HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

2006 – 2011
INTRODUCTION

The Human Resources (HR) Strategy sets out Birkbeck’s plans to ensure the recruitment, development and retention of the best quality staff in all staff groups, in order to fulfil the College’s Mission and thereby meet its strategic aims and objectives.

The HR Strategy covers the period 1 August 2006 – 31 July 2011 and is a summary of the action required to improve human resources management at Birkbeck, and thereby contribute to the success of the College.

The HR Strategy has been shaped taking into consideration the following:

- Birkbeck’s Mission Statement, and the emerging Corporate Plan and strategic objectives
- UK and European employment legislation
- Best practice in human resources
- The National Pay Framework Agreement - resulting from the recommendations of the Bett and Dearing Reports
- The White Paper
- Guidance from the Universities and Colleges Employers’ Association

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for proposing and implementing the Strategy. The Staffing Committee has responsibility for approving the Strategy. Staff and trade union representatives are consulted on the draft.

The Staffing Committee will review the HR Strategy on an annual basis to assess progress against the objectives. The Staffing Committee has responsibility for advising the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Governors on staffing matters. The HR Strategy Steering Group, a sub-group of the Staffing Committee, advises on the development of the HR Strategy and reporting on Strategy progress internally and externally.

The HR Strategy covers a five year period and, as such, will be adapted to respond to changing factors through regular reviews. In addition, these reviews will also take account of any current and emerging employment trends, local, national and EU legislation and best practice in HR and higher education.

Arrangements for the implementation of the Strategy will be outlined in an action plan. This will provide details of alignment of objectives and actions to the College’s Corporate Plan, responsibility for each action and deadlines for achievement.

Building on the College’s existing HR policies and procedures, and codes of practice, the purpose of the HR Strategy will be to provide an effective framework for recruiting, developing and retaining staff in a fair and supportive environment. To this end, the Strategy is structured around the following key themes:

1) Recruitment & Retention
2) Reward
3) Organisational Development
4) Diversity & Equal Opportunities
5) Performance Management
6) Policy Framework
KEY THEME 1: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Links to Corporate Plan Objectives:
- Enhancing Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Enhancing Excellence in Research

The recruitment and retention of high calibre staff is vital to Birkbeck achieving its strategic objectives of providing high quality teaching to part-time adult students and developing excellence in research.

1.1 RECRUITMENT

**Key Aim** – to recruit high calibre staff in all staff groups to meet the College’s objectives and changing requirements.

For most advertised posts, the College attracts a strong field of applicants. This is primarily because of its good academic reputation, the unique opportunities it offers (i.e. working in a research intensive institution - teaching mature, part-time students in the evening), and its reputation as a good employer offering opportunities for career development, job security and a flexible approach to work.

However, Birkbeck also faces a continuous challenge in competing with other universities and, in some cases, the private sector for particular types of staff. The decision to pay market supplements to staff in key academic disciplines (e.g. Economics, Management and Law) and certain professionally qualified and skilled staff (e.g. Finance and IT) has enabled the College to recruit high calibre staff in these areas. As the next Research Assessment Exercise approaches it is highly likely that competition to recruit research active, internationally-renowned academic staff will increase and intensify, and the payment of attractive salaries and market supplements will become more prevalent. Other forms of reward and recognition schemes (such as recruitment and retention premia) will also need to be considered and costed to support the College’s recruitment and retention of high performing staff. However, it should be borne in mind that the College has limited funding available for this purpose.

The College will do the following:

- Continue to provide a range of benefits (e.g. re-location allowances, season ticket loans, counselling, and flexible working) and effectively publicise these benefits.

- Send the revised benefits booklet (October 2005) to all staff joining Birkbeck, and review and revise the booklet as necessary.

- Review and continue to use market supplements and other identified incentive schemes where appropriate, in a consistent, fair and transparent manner.

- Market existing non-financial benefits (e.g. final salary pension scheme, generous leave entitlement, life-work balance policies) more effectively in recruitment advertising.
Review and benchmark annually the College’s benefits package against other comparable higher education institutions (HEIs), to ensure it remains attractive to new and existing staff.

Report annually on the effectiveness of recruitment and retention initiatives, incentives and packages.

The revised guidelines on recruitment and selection were issued to staff in July 2005. The recruitment and selection process is managed by the HR Department and, except for the sending out/downloading and returning of application forms via email, is still a manual process.

In order to provide early warning of difficult to fill posts, gather and record equal opportunities information for the recruitment and selection process and ensure that the process is carried out as effectively as possible, ways of automating the process are currently being investigated. As well as providing information to improve recruitment campaigns and management information on equal opportunities, a computerised recruitment system would speed up the recruitment and selection process, reduce the circulation of paper and allow the HR team to use their time more effectively.

Investigate appropriate automated recruitment and selection systems, with the aim of acquiring a suitable system that provides: a) an improved and efficient recruitment and selection service for the College and b) good management information.

1.2 RETENTION

Key Aim – to retain and motivate high achieving staff at all levels and reduce staff turnover.

1.2.a Turnover

A level of staff turnover in organisations is considered healthy in order to ensure fresh ideas, ways of working and motivation. However, a degree of stability is also necessary so that organisational knowledge and skills and continuity are maintained. Birkbeck contributes to an annual survey of HEIs conducted by DLA; the 2005 survey showed staff turnover across all staff groups was slightly lower at Birkbeck (9.3%) compared to the sector average (10.9%). Clerical staff turnover has historically been highest. However, it should be noted that this fell from 20% in 2003/04 to 10% in 2004/05.

Our central London location, in an area well served by public transport and with good academic, shopping and leisure facilities, enables us to attract staff to Birkbeck. However, with the plethora of HEIs locally, there are also many other job opportunities for staff in close proximity. In particular, increased clerical staff mobility has been attributed to the wealth of employment opportunities in other HEIs but also private sector organisations in the vicinity, with staff using Birkbeck as a stepping stone. But Birkbeck also benefits from this effect by recruiting from other local employers.

Produce a comprehensive turnover report on an annual basis to enable the College to address areas of concern.

As part of the National Framework Agreement (NFA) project, compare all staff group salaries with other HEIs in London and local employers to ensure Birkbeck is offering a competitive salary.
1.2.b Exit Questionnaires
The College introduced exit questionnaires as part of its efforts to ascertain the reasons for staff leaving the College’s employment and help identify themes or areas to target future recruitment and retention action for the College. Regrettably, the response rate has been poor. In view of this, the questionnaire was revised in November 2005 and incorporated into the College’s leaving procedure.

- Re-launch the exit questionnaire with a view to increasing the response rate.
- Annually analyse and report on feedback from exit questionnaires, including equal opportunities information.

1.2.c Staff Survey
The staff survey conducted in May 2005 sought feedback from staff on a range of subject areas. The benefit of staff surveys is that they give a ‘pulse check’ on the views of staff and can provide very timely and important information on a range of issues (e.g. corporate issues, personal development, diversity and employment matters). Staff surveys also provide pointers as to the reason why staff consider leaving Birkbeck. The two primary reasons identified in the last survey were poor pay and lack of career planning. Key themes 2 and 3 address how the College is dealing with these issues.

KEY THEME 2: REWARD

Links to Corporate Plan Objectives:
- Enhancing Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Enhancing Excellence in Research

| Key Aim – to develop and implement a fair and transparent reward strategy that supports the teaching and research strategy of the College and ensures that all staff are paid a fair and competitive salary, receive appropriate salary supplements (where required), and are rewarded and recognised for high performance. |

The College is committed to rewarding existing high performing and prospective staff with competitive and sector comparable packages. However, it is recognised that the recruitment pool for this talent will also include other public and private sector employers, who have greater financial flexibility at their disposal. In view of this, the College will continue to consider and introduce clear and transparent reward packages that are both affordable and recognise either individual or team high performance.

More emphasis on the wider reward package, including greater investment in staff development, remission of fees and improvements in working environment will also be considered, as these are important retention factors.

- Continue to offer reward packages to retain high performing staff.
- Develop and implement more creative and attractive reward packages.
2.a Job Evaluation
Birkbeck currently uses different job evaluation schemes to evaluate clerical, manual, technical and craft jobs. However, in order to address the issue of equal pay for work of equal value, the College made a decision in December 2004 to introduce the Hay job evaluation scheme (which is widely considered to be a robust, transparent and fair scheme), to evaluate jobs across all staff categories. Job evaluation forms the basis on which the new pay and grading structure is being developed at Birkbeck.

☐ Provide for equal pay for work of equal value through the managed implementation of a College-wide job evaluation scheme by August 2006.

☐ Develop a system for evaluating existing jobs that change and new jobs post implementation of the NFA by August 2006.

2.b Pay and Grading Structure
Like all other HEIs, the College is moving away from using a range of different pay scales to introducing a single pay spine applicable to all staff. This will reduce differentials between staff groups as there will only be one grading structure, and ensure both equal pay for equal work and greater transparency, through the use of job evaluation to determine where staff are placed on the single pay spine.

☐ Develop and implement a new pay and grading structure based on the principles of equal pay for work of equal value, fairness and transparency by August 2006.

2.c London Allowance
The College recognises that London is an expensive place to live and work and is supportive of improving London Allowance. Whereas some London HEIs have not increased London Allowance for over ten years now, Birkbeck over the last few years has awarded local increases. The last increase was 3% in August 2005. The College is keen to develop a long-term solution to this issue and will aim to do this through negotiations on the NFA.

☐ Address the issue of future increases, harmonisation and consolidation of London Allowance as part of the negotiations on the NFA by August 2006.

2.d Salary Supplements
In order to recruit and retain high performing staff and reward staff for taking on additional work, the College needs to be able to pay salary supplements. However, the process for determining how such payments should be awarded needs to be consistent as well as fair and transparent.

☐ To support the College in recruiting and retaining high performing staff, develop a market supplement and recognition policy and other policies relating to salary enhancements. These will be applied in a fair and transparent manner.

☐ Carry out a review every two years of market supplements paid in order to provide information on hard to fill posts, and where and how such payments are being used.

2.e Terms and Conditions
The NFA requires HEIs to consider harmonising hours and other relevant terms and conditions in order to reduce differentials and encourage greater equity across staff groups. The College is committed to the fair treatment of staff and is therefore working towards harmonising terms and conditions where there is no objective reason for differential treatment.
Consider harmonisation of hours and any other relevant terms and conditions and implement the changes by August 2006, or as soon as possible thereafter.

2.f Contribution Pay
A key element of an effective pay framework is the process by which excellent performance and outstanding contribution are rewarded. The College currently uses a number of different schemes based on various criteria and standards, to determine contribution pay (accelerated and discretionary increments) and in some cases promotion for the various staff groups.

With the introduction of a single pay and grading structure for all staff, the College needs to consider whether a consistent approach across staff groups to contribution pay would be more appropriate.

Review, develop and implement new systems for contribution pay and promotion for support staff, which are responsive and equitable, and achieve the aim of retaining high quality staff, by January 2007.

Review the promotion and contribution pay procedures for academic staff to ensure they reward excellence in teaching, research and administration, and implement agreed changes by October 2008.

2.g Equal Pay Audit
In order to ensure that our reward systems are not inherently biased or applied inconsistently, the College will need to conduct regular equal pay audits, and scrutinise in some detail the diversity profile of staff in relation to promotion, merit pay, starting salary, allowances, etc.

Carry out the next equal pay audit following implementation of the new grading structure and conduct an audit every two years thereafter.

2.h Recognition
Traditionally, pay was considered to be the key motivator at work. However, with changing demographics and a new life-work balance philosophy, research has shown that other key elements of the reward package also engage and motivate staff. Staff need to feel respected and valued for the contribution they make. The quality of the working environment is also important to staff.

Taking into consideration the views of staff, consider other non-financial benefits that would be attractive to staff by April 2007.

Investigate introducing an annual awards scheme to highlight and recognise staff achievement.

KEY THEME 3: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Links to Corporate Plan Objectives:
- Enhancing Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Enhancing Excellence in Research
- Enhancing the Contribution of HE to the Economy and Society
- Cross Cutting Supporting Aims
The College has a collegiate, consultative culture, and recognises the value of its staff in contributing to the success of its Mission. Working relationships with the trade unions are good, with management and unions working in partnership, collaborating on strategic issues, as well as on group and individual matters.

In order to achieve development of both the College and the individual members of staff who contribute to its success, the HR Strategy encompasses organisational development activities, which aim to improve the College’s capacity to achieve greater effectiveness, including improved quality of service. In recognition that the College is committed to providing support for all staff in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience to meet both current and future needs of its Mission, the HR Strategy also encompasses training and development activities, which aim to enhance the skills and knowledge of the College’s staff.

### 3.a Organisational Effectiveness Reviews

The College conducted its first staff consultation exercise in 2001, and is committed to conducting College-wide staff surveys once every two years in order to identify areas in which it is performing well, and areas in which it can improve the operation of the College as a whole. The aim of conducting staff surveys is to contribute to staff retention, development and motivation, in addition to enhancing the effectiveness of the College’s operation.

The 2005 Staff Survey identified a high level of staff loyalty and commitment to the College, and also identified key areas for improvement.

- Demonstrate improvements in staff perception of College administrative systems, internal communications, career development opportunities and socialising/networking opportunities. These improvements will in part be measured by the College’s 2007 Staff Survey.
- Undertake a Staff Survey every two years.

### 3.b Organisational Systems Framework

The College will review and consider quality management frameworks in order to determine an appropriate approach for improving the effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures throughout the College. One of the considerations in reviewing these approaches will be the potential of the approach to enable effective monitoring of the HR Strategy. Although the Investors in People framework has been deemed inappropriate for the College at this time (reviewed in 2004), other relevant frameworks, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management Scheme, will also be reviewed.

- Review in 2006/07 quality management frameworks and put forward an approach that would work effectively for the College.

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**Key Aim:** to continuously develop the College’s capacity to deliver its Mission effectively, and provide a positive working environment in which equality of opportunity, and the appreciation of diversity and dignity at work, are respected values.
3.c Leadership and Management
In order to support the College’s cross cutting supporting aim in the area of Leadership – Governance and Management, the College is committed to developing a full and coherent strategy for developing management and leadership capabilities across the College.

- Develop, design and implement Senior Leadership and Management Development programmes for implementation in the academic year 2007/08.

3.d Career Management and Development
The College has identified a requirement to review and enhance career development opportunities. Through the staff survey and exit questionnaire reports, lack of career development opportunities has also been identified as contributing to turnover, particularly among support staff.

The College is committed to developing existing career development opportunities, including promotion and succession planning, and continuously reviewing policies and practice in this area in order to enhance staff retention and the development of talent. Development of the College’s career development mechanisms will take place with reference to HEFCE’s ‘professionalisation of support staff’ theme.

In relation to academic staff, the College has recently introduced a five year Academic Fellowship Scheme aimed at research staff and part-time teachers who wish to pursue an academic career. As well as being eligible to apply for academic posts at Birkbeck, in some cases a fellowship appointment will form part of the succession plan for a School as the appointment will be made to succeed a retiring academic.

- Develop a Career Management Strategy by 2009, following review of career opportunities across the College, particularly for support staff.

3.e Staff Suggestion Scheme
As stated in the College’s Internal Communications Policy, a Staff Suggestion Scheme will become operational in order to offer an incentive to staff to communicate and implement improvements in procedures and systems within the College. This Scheme aims to provide a clear communication route to submit suggestions to College management, to offer further opportunities to involve staff in the development of the College, and to acknowledge the value of such staff involvement.

- Staff Suggestion Scheme to be operational by 2007/08.

3.f Staff Training and Development
Birkbeck is committed to providing training and development opportunities to ensure that all staff are competent and appropriately skilled to meet the current and future aims and needs of the College. In accordance with the College’s Equal Opportunities Policy, all staff have equal access to training and development opportunities appropriate to their role, including contract, sessional and part-time staff.

The College has a number of training and development providers to meet the non-subject-specific development needs of all staff. These providers include the Staff Development team (generic skills and management training); Faculty of Continuing Education (sessional lecturer training); Health and Safety Office (health and safety training) and the Central Computing Service (IT training).
In 2005, the College established the Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD), which provides continuing professional development for academic staff (previously provided by the Staff Development team). All subject-specific staff development needs are expected to be provided by the relevant School/Department.

The College will continue to provide training for all staff in College-wide systems, such as the Progress and Development Review (see section 5.a), and in areas of skills or knowledge required by law or best practice such as Recruitment and Selection, Disability and Race Awareness, Health and Safety and Induction. Training provision will also continue to be informed by staff requests through the Progress and Development Review scheme.

It is the College’s aim to ensure that all members of staff understand that they are responsible for their own development, with the support and guidance of their line manager. The College also aims to ensure that all staff with people management responsibility are competent in the skills of supporting the development of their staff.

 To develop a skilled staff who are able to carry out their roles effectively, continue to provide training to all staff in relation to legal obligations and organisation systems knowledge, and in response to staff requests for training arising from the Progress and Development Review scheme.

 Include training and development sessions within the Leadership and Management Development Framework for staff with people management responsibility in the skills of supporting staff development.

### 3.g Academic Professional Development

The importance of academic professional development related to learning and teaching issues is recognised by the College. Through the establishment of the CLPD in 2005, the College is taking a co-ordinated approach to supporting academic staff across the institution in the maintenance and development of their professional competence. This integration of development activity for all academic staff under the auspices of the Centre will help to create an inclusive culture, ensuring that the needs of academic staff – whether full or part-time or contract – are recognised. The Centre, which co-ordinates student learning development support as well as academic professional development, will provide an interface between these two aspects which will ensure that academic professional development is informed by a clear picture of student learning needs.

**Developing Professional Competence in Teaching**

 All Graduate Teaching Assistants and other postgraduate students involved in teaching will be offered the opportunity to attend the Fundamentals of Teaching Programme, which is intended to support academic staff new to the classroom.

 All appointed academic staff will be required to become members of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) as a prerequisite for passing academic probation. The College will continue to offer the Certificate in Teaching in Lifelong Learning as a route to HEA membership.

 Closer links will be built between the Fundamentals of Teaching Programme and the Certificate in Teaching in Lifelong Learning in order to facilitate a smooth transition between these programmes.
**Continuing Professional Development**

- In addition to the extensive programme of professional development workshops delivered by the Faculty of Continuing Education, the CLPD will launch academic practice seminars to provide the opportunity for staff to engage with pedagogic theories as well as issues relating to teaching practice.

- The College encourages active engagement with the HEA. The CLPD will provide support for academic staff in applying for individual membership of the HEA and the College will continue to fund staff membership of this body.

**Rewarding Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

- The annual Birkbeck Award for Innovation in Teaching (BAIT) will continue to recognise staff who undertake innovative practice relating to learning and teaching. Best practice from recognized projects will be disseminated throughout the College via the CLPD.

- Support and encouragement will also be given to academic staff to apply for National Teaching Fellowships, to further extend recognition of successful activity in this area.

- The College will continue to support and monitor the practice of promotion based on excellence in teaching.

**3.h  Change Management**

As competition increases in the sector, the College needs to ensure that it is able to recruit and retain students by offering attractive courses, high quality teaching and effective structures and processes, as well as ensuring that our research profile remains strong.

The HR Team has provided professional advice on a number of key change management projects in Schools/Departments to strengthen these areas.

- Continue to provide professional advice and, in particular, address employee relations and staff development issues relating to change management in the College.

**3.i  Widening Participation**

Through its widening participation agenda, Birkbeck aims to continue to attract students from diverse backgrounds to study at the College. In order to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with a more diverse student population, training sessions on disability and race awareness tailored to the staff group’s needs will continue to be delivered on an ongoing basis.

In support of its strong commitment to widening participation, the College is considering the viability of a satellite campus. Such a campus may provide foundation degree courses to those who would not normally consider going into higher education. This would be a major initiative for the College and HR advice will be provided in preparing any bids. HR will also need to have input at the planning and implementation stage (i.e. staffing requirement for the new campus, recruitment, training and development).

- Provide advice on HR issues in relation to satellite campus initiatives and a full HR service to any new campus, if the initiative is successful.
3.j Research Assessment Exercise
Birkbeck has a thriving reputation as an international centre for academic research. In the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), Birkbeck was awarded the highest rating of international excellence in 12 subject areas and in total 69% of submissions were awarded 5 or 5*.

In preparation for the 2008 RAE, a Working Group chaired by the Pro-Vice Master for Research has been set up. The Group has conducted a College-wide RAE dry-run and identified staff who require additional support to ensure that they have appropriate research publications for the next RAE. These individuals have been offered advice and support from their Heads of School and, where appropriate, given the option of being released from their teaching duties for a short period to complete their research.

The RAE dry-run also identified some staff with excellent research publication records who the College would like to retain but who are due to retire before the next RAE. It is the College’s intention to introduce a Senior Research Fellowship scheme, allowing individuals to continue to work beyond retirement, thereby benefiting from the research environment and allowing their publications to be submitted.

 To provide HR input to support the College in achieving a high research rating in the next RAE by advising the Working Group on HR matters (including equality issues) relating to the RAE, ensuring transparent systems are in place to recruit and retain research-active staff and supporting Schools with lower RAE ratings.

 Develop a Senior Research Fellowship Scheme by April 2006.

KEY THEME 4: DIVERSITY & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Links to Corporate Plan Objectives:
- Enhancing Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Enhancing Excellence in Research
- Widening Participation and Fair Access

| Key Aim | to attract and retain a diverse staff community that reflects the College’s diverse student population, and embed equal opportunities and diversity into all College activity. |

Birkbeck has a long tradition of providing opportunities for staff and students from diverse backgrounds and is committed to providing equality of opportunity for both staff and students. This commitment has been backed up in 2005/06 by additional, dedicated resources to push forward work in this area.

The Diversity and Equal Opportunities Working Party meets on a termly basis to take forward the equality agenda. The remit and frequency of this group is currently being reviewed as part of a wider review of the College Committee structure.

The annual Equal Opportunities report continues to be improved and from 2006/07 will report progress against set targets for increased representation, and provide diversity profiles for recruitment and selection, individual cases (e.g. disciplinary and grievance cases, harassment cases), promotion, and training and development.
4.a Policies
The College already has in place policies on flexible working, career breaks, maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave where some provisions are more beneficial than the law requires. To add to this a childcare voucher scheme was launched in January 2006.

The Dignity at Work and Study Policy, which replaced the Harassment Policy, was launched in January 2005 with a poster campaign. Our pool of trained harassment advisers have played a key role in successfully supporting staff to resolve harassment and bullying issues.

The College revised its recruitment and selection guidelines in 2005 to reflect changes in legislation and best practice. Recruitment and selection training, which has a specific focus on equality, is now mandatory for panel members and all panels must contain at least one member of each sex.

4.b Diversity Strategy
It is recognised that with the recent introduction of a number of significant diversity related pieces of legislation – Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA), Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 – a review of how the College will manage the future diversity agenda should be conducted.

This will take account of existing action plans and include new actions where appropriate. It is anticipated that this ‘joined up’ approach will underpin a raft of staff and student communications and highlight the increased role and responsibilities of staff in supporting the College’s diversity objectives as part of its statutory duties.

- Develop an overarching Diversity Strategy, covering key diversity areas (i.e. race and disability), their respective milestones, and a communication plan to raise staff awareness.
- Work together with Schools/Departments to take forward and publicise our diversity profile.

4.c Impact Assessment
Under the RRAA and DDA, there is a requirement to carry out an impact assessment of all policies, procedures and practices to ensure that they do not adversely affect staff from a particular racial background or staff with a disability. As part of a major and continuous programme, all the College’s policies and procedures will be systematically reviewed under the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The expertise of the Southern Universities Management Service (SUMS) is currently being utilised to develop a framework for conducting EIA at Birkbeck; this will draw on best practice in the sector.

- Develop, implement and monitor the EIA process, including providing necessary guidance and training.

4.d Target Setting
Birkbeck is in a strong position with regard to both gender (47.2% male – 52.8% female) and ethnicity (13.5%). The gender balance in favour of women is also consistent with the student population.
However, when staff data is considered in detail the picture is not as positive, with the majority of academic staff and senior staff being white males and clerical staff being female.

In order to go some way to addressing such imbalance, a positive review has been built into the promotion and merit pay procedures for academic staff and senior managers with effect from October 2005. This action allows for individuals considered by their managers to be worthy of promotion or merit pay, to be encouraged to apply. It is proposed that this process is rolled out for all staff.

Also, the College still has some way to go in recruiting and promoting BME and disabled staff within both academic and support posts. As part of its statutory duties under the race and disability equality schemes, the College will identify and consider ways to reduce this under-representation.

- Review existing targets (i.e. BME and women in senior management and academic positions, and disabled staff across all grades) to determine if these are still appropriate. Put in place appropriate targets and positive action measures.

4.e Monitoring
In order to be in a position to set appropriate targets, carry out EIA effectively, develop a disability equality scheme and report on diversity profile, the College requires accurate data.

Statutory reporting requirements now extend to disability as well as race, and in the next few years are likely to include other areas of diversity.

Staff, for various reasons, are wary of providing such data. However, the success and management of the College’s Diversity Strategy will largely depend on the accuracy of the monitoring data that is available for reporting purposes.

- Develop a planned approach to obtaining accurate diversity data, backed up by a communication strategy to explain to staff why it is important to have this information.

4.f Training
In order to ensure that staff are aware of their obligations under equal opportunities legislation, training will continue to be offered. The recruitment and selection and appraisal workshops specifically cover equal opportunities, and the disability and race awareness training has formed part of the new staff induction programme since January 2006. All other training events also incorporate equal opportunities as appropriate.

- To ensure that the College’s equal opportunities and diversity training is reflective of current and emerging requirements and supports the Diversity Strategy, the training programme will be reviewed annually.

KEY THEME 5: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Links to Corporate Plan Objectives:
- Enhancing Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Enhancing Excellence in Research
- Enhancing the Contribution of HE to the Economy and Society
Key Aim – to ensure that staff are equipped to carry out their roles effectively and develop to their full potential.

5.a Progress Review
The College recognises that there is a strong sense of commitment, loyalty and achievement amongst staff at Birkbeck, and that the continued success of the College depends on staff understanding and performing their roles to the best of their abilities and to a high standard.

The College’s Progress and Development Review (PDR) system (previously known as ‘Staff Development Scheme’) provides an annual, formal opportunity for all staff to review their progress, with their Head of School/Department or nominee. It is also an opportunity to identify any related development necessary to carry out their roles effectively, develop to their full potential and ultimately, to enable the College to achieve its Mission.

To date, the College recognises, with concern, that low numbers of staff have taken part in this review scheme, and that it is important that all staff have the opportunity to discuss their progress and development in the future. The scheme was revised in 2005 to enhance participation, and will be launched in 2006. Training for staff responsible for conducting reviews is now mandatory and monitoring of participation in the PDR system will continue on an annual basis.

- Increase participation in the PDR scheme to 100% by the academic year 2010/11.
- Continue to provide PDR training for all new staff and those new to conducting a PDR at Birkbeck.
- Extract information on development needs from the PDR forms submitted and where appropriate provide relevant training for staff.
- Produce an annual report on return rates.

5.b Under Performance
The College recognises that it is important to deal effectively and at the earliest opportunity with under performance, so that the morale and work of the majority of staff is not affected adversely by colleagues who are not achieving their objectives. The College also recognises that dealing with under performance can be difficult and time-consuming for managers. Professional advice is available from HR to support managers with this task.

- Ensure that under performance and incapability are dealt with promptly in a consistent, fair and sensitive manner, by providing managers with training to manage under performance.

5.c Sickness Absence
The College recognises that staff absences are costly in terms of sick pay, loss of skills and experience, and colleagues covering for absence. Currently, sickness absence reporting and monitoring is not consistently carried out across the College and management information is difficult to generate.

- To improve sickness absence reporting, monitoring and recording in order to determine the level of sickness absence at Birkbeck.
Develop and introduce a pro-active sickness management procedure for managing short and long term sickness absence.

Determine whether the sickness management module of the computerised HR system can effectively record data and provide useful management information on sickness absence levels.

Put in place an effective Occupational Health Service to support the resolution of sickness absence cases quickly and appropriately.

KEY THEME 6: POLICY FRAMEWORK

Links to Corporate Plan Objectives:
- Enhancing Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- Enhancing Excellence in Research
- Cross Cutting Supporting Aims

**Key Aim – to provide an effective framework for managing staff issues.**

HR policies and procedures provide an important framework and source of guidance to College managers and staff for effectively managing employment issues.

- Improve the effectiveness of the service provided by HR by continuous review and improvement of processes, and develop a service level agreement.

- Finalise and implement the Revised Model Statute and associated policies and procedures that cover grievance, conduct, performance and ill health, the use of fixed term contracts and redundancy.

- Complete the programme of reviewing and updating HR policies.

- Improve HR management information by utilising the current computerised HR system to its full capacity and undertaking a capability review in August 2006. If the review identifies that the current system is not fit for purpose, make a case for a more effective system.

NAINA PATEL
Director of Human Resources

May 2006