

Secondment Policy

Introduction

The University of Nottingham recognises the talent and potential of its people, and strives to ensure that staff have access to a range of opportunities to gain skills and experience. This helps the University achieve its strategic and operational goals through a highly skilled and capable workforce, while offering individuals continuing professional and personal development.

Strategy 2020 and the supporting Internationalisation and People strategies require a greater level of collaboration and engagement with industry and external partners, and greater staff mobility between all University of Nottingham campuses, faculties and departments, for short, medium and long-term assignments and across staff groups and job families. Secondments are one strong tool for supporting this.

Secondments can provide an ideal opportunity for individuals to gain new skills and capabilities, and for the University to bring in external expertise or grow internal potential while making best use of its resources to meet business needs. This policy outlines the consistent use of secondments as a tool for individual development, external collaboration and strategic resource planning, and the role of leaders and managers in developing talent for the wider benefit of the University.

Equal opportunities

The University values the diversity of its people and is committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination. This policy should be implemented fairly with equal access to opportunities regardless of gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, trade union membership/activity or marital status, in line with the University's [Equal Opportunities Policy](#).

Statement of intent

Secondments provide an opportunity for members of staff to experience work in a different environment and develop new skills, expand knowledge and develop expertise. They also allow the University to draw on specialist skills both internally and externally to meet short-term demand. A secondment may, therefore, address both individual staff development needs, and the needs of the University, by utilising particular skills that are available.

This policy and associated guidelines provide a framework which encourages mobility of staff, using secondment and acting-up arrangements appropriately as a means of:

- meeting business needs of efficiency and effectiveness within the University
- supporting the University's overall workforce and succession planning
- developing a workforce which is flexible and adaptable to changing service needs
- retaining and developing experienced, skilled and motivated staff
- taking positive action to address lack of diversity within the workforce, which must be evidenced by relevant statistics for the work type/area
- forging greater integration between campuses, faculties, schools and departments to enable a global and integrated approach to research, teaching and the delivery of professional services
- embedding internationalisation and encouraging workforce mobility
- improving external engagement and partnership working with a wide variety of organisations.

Secondments should be considered whenever possible as a highly beneficial and potentially low cost option for recruitment and staff development. The University encourages all managers to support secondments for the wider benefit of the University, by considering advertising internally for vacancies where appropriate, and supporting their staff to undertake secondments in other organisations, teams and departments. All individuals should be empowered to openly discuss both internal and external secondment opportunities with their line managers.

All secondments should remain voluntary. Unless mobility is specifically included in the contract of employment, no member of staff should be in any way coerced to accept a secondment or be sanctioned in any way for declining a secondment if it is offered to them.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to any secondment, defined as an opportunity for an individual to move from one role, team, campus or organisation to another for a specific purpose and specific period of time, typically between 6 months and 2 years. International assignments and secondments can vary from this depending on business needs and arrangements, lasting anywhere from 3 months to 5 years. Secondments may be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis, and job share arrangements should be considered where possible to ensure equality of access to roles at all levels.

Types of work that might be considered for secondment include:

- project roles
- the introduction of a new initiative
- policy development
- change leadership
- interim management
- specific tasks of limited duration or with an uncertain future
- short-term appointments to cover a new area of work prior to making a permanent appointment
- maternity or sickness absence cover
- filling a permanent role through a limited period secondment to meet the individual's development need.

Roles within the same team which are for less than 100% of the individual's working hours, or for less than six months, are covered under separate Acting Up Payments Guidance, available from [HR Business Partners](#).

Types of secondment

External secondments are those outside of the University, with other organisations in the UK or internationally. These facilitate partnership working and knowledge transfer by enabling staff to work temporarily at another organisation while their contract remains with the original employer.

- Outgoing: a role with another organisation, eg undertaking research for a company or managing a project at another University.
- Incoming: a role within the University that needs external expertise, eg bringing in a visiting lecturer or practitioner.

Inter-university secondments are those within the University, whether within the UK (Internal Secondments) or between the UK and international campuses (International Secondments).

- International secondments enable staff mobility and integration between the University's staff in the UK, UNNC and UNMC, sharing leadership skills and ensuring truly global education, research and knowledge exchange.

- Internal secondments within each country enable staff mobility, talent development, and integration between schools and departments. These should be considered for fixed-term posts which existing staff may be attracted to, or where internal appointments would add value to the University. This could include, but is not limited to, the following scenarios:
 - Developmental: a different role at the same or higher level to learn new skills or gain experience as part of personal development, eg job rotation or work swapping.
 - Strategic: a project or policy development role that requires pre-existing knowledge or expertise, eg change leadership or internal project roles.
 - Transitional: role which allows the secondee to gain necessary skills or experience to move into a new permanent role, eg during a restructure or to support career progression.
 - Operational: a role or project which requires structured cover by someone with pre-existing knowledge of the University, eg fixed-term leadership posts, or during prolonged recruitment to key roles.

Related Documents

The following documents are available to support managers and individuals in identifying and using secondments. Any questions not answered by these documents can be directed to [HR Business Partners](#).

- [UK Internal Secondment Guidance](#)
- [External Secondment Guidance](#)
- [Short-term International Assignment Guidance for Managers](#)
- [Short-term International Assignment Terms & Conditions](#)
- [Secondment Authorisation & Justification Form](#)
- [Pay Progression Guidance](#)