



To: The Presidents of the Universities

COVID-19

Temporary assignment arrangements for certain staff

Purpose:

1. The purpose of this letter is to inform Universities of the new arrangements for the temporary assignment of certain staff to different areas of work. This is to ensure the continuation of essential public services and is one of the many responses of Government and the health authorities to the unprecedented challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Priority of Continuity of Education:

2. The clear priority in the education and training sector is to ensure continuity of education, research and essential support services for learners, and this is being progressed across the sector using new and innovative ways of working.
3. Management will need to consider how best to utilise staff to facilitate the delivery of education, research and essential support services.

Temporary Assignment Arrangements:

4. All public servants who are not medically advised to self-isolate (because they are confirmed or pending confirmed COVID-19 cases) must be available to carry out work either to deliver services in their current post or for temporary assignment within the wider public service. This includes public servants who are being advised to restrict their movements and work from home, or who are working from home because of closures. In this regard, Circular 0026/2020 sets out working arrangements and leave entitlements associated with COVID-19.
5. Employers must now identify which staff are required to provide the essential delivery of education, research and essential support services to all students during the closure period. This includes lecturers and all other public service staff in the employment.
6. In doing so, Institutions should plan for contingencies in the knowledge that many staff may not be able to continue to work due to becoming ill.



7. Any public service staff member who is not required to be retained in providing education, research and essential support services and has not been medically advised to self-isolate will be available for assignment on a temporary basis to support delivery of other essential public services.
8. In order to implement this temporary assignment, the Public Appointments Service (PAS) has put in place a central database through publicjobs.ie which will identify staff who have been nominated for temporary assignment by management and enable providers of essential services to draw on the services of such staff.
9. Employers should send the link below to staff who they have identified as available for temporary assignment by **Friday 3 April**:

[Temporary Assignment Scheme Questionnaire](#)

Staff in all grades may be called for assignment subject to the terms of Circular 26/2020.

10. When they receive the link, the staff member will be asked to upload their details via an online questionnaire by **Tuesday 7 April**. The questionnaire can be completed on a mobile phone, tablet or laptop for ease of use and includes information such as PPSN, location, grade, work area, details of skills and experience etc.
11. Employers should as far as possible nominate staff for temporary assignment by Friday 3 April. Employers may continue to nominate staff after this date if necessary.
12. Once they have uploaded their details, the staff member must then inform their HR Manager that they have done so. Where a HR Manager has not received this confirmation from a nominated staff member by close of business on **Tuesday 7 April** (or, for staff nominated after 3 April, within 4 days of sending the link to the staff member), the HR section must immediately follow up with the nominated staff member to ensure that their details are submitted as per the terms of this letter.
13. PAS will collate all responses to the questionnaire on a daily basis and record the information on central databases.
14. Once responses to the questionnaire are received, PAS will seek to confirm with the relevant HR Unit that those staff who have completed the questionnaire are still releasable.
15. Releasable staff will then be added to the relevant PAS database for temporary assignment to a relevant body. Staff may then be called upon by other providers of critical public services to carry out essential duties.
16. PAS will conduct a skills match of releasable staff to vacancies and will initiate contact with them on behalf of the relevant body, providing details of the role and work location for temporary assignment.



17. PAS will finalise the temporary assignment process in consultation with the releasable staff and relevant body and notify the relevant HR section where applicable. Garda vetting requirements may apply depending on the nature of the post to which the individual is being assigned.
18. In no circumstances is an individual staff member permitted to upload their details to **the survey without having been authorised to do so by their employer or HR section.**
19. The Department will be working in partnership with the Public Appointments Service (PAS) on an ongoing basis regarding the sharing of high level data and statistics on the temporary assignment arrangements.
20. All staff who are temporarily assigned will remain staff members of the current/original employer and will remain on the payroll of the employer for the duration of their temporary assignment. In the event of the staff member needing to take leave during their temporary assignment, they should notify their employer in the normal way and also notify their current manager in the temporary assignment situation.
21. A copy of the FAQs issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to Temporary Assignments across the Civil and Public Service is available at www.per.gov.ie . This Letter and the DPER FAQs should be read in conjunction with DES Circular 0026/2020 regarding working arrangements and leave associated with COVID-19
22. The latest information from the Department in respect of COVID-19, including circulars, can be found at www.education.ie
23. Queries in relation to the temporary assignment arrangements should be addressed to: temporaryassignment@publicjobs.ie

Tara Carton
Principal Officer
External Staff Relations
1 April 2020