

REASSIGNMENT POLICY & PROCEDURE

Document Version	Version 2
Document Owner	Human Resources
Approved by	Executive Committee
Date	03 September 2025
Consulted with	Unite
Date	08 July 2025
Approved by	People & Culture Committee
Date	08 September 2025
Approved by	Governing Authority
Date	30 September 2025
Effective Date:	30 September 2025
Scheduled Review Date:	30 September 2030

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 This Policy and Procedure outlines the circumstances in which reassignment of employees will be considered and the Procedure to be applied in such circumstances. The purpose of the Policy and Procedure is:

- To ensure that employees in a reassignment situation are retained by the University, wherever possible;
- To ensure that employees are treated with dignity and respect during the reassignment process;
- To maintain efficiency in the working environment, through the effective management of reassignment;
- To ensure a fair and consistent approach to reassignment.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 ***To whom does the Policy apply?***

1.2.1.1 This Policy and Procedure applies to all University of Limerick employees who hold a permanent contract or a contract of indefinite duration with the University of Limerick. Contracts of employment reaching a natural conclusion in line with their specified purpose or fixed term will not lead to a reassignment under this Policy.

1.2.2 ***In what situations does the Policy apply?***

1.2.2.1 Instances where reassignment of employees may be required include meeting organisational and operational needs, organisational restructuring, management of resources, a job no longer exists in its current format or it substantially changes, facilitating employee/post compatibility.

1.2.3 ***Who is responsible for ensuring that the Policy (and any associated Procedure) is implemented and monitored?***

1.2.3.1 The Human Resources Division has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Reassignment Policy and Procedure, with the relevant Head of Department/School / Dean / Divisional Director playing a key procedural role.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Reassignment involves the transfer of an employee from one position to another within the University at a grade and terms and conditions of employment no less favourable than those in place for the employee prior to reassignment.

1.3.2 Reassignment may be on a temporary or a permanent arrangement.

1.3.3 "Temporary Reassignment" means the temporary transfer of an employee into

another area to cover a short-term service need, for a minimum period of one month and for a maximum period of twelve months, at the end of which the employee will revert to their substantive role or to a similar role (as outlined in section 3.3) at a grade and terms and conditions of employment no less favourable than those in place for the employee prior to reassignment.

1.3.4 "Permanent Reassignment" means the long-term permanent movement of an employee.

1.3.5 "Skilled Resource Pool" refers to the list of employees held centrally by the HR Division who are awaiting a reassignment to another role. Employees must be formally added to the Skilled Resource Pool where they hold a Contract of Indefinite Duration or Permanent role and their substantive position has been removed, is no longer available, no longer has funding, or other reasons as outlined in section 1.4.

1.4 Context

1.4.1 Reassignment of employees may be required for several reasons including (but not limited to) the following:

- as a result of changing organisational, financial and operational needs, including more efficient use of resources;
- where, as a result of organisational restructuring, the individual's job no longer exists in its current format or it substantially changes;
- where employees hold a contract of indefinite duration/permanent contract and the source of funding underpinning their role has been exhausted;
- for developing skills/abilities required in the longer term by the University;
- matching of employee skills and abilities with specific organisational requirements;
- to facilitate an employee who, by reason of disability and/or other medical reason, can no longer continue in their current role, despite consideration of reasonable accommodations and adjustments to that role;
- to facilitate an employee's return from career break where their substantive role is no longer available
- to facilitate a permanent employee who has held temporary contract(s) outside of their substantive post for 24-months or more and their substantive post is no longer available for business reasons whereby a long-term backfill solution was required, or restructuring was deemed necessary.

1.4.2 For clarity, contracts of employment reaching a natural conclusion in line with their specified purpose or fixed term will not lead to a reassignment under this Policy.

2. Policy Statements

2.1 Principles for the Reassignment of Employees

2.1.1 The University of Limerick is committed to the development and maintenance of a positive working environment in which all employees are valued equally and are encouraged to enhance their work life and develop themselves.

2.1.2 Reassignments will be decided in a fair, consistent and transparent manner (as outlined in Section 3), taking into account the business and operational needs of the University and the legitimate career interests and aspirations of employees.

2.1.3 The University is committed to a process of consultation and engagement with employees and their representatives (where employees choose to be represented) regarding proposed reassignment. The consultation process will commence immediately during which time no reassignment will take place. Ideally, the process should not take any longer than three months as it is the University's aim to conclude reassignments in a prompt fashion, however it is recognised that this timeframe may not always be feasible for niche roles or roles at higher grades as the process is dependent on suitable roles becoming available.

2.1.4 It is recognised that over time that business and operational needs may evolve and in limited circumstances a department, role, grade or purpose may no longer exist. Whilst the University recognises the principle that redundancy should be avoided, it nevertheless acknowledges that redundancies (as defined by legislation) may be necessary in such circumstances as outlined above. In such situations the University will consult with the recognised trade union in respect of any member affected and will endeavour, in so far as is reasonably practicable, to utilise reassignment as an alternative to redundancy.

2.1.5 Reassignment of employees on the Skilled Resource Pool will take precedence over recruitment except in circumstances where specific skills are required. This may include, where appropriate, reassigning staff to new or vacant positions outside of their original faculty or division.

3. Related Procedures for the Reassignment of Employees

3.1 General Procedure – Permanent Reassignment

3.1.1 Where an employee is considered for reassignment, managers will initially be encouraged to identify suitable opportunities for reassignment within their own department/division/faculty. In such cases, an employee may be integrated to a new role where this is deemed to be suitable alternative employment in line with the rationale above. Where a line manager is considering more than one employee for reassignment, any opportunities should be publicised to those employees and an agreed structured assessment process undertaken where more than one employee wishes to be considered for the position.

3.1.2 Managers seeking to commence reassignment of an employee/employee(s) for the reasons set out in section 1.4.1 must complete a permanent reassignment form (see Appendix 1) and indicate whether an alternative role has been identified or if the request is for the employee(s) to be added to the Skilled Resource Pool of employees requiring urgent reassignment.

3.1.3 Where an employee holds a permanent contract or a contract of indefinite duration and the source of funding underpinning their role has been exhausted, their line manager will be responsible for engaging with the relevant Head, Dean/Director and other parties to seek a suitable reassignment. The responsibility of the line manager will continue indefinitely until the person is placed in a permanent core-funded role. If a reassignment is necessary, managers will engage with HR & Finance at an early stage to seek advice and to formally add employees to the Skilled Resource Pool. HR will retain a central list of employees on the Skilled Resource Pool (and will require Appendix III to be completed to assist with this) requiring a transfer. Managers will initially be encouraged to identify suitable opportunities for reassignment within their own department/division/faculty. In such cases, an employee may be integrated to a new role where this is deemed to be suitable alternative employment in line with the rationale above.

3.1.4 Where practicable, the University will seek to reassign individuals to work of a similar position. Where this is not possible, the following criteria will be used to determine the suitability of alternative employment:

- the nature of the work;
- qualifications, skills and experience required to carry out the work;
- aptitude or capability of the individual to undertake the work;
- working arrangements e.g. hours of work, shift arrangements, leave arrangements etc.;
- level of responsibility relative to previous role;
- grade and pay.

3.1.5 The University will, in the spirit of partnership, inform the trade union in advance of all new workplace-related initiatives, which may require reassignment of employees. Notification will be given in advance and in sufficient time to allow discussions with the employees involved, and their trade union representatives (where employees choose to be represented). The process should not take any longer than three months.

3.1.6 Consultations between the University and affected parties will cover the nature of the changes involved, the reasons for the changes, the main foreseeable impacts on employees and proposed implementation dates. The consultations will be approached in a partnership manner and will be concluded in time to allow the changes to be introduced by the proposed implementation date.

3.1.7 Where exact matches are not possible following a reassignment decision, flexibility and a constructive approach will be required from the employee being reassigned and the managers concerned.

Where a full skills match does not exist following a reassignment decision then, following consultation with the employee, appropriate training (including off-site and on the job where appropriate) will be arranged by the Human Resources Division in order to equip the employee with the skills necessary for their new role. The nature of the training will be mutually agreed between the University and the employee and will take place when the employee takes up their new role. In practice, this may mean that as part of the reassignment, the manager and employee recognise that the employee requires specific supports in terms of training and development in order to be a successful fit for the role in the long term – this will need to be agreed on a case-by-case basis as appropriate for the person and the role. This will include the provision of the costs of any training identified and approved.

Reassignment will generally take precedence over recruitment, except in circumstances where specialist skills are required, and a skills match cannot be made with an employee on the Skilled Resource Pool, e.g. employees at the relevant grade on the Skilled Resource Pool must meet the minimum essential experience and qualification criteria to be reassigned into a particular role. The hiring unit must engage with the HR Division in an effort to fill vacant post through reassignment from the Skilled Resource Pool prior to advertising a position. The priority of reassignment may include, where appropriate, reassigning staff to new or vacant positions outside of their faculty or division.

3.1.8 While the HR Division will engage with employees and management on all reassignments, the HR Division will be responsible for making a final determination as to whether or not a person being reassigned is an appropriate fit for the role it is proposed to reassign them to.

3.1.9 A letter will issue from HR to the employee being reassigned to summarise the details of the reassignment.

3.2 General Procedure – Temporary Reassignment

3.2.1 The University reserves the right to temporarily reassign employees if necessary to promote efficient operations, improve use of resources, or to meet other essential organisational needs.

3.2.2 Temporary reassignments are subject to approval by the most senior person in the Academic Unit / Division / Dean / Divisional Director and the approval of the Director, Human Resources. In cases of temporary reassignment, the following conditions apply:

- The employee's temporary reassignment does not, in any way, guarantee the temporary reassignment position to the employee on a long term / permanent basis;
- The temporary reassignment does not confer any preference to the employee in competing for the position, should a similar vacancy arise;
- Temporary reassignment shall be for a minimum of one month to a maximum of 12 months.

3.2.3 Managers seeking to temporarily reassign an employee/employee(s) for the reasons set out in section 1.4.1 must complete a temporary reassignment form (see Appendix II) and indicate whether details of the alternative role identified.

3.2.4 A letter will issue from HR to the employee being reassigned to summarise the details of the reassignment.

3.3 Reassignment following an open recruitment competition

3.3.1 Should an existing employee on a permanent contract or on a Contract of Indefinite Duration (CID) be appointed to an alternative temporary UL post following a recruitment competition this will be treated as an internal temporary reassignment and the employee's permanent status will not be affected.

3.3.2 Where a temporary reassignment (following an open recruitment competition) is less than 4 years duration, the substantive post of a permanent employee will be retained for them. At the end of the reassignment the permanent employee will return to their substantive post and grade should the role still exist within their home School/Department. If the role no longer exists then they will be reassigned to a role within the University at their substantive grade.

3.3.3 In the case of reassignments (following an open recruitment competition) of greater than 4 years duration, the substantive post of a permanent employee will not be retained. At the end of the reassignment the employee will return to their substantive grade but may not necessarily go back to their home School/Department. This will not apply to appointments to Academic Roles of Responsibility which are rotational in nature (e.g. Head, Assistant Dean, Executive Dean, Associate Vice President, Vice President).

3.3.4 If at the end of the temporary reassignment (following an open recruitment competition) a permanent reassignment is necessary then the procedure outlined in section 4.3 below will be applied.

3.4 General Procedure – Requests for Reassignment in Exceptional Circumstances

3.4.1 The University's priority is to fill posts primarily through open, transparent and merit-based recruitment and through use of the Skilled Resource Pool, however, it is recognised that there may be occasions when individuals wish to seek reassignment to an alternative role for a variety of reasons of their own. Whilst the University has no obligation to support such requests, the University may consider individual requests for reassignment in exceptional circumstances where the employee can demonstrate a compelling need or valid justification for the move.
Such instances may include:

- medical or health related reasons that necessitates a change in role or environment;
- significant changes in personal circumstances;
- a breakdown in working relationships that cannot be reasonably addressed following the exhaustion of all internal resolution processes in line with University Policies and Procedures.

Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the operational needs of the University, the availability of suitable roles, and the overall impact on the both the current and receiving department.

3.4.2 The employee must submit a written request for reassignment to their line manager or if not appropriate under the circumstances the next person in the management line clearly outlining the exceptional circumstances underpinning the request and providing any relevant supporting documentation. The request will be considered by Human Resources in consultation with the relevant managers. Decisions will be based on the merits of the case, operational feasibility, and existing requirements to reassign staff on the Skilled Resource Pool, which will take precedence in all cases. Reassignment of this nature is subject to approval by the most senior person in the Academic Unit / Division / Dean / Divisional Director of both the current and receiving area and the Director, Human Resources.

3.5 Appeal

3.5.1 Following a reassignment decision, employees being reassigned through the Permanent Reassignment procedures, and employees in the department/division/faculty to which reassignment has been made or is about to be made, shall be informed of the reassignment decision at least ten working days prior to the effective date of the reassignment.

3.5.2 Employees being reassigned may appeal the reassignment decision via the procedures outlined below.

3.5.3 To appeal the reassignment decision, the employee will lodge their appeal in writing to the Director of Human Resources within five working days of notification of the reassignment decision. All decisions must take account of this timeframe in order to facilitate a review if required.

3.5.4 Employees being reassigned will make a written submission setting out the entire grounds for their appeal to the Director of Human Resources within fifteen working days of the notification of the reassignment decision.

3.5.5 Upon notification of an appeal request, the Director of Human Resources will nominate a person to hear the appeal.

3.5.6 The person nominated by the Director of Human Resources, if satisfied that the application falls within 3.4.2 above, will hear the appeal. Any such review will be completed within a reasonable timeframe, where possible not to exceed fifteen working days. The reasoned determination of the person nominated by the Director of Human Resources to hear the appeal will be submitted to the Director of Human Resources and will be provided subsequently to the affected party who lodged the appeal.

3.5.7 Subject to any statutory or other legal remedy available to the affected parties, the appeal outcome will be final. It will be the responsibility of the Human Resources Division to ensure that no employee shall be subsequently disadvantaged or victimised for exercising their right to appeal.

3.6 Monitoring

3.6.1 In the spirit of Partnership, this Policy and Procedures for Reassignment will be evaluated on a regular basis. This will involve consideration of the number of reassignment decisions and reviews and the general effectiveness of the process.

4. Related Documents

National Agreements
Skilled Resource Pool Profile Form

Appendix I - Permanent Reassignment Request Form

University of Limerick

Permanent Reassignment Request Form
(To be completed by the manager proposing reassignment)

All proposals should be in line with the Reassignment Policy and Procedure

Faculty / Division Department	
Division/Department/School/ Sub-Unit affected by this proposed change:	
Senior Manager:	
Executive Lead:	
HRBP:	
Date of Business Case:	

Overview of Department/School/Division and area highlighted for reassignment:

Reasons for the proposed Reassignment:
E.g. - *Instances where reassignment of employees may be required include meeting organisational and operational needs, organisational restructuring, management of resources, a job no longer exists in its current format or it substantially changes, facilitating employee/post compatibility, and within the context of the Equality and Diversity Policy.* - Current vs future - Statement of need for the reassignment

Have alternatives options been considered? **(If yes please specify main reasons for not using them).**

What are the staffing implications? How many are affected by the reassignment?
E.g. - Impact on employees - Number of employees who could be at risk and the nature of their employment contracts

Are there are suitable opportunities for reassignment within the department/division/faculty? As per 3.1.1. of the Policy, where an employee is considered for reassignment, managers are encouraged to identify suitable opportunities for reassignment within their own department/division/faculty in the first instance. **If yes, please provide details of same.** **If no, please confirm that the request is to add the employee to the Skilled Resource Pool for reassignment.**

Proposed process for handling staff feedback and any concerns?

SUBMITTED BY:

Manager/Head Signature and Job Title	**Date**

APPROVAL

Dean/Director

Signature / Title	**Date**

Human Resources Business Partner

Signature	**Date**

Next Steps: Following approval by Dean/Director, HRBP **Date:**
This section is to be completed by the relevant line manager in consultation with the HRBP for the area.

Appendix II - Temporary Reassignment Request Form

University of Limerick

To be completed by the manager proposing reassignment)

All proposals should be in line with the Reassignment Policy and Procedure

Faculty / Division Department	
Division/Department/School/ Sub-Unit affected by this proposed change:	
Senior Manager:	
Executive Lead:	
HRBP:	
Date of Business Case:	

Overview of Department and employee proposed for temporary reassignment (please include relevant details of proposed reassignment):

Reasons for the proposed Reassignment:

APPROVAL

Executive Lead

_____ _____

Signature / Title **Date**

Director, Human Resources

_____

Signature **Date**

Appendix III - Skilled Resource Pool Profile Form

Reassignment –Skilled Resource Pool Profile

The information in this form will be used to help identify which posts may be considered suitable alternative employment for you, based on your skills, abilities and experience. It is therefore important that you provide as much information as possible.

To ensure that you have supplied all relevant information this form should be completed in conjunction with your line manager. In addition, you may want to enclose an up-to-date CV.

PERSONAL DETAILS – BASIC INFORMATION			
Name		Staff ID	
PERSONAL DETAILS – CONTACT INFORMATION			
Email Address (work)			
CURRENT ROLE			
Faculty/Division		Department/ School	
Line Manager		FTE	
Job Title			
Grade			

GENERAL INFORMATION
Current Duties (Describe your main duties and responsibilities. Include any responsibilities for employees/finance/resources. You may wish to attach your job description)
Experience, Skills & Knowledge (Please provide information in relation to your particular skills, experience and knowledge. This should include skills and knowledge gained through employment, voluntary work and any other relevant activities you may have undertaken).

Qualifications, Training & Membership of Professional Body

Details	**Date**

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT
Are there any jobs/areas of the university where you would like to work? (Please give reasons)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Additional Information (any other information that you think may be relevant)

Employee Signature	**Date**

Manager Signature	**Date**