



dixon walter

Winter

NEWSLETTER

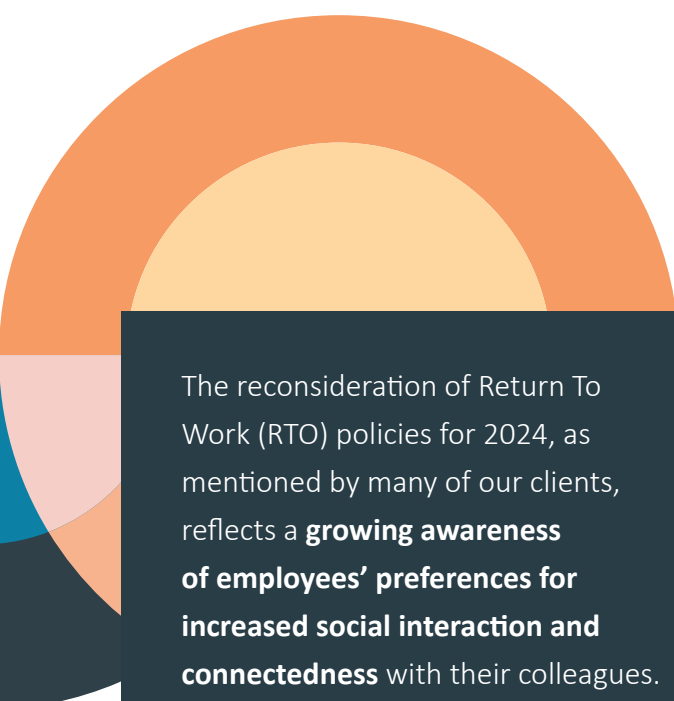
January 2024



We did it...

...we survived January!!

It's time for our usual round-up of hot topics hitting the press as well as the Movers and Shakers and all things senior recruitment within the sector.



The reconsideration of Return To Work (RTO) policies for 2024, as mentioned by many of our clients, reflects a **growing awareness of employees' preferences for increased social interaction and connectedness** with their colleagues. This shift in perspective suggests a recognition of the importance of workplace social dynamics in the overall well-being and job satisfaction of employees.

Is it time to Return to the Office?

We are hearing constantly in the press about the chronic shortage of skilled talent for senior leaders in various industries, and HE is no exception. The skills shortage is not a new problem, but it has been exacerbated by the pandemic, Brexit, and the ageing population.

The prediction that economies globally may lose \$8.5 trillion in unrealised revenues by 2030 due to the skills gap underscores the economic impact of this issue. This projection emphasizes the urgency for leaders to address the skills shortage to prevent substantial economic losses. The time frame mentioned, just over half a decade, suggests a sense of immediacy and the need for prompt action to mitigate the widening skills gap.

To reverse this trend, leaders may need to focus on initiatives such as investing in workforce development, implementing training programs, fostering collaboration between academia and industry, and embracing innovative hiring practices. Addressing the skills shortage requires a comprehensive approach that spans education, training, and talent acquisition to ensure a sustainable and skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of the evolving HE landscape.

As well as internal factors, there are several external factors at play when looking to recruit to senior leadership positions within universities; competition from rival institutions vying for the same top-tier candidates, and a lack of diversity among applicants. The latter is a problem that has impacted leadership teams for a long time, with figures showing that only 27% of VC positions are held by women.

Several factors may be influencing this reconsideration.

First and foremost, the experience of remote work during the pandemic has brought attention to the value of in-person collaboration and social interaction, which may have been missed during prolonged periods of virtual work. Employees may be expressing a desire for more face-to-face interactions to foster a sense of community, teamwork, and a stronger connection with their colleagues.

Additionally, institutions may be acknowledging the impact of social dynamics on employee engagement, creativity, and overall productivity. Face-to-face interactions can enhance communication, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas, contributing to a more vibrant and innovative work environment.

As companies reconsider their RTO policies, they need to carefully weigh up the balance between RTO whilst maintaining that level of flexibility that we now know is a top priority for prospective employees. They might explore hybrid work models that combine in-person and remote work to strike a balance between the benefits of physical presence and the flexibility provided by remote arrangements.

Ultimately, this shift in RTO policies reflects a responsiveness to the evolving needs and preferences of the workforce, aiming to create work environments that promote both productivity and employee well-being whilst also maintaining attractiveness in the very competitive market for talent acquisition.



Challenges

For Recruitment

“Candidates have the advantage in an employee-led market.”

Nearly four in five HR and recruitment professionals said that poor quality applicants and skills shortages were the biggest challenges they faced when recruiting in the past 12 months, a new survey by XpertHR has revealed.

An article by People Management provides a great summary: **What were the biggest hiring issues for HR in 2023 and what can be done about them?**

[Read the full article here →](#)

At Dixon Walter, when we work with clients we push them to look at the whole offer, not just the remuneration when marketing new opportunities; Employer brand and reputation, corporate culture and the employee experience will make their positions more appealing to skilled candidates. We've talked in previous Newsletters about what we call the [Employee Value Proposition](#) and how this is key to tackle the challenges being faced in senior level HE recruitment.

Within the article by People Management, Jo Benelisha, Director at Strictly Recruitment, highlighted the impact of lengthy application processes on attracting the best candidates.

She told People Management that businesses should **“streamline the recruitment process to minimise delays”** as **“long and complicated processes may discourage top-tier candidates.”**

Let's be honest we'd need a whole other Newsletter to talk about that one!!

[Read the XpertHR article here >](#)

Hot Off The Press

A relatively new initiative has been bought together by Advance HE that you may be interested to follow; DVC Dialogues bring together Deputy Vice-Chancellors and other senior university leaders from across the globe to discuss the issues impacting their institutions, staff and students. You can watch the series [here](#).

In case you missed it...

Universities UK (UUK) - UK Higher Education Financial Sustainability Report.

PwC was commissioned by UUK to consider the current financial sustainability of the UK Higher Education sector and its future outlook. It analysed current and historical Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data of 255 Higher Education (HE) providers. The report also analyses the 2022/23 regulatory forecasts (Annual Financial Return 2022 for England and Northern Ireland, and Strategic Plan Forecast 2023 for Scotland) of 84 participating UUK members. It assesses how those forecasts would be impacted by factors such as inflationary pressures, the domestic fee freeze and the reliance on cross-subsidisation from international students. The report uses the Office for Students (OfS) categorisation of English providers into six distinct segments – larger research intensive, larger teaching intensive, medium, smaller, specialist creative and specialist.

[Read the full report here >](#)

[Response from HEPI can be found here >](#)

Job Shadowing HE

Presented by Susannah Marsden, Job Shadowing HE is a podcast that takes a deep dive into the roles of people who work in Higher Education. Featuring guests from across the sector, each episode reveals what's involved in a specific role, the career path that led to it and tips on how to get in and get on in these jobs.

Dixon Walter are proud supporters of the podcast, next episode coming 14th February focussing on the role of a Director of Planning.

About your Host: Susannah has worked in Higher Education for over 25 years. Never intending to work in HE, she started her career as a Course Officer and worked her way through numerous posts which included eight years as Director of Student and Academic Services and Registrar at City, University of London. In 2021, she set up Susannah Marsden Consulting and has since worked with a wide variety of institutions on over 30 projects. She is a Fellow of the Association of Higher Education Professionals. Alongside her consultancy she is a mentor, and is also a Governor of the Central School of Ballet, one of the UK's smallest HEIs.

[Listen and subscribe here >](#)



Gender Equality

“Motherhood is a major contributor to the gender pay gap which is relatively small but widens consistently after a woman has her first child. By the time her first child is 12-years-old, a woman receives 33% less pay per hour than a man”

- Dixon Walter Team Member

Gender Equality is still very much a topic close to our hearts at Dixon Walter.

One of our Team Members once shared her very personal journey of the Motherhood Penalty back in 2021 and whilst we are seeing great strides forward within the sector, there is clearly still a way to go.

[Read her story here →](#)

Interesting article on the Gender Pay Gap in HE by Pinsent Masons explored this in more depth.

[Read the full article here →](#)

The deadline for 2024 GPG reporting is fast approaching. Back in October, Imperial published a [gender and ethnicity pay gap report](#) that laid out clear communication and practical action;

“We need to continue to work to find ways to close both the gender and ethnicity pay gaps. This will include continuing to focus on the recruitment and retention of women and Black and other minority ethnic colleagues, particularly in senior roles – and in alignment with our [Race Equality Charter](#) and [Athena Swan](#) action plans, introducing additional initiatives to reduce the pay gaps. Our people are the most important part of Imperial and are at the centre of delivering our academic mission”

As Recruiters we take our responsibility very seriously to proactively promote diversity and inclusivity in all our searches.

We are all striving for inclusivity and equality but sometimes the reasons as to why can be overlooked and forgotten. It is important as recruiters to lead the charge in promoting the benefits that diversity undoubtedly brings. Take this article for instance;

Quick, interesting read on how [Women Improve Decision-Making on Boards](#). In other words...**why women are fabulous leaders!**

We've really been enjoying the [WHEN](#) Blog Series titled **“My Career My Way”**. Its so very important to hold a spotlight to these stories.

If you are not already aware of [WHEN](#) and the fantastic work they are doing we'd really encourage you to take a look at what they're up to. They are currently taking a fresh look at the perspectives of women and need [your help](#) to get women's voices heard.

They are aiming to get 1,000 responses to their short survey.



Here's just a sample of their blog posts;

Job-sharing: a route to diverse, confident and collaborative senior leadership

About the author:

Professor Parveen Yaqoob OBE is Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation and a Professor of Nutritional Physiology at the University of Reading, where she has worked for 25 years. She chaired the Athena Swan Governance Committee from 2020-2023, overseeing a transformation of the gender equality charter, and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of Advance HE and Chair of its EDI Committee. Parveen is also a Non-Executive Director of the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and was appointed OBE for services to higher education in 2022.

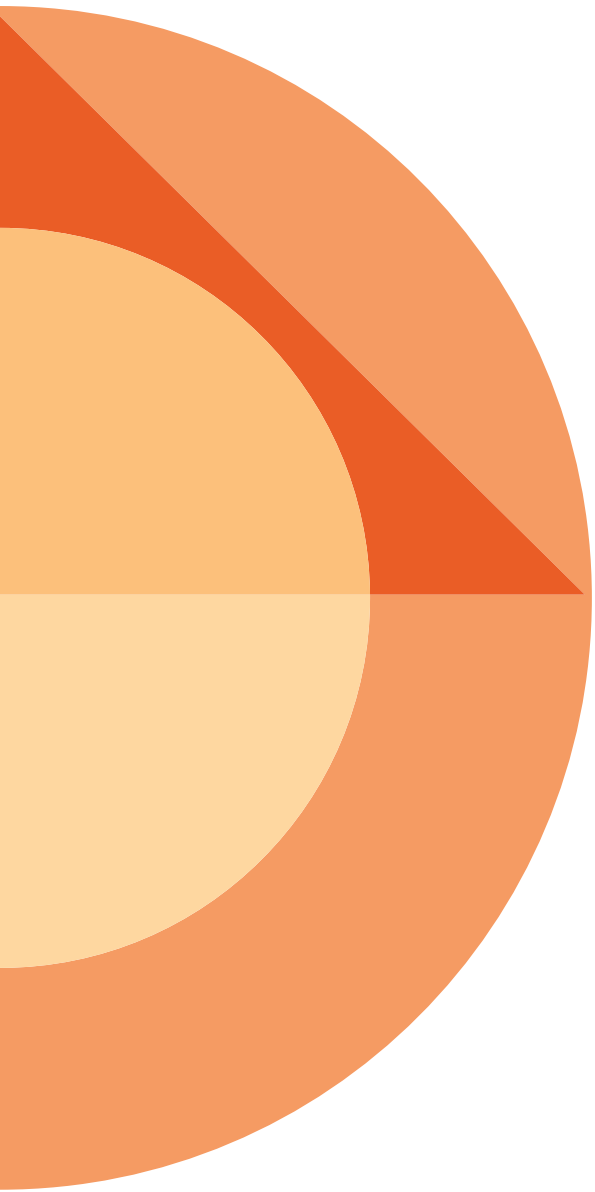
[Read the full blog post here >](#)

Navigating my career and work-life balance

About the author:

Chloe Milano is a mum of two and Executive Director of People at London Metropolitan University. Previously she was Director of Employee Relations, Policy and Planning at University College London and Head of HR at the Institute of Education. She has also worked in HR and organisational development at City, University of London and her early career was spent in a number of different roles at the University of Liverpool.

[Read the full blog post here >](#)



Here are just some of the appointments we have been busy making since our last Newsletter;

Aston University	Director of Student Life
University of Cumbria	Dean, Institute of Health Director of Centre for Research in Health & Society
University of Hull	Director of Admissions Head of Faculty Strategy & Planning (Business, Law and Politics) Executive Director Marketing & Recruitment
Leeds Beckett University	Deputy Director Finance
University of Liverpool	Associate Director: Strategy, Partnerships and Projects
Manchester Metropolitan University	Deputy Chief People Officer
Northumbria University	Head of Department, Nursing, Midwifery and Health
University of Roehampton	Director of Strategic Projects and Planning
UCLAN	Deputy Director Capital Development & Space Management Deputy Director of Commercial & Accommodation Services
University of Sheffield	Director of Estates and Facilities Management
University of Sunderland	PVC Research & Global Engagement

[Got a question? Email Dixon Walter >](#)

LGBTQ+

History Month

As we are now into February already (how did that happen!) we have to mention **LGBTQ + History Month**. The theme for 2024 LGBTQ+ History month is Medicine **#UnderTheScope**. It is a prompt to celebrate the work and life of LGBTQ+ people that have made significant contributions to the field of medicine. It is also an opportunity to shine a light on the discrimination and inequalities that LGBTQ+ people have historically experienced in healthcare settings, and still face to this day.

We often hear conversations (inside and outside of work) whereby people want to be supportive of causes such as this but often shy away from discussions for fear of using the wrong terms. From a recruitment perspective, this nervousness of getting it wrong can often lead to shying away from conversations around inclusivity and diversity. Perhaps a good resource to share therefore is this LGBTQ+ Glossary of Terms and a reminder that the best that anyone can do is approach any conversation with empathy and humility. Empathy to understand that other people will have different views, and humility to know that you are not going to know everything yourself and won't have all the answers.

[View the LGBTQ+ Glossary here >](#)

...A reminder that the best that anyone can do is approach any conversation with **empathy** and **humility**. Empathy to understand that other people will have different views, and humility to know that you are not going to know everything yourself and won't have all the answers.



And Finally... Because even Recruiters have bad days.

Our Top 5 Tips for staying well during the cold Winter Months;

1.

Take a break from social media (but if you're reading this on LinkedIn wait till you've finished)

2.

Buy a slanket – no one will know just how cosy you are from the waist down on those Teams calls – trust us you won't regret it! (other brands are available)

3.

Eat more cake. Cake equals total comfort plus the more you weigh, the harder you are to kidnap

4.

Avoid those Winter bugs and boost your immunity with dirt – no not in your sandwich but maybe buy a house plant or take a nice walk in the countryside

5.

Have a laugh – because all recruiting and no giggling makes all of us a dull [insert pronoun]

Disclaimer: Before trying any of these insightful wellness tips, please consult your doctor or common sense first. Dixon Walter accept zero liability for any slanket related accidents.

