



# Secondment Guidelines

## Purpose

To provide Managers with information to manage internal and external secondments appropriately within Unitec.

## Scope

These guidelines apply to all secondment opportunities at Unitec.

## Terms of reference

Term	Definition
<b>Secondment</b>	An agreement between a staff member and Unitec when a staff member works in a position for a specific period of time for development and/or to assist Unitec with managing resources and achieving its strategic objectives. During the secondment the staff member's substantive role is kept open for them to return to.
<b>Secondee</b>	An employee working in a secondment.
<b>Secondment Line Manager</b>	The Line Manager for the secondment opportunity.
<b>Substantive position</b>	Main position with Unitec.
<b>Substantive Manager</b>	Line Manager for main position.
<b>Specific period</b>	The position has a specific period of time to be no longer than 12 months.
<b>Internal secondment</b>	The temporary movement of a Unitec employee to another area of Unitec.
<b>External secondment</b>	The temporary movement of a Unitec employee to another educational institute or to an external organisation.
<b>Incoming secondment</b>	The temporary movement of an employee of an external organisation to a position within Unitec.

## Objectives

Unitec encourages secondments in the spirit of our kaupapa to provide development opportunities for staff members and to assist Unitec with managing resources and achieving its strategic objectives.

Secondments have an organisational benefit including exchange of information and ideas, promotion of organisation relationships and investment in organisational effectiveness.

The objectives of a secondment include but are not limited to;

- Deploy an employee with particular skills and abilities to undertake a particular project.
- Cover a period of maternity leave or sickness absence.
- Provide an opportunity for an individual to acquire skills or experience which will benefit their team/school upon their return, as well as providing career development for the individual employee in line with their ADEP plan.
- Build internal capability bringing in specialist skills; and/or transferring knowledge.
- Utilise expertise across teams/schools during a period of organisational change, when business requirements are being determined.
- Provide back-up cover while a vacancy is being advertised and filled.

It is important that a secondment should not be utilised in order to 'trial' a new position or shift a performance issue.

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## Guiding principles

These objectives are underpinned by the following guiding principles:

- Capability requirements are generally identified in an employee's ADEP plan.
  - Managers are expected, as far as practicable, to develop their employees to their maximum potential.
  - The investment in the employee's capability development should benefit the employee, the team/school, enhance industry partnerships and ultimately benefit the whole of Unitec.
  - Teams/schools need to work with others, both to achieve their objectives and to make available the best opportunities for their employees.
- A secondment opportunity is a key part of an employee's professional development. A salary adjustment or allowance will not be applied unless there is a significant increase in responsibility eg: decision making, financial authority or already specific skill set you hold that you immediately add and provide value to the secondment opportunity

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## When to use a secondment

A secondment can be utilised where an employee is expected to acquire new skills consistent with their agreed career/professional development plans.

For example, the person has:

- Developed theoretical understanding but has little practical knowledge.
- Practical hands on experience but needs to put this into strategic or conceptual context.
- Expertise in an area of specialty and could further expand their professional knowledge and skills.
- Project management training or expertise in smaller projects and could take on a project management leadership role.
- Specified that they would like some experience in a particular role, e.g. management.

Or they will:

- Be stretched by higher duties, for example experiencing higher levels of leadership and capability.
- Have improved access to the senior leadership management development process through expanded depth and diversity of work experience.
- Benefit from working in a more complex environment or in a new or different type of organisation.

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### **Appropriate duration**

A secondment is in essence a temporary arrangement and should be a maximum of 12 months.

Please consider the following when considering the duration of a secondment:

- Secondments of less than 4 months are unlikely to provide capability growth benefits.
- In the exceptional circumstance where a secondment is extended beyond 12 months, an employee's substantive position will be released, and if necessary advertised on a permanent basis.
- Secondments may be offered on a part-time basis whilst the substantive position continues on a reduced basis.

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### **Eligibility**

An employee may apply for a secondment if they:

- Are a permanent employee.
- Have a current ADEP plan in place and the secondment opportunity provides an integral part of the secondee's professional development plan focussing on particular skill development that will benefit both the secondee and Unitec.
- Have the endorsement from their Manager before applying for the secondment.

The Manager must:

- Articulate how the skills and experience gained will benefit their team/school when they return to their substantive role at the end of the secondment.
- Feel comfortable that they can backfill the substantive role temporarily while the secondee is away and that the organisation's needs can still be met during this time.

Advice should be sought from:

- Human Resources to ensure the secondment agreement meets all requirements, including policies and key obligations.
- For external secondments – Finance regarding cost recovery expectations and GST.

### **Advertising a secondment opportunity**

Although a secondment can provide back-up cover while a position is being advertised and filled, the Education and Training Act 2020, constrains organisations from appointing employees (including secondees) to a position without first advertising and appointing the best person for the position.

The following guidelines apply to advertising secondment opportunities at Unitec:

- Three to six months – there is no requirement for the hiring manager to advertise the role. The role will need to be advertised if the secondment is extended.
- Seven to 12 months – role is to be advertised internally via the internal Careers Page via Snaphire or via Expressions of Interest. The best approach can be discussed with the relevant HR Business Partner. Unitec's policy and procedure for Recruitment, Selection and Appointment of staff will apply for secondments.

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### **Managing secondments**

The employee applies and is offered a fixed term position on a secondment basis. The employee is considered along with any other employees based on requirements of the role.

The employee receives the secondment agreement detailing the period of secondment including notification that their substantive role will be kept open for them to return to. In the event that the secondment is extended beyond 12 months, the substantive role should be released and the employee made clear they are on a fixed term contract with no substantive role to return to.

The Secondment Manager should keep in touch with the substantive Manager and secondees with respect to intentions and how it is all going.

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### **Extending secondments**

The term of the secondment can only be extended by exception with Executive Member approval and should not be extended beyond 12 months without the substantive role being released.

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### **Acting up**

'Acting up' is generally where unplanned cover for a position at a higher level is required for a short period of time, e.g. due to absence of the substantive position holder, usually within the same department/pathway.

Acting up opportunities can normally be offered for short periods e.g. for up to three months. These opportunities do not have to be advertised and are intended to cover short term situations.

Due to the short-term nature of an acting up position the individual will be paid at their existing remuneration for the period of the acting up assignment unless otherwise agreed.

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### **End of secondment**

The expectation is that the secondee will return to their substantive role once the secondment is complete. If the secondment is extended past 12 months, then the substantive role may be backfilled and the employee will no longer hold their substantive position. In the event that the substantive role is released, Unitec will work with the employee to provide visibility of available roles however there is no guarantee that any particular position will be available. The secondee cannot expect to undertake the seconded role for an extended period of time and keep their substantive position. If for any reason, the secondment is ended earlier than planned (by the Secondees Manager or the substantive Line Manager), both Managers will agree/coordinate appropriate notice for the employee to return to their substantive role. In the event that the substantive role is released, Unitec will assist in finding a position at the end of the completion of the secondment but cannot guarantee a position will be available and in this scenario, the employee's employment would end at the end of the secondment.

### Strategies to mitigate risk

Risks	Strategies
<p>The Manager for substantive role is reluctant to let the person be released on secondment due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerns about back-filling the secondee's substantive position</li> <li>work pressures</li> </ul>	<p>Enable other staff to act up.</p> <p>Use internal secondments to replace the secondee.</p> <p>Use an external secondment or contractor.</p> <p>Ask the secondee for their input on how to back-fill their position.</p>
<p>The secondee is not satisfied on return to their substantive role, due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concerns about returning to a position at the same or similar level;</li> <li>benefits of their experience on secondment not being realised by the substantive role.</li> </ul>	<p>From the outset of the secondment, manage and plan for the secondee's return, ensuring expectations are clear.</p> <p>Identify how to build on the secondee's experience gained during the secondment, so that the likelihood of the secondee returning and being satisfied increases.</p> <p>Keep in touch with the secondee during the secondment and brief them on what is expected.</p> <p>Build on the experience gained on secondment by expanding the secondee's role into more complex or higher profile work areas.</p>
<p>Secondees does not come up to speed quickly</p>	<p>Ensure the secondee is inducted.</p> <p>Clarify the work objectives.</p> <p>Provide coaching/mentoring.</p> <p>Provide management support.</p>
<p>The secondment may not work out</p>	<p>Keep in regular contact. Often the best learning opportunities are the most challenging.</p> <p>Ensure the secondee discusses any issues with the secondment manager.</p>

	Use conflict resolution provisions if required.
The project in the secondment changes or is no longer viable	Discuss options with the host manager. The secondment may need to be terminated.
The secondee does not return	Keep the secondment duration to a reasonable length. The longer the duration, the less likely a secondee will return.  If the secondee does not return, maintain contact with them. They may come back at a later date with better skills and experience.

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