

Secondment Policy

1. Introduction

It is in the interests of the University and staff to provide career development opportunities through secondments to alternative duties, and jobs. Heads of Units are encouraged to support secondments where operationally feasible.

2. Conditions of secondment

Secondments (both internal and external) can be for a maximum of two years.

Where a temporary job of two years or less is established, this will be open to University staff on a secondment basis. A secondment is not appropriate where the initial requirement is for longer than two years.

The two year maximum does not apply to:

- Staff undertaking secondments for only part of their time;
- Academic staff (central or regional) appointed to University Office such as Pro- Vice-Chancellor, Dean, or Associate Dean;
- Academic staff seconded to other academic appointments, subject to the agreement of the respective Heads of Unit, and to an overall maximum of three years.

3. Internal Secondments – continuation of Work

Where the requirement for a role which was initially covered by a secondment becomes permanent, the incumbent may be confirmed as permanent in this role providing the following criteria are met:

- The initial secondment was advertised at least internally to the University and the incumbent took part in a competitive selection process for the role;
- The incumbent's performance in the role has been satisfactory and they are not under any disciplinary action;
- There are no other fixed term contract staff undertaking the same or similar roles approaching expiry of their contract (i.e. who have received their notice letter) within that Unit. Where there are other potential candidates on fixed-term contracts within the Unit there may be a need for a further interview or other competitive process. This should be made clear to the secondee from the outset.

Where the requirement for a role which was initially covered by secondment extends beyond two years (or three years for academic staff seconded to other academic appointments) but is still time-limited, the receiving Unit will be expected to make a permanent commitment, subject to the above criteria being met. This means that the individual will become a permanent member of the receiving Unit, who will find alternative duties for them within that Unit at the

same grade and terms and conditions after the initial time-limited work has ended.

Where the original term of the secondment was for less than two years and the work is continuing for a further period (up to the two year maximum), the receiving Unit must discuss the need for continuation of the secondment in advance with the individual and their substantive Unit to gain agreement.

Where the requirement for a role which was initially covered by secondment is continuing, it is in the interests of all parties that action is taken in good time prior to the end of the two years.

4. External secondments

Internal staff on full-time external secondments will be expected to return to their substantive Unit after the end of two years. No further extension of external leave of absence would be considered except that an exemption may be made for academic staff seconded to other academic institutions subject to the agreement of the Head of Unit of the seconding Unit, and to an overall maximum of three years. There are tax implications for relocation/disturbance expenses for secondments lasting more than two years (see Useful references below).

Members of staff from other organisations may fill jobs advertised by The Open University on a secondment basis. If a secondment is being considered, all contact on contractual matters with the other institution must be directed through the People Hub.

5. Supporting secondments

Heads of Units are expected to encourage and support secondments, but where a secondment would cause severe operational difficulties the Head of Unit may refuse support; the final decision will be made by the Planning and Resource Officer of the seconding Unit.

6. Additional expenses

Should internal staff on secondments incur any additional expenses as a result of the secondment, please refer to the 'Relocation Expenses Policy - Internal Staff' for clarification of reimbursable expenses.

7. Equality, diversity and inclusion

Policies are inclusive of all Open University staff, regardless of age, care experience, caring status or dependency, civil status, disability, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnership, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or trades union membership status.

8. Useful references

Secondment Guidance Secondment Expenses Claim Form

Relocation Expenses Policy – Internal Staff Relocation Expenses Policy –
External Appointments

Relocation Expenses Claim Form Internal Staff/Permanent Moves

Relocation Expenses Claim Form – External Appointments from Overseas

Relocation Expenses Claim Form - External Appointments within the UK

Procedure for Converting Fixed Term Appointments to Permanent