

1. Aims and application of the process

This process aims to reduce the potential negative impact on staff involved in organizational change e.g. re-shaping or restructuring part or all of the department/institute and facilitates a change to staff roles without the need to place staff at risk of redundancy.

Aberystwyth University will consult with the recognized trade unions on the appropriateness of this process prior to the instigation of the organizational change. Consultation with the trade unions on the proposed new structure will be undertaken in accordance with the Redundancy Avoidance Procedure.

This process also aims to ensure that employees are placed in a role which enables them to utilise their skills, knowledge and abilities and facilitates the transfer of employees from an existing role to a new role in the proposed new structure for their Institute/Department at the earliest opportunity.

This process seeks to:

- Set out a staged process which will be applied consistently and logically, and provides for fair and equitable treatment of individual employees, within each grade.
- Redeploy staff where possible to avoid placing staff at risk and prior to advertising any new posts within the affected departments/institutes through normal recruitment processes (internal and external advertising).
- Introduce a transparent process of matching and slotting post to post (i.e. this is not about the person) with the aim of reducing the anxiety that placing staff 'at risk' generates for both those directly affected and the wider University community.
- Deal with each situation constructively and sensitively on a case by case basis and for each employee affected to have the opportunity to be matched and slotted in to a new role where they meet the criteria laid down in this process.

The University will continue to consider applications for voluntary redundancy or requests for early release of pension benefits during any part of this process.

2. Eligibility

This process may apply to any Grade 1 – 9 posts within the University covered by the Framework Agreement.

This process applies to employees on open ended contracts, employees on secondments affected by the proposals where they cannot return to their substantive post (in accordance with the Secondment Policy) and employees on a fixed term contract with more than 2 years' continuous service, who hold a job role which is affected by proposals to restructure a particular institute/department. For employees who hold multiple roles in the University it will only apply to the post(s) affected by the restructure.

It should be noted that this process does not provide an automatic right to a different post via matching and slotting.

This process will not commence until all new posts have been evaluated using HERA. Where an existing Grade 1 to 9 post has not previously been evaluated this will also take place.

3. Exceptions/Exclusions

This process does not apply to the normal expiry of a fixed term contract.

Where a situation arises in respect of a post that has not been evaluated but has a spot hourly rate, the post will not be included in this process unless such spot hourly rate roles exist in the new structure.

4. Matching and Slotting: definitions and principles

- a. The matching process follows a number of clearly defined stages, to assess if an existing role can be 'matched' to a role in the new structure based upon:
 - i. A comparison of the current role profile or job description and the new job description by the matching panel.
 - ii. Identification of a single match or
 - iii. Identification of a number of potential matches and an interview process.
- b. The matching criteria may vary from proposal to proposal depending on the complexity and individual circumstances relating to each and every situation. Ordinarily the benchmark level to assess if an employee can be matched to a role on the new structure will be set at a minimum of two thirds of the duties and responsibilities plus meeting the essential criteria of the new role. **A 'match' therefore is where the assessment by the Matching Panel referred to in paragraph Stage 2 below, concludes that a minimum of two thirds of the duties and responsibilities are included in a post in the new structure.** Any change to the threshold will be agreed with the relevant trade unions during the initial discussions and prior to the implementation of the matching and slotting process.
- c. The matching criteria will be based upon an objective comparison of the new role compared with the existing role, based on the overall job purpose, key principle responsibilities and essential criteria, not on an assessment of an individual's ability or performance in their existing role.
- d. Where job descriptions have been revised to take count of the weighting of responsibilities both in terms of time allocation and importance, this should be factored into the comparison of the two roles.
- e. Slotting relates to the offer of a role, on the same grade (Stages 1-2).
- f. Matching and slotting will be applied on a grade by grade basis.
- g. If an employee does not meet the criteria for Stage 1 or 2 (outlined below) or if there are no like for like roles or posts available for matching and slotting at their current grade, he or she will move directly to Stage 3.
- h. If at any stage of the process an additional post becomes available within that department or institute, e.g. through Voluntary Severance, early release of pension benefits, redeployment, resignation following alternative employment etc, the matching and slotting panel will review the previous stages to allow for the matching and slotting of any outstanding employees.
- i. The matching and slotting panel will be tasked with addressing each stage individually or in a combination of the stages.

- j. The matching and slotting panel will make the decisions about employees to be matched and slotted in to the roles available. The Panel will comprise:
 - i. Institute Director or Head of Service Department.
 - ii. Institute Manager or Line Manager.
 - iii. A representative from the Human Resources Department.
 - iv. Trade Union Representative from an appropriate union.
- k. If an employee does not meet the eligibility criteria for matching and slotting they will move directly to Stage 3 of the process.

5. Matching and Slotting Process

The Matching and Slotting panel will carry out a comparison of an existing role with every new role available at the same grade in the proposed new structure. Matching involves a comparison of a current role with a new role by reference to the duties and essential criteria of both posts.

Stage 1: one match

Where only one employee is matched to a new post at the same grade based on both meeting the two thirds threshold of the new duties and the essential criteria, the employee will be slotted into the new post.

An employee will be notified, in writing, that they have been matched and slotted into a post within 2 working days of the Matching Panel having made a determination.

The employee must confirm in writing within a further 2 working days whether they accept the role they have been slotted into.

If they accept the offer, the HR Department will proceed to issue a contract of employment for the post and the process will end. If the employee declines the offer and no alternative slot has been identified for them, they will proceed to Stage 3 of the process.

Stage 2: Multiple matches or fewer posts than matches

Where more than one employee meets the matching criteria, a selection process will be instigated which will entail an interview with all those employees who could be a potential match for a new post or where there are more employees identified that could match than the number of new posts of that type available

An employee will be notified in writing, within 2 working days of the Matching Panel having made a determination, that they have been matched to a post. The employee will also be informed that, as there are multiple matches or fewer posts than matches, a competitive recruitment process will follow to select the most suitable employee for the post(s) available.

The employee must confirm within a further 2 working days whether they wish to attend the interview. Employees will also be required to submit the shortened Application Form (Appendix 2) for consideration by the interview panel should they wish to proceed further in the process.

The interview panel will be made up of 3 representatives from the following list:-

- i. 2 panel members from the relevant Institute or Professional Service Department (as appropriate and consistent with the Composition of Appointing Panels guidance)
- ii. 1 panel member from the HR Department

The normal interview record form (Appendix 3) must be completed by each interview panel member and returned to HR at the end of the interview together with a completed AAF1 Form – Appointment Authorisation Form (Appendix 4).

A gender balance will be maintained at all times in accordance with the University's Composition of Appointing Panels guidance in this respect.

The Department of Human Resources will write to the successful employee within 2 days of the interview to confirm the offer of appointment.

The employee must confirm in writing within a further 2 working days whether they accept the offer of employment.

If they accept the offer, the HR Department will proceed to issue a contract of employment for the post and the process will end. If the employee declines the offer and no alternative slot or interview process has been identified for them, they will proceed to Stage 3 of the process.

All other employees will be notified, in writing, of the outcome of their interview within 5 working days of the interview having taken place.

If an employee does not meet the criteria for Stage 2, they will move directly to Stage 3 of this process.

6. Stage 3: No match

Where an employee has not been slotted or appointed to a post following a competitive interview under this process, the HR Department will advise the Institute Director/Head of Service Department that those staff should now be considered under the Redundancy Avoidance Policy. The line manager will arrange to meet with these staff to inform them that as a result of not being slotted or appointed to a post that they may potentially be 'at risk' of redundancy and will be dealt with in accordance with the Redundancy Avoidance Policy.

7. Any remaining vacancies

Any unfilled posts in the proposed new structure will then be advertised in accordance with the University's normal Recruitment Policy.

8. Reasonable Adjustments to the process

- a. The University will take into consideration any disabilities and/or adjustments required in order to assist an employee fulfil a different role they have been slotted in to. The employee will usually be referred to Occupational Health at this stage for an assessment.
- b. Staff should advise the appropriate HR representative of any adjustments that would assist during the course of this process.
- c. Any flexible working arrangements or specified hours of work already in place will need to be reassessed as part of the slotting process in discussion with the employee, once they have been notified of the outcome of the process. Wherever possible, these existing arrangements will be

honoured but remain subject to the ongoing needs of the department/institute.

9. Application of the process

- a. This process only applies to organizational change proposals where different job roles are created but where existing staff do not meet all of the new responsibilities and essential criteria but where significant elements of the different role(s) are already encompassed in existing job roles.
- b. The benchmark for significant elements of the new role already being undertaken has been set at two thirds or more of the existing job role (a potential match). Assessment of an existing post against the essential criteria for a new post will be on the basis of appropriately qualified either formally or through experience.

10. Trial period

- a. Consideration will be given to any request from an employee for a trial period in the new role identified for slotting purposes. **This request should be submitted in writing to the Line Manager within 5 days of being notified of being slotted or appointed following a competitive interview process.** The employee may request meetings during the trial period with their line manager.
- b. Trial periods will be for a period of 4 weeks only except in the following circumstance:
 - i. Where an employee appeals the decision making process for slotting to a particular post, all such appointments will be made on a trial basis until the outcome of the appeal is known.
- c. If during a trial period the employee decides that the post is unsuitable, he/she must notify the Director of Human Resources outlining their reasons. A meeting will be arranged with the employee to discuss the matter. If the reasons are accepted, other matching/slotting opportunities will be sought if they are still available.
- d. If during the course of the trial period the line manager decides that the individual is not suitable, he/she must submit their reasons for this in writing to the Director of Human Resources and provide evidence of the training opportunities, support and guidance provided to the employee. This must be received by the Director of Human Resources before the end of the trial period. The Director of Human Resources will arrange for the original Matching Panel to consider the submission to ensure that is reasonable. The rationale should be based on performance in the new role and not conduct issues. The original Matching Panel will convene to discuss the documentation and determine the way forward. A meeting will be arranged with the employee to discuss the matter once the Matching Panel have made a determination. If the reasons are accepted, other matching/slotting opportunities will be sought if they remain available. Where they do not remain available, the employee will be referred back to Stage 3 of this process.

11. Training Needs

- a. Due to the nature of this process, it is anticipated that some knowledge, skills, experience or qualifications may not be held by the "slotted" employee. Where this arises, a training plan should be developed as part

of the Staff Development and Performance Review (SDPR) process to ensure that the employee is provided with the necessary training and support to enable them to effectively carry out the full range of duties of the post within a 12 month period.

12. Appeals Process - where an employee is not matched.

All employees will have a right to appeal against a decision **not** to match them to a new post at the same grade on the grounds that due process has not been followed.

The matching process is based upon an evaluation of the role as opposed to an individual's ability, therefore applications for appeal will only be considered in relation to process. The appeal cannot be based on the merits of an individual or skills comparison with other employees.

There is no right of appeal once a competitive interview process takes place as the decision to appoint at this stage is based on merit.

13. Arrangements for an appeal

- a. Notification of an intention to appeal must be submitted within 5 working days of receiving confirmation that they have not been matched to a post under the matching and slotting process. This must be sent to the Director of Human Resources.
- b. An employee will have a further 5 working days from the date of their notification of appeal to prepare and submit their evidence in support of the appeal.
- c. The appeal will be considered by a Pro Vice-Chancellor within 5 working days of receiving the evidence in support of the appeal. This will be a desk top exercise where all the paperwork and evidence of the process followed will be considered.
- d. The decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor will be confirmed in writing within a further 2 working days.
- e. There will be no further right of appeal under the matching and slotting process. However, this does not prevent access to the grievance procedure.

14. Support for staff

- a. Staff can access the Employee Assistance Programme 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Logon details can be found on the HR Website by following the link <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/employment-information/eap-carefirst/>
- b. Additional support can be requested on an individual basis from the HR Department, for example, assistance with interview skills technique and the completion of the shortened application form.

15. Contract Status

- a. It is anticipated that in the majority of cases employees will be slotted on a permanent basis to another role. Where an employee on a fixed term contract the University does not guarantee employment beyond the original contract term, unless the post available is a permanent one.

16. Legal matters

- a. The policy complies with and exceeds the requirements of the current legislation (The Employment Act 2002, the Equality Act 2010, and any subsequent amendments to each Act) and demonstrates the University's commitment to retaining quality staff, maintaining good human resource practices and being responsive to changing business needs in line with best practice.
- b. This process does not form part of an employee's terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to removal at the discretion of the University. Any changes to the process will be carried out in consultation with the recognised trade unions.
- c. Aberystwyth University terms and conditions of employment will apply to all appointments made through the matching and slotting process.
- d. Employees will retain their existing terms and conditions during the course of the matching and slotting process; however, where staff are **not** successfully matched, their protected terms and conditions will apply in the event of any subsequent process being instigated e.g. redundancy.

17. Process Review

- a. The process will be formally reviewed every 2 years or as deemed necessary to ensure that the process remains compliant with legislation and/or good practice.
- b. Such reviews will be conducted by the Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee and presented to the Professional Development, Staffing & Equality Committee for approval.

18. Equality Impact Assessment

- a. An equality assessment has been carried out in respect of the application of this process. This will be a dynamic process in respect of each restructure for which this process will be applied.