Newcastle University Redeployment Procedure

Manager’s code of practice

1. Introduction

This code of practice supplements the redeployment procedure, providing managers with practical guidance on its application and managers should follow this code in all cases. Managers must be familiar with and work in full compliance with the University’s Redundancy Procedure and Redeployment Procedure, and ACAS guidelines.

It is important to remember that the aim of redeployment is to retain staff with valuable skills and experience in addition to meeting the requirements of employment law.

A general point to note is that failure to follow the University’s procedures could render any subsequent action to be considered unfair, and to action being taken against the University. Therefore, it is essential that the procedure is followed.

2. Eligibility for Priority Consideration

It is important to note that the term at risk means the employee may potentially be made redundant. The judgement of whether someone is at risk will be made by the line manager in conjunction with HR. As soon as it has been decided that a person is at risk of redundancy the employee and the relevant trade union must be informed. It is expected that employees will be informed they are at risk of redundancy at least 3 months prior to when it would be necessary to issue notice of dismissal.

The procedure states that employees will be placed on the redeployment register as soon as it is known that their post is at risk. If an employee is involved in a reorganisation, they will normally be placed on the redeployment register after job slotting has taken place. In some instances, where there is a clear intention of reducing staffing levels, it may be appropriate to place staff on the register in advance of job slotting. Where there are individual cases of redundancy, including employees on fixed-term contracts, they will be placed on the register during the early stages of consultation.

It is essential that all concerned in the redeployment process adopt an open-minded and supportive approach to helping at risk employees in securing a suitable alternative position.

3. Priority Consideration

It is important that recruiting managers carefully prepare recruitment documentation that accurately reflects the requirements of the job they are aiming to fill, and are aware that the same documentation on job specifications must be provided for external and internal candidates. In particular, the person specification should reflect the most important duties of the job expressed as the minimum (essential) qualities for the job to be performed to an adequate standard. Insufficient focus on generic
skills by making the job specifications too specific could be costly in terms of delays to the recruitment process. Guidance on writing job descriptions and preparing a person specification can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruitment/process/documentation.php

4. **Suitable vacancies**

Employees will only be eligible for priority consideration if they apply, through the redeployment website, for a vacancy that is the same grade or one grade lower than their current post. Similarly, salary protection will only apply where the post to which the employee is redeployed is the same grade or one grade lower than their current post. Salary protection, where applicable, will be for 1 year.

5. **Interview and assessment process**

Managers must follow the steps set out in the procedure and must assess candidates solely on the basis of whether the candidate meets the essential criteria in the person specification, or could meet the criteria with reasonable training. In making the assessment, the candidate’s cv and performance at interview will be taken into account along with any references.

It is important that careful consideration is given to what may be considered reasonable training in the context of the post in question. There is no prescribed time period or cost envelope for any training. The judgement of what is reasonable will be made by the manager and HR, bearing in mind the University’s stated commitment to avoid compulsory redundancy wherever possible and that redeployment is an important way of meeting that commitment.

It is essential that a written record of the assessment of each candidate is retained by the Chair of the interview panel. Where a panel determines that a redeployee is not appointable, the Chair will inform the redeployee in writing of the reasons and of the right to appeal. This must be done before the post is advertised more widely and it should be noted that no-one can be appointed to the post within 5 working days of the decision to reject the redeployee. In the event of an appeal being lodged by the redeployee, no-one can be appointed to the post until the appeal has been decided.

When providing the reasons for non-appointment and any additional feedback, it is important that this is done in a constructive, clear and sensitive way as possible. It is recommended that HR is consulted before this is communicated to the redeployee.

6. **Support during the redeployment process**

It is recognised that the uncertainty of the redeployment process may be stressful for employees and it is important that effective support is provided by all involved in the process.

Managers must provide reasonable time and facilities for redeployees to consult the redeployment website, and to prepare for and attend interviews.

HR will be available to explain how the procedure operates and provide advice on the interview process. The Staff Development Unit (SDU) can provide assistance in compiling cv’s, completing application forms and preparing for interviews. It is essential that individual requests for support from the SDU are made as early as possible. Where a proposed reorganisation may give rise to a number of staff being at risk, SDU should be advised of this at the commencement of the consultation process so they can accommodate this in their forward plans.
It is expected that the effective operation of the redeployment procedure will minimise any impact on the wellbeing of employees, however, Managers should be aware that the Occupational Health Service is available to provide support to employees who report excessive levels of stress.

In order to facilitate the transition into a new post, where the salary in the new post is lower than that in the previous post, the employee’s salary will be maintained at its previous level for the first year in the new post, with the additional money being provided by the Faculty or Service in which the employee was previously employed.

7. Appeals

Under the procedure, there is an appeal mechanism for an employee who feels that the procedure has been unfairly or improperly applied to them.

Should the employee ultimately be made redundant they will have the opportunity to appeal against the redundancy in accordance with the Redundancy Procedure.

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