Newcastle University Reorganisation Procedure

Manager’s code of practice

1. Introduction

This code of practice supplements the reorganisation 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.

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. When to consult

It is indicated in the procedure that employees and the relevant trade unions should be consulted on any proposed reorganisation at the earliest opportunity. This would normally be immediately after any proposal is approved by senior management. There may be occasions when employees can be given an early indication of factors which may lead to a need to review structures and where possible, employees should be consulted as part of the review. Consultations must be conducted in a meaningful manner, in which the views of employees and trade unions are considered seriously. In the case of large and complex reorganisations, any formal negotiations should take place with the trade unions at the earliest stage. In all cases, before putting forward any plans for reorganisation it is important that the Manager is fully informed about the current roles and duties of the staff who might be involved in the reorganisation, and that their job descriptions are up-to-date and accurately reflect the duties undertaken by employees.

3. Voluntary redundancy

There may be occasions, for example, when it is clear from a proposed reorganisation that there will be a reduction in staffing levels, when it may be appropriate to consider making available voluntary redundancy. This is one of the measures outlined in the redundancy procedure for mitigating the need for compulsory redundancy along with seeking alternative employment through redeployment. It is recommended that if voluntary redundancy is to be made available, it should be at the earliest opportunity (i.e. soon after the initial formal consultation). This will facilitate the achievement of the proposed reorganisation by helping to minimise uncertainty for staff who will remain. Not all reorganisations will require the use of voluntary redundancy and where it is used, the terms and acceptance of applications will be at the discretion of management.

4. A phased approach to populating structures

Where a proposed reorganisation affects all levels of a unit, it may be appropriate to populate senior levels before finalising details of the remaining structure. An example of senior levels could be direct reports to a head of unit. This will enable
those reports to be established in post and they can then contribute to the more detailed aspects of the remaining structure, particularly those parts which will fall under their area of responsibility. This can include: contributing to consideration of alternative proposals arising from consultation; confirmation of existing job descriptions or updating those that are out of date; writing new job descriptions.

5. **Filling posts**

There are a number of mechanisms for filling posts. The first is job slotting i.e. where there is a substantial match between the duties of an existing post and those of a new job description. This is a crucial part of populating structures and it is important that it is carried out in a consistent, fair and transparent manner. Guidance on job slotting has been developed and is attached as appendix A.

Any employee who is not job slotted will naturally be disappointed and it is important that when feedback on the outcome is given, due account is given to the sensitivity of this process and the possible implications for employees.

If an employee is not job slotted, then they should be considered for the new post under the redeployment procedure (except where the new post is at a higher grade) which means that they will have priority consideration and should be redeployed into the post provided that they satisfy the essential requirements of the person specification or can meet such requirements with reasonable training.

It is important to note that any posts which are not filled through job slotting will be ring fenced to redeployees in the unit concerned. The general principle that redeployees have priority must apply fully and job descriptions should be formulated in generic terms to facilitate this. No outside advertising should commence until all existing redeployees have been assessed on the basis of whether they meet the essential requirements of the new positions, or could do so with reasonable training.

6. **Populating structures through recruitment**

There may be occasions when, after job slotting, recruitment to unfilled posts is necessary. As with any recruitment, it is important that recruiting managers carefully prepare documentation that accurately reflects the requirements of the job they are aiming to fill. 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. Guidance on writing job descriptions and preparing a person specification can be found at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruitment/process/documentation.php](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruitment/process/documentation.php)

7. **Appeals**

Managers are reminded that under the procedure, there is an appeal mechanism for an employee who feels that they have been unfairly excluded from job slotting or ring fencing.

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

Garry Coupland
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