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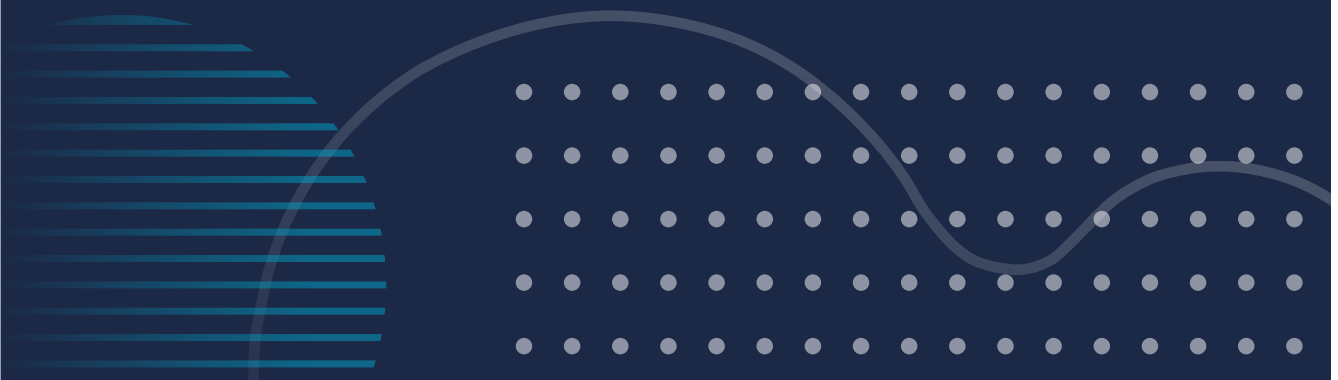
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

HR & PEOPLE STRATEGY

2023-2026

# HR AND PEOPLE STRATEGY 2023-2026

The success of University College Birmingham is solely attributable to our team of loyal and passionate employees. The 2023-2026 HR and People Strategy aims to modernise our people practices and support our colleagues to continue to deliver exceptional and sustained teaching excellence.

This plan provides an outline for the future direction of the University's HR and People function. It sets out six key strategic commitments to University College Birmingham employees and several initiatives to continue to develop our people proposition to enable the University to continue to attract, retain and develop a team of talented employees.

The 2023-26 HR Strategy is set against a backdrop of extraordinary change for the University. Covid-19 brought unique challenges for the University to balance the safety of our employees with maintaining levels of teaching for our students. Subsequently, this period of reflection has resulted in a change of expectation from individuals, with changing employee expectations impacting the way in which many employers operate.

In addition to challenges brought about by the pandemic, the current economic climate is resulting in employers being expected to respond to the rising cost of living and inevitable inflation within workforce costs. Labour markets are presenting challenges to recruit required talent into many roles, with some reporting a current ratio of two roles available for every one candidate available within the market.

The University is committed to providing a first-class experience for its employees to continue to allow the University to attract, retain and develop loyal and passionate colleagues. It is intended that the 2023-26 HR and People Strategy supports the University to continue to build upon this success and to allow us to continue to provide exceptional teaching and learning for our students.

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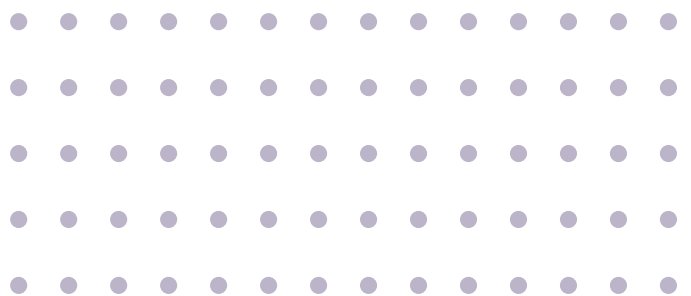
PRODUCTION OF THIS STRATEGY

University College Birmingham is dedicated to enhancing our employees experience with the University and is committed to ensuring their views are heard. Therefore, a number of strategic pillars were set by the Executive Management team of the University and a process of engaging with colleagues to fully understand their views was undertaken.

All colleagues were invited to several workshops, led by an external consultant to encourage open and honest feedback. This insight was collated and was used as the foundation of this strategy. A number of initiatives were proposed to colleagues for feedback prior to finalisation of this plan.

Our employees were consulted throughout the project and the positive intent and changes within the strategy were welcomed.
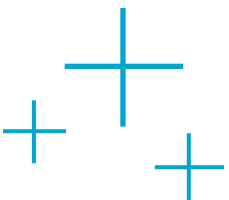
OUR AIM IS TO:

The HR and People Strategy is underpinned by six strategic pillars, developed to be aligned to and facilitate the success of the Strategic Plan and the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

This provides a set of principles that are important to the University in setting out the actions required within the current plan.

STRATEGIC PILLAR ONE:

OUR HR OPERATIONS WILL PROVIDE AN EMPLOYEE FOCUSSED SERVICE

Sub Area One:

The 2023-2026 HR and People Strategy sets out an ambitious agenda to enhance the experience of our workforce. In order to execute this strategy, we must ensure that we have the correct foundations within our HR function.

We intend to invest in this function to ensure the tools within which we operate are not only fit for purpose, but are able to facilitate the remaining Initiatives within this plan.

We will:

1.1 Continue to investigate and implement a revised HR system, increasing self-service functionality and reducing administrative workload for the team, using this opportunity to enhance the overarching employee experience, as well as help increase efficiency.

1.2 Provide a commercially-focused data and MI stack to the University which monitors the progress against the strategic plan and provides line management with required people data for their team.

1.3 At the point where the HR strategy has been confirmed, consider a skills audit of the team, understanding their desired direction for career growth and ensuring retention of current skills.

1.4 Following a review of the skills and desired progression opportunities for the current team, consider whether any additional resource is required to execute the strategy.

Measures of success

- Investment in self-service HR software
- Cross university training / implementation of HR software
- Recruitment of approved HR vacant positions

STRATEGIC PILLAR TWO:

WE WILL GROW A DYNAMIC, RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

Sub Area One: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University takes its responsibility to be an inclusive institution seriously and has recently made senior appointments and developed additional training for colleagues to support this commitment. However, we wish to further this commitment and continue to build a diverse and inclusive environment for our employees that reflects the communities we serve.

We will:

2.1 Continue to capture and monitor progress in quality data regarding Diversity and Inclusion. Provide managerial training to raise awareness of personal bias (in line with initiative 3.12).

2.2 Review the application and selection processes to promote inclusivity, for example, introducing blind shortlisting, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within advertisements and strengthening selection criteria.

2.3 Encourage internal networking groups to support community and inclusion. Once established, continue to engage with these groups for areas of improvement.

Measures of success

- **Increasing percentage of data held versus employee numbers**
- **Completion of ongoing training**
- **Targets to be set to review Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data against students served**
- **Improvements in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Number of internal networking events held**
- **An increase in the number of attendees at internal networking events**
- **Engagement of employees via feedback**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM

» STRATEGIC PILLAR THREE:

WE WILL ATTRACT, IDENTIFY, DEVELOP AND RETAIN TALENT ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

Sub Area One: Attraction and Recruitment

The University has experienced a vast amount of recruitment in the past 12 months, with employees with less than 12 months' service representing approximately 31% of the workforce at the time of writing. With ambitions of curriculum growth, it is expected that a period of recruitment activity will continue into the initial years of this plan.

We are extremely proud of the commitment and loyalty our employees demonstrate to students, with the majority of our employee base citing this to be the reason for choosing University College Birmingham as their employer of choice. Given the current labour market, it is pivotal that the University continues to build a strong employer brand to attract the needed talent into future roles.

A number of key initiatives are proposed to modernise recruitment practices to support our ability to recruit experience within a candidate driven labour market.
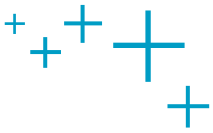
We will:

3.1 Produce a global workforce plan to understand required recruitment for the next 12 months, to support with pro-active recruitment activity.

3.2 Review the current authorisation process and report on time taken to recruit, with ambition to reduce this.

3.3 Review the current selection process, ensuring there is a consistent and proportionate approach to selection, one which is based on job role.

3.4 Provide managerial training for effective interviewing.

3.5 Review the onboarding process, with a view to enhancing the employee experience and reducing time taken to onboard. This should be considered in line with HR system activity in initiative 1.1.

3.6 Re-visit the University's induction programme, ensuring new starters are set for success within their role and welcomed to the University.

Sub Area Two: Performance Management

We are incredibly proud of the high performance our employees demonstrate within our university. However, we accept that more can be done to give our employees the tools and support to allow them to perform at their best.

We have set out a number of key initiatives that aim to heighten the amount of managerial support our employees receive.

We will:

3.7 Introduce a consistent performance management cycle, with consideration to objectives, one-to-ones, feedback and reviews.

3.8 Review policy and process for managing capability.

3.9 Consider a consistent behavioural competence framework.

3.10 Create training opportunities for managers to support with managing the performance of their employees.

3.11 Refresh the cycle for reviewing job descriptions, ensuring the roles and responsibilities for each role are understood and visible.

Sub Area Three: Learning and Development

We are dedicated to supporting our students and employees, and to providing opportunities for personal and career development, with many of our employees experiencing significant career growth during their time with us.

Throughout the period of the strategy, we are committed to increasing the levels of support for learning and development for all colleagues, in addition to increasing the visibility of this support.

We will:

3.12 Increase learning and development opportunities for all, following the feedback from succession planning and performance management efforts.

3.13 Re-consider the review of budget for learning and development, considering access to fundings and claw back arrangements.

Measures of success

- **Following workforce planning, decrease the percentage number of vacant roles**
- **Establish projected future workforce requirements**
- **Reduction in time taken from recruitment trigger to contract issued**
- **Candidate feedback**
- **Increase in percentage of candidates attending interview**
- **Number of hours training available**
- **Managerial feedback**
- **Decrease time taken from offer date to start date**
- **Feedback from new starters**
- **Use of online software**
- **Ability to report on performance curve**
- **Ensure an up-to-date job description is available for all advertised roles**

STRATEGIC PILLAR FOUR:
WE WILL GROW A PASSIONATE AND LOYAL EMPLOYEE BASE

Sub Area One: Remuneration and Benefits

The University operates a skeleton pay structure, which is well understood and fairly executed throughout the workforce. We are proud to have been able to offer additional payments in recent years to support employees during the recession and UK economic downturn.

While there is clear transparency in place, we understand the importance of remunerating our employees with a fair market rate.

This plan, therefore sets out a number of initiatives that the University will undertake to ensure that our colleagues remuneration continues to be fair and transparent.

We will:

4.1 Review the remuneration and benchmarking approach and cycle and set out a statement of intent in a clear policy. This should include overarching responsibility, governance and decision making, budgeting process, benchmarking strategy and frequency, union engagement and communication.

4.2 Review the consistency of approach regarding employees working over their contracted hours and ensure a consistent policy is applied regarding overtime and /or TOIL across all line managers. This may require consultation and additional training.

4.3 A light-touch review of the benefit package to ensure it is industry standard and reflects the values of the University. Re-communicate to employees throughout the entirety of the employee experience.

4.4 Review the process for gaining access to private medical insurance mid-way through employment.

Sub Area Two: Communication and Recognition

Changes in our ways of working and increasing flexibility offered to our teams has resulted in effective communication becoming challenging. Through consultation with our employees, we understand the need to continually engage with our teams and increase the opportunity to hear the employee voice.

The University's success is founded on the passion and commitment our employees demonstrate daily to our students and pledge to ensure our employees understand the value that they bring to us. This plan sets an intention to engage with our colleagues in understanding how recognition of their efforts can be increased.

We will:

4.6 At present, the accountability for internal communications is not assigned within the organisational design of the University. It is proposed that this accountability is assigned. It is usual for this responsibility to sit either in a HR function or within a Communications and Marketing function.

4.7 Review the tools that provide opportunity for internal communications. This could include the use of an internal intranet with news forum, blogs, internal screens, video, face-to-face briefings or internal communication and media platforms such as slack or Yammer.

4.8 Introduce a forum where employees views can be heard on an ongoing basis, ensuring there is a clear and transparent flow of information.

4.9 Engage with employees regarding the value of recognition schemes. This should include any financial incentive, celebratory communications and frequency.

Measures of success

- **Reduction in absence rate**
- **Reduce cost of overtime**
- **Increase uptake in available benefits**
- **Increase management communication**

STRATEGIC PILLAR FIVE:
WE WILL PROMOTE WELLBEING AND SUPPORT FOR ALL

Sub Area One: Wellbeing

We understand that, from time to time, our employees may experience challenges within their lives. We are passionate about promoting an environment of community within our workforce and will prioritise wellbeing and support for all our employees.

In taking this responsibility seriously, we consider it important that University College Birmingham offer our employees a positive work-life balance. Therefore, in addition to increasing opportunities for employees to take care of their wellbeing, the strategic plan will also focus on ensuring our employee numbers are suited for student growth.

We will:

5.1 Set out a wellbeing programme to support employees with managing key events or challenges. This may also include initiatives such as training mental health first aiders, access to additional benefits such as additional holiday days or specific wellbeing challenges such as step counts. This should be managed in line with initiative 4.3 as part of the overarching benefit package.

5.2 In line with initiative 3.1, review the global workforce plan and highlight key departments that are under resourced and review options for support and rectification. This may include consultations with teams, secondments or use of external recruitment consultants.
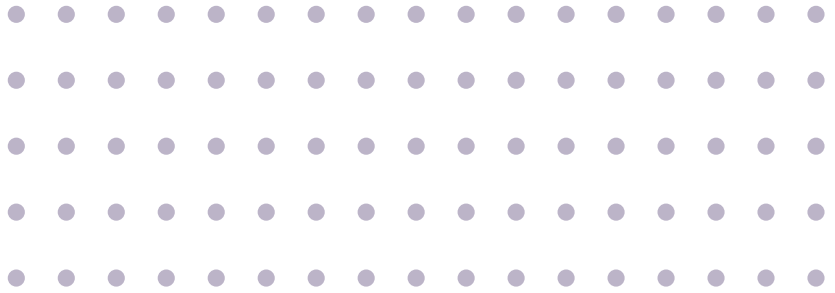
Sub Area Two: Employee Engagement

The 2023-2026 HR and People Strategy aims to continue to build our colleagues view of the University as their employer of choice. To ensure that we continue to engage with our colleagues, it's imperative that we have a mechanism to measure our progress and continue to hear our employees voice.

We will:

5.3 Design and implement an Employee Engagement survey to capture a broader view of employee voice and provide a benchmark for progress.

5.4 Consider re-introduction of social events to encourage cross-functional relationships.

Measures of success

- **Reduction in work-related illness**
- **Reduction in number of hours lost**
- **Increase in engagement rate**
- **Increase in percentage response rate to engagement survey**

STRATEGIC PILLAR SIX:

Sub Area One: Leadership Behaviour and Competence

We have set out an ambitious Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 and we understand that our ability to achieve this will be based on building a high performing culture that puts our mission and core values at the heart of our student experience. Furthermore, we acknowledge the behaviour and skills of our leaders and the impact this has on the culture of the University and the experience we offer our employees.

We are, therefore, committed to ensuring our leaders are visible, approachable and provide a consistency and transparency in their leadership approach.

We will:

6.1 Understand the desired leadership behaviours and competencies and support leaders in managing against a revised framework through appropriate training and coaching initiatives.

6.2 Create initiatives that encourage more visibility of the Executive Management Team. This may include initiatives such as reward lunches, visiting lectures or face-to-face briefings.

6.3 Following gaining an understanding of desired leadership behaviours, consider the implementation of consistent 'introduction to management / leadership' type programme to detail basic principles of management. This should be considered alongside the talent management initiatives discussed within 6.5.

Sub Area Two: Succession Planning and Talent Management Competence

In alignment with our commitment to develop our staff, we wish to offer career progression opportunities to those who desire it. We, therefore, will produce fair and transparent succession planning and talent management programmes to nurture our leaders of the future.

We will:

6.4 Gain an understanding of the organisational design required to support the Strategic Plan. From here, build succession planning tools to support clear and transparent processes for career development.

6.5 As a result of succession planning efforts, consider any required talent management programmes. This may cover cohorts such as executive leadership, middle management or emerging talent. This should be considered in line with initiative 6.3.

6.6 In line with the above, consider a coaching / mentoring programme.

Measures of success

- **Increase number of training activities**
- **Reduction in number of roles highlighted without successor**
- **Increase percentage of employees participating in talent management programmes**
- **Launch of mentor scheme**
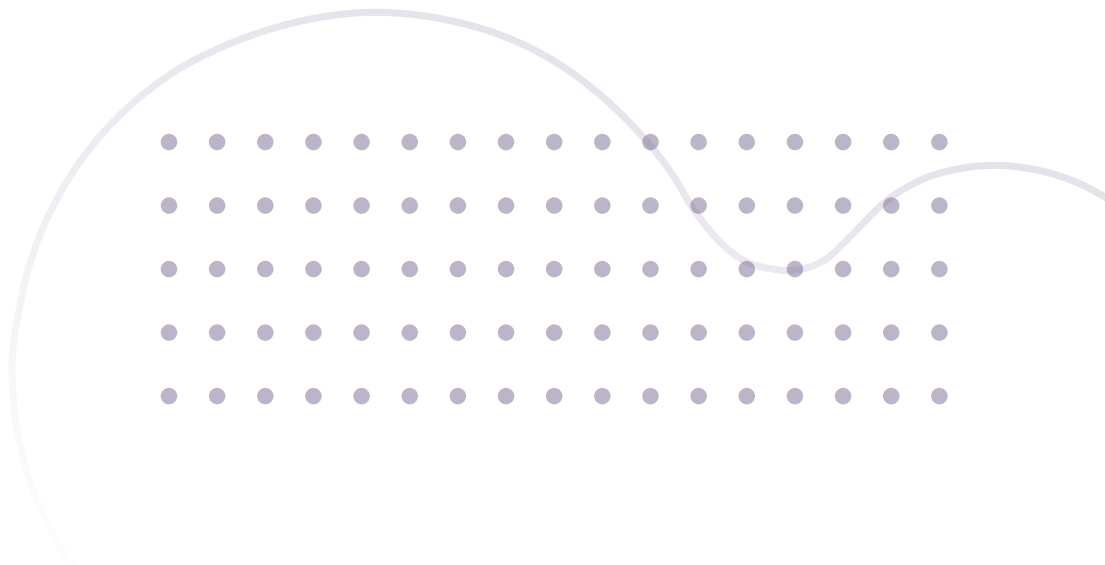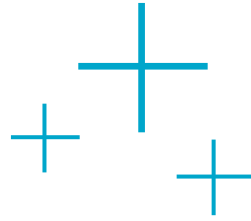
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