

# Reduced Responsibilities

## Policy

This policy is designed to provide individuals with the opportunity to pursue interests which may not be directly related to their responsibilities to the University. It also provides the department and the University with some degree of flexibility in utilizing its financial and human resources.

Any member of the general staff who currently holds a full-time appointment and who has a minimum of one-year continuous full-time service at the University may be granted or requested to take an appointment with reduced responsibilities. Appointments involving reduced responsibilities are normally for a fixed period of time.

There are two forms of reduced responsibilities - those involving a reduced number of hours in a given timeframe (e.g., 4 days per week instead of 5 days per week) and those involving a reduced level of responsibility (e.g., grade 5 position instead of grade 8 position). Within these, there are several types of reduced responsibilities, each being applicable in different circumstances and each with potentially different impacts on benefit entitlements (see Benefit Plans). Reduced periods of responsibility include: reduction in hours of work/reduction in days worked and job sharing. Reduced levels of responsibility includes voluntary demotions.

A reduced responsibilities appointment will not change a staff member's normal security or rights as an employee of the University. This includes maintaining internal status when being considered for other available job vacancies on campus.

In accordance with the Income Tax Act, when moving to a reduced period of responsibilities appointment, the employee may choose to maintain Pension contributions based on their nominal (full-time) annual salary instead of the actual annual salary if the staff member holds a continuing full-time appointment and has completed a minimum of three years of continuous employment at Queen's.

## Reduced Periods of Responsibility

### A Reduction in Hours of Work and Reduction in Days Worked

A reduction in hours of work applies to eligible general staff requesting to work less than 35 hours per week in a specified period of time. A reduction in days worked applies to eligible general staff requesting to work less than 5 days per week or less than 52 weeks per year.

These appointments will normally be for a specified period of time but encompass not less than seven months of working time in the year or 21 hours per week (approximately 60% working time). The general staff member normally should be appointed to a regular part-time appointment if the working period is less than the above normal minimum or if the arrangement is for an indefinite period of time.

## Job Sharing

Job sharing involves the division of one full-time position into two and may consist of any combination of arrangements, but generally not less than 40% on the one part. Job sharing arrangements should normally be considered for specified periods of time. In this type of arrangement, duties of one of the parts may result in a change in the level of responsibility which, in turn, may alter the evaluation of the job. Examples of normal types of arrangements are as follows:

- 50/50 (for each appointment: 17.5 hours per week, or 35 hours every two weeks, or free days one week and two days the next, etc.)
- 60/40 (three days per week for one employee/two days per week for the other)

The participating employees, the supervisor and department head/director should ensure that any proposed schedule is compatible between the two parties and that the transition period from one employee to another occurs efficiently and effectively.

## Reduced Level of Responsibility

### Voluntary Demotion

Voluntary demotions apply to eligible general staff requesting to work in their current position, but at a level of reduced responsibility for a specified period of time. For example, a staff member who currently holds a Financial Coordinator position who requests to work as a Financial Assistant for 6 months.

### Procedure

Requests for a reduced responsibility appointment are normally initiated by the general staff member. The request should be made directly to the immediate supervisor and/or department head/director and should include a potentially viable work arrangement for consideration.

When a request for a reduced responsibility appointment is being considered, department heads/directors should have a clear understanding as to whether any cost savings will be realized and, at the same time, recognize the advantages to the staff member(s) and the overall operational needs of the department. Discussions should be held with the appropriate dean or vice-principal in addition to a representative from Human Resources. Departments may wish to consider the possibility of a trial work arrangement before committing to a long-term situation. The decision to approve a reduced responsibility appointment rests with the department head/director, and should be effectively communicated to all staff in the department.

If a job-sharing arrangement requires the necessity of hiring a second individual from outside the department, it may be necessary to advertise that part of the position on the Queen's HR website. This position would normally be advertised as a term appointment in order to allow the department to periodically assess the advantages and disadvantages of this arrangement.

## Confirmation of Terms of Employment

Any changes to a staff member's term of employment will be confirmed in writing. In the case of staff with continuing or term appointments (general staff), a letter will be issued from the Human Resources Department outlining the specific changes subject to the approval of the department head/director. Copies of the letter will be forwarded to the appropriate department head/director, dean or vice-principal, Compensation Unit and Financial Services, and will include the following information:

- explanation of the change, including percent time worked or grade change
- effective start date and effective end date (if applicable)
- full time equivalent annual salary and annual actual salary (if applicable)
- information regarding benefits coverage
- pro-rated vacation entitlement (if applicable)
- a statement indicating a mutual agreement for any future changes to the arrangement, including the required notice period (it must be at least 8 weeks, except in the case of a trial period) (if applicable)
- the conditions of any trial period, including reversion to the original terms of employment if the trial is unsuccessful (if applicable).

For research, grant and contract employees, changes to the staff members term of employment should be reflected by issuing a new contract to supersede the existing one. In addition, to ensure that both the principal investigator and employee understand all of the conditions of the changed appointment, it is advisable that the principal investigator issue a letter to the employee similar to the one described for employees with continuing and term appointments.

It should be noted that once agreed to, these changes to the general staff member's terms of employment are binding on both the employee and the University (subject to the conditions as outlined in the letter) for the duration of the agreement.

## Changes to the Terms of Appointment

A request to return to full responsibilities or to change the period of reduced responsibility, whether at the initiation of the general staff member or the director, department head, or dean concerned, should be made with appropriate notice as outlined in the original agreement, unless waived by mutual consent (in writing). In the event that no notice period was specified in the original agreement, a minimum of 8 weeks notice is required.

In a situation where two staff members are sharing a job and one of the employees transfers or terminates, consideration can be given to converting the two positions back to one. As stated above the remaining employee should be provided with appropriate notice outlined in the original agreement.

Any changes in the terms of employment for general staff with continuing or term appointments will be confirmed in writing by Human Resources.

## Benefit Plans

Benefit plans coverage can be initiated or maintained subject to certain plan restrictions; however, they can be based on a staff member's actual or full-time equivalent salary. Information and arrangements should be made with your **Human Resources Advisor**.

**Questions?** Contact [Pension Services](#) for pension information and your **Human Resources Advisor** for benefits information.