

Staff Secondment Policy and Procedures

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) To outline the University's approach to staff secondments. This Policy applies to continuing/ongoing and fixed term contract staff only.

(2) Victoria University values and acknowledges the potential benefits that secondments can provide for all stakeholders and supports secondments where such arrangements contribute to the achievement of its strategic direction as follows:

- a. Engaging staff in a creative and rewarding learning community: secondments can provide development/career opportunities for staff, which increase capability and performance, through the acquisition of new skills, experience, and knowledge and through building networks.
- b. Building strategic partnerships that foster mutually beneficial relationships with communities, industry and the professions: through (1) external secondments which allow staff to contribute to another workplace as well as gain new ideas to bring back to University, (2) incoming secondments, for staff from external organisations (3) where there is an identified need for specialist/expert skills that cannot be found within VU.

(3) Secondments usually enable staff (from within VU or incoming from another organisation) to retain their substantive position whilst being temporarily employed in another position within or external to VU for a defined period.

Special Studies Program

(4) Academic staff and Professional staff (HEW 9 level and above) who are considering external engagement opportunities that are expected to contribute to their career/professional development and which advance the University's mission should also refer to the [Special Studies Program Policy](#) to determine if the potential external engagement arrangement falls within the eligibility criteria of that program. SSP provides funding to support external engagement opportunities that are not funded or only partially funded by the host organisation.

Leave Without Pay

(5) Staff seeking to take up fixed-term employment for a defined period external to the University, where there is no direct benefit to VU, or where such employment does not meet the criteria for secondment as outlined in this Policy, should refer to the Leave Without Pay Policy .

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(6) This Policy is important to:

- a. Continuing/Ongoing and Fixed-term contract staff;
- b. Managers/Supervisors; and

- c. People and Culture.

Section 3 - Definitions

- (7) Delegated Officer: is an incumbent officer who holds a position which has been given a delegated authority within the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#).
- (8) External Secondment: is an arrangement whereby a staff member is released from their substantive position to work in another workplace (external to the University or incoming from another organisation) for a mutually agreed period of time, and normally retain their substantive position for the duration of that period (unless they are unable to do so, e.g. their substantive position is for a fixed-term period which expires during the period of secondment).
- (9) Home workplace: is the workplace where the staff member has a substantive position.
- (10) Host workplace: is the workplace where the secondment will take place.
- (11) Internal Secondment: is a co-operative arrangement between two workplaces within the University, whereby a staff member is released from their substantive position to work in another workplace for a fixed term period.
- (12) P&C: is People and Culture within VU.
- (13) Secondee: the staff member who is seconded.
- (14) Staff/Staff member: a current member of staff employed by VU or a member of staff who is coming to work at VU from an external workplace.
- (15) Supervisor: the person to whom a staff member is responsible.
- (16) University or VU: refers to Victoria University.
- (17) Workplace: the organisational workplace (department) in which a staff member is employed to work.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- (18) Secondments should meet the strategic objectives of the University and not give rise to any detriment or undue inconvenience to the University's operations.
- (19) Requests for secondment should be assessed in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.
- (20) The staff member is responsible for
- a. Discussing their interest in development opportunities with their supervisor as part of their Staff Performance and Development Plan (SPDP); and
 - b. Seeking the agreement of their Supervisor prior to applying to be seconded to another area (within or external to the University).
- (21) Requests for secondment should be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the impact on university business operations, the key benefits to the individual and the University. Approval of a secondment does not set precedent for future secondment requests.

(22) Refusal of a secondment request should be in writing to the staff member from the Supervisor and should state the reasons for the refusal. Should a complaint arise, the staff member may seek resolution through the [Staff Complaints Resolution Policy](#). Should the request be supported as a Leave Without Pay (LWOP) arrangement, the staff member should be appropriately advised and referred to the [Leave Types Procedure](#).

(23) All relevant documentation must be completed and approved, and provided to P&C for appropriate record keeping.

SECONDMENT TYPES

(24) Secondments generally occur in the following ways:

- a. Internal Secondment: a VU staff member is the successful applicant in a VU Recruitment and Selection Process for a fixed-term position;
- b. External Secondment (Outgoing): a staff member is the successful applicant for a fixed term position with an external organisation or another organisation requests the University's services, which results in a staff member working for the external organisation for a defined period of time.
- c. External Secondment (Incoming): a staff member from an external organisation is employed to work at the University for a fixed term period; or
- d. Job Exchange - External Secondment (Outgoing and Incoming): a reciprocal arrangement is put in place between two staff members (one from VU and one from an external organisation) to exchange jobs for a defined period.

SECONDMENT BENEFITS

(25) Secondments may be approved where they support at least one of the following:

- a. The meeting of staffing requirements in another workplace within the University by filling a skills gap or for the purpose of individual development to obtain experience not readily available in their substantive position; particularly where a secondment may provide the staff member with a stimulating and challenging developmental opportunity; the opportunity to act at a higher level; or undertake a new role with relevance to the staff member's substantive position or potential future career path at the University;
- b. Achievement of the performance and professional/career development criteria outlined in the staff member's SPDP;
- c. A reciprocal staff secondment between participating organisations (e.g. job exchange) or University workplaces (e.g. internal secondment) for a fixed-term period, for the purposes of staff development, and mutual exchange of ideas;
- d. Enhanced engagement and collaboration with external organisations; or
- e. The provision of identifiable benefits for the University that may include the retention of skilled and valued staff or accessing specialised skills required for a defined period.

SECONDMENT CONDITIONS

(26) Eligibility — Staff members should have satisfactorily completed their probationary period prior to being eligible to apply for secondment, or where probation does not apply, have been working in their current position for a minimum period of six months prior to applying for secondment, unless otherwise negotiated.

(27) Pre-approval - The staff member is to enter into discussions with their supervisor regarding their desire to undertake a secondment as soon as practicable.

(28) Approval - Secondment proposals will generally be negotiated at the Department/School/Workplace level in the first instance, although all arrangements must be approved in line with the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#) .

(29) Recruitment and Selection - Advertising of vacancies that may be filled by a secondment arrangement must be in accordance with the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) .

- a. A secondment is usually the result of a recruitment and selection process whereby a staff member has successfully applied for a fixed-term contract position (in line with clause (24) a) and negotiated a transfer to another workplace for a defined period.
- b. In the interests of fairness and equity, and to provide developmental opportunities for current staff, it is preferred that advertising of temporary vacancies are made via:
 - i. A call for "expressions of interest" in line with the [Expressions Process for Developmental Opportunities Interim Guidelines](#) , or
 - ii. Internal Advertising in line with the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#).

(30) Duration of secondment - Secondments are usually only granted for periods of up to twelve months in the first instance. Secondment requests for periods of more than twelve months will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and for a maximum period of two years. This clause does not apply to Educational Leadership roles (positions) at the University. Refer to the Educational Leadership in Faculties, VU College and Research Institutes — Interim Policy for further information.

(31) Fractional time secondments - Secondments undertaken for part of the staff member's regular working hours in conjunction with their substantive position may be considered.

(32) Service - Secondments will count as service in accordance with the secondee's employment agreement.

(33) Leave - Any leave accrued by the secondee during the secondment arrangement must be taken in accordance with the secondee's employment agreement, prior to returning to their substantive position, and at a time mutually agreed to by the host workplace.

(34) Backfilling - A substantive position that remains vacant due to a staff member securing a secondment may only be filled for a fixed term period to a date no later than the last day of the secondment period. The secondee would normally return to their substantive position at the end of the secondment period (unless they are unable to do so e.g. their substantive position is for a fixed-term period which expires during the period of secondment).

(35) Return to substantive position - Staff on secondment will normally return to their substantive position at the end of the secondment period. For the benefit of the home workplace, on their return, the staff member should discuss/deliver a presentation regarding their experience and achievements while on secondment.

(36) Costs - The host workplace is expected to meet the full costs associated with the secondee during the period of the secondment as applicable, including:

- a. Salary; including overtime and penalty rates;
- b. Any special allowances applicable to the organisation and/or position to which the staff member is seconded;
- c. On-costs including WorkCover levy, payroll tax etc;
- d. Employer's contribution to superannuation; and
- e. All other costs arising from the staff member's performance of duty as directed by the organisation including relocation costs, travel, office services, equipment and furniture.

(37) Legislation - The secondee continues to be bound by the home workplace's employment agreement and conditions outlined in the secondment agreement (outgoing and incoming) entered into by all parties including University policies and the [Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy](#).

(38) International secondments - Supervisors should be aware that there may be immigration or taxation issues

concerning any international secondment arrangements and should seek advice from P&C prior to considering the secondment request.

(39) OH&S - In accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety laws, all employers are required to provide a working environment without risk to the health and safety of the staff member. Prior to approving an External Secondment (Outgoing) for staff, supervisors must make relevant enquiries to ensure the host workplace complies with legislative requirements. Supervisors should contact the OH&S Team within P&C for further advice.

(40) Staying in Touch - Prior to commencing secondment, staff members are encouraged to discuss with their supervisor (home workplace) arrangements for staying in touch. Maintaining regular contact (for example, every two months) may assist the staff member with their transition back to their home workplace. Supervisors are required to inform staff members on secondment of any workplace changes such as restructures, and consult with the staff member where changes may affect their employment, position or work responsibilities.

(41) Notice periods - A staff member is required to comply with the following notice periods (unless otherwise agreed):

- a. Commencing secondment - A notice period should be negotiated with the supervisor of the home workplace, and should not be less than two weeks.
- b. Extending a secondment arrangement - A proposed extension to a secondment arrangement should be discussed at least six weeks prior to the cessation of the secondment period, to allow adequate time for staff planning.
- c. Extending a secondment arrangement would generally occur only once, and must be agreed between the supervisors of the home and host workplaces and the staff member and formalised in writing, through completion of the appropriate form; either:
 - i. [Employee Variation Request Form — HR44](#), or
 - ii. Outgoing/Incoming Secondment Agreement
- d. Approval of an extension must be in accordance with clause (30) of this Policy and the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#).

(42) Not returning to substantive position - It is the responsibility of the staff member to advise their home supervisor of their intention not to return to their substantive position, at least 4 weeks prior to the cessation of the secondment period.

(43) Ending a secondment - To end a secondment earlier than the expiry date of the secondment arrangement, a staff member should consult with their home/host supervisors and People and Culture to determine whether an appropriate, temporary arrangement may be put in place, for example, the taking of Leave Without Pay or a temporary transfer to another position for the interim period. Early return to a staff member's substantive position is not usually an option that is available due to backfilling arrangements.

Section 5 - Procedures

Internal Secondment - Employment Procedures

(44) Prior to commencing a secondment, the terms and conditions of the secondment should be established and agreed by all parties; supervisors of the home and host workplaces and the staff member.

(45) Where a VU staff member is the successful applicant in a VU Recruitment and Selection Process for a fixed-term position, and approval has been granted for secondment to take place, a [Recommendation to Appoint Form \(HR103\)](#) must be completed, signed by all parties, approved in accordance with the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#), and sent to P&C for processing together with a copy of the current position description for the position to which the

secondment will occur.

(46) Probation provisions do not apply to internal secondment arrangements.

(47) Where the secondment is as a result of an Expressions Process for Developmental Opportunities (EPDO) or where a request for extending a secondment is approved, an [Employee Variation Request Form - \(HR44\)](#) must be completed, signed by all parties, approved in accordance with the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#), and sent to P&C for processing together with a copy of the current position description for the position to which the secondment will occur.

(48) Unless otherwise negotiated and agreed by all parties (outlined in clause (45)), should the seconded staff member resign from the University, where applicable, the standard notice period will apply (in accordance with the relevant industrial/employment agreement/letter of offer of employment) to enable adequate time for staff planning.

(49) People and Culture will provide a written letter of offer (where the secondment arrangement is a result of a formal recruitment and selection process), or an email confirmation of the secondment arrangement and approval to the staff member, with a copy to the respective supervisor/s.

External Secondments - Outgoing

(50) Secondments will generally only be approved where the external organisation agrees to fully fund the secondment. Secondments that are unfunded or partially funded will only be approved in consideration of the importance of the secondment to the University. Approval would be in line with the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#).

(51) Where an external organisation requires the services of a University staff member, the request must be made in writing to the home supervisor by the external organisation. The application should outline: the reason for the secondment; terms of the secondment; conditions that will apply; selection process required; and funding arrangements

(52) An External Secondment - [Outgoing Agreement](#) must be prepared by a delegated officer of the University (in line with the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#)) in conjunction with the home workplace (external organisation), the outgoing secondee and People and Culture. This agreement must be in place and signed prior to the commencement of the secondment.

(53) Where changes are required to the standard External Secondment - [Outgoing Agreement](#), these changes must be reviewed and agreed to by the University's Legal Services Department prior to signing.

(54) Prior to commencement of an External Secondment, an External Secondment - [Outgoing Agreement](#) must be sent to P&C for processing. P&C will retain the signed secondment agreement and any other paperwork.

External Secondment - Incoming

(55) Where possible, when a temporary vacancy is to be filled by someone external to VU, it is preferred that vacancies be filled by way of a fixed term contract arrangement.

(56) However, from time to time, a workplace in the University may second a staff member from an external organisation, for the purposes of obtaining specialised skills and knowledge. Such requests would only arise and gain approval, where it can be demonstrated that existing University staff have been considered but do not meet the essential selection criteria for the position.

(57) All appropriate recruitment processes and probity checks, including referee reports, police checks, working with children checks, confirmation of qualifications, and eligibility to work in Australia etc, must be followed and adhered to for all external secondments as appropriate.

(58) Under an external secondment arrangement, the secondee remains a staff member and on the payroll of the home workplace. The home workplace must invoice the University for the secondee's salary and salary on-costs for the secondment period.

(59) An External Secondment - [Incoming Agreement](#) should be prepared by a delegated officer of the University (in line with the [Delegations and Authorisations Policy](#)) in conjunction with the home workplace, the incoming secondee and People and Culture. The agreement must be in place, approved and signed by all parties before the secondment commences. People and Culture will retain the signed secondment agreement and any other paperwork. The secondee's details will be added to the P&C Information System for appropriate record keeping.

(60) Where changes are required to the standard External Secondment — [Incoming Agreement](#), these changes must be reviewed and agreed to by the University's Legal Services Department prior to signing.

Section 6 - Guidelines

(61) Nil

Status and Details

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Effective Date	29th September 2014
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