

Secondment Policy

1. Introduction and values

- 1.1. Queen Mary encourages secondments to support the development of employees through exposure to, and sharing of, new learning and ways of working. In addition to this policy, further information and support is available on the Professional Development pages of the HR website at: [Secondment guidance April 2025 \[PDF 367KB\]](#)

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy sets out the University's arrangements for managing secondments, whether they involve a move into Queen Mary from another organisation, out from Queen Mary to another organisation, or from one role to another within Queen Mary.
- 2.2. Its purpose is to ensure that secondments are used appropriately, liabilities are managed, and legal requirements, set out in our Recruitment Policy, are met in arranging secondment opportunities.
- 2.3. Secondments can be a very useful mechanism for providing development opportunities for staff. Secondments are used to:
 - a) Deliver a new project or to provide additional support to a project.
 - b) Enable skills transfer to or from another, or department of Queen Mary.
 - c) Provide a development opportunity to carry out a specific assignment
 - d) Assist in the development of skills/knowledge in new areas; and,
 - e) Provide cover while a role holder is away or while a full recruitment process is undertaken, where the role offers the opportunity for someone to develop their skills.

3. Legislative context

- 3.1. Secondments will use Recruitment and Selection processes, including Right to Work requirements. Health and Safety, GDPR, confidentiality and other legal responsibilities will be confirmed in a Secondment Agreement document

before any secondment commences.

- 3.2. Pay will remain the same and increments will continue as per the substantive post. Where the secondment includes a higher pay grade, this will be acknowledged for the length of the secondment. Continuous service will be maintained during the period of secondment.

4. Scope

- 4.1. Employees will be eligible to apply for a secondment role if they have:
 - a) Been employed in their current substantive post for a period of at least 12 months at the time of applying for the secondment.
 - b) The approval of their employing department before applying for the secondment
 - c) The appropriate work permit. For individuals who require a work visa, a secondment may breach the individual's visa arrangements.
- 4.2. There are four types of secondment covered in more detail below:
 - a) Secondment-Out: An employee working temporarily in a different role whilst retaining their substantive post within Queen Mary.
 - b) Secondment-In: A Queen Mary post that is filled temporarily by an employee from another organisation who remains employed by that organisation.
 - c) Internal Secondment: An employee working temporarily in a different role within Queen Mary.
 - d) It is also possible for an employee to move to another fixed-term role on a secondment basis. There are requirements in relation to advertising roles in such circumstances, which are covered below.
- 4.3. Substantive post: All references in this policy to an employee's substantive post relate to the post the employee occupied immediately before moving to a different role on secondment.

5. Definitions / Principles

- 5.1. A secondment is an opportunity for an employee to voluntarily undertake a different role to that of their substantive post for a defined (usually short-term) period, while remaining on the same terms and conditions of employment.
- 5.2. Where a secondment is expected to last for more than 6 months, it is Queen Mary policy that the role is advertised and filled in accordance with the

Recruitment Policy.

- 5.3. All secondments within Queen Mary require the following approval:
- a) Financial approval must be given by the Head of School / Institute or Director of Professional Services.
 - b) Approval must be given by the line manager. In some cases, the role will need to be covered in the interim by a Fixed Term Contract or someone “Acting up” into the role temporarily.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. Schools/Institutes/Departments must seek advice from the Staff Visa and Immigration Team before any secondment is offered/considered. Eligibility for overseas secondments will require advice as set out by QMUL’s Global Mobility Manager in HR.
- 6.2. For managers sending someone to a secondment externally or internally, they will remain the Substantive Manager. They will remain responsible for: Keeping in Touch with updates to the Seconded’s substantive post.
- 6.3. In particular, the Substantive Manager should ensure that any organisational changes / restructures, where formal consultation is taking place, will involve any seconded-out employees in any group and one to one consultation, particularly if their role could potentially be at risk.
- 6.4. Managers recruiting a Seconded into their area (Host Manager) will be responsible for:
 - a) Ensuring a local and safe induction, including any mandatory training if the Seconded is from outside of QMUL.
 - b) Ongoing supervision, support and review of the secondment’s aims and objectives.
 - c) Effective Onboarding and Offboarding processes to ensure that Right to Work checks, learning, equipment, and software access are set up at the outset. Access to certain systems and local information will need to be rescinded after the secondment. Responsibilities and liabilities are set out in the Secondment Agreement and Onboarding / Offboarding checklists.
 - d) At the end of the Secondment, the Host Manager will need to ensure that University resources are returned, and that systems/information access is rescinded.

7. Secondment - Out

- 7.1. Secondment-Out involves an employee of Queen Mary voluntarily moving to another role in a different organisation for a temporary period. This is usually for up to 12 months. Managers should seek guidance from their Strategic HR Business Partner should the Secondment-Out under consideration involve any of the following:
- a) A period longer than 12 months (or the extension of a Secondment-Out beyond a 12-month period, in total); and/or,
 - b) A person with any restrictions affecting their Right to Work in the UK/visa; and/or
 - c) Working outside of the UK for most of the working time on the secondment (where advice will also need to be taken from the HR Global Mobility Manager).
- 7.2. During a Secondment-Out, the employee remains employed by Queen Mary on the same terms and conditions as their substantive post. (For clarity, this includes any pay progression arrangements that would have applied had they remained in their substantive post). At the end of the Secondment-Out, the employee returns to their substantive post.
- 7.3. A formal Secondment-Out Agreement must be signed between Queen Mary and the seconding (or “host” organisation) to ensure that the legal liability issues are properly covered. The template agreement for a secondment out of Queen Mary to another organisation is available here: [Secondment-template \(out of QM\)](#)
- 7.4. A letter describing the arrangements should also be sent to the employee clarifying the Secondment-Out arrangements. They [HR Operations team](#) will be able to provide further advice on this.
- 7.5. Substantive Managers will maintain key responsibilities as set out in Section 6.

8. Secondment - In

- 8.1. A Secondment-In involves an employee moving into a role at Queen Mary from a different organisation for a temporary period. This is usually for up to 12 months. Managers should seek guidance from their Strategic HR Business Partner should the Secondment-In under consideration involve any of the following:
- a) A period longer than 12 months (or the extension of a Secondment-In beyond a 12-month period, in total); and/or,
 - b) A person with any restrictions affecting their Right to Work in the UK/visa;

and/or

- c) Working outside of the UK for most of the working time on the secondment (where advice will also need to be taken from the HR Global Mobility Manager).
- 8.2. During a Secondment-In, the employee remains employed by the organisation where they occupied a post immediately before moving to the role at Queen Mary. At the end of the Secondment-In, the employee returns to their substantive post.
- 8.3. Host Managers taking in a Secondee will need to undertake key responsibilities as set out in Section 6.
- 8.4. The template agreement for a secondment into Queen Mary from another organisation is available Secondment template (in to QM) [DOC 77KB] As well as clarifying the legal basis of the secondment, this Agreement will set out expectations for the member of staff undertaking it, including in relation to compliance with key Queen Mary policies and mandatory training (e.g. Display Screen Equipment, Health, and Safety; GDPR; Confidentiality etc.). The HR Recruitment team will be able to provide further advice regarding the process and the formal Secondment-In Agreement.
- 8.5. Secondees must comply with all confidentiality and information security-related policies and procedures during any seconded period and any which apply after leaving the University. Secondees will be required to maintain standards of confidentiality related to information, as specified in university (and any School/Institute/Departmental) policies relevant to information security; this includes, where relevant, the handling of information related to patients or other participants involved in research. All access rights should be rescinded as part of the offboarding process when the secondment ends.
- 8.6. In addition, during any secondments into the University, Secondees must keep safe and not misuse any trade secrets or confidential information designated as such or which should be considered as such due to its nature (Confidential Information). When the secondment ends Secondees must return, and otherwise cease to use, all Confidential Information.

9. Internal Secondments

- 9.1. An Internal Secondment involves an employee moving from one role to a different role within Queen Mary for a temporary period. This is usually for up to 12 months. Managers should seek guidance from their Strategic HR Business Partner should the Internal Secondment under consideration involve any of the following:
 - a) A period longer than 12 months (or the extension of an Internal-

Secondment beyond a 12-month period, in total); and/or,

- b) A person with any restrictions affecting their Right to Work in the UK/visa; and/or,
- c) Working outside of the UK for most of the working time on the secondment (where advice will also need to be taken from the HR Global Mobility Manager).

- 9.2. During an Internal Secondment, the employee remains employed by Queen Mary on the same terms and conditions as their substantive post. (For clarity, this includes any pay progression arrangements that would have applied had they remained in their substantive post). At the end of the Internal Secondment, the employee returns to their substantive post.
- 9.3. It is not necessary for a formal agreement to be signed in relation to an Internal Secondment. However, a Secondment Letter, setting out the arrangements for the secondment (including how all the related costs are to be met) will be sent to the employee by the HR Operations team detailing all the arrangements agreed by the budget holders of both the substantive post and the role to be occupied during the secondment. (It is possible that the same budget holder may be responsible for both roles, where an employee moves on secondment within the same area). A request to the HR Operations team will need to be made via [Oleeeo](#) so that they can process the Internal-Secondment.
- 9.4. Back fill roles for seconded individuals will be offered on a fixed-term basis to reflect the period of the secondment.
- 9.5. General responsibilities set out in Section 6 will apply for managers of internal secondments, both in and out.

10. Moving to a fixed-term role within Queen Mary on a secondment

- 10.1. In addition to the secondment arrangements set out above, it is also possible for a member of Queen Mary staff to move to a different fixed-term role, which has been advertised in accordance with the requirements of the Recruitment Policy, on a secondment basis. This provides for the member of staff to return to their substantive role at the end of the fixed-term secondment. As the substantive post will need to be available for the Seconded to return to, such an arrangement must have the approval of both the hiring manager and the line management of the substantive role.
- 10.2. A member of staff interested in moving to another fixed-term role at Queen Mary on a secondment basis should discuss this with their current line manager, prior to expressing an interest. If the advert for the fixed-term role does not make clear that it may be available to Queen Mary staff on a

secondment basis, it is suggested that this is confirmed with the hiring manager in the first instance.

- 10.3. Staff moving to fixed-term roles (which have been advertised) on a second-hand basis will move onto the terms and conditions of the fixed-term role (in accordance with the standard arrangements for an internal appointment) for the duration of the secondment. At the end of the secondment, staff will move back to their substantive roles and will return to the terms and conditions of the substantive role, as if they had occupied it throughout.
- 10.4. General responsibilities set out in Section 6 will apply for managers of internal secondments, both in and out.

11. Secondments over 6 months' duration

- 11.1. All secondments into roles at Queen Mary (i.e. Secondment-In; Internal secondment; or a member of staff moving to a different, fixed-term post within Queen Mary on a secondment basis) of more than 6 months' duration **must** be advertised in accordance with the requirements of the [Recruitment Policy](#). This also applies where a shorter secondment is to be extended beyond 6 months' duration. The Recruitment Policy requirements ensure that necessary authorisation from budget holders for the secondment is obtained.

12. Secondments of 6 months (or shorter)

- 12.1. It is not a requirement for secondments into roles at Queen Mary of 6 months' duration or under to be formally advertised, but the principles of fairness and equality of opportunity **must** be applied in every case.

13. Funding and pay

- 13.1. Line managers must ensure that funding is available for any secondment within Queen Mary and authorized by the budget holder. Authorisation to engage a member of staff on secondment at Queen Mary **must** be obtained from both the Faculty/ Professional Services Directorate and the relevant finance colleague (i.e. Finance or the Joint Research Management Office (JRMO)). A request to the HR Operations team will then need to be made via [Oleeeo](#) so that they can process the secondment.
- 13.2. It is likely that most secondments within Queen Mary will involve a colleague covering a vacant post for an interim period, and authorisation will usually be straightforward. Budget holders will need to give careful consideration to the full costs of any secondment, that is not to cover a vacant post, and to how these costs are to be met.
- 13.3. It should be noted that staff seconded into a different role within Queen

Mary remain on the terms and conditions (including pay) of the substantive post they occupied immediately before the secondment. It is only in circumstances where a member of staff moves into a fixed-term post (which has been advertised) on a secondment basis, as set out above, that the terms and conditions may vary.

14. Associated information

- 14.1. In addition to this policy, other policies and procedures will need to be referred to:

[Recruitment and Selection Policy - Human Resources](#)

[General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) briefing for managers - Directorate of Governance and Legal Services](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

[Secondments at Queen Mary](#)

[Right to Work](#)

[Global Mobility](#) (if relevant)

[Onboarding](#) and [Offboarding](#) processes.

[Submitting Oleeo requests](#)

15. Review

- 15.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.
- 15.2. Minor updates to this policy that do not affect the rules, principles or intent of this policy may be approved by The Head of HR on behalf of HR.

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	Secondment Policy
Version number	2.9
Related policies and procedures	Recruitment and Selection Policy - Human Resources General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) briefing for managers Privacy Notice Secondments at Queen Mary Right to Work Global Mobility (if relevant) Onboarding and Offboarding processes. Submitting Oleeo requests
Superseded policies	
Approval level	Senior Executive Team
Approval date	April 2025
Effective date	April 2025
Next review due	April 2028
Policy owner	Anne Marie O'Donnell ER Policy and Project Manager
Policy contact	Kev Moon, Head of Employee Relations and Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Reason for updates/Summary of key changes
2.9	July 2025	Updated to new template. Recruitment links and Right to Work checks strengthened. More emphasis on onboarding and off boarding with reference to adhering to confidentiality and privacy agreements. Reminder to relinquish data and IT access at the end of any secondment. ...ISO Mock audit recommendation. Reminder during any Organisational Change to include Secondees away from their substantive post to be involved in consultations.