



Keele University

# Guidance on Secondments

Human Resources Department

Issue date: January 2011
Review date: December 2014 Date of Next Review: 2017/18

## **1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- 1.1 The following guidance has been produced to provide information on secondments.
- 1.2 Further support can be obtained from the Human Resources Department. Although this guidance document focuses on internal secondments, many of the principles and processes will apply to external secondments. Specific advice relating to external secondments should be sought from the relevant link Human Resources team.
- 1.3 This guidance is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

## **2. DEFINITION AND POTENTIAL USAGE**

- 2.1 A secondment is “the temporary transfer of a member of staff to another job/role or to a specific activity, within the same organisation or to another organisation, for a defined length of time”.
- 2.2 Internal secondments are the temporary assignment of a member of staff to another role or activity within the University.
- 2.3 There are two types of external secondments:
  - (i) out-going - temporary assignment of a member of staff to a role/activity in an external organisation;
  - (ii) in-coming – temporary assignment of a member of staff from an external organisation to a role/activity within the University.
- 2.4 Secondments will predominantly be used:
  - (i) where there is a specific short term specialised skills/expertise need;
  - (ii) as a form of career development;
  - (iii) to cover a temporary vacancy due to an extended period of absence of another member of staff.

## **3. BASIC PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1 Support for secondments is not automatic and may not be possible in every case. Secondments can only take place with the prior approval of the individual’s line manager.
- 3.2 Where a line manager agrees to allow an individual to go on secondment they are also agreeing to hold open the individual’s substantive post for the initial, agreed period of the secondment (except where this is not practicable due to re-organisation or redundancy, etc). If the line manager is unable to hold open the substantive post, the secondment cannot be authorised.
- 3.3 Where an internal secondment is at the same grade as the individual’s substantive post the individual will continue to receive the same salary point. If the secondment is at a higher grade the individual will receive the bottom point of that grade.

- 3.4** For the period of the secondment, the secondee will receive the terms and conditions attached to the secondment post.
- 3.5** When the secondee returns to his/her substantive role it will be on the same terms and conditions of employment as if they had not been seconded and he/she will benefit from any incremental progression which would have occurred had the secondment not taken place.
- 3.6** The minimum period of time for which a secondment can be agreed is 3 months.
- 3.7** The maximum period of time for which a secondment can be agreed in the first instance is 12 months.
- 3.8** Any extension to the original secondment period is subject to the approval of the originating line manager. There can be no guarantee that extensions to the originally agreed secondment period will be approved.
- 3.9** Any requests to advertise a secondment or backfill a vacancy arising as a result of a secondment (through the use of agency staff, fixed-term contract or further secondment) must gain approval through the appropriate channel, e.g. via the post approval process.
- 3.10** Where a secondment role becomes available on an indefinite basis, for example where a member of staff on a period of authorised leave resigns, the incumbent in the seconded role will not necessarily be confirmed in post. The normal vacancy process should be followed and the vacancy advertised.

#### **4. PROCEDURE**

- 4.1** Any post which is fixed-term or where the purpose of the role is to undertake a specific project/task, may be advertised as a secondment opportunity or state that secondments will be considered. The post must still receive approval to recruit via the normal channels (see 3.9 above).
- 4.2** Any internal applicants who wish to apply for a vacancy on a secondment basis must discuss this with their line manager in the first instance, i.e. prior to submitting his/her application, to avoid disappointment or difficulties later in the process. The manager should indicate at this stage whether they would, in principle, be able to support a secondment.
- 4.3** When considering whether they can support a secondment request, line managers should think about –
- Potential impact on the service and how key responsibilities will be covered during the secondment;
  - Whether it is feasible to keep the substantive post open for the proposed duration of the secondment;
  - Budgetary implications;
  - Potential benefits to member of staff;
  - Potential benefits to the School/RI/Department and University.

- 4.4** Where a secondment opportunity is offered, the secondment start date should be discussed and agreed between the originating line manager and the secondment line manager.
- 4.5** Individuals on secondment may wish to return to their substantive role sooner than originally planned. In this situation the individual must contact their substantive line manager to discuss whether this is possible. If it is possible, further discussion must take place involving the secondment line manager and a mutually convenient date agreed.
- 4.6** HR will facilitate all appropriate contractual documentation.