

# Staff Secondment and Placement Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to developing its staff, and recognises the value of secondments and internal placements in doing this.

1.2 Secondments and internal placements are valuable opportunities to support career development and progression by offering the chance to increase skills and knowledge, and experience working in new and different environments without the disruption of moving permanently to another organisation and while retaining continuity of employment.

1.3 A secondment can be described as the loan of an individual from one organisation, or one part of an organisation, to another, for a specific purpose and period of time. There are five types of secondment which the University normally operates:

**Internal Placement:** A University of Reading employee temporarily moves to another role in another Faculty, Service, or within the same department, for example to cover for a period of leave.

**External Secondment out of the University:** A University of Reading employee remains under contract to the University but carries out a temporary role based in another, external organisation.

**External Secondment in to the University:** An employee from an external organisation (such as the NHS or another University) temporarily carries out a role at the University of Reading whilst maintaining their contract with their substantive employer.

**International Posting:** A University of Reading employee temporarily working overseas for another Faculty or Service, or within the same department. The employee is doing work for the host Faculty or Service, under their instruction, and for their purposes. This differentiates the International Posting from a business trip.

**Intra Group Secondment:** A University of Reading employee temporarily working for a subsidiary of the University.

#### 1.4 Other terms used in this Policy:

<b>Secondee</b>	The individual who is being seconded.
<b>Host</b>	The organisation, Faculty, or Service who is receiving the secondee.
<b>Placement/Secondment Manager</b>	The manager in the organisation, Faculty, or Service who is responsible for managing the secondee during his or her secondment.
<b>Substantive employer</b>	The external organisation who is loaning the secondee.
<b>Substantive post</b>	The original and underlying post that an individual is employed to do.

1.5 A secondment or internal placement may be full or part time, and may be undertaken by all staff. To ensure the University is making full use of secondments and placement opportunities an annual report will be made available to Staffing Committee at its meeting in the Autumn Term detailing the number of secondments and placements that have taken place during the preceding academic year.

1.6 Whilst every reasonable effort will be made by the University to support secondments and placements there will be circumstances in which it will not be possible, for example, where the post-holder has specialist knowledge that would be difficult to replace for a limited period of time or where a specialist professional qualification is a requirement of the position.

1.7 This Policy outlines the University's arrangements for:

- (i) Internal Placements
- (ii) External Secondments
  - Out of the University
  - In to the University
- (iii) International Postings
- (iv) Intra Group Secondments
- (v) Funding.

## Internal Placements

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 As identified from the results of the recent staff survey opportunities for career development and progression are important factors in enabling staff to feel motivated and valued in their working environment, especially for non-academic staff. It has therefore been agreed that the use of internal placements as a development activity for non-academic staff should be promoted and expanded in order to increase the skills, experience, and mobility of non-academic staff across the University. However, internal placements are also available to academic staff as appropriate.

1.3 Internal placements are open to University employees who have successfully completed their probation period and usually been employed by the University for a minimum of 12 months.

1.4 Internal placements are offered for a fixed period but the member of staff is not employed on a fixed term contract because the employee is expected to return to his or her substantive role at the end of the placement. The placement constitutes a temporary, mutually agreed variation to the contract of employment. If, however, the substantive role is a fixed-term contract and the placement ends after the fixed-term contract expires the employee will not be entitled to return to their substantive post.

1.5 Owing to the size and scope of the University's activities there are frequent opportunities for employees to apply for internal placements, whether they are advertised formally as a 'development' placement or advertised as a temporary role that an employee could use as a developmental opportunity, such as maternity leave or parental leave cover. In either case the placement may offer new and different responsibilities - either within the employee's own team or in another department - so the employee can *stretch* him- or herself in a way that might not have been possible in their current role.

## 2.0 Types of internal placement

2.1 There are two types of internal placement:

2.2 A *short-term placement* is normally filled at relatively short notice, by someone within the immediate team or department, who has a particular set of skills needed to undertake the placement.

2.3 A *long-term placement* is normally filled in a timescale resembling permanent recruitment, and is filled by an applicant from any part of the University who has displayed the potential to undertake, and successfully complete, the placement.

2.4 In either case, the placement covers an established job or a newly created job.

2.5 Other key features of placements are outlined below.

Feature	Short-term placement	Long-term placement
<b>Duration</b>	Approximately 1-3 months	Approximately 4 to 12 months
<b>Location</b>	Normally within the employee's department, or one closely associated with the services he or she provides.	Normally outside the employee's department.
Feature	Short-term placement	Long-term placement
<b>Appointment process</b>	The role will be advertised within the department, and will be offered subject to an interview.	The role will be advertised across the University and the normal selection procedures will apply.

<b>Terms and conditions during the placement</b>	The terms and conditions of the placement role will normally apply during the placement. If pension arrangements differ, options will be discussed with the employee.	
<b>Terms and conditions after the placement</b>	Subject to the rules set out below employees will return to their substantive post on the substantive terms as if they had remained in post. This includes any terms that are linked to length of service such as an increase in annual leave entitlement or incremental progression.	
<b>Right to return</b>	The employee has the right to return to his or her substantive role, and terms and conditions, at the end of the placement subject to any changes that may have occurred during his/her absence.	The employee has the right to return to his or her substantive role or a similar role on broadly comparable terms and conditions at the end of the placement, subject to any changes that may have occurred during his/her absence.
<b>Manager's right to recall</b>	The Line Manager is able to recall the employee back to his or her original role earlier than planned, subject to agreeing a return date with the Placement Manager.	The Line Manager is unable to recall the employee back to his or her original role earlier than the agreed date.
<b>Supervision</b>	<p>Day-to-day line management rests with the Placement Manager but s/he must consult the Line Manager before handling issues relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-absence from work (eg illness)</li> <li>-grievance/disciplinary matters</li> <li>-performance.</li> </ul> <p>The Line Manager retains responsibility for appraisals and decisions relating to reward.</p> <p>HR advice should be sought.</p>	<p>Day-to-day line management rests with the Placement Manager but s/he must consult the Line Manager before handling issues relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-absence from work (eg illness)</li> <li>-grievance/disciplinary matters</li> <li>-performance.</li> </ul> <p>The Line Manager retains responsibility for appraisals and decisions relating to reward.</p> <p>HR advice should be sought.</p>

2.6 In some circumstances, placements that were originally envisaged by the employee and/or the University may cease to be of fixed term duration as the opportunity becomes more long-term in nature. In such situations and following discussion with the employee, the University may decide to make the placement a permanent change to the employee's job title or, if the employee does not agree, to terminate the placement so that the employee returns to his or her substantive role. On the termination of the placement, the University would have the same obligations to seek suitable alternative employment within the University for the employee as set out above.

### **3.0 Guidance for staff applying for an internal placement**

3.1 Employees should meet their line manager at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss their interest in applying for a placement - the Performance and Development Review (PDR) meeting is a perfect opportunity to have that conversation.

3.2 Employees should be aware that placements may be advertised explicitly as a 'development' placement, but temporary vacancies may also lend themselves to a placement opportunity without being advertised as such. When a temporary vacancy is advertised the recruiting manager may be willing to accept applications for an internal placement. The development opportunities may be worthwhile in both cases but it is likely that the learning outcomes for the employee will be more self-directed when applying for a temporary role rather than one that is explicitly advertised as a placement role.

3.3 The recruitment and selection process for placements is very similar to that followed for a standard vacancy i.e. you will be expected to complete an application form and undertake an interview. In the case of short-term placements the role will be advertised across a team or department with the most relevant skills, and who are available at relatively short notice.

3.4 The benefits of a placement to the individual must be balanced alongside the needs of the University and therefore approval from your current line manager is required before you can be appointed.

### **4.0 Guidance for placement managers establishing an internal placement**

4.1 When a placement is being considered, the host department receiving the secondee should seek support from their HR Partner or Advisor to clarify the terms and conditions of the placement prior to submitting the Staffing Request Form.

4.2 Guidance outlined by the University on recruitment and selection should be observed to ensure compliance with University procedures and employment legislation. Also note that for a placement with a developmental focus, the host department should consider the skills and behaviours the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate from the outset and what skills and attributes the employee will have the opportunity to develop.

4.3 As with a standard recruitment process, offering a reasonable lead-in time to recruit to the placement is important to ensure access to placement opportunities is maximised and because filling placements can generate a domino effect e.g. when one person moves from their substantive post to undertake a placement, their substantive post may also be filled with a placement.

4.4 Short-term placements will be advertised within a team or department, while long-term placements may be advertised more widely via the University website marked as 'Secondment opportunity, for internal applicants only'. Temporary roles suitable for employees to consider as a potential placement opportunity may be advertised locally within a specific team or across the University.

4.5 The host department will oversee the recruitment and selection process. During the interview it is helpful for candidates to have some clarity around the training and development opportunities that will be available to them during the placement and the type of support they will receive such as a mentor or buddy.

The host department will offer feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

4.6 The host department will be responsible for completing the recruitment documents and mutually agreeing a start date with the employee and a release date with their line manager. On receipt of the recruitment documents HR Operations will generate a Placement Letter outlining the terms and conditions of the placement. The Placement Letter will be sent to the applicant and copied to the host and home departments.

4.7 At the outset the host and home department will agree review intervals and ensure that regular reviews involving the employee and host and home departments take place during and at the end of the placement. HR will provide support as required throughout the placement.

## External Secondments

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 External Secondments occur when the University wishes to work collaboratively with a third party organisation, and where there are benefits to the University and the individual being seconded to work with an external organisation and to develop skills and knowledge by so doing.

1.2 There are two types of External Secondments:

- (i) An external secondment out of the University to another organisation such as to DEFRA, the NHS, or another university.
- (ii) An external secondment in to the University from another organisation such as the NHS, or a commercial company.

1.3 External Secondments can be overseas and if so, the section below on International Postings may also apply.

1.4 This policy will not usually apply to KTP Associates, who are recruited specifically for a particular role as part of the University's knowledge transfer activities.

### 2.0 Secondment Agreement

2.1 It is essential that all External Secondments are documented correctly and that a Secondment Agreement is signed between the University and the other organisation prior to the secondment starting. This will ensure that all parties are aware of their legal obligations in relation to the secondment and that the rights of the employee are properly set out and protected. No External Secondment arrangement should begin until a Staffing Request Form for the secondment has been approved and the Secondment Agreement is in place.

2.2 When the Staffing Request Form has been completed and approved the HR Partner will arrange for the Secondment Agreement to be prepared, negotiated and signed, with input from Finance, Research and Enterprise, and the line manager as appropriate.

2.3 In the event of a University employee being seconded out of the University and the host organisation (to which the employee is being seconded) sends their own form of Secondment Agreement, this must be forwarded to the HR Partner immediately for consideration.

2.4 In some situations VAT may be chargeable on a secondment fee. Please refer to VAT and Secondments in Appendix 1 for further information. Advice should be sought from Finance as appropriate.

### **3.0 Secondments out of the University**

3.1 Where an employee is offered the opportunity of a secondment out of the University, he or she should discuss it with the relevant line manager and Head of School/Service.

3.2 If the line manager and Head of School/Service agree that the secondment can be supported, the proposal must be notified to the relevant HR Partner, who will discuss with the line manager and Head of School/Service the practicalities of the arrangement, including how the employee's role will be fulfilled in his or her absence.

3.3 The Head of School/Service must complete a Staffing Request Form and Information Required for Secondment Out form at Appendix 2 and send them to the HR Partner. When the Secondment Agreement has been finalised, HR will issue the employee with a letter setting out the terms of the secondment. Except as stated in that letter, the employee's terms and conditions will remain the same and the employee will remain an employee of the University, unless his or her employment is terminated.

### **4.0 Secondments in to the University**

4.1 Secondments in to the University occur in one of the following ways;

(a) *either* the University is collaborating with another organisation or identifies an individual working for another organisation and considers it would be advantageous to the University for an individual to be seconded to it. In such cases, the line manager must complete a Staffing Request Form identifying that this is a secondment arrangement and setting out the source of funding;

(b) *or* an individual applies for an advertised post with the University and on being offered the appointment a secondment arrangement is agreed with their current employer. In this situation a Staffing Request Form has already been completed, and as such the line manager must notify HR Operations via the New Starter Form that this is now a secondment arrangement.

4.2 The Head of School/Service must complete a Staffing Request Form and Information Required for Secondment In form at Appendix 3 and send them to the HR Partner. When the Secondment Agreement has been finalised, HR will write to the secondee providing practical information about the secondment. When an individual is seconded to the University, he or she remains employed by their original organisation, he or she is

not an employee of the University. For this reason advice should be sought from your HR Partner about induction and training for seconded individuals and the extent to which line managers should manage seconded employees.

## **International Postings**

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 As the University develops its international presence, both at the University Campus in Malaysia and at other international offices, and with staff engaged in University activities across the world, this section of the policy provides a framework for the basis upon which staff employed in the UK may spend time working abroad on an international posting.

### **2.0 Overview**

2.1 Detailed policy documents are available covering the terms and conditions applicable to both short and long term International Postings, these terms are not detailed here but are available on the HR website. These terms apply to employees on UK contracts of employment and combined with the principles set out below as well as the guidance on internal placements above aim to ensure that International Postings are managed in an efficient and consistent manner, that individuals have full and clear information about any terms and additional benefits in relation to international postings and that they have received appropriate advice, for example in relation to tax liabilities, before agreeing to undertaking an international posting.

2.2 Short term business visits abroad, sabbaticals spent abroad and academic/research trips undertaken on an individual basis are not covered by the terms applicable to International Postings.

2.3 International Postings provide an ideal opportunity for personal and career development; as such overseas opportunities may be explicitly advertised or in specific circumstances, individuals may be approached directly to undertake a posting. The relevant overseas office will oversee the recruitment and selection process for International Postings, with ongoing involvement from the relevant Faculty/Service as appropriate.

2.4 Succeeding in an international assignment takes an individual who is flexible to change, has the emotional maturity and cross cultural suitability to deal with new challenges, in addition to the technical requirements of the role. Any individual considering undertaking an International Posting will have the opportunity to meet with the relevant HR Partner to discuss the applicable terms and conditions, the University aims to ensure that individuals are supported in their decision to undertake a posting and fully understand both the career opportunities and the challenges, for them and their families, as well as the applicable terms.

2.5 All individuals undertaking a posting overseas will receive full written details of the terms and conditions of their posting in the form of a letter which will set out in detail the personal terms and conditions applicable to them.

# Intra Group Secondments

1.0 The University has a number of subsidiary companies and other subsidiary organisations through which certain of its activities are channelled. On occasion, although employed by the University, employees may be required to undertake work for a subsidiary of the University.

1.1 The University therefore has in place a number of secondment agreements between itself and its subsidiaries. As these are external secondments out of the University, consideration should be given to the guidance relating to such secondments set out above, particularly in relation to VAT.

1.2 In the majority of occasions, there will be no change to the employee's terms and conditions of employment, and the work for the subsidiary will be carried out as part of the employee's normal duties.

1.3 However, from time to time, owing to the activities of the subsidiary, employees may be required to agree additional terms and conditions in order to carry out work for the subsidiary. In such situations, more information will be provided to you by your HR Partner.

## Funding

### 1.0 Internal Placement

1.1 An internal placement, however it arises, must be supported by a Staffing Request Form that confirms the terms of the appointment and the source of funding. Payroll will be notified of any changes to salary arising out of the secondment.

### 2.0 External Secondment out of the University

2.1 Before an employee of the University can be seconded out to another organisation a Staffing Request Form must be completed. The form will confirm the details of the secondment, in particular the external source of funding that will pay for the shortfall in the amount of time worked at the University, including but not limited to salary and holiday pay. The employee will continue to receive their salary from the University as if they were not on secondment but the portion of time s/he spends on secondment will be paid for on receipt of invoices from the University, and in accordance with the terms of the Secondment Agreement.

### 3.0.External Secondment in to the University

3.1 Before an individual can be seconded in to the University from another organisation a Staffing Request Form must be completed in order to approve the appointment of the secondee, and confirm the source of funding. During the secondment the secondee continues to receive their salary from their employer but the portion of time s/he spends on secondment to the University will be paid for on receipt of invoices from the host organisation, and in accordance with the terms of the Secondment Agreement. The University must not pay the individual directly.

17/03/14