

Secondment Policy

The University is committed to the development of its employees. Secondments are a valuable tool for individual career development and for developing the skills of an organisation.

A 'secondment' is the temporary move or 'loan' of an employee either to another Institution in the University (internal secondment) or externally to a different organisation (external secondment). In each case the employee will have the opportunity to return to their substantive position on completion of the secondment unless otherwise discussed. The term secondment can also be used if an individual moves within their own Institution, covering an alternative position and reverting to their original position on completion.

Secondments are an effective way of providing individuals with the opportunity to apply their skills and experience in a new environment and challenge themselves professionally, thereby aiding their development, bridging identified skills gaps and broadening their experience.

The department that 'hosts' the secondee benefits from the individual's existing and new skills whilst their 'home' department benefits from their increased motivation and enhanced skillset on their return. There is also an organisational benefit of promoting increased mobility within the University and retaining staff with valuable skills, knowledge and experience.

The University operates three types of secondments:

- **Internal** (within/between different institutions in the University)
- **External** (from Cambridge to an external organisation)
- **Incoming** (from an external organisation to Cambridge)

For all types of secondment, it is essential that all parties are clear about their obligations, expectations, accountabilities and objectives. To support this understanding, a template secondment agreement has been developed for use in these circumstances.

Definitions:

Host Institution: Faculty or Institution where secondment is to be held

Home Institution: Faculty or Institution where the substantive position is held

For employees who are taking on additional responsibilities or completing temporary acting up assignments for which additional responsibility payments may be made there are separate arrangements in place. Please refer to the guidance for [Additional Responsibility Payments](#).

Eligibility

Secondments are open to all staff groups, regardless of University service. If the substantive role is a fixed term contract or has limited funding, this should be considered when assessing the suitability and duration of the secondment.

It is normally expected that staff will have been confirmed in their post after completing their probationary period before applying for a secondment.

Statement of Policy

The University will endeavour to promote secondment opportunities as set out in the sections below, taking into consideration the operational needs of their Institution. Please see also the [Procedure section](#).

Types of work that might be considered for secondment include:

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

Duration

The duration of a secondment will vary depending on the circumstances and can be on a short-term or long-term basis. It is expected the duration will normally be up to 12 months and for a maximum of 2 years. It can also be filled on a part-time or a full-time basis.

A secondment can be renewed; however, if it has already been extended once then the terms of the secondment should be reviewed by the Institution in conjunction with the relevant HR Business Partnering Team due to potential legal implications. This review would include an assessment of the future need for the role and a review of the terms and conditions of the secondment.

Change to hours and working pattern

Any changes to working hours or working pattern required during the secondment will be agreed with the employee prior to commencement.

For Departmental Administrators arranging a secondment for established officers only: when completing the details in Web Recruitment, if it is stated that the Officer will be working fewer hours on the secondment than they currently work in their established office, it will be assumed, unless stated otherwise in the comments, that the officer is being given partial leave from their office and that their total contractual hours will be unchanged, i.e. because they are working the same total hours but part time in their established office and part time as a secondee.

Officers will continue to hold their substantive established office while on secondment.

Advertising

A secondment may be advertised as part of an internal recruitment process, where the opportunity is limited to university employees as it is a career development opportunity. Advice should be sought from the relevant HR Business Partnering team if, exceptionally, it is proposed to advertise the opportunity externally. The University's [Recruitment procedure](#) should be followed.

Alternatively, secondments may be set up to meet the particular development needs of an individual. The University has a [secondment development initiative](#) which encourages the use of secondment as a valuable development route.

Insurance Requirements

All secondments from and to countries outside the UK should be referred through the relevant [HR Business Partnering Team](#) /Adviser to the Legal Services Department for consideration of insurance requirements.

In circumstances where academic staff would be seconded to perform duties outside their academic capacity, (i.e. where they are providing professional services), the proposed arrangements should also be referred to the Legal Services Department for consideration of insurance requirements.

Evidence of insurance should be obtained from the Host Institution or company and held on file.

Immigration Issues

Secondments to countries outside the UK need to be referred through the relevant [HR Business Partnering Team](#) to the Legal Services Department for consideration of insurance requirements. The Global Mobility Coordinator and/or Legal Services Department will also need to give advice on the local right to work provisions for the country or countries involved.

There are special considerations for individuals sponsored under the points-based system. Therefore, the HR Business Partnering Team will consult the Compliance Team at an early stage to seek advice if the sponsored individual's duties, remuneration or hours would change for the duration of the secondment, to ensure the implications of these changes are clear both for the sponsored individual and in terms of legal reporting requirements and appropriate action taken.

Pre-employment Check Requirements

For incoming or internal secondments, any pre-employment checks (including Disclosure and Barring Service checks, Security checks and health screening) which are required for the post must be identified at an early stage and appropriate action taken, in accordance with the [Recruitment Guidance](#).

Payment and expenses

It is expected that internal secondments on the same grade will be at the same rate of pay/spine point. Secondment to a higher graded post may result in a change in salary (in line with current promotions guidance of moving to step one of the higher grade or by two increments, whichever is the greater), but the individual will revert to their original salary at the end of the secondment (subject to any service increments which may have been acquired in the period).

Whether the University employee is on secondment internally or seconded externally, the University will continue to pay the employee's salary and benefits as normal during the secondment period. However, in both cases, costs will be met by the Host Institution. Advice should be sought from Payroll/Finance and arrangements will be put in place in advance of the secondment.

Expenses incurred during the secondment should be agreed with the Head of the Host Institution in advance and the claims procedure followed in accordance with that of the Host Institution.

Incremental Progression

During the secondment, incremental progression will take place as normal, if the employee is eligible. On completion of the secondment, the employee will return to their substantive position, grade and scale point subject to any incremental progression that took place during the secondment.

Contribution Reward

If an employee is on secondment at the time of the scheme launch, they may apply for an award for their performance in their substantive role provided that:

- They were in their substantive role for at least three months (for a single contribution payment) or 12 months (for a contribution increment award) before the start of their secondment.*
- If applying for contribution increments, they have not yet reached the maximum contribution point for their grade in their substantive role.*

The application should be considered by the line manager, Head of Institution and Awarding Authority for their substantive role. Any awards received would apply to the substantive role only.

If an employee has been seconded to a substantially different role and has been working in that role for at least three months (for a single contribution payment) or 12 months (for a contribution increment award) as of 1 January of the year the award is effective, they are eligible to apply for an award in their secondment role. Any application should be considered by the line manager, Head of Institution and Awarding Authority of their secondment role.

If the secondment role is similar to the substantive role, it would normally be expected that any awards would be applied in both roles. The Awarding Authority should confirm if this is the case. If the secondment role is different to the substantive role, any agreed awards would only be applied to the secondment role (i.e. the role on which the application is based).

Pensions

In advance of the secondment, individuals are advised to contact the Pensions Section to discuss any impact on their pension arrangements.

Secondment to a different staff category

If the secondment position is in a different staff category from the substantive position, different terms and conditions, including annual leave entitlement, hours of work and pension scheme membership may apply. In these circumstances the Host Institution should refer the employee being offered the secondment to the relevant [HR Business Partnering Team](#) / to discuss the terms and conditions of the role, which would apply during the secondment period. If an individual wishes to remain in their current pension scheme on taking up a secondment in a different staff category where a different pension scheme applies, they should contact the Pensions Section directly to discuss the options available to them.

Management and Communication

Internal

On a day to day basis, the secondee will report to and be managed by the Head of the Host Institution or an appointed deputy. Any management issues concerning the secondment will be dealt with in consultation with the Home Institution. The secondee will be expected to comply with the internal policies and procedures of the Host Institution in addition to those of the University.

Where internal secondments are on a full time basis, the employee would be expected to fully relinquish the responsibilities of their substantive position in order to focus on their new role. Before the start of the secondment, the individual should agree with their line manager how to keep in touch during the secondment period.

External

On a day to day basis, the secondee will report to and be managed by the Head of the Host employer or an appointed deputy. Any management issues concerning the secondee will be dealt with in consultation with the University. The secondee will be expected to comply with the policies and procedures of the Host organisation including health and safety, dignity at work and other policies, in addition to those of the University.

The secondee will not be expected to keep abreast of developments at the University unless this has otherwise been agreed and communication arrangements have been put in place.

Appraisal

For internal secondments, the University's [Staff Review and Development Scheme](#) (for appraisals) will apply.

For external secondments SRD reviews will be carried out in conjunction with the Host employer.

Family-related leave

For secondments of University employees, the University [Maternity Policy](#) and procedure will apply.

Depending on the need, cover for the duration of the maternity leave period may be required. Please contact the [HR Business Partnering Team](#) to discuss options for arranging this cover.

For all other types of family-related leave the provisions of the relevant policy will apply.

Sickness absence

For secondments of University employees the University [Sickness Absence Policy](#) and procedure will apply.

For details of sickness reporting arrangements please refer to the terms of the secondment agreement. Depending on the need, cover for the duration of the sickness absence period may be required. Please contact the [HR Business Partnering Team](#) to discuss options for arranging this cover.

Annual Leave

Internal Secondments

Annual leave requests and approval should be obtained from the Head of the Host Institution or nominated deputy. At the end of the secondment period, the Home Institution should be notified of the annual leave taken.

External secondments

For secondments of University employees, the University's annual leave policy and procedure will apply. The secondee will continue to be eligible for paid holiday leave in accordance with their employment contract and will remain subject to the University's approval and notification procedures. The secondee will seek approval from the Host Institution for leave and provide details of leave taken on return to the Home Institution.

Returning to substantive post

In the last three months of the secondment, the line manager in the Home Institution should contact the secondee to arrange a full briefing and make arrangements for the secondee's return. At the meeting, it will be important to manage expectations and be clear with the secondee what will be expected on returning to their original role. This could include

clarifying details of the role and responsibilities, setting objectives and discussing how any new skills can be used.

Arrangements should be made to ensure delivery and return of all property, documents and data owned by the Host Institution.

In the event that a substantive role is to be made redundant, the employee will be involved in the consultation process as normal and available redeployment opportunities should be explored. Please refer to the [Redundancy Pay: notes of guidance](#). Under these circumstances clarity should be sought regarding funding and whether the secondment can continue until its completion. Guidance should be sought from the School HR Business Partnering Team and the Host Institution should be notified of the situation.

Procedure

General Guidance

The University's [Recruitment Policy](#) should be followed, for example when advertising the secondment and selecting the preferred candidate:

The employee should discuss their intention to apply for a secondment with their line manager and notify them of an application for such a role at the earliest possible opportunity. For their part, managers should adopt a positive approach to secondment opportunities. If there are business/operational requirements which may make it difficult to release an employee to take up a secondment they should review the situation flexibly and consult with their [HR Business Partnering Team](#) as appropriate, before reaching a decision.

Internal Secondment (secondment within an institution or to another institution within the University)

This situation arises when an employee is seconded to a different role or project either within an institution or in another Institution in the University for a fixed period of time. The process allows an employee to gain wider experience and acquire new skills whilst retaining continuous employment. On completion of the secondment, the individual would return to their substantive post.

The secondment is funded by the Host Institution or project. For established officers only, the secondment leave would be granted under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b). (Academic leave arrangements are detailed on the [website](#)).

Application process

1. Both the Home and Host Institutions should liaise with their HR Business Partnering Team on the details of the secondment before the Head of Department of the home institution confirms that it should proceed. Where there are immigration or Disclosure and Barring Service check implications, these must be referred to the HR Compliance Team.
2. For established officers only, approval must then be granted by the faculty board (or equivalent) of the home institution before the secondment takes place.
3. The Host Institution sends an offer letter to the successful candidate. This can be actioned via the Web Recruitment System.

The Host Institution submits the relevant details to the HR New Appointments Team via Web Recruitment. The Host Institution should attach confirmation from the Home Institution that the details of the secondment have been agreed.

If Web Recruitment has not been used to accept applications, details for the secondees should be entered manually into the Web Recruitment system before sending to the HR New Appointment team via the system.

4. The HR New Appointment Team will input the details into CHRIS and raise a secondment agreement. For officers, a letter granting leave under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b). will also be raised and sent with the secondment agreement. (Academic leave arrangements are detailed on the [website](#)).
5. Three months in advance of the end of the secondment, a member of the HR School Team liaises with the Home Institution regarding arrangements for the individual's return to the Home Institution. On completion of the secondment, the Host Institution makes the individual a leaver on CHRIS from the secondment position with the leaving reason as 'end of secondment'. The HR Amendment team will then update details of the substantive position on CHRIS.
6. If the date of the secondment is to be extended, having discussed this with the secondee and consulted with the School HR Business Partnering team, The Host Institution should complete a CHRIS/53 or if there is also a change of hours a CHRIS/50. The Host Institution should attach confirmation from the Home Institution that the extension/change of hours has been agreed and sent this and the relevant form to the HR Amendment Team for provision of an extension letter and to update CHRIS. If applicable, a further grant of leave letter under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b) will be raised and set with the extension letter. (Academic leave arrangements are detailed on the [website](#)).

External Secondment (Secondment from the University)

This is used if the services or assistance of an employee is requested by any of the following: governments, national agencies, international agencies of which the United Kingdom is a member, academic institutions, charitable organisations, industrial or commercial concerns (the list is not exhaustive) and agreed by the University as being of benefit to the employee, taking into account operational requirements.

For officers, secondment leave is granted under granted under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b). (Academic leave arrangements are detailed on the [website](#)).

External Secondment Checklist

For external secondments, institutions may use the following checklist in advance of the secondment being finalised:

- Has the employee agreed to any changes to their contract in order to implement the terms of the secondment agreement?
- What is the duration, start and end date of the secondment?
- Is the secondment full-time or part-time? If part-time, will some University duties continue on a part-time basis?
- Although the University will generally be responsible for paying basic salary, what are the arrangements for overtime, bonuses, expenses, training etc?
- Have the Insurance requirements been checked?
- Have the immigration requirements been checked?
- Will the salary and on-costs be cross charged or invoiced? (Advice should be sought from Payroll/Finance in advance of the secondment being implemented).
- What are the line management arrangements including authorisation of holidays and sick leave?
- Who will fill the secondee's substantive role for the duration of the secondment?
- How will the secondee retain contact with the Home Institution?
- How will the end of the secondment be managed (for example, the return to the original role)?
- Has a meeting taken place on return to review the secondment and its benefits to the individual and University?

Application process

1. The institution liaises with their HR Business Partnering team on the details of the secondment, before the Head of Department confirms that it can proceed.
2. For established officers only, approval to take secondment leave must be granted by the faculty board before the secondment takes place.
3. The Home Institution completes a CHRIS/71 (External Secondment Form) and sends it to the HR School Team for processing.
4. On receipt, the HR School Team arranges for CHRIS to be updated and produces a secondment agreement (and for established officers, sends a letter granting leave under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b).for all involved parties (home institution, host employer and seconded) to sign and return.
5. Three months in advance of the completion of the secondment, the HR School Team will liaise with the Home Institution regarding return dates from Host employer to the seconded's original post.
6. On their return, the HR School Team arranges for CHRIS to be updated.
7. If the date of the secondment is to be extended having consulted with the School HR Business Partnering team, after discussion with the seconded the Home Institution should complete a CHRIS/71 and forward it to the Host Institution to sign and send to the HR School Team arrange for an extension letter and for CHRIS to be updated. If applicable, the Lead HR Business Partner will issue a further grant of leave letter under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b). (Academic leave arrangements are detailed on the [website](#)).

NB

If the Host Institution asks the individual to sign their own secondment agreement, advice should be sought from HR Business Partnering team before signing.

Incoming Secondment

This is used where an employee of an external organisation is seconded to the University of Cambridge for a fixed period of time. Institutions should advise their School HR Business Partnering team about any proposed incoming secondments at an early stage.

Incoming Secondment Checklist

Institutions should liaise with their School HR Business Partnering team about the secondment arrangements and may wish to refer to the following checklist in advance of the secondment being finalised

- Are any of the terms of the employee's employment contract inconsistent with the secondment agreement and therefore require change?
- Have the immigration requirements been checked?
- Have any pre-employment check requirements been checked?
- Has there been discussion about the secondment agreement from the seconding organisation with the HR Business partnering team?
- Is the secondment agreement to be signed and returned?
- Have line management, communication and work placement arrangements been confirmed?
- Have salary/invoice/payment arrangements been made?
- Are the benefits and expenses arrangements agreed?
- Is the induction process outlined?
- Has the health and safety information been provided?

- Has a contact list for the seconding organisation been finalised?
- Is there appropriate protection, specifically in respect of confidentiality and restrictive covenants both during and post secondment?
- Has there been consideration of any conflict of interest?
- Have the necessary consents been obtained in respect of processing personal data?
- Has it been considered if the secondment could amount to a transfer of undertaking?
- Have notice requirements been considered as well and what would happen if the secondee's employment terminates?
- Has ownership of intellectual property been taken into consideration?
- Is there a need to ensure that the secondee does not become integrated into the Host Institution to the extent they may be deemed to be an employee, e.g. included in staff lists?

The external seconding organisation may provide a secondment agreement for the University to sign. In this event advice should be sought from the HR School Team before agreeing to its terms. However, where one is not provided, the University's template secondment agreement should be used, provided by the HR School Team on request, and signed by all the parties concerned (home employer, host institution and secondee).

Roles and responsibilities

Employees

- The employee needs to advise their manager when applying and once accepted for a secondment opportunity. Their manager also provides supporting information where needed. Employees can contact their HR Business Partner in the first instance to discuss the secondment if required.
- The employee should give at least 4 weeks' notice before the requested start of the secondment wherever possible.
- The employee should contact the pensions office to clarify if there would be any changes to their pension status during the secondment period.

Managers

- The relevant manager within the Host Institution (for internal secondment) completes the relevant details in Web Recruitment and attaches the confirmation from the Home Institution, having first agreed terms of the secondment agreement with the HR Business Manager/Adviser if required (for incoming and external secondments).
- The manager ensures that requests are dealt with in accordance with this policy and the relevant procedure.
- If the secondment is extended the relevant manager within the Host Institution (for internal secondment) completes a CHRIS/53 or CHRIS/50 form and attaches the confirmation from the Home Institution. Once completed this will be sent to the HR Amendment Team for processing.
- The Home Institution is responsible for keeping in contact with the employee during the secondment. This may be to update the employee on changes in the Department or work area. Contact should be made at least every 6 months.

HR

- Provide guidance to the Institution on the terms of the secondment.

- Complete the secondment agreement, as appropriate.
- Complete a letter granting leave under Special Ordinance C(i) 2(b).
- Input details of the secondment on CHRIS.
- Complete an amendment letter and update CHRIS when there is an extension and/or change of hours to the secondment.

Documentation

- [CHRIS 71 - External Secondment Form](#)

Secondment Agreement templates are available from the relevant School HR Business Partnering team.