

# Secondments policy

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# Secondments policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University encourages secondments as part of its staff development objectives and as a means of improving relationships between participating schools/departments. Secondments also provide the opportunity to build links with other institutions and bring other benefits to the University.
- 1.2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Recruitment and Selection guidelines. Heads /directors should have due regard to equal access in respect of secondment opportunities for staff.
- 1.3. A secondment can be a specific activity or role that requires either the full-time or part-time involvement of an existing member of staff for a fixed period of time. There are normally two types of secondment of University staff:
  - i) Where a member of staff is temporarily assigned to a different role in a different area of the University for a fixed period of time as an **internal secondment (Section 2 refers)**. The secondment will normally be regarded as a staff development opportunity.
  - ii) The temporary assignment of a member of staff to a position in an external organisation (**external secondments – Section 3 refers**).
- 1.4. Additionally, there are secondments into the University of an individual working for an external organisation. This is normally intended to bring expertise and developmental opportunities into the University from an external organisation for a specific period of time (not more than two years) – **Section 4 refers**.
- 1.5. Dependent upon the location of proposed secondments, these would normally be subject to authorisation by the head/director.

## 2. Internal secondments

- 2.1 Internal secondments might arise for a range of reasons, for example:
  - where a specific short term specialised need cannot be effectively met through the normal recruitment and selection process;
  - as a mechanism for career development; or
  - as a result of a temporary vacancy due to a period of extended absence of another member of staff.

An internal secondment involves a member of staff changing to a different role, normally for a short and pre-determined length of time, which would not usually exceed 12 months. The parameters of the secondment opportunity will be determined using our [Recruitment and Selection Guidelines](#). This would include providing a job description and person specification to Human Resources, for grading evaluation.

- 2.2 The [University's vacancy approval process](#) (see Recruitment and Selection guidelines) applies to secondment opportunities of six months or more. This includes following the normal selection procedure, including an interview by a panel. The advertising proposals should be clearly indicated on the vacancy approval form. Advertising might for example be directed at a limited selection of staff (i.e. ring-fenced), including within a specific school/department or relevant area, dependent upon the specialist nature of the role. Any such proposals must be objectively justifiable, to ensure that secondments are consistent with the [University's Equality and Diversity policy](#).
- 2.3 Internal secondments of less than six months in duration can be offered without going through the vacancy approval process or an advertisement, if the secondment is authorised by the head/director and it can be demonstrated that the member of staff's substantive role makes them the only suitable candidate. The secondment must also have the mutual agreement of the member of staff. The head/director will inform their Human Resources contact of all details regarding the secondment, including the rationale for the secondment being short term, and for the selection of the member of staff for the short term secondment. Human Resources will then send formal confirmation to the member of staff.
- 2.4 Heads/director are asked to be mindful that secondments might be extended beyond the initial duration and to closely scrutinise applicants, since individuals who undertake secondments for a period in excess of 12 months will normally have a claim on a post, if the substantive postholder does not return and if it is not practicable for the secondee to return to their substantive role, following secondment.
- 2.5 If, following extension, a secondment reaches a period of 9 months and there is a likelihood that it will need to be extended further, the head/director should submit a vacancy approval form detailing the current secondment arrangements to request filling the vacancy on a fixed-term or indefinite basis. The position would normally be advertised in accordance with the University's Recruitment and Selection guidelines, so that all University staff and external applicants have an opportunity to consider applying for the position. The secondee will then have the opportunity to apply for the post through the usual mechanisms.

- 2.6 Following the selection processes outlined in this policy, the member of staff will be formally appointed to the secondment opportunity (on a temporary basis) which will be confirmed in writing to the member of staff by Human Resources, prior to the secondment commencing. This written confirmation will specify the duration of the secondment, the reason for it being temporary and the remuneration arrangements. The letter will also state that in the unlikely occurrence of events beyond the University's control which necessitate the early termination of the secondment, the secondee(s) will revert to their substantive post(s).
- 2.7 Internal secondments will not be subject to a probationary period.
- 2.8 The member of staff's substantive post will be held open and the head/director will seek advice from Human Resources on a suitable arrangement for covering the secondee's duties. This may result in a further secondment opportunity. The secondee will be informed by Human Resources in writing that they have the right to return to their existing post at the end of the secondment unless there is a reason why it is not practicable for them to return to their old job. If this is the case, redeployment will be sought, in line with the [Redeployment procedure](#). Where organisational changes occur during the secondment which might affect the member of staff's substantive post, the University will consult the member of staff about the impact of the changes. If these changes result in the deletion of the member of staff's substantive post, redeployment will be sought. Should the member of staff be redeployed into a post graded lower than their previous substantive role prior to secondment, the University's salary protection arrangements (set out in the [Redeployment procedure](#)) will apply.
- 2.9 If the post which the member of staff is being seconded into is a staff category to which a different University pension scheme normally applies, the member of staff will remain in their existing pension scheme.
- 2.10 The University will not reimburse the cost of relocation which may be incurred by the member of staff if the secondment is located at a different site of the University.
- 2.11 If a member of staff on secondment expresses a wish to return to their substantive post earlier than the intended date of termination of the secondment, this will be considered by the head/director who might wish to seek advice from Human Resources. The head/director will take into consideration the terms and conditions attached to the secondment. In such cases, as much notice as possible will be provided to those affected.

### 3. External secondments

- 3.1 External secondment opportunities will normally arise when a member of staff has been offered a temporary opportunity at another institution/organisation. They may also arise through mutual agreement between the University and an external organisation.
- 3.2 When a member of staff is offered a secondment opportunity outside the University or an external agency makes a request for a secondment, the head/director will consider the matter in conjunction with the Human Resources Director. So that the secondment request can be given full consideration the information provided to the head/director and the Human Resources Director, should include:
- i) the reasons that the secondment is supported;
  - ii) proposals for covering the duties of the secondee's substantive post during the secondment;
  - iii) budgetary implications;
  - iv) potential benefits to the University and the member of staff in respect of the secondment;
  - v) the nature of the duties to be undertaken by the secondee with the external organisation;
  - vi) any other relevant information.
- 3.3 After the proposal has been received and approved by the head/director and the Human Resources Director, the contractual issues will be dealt with by Human Resources, in consultation with the school/department and the external organisation.
- 3.4 If it is proposed that the member of staff should be seconded externally on a part-time basis, this would be considered in the same way as a full-time secondment.
- 3.5 Staff on external secondment will normally be seconded on the terms and conditions of employment (pro rata as appropriate) applicable to staff of the host institution, where relevant. The normal method of salary payment to the seconded member of staff will be for the University to continue paying the salary, with costs being reimbursed by the host organisation.
- 3.6 Full contractual details for University staff seconded to external organisations, will be confirmed to the member of staff in writing by Human Resources, prior to the secondment commencing. Human Resources will liaise with the member of staff and external organisation to confirm the secondment terms and conditions. Further advice concerning the possible contractual implications of external secondments can be obtained from Human Resources.

#### **4. Secondments into the University from other institutions / organisations**

The contractual terms of secondments for individuals who are formally employed by an external institution/organisation to the University will be agreed on an individual basis between the individual, the external organisation and the University. Secondments into the University from an external organisation will normally be effected in accordance with the University's Recruitment and Selection guidelines. If alternative methods of appointment are proposed, the rationale for this should be set out on the vacancy approval form. Secondments will be subject to written confirmation from Human Resources prior to the secondment commencing. Further advice in respect of such secondment arrangements is available from Human Resources.

#### **5. General**

- 5.1 If a secondment overseas is being considered, advice on possible contractual implications should be sought from Human Resources at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.2 If a role which is occupied on a secondment basis (by either internal or external staff) becomes available as an indefinite appointment (subject to the vacancy approval process), the position would normally be advertised in accordance with the University's Recruitment and Selection guidelines, so that all University staff and external applicants have an opportunity to apply. The secondee will then have the opportunity to apply for the post through the usual mechanisms. If a secondee's role becomes indefinite, the secondee will normally have a claim on the position if they have been seconded to the role for a period greater than 12 months.
- 5.3 Given the range of situations which may occur in respect of secondment opportunities, Human Resources can provide advice on any circumstances not covered by this Secondments policy.