



dixon walter

Spring

NEWSLETTER

May 2024



Introduction



With Spring well and truly sprung (can someone please tell the weather forecast), we take stock of the current landscape of Senior Recruitment within Higher Education and certainly it has not been without its challenges of late.

We cannot ignore the current financial constraints marring the sector; a decline in student applications and recruitment both domestic and international have been felt hard. We have seen the rise and stagnation of China and the rise and fall of India and Nigeria.

There is ongoing and tense debate around Pay and Reward with trade unions laying out their expectations from a pay spine review, including restoration of 3% incremental gaps across the spine.

This has put significant financial pressure on many institutions with several announcing cost-cutting drives including redundancy schemes. Now more than ever, the importance of effective leadership will be key to navigate the challenge. Senior colleagues within the sector will face tough decisions in the time ahead; resilience, innovation and empathy will be key attributes to ensure success. The financial prospects of an institution will play a large role in candidates decision making when considering new opportunities.

At Dixon Walter we will continue to support the sector to find and develop key talent to drive through this period of uncertainty. We are consultants in the true sense of the word. We'll share our expertise; act as your sounding board; offer alternative perspectives; take you beyond your brief; surprise you with new ideas – and constructively challenge you.

Estates

and Facilities

It's been a busy few months in the world of Estates and Facilities, with April seeing the annual AUDE conference in Newcastle.

This included the prestigious AUDE Awards, where, as ever, the standard of the nominations was strong.

[Check out all the winners >](#)

Alongside the Conference, AUDE have also published their annual report;

[Check out their annual report >](#)

Our sector specialists continue to have been active across a number of key appointments in this space over this last year, which have included Lancaster, Leicester, Liverpool, Durham, UCLAN, Exeter and currently completing appointments at Manchester and Glasgow Caledonian. Our extensive networks across Estates professionals both inside and outside of the HE sector have ensured dynamic and diverse candidate pools and ultimately successful appointments.

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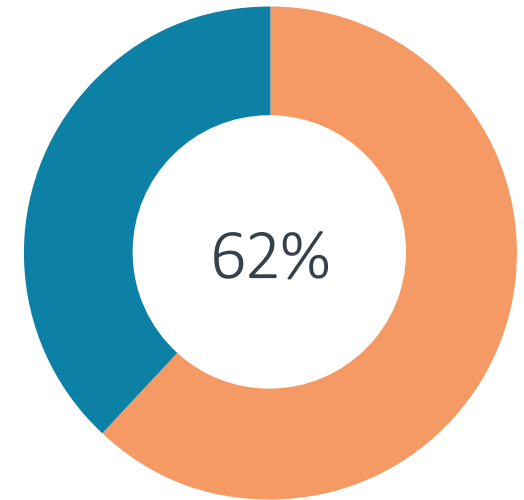
Proud to Announce



Dixon Walter are proud to announce that we have become Committed Members of [Inclusive Employers](#).

This partnership follows an ongoing and thorough review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. We know that our clients are constantly under pressure to measure EDI, to ensure fairness and to actively diversify their recruitment channels and processes. We are fully aware of the responsibility we hold as senior recruiters to the sectors we serve and acknowledge that EDI must be at the heart of our approach. We want Dixon Walter to be part of the positive change within the sector, taking an active role and providing expert guidance for our clients.

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In 2023, 62% of our appointed candidates identified as female

Pay & Reward in HE

The story continues to unfold with debate continuing and Trade Unions setting out further demands.

The impact this is undoubtedly having on internal Reward Teams is great and as a result UHR have implemented a [UHR Reward Resource Survey 2024](#) to collect data and insights on the size and scope of Reward teams in HE, the challenges faced in recruiting and retaining Reward colleagues and the reality of working in this area of practice.

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) released a report back in March titled **“Show me the money: an exploration of the gender pay gap in higher education”**

The full report can be found here >

At-a-glance:

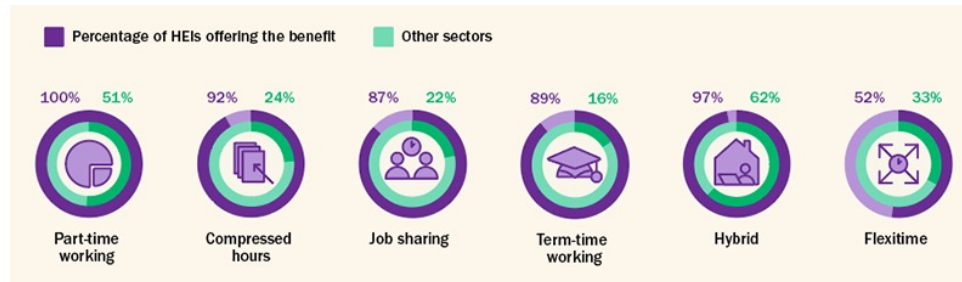
- The median gender pay gap across HE stands at 11.9 per cent, outperforming the broader UK average of 14.4 per cent. HE providers have seen a reduction of 4.4 percentage points in their gender pay gap since reporting began in 2017. Across the UK, the drop is 4 percentage points (p5)
- Variations between institutions are wide-ranging, however, with median gender pay gaps in 2022 reported between 0 per cent and 41 per cent (p5)
- Five institutions have eliminated their gender pay gap. At the current rate of progression, 26 institutions will close their median gender pay gap within five years (p19, p30)
- Eight providers still have a pay gap of over 20 per cent, including one new university with a median gender pay gap of 41 per cent (p20)
- According to the report, some 28 institutions will never reach pay parity at their current rate of progression as they have been moving in the wrong direction. Estimates of how long it will take some universities to close the gap range from 50 years to up to 680 years (p30)
- Women are over-represented in the lowest pay quartile, and this overrepresentation is more prominent in institutions with a large pay gap (p6)
- Institutions which have been successful at closing their gender pay gap have a deliberate focus on gender parity, backed by robust action plans (p6)
- Good maternity leave provisions and flexible working for mothers should be standard, the report argues. Part-time and flexible working opportunities, particularly in senior roles, should be considered (p46)
- Institutions should prepare for, communicate and implement the recent Employer Relations (Flexible Working) Act (p49)
- A review and overhaul of recruitment metrics, particularly those that lead to further inequity, is recommended (p41)
- Recruitment panels should be gender-diverse. Panels should avoid inquiring about salary history in recruitment processes, to mitigate historical pay biases (p45)
- Paternity leave, shared parental leave and flexible work for fathers, should be encouraged and normalised. The government should consider more proactive forms of paternity leave, like those seen in Sweden (p57)
- Russell Group and other research-intensive universities should pay particular attention to their pay outliers - those who get paid the very most, and those who are paid the very least (p57)

Institutions should monitor their gender pay gaps by a broader set of protected characteristics than gender. This should include ethnicity, disability, LGBTQ+ and religious-based pay gaps (p37).



Benefits of working in HE

UCEA have been taking a focussed look at the benefits of working in the HE sector for some time now. Last week they updated their pension specific infographic.



This infographic suite shares some of the often overlooked benefits and conditions available to HE sector employees. It was first published in February 2024. The Pensions specific infographics were updated in April 2024 to reflect the new employer contribution rates for TPS in England and Wales.

The full report analysing the range of benefits can be found [here](#) and provides an analysis of the financial and non-financial benefits offered across 93 responding HEIs. This will be used to support UCEA's objective of improving the collective narrative for the sector as employers of choice, by demonstrating the more generous employee benefits offered in our sector by comparison with those offered by employers in the wider economy. UCEA hope the report will help HEIs to promote and develop their employment offering through benchmarking their own benefits offering against employers within and outside of the sector.

Flexible Working

The new regs...

Many organisations will be busy amending or perhaps even introducing an up-to-date flexible working policy following the recent law changes. In case you missed it, here are the regulations we need to get a handle on;

From 6th April 2024, the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act means:

Employees are able to request flexible working from day 1 of employment instead of 26 weeks.

They will also be able to make up to two requests per 12-month period, instead of one.

Employers have just two months to respond to a request instead of three months.

So what does all of this mean for recruitment and retention of staff? According to the Fawcett Society, 40% of women who are currently not working said access to flexible work would mean they could take on more paid work, while 77% of women agreed they would be more likely to apply for a job that advertised flexible working options.

For more information on these new regulations, visit [here](#).



Leadership

What kind of leadership is needed to steward HE?

One of the many questions being posed for this year's Festival of Higher Education to be held in November hosted by Wonke and the University of London.

The difficult decisions that institutional leaders and governors are making right now will determine the future shape and activity of the higher education sector including what courses are on offer, and what research is prioritised. Their ability to oversee change, build organisational capability, sustain external partnerships, and maintain the morale and motivation of their staff will determine whether the sector continues to thrive or whether it flounders in the years ahead. But equally important will be leadership of subject disciplines, students' unions and professional service teams – we'll assess whether the sector's decision-makers have the right mix of skills, evidence, and values to make the best possible calls in challenging times.

[Original Source >](#)

The Festival will take place on 12-13 November and further information may be accessed [here](#).

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SUMS

Senior Salary Benchmarking Survey

Because we're worth it?

Following success last year, SUMS Consulting is excited to offer their Senior Salary Benchmarking Service uniquely designed for the higher education sector. It aims to provide comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date insights, which will empower you to accurately benchmark salaries, improve employee retention, and assess your equal opportunities. [Click here to find out more and take part.](#)

Headline findings from last years survey included;



£80k+

Average pay distribution was £80k to £150k with 3 roles commonly exceeding £200k. Four roles had a differing minimum and maximum pay distribution of over £100,000 among reportees.

43%

43% of DVCs had been internally appointed; whereas 55% of CIOs had been externally appointed outside of the sector. There was a direct correlation between internal appointees and the lowest salary being offered.

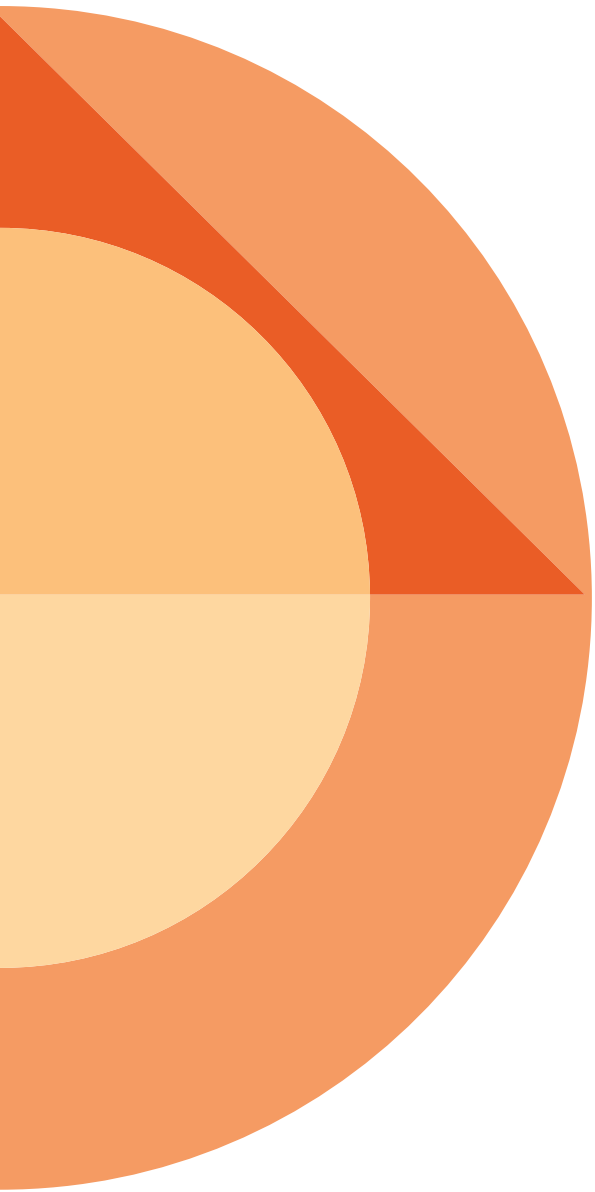
90%

Nearly 90% of Directors of Research had less than 2 years' service.

83%

83% of University Secretaries identified as male; whereas 83% of Learning and Teaching professionals identified as female.





Articles we've been enjoying

How to recover from being rejected for a job by Ellen Scott

Getting rejected for a role you really wanted can feel brutal, but don't let it hold you back from making your next move.

[Read Here >](#)

Eight ways to be a better leader

Being brave enough to make decisions without worrying about failure is important. Lead the way and you can inspire and develop your team, writes Padma Rani.

[Read Here >](#)

Congratulations! You've been promoted. Now what?

As a senior team member, don't ignore the benefits of newness that an appointee from the outside would have, write Laurie Fenlason and Jenn Desjarlais.

[Read Here >](#)

Whatuni Student Choice Awards:

The best UK unis of 2024, decided by students!

The Whatuni Student Choice Awards (WUSCAs) are the largest annual awards in the UK where the outcome is decided exclusively by students. The Awards took place at the end of April and all of the winners and nominees can be found here. Huge Congratulations to the University of Sheffield who scooped the top prize of University of the Year !! As an alumni of the University himself, Mike Dixon was particularly pleased to see this victory.

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

