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Role of Priorities Sub-Committee

Priorities Sub-Committee has operated as a Sub-Committee of Academic Planning and Resource Committee. Its overarching function has been to consider and make recommendations to APRC on staffing requests, including the creation of all academic posts, to ensure that they came within the approved staffing plans and budgetary allowance of the relevant College/Academic Support Unit, as well as on the staffing plans of the Colleges and Academic Support Units.

Review of Academic Committees in the Context of Academic Restructuring

The statutes of the University were amended in Q1 2018 to provide for the expansion of UMT and the appointment of Executive Deans. As a result of these changes and coupled with the implementation of budget devolution and increased decentralisation of decision-making to the Colleges, a review of academic committees was undertaken.

A significant change recommended from the review relates to the functions of Priorities Sub-Committee. In the context of academic restructuring and budget devolution, the review notes that a considerable element of the functions of Priorities Sub-Committee has been absorbed into the role of Executive Dean. Consequently, it recommends that Priorities Sub-Committee is discontinued with effect from 31st of October 2018. This recommendation has been endorsed by UMT and APRC and adopted by Academic Council and Údarás na hOllscoile in October 2018.

5-year Planning Cycles overseen by UMT and UMT Sub-Committee for Academic Planning

In order to maintain a whole-university perspective on academic budgets and headcount, it is proposed to replace Priorities Sub-Committee with a 5-year planning processes in the Colleges, Academic Support and Central Support Units, overseen by UMT and aligned to the annual Operational Planning Process. The central planning process will provide for a 5-year planning cycle in the Colleges and in Support Services with 5-year College and Support Service strategies, budget plans and staffing plans, and risk registers set out.

Under this model, and with the exception of Professorial-level posts, the detail of academic headcount planning at college level is primarily a matter for Executive Deans of College to manage, within the parameters of the available College budget. A new sub-Committee of UMT responsible for Academic Planning will consider and make decisions on the creation or re-filling of all Professorial-level posts, in the context of the strategic needs of the University.

It is proposed that requests for **new posts** that are outside of existing headcount and budget, in the Academic Support units (*i.e.* CELT, Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development, OVPR, Library, Graduate Studies) will be considered as part of the annual budget planning process.

Role of Academic Planning and Resource Committee

In parallel to the Central Planning Process overseen by UMT and the establishment of the UMT Sub-Committee for Academic Planning, it is proposed to refocus the role of APRC towards the oversight of policy and procedures with

regard to academic planning and resourcing, together with the strategic review of the effectiveness of the deployment of academic resources.

From a governance perspective, the role of APRC will be to ensure that appropriate controls are in place centrally to ensure consistent and transparent processes are implemented across all Colleges and that the Colleges operate in line with University Policies, including HR Policies, and within budgetary and statutory regulatory requirements.

Statutory Regulatory Requirements

NUI Galway has an on-going requirement to provide statutory returns to the Higher Education Authority. These include:

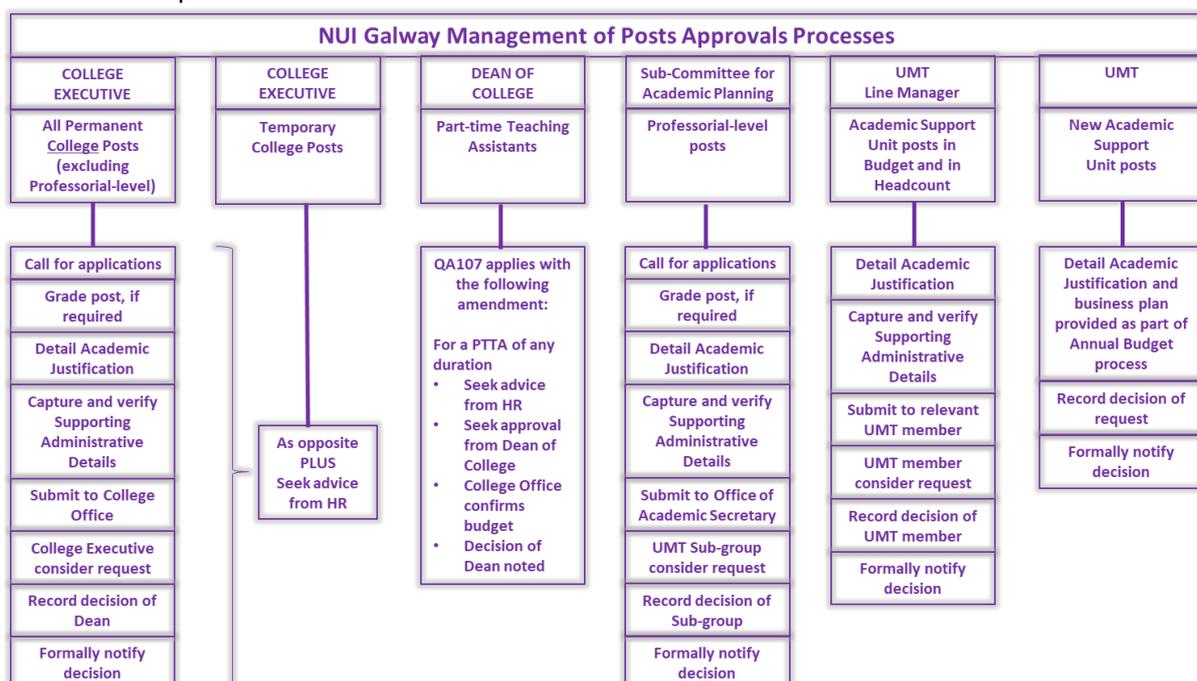
- **HEA Student Return** – Bi-annual return of Student numbers and Courses
- **RGAM Return** – Annual return of student FTEs and the Book of Modules
- **Staff headcount** – Quarterly return of staff headcount, including core and non-core posts
- **HEA Compact** – Annual report of performance against targets

Under the new model, these returns will continue to be completed and validated centrally and **will depend on each of the Colleges following the guidelines presented herein. This will enable the University to maintain and provide absolute, up-to-date and accurate data to the HEA.**

College-level processes for decision-making

At the last meeting of Priorities Sub-Committee on 25th of September 2018, the Deans of College acknowledged that a consistent approach to a posts-approval process across the Colleges is preferable. They agreed that the templates that already exist for the Priorities decision-making process provide a good framework for a College-based process. APRC has recommended also that a consistent approach to a post-approvals process should be adopted across the Colleges.

In this context, and at the request of the Deans, the principles listed herein are provided to Colleges to support a consistent approach across the Colleges to the management of the post-approval process at a college level and to facilitate compliance with statutory requirements. The Guidelines outline the process associated with the re-filling of existing posts in the Academic Support Units also. The Guidelines are summarised in the Figure below and provide a framework in the transition period to devolved decision-making. A review of the Guidelines will be undertaken 12 months after their adoption.



Guidelines for the Management of Posts-approval Process by Colleges

1. Annual Central Planning Process

- 1.1 On an annual basis, budget plans and staffing plans for Colleges are approved through an annual central planning process overseen by UMT, aligned to College 5-year strategies and Operational Plans.
- 1.2 As part of the Central Planning Process, Colleges are required to set out:
 - 5-year Strategy including strategic statement of unique strengths of College
 - 5-year budget plan
 - 5-year staffing plan including Staff/Student ratios
 - 5-year student numbers plan
 - Risk Register
- 1.3 The College Plans are presented to UMT by the Dean of College and are signed off annually.
- 1.4 Budgets are allocated to Colleges based on the agreed revised resource allocation model.
- 1.5 Colleges are required to operate within the limits of the allocated budget.

2. College Planning Process

2.1 Permanent New and Existing Posts

- 2.1.1 The College Executive will consider staffing requests for permanent new and existing posts and will make a recommendation to the Executive Dean.
- 2.1.2 To underpin informed planning and to avoid an *ad hoc* consideration of requests at every meeting of the Executive, the consideration of staffing requests will normally be limited to designated meetings of the Executive which will take place at least every 4 months. In exceptional circumstances, where an urgent decision is required, the College Dean will review the post documentation and take a decision on the post.
- 2.1.3 On an annual basis, one of these meetings shall be designated as the *Annual Resource Planning* meeting for the College where requests for posts across the College will be prioritised in the context of strategic justification and available budget.
- 2.1.4 The HR Business Partner, College/Institutional Finance Officer and a representative of the Office of the Academic Secretary will attend the designated meetings of the College Executive where staffing requests will be considered to provide support to the process.
- 2.1.5 To stimulate reflection on the existing staff profile to inform decisions on new posts, including grade and area of specialism, the College Executive will refer to the College Academic/Support Staff Gender Profile for the current academic year (which will be provided by HR) in the consideration of requests for all posts.
- 2.1.6 Any vacancy that arises will be considered in terms of the strategic priorities and business needs of the College overall.
- 2.1.7 The College Office will issue a call, with an associated deadline, to the Heads of School for the submission of applications to fill a post.
- 2.1.8 In instances where the request relates to a new support post, the job description will be graded by the central Grading Committee, prior to the submission of the request to the College Office¹.
- 2.1.9 The Head of School will complete **Part A** of an *Application to Fill a Post* form. This section represents the justification of the requested post with reference to how it aligns to the College 5-year Staffing Plan and College Strategic Plan.
- 2.1.10 **Part B** of an *Application to Fill a Post* form will be completed by the Head of School, or HR, or the College Office, as advised by the College Office. In the completion of Part B of the application form:

¹**Grading:** The grading process for new administrative support posts requires the Head of School to complete a [Job description form](#) (academic support posts) in consultation with the HR Business Partner and to attend a meeting of the Grading Subcommittee to provide an overview of the post. The Head of School should contact josephine.hynes@nuigalway.ie as soon as possible to schedule an appointment with the Grading Subcommittee. Completed job description forms should be submitted to josephine.hynes@nuigalway.ie at least one week in advance of the meeting of Grading Subcommittee.

- HR will confirm head count availability and the correct post number for the post (where a post is an existing post)².
 - The post will be costed by finding the average cost of each pay scale using the budget template³. Note that new posts that fall outside of core headcount need to be budgeted to include a 20% provision for pension (any new post will be considered non-core; for existing posts, HR shall advise whether the post is core or non-core).
 - The College Finance Officer/Management Accounts will verify that the request aligns to the College 5-year Staffing Plan.
 - Where a post is not included in the College 5-year Staffing Plan, Management Accounts will confirm budget availability for the post, and if approved, the post will be incorporated into the next version of the 5-Year Staffing Plan.
- 2.1.11 College Office will accept applications from Heads of School only.
- 2.1.12 At designated meetings, the College Executive will consider the application in the context of the College's allocated budget and the College 5-year Staffing and Strategic Plans and will make a recommendation to the Executive Dean.
- 2.1.13 The resulting decision of the Executive Dean, drawing upon a consultation with the College Executive, will be recorded formally.
- 2.1.14 The Dean of College or College Administrative Officer will formally advise the Head of School, HR, Management Accounts and the Office of the Academic Secretary of any decisions taken with regard to new or existing posts.
- 2.1.15 To facilitate the set-up of a post on Core, HR shall maintain a summary of all decisions related to the approval of posts⁴.

2.2 Temporary Posts

In certain circumstances, a permanent contract is not suitable and a temporary contract may be used. In general, these circumstances relate to providing cover for leave, *e.g.*, maternity leave, or for short-term specific projects, *i.e.*, transfer a piece of work.

Temporary contracts should be **not** be used to delay the filling of a permanent role. Temporary contracts may be for a *fixed-term* or for a *specified purpose*, as follows:

- A *fixed-term contract* specifies a date of commencement of employment and a date on which the contract will expire.
- A *contract for a specified purpose* specifies a commencement date also but it does not state exactly when the contract will end. Instead, the contract states the specific purpose or the occurrence of a specific event (*e.g.*, replacing an employee who is on sick leave, installing a machine) and the contract will end when the purpose for which it has been given ends.

It is important that fixed-term and specific purpose contracts are used appropriately. For example, if an employee is hired to provide maternity cover, he or she should be issued with a specific purpose contract. This will cover such eventualities as the employee on maternity leave deciding to take additional maternity leave or annual leave.

With the exception of Research Support/Administrative posts⁵, all aspects of the process outlined above for the consideration of new or existing permanent posts apply for the consideration of temporary posts, with the following additional step:

² For existing posts or where a post is being suppressed, you must seek confirmation from your HR Business Partner that the post number is vacant.

³ http://www.nuigalway.ie/management_accounting/forms-templates/

⁴ Once a post is set-up on Core, the line manager shall contact recruit@nuigalway.ie to initiate the recruitment process.

⁵ A [Post Proposal Form](#) must be completed for Research Support Posts. The Principal Investigator (PI) shall seek approval from the Dean of College to fill the research administrative post and the decision of the Dean shall be noted by the College Executive. The College Office shall formally advise the PI, HR, and the Office of the Academic Secretary of the decision.

- 2.2.1 For fixed-term/specified-purpose posts and informed by the recommendations of the Cush Report, the Head of School will engage with HR to discuss:
- The rationale for a temporary, rather than a permanent, appointment
 - The nature/objective grounds of the temporary appointment
- 2.2.2 HR will advise on the most appropriate contract type for the post, *i.e.*, fixed-term or specified-purpose.

2.3 Part-Time Teaching Assistant (PTTA) Posts

A Part-time Teaching Assistant (PTTA) contract is a temporary contract of employment, generally a Fixed-Term contract, and PTTA employees have the same employment rights as any other group of employees. The Director of HR is leading a review of the policy and process associated with the Employment of Part-time Teaching Assistants. Pending the development and approval of any recommendations arising from the review, the University Policy with respect to the Employment of Part-time Teaching Assistants ([QA107](#)) shall continue to apply with minor modification as listed below.

Where the Discipline/Unit/Programme Director is intending to employ a PTTA for **any duration**:

- The Head of Discipline/Unit will, in consultation with HR, justify appropriately the rationale for employing a PTTA.
- HR will advise the Head of Discipline/Unit on the objective grounds for engaging a PTTA.
- The Head of Discipline/Unit will seek approval from the Dean of College.
- The Dean of College/Administrative Officer will confirm to HR that there is budget for the post and that the salary will be paid from the existing PTTA budget or an identified alternative source. The approval of the Dean of College will be noted at the next meeting of the College Executive.

By definition, a PTTA contract is a temporary part-time contract and PTTA contracts will normally be less than 0.5 FTE.

2.4 Approval of Professorial-Level Posts

- 2.4.1 The UMT Sub-Committee for Academic Planning will consider and make decisions on all Professorial level posts.
- 2.4.2 The UMT Sub-Committee for Academic Planning comprises the President, the Registrar and Deputy President, the College Deans, the Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Vice-President for Research, the Academic Secretary, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Bursar, and Vice-President for Development.
- 2.4.3 The UMT Sub-Committee for Academic Planning will meet quarterly to consider applications.
- 2.4.4 To stimulate reflection on the existing staff profile to inform decisions on new posts, including grade and area of specialism, the UMT Sub-Committee for Academic Planning will refer to the relevant College Staff Gender Profile for the current academic year (which will be provided by HR) in the consideration of each request.
- 2.4.5 The Office of the Academic Secretary will provide the secretariat to the Sub-Committee.
- 2.4.6 The Office of the Academic Secretary will advise Colleges in advance of the dates of meetings of the Sub-Group and documentation for consideration will be required to be submitted at least two-weeks prior to a meeting.
- 2.4.7 The Dean of College will complete **Part A** of an *Application to Fill a Post* form. This section represents the justification of the requested post with reference to how it aligns to the College 5-year Staffing Plan and the College Strategic Plan. For Professorial posts only, the Dean is required also to set out the strategic relevance of the post for the University, demonstrating how the post aligns to the University's existing or emerging priority research areas.
- 2.4.8 **Part B** of an *Application to Fill a Post* form will be completed by the Dean of College, or HR, or the College Office (as advised by the College Office). In the completion of Part B of the application form:
- HR will confirm head count availability and the correct post number for the post (where a post is an existing post)².

- The post will be costed by finding the average cost of each pay scale using the budget template³. Note that new posts that fall outside of core headcount need to be budgeted to include a 20% provision for pension (any new post will be considered non-core; for existing posts, HR shall advise whether the post is core or non-core).
- The College Finance Officer/Management Accounts will verify that the request aligns to the College/Academic Support Unit 5-year Staffing Plan.
- Where a post is not included in the College 5-year Staffing Plan, Management Accounts will confirm budget availability for the post, and if approved, the post will be incorporated into the next version of the 5-Year Staffing Plan.

2.4.9 The Office of the Academic Secretary will accept applications from Deans/College AOs only.

2.4.10 The UMT-Sub-Committee for Academic Planning shall review the application in the context of the University's needs, the College's Strategic Plan, as well as the strategic relevance of the post and its alignment to the University's existing or emerging priority research areas.

2.4.11 In its assessment of the strategic relevance of the requested Professorial post, the UMT Sub-Committee retains the discretion to request, on a case by case basis, an external review of the subject area of the Professorship, to inform its decision.

2.4.12 The resulting decision of the Sub-Committee will be recorded formally.

2.4.13 The Office of the Academic Secretary will formally advise the relevant Dean of College, HR, and Management Accounts of any decisions taken with regard to posts.

2.4.14 To facilitate the set-up of a post on Core, HR will maintain a summary of all decisions related to the approval of posts⁴.

3. Approval of Academic Support Posts

3.1. The Academic Support units are as follows:

- CELT
- Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development
- Office of the Vice-President for Research
- Library
- Graduate Studies
- Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge

3.2 Any vacancy that arises within an Academic Support Unit shall be considered in terms of the strategic priorities and business needs of the Unit.

3.2.1 **For existing posts**, where no change to the post is proposed and where the post is fully in budget and head count, the Head of the Academic Support Unit shall complete an *Application to Fill a Post* form, as outlined in section 2.1.8-2.1.9 above, and submit the request for consideration by the relevant UMT line manager.

The relevant UMT line manager is the Registrar and Deputy President (for CELT, the Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development, the Library, and Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge), the Vice-President for Research or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Head of the Academic Support Unit shall formally advise the Office of the Academic Secretary, HR, and Management Accounts of any decisions taken with regard to posts, to include confirmation of approval of the post by the relevant UMT member.

To facilitate the set-up of a post on Core, HR shall maintain a summary of all decisions related to the approval of posts⁴.

3.2.2 **For new posts (permanent or temporary)**, requests that relate to a post that is NOT fully in budget or head count will be considered as part of the annual budget planning process.

The Head of the Academic Support Unit shall formally advise the Office of the Academic Secretary, HR, and Management Accounts of any decisions taken with regard to new posts, to include confirmation of approval of the post.

To facilitate the set-up of a post on Core, HR shall maintain a summary of all decisions related to the approval of posts⁴.