

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT FUNCTION

Assignment of an Academic to an Alternate Variant of the Academic Contract

Background

A number of significant developments have taken place since 2009 regarding the academic contract of employment including:

- the revision of clause 11(a) enabling certain academic staff to be released from the normal expectation of being research active (or to appoint to roles with a teaching focus), recognising the overall importance to the University of teaching and learning activities, and the valuable contribution made by the many colleagues for whom the majority of their work is concerned with teaching/administration/leadership and management activities. This has allowed Heads of School flexibility, but not unilateral authority, to agree a balanced portfolio of duties with members of academic staff without undermining their career or promotion prospects.
- the re-classification of certain academic staff to a “teaching-intensive” contract for the purposes of the HESA return, and where the normal expectation is that the focus of their work is concerned with teaching/administration/leadership and management activities (referred to as T).
- the re-classification of certain academic staff to a “research-intensive” contract for the purposes of the HESA return, and where the normal expectation is that the focus of their work is concerned with research activities (referred to as R).
- amendments to the Personal Titles procedures to ensure that an equal opportunity for career progression exists regardless of the balance of academic activity, the key determinant being demonstrable excellence.

Therefore, academic staff will either have a balanced portfolio of academic activities, whereby they will be required to undertake a combination of teaching, research and scholarship, outreach and administrative activities (referred to as T+R) or will either have a teaching-intensive portfolio whereby the focus of their work is concerned with teaching/administration/leadership and management activities (referred to as T) or a research-intensive portfolio whereby the focus of their work is concerned with research activities (referred to as R).

The University also recognises that, although exceptional, there may be occasions when it is deemed appropriate and necessary for an academic member of staff to move to an alternate variant of the academic contract.

At the present time there is no consistent process for moving academic staff to an alternate variant of the academic contract and so this guidance has been developed to provide relevant Heads and academic staff with clarity as to the process to follow.

Process for assigning an academic to an alternate variant of the academic contract

1. The normal expectation is that, following a discussion with the relevant HR Partner, the Head of School and the academic colleague will have discussed and agreed that a move to an alternate variant of the academic contract is appropriate (including agreement on the effective date of the proposed change) and this would normally follow a discussion between the academic and their reviewer as part of the PDR process. Discussions should include the relevant Research Dean or Teaching & Learning Dean as appropriate to the specific case.

2. The Head of School will then seek the agreement of the PVC (Academic Planning and Resource). This approval is sought by completing an **Academic Employment Function Change Form** (that can be downloaded from the HR website at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/humres-researchdivisions.aspx>) The Head of School will be required to include a business case on the form (no more than one side of A4) outlining the reasoning behind the decision, an outline of how the academic member of staff will be supported during their transition to the alternate variant of the academic contract and the date when the proposed change will take effect. The academic member of staff will also be required to sign the form.
3. Should the PVC support the request to move to an alternate variant, the Head of School will then notify the academic member of staff and their PDR reviewer.
4. The Head of School will then send the completed and authorised Academic Employment Change Form to the HR Operations team to confirm the change, the effective date and will include the business case.
5. HR Operations will generate a letter to the academic member of staff to confirm the change from T+R to T or from T to T+R. HR Operations will make the necessary amendments to the HR system (TRENT).

Human Resources
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