



# UCL Organisational Change Procedure

This procedure should be read alongside the supplementary guidance notes [Reviewing workforce requirements - a guidance note for managers](#) and [Guidance notes on selecting the 'pool' of staff who are at risk of redundancy](#)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a modern, world leading university UCL needs to be able to adapt to changing circumstances in order to maintain and improve its position in the global higher education community. UCL recognises that change is an integral part of organisational life and is committed to managing it effectively, in an open and transparent manner. Consultation with staff and recognised trade unions plays a key role in the effective management of change and when organisational change occurs, UCL will adopt good practice in its employee relations and will seek to avoid redundancies wherever possible. The requirement to consult affected staff and their recognised trade unions about organisational change is enshrined in employment and health & safety legislation and UCL will work in accordance with all relevant legislation. This procedure will be jointly reviewed in light of any revision to the law governing this area.

## 2. Principles and objectives of this procedure

- 2.1 The objective of this procedure is to provide a framework for effecting organisational change which ensures that the process is fair, open and consistent and accords with UCL's responsibilities and obligations regarding consultation and involvement of the staff concerned and their trade unions.
- 2.2 UCL is committed to consulting on and implementing change within a reasonable timeframe to minimise uncertainty while ensuring sufficient time for meaningful consultation.
- 2.3 UCL will avoid redundancies wherever possible and where redundancy becomes necessary, will utilise its [Redeployment Procedure](#) and provide support and assistance to displaced staff to minimise hardship.
- 2.4 UCL is committed to ensuring that the timescales for change are realistic including consultation periods and arrangements for re-training or re-skilling where appropriate.
- 2.5 There are many different types of situations where organisational change may occur and this procedure attempts to deal with a range of eventualities.

## 3. Procedure

### Changing nature of jobs, roles and tasks

- 3.1 UCL expects managers to review activities for which they are responsible to ensure that they support UCL's corporate goals and faculty/departmental plans and aspirations. Examples of such changes may include moving into new areas of research, developing new methods of delivering teaching or development/change in the provision of a support service. This policy complements any agreed arrangements

for reviewing and revising academic course content or developing research strategy etc. Where any change proposal has substantial implications for the health & safety of staff, students or visitors, advice may be obtained from Safety Services and the manager must consult local safety representatives.

- 3.2 In many cases, a proposal for change includes changes in the duties, roles or working practices of individual employees or a group of employees. In such circumstances managers should discuss proposals for change with their staff, either individually or collectively to explain the reasons for the change. If additional or alternative proposals are forthcoming through consultation these should be discussed, with the appropriate manager taking the final view on issues for which they are responsible and explaining the decision they have reached. If a proposed change in duties requires skills not currently possessed by the employee(s) concerned, training and development may be appropriate and advice is available from UCL Human Resources (UCL HR).
- 3.3 Job descriptions should be revised if duties and responsibilities change and it may be appropriate to seek confirmation of whether the change warrants a grading review. Such a review will require that a revised JDO is submitted for evaluation. Managers should seek advice from UCL HR when considering changes that will have an impact on their staff.

### **Change to Organisational Structure**

- 3.4 When a manager is reviewing the way in which work is carried out; is contemplating the reduction in the volume of a certain type of work or considers that an activity needs to cease altogether and redundancy is a possibility, the manager needs to take the following steps:
- a) produce a document outlining the proposal and the reasoning behind it,
  - b) discuss and consult on the proposal with those affected,
  - c) confirm the final proposal when the consultation is complete,
  - d) implement the change, in close consultation with those affected.
- 3.5 Where a change proposal includes a proposal to transfer staff either into or out of UCL, advice must be sought from UCL HR.
- a) - Putting the Proposal in writing
- 3.6 Managers leading organisational change that may or may not result in a redundancy(ies) should draft a note of the context for the change, the outline of the proposals, the desired benefits and if there are any, the options that have been considered and rejected. More complex change processes may need to be staged and changes would normally be reviewed once implemented and embedded to ensure that they produced the required benefits.
- 3.7 The document produced to inform consultation should include the following where they are known:
- the numbers and description of affected posts and the reason that they will be affected if they are part of a wider group of such posts who will be unaffected,
  - the method of selection to any new posts that will come into being or where it appears that redundancy cannot be avoided, the number and grades of post holders who may be at risk of redundancy,
  - any proposed training or re-skilling for staff if that is deemed necessary to facilitate the change.
- 3.8 Advice can be sought from the UCL HR on the contents of such a note, as necessary.
- b) – Staff Consultation

- 3.9 The proposal document should then be discussed with the staff likely to be affected by the changes (i.e. either those affected by the change in services or support provided to them or because they work in the jobs which will cease to exist or reduce in number as part of the change). The manager concerned may hold an open meeting or choose to talk to staff in groups or one to one to make sure that those affected understand the proposal(s), the impact on the department and in order that they can contribute their views.
- 3.10 UCL's recognised trade unions should be provided with a copy of the proposal document and invited to a meeting to discuss it. Individual members of staff will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague at any meetings to discuss the proposals. Equally, trade union representatives may wish to request a meeting with the manager concerned to gain clarification and/or seek information related to the change proposal. Staff who are absent from work (e.g. due to maternity, sickness or other leave) must be sent a copy of the note about the proposed change to their home address in order that they have the opportunity to participate in the consultation process.
- 3.11 Managers leading change must consult with an open mind and welcome suggestions that enhance or improve their proposals, suggest alternative courses of action or that provide information which demonstrates that the proposals will not reap the benefits intended. Proposals should be reviewed as a result of the consultation process and rejected suggestions explained and documented.
- 3.12 Consultation must align with statutory timescales and the UCL HR will advise on what is appropriate. Managers must give sufficient time for meaningful consultation and periods may be extended if necessary.
- c) – Confirmation of final proposal
- 3.13 At the end of the consultation period the manager concerned, in conjunction with other senior managers, as appropriate, will consider all comments and make a decision on the way forward. This decision will be communicated to all affected staff and their trade union representatives and any suggestions that have been considered and rejected will be summarised.
- 3.14 Complex changes may need to be implemented in stages. In such circumstances, care should be taken that the decisions at one stage do not unreasonably limit opportunities for staff who will be affected at later stages.
- 3.15 Once a proposal has been finalised managers should effect change as efficiently as possible to reduce uncertainty over the future which can undermine morale, lead to increased turnover and induce planning blight.
- d) - Implementation - see [flowchart](#)
- 3.16 In the event that a final change proposal involves the deletion of one or more posts and/or the creation of new posts staff occupying the deleted posts will be considered for assimilation into the newly created posts. Assimilation will depend on skills and experience and whether the necessary skills could be obtained quickly through appropriate training. Where there is more than one member of staff eligible for consideration for assimilation into a post a competitive process must be completed and the UCL HR will advise on this.
- 3.17 Where a post holder's duties, skill and experience identifies them as appropriate for another post at the same or higher grade following the deletion of their previous post, this is deemed to be 'suitable alternative employment'. If an individual chooses not to accept suitable alternative employment they would be deemed to have resigned from their employment with UCL. The question of the suitability or otherwise of any post in the new structure is (as part of the overall proposal) subject to the formal

consultation process with the staff member.

- 3.18 Where a higher graded post is available that is deemed suitable alternative employment for an employee, the employee will be interviewed for the post to ascertain their suitability. If the employee is unsuccessful and another suitable post is not available they will be eligible for redundancy. In cases where more than one employee is in contention for a post at a higher grade this interview will be conducted competitively (see para 3.16 above).
- 3.19 Where the change proposal places staff at risk of redundancy either because posts are being reduced in number or being replaced by different types of posts, UCL will seek to avoid redundancy and facilitate redeployment wherever possible. Measures used may include not replacing staff who resign or retire and by curtailing the use of temporary and agency staff wherever possible. Where there are a number of staff facing redundancy, volunteers for redundancy will be sought.
- 3.20 Where redundancy cannot be avoided and redeployment has not been possible, the [Termination Procedure](#) for UCL Employment Contracts or the Termination Procedure for UCL Fixed Term Academic Contracts must be followed. Academic staff are covered by UCL's Statute 18.
- 3.21 UCL recognises that organisational change can sometimes have unforeseen consequences and therefore it is good practice to review the outcome of an organisational change once it has settled down, to examine whether the desired benefits have been achieved.

## **Agreement**

- 3.22 This procedure has been agreed in partnership with UCL's recognised trade unions, UCU, UNISON and Unite. The impact of change will be monitored and the procedure will be jointly reviewed in light of experience or in the event that employment or health and safety legislation relating to the management of organisational change is revised.