



Internal Secondment Policy

1 Introduction

1.1 The University supports the use of internal secondments, recognising them as:

- personal and professional development for the individual
- a means of succession planning
- adding to the skills base of the University

1.2 Secondments support a culture of learning and development and contribute to the themes of the Staff L&D strategy:

- evolving our performance culture
- enabling skills development
- embracing and effecting change

2 General Principles

2.1 An internal secondment is the temporary deployment of a member of staff to another role for a specific purpose and period of time to the mutual benefit of all parties. A secondment is usually for no less than three months and not longer than two years. The member of staff retains their right to return to their substantive post at the end of the secondment period.

2.2 Internal secondments can allow departments to recruit to short or fixed term vacancies whilst enabling secondees to develop skills and their understanding of particular areas of work. In many cases, individuals will return to their original team at the end of the period with increased knowledge and experience and a greater understanding of the University.

2.3 Secondments may be used to:

- temporarily fill a vacancy
- fill a fixed term contract (usually of less than two years)

- cover extended leave e.g. maternity leave
- provide support for a specific project
- transfer expertise across the University
- develop staff as part of their personal and professional development plan

2.4 An internal secondment is different to an acting-up responsibility arrangement. An acting-up responsibility is generally where unplanned cover for a position at a higher level is required for a short period of time, e.g. due to the absence of the substantive post holder.

3 Eligibility

3.1 Members of staff who have successfully completed their probation, have been employed by the University for a minimum of 12 months and are performing satisfactorily in their substantive role, will be eligible to apply for a secondment. Satisfactory performance will be based on performance development reviews.

4 Advertising of secondments

4.1 Managers should consider whether vacancies to be advertised are able to be considered as secondment opportunities. Where a temporary or fixed term post does not specify this, it is still possible for a member of staff to ask if they could be considered for the post on a secondment basis.

4.2 Where a post contains specialist or specific skills that can only be sourced within a specified group of staff or a particular business area, or where an area is undergoing organisational change, it may be possible to advertise the secondment to these limited groups only. In these circumstances managers should consult with their Human Resources Partner before advertising the secondment.

4.3 Applications will be dealt with through the normal competitive recruitment process, with the role being appointed to the applicant who best meets the requirements of the person specification.

5 Applying for a secondment

- 5.1 Prior to submitting an application for an internal post on a secondment basis, the member of staff must discuss with their current (substantive) manager whether a secondment application would be supported by the department. Approval of the individual's substantive manager is required for a secondment to take place.
- 5.2 Prior to approaching their substantive manager, members of staff are encouraged to identify areas of their own development which would directly benefit from the secondment opportunity and ultimately how any knowledge or experience gained as a result will benefit the team to which they will return.
- 5.3 Secondment opportunities should not be unreasonably refused by the substantive manager; however support for secondments is not automatic and may not be possible in all circumstances. For example, secondments can sometimes be refused by the current manager, if:
- there will be a significant impact on quality or performance of the department
 - the department would be unable to recruit, replace or reorganise the work among existing staff
 - the individual is being monitored under the formal stages of Human Resources policies and procedures
 - the individual has already undertaken a secondment in the last three years.
- 5.4 Managers are advised to discuss this with their Human Resources Partner. Secondments should normally be granted provided they meet the following criteria:
- that the secondment will provide personal and professional development for the individual
 - that there will be overall benefits to the University through improved individual and organisational performance
 - that the seconding department can reasonably expect to cover the work of the secondee by redeployment, inward secondment or recruitment.
- 5.5 If the secondment request cannot be accommodated, the member of staff may still wish to apply for the post on the same basis as other applicants (i.e. temporary or fixed term) but they will relinquish their right to return to their current post if they are successful. At the end of the fixed term appointment the University will aim to find a suitable alternative post through the Redeployment Policy, however the individual should be aware that this may not be possible. In such circumstances the secondment manager will be responsible for managing this situation in accordance with the Contracts of Employment Policy.

5.6 Staff on open and fixed term contracts may apply for secondment opportunities, though it is more likely that the managers of staff on fixed term contracts may not be able to support a secondment. If the secondment continues beyond the end of a fixed term contract, as there will be no substantive post to return to, relevant notice will be given to the individual before the end of the secondment that their employment contract will be terminated in accordance with the Contracts of Employment Policy. The normal redeployment process will apply towards the end of the secondment.

6 Managing the secondment

Preparation

6.1 In order to maximise the success of the secondment opportunity there should be a clear understanding of the purpose and desired outcomes of the secondment by all parties:

- a formal induction programme should be developed
- objectives set which relate to the department's business plans
- regular review periods should be built into the secondment period.

During the secondment

- the seconding manager should hold regular reviews with the secondee to ensure they are supported and to provide an opportunity to review performance.
- the seconding manager will be responsible for the day to day management of the member of staff. Should any issue arise during the period of the secondment and the seconding manager or the seconded member of staff wishes to invoke a HR policy (e.g. absence, disciplinary, grievance), in all situations the issues will be dealt with in consultation with the substantive manager.
- the substantive manager should keep in touch with the secondee on a regular basis to keep them up to date in changes in the department and to maintain an effective relationship.
- in the event that during the secondment changes take place to the substantive post, the secondee will be informed and where necessary, consulted. This is the responsibility of the substantive manager.

Approaching the end of secondment

6.2 At least one month prior to the end of the secondment:

- the seconding manager should hold a final review meeting to discuss the secondee's progress and achievements within the post, and discuss arrangements for handing over work within the team.
- The seconding manager must complete a Staff Exit Checklist with the secondee to ensure all necessary equipment, files etc are handed over
- The substantive manager should also meet with the secondee to discuss the arrangements for returning to their substantive post, and to update the individual on any changes within the department.

On return to substantive post

6.3 The substantive manager should meet with the member of staff as soon as possible and always within the first month of their return to:

- discuss what has been achieved from the secondment
- plan how the knowledge and/or skills gained through the secondment can be used in their substantive role
- agree when and how these arrangements will be reviewed.

7 Changes to the secondment period

Ending the secondment early

7.1 If difficulties arise during the period of secondment and it is not working successfully, all three parties – the substantive manager, the seconding manager and the secondee, should review the secondment and decide whether it should continue or not. The Human Resources Partner should be approached to provide advice.

7.2 If the secondment needs to end earlier than planned due to any other circumstances, the reasons for this must be discussed with the substantive manager at the earliest opportunity. If the substantive manager can accommodate this request a mutually convenient date will be agreed for their return. This must be discussed with the secondee and the reasons explained. If the substantive manager cannot accommodate this change (e.g. due to the cover arrangements in place) the secondment will continue till the agreed end date.

Extension requests

- 7.3 An extension to a secondment should be agreed by all parties – the secondee, the secondment manager and the substantive manager in order to consider the impact and implications of the change. Advice should be sought from the Human Resources Partner. The seconding manager should contact the substantive manager in the first instance to discuss the possibility of an extension.
- 7.4 If the substantive manager is not able to accommodate an extension to the secondment, the secondee will return to their substantive post at the end of the agreed secondment period. Alternatively, the individual may request to stay in the role after the secondment has ended on a fixed term basis (if it is genuinely a fixed term post) however, they would be relinquishing their right to return to their substantive post. Human Resources must be consulted for advice. At the end of the fixed term appointment, the University will aim to find a suitable alternative post through the Redeployment Policy, however the individual should be aware that this may not be possible. In such circumstances the secondment manager will be responsible for managing this situation in accordance with the Contracts of Employment Policy.

Turning into a permanent role

- 7.5 If a seconded role becomes available on a permanent basis, where there was a competitive recruitment process for the secondment and where there have been no substantial changes to the role, the secondee may be offered the role on a substantive basis, subject to the agreement of the seconding manager and the secondee.
- 7.6 If the secondee was recruited to the secondment opportunity without a competitive recruitment process, the post must be advertised and the secondee may apply to be considered for the post alongside other applicants in accordance with the University's Recruitment Policy.

8 Terms and conditions of employment during the secondment

- 8.1 Successful candidates will receive a letter confirming the appointment and terms and conditions covering the period of the secondment.

- 8.2 The member of staff will be paid at the appropriate grade and hours (with any associated additional benefits) for the secondment role. There is no pay protection in the (unlikely) event of the secondment being at a lower grade than the individual's substantive post.
- 8.3 If the secondment is to a post at the same grade, there will be no change to terms and conditions or rate of pay. Annual incremental progression will apply during the period of the secondment.
- 8.4 If the secondment is to a higher graded post the member of staff's salary will be increased accordingly. The increase will usually be based on the bottom spine point of the new grade. If the member of staff is entitled to additional annual leave, this will be applied on a pro rata basis. Their terms and conditions will remain the same.
- 8.5 At the end of the secondment the member of staff will revert to their substantive grade (if the secondment has involved a change of grade) benefitting from any increments they would have received had the secondment not taken place.
- 8.6 If, during the period of the secondment, organisational change results in the substantive post being substantially altered or is put at risk of redundancy, the member of staff will be consulted by the substantive manager in accordance with the Procedures for Introducing Change to Organisational Structures and the Redeployment Policy. In these circumstances, members of staff will be treated as if they are in their substantive post.
- 8.7 At the end of the secondment the individual will return to their substantive post as agreed; they cannot request to change their status to that of fixed term because they do not wish to return to their substantive post.

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