

Reduction in Force (RIF) Process

Human Resources Guide

In making any decisions about the necessity to reduce staff, it is essential that these decisions are consistent with the principles established by President Mason. <http://budget.uiowa.edu/>

- First and foremost, protect quality. Preserve the quality of our core missions: education, research, service/patient care.
- Second, protect people: our most important investment. There is a reason why so much of our budget is invested in personnel, and disinvesting in people at this point in time only worsens an already critical situation.
- Third, protect affordability: we owe it to Iowans and to all of our students.
- Fourth, while we increase cost-savings and create efficiencies, we also look for opportunities to increase revenues and we do this on a carefully planned, multi-year timetable.
- Fifth, we identify selected opportunities for innovation and excellence by reallocations and investments from new revenues.
- Sixth, we articulate a strong strategic vision and priorities that inform the budget choices that we ultimately make;
- And finally, we continue to use consultation through the long-held and well-respected traditions of shared governance here at the UI to inform all of our actions and choices.

After all other options to reduce expenses are considered, and reductions in force are still necessary, it is essential to utilize workforce planning to assure critical skills are retained to meet the current and future plans of the work unit.

University administration, Central HR, and collegiate units share an interest in making the planning and implementation processes work efficiently and effectively, while being humane and supportive to all who are impacted. This document provides information to assist collegiate unit HR leaders in fulfilling the tasks to advance a RIF plan.

A. Decisions regarding staffing levels and reductions

The following are intended to serve as guideposts for decisions regarding staffing levels and potential staff reduction in response to the anticipated budget reductions, restructures, and funding changes:

- **Workforce Planning – Focus on Functions**
http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/relations/hrrep/immediate_workplan.pdf
 - Define critical roles and skills that need to be retained or developed in the workforce to meet current and future needs of the unit.
 - Assess staff to determine who can fulfill those roles; seek right fit for current and future needs.
 - We must be able to articulate objective rationale for any such decisions, which will also serve to defend any claims of improper cause or intent underlying our decisions.
- **Determining the individual to be impacted**
 - For positions covered by collective bargaining agreements and merit exempt positions, the seniority provisions of the contracts and merit system rules will be used to determine the individuals impacted.

- For non-bargaining positions, the factors that should be considered include:
 - ✓ Any special skills or a unique range of skills.
 - ✓ Length of service to the classification, department and/or the University.
 - ✓ History of past performance, as documented by performance appraisals, performance improvement plans and/or discipline.
 - ✓ Where all other factors are equal among a group of individuals who perform the same duties, length of service may be used to determine who is impacted, retaining those with the most service.

- **Performance considerations**
 - Staff reduction is not a replacement for discipline or on-going performance management.
 - Individuals affected by a staff reduction may well be placed elsewhere within the University with priority status. Therefore, employees with persistent performance problems should not be passed on to other units. This only compounds the disruption across campus.
 - Assuming all meet minimum performance standards with a group, and yet individual performance is the primary factor that differentiates between like staff (overriding length of service), such performance must be visible through documentation such documentation may include disciplinary actions, a performance improvement plan within the last evaluation year, or a series of less than satisfactory evaluations.
 - If duties were removed from a job due to performance issues, consultation with ELR staff is advised before targeting the position for reduction. Functional Analysis forms and specific job descriptions may be required to assess level of functioning versus classification requirements. Some attempts to remediate the situation through a Performance Improvement Plan, additional training/development or accommodation for employees with disabilities may be required to enhance the individual's ability to be successful in the role. <http://www.uiowa.edu/learn/perfmgt/index.html>

- **Risk Mitigation**
 - Carefully apply UI policies and labor contracts to mitigate the risk for grievances, arbitration, and or litigation
 - Be conscious of the impact of reduction decisions as to whether they create a disparate impact upon individuals in a protected class, such as race, religion, national origin, age, gender, or disability
 - We must be able to show our decisions are not for an improper or "bad cause" in relation to these factors.

- **Restructuring for Continuity of Operations**
 - If the work associated with eliminated positions must be continued, restructure the work of other employees so the unit work's can be accomplished and workloads managed <http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/workconsult/>
 - Match the work to those with the appropriate skills, incorporate into job descriptions and procedures; conduct retraining
 - Be careful not to overburden remaining staff which could result in burnout, poor performance, and/or turnover

- **Final Review**
 - Consider any unintended consequences such as decrease in service or quality, impacting a strategic area, affecting diversity, demoralizing a high performer by adding workload.

B. Required Reduction in Force Plan

Prior to any RIF being implemented, a plan must be developed and approved by Central Human Resources and University leadership **before** any discussion may occur with the affected staff.

- **Plan Elements**
 - Reason for the reduction in force, whether related to grant funding, reorganization, changes in services, etc. The rationale should also serve as basis for the message that will be consistently used to communicate with a variety of constituencies in explaining the reason for the reduction, including the individuals involved, the unions, co-workers, media representatives or other public inquiries.
 - Impact of the reduction in force on any University operations or services, or on any customers or other relevant constituencies. This impact description should alert University administrators to any points of consideration or concern that may be impacted by the plan being presented.
 - A desired time line for the implementation and/or completion of the reduction in force plan. It will also be useful to highlight any specific factors related to the issue of timing, either to the announcement or potential placement of individuals.
 - Employee Detail
 - Explanation of why this classification and person is impacted – e.g. elimination of duties and/or functions and in not least senior, any special skills, performance or other considerations (if relevant).
 - Copies of the most recent performance evaluation for the individuals impacted should also be forwarded for review, whether or not performance is listed as a consideration.
- **Plan Analysis and Management by Central HR**
 - Focuses on procedures, organizational impact and the University's communications regarding the reduction in force. The level of analysis will also depend upon the reason for the proposed action.
 - Anticipated reductions of regular merit or career status professional positions resulting directly from the expiration of grants and contracts may be approved directly by HR, who will in turn notify University leadership of the reductions.
 - Proposals arising from other funding or organizational changes, HR will submit a recommendation to the Provost and Senior Vice President for their review and approval before any notice or other action is taken.
 - In the case of AFSCME covered positions, HR will also coordinate with the Board of Regents Office and the Iowa Department of Administrative Services/Human Resource Enterprise to gain any approvals necessary for reductions under the AFSCME contract.

- **Communication and Plan Implementation**

- When final approval is reached, Central HR will notify the department and ask them to work with the following individuals to assure proper notification and process:
 - P&S non-bargaining: Robert Millsap
 - Merit Staff: Lyra Dickerson and David Bergeon
 - SEIU: David Bergeon
- Depending upon the issues and scope involved, HR may assemble a working group coordinated by Kevin Ward to manage the reduction in force, from conception of the plan through implementation
- Train supervisors who will be delivering the layoff message
- Depending upon issues and scope, develop a communication plan to inform affected units, and as needed others in the UI community and external audiences. As needed work with University Relations

C. Resources to Support Managers and Staff during Transition

<http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/workconsult/> <http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/fsseap/index.html>

- **Reassigned Staff**

- Welcome them, provide orientation and retraining as needed, discuss performance expectations and provide an environment for success
- Consider team building activities (partner with OE) to integrate the new staff

- **Departing Staff**

- Offer emotional support (encourage use of EAP if employee or family seem unable to move forward)
- Encourage use of UI resources and allow work time for some activities related to departure and job hunt

http://www.uiowa.edu/hr/relations/hrrep/staff_resources.pdf

- **Continuing Staff**

- Offer emotional support (encourage use of EAP if employee or family seem unable to move forward)
- Supervisory courses in managing change are offered
- OE Workplace consultations are available
- Continue to support and reward high performers
- Continue to manage performance to achieve productivity
- Offer retraining as needed to enhance skills
- Continue to reevaluate the work to be done and regularly review work and improve processes
- Continue to communicate with staff to keep them informed of outcomes of RIF, work redesign, budget, etc., to maintain engagement