Procedures

Voluntary Redundancy Policy
February 2017
Refreshed December 2021

PROCEDURES

Procedures relating to:	Voluntary Redundancy Policy
Approving authority:	University Executive
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Responsible Office:	Human Resources

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
POLICY TITLE

CONTENT

PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

All staff in areas where the need for change/restructuring has been identified will be made aware of the scheme and may seek guidance as to whether their area of work is one in which the University would consider an application for voluntary redundancy. This should initially be done through the Head of School/Service. There will be no automatic right to a severance payment and Heads will only recommend such cases as are in the best interests of the University. Criteria for such recommendations are outlined below.

The University provides support mechanisms for staff, where applications for voluntary redundancy have been approved, pre-retirement courses such as career coaching. Other support, such as outplacement counselling and re-training may be available from time to time and full details will be shared with staff as appropriate.

2. PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY POLICY

Process for Applying for Voluntary Redundancy

1. All staff in areas where the need for change/restructuring has been identified will be made aware of the proposals for change and the availability of Voluntary Redundancy. Individuals in targeted teams, sections or job types within that area who may be specifically "at risk" would be considered for VR ahead of others in the broader area (see (5) below)
2. In the first instance, an individual should approach their Head of Department to discuss confidentially whether their area of work/expertise would be considered for voluntary redundancy.
3. The individual may then express a provisional interest in Voluntary Redundancyby completing the VR application form available on the website and submitting it to their Head of School/Service. No commitment will berequired from individuals at this stage and they will have the opportunity to confirm or withdraw their interest at a later stage
4. A ready reckoner is available on the website for a provisional calculation of severance pay. Employees who are members of USS may access the USS website to calculate an estimate of pension provision.
5. Heads of Department may wish to categorise applicant requests on the following basis:
   a. Category A = request recommended for approval because the individual sits within a targeted area and the post can be released/ not replaced, leading to a long-term saving.
   b. Category B = the request may be recommended, but approval is dependent on other criteria; for example, the individual is not in a targeted area but a restructure or redeployment may achieve savings to allow the redundancy
   c. Category C = It is unlikely that the request would be recommended for approval for one or more reasons, e.g., the skills or experience are highly desirable to achieve University strategy: the individual does not work within a targeted area and it is not possible to redeploy or restructure; the post is essential.

6. Heads will collate the names of those indicating a provisional interest indicating the category to which they have been assigned and forward them to their HR representative.

7. The HR Department will undertake severance calculations and pass to Payroll any quotes which require a pension quote calculation for Categories A and B. Category C applications will be retained for information only.

Process for Considering Applications for Voluntary Redundancy

The University will consider all applications in a timely and transparent manner. The over-riding criteria for accepting applications will be (i) that the associated payroll savings are fully realised and sustainable, and (ii) that the departure does not impact negatively on the University's Strategic Plan and helps to achieve the savings planned in the targeted area.

1. Applications will be considered by the Head of School/Professional Services with input from the relevant HR and Finance Business Partners and their Heads of Department.

2. Heads of Department will provide input including:
   a. Categorising the individuals as outlined above into one of three categories.
   b. Providing a confirmation that no replacement is required.
   c. Confirming consequent savings in annual pay costs.

3. The Head of School/Service will reach a provisional decision on each request, based on the recommendations by the Heads of Department and the overall impact on the University.

4. On the basis of the information presented, the Head will make their recommendation as to whether the application should or should not be accepted to the Vacancy Management Group. VMG will only override Heads' decisions where it is aware of vacancies in other parts of the university that may be appropriate for redeployment.

5. Individuals will then be informed of the decision. Where Voluntary Redundancy has been agreed, the individual will be formally advised of the severance payment and any pension information as required. Individuals will then have the opportunity of discussing this with HR colleagues.

6. If the individual wishes formally to accept the offer of Voluntary Redundancy s/he should complete the acceptance form and return it to HR.

7. Once a final decision is made on the application, including the leaving date, the individual will be advised of the outcome in writing and required to sign a Settlement Agreement.

Redeployment Policy

It may be possible to redeploy elsewhere in the University. Each case will be considered on its merits and in line with the Redeployment Policy

Part Time Working / Unpaid Leave[1]

Colleagues may wish to consider part-time working or a period of unpaid leave (career break). Each case will be considered on its own merits in linewith the general principles of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

Outplacement and other support

Outplacement counselling and career support may be made available from time to time to support VR Schemes. Details of such support will be circulatedto relevant staff and published on the HR website.

Other practical support such as, for example, provision of retraining or payment of fees for retraining may be considered where it can be demonstrated that there is no financial or otherwise detriment to the University. Such requests will be considered on their merits by the Head ofSchool/Service, ensuring fairness of approach at all times.

University Wide VR Schemes

From time to time, it may be appropriate to offer Voluntary Redundancy across the whole University or to a group of staff not "contained" within one School or central Professional Service. In such cases, the procedure for approving applications for VR may be amended with a central committee suchas VMG, or the Vice-Principal and Secretary taking the final decision, with input from Heads of School and Services. Where such schemes are offered, details of the procedure will be communicated as an addendum to this Procedure.

3. **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND FURTHER REFERENCE**

    Policies
    - Consultation on the Avoidance of Redundancy
    - Redeployment Policy
    - Severance Payments Policy

    Procedures
    - Redeployment Procedures
    - Redundancy Selection Procedures

    https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/human-resources/human-resources-policies.htm
    These policies can be viewed under Change Management at the above link

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[1] Note that there are cost implications in terms of continuing pension contributions during periods ofunpaid leave; HR and Payroll teams can advise on specific circumstances

4. FURTHER HELP AND ADVICE

Please contact HR helpdesk for queries regarding this Policy and linkedProcedures

5. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority	Brief Description of Amendment
V. 6	February 2017 refreshed Dec 21	University Executive	VR policy & procedures replaced 2012 versions. December 21 refresh updates references and links

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