

Secondment Policy of the ERA-Shuttle project

This policy outlines the authorities, processes, and procedures for establishing and organizing secondment opportunities offered by the ERA-Shuttle project for the employees of the University of Malta, University of Gdansk, and University of Split.

This project-based policy forms part of the ERA-Shuttle project commitment to enhancing working conditions and career development for researchers in line with ERA-Policy objectives and is abiding by the rules of [EU's Posted Workers Directive](#). As part of its action plan, ERA-Shuttle is providing mobility and training opportunities, making our universities an attractive place to work, providing a stimulating work environment, and helping to reverse the brain drain.

Reason for Secondment Policy

As part of the ERA-Shuttle project consortium, the University of Malta, University of Gdansk, and University of Split are committed to supporting the internal logistics of secondments, in line with its ongoing commitment to employee development based on the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers framework (HRS4R). As part of the successful implementation of the HRS4R, secondments are considered valuable tools for individual career growth and for the overall development of the universities.

In line with the university's commitment to enhance the career development of its employees, this policy provides a standard process for announcing, creating, reviewing, and reporting on the secondments funded under the ERA-Shuttle project.

Scope and Audience

This policy applies any time a research centre, institute, faculty, or department of a home institution is planning to benefit from a secondment managed by ERA-Shuttle project, including any employee within the university who is employed on a contractual basis.

Definitions

A '**secondment**' refers to the temporary transfer or 'loan' of an employee to an external organization (external secondment). After the secondment, the employee will have the opportunity to return to their original position upon completion of the secondment, with the mandatory 3-month return phase.

Secondments provide individuals with an opportunity to apply their skills and experience in a new environment, offering professional challenges that support career development, bridge skills gaps, and broaden expertise.

Host and Home institutions: The department or organization within the ERA-Shuttle consortium that '**hosts**' the secondee benefits from the individual's current and newly acquired skills, while their '**home**' department gains from their increased motivation, job satisfaction, and enhanced capabilities upon their return. On an organisational level, secondments promote mobility among university employees, retain valuable talent, and help prevent brain drain by keeping staff with critical skills and knowledge.

The provisions governing secondment relocation, annual leave, and accommodation shall not be governed by the Travel Policy.

It is imperative to distinguish that secondment cannot be classified as business travel or any other form of travel, as the act of relocating to the host institution does not constitute travel in the conventional sense. Travel typically refers to journeys undertaken outside an employee's regular workplace. In contrast, secondment entails a relocation to a new (temporary) workplace, thereby establishing a distinct set of obligations and considerations separate from those applicable to business travel or duty-related trips.

Types of Opportunities

The ERA-Shuttle project will endeavour to promote secondment opportunities according to the host institution's offers for secondment placement.

These are the types of work that might be considered for ERA-Shuttle-sponsored secondment:

1. A project (including a PhD-related project);
2. Introduction of a new initiative, like the new funding opportunity;
3. Policy development;
4. A specific task of limited duration (like learning how to operate the new equipment);
5. A short-term appointment to learn new skills (skills can be related to the research or to the Management & Administration);
6. Any other limited period secondment, designed to meet the individual's career development need.

Change to hours and working pattern

Any changes to working hours or working pattern required during the secondment will be agreed upon with the employee prior to commencement of the secondment. A secondment agreement will be discussed prior to the final commitment of the host institution.

If it is agreed that the secondee will be working fewer hours on the secondment than they currently work in their established office, it will be assumed, unless stated otherwise in the comments, that the officer is being relieved from working the full hours in the established office to be able to do the secondment and that their total contractual hours will be unchanged, i.e., because they are working the same total hours but part time for their established office and part time as a secondee.

Employees will continue to hold their substantive established office while on secondment. Alternatively, secondments may be set up to meet the particular development needs of an individual. In accordance with the ERA-Shuttle proposal, a secondment development policy will be initiated to encourage the use of secondment as a valuable development route at the university.

Advertising

A secondment will be advertised as part of an internal recruitment process, where the opportunity is limited to university employees as it is a career development opportunity. ERA-Shuttle managers will follow the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) standards for open, transparent, and merit-based procedures associated with the advertising of the secondment opportunities, aligning with the EU's goals for researcher mobility and career development.

Notes on Insurance, Salary, and Expenses

All secondments should be referred to the relevant ERA-Shuttle project managers for consideration of insurance requirements.

Secondee will revert to their original salary at the end of the secondment. The home institution will continue to be eligible for the employee's benefits as normal during the secondment period. Advice should be sought from the Project Support Manager responsible for the project's finances, and arrangements will be put in place in advance of the secondment.

It is also expected that all payment arrangements will be done in line with ERA-Shuttle budget for secondments, outlining the subsistence and travel allowance and accommodation cost (with and without family).

Expenses incurred during the secondment should be agreed upon with the host institution in advance, and the claims procedure should be followed in accordance with that of the host institution. This statement will be reflected in the Secondment Agreement to be signed prior to the secondment.

Management and Communication

On a day-to-day basis, the secondee will report to and be managed by the relevant manager of the host institution or an appointed deputy. Any management issues concerning the secondment will be dealt with in consultation with the home institution. The

seconded will be expected to comply with the policies and procedures of the host organisation including health and safety, dignity at work, and other policies, in addition to those of the home institution.

Before the start of the secondment, the individual should agree with their line manager how to keep in touch during the secondment period.

Annual Leave

Sending University's annual leave policy and procedures will apply when calculating the vacation leave of the seconded. The seconded will continue to be eligible for paid holiday leave in accordance with their employment contract and will remain subject to the home institution's approval and notification procedures. The seconded will seek approval from the host institution for leave and provide details of leave taken on return to the home institution.

Returning to Substantive Post

In the last month of the secondment, the line manager in the home institution should contact the seconded to arrange a full briefing and make arrangements for the seconded's return. At the meeting, it will be discussed with the seconded what will be expected on returning to their original role. This could include clarifying details of the role and responsibilities, setting objectives, and discussing how any new skills can be used.

Arrangements should be made to ensure delivery and return of all property, documents, and data owned by the host institution. In the event that a seconded is employed at a home institution on a definite contract basis, the date of the expiration of the contract should be no further than 3 months after the end of the secondment to allow for the implementation of the return phase of the secondment.