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Management of Change Guidelines

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Management of Change Guidelines

1. Introduction

- 1.1 These guidelines are intended to support major change situations that may impact significantly on staff, and in particular where a number of jobs may be at risk. These guidelines will be most relevant where collective redundancies (20 or more over a 90 day period) are proposed and are not intended to cover individual or a small number of proposed dismissals. Our University Dismissal Procedure will apply in these circumstances. The principles in relation to consultation as outlined in this document will apply in major change situations, even where jobs may not be at risk. However, this will be proportional to the changes proposed.
- 1.2 The emphasis is on early consultation with staff and their representatives so that every effort is made to avoid job losses. Voluntary options, including redeployment, retraining to re-skill (linked to approved redeployment opportunities), and voluntary severance will be explored over a reasonable timescale, in advance of compulsory options. In addition, these guidelines will help ensure that our University operates in accordance with legal requirements and best practice.
- 1.3 These guidelines are not intended to be administratively burdensome or to slow down the effective implementation of change unnecessarily. They are not for example intended to deal with changes to individual roles and responsibilities or to day to day staff/management issues which are more appropriately dealt with through established staff allocation of duties processes.
- 1.4 For the purpose of this document the term representative means a full-time trade union officer, a trade union representative who is an employee of our University, or a work colleague.
- 1.5 The approach described in these guidelines is referred to as 'Management of Change'.
- 1.6 Any actions taken in accordance with these guidelines must meet all legal requirements. In most cases, other than for misconduct, attendance or for 'some other substantial reason', a dismissal will be for reasons of redundancy. The law dictates a certain order in terms of how we approach such situations and these guidelines have been developed accordingly.
- 1.7 The ending of a fixed term contract is a dismissal and must be dealt with appropriately.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of these guidelines are:
 - To enable major change situations to be dealt with in a planned, systematic way.
 - To identify at an early stage any staffing imbalances.
 - To identify at an early stage any potential for dismissals, including redundancies, so that remedial action can be taken, where possible.
 - To retain appropriate staff skills for the future.
 - To ensure that where possible dismissal is avoided.
 - To keep relevant staff and their representatives fully informed throughout the process.

3. Basic Principles

- 3.1 The focus of our University approach is to achieve the required change(s) where possible through voluntary means with the emphasis on retaining employment. However, it is not appropriate for staff to remain in a 'change' situation indefinitely.
- 3.2 All action taken will be in keeping with our University's approach to Equality and Diversity. However, it is recognised that in situations where continued employment of staff is at risk, then special considerations will need to be applied. For example, appropriate vacancies will be ring-fenced for redeployment purposes, and 'redeployees' will receive certain preferences. (See our Redeployment Guidelines.)
- 3.3 Specific timescales will be identified (see section 4 below). If, within the prescribed timescale, voluntary means prove insufficient (in total or in part), consideration will be given to compulsory options. These include compulsory re-assignment and compulsory redundancy.
- 3.4 A senior member of staff will be designated to co-ordinate the change process (the Change Co-ordinator) and will work closely with Human Resources and in consultation with staff representatives to ensure that the human resource implications of change are handled according to the principles laid down in this document.
- 3.5 Our University, through the Change Co-ordinator and Human Resources, will consult with staff, including through their representatives (see section 5 below).

4. Timescales

- 4.1 When a change situation has been declared, a clear timescale over which the change will be implemented will be identified as soon as possible.
- 4.2 The process, depending on the scale and complexity of the change(s) envisaged, may be divided into a number of phases against which specific timescales may be identified. These phases may include:
 - Considering the proposals, including consultation.
 - Implementation process voluntary.
 - Implementation process compulsory.

These in turn may be further sub divided.

5. Communication and Consultation

- 5.1 The relevant manager will liaise with Human Resources in respect of communication, including the provision of appropriate information, (particularly formal requirements) to employees and their representatives. Appropriate consultation will follow.

- 5.2 There are two key phases in the consultation process, 'consultation on the proposals' and 'consultation on and through the implementation'. Where appropriate, timescales will be identified for both.
- 5.3 Where redundancy is a possibility, the consultation will include consultation about ways of:
- Avoiding dismissals;
 - Reducing the numbers of employees to be dismissed and;
 - Mitigating the consequences of the dismissals.

(For further information see our University Redundancy Policy.)

6. Describing the Proposals

- 6.1 The relevant manager(s) will outline the proposed changes in writing in order to provide sufficient background and information and to commence the Management of Change process. This outline will inform early discussions with staff and their representatives.
- 6.2 The outline will identify some or all of the following:
- Why the proposed change is necessary (the rationale).
 - Details of any proposed structural changes.
 - Processes relating to structural changes or re-alignment.
 - Any potential for shortages or surpluses in the numbers of staff and/or their skills.
 - The training and development which will be required to meet the needs of the future planned developments that can be identified at this stage.
 - General timescales proposed, particularly to resolve staffing issues, for example over staffing or situations where there is a mismatch between the existing staffing base and skills required.
 - The staff likely to be affected by the proposed changes.
 - Other appropriate information.
- 6.3 The Change Co-ordinator will liaise with Human Resources to develop the outline proposals, including in relation to setting appropriate timescales. The proposal may evolve as discussions progress.

7. The Proposals – Consultation

Meeting(s) with Staff Representatives

- 7.1 An initial meeting will be held with the appropriate staff representatives to discuss the proposed changes and their likely impact (as known at that time), on the strict understanding of the need to maintain confidentiality. This meeting(s) will normally take place prior to any formal meeting with the staff who might be affected. Human Resources, as well as appropriate managers, will be involved.
- 7.2 As a priority, agreement will be sought on the pool of staff to be included within the 'Management of Change' process. This, or a smaller or larger group, depending on any changes following consultation, will be the 'pool for redundancy', should a redundancy pool be necessary. The main focus thereafter will be on this group of staff in terms of resolving matters

either on a voluntary basis, or through compulsory options including redundancy if necessary. The intention will be to keep this group as small as possible whilst at the same time acting reasonably and within the law.

- 7.3 If agreement is not reached it is for our University to determine the pool.
- 7.4 The potential for any dismissals, including redundancies occurring, will be discussed. In addition the voluntary options available during the period of change will be fully discussed.
- 7.5 This initial meeting(s) may or may not lead to changes to the proposals.

8. Meeting(s) with Staff

- 8.1 A meeting with the relevant staff (as determined at that time) and their representatives will be arranged. Appropriate managers and Human Resources will present the proposed changes and their possible impact including:
 - Why change is necessary.
 - What changes are proposed.
 - How our University proposes to implement the proposed changes (reference this document).
 - Options available.
 - The potential for redundancy/dismissal.
 - Timescales (see above).
 - Distribution of these guidelines and other related policies and guidance as appropriate.
- 8.2 The specific timescales will be identified, either at the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 8.3 Where appropriate, staff will be invited to attend an individual meeting with the relevant person(s). The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the individual's circumstances as well as giving each member of staff an opportunity to engage in the consultation on an individual basis.
- 8.4 At any stage of the process staff may wish to seek meetings with the relevant person(s) and/or Human Resources and/or their representatives.
- 8.5 Staff may be accompanied by a representative to any meetings. A Human Resources representative may also attend these meetings.
- 8.6 Through the process described above staff (individually and collectively) and their representatives will be invited to comment on the proposals and make submissions as necessary. This can include further one to one or group meetings and/or written submissions within the timescale prescribed.

9. The Proposals – Confirmation and Communication to Staff

9.1 Following completion of the consultation on the proposals the relevant management, in liaison with University senior management as appropriate, and with Human Resources, will reach their conclusions. The outcome will be notified to staff and their representatives in writing after which the implementation phase will begin.

10. The Proposals – Implementation

10.1 Staff affected will receive individual confirmation in writing that they are within a 'management of change' situation and as such will be designated as 'redeployees'. Timescales will be effective from this date.

10.2 It will also be made clear to staff at this stage, if their future employment is at risk. Their status as within a 'pool for redundancy' will be clarified as necessary.

10.3 The process to follow, including timescales will be confirmed.

10.4 Further meetings with staff individually will be offered.

10.5 Staff will be notified if necessary if they are no longer at risk of redundancy.

10.6 Where employment is not at risk the proposed changes will be implemented in accordance with appropriate protocols and timescales.

The remaining sections consider situations where future employment is at risk. All the options available must be considered carefully. Consultation with staff and their representatives is important throughout this phase.

10.7 Following the formal decision to proceed with the implementation, and where a staffing imbalance exists, compulsory redundancy remains a possibility. Our University will operate in accordance with statutory requirements and best practice.

10.8 Appropriate staff representatives will be invited to a meeting(s) to discuss the following, although it is recognised that some discussion on these matters may have taken place earlier:

- The imbalance between the number of staff employed in a particular area and the number of posts available.
- Options available, both voluntary and compulsory (see below).
- The criteria for selection for redundancy.

10.9 In the event that agreement with staff representatives is not reached on the above matters our University will make such decisions as necessary.

10.10 The options available at the appropriate time may include:

- Redeployment, including retraining where required.
- Voluntary severance/redundancy.
- Reduction of contracted hours.
- Assignment to another post.
- Dismissal by reason of redundancy.

It will be clarified which options are available at the time.

10.11 Following this meeting staff will receive, as appropriate, in writing, some or all of the following:

- Details including the number of posts available.
- The number of staff 'at risk'.
- Voluntary options available.
- The selection criteria for redundancy and reference to the redundancy policy.
- Timescales, including those associated with each of the available options.

11. Voluntary Options

11.1 The purpose of this phase is to reduce the number of staff at risk and thereby reduce the need for compulsory redundancy.

11.2 In some cases it may be possible to offer whatever voluntary options are available, before selection criteria are announced. Staff must commit (or not) to the relevant option within a prescribed timescale.

11.3 In some cases it may be appropriate to apply selection criteria prior to making voluntary options available. In these circumstances the voluntary options would be made available to those selected for redundancy and where appropriate, to a wider group where this may assist in avoiding compulsory redundancy. For example, where this would create a genuine redeployment opportunity.

11.4 Where more staff than necessary wish to pursue voluntary options, decisions will be taken by our University in the best interests of our University, including in relation to cost.

11.5 Those selected for redundancy will be invited to individual meetings with management and Human Resources (see Redundancy Policy and Dismissal Procedure). They will be given a final opportunity, up to the date compulsory redundancy notices are issued, to consider any voluntary options that may remain available, (see Redundancy Policy).

11.6 Those selected for redundancy have a right of appeal (see Redundancy Policy and Dismissal Procedure).

11.7 Staff not selected for redundancy will be informed in writing as soon as possible.

12. Redundancy Notices

- 12.1 Compulsory redundancy notices will be issued to staff who remain at risk, in accordance with our University Redundancy Policy. Such notices will be issued in accordance with statutory requirements although a longer notice period may be applied.
- 12.2 During any compulsory redundancy notice period efforts will continue to secure reasonable alternative employment.
- 12.3 Any voluntary severance offer remaining will only be available up to the date compulsory redundancy notices are issued.
- 12.4 Our University Redundancy Policy provides further information, including in relation to appeals.

13. Redeployment

- 13.1 Redeployment is one of the options available and presents an opportunity to reduce or negate the need for formal dismissals.
- 13.2 The mechanism for redeployment is outlined in our Redeployment Guidelines.

14. Other Relevant Information

- 14.1 The following University documents are available on the intranet or from Human Resources:
- Redundancy Policy
 - Redeployment Guidelines
 - Dismissal Procedure
- 14.2 In addition, guidelines will be produced to deal with particular circumstances that occur in order to assist managers and staff and ensure consistency of approach.