone such changes and used the Steering /Project Group approach, a number of suggestions have been made to build upon the good points and to recognise areas that need further clarification. The aim of this discussion paper is to set out a Framework to be adopted when following the Action Plan on Managing Change which covers, managing the consultation, implementation and review processes of change. The framework cannot be prescriptive to cover all eventualities but the principles will complement other University HR Policies and good practice. All parties appreciate their necessary commitment to ensure that change is managed according to the Framework principles, employment law and most importantly with the contribution of members of staff affected either directly or indirectly.

Scope and Process

Outline proposals for change or new initiatives, which have a contractual impact on staff and their associated service delivery, are placed before the Executive Team for provisional approval subject to consultation. At this or at an earlier stage, the Trade Unions will be informed and a Steering Group will be established to oversee the consultation, implementation and review processes of the changes. The Vice Chancellor will nominate the Chair of the Steering Group. Depending upon the size and complexity of the proposals both a Steering Group and an Operational Project Group may be established. This decision will be outlined in the proposal forwarded to the Executive Team. Where only a Steering Group is established that group may wish to establish sub groups to examine and take forward specific areas of work.

It is important to note that all group members have a vital part in endeavouring to reach agreement on the proposals and taking them forward. The Trade Union representative(s) is the formal representative for their relevant trade union to engage in the consultation process. He/she will have the duty to report back to the executive committee of their local Trade Union branch. This framework is not intended to cover projects led by the Office of Programme Management but may on occasions work in parallel.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Steering/Project Group will include the following:

Project Background

Project Scope

Project Objectives

Membership
Communications
Risk Register
Frequency of Meetings

Membership of the Steering/ Operational Project Groups

It is intended that membership of the groups are representative of the relevant stakeholders, whilst at the same time, having a small and productive membership. The groups will have the ability to invite other members of staff or relevant stakeholders to attend meetings as appropriate.

Membership will include:

The Chair of the Steering Group will normally be at a Senior Management Level and the Chair of the Operational Project Group will normally be the operational manager e.g. Head of School/College or Department Head or senior manager.

Management representatives - will be chosen as appropriate and will include an HR representative, a project manager and an appropriate manager from outside the school/department.

The recognised trade unions - will be asked to nominate a representative(s). It may be appropriate, with agreement, for one Trade Union representative to act on behalf of the 3 recognised trade unions.

Staff representatives - will be asked to self-nominate but should more names be submitted than required an election process will be undertaken.

There may be members who sit on both the Steering and Operational Project Group. These will normally be the project manager, Chair of the Project Group and HR representative.

Project Steering Group

The Role of the Steering Group is to:

- Act as the strategic body responsible for steering the work in relation to the proposed project.
- Provide high level advice on the effective implementation of the project.
- Agree, ratify and monitor the work and progress of the Operations Project Group.
- Oversee the Risk Register and take action as appropriate.
- Agree and ratify the membership of the Operations Project Group.

- Provide the Operations Project Group with timely decisions as required.
- Provide a link to the University Executive through its membership.
- Establish sub-groups if required.

Project Operations Group

The Role of the Operations Project Group is to:

- Further refine the outline proposals with input from the identified stakeholders and staff groups and following an audit of current practice, policies, procedures and capability.
- Develop and maintain effective communication channels with external and internal partners, stakeholders and staff groups and individual members of staff covered by the Project. Trade Union members and staff representatives will have the additional responsibility of communicating with the members of staff they represent and ensuring that their views are represented.
- Consider all operational matters, and escalate to the Project Steering Group operational matters that require their consideration / intervention.
- Develop a detailed Project Plan and ensure that all project actions are completed in line with the agreed plan and the Project Steering Group requirements.

The Operations Group will report to the Steering Group.

Should it be decided only to have a Steering Group the roles and responsibilities of the two groups will be merged.

Project Management – Project Manager

The link between Steering Group and Operational Project Group will be through an identified Project Manager. The Project Manager will also take the role of coordinating activities of the Groups and any sub-groups. The Project Manager will normally be a manager in the area covered by the project.

Role of the Project Manager is:

- To work closely with the necessary leads to ensure timely completion of activities.
- To identify any resource required for the project implementation.
- To act as a link between the Steering and Project Group and make representations to the Steering Group on behalf of the Project Group, highlighting priorities and required actions.
- To highlight risks and issues that unfolds during the project lifetime and maintains project risk register.

- To work with the necessary parties to ensure that accurate and timely communication takes place.
- To co-ordinate and schedule project meetings as required and ensure flow of information between both groups.
- To adopt a persuading and influencing role so as to elevate issues of urgency and importance.
- To undertake a quality assurance role where appropriate