SECONDMENT POLICY

Policy Statement
Birkbeck College is committed to developing skills, knowledge and experience of its staff and to identify good practice and enhance organisational flexibility. Secondments are part of the College’s approach to managing existing talent and succession planning, they offer career development opportunities internally and externally and can contribute to the commitment to working in partnership with other organisations to promote, develop and strengthen networks. The potential use of a secondment can be identified by either the individual or the line manager as part of the Progress and Development Review process or, if appropriate, when they are advertised.

A secondment can take place when, with the agreement of the line manager, a staff member moves to work in another school or department of the College or to an external organisation for a defined period of time. It may be either on a full or part time basis. It is presumed that the staff member will return to their substantive post at the end of the secondment.

A secondment can also take place when a staff member moves to work in the College from an external organisation. The work may be either full or part time.

Any request for a secondment will be treated seriously and given due consideration.

All secondment opportunities will normally be advertised, staff on the redeployment register should be considered prior to advertising and the College’s Recruitment & Selection Policy adhered to.

SCOPE

Internal Secondments
Internal secondments may occur when a member of staff has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to undertake a particular role that the College requires doing. This will be for a time limited duration, e.g. cover for maternity leave, a new development or long term sick leave. Secondments will normally be restricted to a maximum of one year after which the staff member will be expected to return to their substantive post.

Secondments may be used when an existing member of staff applies for a role in the College which is on a fixed term contract basis or the staff member would like to be considered for an internally recruited role on a secondment basis. The staff member seconded will be provided with a development opportunity whilst retaining the right to return to their substantive post at the end of the secondment.

The manager of the secondee must agree in advance that the substantive role (or an equivalent role) can be retained for the staff member. In some cases (e.g. organisational change), this may not be possible and the College will seek to re-deploy where practicable.

Internally seconded staff will be consulted if there are any proposed organisational changes to take place which are likely to affect their substantive post.

External Outward and External Inward Secondments
An external secondment will involve the temporary transfer of an employee either to or from a partner organisation (e.g. another academic establishment). For procedural guidance for external secondments see Part 2.

Part 1 STAFF AND MANAGERS’ PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE NOTES
All requests for a secondment should initially be discussed with the staff member’s line manager ideally at their Progress and Development Review (PDR) or alternatively when the role is advertised and before any application is made. Individuals should identify to their manager the benefits for their development from the secondment opportunity and how any new knowledge or experience gained will benefit their substantive department. The manager can then decide whether the staff member’s existing role can/cannot be covered during the secondment and plans for how their duties will be covered for the duration of the secondment.

1.0 Responsibilities

1.1 Responsibilities for All Parties

The objectives of the secondment, both from the perspective of the individual’s career development and the managers involved, should be agreed and understood by all parties in advance of the commencement of the secondment. It is essential that there are written terms of the secondment agreement in place, they are understood by the individual and the managers involved - this must include in particular supervision, pay and conditions issues, arrangements for performance and conduct management and the implications in regard to return from the secondment. A template agreement is available at Appendix A alternatively HR may draft a letter covering the terms of the agreement and addressing the relevant issues. Secondments should be established on an initial trial period. Regular review meetings by the host line manager should be established with the secondee to monitor progress and highlight any issues which need to be addressed arising from the secondment.

1.2 The Substantive Post Line Manager’s Responsibilities

- All secondment requests will be given careful consideration and accommodated where possible.
- Ensure the granting of a secondment will not adversely affect the smooth running of the business.
- In the case of shared week internal secondments, agree with the other line manager involved the terms of the secondment (Appendix A) which will include the working pattern, who will be responsible for authorising annual leave, sickness and performance monitoring.
- Ensure a tailored induction for the secondee and ensure that the secondment is carefully reviewed and monitored throughout.
- Ensure the budget is available to cover any backfilling of the role on a temporary basis.
- Ensure any backfilling of the post encompasses the timeframes of the secondment and includes a provision for possible early termination.
- Encourage feedback and evaluation from secondees on or prior to their return to their substantive post.

1.3 Staff Member’s Responsibilities

- Ensure prior discussion and agreement from the line manager is obtained before an application is made.
- Ensure they are only carrying a reasonable amount of annual leave i.e. the accrual of days for the year to date, into and out of the secondment position.
- Return to the substantive post at the specified time following the secondment.
- Secondment represents an opportunity for individual development and therefore personal objectives should be agreed by the substantive post line manager. These might include:

  - identification of good practice that could be applied on return;
> broaden of experience generally or in relation to a specified skill or competence;
> Creation of a more outward or flexible approach to work related issues;
> learning on general, procedural or management issues from the other department.

1.4 Human Resources Responsibilities

- Ensure the appropriate paperwork is issued to those on secondment and the relevant managers.
- Ensure any salary amendments are in place for the secondee.

2.0 Salary and Benefits

The College's contractual entitlements will continue during the secondment and HR will issue a secondment letter outlining the terms of the agreement to the individual and confirming that they will return to their substantive post or suitable alternative post on a specific date.

If the secondee covers a post at the same grade, no change will be made to their existing pay. If the secondee is covering a higher grade post, then the salary will commence at the bottom of the pay scale for the grade of the role. Salary increments will then apply. If the secondee takes a role at a lower grade eg if it was for a planned career change, they will be eligible for 12 months pay protection and then would be expected to move to the pay level of the secondment role. On completion of the secondment, the secondee will return to their normal role at their previous grade level and previous terms and conditions. Any increments and pay awards due will be made to the substantive post as normal so that the employee returns to the same salary that they would have received had the secondment not occurred, including increments.

Membership of the pension scheme will remain unaffected throughout the period of the secondment. If the secondment role is eligible for a different pension scheme advice should be sought from the College pensions' adviser.

The staff member's continuous service date will remain unchanged and they will continue to accrue service with the College during the period of the secondment.

Salary and associated costs will normally be re-charged to the department budget where the secondment is being hosted.

3.0 Early Termination

The secondment may not be terminated unilaterally by either the staff member, line manager or the College. If early termination is sought by either party, agreement must be reached and four weeks’ written notice given. A request for early termination will not be unreasonably withheld.

A request for early termination from the staff member will be considered alongside factors which shall include but not limited to:

(i) the employment or contracting of other staff to cover the staff member’s duties during the secondment;
(ii) any adverse impact to the business or team;
(iii) the financial implications to the College of having to terminate a third party contract entered into as a partial or direct result of the secondment.
A request for early termination from the line manager responsible for the secondment post will be considered alongside factors which shall include but not limited to:

(i) the under performance of the individual in the secondment role;
(ii) any adverse impact to the business or team;
(iii) the financial implications to the College of having to terminate a third party contract entered into as a partial or direct result of the secondment.

In the event early termination is agreed by all parties, transfer back to the staff member’s substantive role will be at the earliest opportunity and dates of transfer confirmed in writing from HR.

4.0 Returning After Secondment End Date

Staff will normally return to their substantive role and on the same terms and conditions prior to the secondment. The return date will be the next working day following the end date of the secondment period.

Any short term extension to the secondment will be agreed on a fixed term basis. All secondments should be for a maximum of one year although may be extended in exceptional circumstances. Any agreed extension should be agreed by all parties involved within six weeks of the agreement end date and authorised by the Director of HR. Any extension should not exceed six months and will be confirmed in writing by HR.

In the event a staff member is to continue in the seconded role in an open ended arrangement after 1 year, the seconded role will become their new substantive post. They will forfeit their right to return to their original role. HR will write and confirm this is their new substantive role.

The secondment should be evaluated by the line manager in relation to the original agreed objectives and how best to utilise any achievements to the benefit of either the individual or the College.

If it is not possible for the staff member to return to their substantive role because:

- their position has become redundant;
- their duties have changed as a result of business re-organisation;
- there is a substantive business or occupational health reason.

the staff member will be consulted in accordance with the Redundancy Policy.

Where the staff member under notice of redundancy accepts an internal secondment, the offer will be made on the basis that the staff member will become redundant at the end of the secondment if they are covering a fixed term contract. The Redundancy Policy and Procedure will apply and employees will be entitled to rights of individual consultation, be eligible for pay protection and continuous service rights will accrue during the secondment period. The originating substantive post department will be responsible for covering the redundancy costs.

If a staff member deems their request to participate in a secondment arrangement is unreasonably withheld by their line manager, they may appeal the refusal to be offered the opportunity to apply for secondment through the grievance procedure.
Part 2  

EXTERNAL SECONDEMNTS

1.0  External Outward Secondments

An external outward secondment will occur when a College staff member remains under contract with the College but is based in another organisation for a defined period of time. Secondments will normally be restricted to a one year maximum after which the staff member will be expected to return to their substantive post or an extension negotiated.

Any secondment granted is at the discretion of the College and will normally be considered at School Manager/Executive Dean/Director level. The staff member’s attendance, performance and conduct record will be taken into account together with the development opportunity provided to the individual. The College will invoice the organisation for the salary, on-costs and any other expenses incurred for the duration of the secondment.

Secondees will normally maintain the same terms and conditions relating to their employment at the College unless there is an agreement to the contrary.

2.0  External Inward Secondments

Inward secondments occur when the College wishes to deploy a member of staff from another organisation who has specific skills and abilities needed to fulfil a particular role or project. This role or project will be of a limited duration and the College will reimburse the organisation for the salary costs and expenses incurred by the secondee for the duration of the secondment. If the post becomes open ended rather than fixed term it must be advertised as a new substantive role for the College. The secondee may apply for the position but must be considered against other candidates as part of a normal recruitment exercise.

3.0  Responsibilities

These responsibilities are in addition to the responsibilities outlined for Internal Secondments set out in the procedural guidance Part 1.

3.1  Responsibilities for All Parties

It is essential that a formal secondment agreement is in place, it is understood by the individual and the partner organisations to be involved - this must include in particular supervision, pay and conditions issues, arrangements for performance and conduct management and the implications in regard to return from the secondment. A template agreement can be found at Appendix B covering the terms of the secondment and this must be signed by all parties prior to the secondment commencing.

3.2  Line Manager’s Responsibilities

- Ensure a tailored induction for both inward and outward secondees that will include health and safety obligations and ensure that secondments are carefully reviewed and monitored throughout.
- Ensure financial costs are covered or there is a business case that supports the secondment.
- Any secondee into the College complies with the Dignity at Work and Study Policy.
- Ensure a secondment agreement is in place for secondment arrangements with external organisations and a signed copy of this is logged with HR.
- Maintain reasonable contact with the staff member whilst on an external secondment.
3.3 Human Resources Responsibilities

- Ensure a secondment agreement or letter of agreement is in place.
- Ensure there is a clear plan for the return of the secondee to their substantive role.

3.4 Employee’s Responsibilities

- Maintain reasonable contact with the College whilst on external secondment, this will include recording of annual leave and sickness.

3.5 External Organisation Responsibilities

- Development of an appropriate training plan to support the objectives and maximise benefit.
- Maximise the opportunity of the secondment.
- Prevent any inferred or direct employment relationship with the secondee.
- Notifying any concerns about an individual’s conduct during the secondment.

4.0 Salary and Benefits

For College staff the salary payments will continue to be paid by the College and any increments and pay awards due will be made as normal. The host organisation will be invoiced for the salary and relevant on costs. The College will pay an external organisation for any salary or associated costs for an externally placed employee.

Annual leave entitlements will be as per the secondee’s contractual terms.

5.0 Keeping In Touch With External Secondees

A staff member on a secondment should supply their line manager with contact details for the period of the secondment and notify them if these details change.

The staff member and line manager should maintain reasonable contact during the secondment period to ensure objectives are being met and make the return to work easier for both parties. The staff member and line manager should discuss what kind of contact there will be in advance of the secondment commencing.

The staff member must continue to report sickness and submit annual leave requests according to the College’s policies. They must also, as a courtesy to the secondment host, report their planned and unplanned absences.

The line manager is responsible for keeping the staff member on secondment informed of any significant workplace developments which may be relevant to their employment.

The staff member on secondment is expected to maintain any professional links and keep up-to-date with any significant developments in their area of work.

6.0 Early Termination

The secondment may not be terminated unilaterally by either the staff member, line manager or the College. If early termination is sought by either party, agreement must be reached in writing giving four weeks’ written notice.
A request for early termination from the College to another organisation will be considered alongside factors which shall include but not limited to:

(i) the staff member’s obligations to the other organisation they are working for during the secondment;
(ii) the financial implications of having to terminate a third party contract entered into as a partial or direct result of the secondment.

A request for early termination from another organisation will be considered alongside factors which shall include but not limited to:

(i) an incident which constitutes gross misconduct;
(ii) the long term absence of the secondee due to ill health;
(iii) the financial implications of having to terminate a third party contract entered into as a partial or direct result of the secondment.

Staff returning to the College following external secondment, will undergo a period of re-induction back into the College and their job role. The line manager will be responsible for organising this and the structure will be dependent on the duration of the secondment.