



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

Acting Up Arrangements Policy and Procedure

Policy Summary:	The Acting Up Arrangements Policy and Procedure provides guidance on acting up arrangements and the procedure to undertake acting up.
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1.0 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to provide Managers and staff with guidance on acting up arrangements to ensure that this is undertaken fairly and consistently across Queen Margaret University in accordance with equality and diversity principles.

2.0 Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all acting up arrangements within Queen Margaret University.

3.0 Monitor and Review

Human Resources is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and supporting procedures and will conduct reviews at appropriate intervals.

Anyone who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against as part of acting up arrangements should contact Human Resources.

4.0 Equal Opportunities

Queen Margaret University is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and it is the responsibility of all QMU employees to promote “equality and diversity” in the application of this policy ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability, race/ethnic origin, sex/gender, age, religion, marital/family status, dependency, sexual orientation, political opinion, and economic or social status.

5.0 Responsibility for this Policy

Human Resources.

Any changes to this policy and supporting procedures will be made in consultation with appropriate bodies.

QMU reserves the right to update HR Policies in line with new or updated Employment Legislation.

6.0 What is “Acting Up”?

- 6.1 “Acting Up” refers to a situation whereby an employee temporarily moves into another position, which is vacant, in order to maintain effectiveness within the School/Department or organisation. Acting up opportunities are normally offered, in the first instance, to employees within the team where the vacancy exists.
- 6.2 The employee is required to undertake duties and responsibilities of a higher graded position than the one they currently occupy.
- 6.3 Acting up does not apply where the employee simply has an increase in volume of their normal duties.

- 6.4 Asking existing employees to act up into higher graded roles can be advantageous as it maintains continuity in the organisation so long as the employee has a sufficient level of knowledge and skills to perform in the acting up position. Acting up should also be seen as an opportunity for development of employees.
- 6.5 Employees who act up are entitled to return to their substantive post at the end of the acting up period.

7.0 Acting Up Circumstances

- 7.1 Acting up arrangements are appropriate in circumstances where it is anticipated that there will be an unsustainable gap in the School/Departmental structure for a significant period of time.
- 7.2 Acting up arrangements may be considered in the following circumstances:

7.2.1 Long Term Absence:

In the majority of cases of short term absence the outstanding workload is managed within the team and the absent employee is not replaced. However, where a member of staff is absent for a medium or long period of time, such as sickness absence, maternity leave, career break, etc, this may mean additional pressure on work colleagues is not sustainable. In such cases the best option may be to act up another employee into the role. It may be easier to manage the gap at the lower level role where the acting up employee performed previously.

Acting up arrangements are not normally necessary to cover periods of annual leave. If, in exceptional circumstances, this is considered necessary, the Manager should liaise with Human Resources to discuss resourcing options.

7.2.2 Vacancies pending permanent recruitment:

When a member of staff leaves there can be several reasons why it may take some time to recruit a replacement. Following VAP approval in such cases, it may be best to act up an employee into the vacant position until permanent recruitment can commence.

7.2.3 Cover for Secondments:

If a member of staff is seconded to another department or another organisation for a length of time then it may be necessary for another employee to act into the vacant position for the duration of the secondment.

7.2.4 Cover for Existing Acting Up Arrangements:

Where a member of staff within the School/Department is acting up into a higher position, it may be necessary for another employee to act up into that staff member's existing position.

8.0 Acting Up Procedure

8.1 If a Manager is considering acting up arrangements within their School/Department they should contact their HR Partner to discuss taking this forward.

8.2 The following procedure should be followed:

8.3 Establish Grade of the Acting Up Position

8.3.1 The first step in arranging an acting up is for the Manager to determine the grade of the acting up position.

8.3.2 The Manager, in conjunction with their HR Partner, should determine the scope of the role which needs to be undertaken and the degree to which they expect the acting up employee to fulfil the vacant position.

8.3.3 If the Manager expects the acting up employee to fulfil the entire role then the acting up employee should be placed on the same grade which is attached to the acting up position.

8.3.4 In cases where the Manager does not deem it necessary for the acting up employee to fulfil all of the duties and responsibilities attached to the acting up role then the Manager should liaise with their HR Partner to obtain a copy of the HERA (Job Evaluation) profile for the acting up position. The Manager should edit the profile to reflect accurately the role to be undertaken by the acting up employee, removing tasks which will not be undertaken by them. The Manager should pass the amended role profile to their HR Partner who will advise if the position will remain at the original grade or should be re-scored to determine the appropriate (lower) grade.

In cases where the acting up role has been edited as above and the grade is determined to be the same grade the acting up employee is currently on then the acting up employee will receive an incremental rise of one point on the scale in recognition of their acting up duties.

8.3.5 Where it is not required for the acting up employee to fulfil all of the duties and responsibilities attached to the vacant role, the Manager, in conjunction with their HR Partner, should identify appropriate methods of redistributing the duties not included in the acting up role throughout the School/Department.

8.4 Determine the Duration of the Acting Up Position

8.4.1 It is often difficult to know how long cover in the acting up position will be required for and this is likely to depend on the reason the acting up position is vacant.

8.4.2 The Manager may be required to make an estimated judgement on the duration of the acting up period depending on the circumstances.

8.4.3 Employees who are affected by the acting up arrangements should be kept informed as far as possible on the likely duration.

- 8.4.4 Acting up arrangements should be reviewed at least every three months. The need for continuation of the arrangement versus actions to fill the position permanently should be assessed.

8.5 Vacancy Approval Panel

- 8.5.1 All acting up arrangements are dependent on approval by the Vacancy Approval Panel (VAP).
- 8.5.2 Once the Manager has identified a vacancy that can be filled by acting up arrangements they should complete the Vacancy Approval Form (available on the HR Intranet page) and submit this to the relevant Executive Board member. If the Manager requires assistance to complete any part of the Vacancy Approval Form they should speak to their HR Partner.
- 8.5.3 The HR Partners will keep Managers informed of the forthcoming VAP submission and meeting dates. The outcome of each VAP meeting will be notified to Managers following the meeting.

8.6 Filling the Acting Up Position

- 8.6.1 The Manager should determine if there is an obvious individual who is suitable to act up. A suitable individual is one who is qualified to undertake the role or has had significant exposure to the role through their current position. The individual should possess appropriate experience, ability, competency and core skills to undertake the acting up position. Reference should be made to the person specification of the acting up role where appropriate.
- 8.6.2 Where the Manager is able to select an obvious individual they should give due consideration to the impact this will have on the remainder of the team, both in terms of covering the lower level duties and in terms of team morale.
- 8.6.3 In circumstances where it is clear to the Manager there is more than one member of staff who might be suitable for the acting up position then all employees working in the area should be made aware that an acting up opportunity has arisen. As the individual who acts up will be required to have direct, relevant skills and experience, it is appropriate procedure to initially advertise the acting up within the relevant department only. The Manager must also liaise with their HR Partner at this stage to establish if there are any suitable individuals currently on the Redeployment Register who may wish to express an interest in the acting up position.
- 8.6.4 Staff who are temporarily absent due to, maternity leave, etc, must also be informed of acting up opportunities. Their interest should be considered in cases where they are expected to return in time to take up the posting for the expected duration of the assignment.

- 8.6.5 If more than one expression of interest in the acting up opportunity comes forward then the Manager should undertake a recruitment and selection process and should refer to the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure on the HR Intranet site for guidance on undertaking this process.
- 8.6.6 Where there is more than one appointable employee at the end of the recruitment and selection process, consideration should be given to each employee acting up for a proportion of the time for developmental purposes.
- 8.6.7 Where there are no suitable employees in the School/Department to act into the position then the recruitment and selection process should be followed by means of advertising the position internally within QMU if appropriate. Where this is the case, the Manager should follow the Secondment Policy (available on the HR Intranet site).

8.7 Appointment

- 8.7.1 Once a suitable candidate for the acting up position has been identified, whether they have undergone a recruitment and selection process or not, an Amendment to Contract form should be completed and submitted to Human Resources.
- 8.7.2 Human Resources will advise the Manager of the appropriate scale point upon which to appoint the employee.
- 8.7.3 Human Resources will issue a contract amendment letter to the employee, detailing the acting up arrangements, including any alterations to the employee's existing terms and conditions.
- 8.7.4 Upon commencement of an acting up arrangement the Manager should follow the Performance Enhancement Review guidance to discuss with the employee their forthcoming activities and objectives and identify appropriate development opportunities. Reviews should be undertaken in accordance with the Performance Enhancement Review policy.

8.8 Extensions to Acting Up Arrangements

- 8.8.1 Acting up arrangements should not continue indefinitely and the Manager should remain in regular dialogue with their HR Partner to review acting up arrangements and longer term workforce planning in their School/Department.
- 8.8.2 Acting up arrangements will be reviewed at monthly partner meetings by the HR Partner and the Manager. The need for continuation of the arrangement versus actions to fill the position permanently will be assessed.
- 8.8.3 Extension of acting up should be fully discussed with the acting up employee and the employee should be kept continuously informed of the likely duration.

- 8.8.4 If an employee is to act up for longer than was originally anticipated then the Manager should submit a further Vacancy Approval Form to the relevant Executive Board member to ensure the acting up arrangement can continue. Human Resources will write to the employee confirming the extension of the acting up arrangements.
- 8.8.5 Where an employee has been acting up for at least six months as at 1st April they will receive an incremental increase of one point if this is applicable to their point on the scale.

8.9 End of Acting Up Arrangements

- 8.9.1 The acting up employee should be given as much notice as reasonably practicable if the acting up arrangement is to come to an end.
- 8.9.3 The acting up employee is entitled to revert to their substantive post and all associated terms and conditions, this includes any increments they would have been entitled to in their substantive post during their period of acting up. The return of an individual to their substantive post should be planned with all members of the team who may be affected.
- 8.9.4 Where an individual returns to their substantive post after a period of acting up, they should be provided with feedback on their performance in the role. The Manager should also discuss future personal development with the individual, involving their HR Partner where appropriate.
- 8.9.5 Where acting up circumstances arose due to a delay in permanent recruitment into a vacancy, the acting up may be coming to an end because the position has now been filled on a permanent basis. The acting up employee may have been permanently recruited into the position. However, in cases where the acting employee has not been successful in such a recruitment and selection process then consideration should be given to support the employee at this time as their confidence and morale may be affected. The Manager should provide considerable feedback on their assessment at selection stage and discuss appropriate development opportunities.
- 8.9.6 Where employees have been acting up into a position for a considerable period of time it is often perceived that they are entitled to be slotted in to the position on a permanent basis, however, where permanent filling of the position is deemed appropriate the Manager must undertake a recruitment and selection process, in accordance with QMU's equality and diversity principles.

9.0 Related Policies

- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Secondment Policy and Procedure
- Vacancy Approval Procedure
- Performance Enhancement Review