

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON  
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**SECTION: Human Resources**  
**AREA: Employee Relations**

**Number: 02.04.06**

<b>SUBJECT: Reduction in Force</b>
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I. PURPOSE

This document outlines the steps to be followed in making reduction in force (RIF) decisions, implementing a staff reduction plan, and re-employing displaced employees. It also provides information for staff who are affected by a RIF regarding employment assistance and an appeal process.

When institutional or unit planning or budgeting needs dictate organizational review and change, all relevant University offices and directives shall be consulted for direction. When a review involves personnel reorganization, reclassification, and/or the possibility of reducing the work force, Human Resources and Affirmative Action must be consulted early in the planning process. All necessary actions shall be taken to ensure that decisions are made based upon careful analysis and that employees are treated fairly and offered opportunities for reassignment, assistance, and re-employment.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Reduction in force (RIF): The elimination of an occupied position or positions resulting from an administrative decision deemed appropriate under such situations as a lack of funds, a lack of sufficient work, reorganization, changes in technology or research needs, or other factors.

A suspension, dismissal, discharge, or discontinuance of temporary employment does not constitute a RIF.

B. Regular employee: A University employee who is employed for at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis for a period of at least 4-1/2 months, excluding students employed in positions which require student status as a condition for employment.

III. PROVISIONS FOR A RIF

All RIF decisions should include the following elements:

A. Careful analysis to determine which areas, activities, programs, or organizations should be reduced.

- B. Identification of the jobs and functions that will need to be performed after the reductions.
- C. Evaluation of qualifications and abilities of present employees to perform the jobs remaining.
- D. Written notification of the employee(s) affected by the RIF as soon as feasible, but not less than 30 days prior to the effective date of the action.
- E. Reasonable opportunities for displaced employees to interview for other employment.
- F. A placement and re-employment program provided by Human Resources.
- G. Opportunity for the displaced employee to appeal, if he/she believes that the reason for the reduction action is a form of discrimination or if the appropriate RIF procedures were not followed.

#### IV. RIF DETERMINATIONS

The following steps are to be followed and factors considered in the organizational review and development of a RIF plan:

- A. A clear statement of the rationale for eliminating or reducing programs and/or services must be developed. The statement must address the ultimate benefits to be achieved, such as reallocation of resources, effecting a budgetary reduction, or enhanced productivity.
- B. Unit functions and responsibilities must be carefully analyzed to determine which areas, activities, programs, organizations, or classifications should be reduced.
- C. The jobs and functions that will need to be performed after the reductions are identified.
- D. The qualifications and abilities of present employees to perform the jobs remaining should be evaluated. In evaluating present employees, a manager should consider the following employee characteristics:
  - 1. Effectiveness on the job, including past performance, records of achievement, and disciplinary history.
  - 2. Specialized training and skills necessary for a particular function, such as proficiency in use of equipment, licenses, or special certification.
  - 3. Length of time in service with the University.

4. Amount of total work experience in the field, including applicable non-UH experience.
- E. The nature of the RIF and the employees affected must be determined. All documentation prepared in the evaluation process and an explanation of the recommendations will be sent to the dean of the college or director of the department for concurrence.
- F. In the case of an employee whose duties are divided between two or more departments, a RIF decision by one department will not obligate the other(s) to increase the appointment and funding to compensate for the reduction.

#### V. REVIEW, APPROVAL, AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

- A. The dean of the college or the director of the department implementing such work force reduction must submit a written plan reflecting such work force reduction with the Executive Director of Human Resources and with the Executive Director of Affirmative Action. In order to facilitate such review, the administrative unit must include a document reflecting the racial, gender, age, and disability makeup of the administrative unit, including names and protected class status of the employees to be displaced, with the copy of the plan furnished to the Executive Director for Affirmative Action. (See Check List - Addendum A)
- B. The Executive Director of Human Resources will review the written plan to determine that all work force reduction determinations are consistent with this document and that employees are treated in a fair and equitable manner. The Executive Director for Affirmative Action will review each plan for adverse impact; i.e. to ensure that protected classes are not disproportionately affected by the RIF decision. Within five working days of receipt, each will respond to the administrative unit submitting the plan with their approvals or recommendations for action. Corrective actions required may slow the layoff process.
- C. Following approval, the confidential written plan describing the nature of the RIF required and the employee(s) affected must then be sent through administrative channels to Human Resources, Affirmative Action, the responsible vice president, and then to the President or designee. Only at such time as the President (or designee) concurs with the recommendation may the college or department initiate the notification process.

- D. The dean of the college or director of the department (or designee) shall schedule a personal meeting with the employee(s) affected not less than 30 days prior to the effective date of the action. At that time, the employee(s) will be notified and provided with a letter of notification of their RIF. Each letter of notification must include language describing transition assistance offered by Human Resources and the employee's right to file an appeal. A copy of the notice of RIF will be forwarded promptly to the Executive Director of Human Resources.
- E. An employee who has been notified of a RIF may be removed from the worksite, with pay, immediately upon receipt of the notice of the RIF, providing all the following conditions are met:
1. There is reason to believe that the employee will cause damage to University property, including computer or business systems.
  2. The employee's supervisor is able to justify this danger in writing to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of Human Resources.
  3. The employee is given a work assignment to be completed away from the worksite and this assignment is confirmed in writing.
- F. Employees are not required to use accumulated vacation during the 30-day notification period. Accumulated vacation will be paid in lump sum following the effective date of layoff.

## VI. PLACEMENT EFFORTS

- A. Human Resources will provide professional support and services to assist regular employees displaced as a result of reduction in work force.
- B. Employees are encouraged to contact Human Resources to discuss career options and opportunities for internal placement. Employment representatives will assist displaced employees as needed.
- C. Displaced employees will be granted reasonable opportunities to interview for other employment.
- D. If an employee is offered other employment with the University in a position for which the employee is qualified and such offer is refused, the employee will be deemed to have resigned from employment.
- E. Benefits information will be made available to all displaced employees. Such information will identify those benefits that cease upon termination, those benefits that can be continued at employee expense, and retirement options (if applicable).

## VII. RE-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

- A. The names of employees displaced as a result of work force reduction will be placed on a re-employment list in order of their displacement and will remain on this list for a period of six months.
- B. An employee who has been displaced as a result of a work force reduction will be offered the same position if it is re-established within six months of the RIF, provided that the employee has retained the ability to perform the work.
- C. An administrative unit may bypass employees on a re-employment list for any of the following reasons:
  - 1. Another employee has been or will be voluntarily or involuntarily demoted to that classification within the department.
  - 2. The list includes employees in a classification who before the work force reduction did not work within the department in which they would be re-employed. The administrative unit may give first consideration to those employees on the re-employment list who were previously employed within their own department. Then consideration will be given to the remaining employees on the re-employment list for that classification.
  - 3. The dean, director, or vice president in consultation with the Executive Director of Human Resources determines that on the basis of past performance, training, experience, or skills--the applicant is not qualified to fill the position.
- D. The Executive Director of Human Resources will mail a notice of re-employment opportunity to the displaced employee at his or her last reported address as shown on the official University records via certified mail, return receipt requested. The displaced employee must respond to the notice in writing to the Executive Director of Human Resources within 10 business days of the date on the notice or will be deemed to have forfeited all rights to re-employment. It is the obligation of the employee to ensure that the University address records are correct.
- E. An employee who is terminated because of RIF and who is re-employed by the University within 12 months shall have his/her sick leave balance restored. Also, regardless of the time lapse, upon re-employment, an employee will receive credit for prior state service in longevity calculations.

## VIII. APPEAL PROCESS

- A. Any employee affected by a RIF decision may appeal on the basis outlined in this document. The appeal must be made in writing to the Executive Director of Human Resources within five working days of receipt of the written notice of work force reduction. Failure to comply with this requirement will be deemed a waiver of the right to appeal.
- B. The Executive Director of Human Resources will review all requests for appeal to determine that the appeal is timely and in compliance with this document. Requests that meet the criteria will be processed in accordance with the Formal Grievance Procedure.
- C. The burden will be upon the appealing employee to show that the reason for the reduction action was not reasonably related to a legitimate RIF factor, but rather due to a reason impermissible under federal or state statutes or institutional policies. No other issues will be heard or considered by the hearing panel.
- D. If the appeal process is not completed by the employee's last scheduled day of work, the employee will be released on the effective date of the RIF. If the appeal results in a decision favorable to the employee, the employee will be reinstated with back wages, less the amount of any unemployment compensation received from the Texas Workforce Commission while the appeal is pending. In such case, the Texas Workforce Commission will be notified promptly in writing by Human Resources of the employee's reinstatement.

## IX. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Associate Vice President for Finance

Review: Every three years, on or before March 1

## X. APPROVAL

Carl P. Carlucci

Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance

Renu Khator

President

Date of President's Approval: June 9, 2009

XI. REFERENCES

System Administrative Memorandum [02.A.06](#)

**Addendum A****RIF Check List 1 of 2**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Details</b>
Statement of rationale for the elimination or reduction of programs/services	The statement must address the ultimate benefits to be achieved, such as reallocation of resources, affecting a budgetary reduction, or enhanced productivity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include a brief history of the program/service.</li> <li>2. Explain what situation/occurrence has determined the need for the reduction.</li> <li>3. Specify what will become of the responsibilities after the RIF.</li> </ol>
Approvals	At the close of your statement of rationale, there should be the necessary signature lines.	Approvals of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Executive Director of Human Resources</li> <li>2. Executive Director of Affirmative Action</li> <li>3. Responsible vice president</li> <li>4. President</li> </ol>
Unit functions and responsibilities	Careful analysis must be done to determine which areas, activities, programs, organizations, or classifications should be reduced.	Spreadsheet including information of all employees in the department being considered for RIF: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Names</li> <li>2. Titles</li> <li>3. Job grade</li> <li>4. Salary</li> <li>5. Gender</li> <li>6. Race</li> <li>7. Date of Birth</li> <li>8. Disabilities</li> <li>9. Date of UH hire</li> <li>10. Date of Dept hire</li> </ol>
Notification of RIF	Sample memo to be sent to all RIFed employees.	Complete memorandum including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Date of RIF</li> <li>2. Details behind the reason for RIF</li> <li>3. What's to happen with the remaining duties</li> <li>4. HR Dept commitment</li> <li>5. Appeal info</li> </ol>
Organizational Chart(s)	Complete Departmental Organizational Chart(s)	Prepare an organizational chart for <i>before</i> and <i>after</i> the RIF.
Job Description(s)	Complete Job Descriptions	Include a copy of the current job descriptions as well as the job descriptions for any new or created positions as a result of the RIF.

**Addendum A (page 2)****Check List 2 of 2****Additional considerations for RIFs of Partial Employees from One Area**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Details</b>
Past job performance, Records of achievement, and Disciplinary history	Prepare a matrix of past performance evaluations on ALL employees in the area being considered for the RIF.	Include evaluation scores on all employees in the job class affected by the RIF and also include the employees' disciplinary and/or awards history.
Specialized training	Add to matrix additional training including proficiency in use of equipment, licenses, or special certifications.	This information may be obtained from the employee's personnel file (departmental and/or HR).
Length of service with UH	Add to matrix all service with the University.	Insure the accuracy of this information by noting non-benefits service separate from benefits service.
Amount of total work experience in the field	Add to matrix actual work experience including experience in the field and applicable non-UH experience.	This information can be obtained from the employee's departmental and/or HR file (application).