

Guidance for Secondments

Introduction

Secondments are one of the many ways in which Queen Mary can support staff development. Secondees can enhance or develop skills and their understanding of areas of work that are relevant to their current or future role. Skills and expertise gained can then be transferred back to their substantive role. Secondments may also develop valuable relationships within and between the University and other organizations.

This document gives practical guidance on the successful implementation of secondment agreements. Refer to the formal secondment policy document on the HR pages for key principles and main procedures.

About Secondments

There are three types of secondment:

- **Secondment-Out:** An employee working temporarily in a different organisation whilst retaining their substantive post within Queen Mary;
- **Secondment-In:** A Queen Mary post that is filled temporarily by an employee of another organisation who remains employed by that organisation.
- **Internal Secondment:** An employee working temporarily in a different role within Queen Mary.

As an alternative to a secondment, a [project placement](#) is an informal, part-time arrangement within Queen Mary where a member of staff spends a small part of their working time within another team or department participating in a project of defined scope and timeline (e.g. 0.5 days per week over four months). Secondments are usually full time or a greater proportion of someone's working time, involve a formal change in line management and are for a longer period.

Benefits of Secondments

For the University;

- Developing colleagues' knowledge, skills and experience
- Raising performance through cross-departmental co-operation, sharing knowledge, skills and communication
- Providing experience for employees who are underrepresented in certain areas of Queen Mary
- Providing career development for individuals retaining talent and institutional knowledge
- Deliver a new project or provide additional project support
- Assist in the development of skills/knowledge in new areas
- Provide cover while a role holder is away or while a full recruitment process is undertaken

For the individual;

- Wider experience and acquisition of new skills and knowledge

- An opportunity to try out new work to inform their career choices
- Exposure to different work cultures, processes and perspectives
- Enhanced networking opportunities
- Provide development opportunity through a specific assignment

For the receiving/host organisation/department

- Access to new expertise that may not otherwise be available and an opportunity to share expertise with the team
- Provides extra temporary resource
- Brings an external perspective to the organisation which could foster innovation
- Enable skills transfer between organizations, or Departments/Schools/Institutes

Managing the Secondment - Secondment roles and responsibilities

	Seconded	Host manager	Substantive manager
Before the secondment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing intention to apply for a secondment with their substantive manager • Providing handover in substantive role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that funding is available and authorised by budget holder. • Advertising a role as a secondment opportunity • Checking individual development aims and secondment aims match, • Inducting the secondee in line with Queen Mary and local area Induction processes • Agreeing a work plan and development plan • Confirming that the secondee has received a briefing before the secondment starts; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing the proposed arrangements and deciding whether they can release the member of staff. • Arranging cover for the substantive post;
During the secondment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking any mandatory training/induction required for secondment role • Keeping in touch with substantive role (as agreed with substantive and host manager collectively) 	<p>Normal line management duties including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying goals, providing support and ongoing feedback (our one to one guide might help) • Providing development support such as mentoring and networking • Undertaking review and appraisal meetings • Authorising annual leave, monitoring sickness, etc (in line with the manager at the external organisation if this is an External Inward secondment) • Evaluating and monitoring performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking part in meetings to discuss progress and issues as appropriate; • Keeping the secondee informed of any developments in their team and department and ensure they are consulted on any changes which affect their post. • Consider keeping in touch meetings to make sure that the secondee is kept up to date with information relevant to their substantive role and is prepared and supported in returning to their substantive role
After the secondment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on and embedding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a debriefing session at the end of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning a re-induction period for the returning

	learnings from secondment on return <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on their experience for the host areas as well as ideas for substantive team 	secondment. To cover; achievements, reflect on their learning, feedback on strengths and areas of development	secondee. Discuss any changes to the post as well as the contribution the returning employee can make to embed the secondment experience.
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Substantive manager

It may seem difficult in the short term to release someone for secondment due to resource constraints, loss of key skills, and other challenges. However, these issues can often be addressed through open communication and creative problem-solving. The long-term advantages for the Queen Mary, in living up to our Strategy aims of supporting staff to flourish often outweigh the short-term difficulties. Ahead of applying for an internal secondment, it is expected that an applicant would discuss their intention to apply with their substantive manager. Any concerns about timing can be discussed at this point, alleviating any difficulties later in the process.

Advertising a secondment

Secondments of over 6 months in duration must be advertised according to the Queen Mary Recruitment Policy. Secondments of under 6 months do not need to formally be advertised but principles of fairness and equal opportunity should be followed to make sure that interested colleagues can be considered, and a fair selection process followed.

HR will issue a Secondment Letter for internal secondments or Secondment Agreements for any secondments to or from external organisations.

Ending a secondment early

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to end the secondment early i.e. ahead of the agreed end date. Where it is considered that such circumstances may have arisen, colleagues are strongly advised to take advice from their Strategic HR Partner/Employee Relations Team prior to taking any action to end the secondment. The HR teams will provide guidance in terms of handling any discussions around early termination with all of the parties.

Other considerations

Appraisal - A secondee should expect to have an appraisal for their seconded role (if the secondment falls during the appraisal window). If appropriate, this could be done jointly with host and substantive line managers. The intention is that the secondee should have clear objectives for the duration of the secondment. [Appraisal guidance](#)

Apprenticeships - if the secondee is an apprentice, contact apprenticeships@qmul.ac.uk for advice.

Resources and Other toolkits

[CPD Training Platform](#) for development opportunities and [OPD webpages](#) for toolkits and resources