

Secondment Policy

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For **International** secondment, please see the Policy available at:

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-195.pdf>

The latest version of this document is always to be found at:

<http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-004.pdf>

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Secondment Policy

Summary

What is this Policy about?

This Policy provides the basis for all formal internal and external secondment arrangements across the University.

Who is this Policy for?

All employees who have both successfully completed their probation and been employed by the University for a minimum of 12 months.

How does the University check this Policy is followed?

The Human Resources Department (HR) will check that this Policy is followed.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this Policy?

The HR Department should be the first point of contact on any queries, details can be found at www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/humanresources/contactus/hrbusinesspartnerteams/.

1. Introduction

The aim of the Secondment Policy and procedure is to provide guidance to enable managers to best facilitate the development needs of their staff. It is not intended to be prescriptive but to prompt full consideration of the issues to be addressed by departments when offering a secondment opportunity and by prospective candidates when considering whether to apply for a secondment. This Policy and procedure provides the basis for all formal secondment arrangements both across the University and externally.

2. Policy statement

The University of Portsmouth is committed to creating an equitable, developmental and motivating working environment, which values and empowers people at all levels. Secondment opportunities can be an appropriate means of achieving this commitment.

The University recognises that individuals will be committed and motivated to achieve strategic objectives when individual aspirations are aligned with the University's **Strategic Plan**. Provision of appropriate support and development opportunities for staff is essential to improve their performance and to respond to the demands and pressure on them. Objectives for individual members of staff should be closely aligned to the overall objectives of the Faculty, Department and Service plans. These individual objectives are decided at meetings with staff and through Performance Development Reviews (PDR) and other career development planning.

The University of Portsmouth is committed to equality of opportunity and to promoting an ethos of dignity, courtesy and respect throughout the organisation for all employees, visitors and secondees. An impact assessment of this Policy and procedure has been undertaken.

3. Scope

The Secondment Policy applies to employees who have both successfully completed their probation and been employed by the University for a minimum of 12 months. Secondments will only be considered in the following three circumstances:

- When an individual identifies an advertised opportunity for which they would like to be considered on a secondment basis. Before an internal secondment opportunity can be advertised, the University **Organisational Change, Redeployment and Redundancy Policy** must be followed to determine whether any suitable redeployee could fill the position.
- Where there is a particular organisational need within the same department, e.g. to resource a specific project, provide cover for a long-term absence or fill a role that is offered on a rotational basis. In such a case, the requirement may be met by re-assigning, for a defined period of time, a member of staff with the requisite skills, knowledge and experience or expertise in specific aspects of the University's activities.

- The University reserves the right to identify secondment opportunities for individuals at their current grade, in line with the developmental needs of the individual. Such opportunities may not be advertised and should be discussed with the individual during the PDR process.

For situations where the individual is approached by the University to undertake a specific task or work for a specified period, the terms of the secondment may not apply, particularly in relation to the duration, i.e. where the secondment might extend beyond two years. In such cases the University would agree to protect the substantive post for that extended period and the terms of secondment will be no less favourable than specified in the Policy.

4. Definitions

4.1 Secondment

A secondment is a temporary placement of an employee to another role for a specific purpose and period of time to the mutual benefit of all parties. The secondment is usually no more than two years. This is different to 'acting up' which is defined in section 4.2 below.

Secondments occur where a Faculty/Department of the University wishes to temporarily deploy an employee who has the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience to undertake particular tasks that cannot be covered by existing roles. Normally these tasks are expected to be for a limited duration although there are occasions when the secondment offers an opportunity to assess whether the need for the particular expertise is likely to be long term. These secondments can be within the same Faculty/Department in which an employee works (normally where there is no increase to the Faculty/Department headcount), elsewhere within the University or external to the University. The same principles apply to full and part-time secondments.

The University supports the use of secondments for business needs, recognising them as:

- a means of succession planning;
- adding to the skills base of the University;
- an opportunity to build or develop relationships with internal departments or external partners;
- personal development for the individual.

The role to which an individual is seconded may be of the same grade as their substantive role, or possibly, a higher grade. Annual incremental progression will be applied during the secondment. If the secondee, as part of a development plan, wishes to undertake a secondment in a role at a lower grade, the secondee would be expected to move to the pay, terms and conditions associated with the seconded post.

If an individual is interested in or applies for secondment and currently requires a visa to work, advice should be sought from an HR Adviser/HR Officer by the individual and the manager(s) involved, to determine whether their visa limits their ability to undertake a secondment.

Individuals will be given a secondment letter stating details of the arrangement which will act as a temporary variation to their contract of employment.

Any secondment is subject to the normal approvals process which applies to any recruitment undertaken across the University. Prior to proceeding managers should seek advice and guidance from their management accountant and HR Business Partner/Adviser.

4.2 Acting up – internal

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. Acting up opportunities can normally be offered for a maximum of 12 months. These opportunities do not have to be advertised and are intended to cover short term situations. An individual cannot normally be offered an 'acting up' position which is more than one grade higher than their current position. If there is more than one individual within the department who could cover the acting up, the opportunity should be offered to the group and a selection process applied. An example of an email asking for expressions of interest from within the department is shown at Appendix 2.

Acting up is subject to the normal approvals process. Prior to proceeding managers should seek advice and guidance from their management accountant and HR Business Partner/Adviser.

Where an 'acting up' role becomes available on a permanent basis, e.g. the substantive person does not return to the role, an open recruitment process subject to the normal approvals process will be required.

Please contact your HR Business Partner or HR Adviser for details on the process. The individual will be paid at the appropriate rate for the role for the period of acting up. At the end of the period the individual will revert to their substantive role with the associated pay and conditions.

5. Support for secondments

Whilst the University is committed to encouraging personal development this must be balanced against the business needs of the department or service. Approval of the current line manager and budget holder is required, after seeking advice from HR. Secondment opportunities should not be unreasonably refused by the home department; however support for secondments is not automatic and may not be possible in every case. It will be dependent upon a number of factors and the length of the proposed secondment will have a bearing on whether the individual may be able to return to their existing post. Secondments will normally be restricted to a maximum of two years after which the individual will be expected to return to their substantive department.

5.1 Granting secondments

Secondments should normally be granted provided they meet the following criteria:

- that the secondment will provide personal and professional development for the employee;
- that there will be overall benefits to the University through improved individual and organisational performance;
- that the seconding department can reasonably expect to cover the work of the secondee by redeployment, inward secondment or recruitment.

5.2 Reasons for refusal

Secondments can sometimes be refused by the current line manager, if:

- there is a significant impact on quality or performance of the department;
- the department is unable to recruit, replace or reorganise the work among existing staff;
- the individual is being monitored under the formal stages of HR policies and procedures;
- the individual applies for more than one secondment in a three year period.

5.3 Manager's right to recall

The line manager is able to recall the employee back to his or her original role earlier than planned, subject to agreeing a return date with the placement manager or third party and the individual.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Current line manager

Managers should first consider whether it is possible to release the individual from their current role for the requested time period. Managers are advised to involve the HR Business Partner/HR Adviser in discussing the options for providing temporary cover of a post at an early stage. It is also important to consider the individual's development needs and how they may best be met by support for a secondment. Individuals can benefit from secondment opportunities and in many cases, will return to their original team at the end of the period with increased knowledge and experience and a greater understanding of the University.

Before the individual starts their secondment, the line manager should consider if there are any job-related possessions to be returned to the department such as keys, electronic equipment, electronic access to confidential information, etc.

6.2 Line manager during secondment

During the secondment it is recommended that there are regular reviews with the secondee following the probationary model at one, three and six months to ensure individuals are supported and also there is an opportunity to review performance. The placement manager or third party will be responsible for day-to-day line management during the secondment. Any HR matters that may continue beyond the secondment period must be informed to the current line manager. The PDR will be the responsibility of whoever is the line manager at the time the PDR is due.

6.3 Individuals

Prior to submitting an application for secondment, individuals must approach their line manager to discuss whether a secondment application would be supported by the department. Prior to approaching their line manager, individuals are encouraged to identify areas of their own development which would directly benefit from the secondment opportunity and ultimately how any knowledge or experience gained as a result will benefit the team to which they will return. Normally, this development discussion should be part of the annual Performance and Development Review although it is acknowledged it may arise outside this discussion.

The line manager must consider the needs of the service but will not unreasonably withhold consent for the secondment. If the manager does refuse the secondment, and the individual is in an open-ended post, they will not be permitted to apply for the role internally.

7. Disputes

HR Business Partners/HR Advisers are able to provide assistance to both individuals and managers to mediate and negotiate acceptable outcomes regarding internal secondment opportunities.

8. At the end of secondment

Prior to the end of the period of secondment, a meeting should be arranged between the secondee and their substantive line manager to discuss re-orientation to their substantive post, and in order to update the individual on any changes within the department. They should also discuss any benefits gained during the secondment that may assist them in their substantive post. This is to maximise the benefit to the individual and the department of the development gained by the secondment, and to refresh job-specific skills, if necessary. This meeting should be arranged at least one month before the return date. Two months before the end of the secondment the HR Service Centre will notify the current and previous line managers or third party and the individual that their secondment is due to finish as a reminder for this meeting to be arranged.

If, during the term of the secondment, organisational change results in the original post being substantially altered or made redundant, the guaranteed right to return will cease to apply. In the event of this happening the employee will be consulted on any changes in line with the University's Organisational Change, Redeployment and Redundancy Policy, found at <http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-044.pdf>.

If the secondment role continues beyond the end of a fixed term contract, as there will be no substantive role to return to, appropriate notice will be given to the individual before the end of the secondment that the employment will cease. The normal University redeployment process will apply towards the end of the secondment.

9. Extension requests

An extension to a secondment should not exceed a total secondment period of two years and would need to be agreed with the original department (where the substantive role is) as they would need to consider the impact. If the original department do not agree to the extension then the individual should return to their substantive post on the date originally agreed.

Where an internal seconded role becomes available on a permanent basis, the incumbent in the seconded role could be offered the role on a substantive basis in the first instance. This can only happen if there has been an open recruitment process at the start of the secondment and there have been no significant changes to the role. If the post is to be re-advertised, a discussion should be held with the secondee beforehand. This is to be carried out by the current line manager.

10. External secondment

Where the secondment is external to the University, a third party agreement will be drawn up by the HR Business Partner in conjunction with the parties involved. The agreement will make clear responsibilities of the two organisations for the secondment and will vary according to the individual circumstances and case.

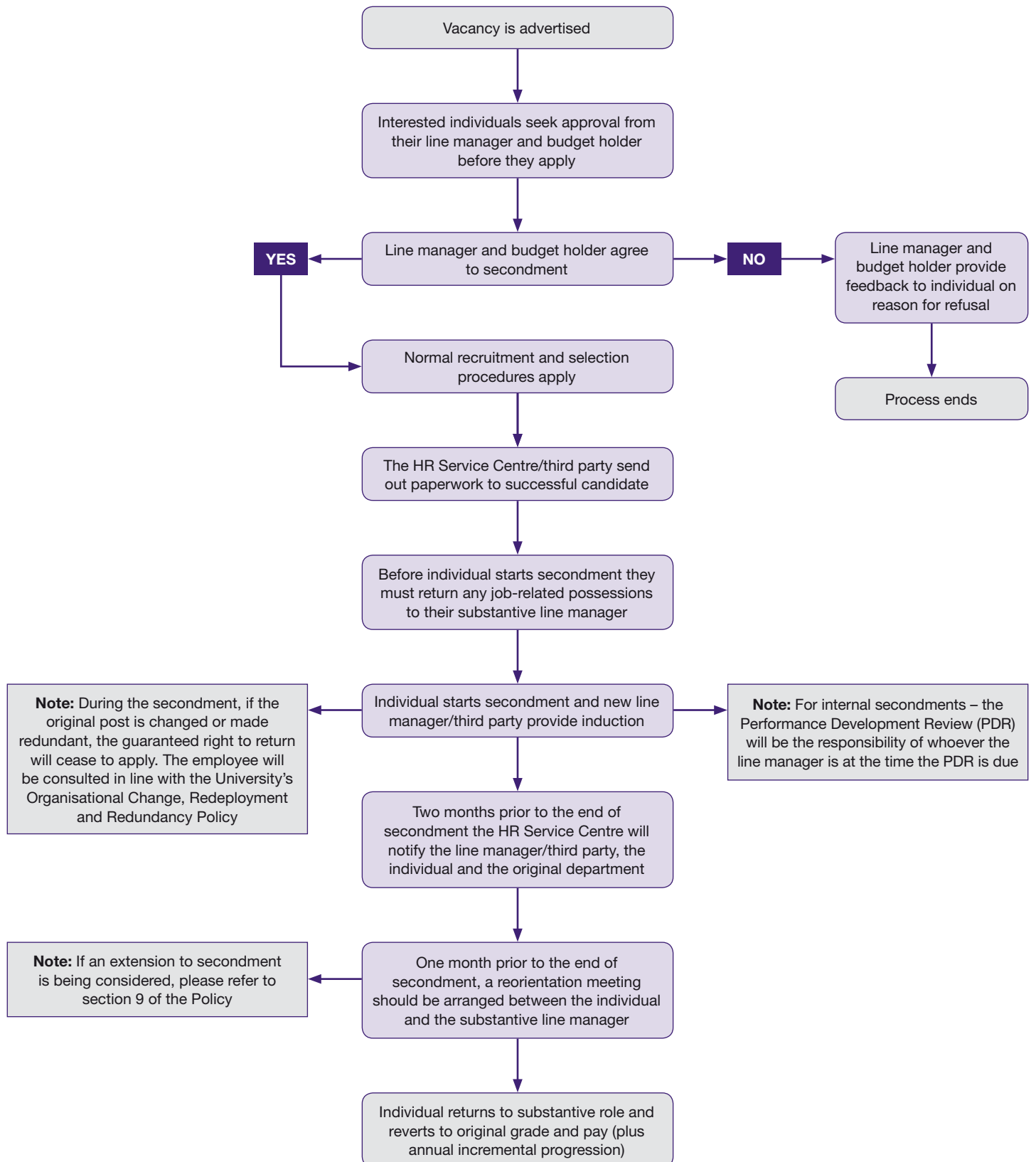
11. Procedure

The process is outlined in Appendix 1. If you have any queries or need advice please contact your HR Business Partner/HR Adviser.

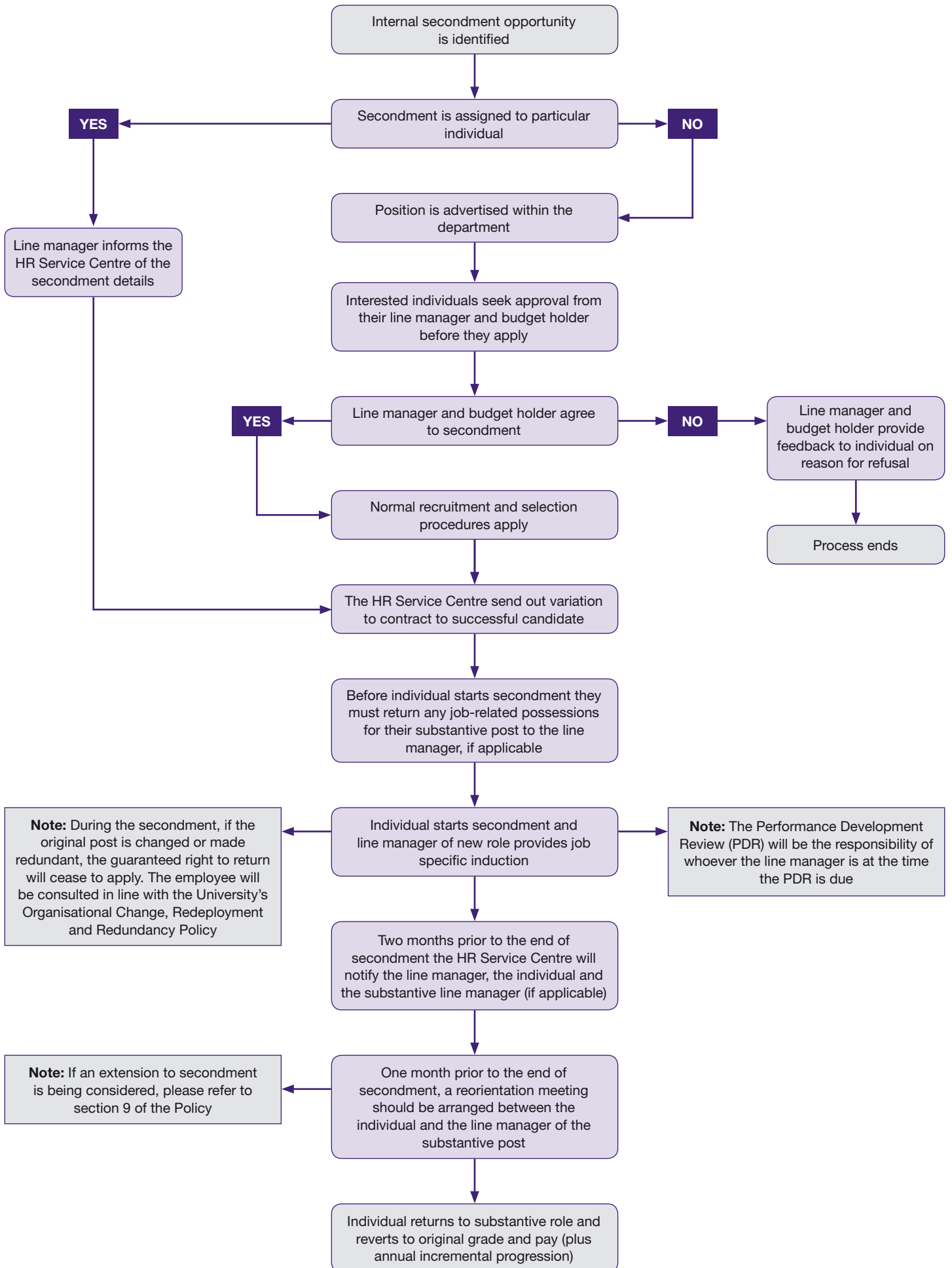
Appendix 1

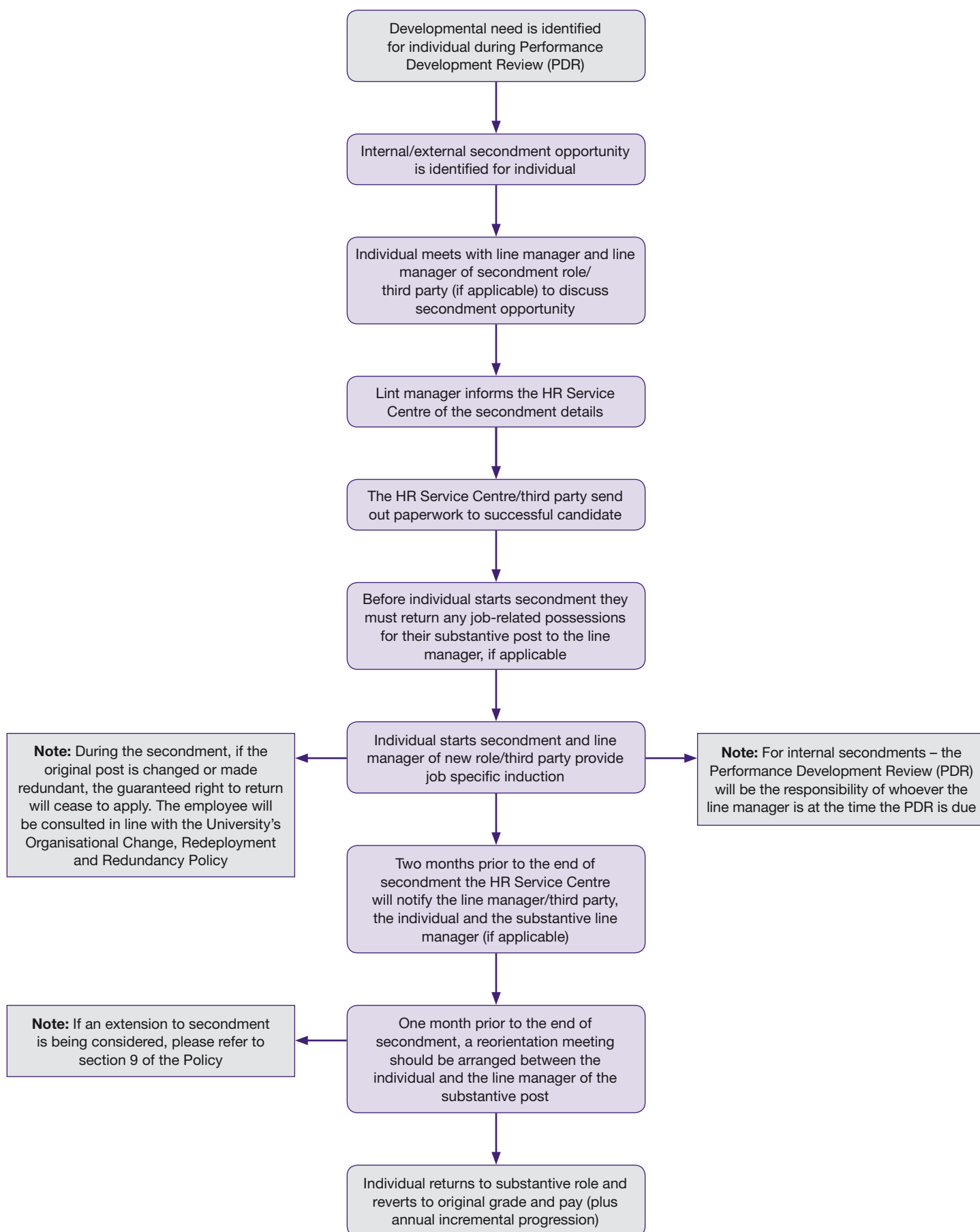
Process flowcharts

Process for when an individual identifies an internal/external advertised opportunity for which they would like to be considered on a secondment basis



Process for when there is a particular organisational need within the same department





Appendix 2

Acting up – draft email

Dear.....

As you may be aware, [name] has been [reason for opportunity, e.g. maternity leave]. We have been given approval to recruit to [name] substantive position of [title of position] for the period of [dates to and from] from within the [name of department]. Job description and person specifications can be [provided on request/found at].

We would like to put in place an interim arrangement as quickly as possible. Please let me have any expressions of interest for the [title of position] by email by [specify deadline].

Regards etc.

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