



Applies to: Regular unclassified staff

Responsible Office

Office of Human Resources

POLICY

Issued: 10/01/1973
Revised: 01/03/2021
Edited: 10/09/2023

Conditions may arise that necessitate the reduction of the university workforce. Abolishment of unclassified positions may occur due to lack of funds, lack of work, reasons of economy, or reorganization for efficiency.

Purpose of the Policy

To outline the process for requesting and completing a **reduction in force** of an unclassified staff member.

Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Continuous Service | Employee's years of service at the university without a break in service. |
| Full-time equivalency (FTE) | An employee's assigned hours per work week divided by 40, and then multiplied by 100. For example, an employee assigned 30 hours per work week has a 75% FTE (30 divided by 40 equals .75, multiplied by 100 equals 75%). |
| Reduction in force | A decrease in the number of positions at the university's initiative due to a lack of funds, lack of work, reasons of economy, or reorganization for efficiency. |
| Unit | College or administrative unit. |

Policy Details

- I. Reduction in Force
 - A. **Units** must balance organizational needs with human resources considerations, comply with university policies, and consult with Employee and Labor Relations prior to planning a **reduction in force**.
 - B. All of the following are reductions in force and a request for approval must be submitted to Employee and Labor Relations:
 - 1. A staff position is being reduced below **75% full-time equivalency (FTE)**.
 - 2. An original staff position is below 75% FTE and is reduced below 50% FTE.
 - 3. Any staff position that is abolished, regardless of original FTE.
 - C. All reductions in force must be approved by Employee and Labor Relations.
 - D. Reductions of a staff position to 75% (FTE) or greater will not be considered a reduction in force. The unit must contact Employee and Labor Relations 30 days prior to implementing such a change to a FTE to notify and discuss the proposed action with Employee and Labor Relations. For multiple such reductions, prior approval by Employee and Labor Relations is necessary.
 - E. When reducing the FTE below 75% for the purpose of maintaining positions until anticipated grant funding is available is not considered a reduction in force, and a reduction in force request is not necessary. Reducing the FTE below 50% is considered a reduction regardless of the reason, and a reduction in force request must be submitted.
 - F. Reductions of staff represented by labor unions must be in accordance with terms of applicable collective bargaining agreements.

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- G. Units must manage unsatisfactory performance issues separately from the reduction in force process, and address performance issues through performance management and the corrective action process.
 - H. Units should review use of temporary staff prior to reducing regular staff.
 - I. Termination of employment will be effective no earlier than 30 calendar days after the delivery date of the letter of notification to the employee.
- II. Impact of Reduction in Force on Benefit Programs for Employees Who Are Terminated
- A. Vacation and compensatory time – payment for vacation and compensatory time for eligible positions is made at the time of termination in accordance with the [Paid Time Off 6.27 policy](#).
 - B. Sick time off– there is no payment for sick time off at time of termination.
 - C. Group insurance plans – medical, dental, and vision coverage may be continued in accordance with COBRA.
 - D. Retirement – contributions to retirement plans are discontinued at the time of termination. Employees are advised to consult their retirement plans for details about the impact of termination.
 - E. Unemployment compensation – staff members who are terminated as a result of a reduction in force may be eligible for unemployment compensation. Guidelines are governed and administered by the [Ohio Department of Job and Family Services](#).
 - F. Rehire – eligible regular staff whose positions are abolished and who are subsequently rehired within one year of the effective date of termination maintain their benefits service date for the purpose of vacation accrual determination. A staff member who is terminated from the university due to a reduction in force may only receive severance pay once for a specific period of **continuous service**; therefore, the staff member’s continuous service date is restarted upon rehire if severance was paid.

PROCEDURE

Issued: 10/01/1973
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- I. Planning and Implementing a Reduction in Force
 - A. Units must:
 - 1. Consult with Employee and Labor Relations prior to planning a reduction in force.
 - 2. Review and follow the process in the [Reduction in Force Manager Guide](#).
 - 3. Complete a [Request for Reduction in Force](#) with supporting information and justification, and submit it to Employee and Labor Relations for approval no later than 30 days in advance of the requested reduction to allow adequate time to approve the request and provide notification to the affected employee(s).
 - a. When multiple reductions will occur, units should contact Employee and Labor Relations at least 60 days in advance of the implementation.
 - b. In situations involving mass reductions, a longer notice period may be required by law.
 - 4. Verify the funding source for the position and submit supporting documentation to Employee and Labor Relations regarding the funding source.
 - 5. Consult with Employee and Labor Relations for positions that do not fall under the purview of this policy (i.e., term, temporary positions).
 - 6. Deliver the letter of notification to the employee as soon as possible.
 - a. The letter must be delivered in person, electronically, or by mail by the supervisor, HR representative, or the HR representative’s designee.
 - b. The letter must include the employee’s termination date, which will become effective no earlier than 30 calendar days from the delivery date of the letter of notification.
 - 7. If the employee is eligible for severance, deliver the Severance Agreement and Release of Claims simultaneously with delivery of the letter of notification
 - 8. Review the letter of notification with the employee.
 - B. Employee and Labor Relations or designee must:

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1. Consult with units on the process for reduction in force, and when applicable, consult with units on the [Staff Severance Program 2.40 policy](#).
2. Ensure that the reduction in force is not used to circumvent good performance management practices.
3. Review [Request for Reduction in Force](#) with supporting information and justification, including grant funding documentation, if any.
4. If the [Request for Reduction in Force](#), supporting information and justification, and any funding documentation supports the request for the reduction in force, approve the reduction in force request.
5. Notify the unit of the decision.
6. Prepare the letter of notification and send it to the unit after approval of the request.
7. Be available to discuss with the employee any potential impact to their benefits.
8. If the employee elects severance, review and comply with the [Staff Severance Program 2.40 policy](#).
9. If the employee is not eligible for severance:
 - a. Verify the employee’s leave balances and request pay out of vacation from the Office of Business and Finance, Division of Payroll Services upon termination from the university.
 - b. Process the appropriate employment action via Workday.
10. When applicable, enter the appropriate effective termination date via Workday.

Responsibilities

| Position or Office | Responsibilities |
|------------------------------|---|
| Employee | Review letter of notification and, if applicable, Severance Agreement and Release of Claims. |
| Employee and Labor Relations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult with units on reduction in force process and Staff Severance Program 2.40 policy. 2. Review reduction in force requests and supporting documentation, and approve as appropriate. Notify units of reduction in force decisions. 3. Prepare letter of notification/layoff and send to unit. 4. If employee elects severance, comply with Staff Severance Program 2.40 policy. 5. If employee is not eligible for severance, verify leave balances and request vacation pay out upon termination. Process appropriate employment action via Workday. 6. Enter effective termination date via Workday, if applicable. |
| Unit | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult with Employee and Labor Relations as set forth in this policy. 2. Review and comply with Reduction in Force Manager Guide. 3. Ensure that reduction in force process is not used to circumvent good performance management practices. 4. Submit reduction in force requests and required supporting documentation to Employee and Labor Relations as set forth in this policy. 5. Consult with Employee and Labor Relations regarding positions outside purview of this policy. 6. After approval by Employee and Labor Relations, deliver notification documents and, if applicable, the Severance Agreement and Release of Claims to employee as set forth in this policy. 7. Review letter of notification with employee. |

Resources

Forms

Request for Reduction in Force, hr.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/form-workforce-reduction.pdf

Governance Documents

Paid Time Off 6.27 policy, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy627.pdf

Staff Severance Program 2.40 policy, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy240.pdf

Additional Guidance

Leaving University Employment, hr.osu.edu/life-events/leaving-ohio-state/

Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, jfs.ohio.gov

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS), opers.org



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Reduction in Force Frequently Asked Questions, hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/resources/915920faq.pdf
Reduction in Force Employee Guide, hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/resources/915guidelines.pdf
Reduction in Force Manager Guide, hr.osu.edu/public/documents/policy/resources/915managerguide.pdf
State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio (STRS), www.strsoh.org

Contacts

| Subject | Office | Telephone | E-mail/URL |
|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Benefits, including COBRA | HR Connection | 614-247-myHR (6947) | HRConnection@osu.edu |
| Counseling and Employee Assistance | Ohio State Employee Assistance Program, The OSU Health Plan | 614-292-4472 800-678-6264 | hr.osu.edu/benefits/eap |
| Payroll Services | HR Connection | 614-247-myHR (6947) | HRConnection@osu.edu |
| Policy questions | HR Connection | 614-247-myHR (6947) | HRConnection@osu.edu |

History

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| Issued: | 10/01/1973 | Reduction in Workforce – Administrative and Professional Staff |
| Revised: | 10/01/1980 | |
| Revised: | 04/24/1991 | |
| Revised: | 06/03/1996 | Renamed Reduction in Work Force Unclassified Staff |
| Edited: | 10/31/1997 | |
| Revised: | 06/15/1999 | |
| Revised: | 09/01/1999 | |
| Revised: | 03/11/2002 | |
| Edited: | 09/06/2002 | |
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| Revised: | 01/01/2010 | |
| Revised: | 06/01/2011 | |
| Edited: | 03/01/2012 | |
| Edited: | 08/01/2013 | |
| Edited: | 04/17/2014 | |
| Revised: | 01/03/2021 | Renamed Reduction in Force Unclassified Staff. Reflects material revision approved by President’s Cabinet and subsequent minor revision clarifying delivery methods for letter of notification and inserting HR Connection in the Contacts section |
| Edited: | 10/09/2023 | |