

Open meeting on the University's review of its retirement policy-20240305_091909-Meeting Recording

March 5, 2024, 9:19AM

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Roger Mosey 0:05

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this Cambridge University Town Hall. I'm Roger Mosey, the master of Selwyn and therefore a non-university employee, and I hope a neutral chair. The main thing we're going to do this morning, obviously a really important subject, is about the age at which we retire and there's going to be a presentation lasting round about 25 minutes or so. Let me introduce you also to the panel.

So the presentation is going to be led by Richard Penty and by Nick Holmes, who's also a member of the EJRA Review Group, and they'll be taking us through what they've been learning and their recommendations. And then also joining us, we're delighted to be joined by Mary Beard, who is actually in Australia, so it's almost bedtime there, Tim Harper, and Andrea Hudson, representing the university HR department. So plenty of people to answer questions. But the key thing will be to have enough time for those questions.

We're aiming for at least half an hour, possibly a bit more, of questions and when we come to questions, you can either file them in through the Q&A or you can raise a hand – all the usual ways in which to signal you want to take part, and we will make sure we have as much time for that as we possibly can. They see the screen says about 30 minutes for questions and comments. So let's get started. Let me hand over to Richard Penty.



R.V. Penty 1:33

Alright, thank you. If you could go back one slide please.

Personally, thanks very much everyone for for coming along today to hear the high level outcomes of the the work that the Retirement Age Working Group has undertaken. So just a brief reminder to start with.

What is an employer justified retirement age? The thing we've all been worrying about, and that's the fact that an employer may operate a compulsory retirement age perfectly legally, just so long as the employer can objectively justify it as a

proportionate means of achieving one or more legitimate aims. Next slide please.

So what is the the background to EJRA at Cambridge and what is the process?

Firstly, the university used to operate a standard retirement age of 67 to university officers, and has done for many years actually, and 65 for other staff. When the government proposed phasing out default retirement ages back in 2010–11, this was then reviewed.

And as a result of that review, and indeed a Senate House vote endorsing it and then a further review in 2015–16, the university has retained a retirement age for academic and academic related established staff only. All other staff no longer have a retirement age.

So 10 years further on the university council decided to further review the EJRA and it's established a an academic-led review group. It's academic led, but there are people from academic-related staff, there are people from the unions, there are postdocs – all of whom have provided valuable inputs. That was established in February 2023 to review the EJRA and to do that we need to decide whether it's achieving its aims and whether it's legitimate; and recommend any changes as appropriate, so we'll come to them later. Thanks. Next slide please.

But again, what are the aims of our EJRA? Intergenerational fairness and career progression are there; to enable effective succession planning for academic and established staff; to promote innovation in research and in knowledge creation; and then to preserve academic autonomy and freedom. And we'll come to those with a bit more detail of how we've applied those later. Next slide please.

So what are the key questions that the review group has had to ask itself? Firstly, to look at the two tests that we need to do, we need to know whether the aims remain valid and we think are justified on the law. And then whether if the aims are valid, whether they're being proportionately applied to achieve that.

OK, questions, as I said, do the aims remain valid? Then this means looking at the individual aims, the first one being intergenerational fairness. We looked at how the EJRA contributes to vacancies for academic and academic-related staff and also the resulting age profile as a result of EJRA, we looked at how raising or abolishing the EJRA might affect age profile, the vacancy creation and turnover of those staff.

That was very much a data-driven process, by the way. And in terms of surveys of staff, we looked at the extent to which EJRA meetings the other aims: the succession planning, the innovation and preserving academic freedom. Now of course, if we could have these aims., and instead of having a retirement age, we needed to ask

ourselves, whether there are any viable alternatives to the retirement age to enable us to achieve the same aims. And then finally, whether there could be any improvements to the extensions policy and the post-retirement engagement with academic staff. That was something that came up during the consultations themselves. It was clear that there was a lot of dissatisfaction around the policy and also post-retirement engagement. So we'll talk about that later.

That's the background process, so we gathered a lot of information. Nick Holmes will talk about the analysis shortly. So a lot of internal data from the university HR system and we also interviewed various parts of the university HR in terms of senior appointments and EDI. We looked at external staffing data obtained from HESA on Russell Group universities. We had a bunch of surveys and will come to them in the next slide.

We had town hall meetings back in September to introduce what we were doing and to hear comments and we ran special focus groups.

Now there is some time pressure on the review group. We need to complete our work and hopefully go through the university governance process in time for those staff retiring in September 24 to have any changes applied to them.

So what are the most pressing items that we've therefore looked at? So firstly, can we justify the EJRA and then if we can, whether to retain or abolish it?

And if we retain it, should we raise it to a greater age? I'm sure you'll be glad to know we didn't look at whether it should be reduced. And then finally, as I said, any improvements to the extensions process and post retirement engagement?

So next slide please and then.

A lot of that was taken early in the process and there was a great deal of engagement with staff. We had, as I said, multiple surveys, we had one with all staff and over 1000 responses to that. So thanks very much to everyone for those and that sort of opinions on what people thought of the aims, the effectiveness of the aims, whether they were valid, and if there was a an EJRA, what the preferred retirement age would be.

What are the impacts on people and colleges individually? What people felt about post retirement engagement, et cetera, and that was all analysed on the demographic and a staff group basis. Obviously anonymized data from people, but we did know the demographics. We also surveyed retired academics, staff and those who had been subject to the EJRA. How did they view the EJRA itself?

And what did they think of the post retirement engagement?

And then finally, heads of institutions both in academic departments, at school level and in non-school institutions, and there we focused on succession planning and the innovation and research aspects. At the end we also held two focus groups.

They following the results of the survey, looked at the things in a bit more detail, whether the groups felt the EJRA was valid, but it should be raised or abolished.

Importantly, if it were abolished, what alternative measures could be used to support the aims?

And then if it were retained, how to improve this transition again and the experience of retirement? So thank you.

NH **Nicholas Holmes** 10:20

I'm just going to take you through a very high-level picture of the analysis of the data that we obtained. So the first thing we're going to look at is the data we got from our internal HR system.

And we reviewed the last 11 years of staff data and whoops, we've gone too far.

Sorry. We need to go back one. Go back a slide. Sorry, that's the one. Thanks.

So from our internal data what we found was that about half of all academic university officer departures are due to retirement at the EJRA date, which is the 30th of September of the year that the officer turns 67, and that the turnover of academic university officers was rather low. Only 4.3% per annum departing in total, whereas for academic-related officers, the turnover was about 60% higher and the EJRA played a much less significant role in those departures. So only about one in 10 of academic-related officers stayed until their EJRA retirement date.

Next slide please.

We also obtained a very large data set from HESA and carried out a very thorough analysis on that. And that looked at 15 years of data from 2007, right up until the latest available data, which was 2021–22.

And primarily we focused on comparing Cambridge with the 22 Russell Group universities that abolished their retirement age in 2011–12, so that we could understand the effects of not having a retirement age on the demographics of the university input. And what we found was that Cambridge is much more dependent on a retirement for creating vacancies than other Russell Group University institutions. We excluded Oxford obviously, because it has a retirement age, so you can see that slightly more than half of all academic officers who left the university during the post EJRA period did so by reason of retirement, but the equivalent figure

for the average across other Russell Group universities is only 22%. So retirement is much more important in our vacancy creation.

The other thing that the data revealed was that academic university officers at Cambridge retire approximately 5 years later than on average across the Russell Group universities. That's despite the fact that they have to retire when they're 67. So in fact the vast majority of academics at other Russell Group universities are already retired before they hit 67.

We also found that the University of Cambridge had lower job creation rates than other universities prior to the change in retirement age in 2011–12 and that our rate of vacancy and turnover had not changed since the inception of the EJRA, but that the rates at other Russell Group universities had gone down relative to the rate that they had before retirement was abolished.

OK, next slide please.

In addition to that, as Richard said, we did surveys, so some of which were focused on heads of institutions.

And the head of institution survey confirmed that the assumption we'd already made was that where academics retire, they tend to be replaced. So retirements do create vacancies. That was an important thing to establish, and that where those people are replaced in general, they're replaced with someone with a slightly new, somewhat new direction, but in a similar field of expert expertise. By and large, the candidates are more junior in their career.

We would have liked to get a much richer picture of how the United States has coped with the effect of abolishing compulsory retirement on academic workforce because they abolished their retirement in 1994, so they've had a much longer period to observe the effects of this change. Unfortunately the published hard data is rather sparse. We did manage to get some data which showed that it took at least 20 years for the full effects of the abolition of compulsory retirement to be fully realised. We know that anecdotally, there's been a lot of comment about the effects of the abolition of retirement on other on institutions in the United States, but it was difficult to get any hard numbers on that. Certainly there have been many articles written about the problems that it's created.

Next slide please.

So we decided to use a systems dynamic modelling approach to try to understand what the most likely prediction would be for what would happen at Cambridge if we decided to raise or abolish the EJRA. And on this slide you can see the results of that

modelling. We did actually vary the conditions in a few situations, but this is the one we believe the most, the representational model that we came up with.

And what you can see is we've assumed that there are 70 new vacancies created every year for academic staff at Cambridge, which is about the average over the last 10 years. And if that were the case, then if we abolish the EJRA altogether, we would expect that in the immediate aftermath of that abolition, we'd be experiencing a reduction of something like 27 or 28 vacancies per year. That would be the average over the first 10 years after abolition. And of course, over time that would go down. But I think it's important to stress it would never go away completely.

Inevitably the effects of having people stay longer in in post as academics at Cambridge would be that there would be a permanent reduction in the vacancy rate created and we estimate that at about 13 per year, which is around about 19% of 70. If we raise the retirement age, obviously we diminish the effectiveness of EJRA in creating vacancies. But if we raised it to say 69, then we lose about 30%. So we retain 70% of the vacancies that we would expect with the current EJRA at 67. Next slide please.

So this slide talks a little bit about the results of the survey. So as we've heard about just over 1000 staff responded to the All Staff survey, there was a tendency, comparing the demographics of responses with the demographics of the total staff body, there was a bias towards older age groups. So the majority of responses were from people from older age groups.

But opinion was fairly evenly divided as to whether we should retain the EJRA or not and there was a clear correlation between older people, who tended to favour abolition, and younger people tended to favour retention.

When people were asked to express a view as to when they would probably want to retire, should there be no retirement age, more than half of those who did express a view said that they would choose 70 or older.

And among that group expressing a view, there was a tendency for women to be more likely to want to retire earlier and for men to want to retire after 70. And we also looked at some other diversity measures, so disabled staff were more likely to respond to want to retire at age 67.

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So just to sum up the key findings from our data analysis for academics, but not academic-related staff at Cambridge, the EJRA is a major generator of vacancies. Modelling suggests that the abolition of the EJRA would lead to a substantial

reduction in academic vacancies over the next 40 years, 672 out of 2800 predicted, and that it would continue to reduce vacancies forever.

And finally, for academic-related stuff, we could not find from any of our analysis that the EJRA was a significant contributor to turnover or vacancy generation. Thank you.

I'm going to hand back to Richard now.



R.V. Penty 20:04

Well, thank you. So I'm going to go through the key recommendations that that have followed. The first thing I'd like to say is that the review group found that the aims all remain valid, and indeed they found that they were a proportionate or the EJRA was a proportionate way of doing it. So the first recommendation is for academic university officers. And that that's that the EJRA should be retained for those people.

But we also felt – and this is where the data that that Nick showed earlier came into account – that there was a very strong argument to raise the age. We want, however, to have a balance between those who are approaching retirement and wish to work on longer. Clearly those people are badly affected about having an EJRA to say the least, but also to balance the the earlier career staff who very much want to have a permanent career at the University of Cambridge and have a lot to offer

Taking the data, looking at the amount of vacancies, as Nick said, if we increase the retirement age, we have a reduction in the number of vacancies. And so we felt that the sort of right balance – and it very much is a question of judgement and balance – but the review group felt that the age it should be raised to is the age of 69, so an increase of two years. And this is coincidentally, though they're not the reason, effectively the same age as the current version at the University of Oxford.

So secondly, the next one.

But as Nick said, we could find very little evidence that there was any significance of that. Almost no evidence there's a significant effect on vacancies for academic-related university offers, and hence having an EJRA for that staff group is not proportionate. And so we felt that that would fail the test for having a compulsory retirement age for that group. And we will be recommending that the EJRA should be abolished for those people.

And then finally, this is the final major one. There are other recommendations, but they're more detail in in terms of the process for extensions. It's clear from the surveys that that there's a reasonably large amounts of dissatisfaction around the process for extensions, and one thing that we felt could be significantly improved –

there will be other things recommended – is that there should be more than one extension. This will allow staff to put in a series of shorter extensions which are much better justified in each case and therefore should be easier to allow or on objective grounds. The next slide please.

The other actions that that the review group will be recommending, as I said at the beginning and as Nick mentioned, considerable amounts of dissatisfaction amongst staff where people feel that whilst that they may agree with the retirement age, they don't agree with how it works, the transition between working full time and then moving into retirement, and how the staff should remain engaged at an appropriate level, with the university. So the university, sorry, the review group will recommend to Council that the university sets up a body to review some ancillary items. So as I said, the relationship between retired academics and the university so that they're able to contribute to the university in a meaningful way should they wish, of course, but without undermining the EJRA. To review the extensions process, hopefully to allow a simpler operation. And whilst there are permissions for retired staff to get grant funding already, to make that a simpler process to allow people to have plenty of time to apply for grants and hopefully carry on with their research., And then finally enable a much more informed approach to retirement as staff say they don't always understand what the options are, they don't understand what the processes are to obtain extensions or to apply for grant funding, or indeed hold grants post retirement and also, even though that is already allowed, they often didn't understand that that was the case.

Next slide please.

They're going back to the aims. I hope the explanation you've just received those that we, we are trying the way we believe that these items remain valid. So by raising the age for 69 we hope that we've balanced the benefits with of course the disadvantages to older people.

Who will have to retire under this so-called forced retirement? Forced retirement with help those younger people who need and have a lot to offer in academic posts earlier in that career. As part of that we've looked at the effect of the EJRA and allowing succession planning. We can go into more detail on the questions on that, but there's definitely evidence that the heads of institution value the retirement age to allow them to plan for staffing as they go forward.

In terms of innovation and research and knowledge creation, again the surveys revealed that the strong belief that the EJRA allows new posts to be created in new

fields and so that allowed the research that the university does to be refreshed on a reasonably regular basis.

And then finally academic autonomy and freedom. This is a harder one to explain, but it's basically around the fact that academic established staff have protection under the so-called schedule to statute C, which gives them a very, very strong protections to not being dismissed as a result of doing anything. And if there was no retirement age that then the university might have to look at that because it would have to look at how performance management would work for people who are established and that would be a very difficult thing to untangle.

The next slide please.

But finally, for me, I think that the timeline we're having, these town halls at the moment with another one next week, we're also engaging with trade unions to discuss the recommendations with them next month. The proposal will be presented to the Council and to General Board. Council, of course, has to decide whether to accept the report of the review group and, assuming it does, it will publish the report in May.

And then there will be a discussion as usual, I assume and the review group will have recommended to council already, and Council has agreed that that because of the interest and indeed the divergence of views on this and this topic, that a ballot should take place and that will take place in June with results in July.

And then finally, that will allow the proposals or whatever the outcome, the balance is to be in place for the current cohort that are due to retire at the end of this year.

Thank you very much.



Roger Mosey 29:02

OK, Richard and Nick, thanks very much. I thought that was a an incredibly clear presentation. So let me just remind you who the panel is before we go to questions and on questions. You can either fire them in through the Q&A and if they're through the Q&A, I'll read them out. If you put your hand up and signal that you'd like to ask a question, we can do that and you would appear in video if you do it by that route. If you get stuck in none of those ways work, I'm rm725 on e-mail, so I'll happily take a question there and also read it out. so the panel is the people who've just heard from Richard Penty, the chair of the EJRA Review Group, and Nick Holmes, member of the EJRA Review group. Also we have Tim Harper, the head of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. We have Mary Beard, member of the EJRA Review

Group, and Andrea Hudson, who is the director of HR for the university. So all of them will be glad to answer questions and let me just get the Q&A up because I can see someone now coming in.

Richard, can I just ask a question while we're looking at that, that timeline you put out, are you confident that timeline holds? So if someone is currently 67 and facing retirement in the autumn, will their position definitely be resolved by September?



R.V. Penty 30:28

Quickly, Roger, we believe so, well assuming Council accepts the report, of course, and takes it forward. But there's some that have already been given a preview of the major recommendations and there's not been any serious comments there. They haven't yet received the report, of course, but that that will be with them shortly. So assuming they they take it forward, which I strongly believe they will, then there are no reasons why that timeline shouldn't be met, so those people should be in the position for them to be resolved, and indeed that's driven this timeline all the way through.



Roger Mosey 31:15

OK, I think we've got the first question potentially coming in by video, which is from Ross Anderson. So technical team, can we get Ross and see that? Sometimes take a moment or two. If not, I have some que.



Natalie Glasberg 31:30

Yeah, Ross, you should be able to. Yeah, there we go.



Roger Mosey 31:34

OK.



Ross Anderson 31:34

Great. Can you hear me?



Roger Mosey 31:36

We can.



Ross Anderson 31:37

Great. Thank you, Richard. Thank you for your presentation, which has been very clear. Nick, thanks for the figures, which I'm sure we will argue over at some length in the process that is to come. I have got two questions for today. First, did you consider the effect on the universities profit and loss of sacking several dozen of our top sales executives every September? And what's more, stopping a number of our top earners applying for grants during the 60s, because our position would be that the extra revenue that's generated could more than pay for additional posts, as we have argued at the discussion beforehand.

And second, are we going to get a vote in June as to whether we can abolish EJRA outright? Because as your survey shows, the university is divided on this. It's 50/50. The vote could go either way depending on who is more persuasive and if we don't get a vote option to actually abolish EJRA, then that would lead to a very widespread dissatisfaction with the university's democratic processes.



R.V. Penty 32:46

I have one brother.



Roger Mosey 32:48

Yes, yes. Take away.



R.V. Penty 32:49

Yeah. All those two. Well, thank you, Ross, for that those questions.

I'll take the second one first, if that's OK and the it's up to council what the vote will be. And so I can't comment on that, but of course, there is a process by whereby people can put amendments to any Grace that goes before Regent House, so should people wish to have a vote on abolition, then there is a mechanism for doing that. And either Council will have that as an option, or no doubt, people will put forward an amendment. So hopefully that answers that one.

Secondly, on profit and loss, I mean without sort of trivialising your question, of course, because I don't think you mean it in this way that the university loses money on all research grants. So actually having more would not affect or in fact would actually improve the profit and loss, but that's not the point you're making the point you're making is it affect the volume of research grants coming in and there are some very good people who will either be forced to retire or possibly leave Cambridge and and go to work elsewhere who will be prevented from holding grants

at the university. So what we've done it's very hard to know what the income that the research income that those people would bring in.

But of course it is possible to hold research grants, and many people do, post retirement. In terms of what we have looked at around there is what the age demographic of research grant holders is in terms of how much somebody holds in research grants on average as a function of their age as they go through their careers at the university. And what happens there is that the average amount that's a grant holder holds increases with age as they go through their early to mid to late career and then peaks in the 50s and post 50s. It starts to drop after that. And so those who are in their sort of late 60s and 70s who are holding grants at the University of Cambridge tend to have a reasonable amount of grants income but less than those in their 50s. And so there is obviously evidence that people would bring in good grant income, but it's not a given that they're bringing in very, very large grants on average.



Roger Mosey 35:49

OK, I there are lots of questions coming in. So we will also keep going to about 20 past 10 as we can start a bit late to make sure we can get the questions in. I'm going to go to Tom Blundell in vision in a moment. Can I just ask a question from Geoffrey Cantaris, which I don't know who wants to take this. But with the voting June, it seems a bit difficult for HoDs to plan retirements. Should succession plans be put on hold now? Maybe. Maybe Tim Harper, do you want to take that?



Tim Harper 36:21

No, that's a good question. It does no doubt present planning challenges. But the schools have been thinking about this and my school, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, we didn't know what the result of of this report would be. But we did begin to think around contingencies. I don't think we're going to hold anything up, as has already been said, we hope that the people who are approaching the age of 67, approaching retirement, will be able to make decision about that in in good time. That's one reason why this process has been so intense. And of course it will take extra funding to sort out some of these planning challenges. But this is something we're all we're all aware of.



Roger Mosey 37:15

OK, let's try and bring in Tom in video if facing technical team can do that.
Tom, I'm not sure we can see you, but do you want to ask the question anyway?
OK. Well, while we sort out the technicalities on that, let's go to the senior tutor of Trinity College, who it's also, I think, an employment lawyer.

Catherine Barnard

Thank you for the helpful presentation. Please could you talk about the transition arrangements you're proposing, for example, for those who turn 67 in 2223, i.e., who have already retired, who wants to take that question? Andrea Hudson, it might be one for for you.



Andrea Hudson 38:03

Yeah. So for those colleagues who have already retired, whose employment has ended, the current proposals do not include a recommendation to reinstate. So those individuals would remain retired.



Roger Mosey 38:20

OK. A question from Oliver Linton, specifically this one to Nick Homes. The conclusions you've reached are based on statistical analysis of a bespoke data set. Will you make this available in its entirety for scrutiny and replication?



Nicholas Holmes 38:37

I'm afraid the short answer to that is no. We are not. The data is owned by HESA and they won't allow us to make the full data set available to anyone else and they've been very strict about allowing access to the raw data. What we hope to do is to publish in full our methodology and the full data analysis that we have undertaken on the data set. That is subject to the approval of HESA and they have a copy of our report and we are waiting their approval for that. So we would hope to publish the methodology and full results with the report in in May, but we cannot make available the raw data because that we are not permitted to and HESA won't allow that.



Roger Mosey 39:31

OK. We're we're going to try and go to Mr Blundell in a moment or two. You need to unmute and put yourself on video if you want to be seen and heard, I think. But let's go to one, which I'm going to put this to Mary Beard because it's an issue about

people performing at a very high level at the retirement age. That's from (name unclear). So he says some academic officers are performing at a high level at retirement age. Why not offer these officers a chance to stay on being able to apply for and hold grants as long as they're performing at that good level? The loss of vacancy generation would be offset by the high performance of retained staff making an EJRA unnecessary. So Mary, I guess a question about what if you're firing on all cylinders, shouldn't you be spared?

MB **M Beard** 40:17

Oh well, I should say that I am retired and I hope I am firing on all cylinders. This is something that we have thought about a lot. There's two things I'd say here. One is, there was a myth that I believed, that it was impossible to hold a grant if you were retired in the University of Cambridge, and that is clearly not true in that simple form. So I think that that's something that we can dispel. I think the other thing is, and this is something that I felt very strongly throughout the whole process, that the balance between generating vacancies for the precarious at the bottom and the high performance at the top is a very tricky one. But I think that one of the things that makes it most difficult and most irritating for the higher performers, as you know, is the sense that we're still a bit a bit uncertain about what the relationship is between the university and retired staff, academic staff. And I think that what was for me extremely important was that that in retaining the EJRA, which I thought was the right thing to do, we should also, hand in hand, have a really fundamental review of what and how the retired could contribute to the university, and what the university could contribute to those who had retired. Well, I weighed hugely importantly the predicament of the precariat at the bottom, who currently feel very, very anxious about ever getting an academic job. So I agree that there's a dilemma, but I think that we can go some way to at least exposing and fixing it.

 **Roger Mosey** 42:28

OK, I I think I used the word Mr in connection with the surname Blundell. It's actually Sir Thomas and I hope your there now. Tom, would you like to ask your question? Again, you're muted at the moment, so just unmute.

TB **Tom Blundell** 42:47

Oh, yes, OK. I'll go back again.



Roger Mosey 42:48

Wait, we need.



Tom Blundell 42:51

Can you hear me now?



Roger Mosey 42:52

We can. We can hear you and see you.



Tom Blundell 42:54

Yes. So I just want to make the point that I've had a career where very early on I became head of department in London. When I was in my 30s, I played that role. I reorganised the research Councils nationally and founded the BBSRC and also I advised several prime ministers. Even though I was left wing Labour, I advised even Margaret Thatcher for 10 years and if you'd done all that, it delays a little bit your opportunities to do research. And so I've continued. And I'm now this year coming up for 82 and I've had papers in Nature, and in fact 200 papers since I was formally retired. So the point that I want to make is that people like myself could properly contribute quite a lot to the university's record.

In fact, you've reemployed me more than once for a few weeks before the dates of putting people in for the university in research evaluation exercises, then left me in for another few weeks and then taken me out again. So I've clearly played some role, but I think we ought to be aware that people can be research productive at later ages, and if one spends a lot of time in one's career, 60 years of it, administrating at various levels it is very valuable to be able to do that.

I'll stop there.



Roger Mosey 44:44

I think, Mary, I think Mary Beard wants to come into that first.



M Beard 44:48

I mean, I could not possibly compare my own research output to Sir Tom's, but I think that is precisely the issues that we're wanting to look at in a wider review of how we support the research of research active people over the age of 67 or 69. And

I think it's absolutely taken as a major priority. Given all the things you say, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the proposals for the EJRA are not themselves, on their own terms, the right ones.



Roger Mosey 45:25

OK, we've got about 15 minutes left, so I'm going to ask for quick-fire questions, which are coming in. This is anonymous. It's recommended that EJRA be abolished for academic related officers. Did the review group also explore the abolition of established status for these staff at age 67? If no, is there a reason for this, Richard?



R.V. Penty 45:46

No, absolutely, we didn't. It's not part of our remit. So we didn't look at that. I don't believe there's any intention to abolish it, but it's certainly not part of the agreement that this would be good.



Roger Mosey 46:03

OK. A question from Charles Smith. There's a big difference between experimental and non-experimental work. Experimentalists are not able to get grants after retirement. Research also shows there is no good link between the quality of experimental work and age. Should they both be treated the same? Who wants to come in on that? Tim, maybe.



R.V. Penty 46:27

I'll do it. Don't need to again. But they're many may wish to on the science and engineering side. Mary may want to comment from the from the arts side. But I I don't. I think personally that that everyone should be treated the same. I don't see any particular reason why someone in the arts should be either better or worse than somebody in the sciences, and so they both should be treated the same. So the point being that those who are very, very good at research and wish to carry on, as Mary said earlier, the extensions process should make that possible. Now of course there are some issues around resources that people will heads of institution will need to take into account if someone is using vast amounts of a research lab and not letting younger people use it. Well, that may be something a head of institution may wish to consider, but again that's not something that is part of our remit. We feel that

resources are important, but the Heads of Institution of the best people to judge what is appropriate for someone post retirement.



Roger Mosey 47:45

Anything quick to add Mary or?



M Beard 47:47

Yeah, I absolutely agree with Richard. I think that there are many people both in the Arts and Sciences who do some of their best work aged over 67. One of the things I think this process does is perhaps try to decouple that from formal employment and work out what the consequences of that would be, and that would be what the following review would be set up to look at.



Roger Mosey 48:18

Richard Penty from Oliver Linton, who says the target here seems to be vacancies. Filling vacancies takes time and money. In economics, we have 10 vacancies to fill and only one is due to retirement and most are due to lateral moves. Who are the intended beneficiaries of the HRA? Individuals who are not currently at the university or even in the country? He asks.



R.V. Penty 48:43

Thank you. Very good question, Ashton. I know there's a lot of issues, I think probably economics is possibly a little bit of an outlier. I tend to more comment on that. I believe it's in his school but most departments, should they have a vacancy? Relatively easy to tell. The question will be how long does it take? So that is the thing around succession planning. If many people are retiring when they reach the retirement age, then there is some forward view as to when the vacancy will become vacant and therefore the departments can plan around that. The issue around vacancies that we've looked at vacancies as a tool to help us understand what we feel are the effects of the EJRA, and also to justify, to give the proportional justification, for the intergenerational fairness. So it's a tool, it's important. It's not the only reason to have an EJRA right now.



Roger Mosey 50:05

OK, go to ask Andrea Hudson what I think should be a yes/no question really from

David Spring: if a proposal goes through, will everyone get a new employment contract?



Andrea Hudson 50:17

I'm actually typing an answer in the chat as you asked me the question. So no, the plan isn't to issue everybody with a new contract of employment. We may need to consider contract variation. That is for some people but the plan is not to issue everyone with a contract of employment.



Roger Mosey 50:38

OK. Question from Charles G Smith. Will those who will now be three years from the new retirement age be able to accept PhD students starting in October 2024, maybe Tim or or Nick on that?



Nicholas Holmes 50:56

I mean, I think that that will depend a little bit on departments' take on PhD programmes. In some PhD programmes you have to. But my assumption would be that PhD programmes and departments will adjust to their processes to take account of the additional time that people have if they wish to stay on. I should say that not everybody who is turning 67 in this academic year may choose to stay on from the 30th of September this year. But for those who do, I assume that departments will adjust their processes. But there are already some departments which require four years, so most of the PhD programmes in my area are four year programmes, not three-year programmes. So you have to have four years still to run to accept a PhD student.



M Beard 51:34

Hello.



Roger Mosey 51:47

Nick this a question which I think I'll put to you as well from Jenny Morton, which is about the data. Again, surely the data for grant income will be skewed given that those of us retiring this year have been hampered in our ability to apply for grants in the last few years.

 **Nicholas Holmes** 52:03

And the answer is yes, which is why we haven't drawn any robust conclusions, as you'll see in the full report. We haven't drawn a very robust conclusion from the grant data. What we did, what we do, can we looked at it specifically because people at the discussion had alleged that the that people over 60 were the most productive in terms of bringing in income into the university and we wanted to find out whether that was true or not. It's not true, but we qualified that by saying that this might be affected by the issue about the rundown to retirement, so that we decided that you couldn't make any conclusion that people were more, you certainly couldn't conclude that people were more productive in terms of bringing in grant income. But it's an open question, I would say.

 **Roger Mosey** 52:56

OK, I want to put a question from Rushi Garg asking if the vote in June, July rejects a recommendation. Does that mean the current age of 67 is retained, which also fits in with a question from Christopher Lawrence, the Bursar of Newnham, who's asking what the question on the ballot paper will be. And I suppose given the majesty of the Regent House and its decision making, nobody could be quite sure what outcomes are going to be and what Grace is going to be put. But Richard, maybe do you want to just try and take that as much as you can?

 **R.V. Penty** 53:26

Yeah, sure. And so Council I guess will instruct the university draftsman to draft the grace and she will do that. So I can't say what the exact wording is now. As I mentioned earlier of course it's possible for people, and I'm sure there will be people who will put forward amendments to that Grace. So I suspect that there will be various options. On offer, Ross mentioned earlier, we're asked earlier whether there will be one for abolishment. Or abolition? Sorry. And I suspect that that's likely. Should all of those amendments be rejected, which is a possibility, then, my understanding would be that yes, we would revert the status quo, which is 67.

 **Roger Mosey** 54:18

OK. Question also for you, Richard. The modelling presented by Nick presupposes continued absence of performance management, abolition of the EJRA would clearly

necessitate the introduction of performance management. It seems from what Richard said, there's a major driver of the decision not to abolish EJRA is a serious lack of appetite for performance management at the university. Can you confirm that?



R.V. Penty 54:43

Well, maybe also one for Andrea. I think "serious lack of appetites at the university" is probably rather strong, but certainly there is a view that the schedule to Statute C would well not make it difficult to do performance management, if there were any, you know, seriously underperforming staff. Of course that will be in a very small minority. But it will be very difficult with the schedule to Statute C to do anything or much about it. So I think it's a very good question. If the EJRA is abolished, what would happen? The most obvious thing is to bring in some performance management. If performance management were brought in, of course it clearly would be age discriminatory to apply performance management to just the people approaching in their 60s and above. It would be necessary to bring it in for everybody, which might be a good thing because of course performance management is not necessarily a negative thing in itself. So it's a way of helping people progress their careers in in a positive sense. I don't know if you want to add anything Andrea to that.



Roger Mosey 55:57

OK. Yeah.



Andrea Hudson 56:01

Yes, I just wanted to clarify that there is currently a process for managing performance for established staff academic, sorry process does exist already. Whether we need to consider reviewing that process is another question that's clearly not a question for the review group, but it's something that the university may wish to pick up once we know the outcome of this process. But there is already a performance management process in place and it is used. We do have at any one time a number of cases involving established staff and managing capability.



Roger Mosey 56:35

OK, I think we've just got time for one more question also just to tell the panel

members, I'm give you a chance if you want to come back in and say anything you think we've missed in the discussion, but let's ask one question first, which is again a big important question from Jeffrey Scope. Your number showed what would happen if mandatory retirement was abolished without any alternatives in place. But you didn't show what would happen with alternatives to be justified. Mandatory requirement must be proportionate when considered in relation to its alternatives. What alternatives did you consider? How did you model them, and how did you determine that they would not be sufficient to achieve the university's aims?

 **Nicholas Holmes** 57:21

The consideration of alternatives possibly is (?) the thing, but we did consider alternatives. I'm not sure. I'm not a lawyer and I'm I've no idea whether the questioner is, but I'm not 100% sure that his his legal interpretation is correct. It certainly doesn't chime with the advice. As I remember us receiving it. So in other words, employers are not obliged to consider the effects of every possible alternative. But It is obviously not necessarily straight. We certainly couldn't do any detailed modelling on alternatives. We didn't have any data we felt would enable us to model the alternatives, but we did consider alternatives. I think that would be as far as I can go.

 **Roger Mosey** 58:10

I have a suspicion that Jeffrey Scope is indeed a lawyer, but I can't confirm that.

 **R.V. Penty** 58:11

And yeah, and to yeah. But to follow up on that, we did look at.

 **Roger Mosey** 58:17

Does anybody else want?

 **R.V. Penty** 58:21

A relatively high level, as Nick said at alternative, so performance management was certainly one that we did look at though, as Nick said, there's no data that allows us to model the effect of it. So, so we didn't, we also looked at whether there was a possibility of taking a sort of lead from the book of some universities who create vacancies by doing things like Chancellors' fellowships at the University of Edinburgh.

There's various other similar schemes around the country but these seems to have mainly been enabled by the fact that a lot of UK universities have expanded significantly in terms of student numbers over the last 10 or 15 years, and so that whilst their average age of their staff has risen, their numbers have risen significantly as well and therefore they can offer posts to younger people in significant numbers. The eventual thing with the sort of financial situation of UK universities is whether that can continue. For a financial expert on our panel, the view was that the university, given its financial deficit, would be unlikely to be able to afford that against its other priorities. So there were just two of the ones we recommend that we did consider. Various others that we will put in our report, which will be published.



Roger Mosey 59:57

OK, we're gonna go to final words. I saw Tim Harper. You put a hand up at that point.



Tim Harper 1:00:02

There is one recommendation in the mix which I don't want us to lose sight of, and that is to encourage the university and to coach people to explore options for flexible retirement. That provision's already there, but it's not well understood or well used, and it's something faculties, departments, schools can help with in succession planning. If someone wants to taper down to towards retirement, that might increase the opportunities for proleptic appointments in their their shadow, as it were, and thus ease succession more generally.



Roger Mosey 1:00:39

OK, let's go for final word to Melbourne. Good Evening, Australia again, Mary.



M Beard 1:00:46

All I'd like to say is that I've been very happy to serve on this working party and I think that it has proceeded with immense care, and and a kind of number crunching that I was not capable of myself of doing. But I have been walked through the arguments and I am absolutely convinced that the broad recommendations in my view are correct. I think that means that we aren't at a big turning point, just as every institution is about what you what you do with an ageing population with lack of money, with changing pension prospects. But I think that is probably a separate issue which I think is an urgent issue, which is separate from the specifics of the EJRA and I

hope that this time next year, or two years' time, we'll be talking about a different version, of how we saw retirement research grants and all the rest. So I'm quite optimistic that this is the start of something that could be quite good, not something which is regressive.



Roger Mosey 1:01:58

I think unless anyone else thinks... that's a good point at which to end. So thank you very much to the panel. Thanks to everyone who joined hundreds of people joining this will be done all over again next Monday morning with a slightly different cast list, but for now, thank you very much and goodbye.

● **Katia Asfalto** stopped transcription