Responsibilities of Heads of Department

Heads of department and institutions are accountable to the divisional board, through the head of division, for the performance of their duties, and are expected to work proactively with the Head of Division, and collaboratively with their divisional board and with each other in the delivery of key policies. Heads of department have a vital leadership role within their department, as well as formal responsibilities set out within the University's published regulations, Codes of Practice and agreed practice (https://legal.web.ox.ac.uk/statutes). Within the context of these statutes, regulations and codes of practice they are responsible for initiating and maintaining policies within their departments which promote and support learning, teaching and research of the highest quality and which create in the department a climate in which individuals at all levels can work together constructively to further their objectives and embrace equality and diversity. In this context heads of department are responsible amongst other matters for the following.

1. Governance: this includes the establishment and operation of appropriate governance structures to ensure good decision-making and management of people and resources at all levels within the department in accordance with national and University regulatory frameworks.

2. Strategic planning: this includes the development of departmental medium-term strategic plans and associated financial forecasts. Departmental planning will encompass a forward look for research strategy, educational provision, academic hiring, capital investment and renewal of local resources (e.g. IT). Heads will also ensure the progress of actions arising from strategic reviews such as the 6-yearly departmental review process, external accreditation and other charter mark processes, where appropriate.

3. Staffing: while the head of department has ultimate responsibility for all departmental staffing matters, where there is a departmental administrator/head of administration and finance, the management of professional services and most academic-related staff will be delegated to the administrator/HAF in most cases. The head of department's main day-to-day responsibility will be for academic staff. This responsibility includes:

- allocating duties and responsibilities and overseeing academic workloads in general;
- managing recruitment and selection, the initial period of office for Associate Professors, performance and disciplinary issues, retirement, and requests for outside appointments, and ensuring the equitable application of salary and other reward policies, in accordance with University guidelines;
- ensuring that PIs fully understand and can discharge their various management roles within their teams; and,
- ensuring that all staff are supported in their work and in their personal and professional development and that a PDR scheme established in accordance with the University's guidance is accessible to them.

(Appendix A sets out the formal employment responsibilities held by heads of department).

4. Financial management of the department: this includes the preparation of budgets; ensuring that budget targets are met each year and that appropriate action is taken to improve deficit positions; ensuring that the department complies with the University's financial regulations.

5. Physical resources and equipment: this includes the heating, lighting, plumbing and cleaning of any space assigned to the department, the maintenance of buildings and of experimental, IT and other equipment, and the allocation of space within the department.

6. Research: this includes encouraging and supporting the research of members of the department, across all stages of their careers, including those in the early stages of their careers; reviewing and approving applications for research funding within the department; providing the necessary facilities and conditions so that research can flourish within the constraints of the resources available; making arrangements for the REF exercise or its successor; supporting the development of impactful research; overseeing adherence to national research data management requirements (e.g. open access policy); and, as appropriate, encouraging innovation in research and public engagement activity.

7. Teaching: heads of department are responsible for organising teaching in their departments within the overall framework of the division. This includes the admission, supervision and assessment of graduate students; ensuring that satisfactory arrangements are in place for the teaching and examining of undergraduate students in partnership with the colleges who have primary responsibility for admitting undergraduates and contributing to college teaching provision; departmental outreach activity, as appropriate; reviewing courses regularly; embedding quality assurance and student feedback policy in support of national policy requirements.

8. Equality, diversity and inclusion: heads of department should lead and support an inclusive working, learning and social culture in which equality and diversity is embraced and integrated into all areas of work, in which the rights and dignity of all staff and students are respected and where appropriate focus is given to identifying, implementing and monitoring effective actions to promote equality and diversity. Heads of department are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the University's Equality and Diversity policy and for supporting the delivery of the University's strategic objectives for equality and diversity in the department.

9. Development: heads are responsible for fundraising and development work for their departments through identifying funding needs and opportunities and taking a leading role in liaison with existing and potential donors, in consultation with the divisional and central development teams.

10. Communication: this includes facilitating communication within the department; acting as the main point of contact and communication link between the department on one hand, and the division and the wider collegiate University on the other, ensuring that information flows efficiently in both directions; encouraging links with other departments and institutions; promoting the department to potential students, staff and grantors. In the Medical Sciences Division this also includes maintaining good communication links with NHS colleagues.

11. Health and safety: heads are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all people who are in the buildings under their charge and are required to bring to the notice of all employees a written statement describing the organisation and arrangements for safety within their departments. In discharging their responsibilities heads are required to conform to University health and safety policies.

12. Risk management: heads should ensure they are aware of the University's risk policy,

framework and appetite, and apply this to their decision making. They lead departmental risk assessment activities, which feed into divisional risk assessments, and monitor and manage their risks thereafter. Heads should make themselves and their departments aware of core University compliance policies (e.g. bribery, conflicts of interest, fraud, and gifts & hospitality), and department requirements within these (e.g. recording of gifts/conflicts). Heads are also responsible (in consultation with central University and divisional colleagues) for all Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed by department staff and should ensure that standard University templates are used for such documents.

APPENDIX A

The head of department will have responsibility, in conjunction with the Divisional Registrar, for the management, including probation reviews, PDR and performance management, of the departmental administrator/head of administration and finance.

Under the provisions of Statute XIV, sections 1-5 (Supplement (1) to *Gazette* No. 4633, 9 October 2002), whilst you fill the post you are authorised in your position as Head of the Department:

−   to offer employment and sign letters of appointment for academic-related research, library, computing and administrative staff (excluding lead Departmental Administrators posts);

−   to offer employment and sign letters of appointment for non-academic staff;

−   having followed the procedures laid down in the Support Staff handbook, to dismiss support staff in grades 1-5; and

−   having followed the procedures laid down in the Academic-Related Staff Handbook, to dismiss academic-related research, library, computing and administrative staff (excluding lead Departmental Administrators posts) during the probationary period, or in other circumstances which fall outside the provisions of parts B-E of Statute XII;

provided that this authority is exercised in accordance with the Statutes of the University and in accordance with the proper terms and conditions of employment for staff in those categories.

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