

Management of a reorganisation

These re-organisation guidelines are intended to apply when a department or departments intend to make significant changes to the duties and responsibilities of a number of posts as part of a re-organisation either within a department or across a number of departments.

They are most likely to be applicable where:

- organisational units are merged, or de-merged;
- an organisational unit is re-organised in such a way that there is a significant reallocation of posts and responsibilities within it.

These guidelines are not applicable where:

- a re-organisation changes reporting lines but leaves posts and responsibilities substantively unchanged – in which case the only action is to inform the staff of the changes;
- there are self-contained changes to a single post, or a small number of posts – in which case the appropriate action is to have the post evaluated and (re-)graded;

Where the purpose is to reduce the headcount, the [redundancy procedures](#) must also be followed.

The guidelines set out the principles and general procedure that should be followed – departments should adapt them to produce, and agree, specific procedures that will best suit the circumstances of their particular re-organisation.

Re-organisation guidelines

Scope

This procedure will apply when it is proposed to make significant future changes to the duties and responsibilities of a number of posts in an organisational unit or across organisational units. It is applicable only to academic-related and support staff.

The extent to which the whole procedure will apply depends upon the overall size, complexity and significance of the planned change. The procedure to be followed in any given case should be specifically adapted and agreed for the purpose from this general procedure. It is important, however, that, when change is to be introduced, the following framework of principles is applied as far as practicable in each case:

- There needs to be a clear proposal which should, where possible, take into account future changes which might impact in the short to medium term.
- Staff and the recognised trades unions should be consulted at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort should be made to include face-to-face consultation.
- Staff should have the opportunity to seek clarification and offer their views on the proposal.
- Changes to job descriptions should be produced and agreed following consultation with job holders.
- The assignment of staff to jobs will be through a fair and transparent process.
- There should be an Equality Impact Assessment.
- Wherever possible, compulsory redundancy will be avoided, but if there is a possibility that a reorganisation will place some staff at risk of redundancy, the [redundancy procedure](#) should be followed and the effect on employees mitigated as far as is possible.

It is recognised that there may be instances when changes to the duties and responsibilities of a post occur in a self-contained way which does not impact upon any other post. There may also be instances where this self-contained change occurs in more than one post at the same time (usually a relatively small number of posts). In either case the reorganisation procedure would not apply. The job descriptions concerned can be submitted for evaluation and any subsequent grade changes would be attributed to the current post holders.

Procedure

Step 1

In consultation with Personnel Services, the head of department (HOD*) will consider the design of the jobs affected by the reorganisation and how those jobs interact, not only with each other but with other jobs outside the unit. A document will be prepared which contains the following:

- The reasons for the reorganisation and the rationale for the proposed structure with a brief outline of the key duties of each post.
- An organisational diagram of the current structure and proposed structure, including the number and type of posts with proposed grades (names excluded).
- The number and type of staff, with grades, who might be put at risk of redundancy by the proposed change.
- The date when it is intended that the proposed structure will come into effect.

** In this procedure this should be taken to refer to a head of department, or the person he or she nominates to take responsibility for a re-organisation, or any other person properly authorised to take charge of a re-organisation. The HOD may be supported by a steering group or some other such body.*

Step 2

The proposal is considered by the Divisional Board or appropriate body, as required, and approval to consult is given.

Step 3

Consultation will begin with all staff affected within the unit(s) concerned and with trade union representatives. Consultation should continue throughout the reorganisation process.

3a. consultation with unions [At Oxford the recognised unions are UCU, Unison and UNITE.]

- The unions should be briefed on the emerging business plan at the earliest reasonable stage. The initial briefing should be timed to take place just before or just after staff are briefed. It should be arranged through Personnel Services.
- The unions should be given the number and description of posts affected. They should also be offered the opportunity to comment on the intended procedure for achieving the re-organisation and allocating staff to posts.
- The presentation of the business case is best done at an oral briefing by the HOD, with Personnel Services, so that initial questions and comments can be sought and received. The briefing should be based on the paper in [step 1](#) (above), a copy of which should be made available to the union representatives.
- The unions must be given adequate information to enable them to respond and adequate time in which to make their response. Management must give conscientious consideration to those responses.
- This first presentation is also the occasion on which to settle details of how formal consultation will be continued.
- If redundancies are a possibility, the unions should be briefed when there is still an opportunity to influence the decision on whether staff reductions are required. They should be given information on the pool of staff from which it is proposed to select any eventual redundancies. The provisions of the Redundancy procedure should be followed.
- It may be that, by mutual agreement, consultation need only be with one or other of the recognised unions e.g. where the case in question concerns employees represented by one particular union. The unions are generally content to be briefed together, but there may be occasions where this is not possible or appropriate.

3b. consultation with staff

- The HOD will invite all staff affected to a meeting at which he/she will outline the proposed reorganisation based on the paper in [step 1](#) (above), a copy of which should be issued to all affected staff. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide this information to staff away from work (e.g. on maternity leave, holiday or sickness absence).
- On occasion it may be appropriate to start the consultation by looking at the broad functional areas before going on to discuss the detailed roles within each functional area.

- If there is a possibility that staff will be at risk of redundancy as a result of the proposed change this should be made clear at the briefing, in line with the [redundancy procedure](#). (If the possibility of redundancy only emerges later in the reorganisation process, staff and union representatives should be informed and consulted as soon as possible).
- At the meeting staff will be able to raise queries and ask questions regarding the proposal. Staff may choose to convey their views by e-mail, letter or orally in one-to-one meetings or in small group meetings. Staff should be offered the facility to discuss any matters with the HOD or nominee on a one-to-one basis. Members of staff may be accompanied at such meetings by a trade union representative or a work colleague and should advise the HOD in advance if they are to be accompanied.
- Wherever practicable, the HOD will keep staff informed about the progress of proposals.

Step 4

After considering any comments, the HOS will revise or confirm the proposal, obtain, as appropriate, any further approval from the Divisional Board or appropriate body and communicate any amendments to the proposal to staff and the union representatives.

Step 5

The HOD or nominee will then proceed with the production of job descriptions.

- Job descriptions will be drafted in consultation with personnel officers.
- Template or generic job descriptions should be used where appropriate.
- All staff in the organisational unit(s) affected by the change will be given a copy of the job descriptions for comment.
- After considering any comments, the HOD will revise or confirm the job descriptions as appropriate and inform staff accordingly.
- All current job descriptions in the area affected should be checked to ensure they are up-to-date, and, where they are not, new ones agreed.

Step 6

The final job descriptions should be submitted to Personnel Services for evaluation.

- It may be the case that not all job descriptions need to be submitted for evaluation, particularly where there is relatively little change to the duties and responsibilities of a job or jobs.
- Job descriptions will be evaluated as vacant/new posts unless template or generic job descriptions are used.
- The HOD is responsible for obtaining any approvals under e.g. the [recruitment protocol](#).

Step 7

It is likely that the new structure will contain a mix of posts which:

- match or are substantially similar to existing posts at the same grade; or
- are new or have been reconfigured so that they do not substantially match existing posts at the same grade.

The HOD, in consultation with a personnel officer, is responsible for deciding into which category posts in the new structure fall, taking into account the current and revised job descriptions.

Step 8

The process for filling posts will be as follows:

8a. Posts with a substantial match with existing posts at the same grade.

Staff whose existing post substantially matches a post at the same grade in the new structure:

- will be slotted into the new post;
- where more than one member of staff from the unit(s) could be job-slotted into a new post, the post will be ring-fenced to those staff;
- the HOD will run a fair and transparent selection process to determine which of the staff concerned is appointed to each ring-fenced post.

8b. Posts which are not filled by job-slotting, including new and reconfigured posts:

- will be advertised to all members of the existing unit(s);
- any member of the existing unit(s) may apply for one of these post;s
- if a member of the unit(s) applies for a post at the same or lower grade, he/she does so as a priority candidate i.e. they are considered before other applicants and, if the selection panel judges that they are suitable, they should be offered the post (for full details see [priority candidate](#));
- members of the unit(s) may apply for posts at a higher grade, but their application will only be considered if there is no suitable candidate at the same grade;
- members of the unit(s) who have already been 'job-slotted' may apply for a different post. If they are successful, the post they had been slotted into is then filled by selecting one of those members of staff whose existing post matches the new post and who was not 'slotted' earlier (following the procedure in 8a); if there is no member of staff eligible for 'job-slotting' into this vacancy, the post is then advertised to other members of the unit (following the procedure in 8b).

8c. Any posts which remain unfilled after job-slotting and advertising to and selection from members of staff in the existing unit(s) may then be advertised more widely in the University or externally and filled in the usual way.

8d. Any member of staff who has not been slotted into or selected for a post in the new structure will be/remain at risk of redundancy and will be subject to the University's redundancy procedure, including the provisions for redeployment.