

Guide to secondments in the Victorian public sector



**Victorian
Public Sector
Commission**

The information contained below is a guide to secondment arrangements in the Victorian public sector. It is intended to provide managers and staff with answers to some of the questions they may have when considering and implementing secondment arrangements.

This information is a guide only – it **does not** replace local organisational policies and the current [Enterprise Bargaining Agreement](#).

Please contact your Human Resources team for further information.

Definitions

Home organisation: the organisation that an employee is moving from or has moved from.

Receiving organisation: the organisation that an employee is moving to or has moved to.

Secondment: the temporary movement of an employee from their home organisation to the receiving organisation with the mutual agreement of the home organisation, the receiving organisation and the employee.

Guidelines

Defining the secondment

A secondment is different to a transfer

A transfer occurs as a result of an agreement between relevant parties within the home organisation and the receiving organisation. While desirable, the employee does not necessarily play a role in establishing this agreement. A secondment requires the agreement of the employee.

A secondment is different to a fixed-term position

A fixed term role is when a person is employed by an organisation for a specific period of time and then departs that organisation. A secondment occurs when a person is still employed by their home organisation and they have the right to return to that organisation when their secondment ends.

Secondments can happen beyond the Victorian Public Service

Secondments can occur between VPS organisations, public entities, local government, other jurisdictions, not for profit organisations and sometimes, private organisations.

A secondment needs to be agreed to by all relevant parties

The employee, home organisation and the receiving organisation must agree for a secondment to occur.

An employer can say no to a secondment

It is the home organisation's responsibility to consider the secondment request and decide whether it can be reasonably accommodated. The following decision making criteria must be considered:

- nature and practicality of the request
- impact on the workplace and business; such as work delivery, efficiency and productivity;
- effects of the proposed secondment on the team and their workload; and
- potential professional development benefits to the employee by undertaking the secondment.

There is no standard time limit for a secondment

The duration of the secondment is by agreement between the home organisation, the receiving organisation and the employee.

A secondment is not a solution to addressing poor performance

The home organisation must disclose to the receiving organisation if performance is a current or expected issue for the potential secondee.

During the secondment

An employee can be seconded to a higher grade position

They can be provided that a competitive process has been used. This may not be necessary if the secondment is short term (normally less than six months) but this is at the discretion of the receiving organisation.

The receiving organisation is not always responsible for the payment of the employee's salary

Who pays the employee is subject to agreement by the home organisation and the receiving organisation prior to the commencement of the secondment. Normally, it is the receiving organisation who pays.

Employee entitlements are not always automatically transferred to the receiving organisation's payroll system

This depends on the arrangements between the home and receiving organisations. Where an employee has applied for an entitlement, but that entitlement can't be transferred to a receiving organisation's payroll system, both organisations will need to clarify whether the employee can claim it and record the entitlements taken.

The home and receiving organisations are both responsible for ensuring the occupational health and safety of the employee

Both the home and receiving organisation is responsible for ensuring the employee understands the occupational health and safety requirements of their respective roles.

The home organisation is not responsible for the performance management of the employee

The receiving organisation is responsible for the performance management of the employee. However, the home organisation has an interest in ensuring any

performance management is conducted in a fair and reasonable way. The home organisation should be advised of any progression payments awarded to the secondee as they will carry over to the home organisation.

It is recommended that the home organisation stays in touch with the employee during their secondment

This keeps the employee up to date on what is going on in their home organisation. It can also assist in managing the expectations of each party upon return.

A secondment period can be extended

If the home organisation and employee agree to the request from the receiving organisation, a secondment can be extended.

A secondment period can be reduced

A secondment can be reduced with the agreement of the home organisation, receiving organisation and employee.

The receiving organisation may terminate a secondment arrangement for a breach of the Code of Conduct

A breach of the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#) may lead to the early termination of a secondment. The receiving organisation should conduct any disciplinary process in consultation with the home organisation. Any penalty should be determined in consultation with the home organisation, bearing in mind that the home organisation remains the employer and may need to take formal action arising from the disciplinary process.

A seconded employee can be offered an ongoing role in the receiving organisation

If an employee has been through a competitive process to gain the initial secondment, there is no requirement for them to go through another process, provided the classification of the ongoing role is the same as the secondment role.



Moving on from the secondment

A seconded employee does not always return to the role they left

The home organisation is responsible for making sure the employee has a role to return to at their substantive grade, even if they were seconded to a higher grade. The role the employee returns to depends on the current and future needs of the home organisation. All return arrangements should be discussed and documented prior to the commencement of the secondment.

If there is a machinery of government change or an internal restructure, the employee's substantive position in their home organisation may be affected

These restructures affect employees regardless of whether they are on secondment or not. Seconded employees should receive the same level of consultation, information and advice as all affected employees.

