

## Administrative and Technical Staff

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The administrative and technical staff, as a professional corps alongside the academic and teaching staff, is the backbone of the university, and helps deliver a high international standard of education and research on a daily basis. Its contribution is sizeable and could be much greater, in fact, than it is today. Our ATP members have varied and wide-ranging competencies and these are best served in a horizontal framework of dialogue, rather than an authoritarian model. Many ATP members have deliberately chosen this university for the environment, the project and the contribution they feel they can make. The university is not merely an employer. The administrative and technical staff fully deserves the recognition, and confidence, on which a university thrives.

This recognition and confidence must also be reflected in the ATP's representation in all the policy bodies, from the Academic Council and the Works Council to the Group Executive Committee and the Faculty and Department Councils. The ATP representatives in these councils must also be effectively involved in the decision-making debates. And where a decision-making body does not have an elected ATP representative, one must be found at the earliest opportunity. This policy has already yielded positive results. The first ATP representative in the Humanities and Social Sciences Group, for example, sat on the Group Executive Committee and there is now a project to facilitate internal and international mobility within the Group for ATP members, and in this way assure a greater spread of expertise. The goal of involving ATP staff more closely in effective policy must be pursued resolutely and logically to its end.

In addition to these formal bodies I myself commenced regular, direct consultations with elected ATP representatives in the Academic Council and the Group, Faculty and Department Councils, and a delegation of dedicated ATP members from Central Services. These consultations are very open and constructive. We discuss and, through working groups, seek solutions to important points, such as the participation of ATP members in OFD and the creation of a new OFD framework which leaves room for extra responsibilities and in-function development (OFD 2.0). Other subjects covered in these consultations are the remuneration policy and workload issue. The consultations are not designed to bypass the existing, formal structures of consultation, but provide an additional refreshing input which may later find its way into official policy. I would like to continue these consultations in the years to come as a way of making further improvements in staff policy in dialogue with the ATP representatives.

Though the staff survey ('satisfaction survey') of 2015 showed a high level of satisfaction among staff at the university, we cannot rest on our laurels and will have to tackle the remaining problems. As I have just said, the OFD system (the organisation and job design system in use at KU Leuven) is to be upgraded to OFD 2.0. The staff members' job titles will be reviewed to ensure that the job descriptions and accompanying salary splits correspond to the actual tasks. This system will then roll out to the university as a whole.

Here, special attention will be given to the classification of ATP jobs with an education supporting role, from monitors and study itinerary guides to educators and (policy formulating) educational project staff. This is because they have an important role to play in supporting and innovating education at the

university. We have already focused on the role of the educational ATP staff member as course unit holder, and regularised and standardised the existing situations.

We devote special attention to the stimulation and improvement of the coaching and managerial competencies of middle management and local leaders at all levels; here, we provide training in the organisation of job assessments and direct performance feedback. This should result in improved self-development and better coaching of each member of staff in our university community. Lifelong learning and ensuring 'employability' in the organisation are also crucial concerns for ATP members. As a dynamic organisation, the university must create opportunities for its staff to grow horizontally and vertically. Age must not be seen as a hindrance when employing older members of staff; their experience should be valued positively. When job content and age are harder to reconcile, a fair solution should always be sought. Thanks to our initiatives on training, talent management, career guidance and local leadership development we should be able, given the feedback received from the 2015 satisfaction survey, to take great strides in the coming years towards a staff policy of appreciation and stimulation.

One important achievement has been the recent approval of a general policy on the offer of permanent ATP employment contracts after a maximum of two years, to be financed by all income streams. The professional support received from the ATP staff is essential to the university's sound operation. In the past, it was not uncommon for ATP staff to be employed under successive temporary contracts, given the often limited duration of internal and external project funding and the temporary nature of the assignments. In the future we aim to do everything we can to establish a proactive career policy, which offers long-term prospects, irrespective of funding type. For this reason we decided to introduce, on 1 May 2017, a university-wide restriction of the maximum term of employment for ATP members under successive temporary contracts to two years, and thereafter to offer employment under permanent contracts. This encourages ATP staff to assess their long-term career prospects in good time and creates transparency and job security. We are currently in the process of implementing this policy in the Groups and central services.

More information on the integration framework in general can be found in the chapter on Teaching Staff. Staff regulations for ATP in the same integration framework are to be finalised as soon as possible. The procedure for promotions and appointments, which was suspended as a result of this initiative, will need to be reinstated. This is because we aim to offer clear and fair career prospects for all members of staff, irrespective of their position, inside or outside the integration framework.