

## **CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Change is constantly present and is an essential part of life. Within the University of Aberdeen change demonstrates the dynamic and vibrant nature of the working environment. The need for change, as well as its impact, can vary greatly and while change can indicate progress it can also present challenges for individuals and groups. There is, therefore, a need to ensure it is expertly managed to realise and sustain benefits.
- 1.2 The University recognises the significant contributions made by staff in delivering the University's objectives and seeks to ensure, as far as possible, stable and sustainable employment through effective planning to meet current and future needs. However, no organisation is static and there is an ongoing requirement to evolve and adapt to the needs of the business and to external factors.
- 1.3 This Protocol reflects the commitment of the University to manage change effectively, fairly and consistently through planning, consultation and communication in accordance with good practice and employment legislation and with full regard to the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 1.4 The guidelines within the Protocol are designed to set out an approach to leading and managing change within the University. The University would expect anyone leading a change initiative or playing a significant role in one to consider all stages of the guidance and use this appropriately, whatever the scale of change.
- 1.5 Where a change process is likely to result in changes to terms and conditions of employment, there is a legal obligation to consult formally with the recognised Campus Trade Unions and ensure that staff are engaged and involved. The guidelines detail some of the recommendations for communicating and engaging with staff throughout the process. In practice, if there is any possibility that a change process is likely to impact on the employment, contracts and /or terms and conditions of staff the matter must be referred to HR who will advise on the process to be followed.
- 1.6 The Protocol should be applied in conjunction with key policies and procedures, as and when appropriate, agreed within the University as follows:
  - Collective Agreement on the Management of Staff Contracts of Employment;
  - Consultation on Avoidance of Redundancy Policy and Procedure;
  - Redundancy Procedure
- 1.7 This Protocol does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time with the appropriate consultation with the recognised campus trades unions.

### **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1 The Protocol applies to all staff.

### **3. KEY PRINCIPLES**

- (i) The Change Management Protocol and its related procedures (noted above) are based upon the principles of fairness and equality and shall be applied with these in mind. All documents reflect the requirements of current employment legislation.
- (ii) The University is committed to full and meaningful consultation with staff and our recognised Campus Trades Unions regarding proposed organisational changes. The University recognises the benefit of early consultation and has in place appropriate forums to work in partnership with the Campus Trades Unions – the Joint Consultative Committee on Redundancy Avoidance (JCCRA) which provides the main opportunity for overseeing meaningful consultation where planned change is expected to reduce staffing levels, and the Partnership and Negotiating Consultative Committee (PNCC) which meets formally and includes the remit of negotiation on terms and conditions as they affect staff of the University

with matters relevant to only one group of staff being the responsibility of the relevant sub-committee – ie JNCC, SSLC or CNC.

- (iii) It is recognised and understood that organisational change may have a significant impact on staff and may involve periods of uncertainty. The University is committed to supporting staff through periods of change and to minimise any negative impact.
- (iv) The University shall seek to ensure, as far as possible, security of employment and avoidance of compulsory redundancies where staffing reductions are required.
- (v) The same key considerations outlined within the Protocol will apply regardless of the size of the change exercise – for example, while formal consultation is not required for minor change, staff will still be consulted about changes that have an impact on their work.
- (vi) Managers contemplating change that impacts on staff will engage with Human Resources early on to discuss the scale of change and appropriate process to follow.

#### 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The table below outlines the key responsibilities of those potentially involved in change exercises within the University.

<b>Senior management</b>	Responsible for initiating, planning, consulting on and implementing organisational change at an organisation-wide level.
<b>Line managers</b>	Responsible for initiating, planning, consulting on and implementing organisational change at a local level.
<b>Staff</b>	Considering the implications of any proposals in respect of themselves and service provision, making comments, asking questions and suggesting alternatives as and when appropriate.
<b>HR</b>	Advising and supporting managers and staff in the application of the Change Management Protocol and associated policies and procedures.
<b>Campus Trades Unions</b>	Working in partnership with the University in the consultation process, representing staff and providing advice and guidance to trade union members.

#### 5. TYPES OF CHANGE

##### 5.1 Ongoing Minor Change

*(Examples include: Job title change, job description changes, change of department, service, team or line manager)*

- 5.1.1 It is recognised that in order to meet changing needs more effectively, there may be occasions where managers need to implement relatively minor changes. These may be implemented without recourse to formal procedures outlined in this document and associated policies/procedures.
- 5.1.2 While formal consultation is not required for minor change, staff will still be consulted about changes that have an impact on them. Managers will meet with staff either individually or collectively to explain the reasons for the need to implement any minor changes and asked for their views before implementation. Should there be any concerns about proposed changes staff may wish to request that they be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague and this will be accommodated.
- 5.1.1 In exercises involving minor change, managers should still adopt the guidelines outlined in the steps below (see section 5.2.2) to ensure appropriate planning, consultation, decision making and implementation albeit at a lower level.

##### 5.2 Major Change

*(Examples include: Department/Service or team restructurings or major changes to working practices or contractual terms)*

- 5.2.1 In major exercises that represent a potential change to staff terms and conditions, there is a requirement to formally consult.
- 5.2.2 In such exercises, the process outlined below will be followed.

<p><b>Step 1 – Planning</b></p>	<p>Managers will prepare a business case with input from Human Resources that includes coverage of the points listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detail of the current position including staffing structure;</li> <li>• The business case for change and rationale behind it, including difficulties with existing arrangements, external influences (such as funding related);</li> <li>• The options that have been considered;</li> <li>• The proposal(s) for change – including the proposed staffing structure where relevant if envisaged prior to consultation;</li> <li>• The perceived benefits of the proposal(s);</li> <li>• Implications of the proposal(s) – financial and staffing;</li> <li>• Where there are staffing implications, the proposed method of job matching and selection of staff ‘at risk’;</li> <li>• Equality impact assessment considerations;</li> <li>• Detail of proposed timescales – for consultation, schedules of meetings and implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 2 – Consultation &amp; communication</b></p>	<p>It is recognised that open and effective communication and consultation is key to successful organisational change.</p> <p>Communication and consultation will take place with the Campus Trades Unions and staff at the earliest opportunity to gather views and comments as a basis for informing management decision making.</p> <p>Communication and consultation will take place on all aspects of organisation change, regardless of the scale of the change exercise, and where appropriate will conform to the statutory requirements and reference will be made to the Consultation on Avoidance of Redundancy Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>Consultation will be meaningful and with a view to reaching agreement on the way forward. Information will be provided that is necessary for staff and the Campus Trades Unions to make an informed contribution and updates will be circulated throughout the consultation period.</p> <p>Communication methods will be appropriate to the information being presented and could include, for example, departmental briefings, team meetings, newsletters as well as formal consultation meetings with the Campus Trades Unions.</p> <p>Large scale change programmes, involving a significant number of employees, will include implementation of a communications strategy with reference to the Communications Checklist attached as Appendix A.</p>
<p><b>Step 3 – Decision to proceed</b></p>	<p>At the conclusion of a consultation process all comments and suggestions will be considered and a decision made on the way forward. This decision will be confirmed in writing and all staff affected by the change and relevant Campus Trades Unions will be notified.</p>

<p><b>Step 4- Implementation</b></p>	<p>Arrangements will be put in place according to the nature of the change exercise including the following where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the redundancy and redeployment procedures including organising trial periods where appropriate;</li> <li>• Putting in place arrangements to assist in building capacity/skills for new roles with appropriate training and development opportunities;</li> <li>• Ongoing communication of the changes to relevant stakeholders;</li> <li>• Appropriate supportive mechanisms for staff to assist with impact of the changes, such as changes to roles, supporting staff through redeployment, notice periods etc;</li> <li>• Dealing with any appeals where relevant;</li> <li>• Undertaking post-change administration including HR systems changes (such as hierarchy updates for reporting lines), changing staff records etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 5- Consolidation and Learning</b></p>	<p>A review will be undertaken to evaluate and understand whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• original objectives have been met</li> <li>• any lessons can be identified for the future.</li> </ul> <p>The scope and scale of the review will depend upon the nature and scale of the change exercise, and the time and resources dedicated to a review will be consistent with the original scope and the desired output.</p> <p>Where appropriate (and generally for larger scale change exercises), the review will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clarifying if the business need has been met, whether there are any gaps and how they can be addressed;</li> <li>• how the end result compares with the original plan in terms of quality, timescale and budget;</li> <li>• whether the change has solved the problem it was seeking to address/achieved the aim it was seeking to deliver;</li> <li>• what lessons were learnt during the change exercise and how these could contribute to future change processes (including, for example, whether policies/procedures should be reviewed);</li> <li>• determining how satisfied key stakeholders are with the end results;</li> <li>• reviewing staff wellbeing;</li> <li>• reviewing equality impact to identify any actions required;</li> <li>• agreeing further actions and sharing the outcomes of the review.</li> </ul>

**6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

6.1 The Protocol will be reviewed in consultation with the recognised Campus Trades Unions after two years or where operational and/or legislative requirements change.

**Appendix A : Communications Checklist (Larger Scale Change Exercises)**

Stage	Considerations/actions
<p><b>Planning and Preparation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and agree the appropriate team to lead on communications for the exercise (including HR, Communications and the relevant senior managers).</li> <li>• Establish who will act as the leader of the change exercise within the team.</li> <li>• Convene the team from the outset to begin planning for internal and external communications.</li> <li>• Prepare for the specific challenges that may arise as part of the change exercise such as likely reactions of internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Develop an internal and external communications strategy/plan.</li> <li>• Decide on timescales.</li> <li>• Agree timing of the launch of the change programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Messaging and Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform trade union representatives, AUSU representatives and other key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Consider how best to communicate with staff (including those who do not have access to internet).</li> <li>• Provide timely information and produce a platform for active and ongoing two-way communication.</li> <li>• Provide regular reminders through consistent messages.</li> <li>• Date all communications material.</li> <li>• Consider the level of support required for line managers involved in the change process, before, during and after the change.</li> </ul>

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