

Staff Numbers and Cost 2024-25

The QUB accounts contain data on average staff numbers by major category, and I have added vacancy levels and financial data.

Year	2018/9	2019/20	2020/1	2021/2	2022/3	2023/4	2024/5
Academic	1,196	1,256	1,250	1,270	1,292	1,329	1,371
Research	669	694	696	678	654	667	633
Acad. Related	833	901	907	915	999	1,104	1,198
Technical & Clerical	1,008	1025	997	978	991	1,057	1,076
Other	481	499	509	503	550	571	522
Total Staff	4,187	4,375	4,359	4,344	4,486	4,738	4,822
Staff Costs excluding VSS £M	208.6	226.0	228.4	240.6	252.0	273.5	296.1
Staff Cost per Staff Member £K	49.821	51.657	52.397	55.386	56.175	57.725	61.396
Staff Vacancies %	8.0%	5.7%	8.8%	4.1%	9%	7%	8.31%

Staff numbers are averages over the year. 295 staff (mostly in support roles) have agreed to leave under the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS). Virtually all left on or after the close of the financial year, and so VSS has not affected the figures above.

Staff costs are 62% of income and include the annual pay award, the cost of incremental Real Living Wage update, the cost of incremental progression, academic promotions and the cost of the Apprenticeship Levy. Staff costs in 2022/23 included £2.3M for the cost-of-living interventions, and about £1.9M in relation to the early implementation of the 2023-24 pay award from 1 February 2023. Staff costs in 2023/4 included £3.8M for the one-off non-consolidated award in July 2024 as part of the new three-year pay deal. Staff Costs in my table exclude the cost of teaching assistants, temporary lecturers and other temporary staff who were not employed under contract by the University and therefore not included in staff numbers.

Staff Vacancies is proportion of posts unfilled averaged over all staff, and the position was differed across Faculties and Professional Services. Usually Academic vacancies are higher than this average. When Staff Vacancies reached 9.4%, lay members of Senate questioned whether any organisation could operate effectively at this level, and target level of 5% was set. The reduction of the vacancy level has been a high priority of management for several years. So far they have only briefly achieved the target. This level of vacancies throws crippling extra work on the remaining staff and causes stress and low morale. It also denies students the level of personal contact that they desire and the Voluntary Severance Scheme will make that worse unless new forms of personal teaching are developed.

Virtually all the Research posts are fixed-term so that **the number of staff in insecure employment remains high. Even more insecure are the teaching assistants, temporary lecturers and other temporary staff.** The variation in their number is indicated by the yearly expenditure on them: 2024/25 £9,227K; 2023/24 £8,230K; but in 2020/21 £4,435K.

During the year, the University made total payments in respect of compensation for loss of office of £19,190K (2023/4: £83K) relating to 518 (2024: 149) staff members. This total included payments to 273 staff on fixed terms contracts and the remainder related to payments in line the University's Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) which was launched during 2024–25.

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