

Redundancy: Guidelines on Good Practice

Introduction

City University has a strategic commitment to develop and expand its activities, which, from the perspective of its employees, contributes to providing a stable working environment and security of employment. However, the University must also ensure the economic viability and efficiency of its Schools and Portfolios in a competitive environment. Circumstances may therefore arise where changes in organisational requirements necessitate a reduction in staffing levels. These Guidelines on Good Practice have been prepared to assist Deans and Heads of Portfolios to minimise the impact of redundancies in such circumstances.

Organisational responsibilities

The employer's legal liabilities and obligations ultimately fall on the University (through Council, the formal 'employer'). In practice, these obligations are normally discharged through the University's devolved management structure. In exceptional circumstances it would be appropriate for the Centre to lead on negotiations in close conjunction with the relevant line manager.

Principles

In dealing with cases of redundancy the University undertakes to uphold the following principles:

- To avoid the use of compulsory redundancy wherever it is practicable to do so. To this end, staff reductions should first be sought through voluntary rather than compulsory means.
- To seek to minimise the effect of redundancies by exploring alternative options in consultation with the University's recognised trade unions.
- To handle redundancies in an equitable, consistent and sympathetic manner and seek to minimise the anxiety for the employees concerned, e.g. by providing additional support to employees via Occupational Health.
- To treat staff facing redundancy in a respectful way that recognises their contribution to the University.
- To ensure that the process is supportive, characterised by open exchanges of information between staff and managers and accompanied by full consultation at the earliest possible stage.
- To conclude the consultation within a reasonable timescale and in the interests of the individual and the University.

Redundancy

Dismissal can be termed redundancy when it results from:

- Cessation of business
- Cessation of business at the employees site
- A reduction or cessation of work
- Anticipation of a reduction or cessation of work

The University will consider the following measures on each occasion that a redundancy situation arises:

- trying to make savings in other areas;
- reduction of staff levels by natural wastage;
- reduction of the number of short-term temporary or agency staff in areas where redundancies have been identified;
- seeking volunteers for redundancy with no commitment of either side
- redeployment and if possible, retraining to enable redeployment to other parts of the organisation;
- reduction or elimination of overtime working;
- restricting or freezing external recruitment where appropriate;
- considering suggestions from trade unions/employees.
- considering volunteers for part-time working or job sharing;

Consultation

The University will consult at the earliest opportunity with the appropriate trade union representative concerning details of proposals which have staffing implications involving potential redundancy and the steps to be taken. This will normally take place before individuals are notified but there may be exceptional circumstances when this will not be possible. The University will also notify the Secretary of State, within the statutory notice periods given below if applicable:

- 100 or more employees of the University within 90 days
- 20 – 99 employees of the University within 30 days
- In recognition of good practice where less than 20 employees are to be dismissed 30 days notice will also be given.

The University will provide the appropriate trade union representative with the following information:

- Reasons for the proposal
- Number and job categories
- Proposed selection criteria
- Procedures and time scales
- Method of calculating the amount of any redundancy payments

In addition, consultation will include discussion on ways to:

- Avoid or reduce redundancies
- Mitigate the consequences of the dismissals

Invitation to consider voluntary severance

The offer of voluntary terms is an accepted approach prior to making any decisions on compulsory redundancies as this can help to reduce the overall impact on other staff.

Definition of the pool for selection

Where it becomes necessary for the University to effect compulsory redundancies, careful attention will be given to define the pool for selection appropriate to a particular situation rather than to specify criteria for each and every situation. However, on each occasion the University will seek to utilise criteria which are fair

and objective. The criteria will be discussed and if possible agreed with trade union representation as well as individuals concerned. Proposed criteria's could include:

- Length of service
- Attendance records
- Disciplinary records
- Skills, competency and qualifications
- Work experience
- Performance record

Suitable alternative employment

During the redundancy process City University will actively seek alternative solutions to the proposed compulsory redundancies and in particular the possibility of alternative work across the University.

All employees selected for redeployment to suitable alternative employment will be offered a statutory four week trial period. The employee can at the end of the trial period reject the position and elect to be treated as dismissed for the purposes of receiving a redundancy payment.

When all redeployment opportunities / possibilities have been exhausted without success, the employees who have been identified for redeployment will be placed on notice of redundancy. The University will, however, continue to use its best endeavours to remove the need for compulsory redundancy until such time the member of staff leaves the University when the redundancy notice expires.

Right to time off

Employees at risk of redundancy will be given reasonable paid time off to look for work during their final notice period.

Appeals

All employees will have the right to appeal against dismissal for redundancy and to exercise this right they must apply in writing to the University Secretary within 14 days of their termination of employment.