

HUMAN RESOURCES

Voluntary Severance 2017 – Summary Analysis

This document provides some headline analysis of the Voluntary Severance Scheme 2017 and supports the equality impact assessment process. In considering the data presented, the following should be noted:

- A total of 104 applications were received. Five of these were withdrawn prior to decisions being made on the applications received. The withdrawn applications are still recorded for the purposes of ‘all applications’, as the total number of applications has been reported as 104 elsewhere;
- At the time of writing, 1 application remains unresolved, although funds have been provisionally set against this post pending confirmation of the outcome of this application. A final decision will be made before 30 June 2018.
- The data is presented in terms of key measures of comparison. This summary includes data for the protected characteristics of age, gender, ethnicity and disability. This information is held for a sufficient number of applications to be able to undertake meaningful analysis.

Summary of Applications Received

	Teaching		Support & Management		All Applicants	
Number of Applicants	48	46.2%	56	53.8%	104	100%
Lowest Applicant Age	35		25		25	
Highest Applicant Age	70		73		73	
Average Age of Applicants	56.9 yrs		52.6 yrs		54.7 yrs	
Average Service	16 years		15 years		16 years	
Longest Service	38 years		44 years		44 years	
Shortest Service	7 years		1 year *		1 year *	
Number of Female Applicants	28	58.3%	42	75%	70	67.3%
Number of Male Applicants	20	41.7%	14	25%	34	32.7%
Declared Disability	4	9.5%	4	6.5%	8	7.7%
Ethnic Minority	1	2.4%	0	0%	1	0.96%

* This applicant had just under two years’ service at application, but would have 2 years’ service (and therefore qualify for VS) once the decision making period and contractual notice periods were taken into account.

In considering the number of applications received (and the subsequent number of applications accepted), it is important to recognise at the outset that the College received a disproportionate number of applications from support staff. The split in staffing between teaching staff and support staff is approximately 60:40, but this is not mirrored in the number of applications received.

While care must be taken in putting forward reasons why there appears to be an imbalance between support staff and teaching staff, it may be the case that, rather than the number of support applications being higher than perhaps expected, the number of teaching staff applications is lower. There does appear to be some evidence for this, as the support staff applications represented a spread of areas. While there were teaching applications from all faculties, there were curricular areas, teams and campuses from which no teaching applications were received. Although the scheme was open to all college staff, there was a perception that teaching staff would be less likely to be accepted as there is a need for the college to maintain agreed levels of curriculum delivery.

For all applicants and both teaching and support staff groups, the average age of those who applied was higher than the average age of the college’s staff population as a whole, which is approximately 48 years. The average age of

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teaching applicants for voluntary severance was higher than that of support staff applications and this mirrors the age profile of the respective staff groups. A total of 62.5% of all applicants (70.8% for teaching staff, 55.4% for support and management staff) were over the age of 55 years and 14.4% of applicants were aged 65 years or more (16% for support and management staff, 12.5% for teaching staff).

In terms of service, again the average length of service of those applying for voluntary severance was significantly higher than the average length of service for the college as a whole, which is around 9 years. The average service of an applicant for voluntary severance was almost double this figure.

Individual entitlements to a voluntary severance payment were calculated based on length of service, as follows:

- 2 – 4 years' service 6 months' salary as a voluntary severance payment
- 5 – 9 years' service 9 months' salary as a voluntary severance payment
- 10 years or more 12 months' salary as a voluntary severance payment

The service of those applying for voluntary severance meant that 72.1% (75 staff) of all applicants would be entitled to a voluntary severance payment of 12 months' salary. A further 22.1% (23 staff) would be entitled to a payment of 9 months' salary and 5.8% (6 staff) would be entitled to a payment of 6 months' salary.

In terms of gender, the percentages of applicants at both a college level and for teaching and support staff broadly mirror the profile of the college as a whole.

While the level of disclosed disability across the college is low, a significant percentage of applications were received from staff who have formally disclosed a disability to Human Resources. Again, care must be exercised in hypothesising why this may be the case; however, it is clear that several applicants have been experiencing ill-health for some time.

In relation to ethnicity, the percentage of College staff who have disclosed a Black or Ethnic Minority background or origin is very small and broadly reflects the Lanarkshire population as a whole. As a percentage, the 1 application received is higher than the representation of minority ethnic backgrounds across the College as a whole, but as the numbers are so small a change in one member of staff can result in significant fluctuations in the percentage this represents.

Summary of Accepted Applications

	Teaching		Support & Management		All Applicants	
Number Accepted	19	55.9%	15	44.1%	34	100%
Lowest Accepted Age	35		32		32	
Highest Accepted Age	70		66		70	
Average Age of Acceptances	55.6 years		48.3 years		52.7 years	
Average Service	18 years		12 years		15 years	
Longest Service	38 years		44 years		44 years	
Shortest Service	8 years		2 years		2 years	
Number of Female Acceptances	10	52.6%	12	80%	22	64.7%
Number of Male Acceptances	9	47.4%	3	20%	12	35.3%
Declared Disability	2	10.5%	0	0%	2	5.9%
Ethnic Minority	1	5.3%	0	0%	1	2.9%

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In total, 34 applications have been accepted from the 104 applications received, representing 32.7%. As shown in the above table, 19 (55.9% of the total) were teaching staff and 15 (44.1% of the total) were support and management staff. These percentages, although different from the overall split in applications received, more closely mirror the overall percentage split between teaching staff and support staff in the college's wider staff population. It is also important to recognise that significantly more support staff were released through voluntary severance at merger and of 94 staff released at that point, only 11.7% (11 staff) were lecturers.

The 34 staff accepted for voluntary severance come from all six teaching faculties and six support staff areas. There were also three accepted applications from members of the senior management team. The breakdown is as follows:

Faculty / Service	Teaching Staff	Support Staff
Faculty of Care and Science	1	NIL
Faculty of Engineering and Automotive	4	NIL
Faculty of Computing and Creative Industries	6	NIL
Faculty of Service Industries	5	NIL
Faculty of Business, Social Science and Sport	3	NIL
Faculty of Supported Learning	NIL	1
Business Development	NIL	3
Customer Services	NIL	3
Marketing	NIL	1
Human Resources	NIL	2
MIS	NIL	2
Senior Management Team	NIL	3
Total	19	15

For teaching staff, there is no replacement for the staff being released. Decisions have been made to address areas of overstaffing or inefficiency – particularly where changing patterns of demand for specific curriculum delivery has created a mismatch between the sustainable level of curriculum delivery and current staffing levels.

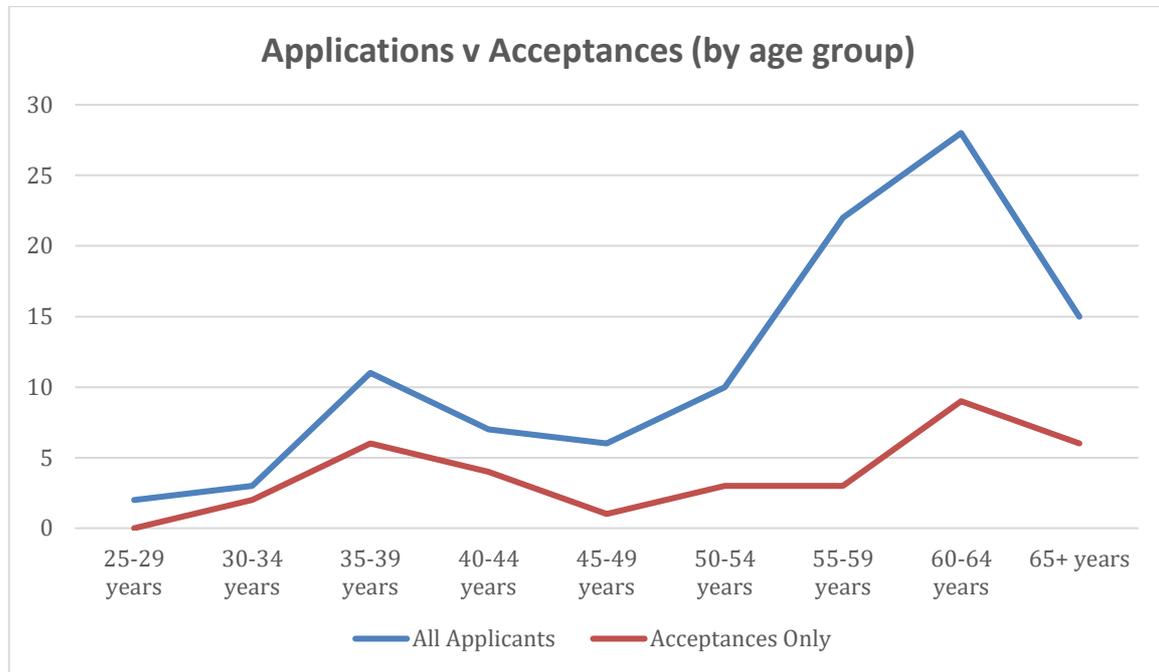
In support and management areas, staff can be released as a result of re-prioritisation of work, the impact of systems and revised processes on existing workloads or a change in the level of work available for existing team members. In relation to the acceptances from the senior management team, there will be a realignment of duties across the remaining members of the SMT.

For both teaching and support staff, the average age of those accepted is lower than the average age of all applicants. However, the average age of those accepted is closer to the overall average age of college staff. Given the age profile of staff who applied for voluntary severance, it is clear that voluntary severance offered some staff a potential means of financially bridging the gap between employment and retirement.

Of the 43 staff over the age of 60 who applied for voluntary severance (representing 41.34% of all applicants), 15 staff were accepted. This represents 44.12% of all acceptances and includes 6 staff who were accepted and who were 65 years of age or over. While the ability to access pension benefits will have been an important consideration for an individual in making an application, the College was unable to take personal circumstances into account and all decisions made focused on the posts from which people had applied, not the individuals holding those posts. However, the final proportion of those accepted who were close to or over retirement age demonstrates that the college has not disadvantaged this group. This must also be viewed within the context that the voluntary severance scheme is part of a series of actions to reduce costs and, in the absence of a defined retirement age, all staff must be considered equally.



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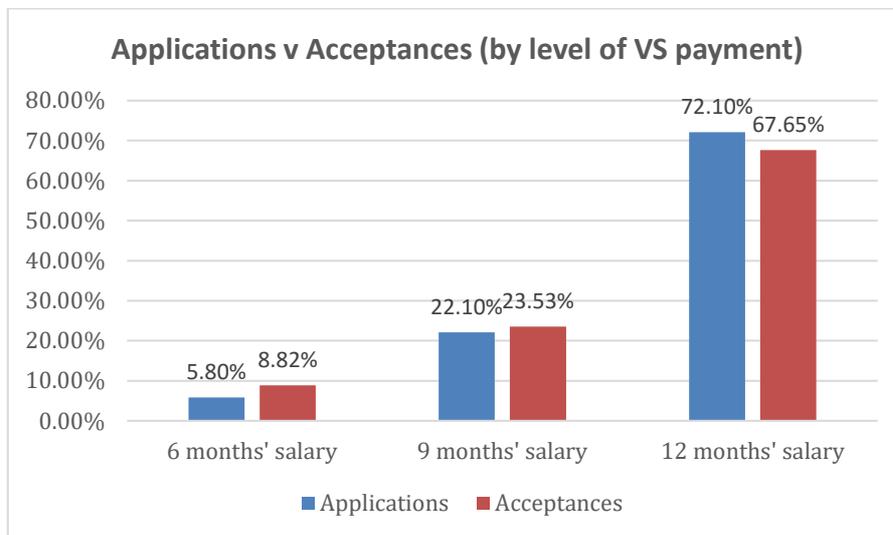


At the other end of the age spectrum, we received two applications from staff aged between 25 and 29 years. Both were support staff and both were declined. The reason for this is that both posts would have had to be replaced on a like-for-like basis and there was thus no saving that could be generated by accepting the applications. This was an objective decision based on the post and not individual circumstances or personal characteristics. For teaching staff, both the youngest and oldest applicant were accepted, as this could be justified in terms of ongoing curriculum need.

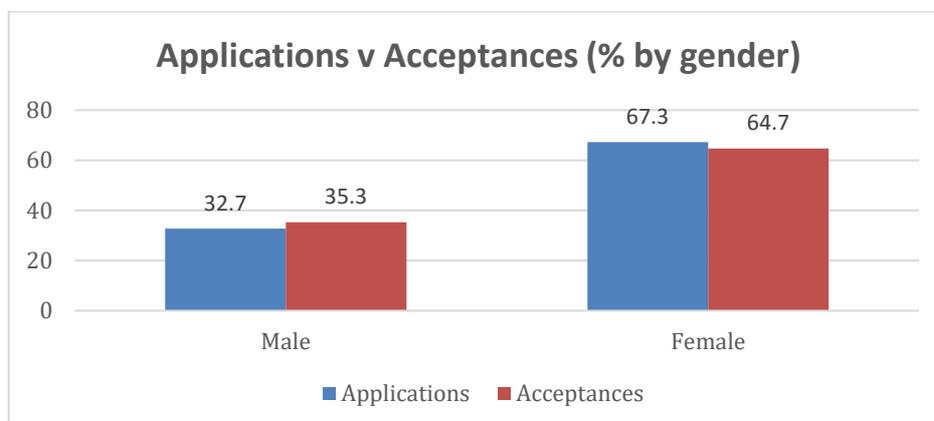
As indicated above, 72.1% of all applicants would have been eligible for a voluntary severance payment of 12 months. In terms of those accepted, the figure was 67.65%. This shows that, even taking into account the skewed age profile of applicants in some areas, there was no attempt by the college to refuse applications from older staff as a means of reducing the overall cost of the voluntary severance scheme.

In terms of length of service of those accepted, the percentage of acceptances falling into each service band broadly mirrored the applications received. The graph below compares the percentage of applicants falling within each payment band with the percentage of those accepted falling within the same band. The difference in percentages is due to the fact that there were a greater spread of length of service for support staff applying for severance.

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For gender, the percentage of applicants accepted mirrors the gender split in the wider staff population – this is noticeable in the teaching staff acceptances, where the acceptances tend towards a more equal split than the 60:40 female to male split of the applications received. For support staff, the number of acceptances remains skewed in favour of female staff. However, this is understandable given the significant skew in the gender balance of support staff overall.



In relation to disability, the percentage of applicants accepted for voluntary severance was lower than the overall percentage of applicants who had previously disclosed a disability, but was higher than the percentage of staff within the college staff population as a whole who have disclosed a disability.

For ethnicity, the single applicant who has disclosed a black or ethnic minority background was accepted for voluntary severance, so it is clear that there was no disadvantage in this regard.

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Conclusion

The college is satisfied that the voluntary severance scheme was conducted fairly and, given that the college has no control in a voluntary scheme over the applications that may be received, the acceptances represent an objective and justifiable outcome.

It is clear that, in relation to some protected characteristics, the profile of the acceptances for teaching and for support staff mirror the college's staff profile for these groups and, within acceptable variances, the applications that were accepted reflect the profile of the overall applications received – for example, in relation to age, gender and service.

There is no evidence of any discriminatory approaches in relation to the outcomes received and all decisions made can be justified on grounds of the need to replace or not replace the posts under consideration.

Brian Gilchrist
Assistant Principal: Organisational Development

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