



STAFF FORUM DISCUSSION SESSION SUMMARY

Topic: Tiered Pay Cuts

Date/ Time: Tuesday 21st July 2020 at 1pm & Thursday 23rd July 2020 at 1pm

The Staff Forum representatives welcomed attendees to the discussion session and explained that the Staff Forum were hosting discussion sessions during the current consultation period to give colleagues the opportunity to give their views, ask questions and have a discussion about how the options being considered as part of the response to the Covid-19 situation. Colleagues were also invited to send through any other questions, comments or suggestions to staff-forum@reading.ac.uk. It was also noted that staff could access the summaries from the discussion sessions via the Staff Forum website.

The Staff Forum representatives explained that one of the collective options is a tiered pay cut for 1 year. The proposed percentage reduction being 5% for grades 3-5, 10% for grades 6-8 and 15% for grade 9.

Colleagues in the discussion sessions agreed that a tiered pay cut dependent on grade is a fairer option than a same percentage cut for all grades. Colleagues in the discussion sessions appreciated that grade 2 is out of scope of this collective reduction as it would impact them the most.

A Staff Forum representative mentioned that pension contributions are different for staff on grade 6+ compared to the contributions for staff on grades 1-5 due to different pension schemes. Potentially staff on grades 6+ would benefit more in the long run than staff graded 1-5. Colleagues in the discussion sessions raised concern that in difficult times like these it is important to consider the effect on net take home pay rather than pensions as net pay will affect the ability to manage bills, mortgage, childcare etc.

The discussion sessions covered the following themes:

Spinal Points: Concern was raised that pay cut could have a greater impact on staff on the top spinal point of their pay grade as those on lower and mid spinal points would still receive increment payments.

Impact on part time staff: Concern was raised about how a pay cut could affect staff members who have already reduced their working hours. The Staff Forum representatives noted that questions have been asked during the consultation meetings and that John Brady had mentioned that pay would be prorated for part time staff.

Overlap in pay grades: A concern was raised that any overlaps could cause a problems, for example, a colleague on grade 5 at the top of their band could earn more than a colleague on grade 6 at the bottom of their grade due to the different levels of cuts on the tiered model. A tiered pay cut could unfairly impact colleagues at the bottom of their pay band. Colleagues in the discussion sessions also mentioned that this could lead a line manager earning the same or less than a team member.

Trigger points: Staff in the discussion sessions noted that regular reviews of any salary saving measures would be required and should be in line with income streams, student recruitment for example. The Staff Forum representatives asked colleagues to suggest what they thought a suitable 'review period' could be. Most colleagues in the discussion sessions agreed that annual reviews would be suitable.

What colleagues in the discussion sessions have asked for:

- A suggestion was raised to consider pay bands rather than pay grades for the percentage reduction. The reasoning was there is marginal difference between top spinal point of lower grade and bottom spinal point of the next grade.
- Could there be a condition added to the models that no-one will receive a cut which takes them below the minimum salary point for their grade?
- Has the University considered providing some form of advice on budgeting or financial management so that staff are better able to manage any pay cut that we experience? The Staff Forum representative noted that similar questions have been asked in the consultation meetings about what support would be available for staff.
- Question was raised whether there is provision for staff already working part-time or flexible working contract to increase hours to compensate the shortfall in pay