



**UK Research
and Innovation**

HR Policy Framework

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Policy Statement

This HR Policy Framework, along with the UKRI policies and guidance, set out the terms under which UKRI employs its staff.

Policies confer rights and obligations.

It provides clarification and guidance on the responsibilities for UKRI, line managers and employees when applying and updating policy.

Management Statement

The HR Policy Framework has been agreed with the Trade Union Side.

References

UKRI Grievance, Harassment and Bullying Policy
UKRI Ending Work Policy
UKRI Managing Performance and Conduct Policy
UKRI Probation Policy
UKRI Ways of Working Policy

| Version Number | Status | Revision Date | Summary of Changes |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Version 1.0 | Complete | January 2020 | New policy framework created |
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HR Policy Framework

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This HR Policy Framework sets out the principles for developing, agreeing, maintaining and reviewing policy for UKRI.
- 1.2 This policy covers all UKRI employees, workers, contractors and visitors unless individual policies clearly state otherwise.
- 1.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 UKRI must make changes in their approach or provision to ensure that services are accessible to disabled people as well as everybody else. Reasonable adjustments can mean alterations to buildings by providing lifts, wide doors, ramps and tactile signage or adjustments to facilitate a return to work after an absence, but may also mean changes to policies, procedures and training to ensure that services work equally well for people with learning disabilities.
- 1.4 The HR Policy Framework has been written to comply with employment law whilst allowing line managers as much discretion as possible in balancing the needs of UKRI and its employees. While consistency of application is essential, outcomes may vary according to circumstances.
- 1.5 UKRI will:
 - 1.5.1 Set realistic timescales for the development, discussion and review to ensure policies are fit for purpose in supporting our employees and business needs.
 - 1.5.2 Include the policies as part of the induction process for new employees, ensuring they are signposted where relevant.
 - 1.5.3 Ensure policies are complementary, clear, practical and enforceable.

2. Good practice

- 1.1 UKRI recognises the importance of people and the environment in which they work. UKRI has therefore, established a framework of employment policies which are a key enabler of effective employee and organisational performance. UKRI will deploy and develop the capabilities of its employees so that they can contribute to the achievement of UKRI's mission and objectives. A list of all the policies is at [Appendix A](#).

3. Access

- 3.1 All UKRI policies and guidance are available on the UKRI Hub and external website and will be made accessible to employees in relation to their needs.

4. Determination of conditions of employment

- 4.1 UKRI will review and revise the conditions of employment for its employees to ensure that they underpin business needs and comply with appropriate legislation and regulatory guidance.
- 4.2 UKRI will consult about policy development, review, change and implementation with Trade Unions, with a view to reaching agreement in line with recognition agreements.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 There are three parties essential to policy:



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- 5.1.1 UKRI as the employer.
- 5.1.2 The line manager.
- 5.1.3 The employee.
- 5.2 Other key stakeholders include:
 - 5.2.1 Trade Unions recognised by UKRI.
 - 5.2.2 Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, as the sponsor department.
 - 5.2.3 Any third-party provider who delivers an aspect of the policy framework.
- 5.3 UKRI, as the employer, is responsible for:
 - 5.3.1 Developing and maintaining policy.
 - 5.3.2 Ensuring that the organisation complies with statutory requirements and its policies.
 - 5.3.3 Creating an environment in which policy compliance can take place.
 - 5.3.4 Ensuring that all employees have access to and are informed about policy and policy change.
 - 5.3.5 Ensuring that line managers are have the necessary capability and support to manage their teams.
- 5.4 The Line Manager is responsible for:
 - 5.4.1 Familiarising themselves with, and make decisions in line with, policy and guidance.
 - 5.4.2 Directing employees to relevant policies when engaging with them on or responding to policy queries.
 - 5.4.3 Ensuring consistency of application of policy. Circumstances may vary so outcomes may differ, but line managers should ensure that they apply policy consistently.
 - 5.4.4 Where the policy stipulates it, engaging with HR for advice and guidance, before deciding and advising the employee.
 - 5.4.5 Ensuring that employees adhere to and conform with UKRI policy.
- 5.5 Employees are responsible for:
 - 5.5.1 Familiarising themselves with policy and guidance.
 - 5.5.2 Using and following policy and guidance.
 - 5.5.3 Informing UKRI of relevant changes to their personal circumstances that may have an impact on policy or compliance with employment law.

- 5.5.4 Informing UKRI of any known non-conformance with policy that could create a risk for UKRI.

6. HR Attendance

- 6.1 Before formal action is initiated under a relevant policy, the line manager should consult HR.
- 6.2 If a formal meeting is to be held, the line manager will normally be supported by a member of HR, who is present to ensure the correct policy and process is followed.
- 6.3 No hearing will go ahead without consultation with HR.

7. Right of accompaniment/representation

- 7.1 At all stages of formal procedure, the employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative. The employee also has the right to request a postponement of up to five working days if their chosen companion is not available to attend on the original day or time.

8. Common features of all policies

- 8.1 There are a number of features that are common to all policies. These are recorded in this framework document and will not appear in individual policies, but all policies will have a link to the framework document. They include:

8.1.1 Duty to consider all policy related requests

8.1.1.1 Line managers have a duty to consider all reasonable requests from employees that relate to policy. In addition, where a reasonable request is made in relation to policy, it is expected that such a request should be viewed favourably and agreed.

8.1.1.2 Where requests are declined, a clear reason must be provided to the employee, in line with the policy or guidance.

8.1.2 Records management

8.1.2.1 When dealing with other agencies, care should be taken to ensure information is shared only as required with those responsible for records/policies.

8.1.3 Data protection

8.1.3.1 UK Research and Innovation understands the importance of protecting personal information and is committed to complying with the current UK Data Protection legislation.

8.1.3.2 UKRI is committed to fostering a culture of transparency and accountability by demonstrating compliance with the principles set out in the legislation. It is also committed to ensuring that employees are appropriately trained and supported to achieve compliance with data protection.

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- 8.1.3.3 The data protection legislation sets out the rules for how organisations must process personal and sensitive personal data that it is processing about living individuals, and gives those individuals a number of rights relating to the data that is held about them.
- 8.1.3.4 In any formal procedures, UKRI reserves the right to conceal the identity of witnesses who provide evidence if it deems it necessary and appropriate to do so in which case witness statements may be anonymised.
- 8.1.3.5 UKRI needs to collect and process personal data about its employees to carry out its business effectively. In doing so, records will be kept confidential and retained on the employee's personal file.
- 8.1.3.6 UKRI will consider requests to see, correct or erase personal data held on a case by case basis and will seek to protect the information rights of third parties.
- 8.1.3.7 UKRI recognises that witness statements will only be anonymised in exceptional circumstances and that such statements may weaken the case if further action is taken against the alleged perpetrator.
- 8.1.3.8 Insofar as is practicable, all complaints or concerns will be dealt with in confidence.
- 8.1.3.9 In terms of HR policy, line managers and other colleagues should consider the following principles:

8.1.3.9.1 Lawful, fair and transparent

- 8.1.3.9.1.1 UKRI will only process personal data if it is lawful, fair and transparent i.e. it is allowed under the law, it is handled in a way that an employee would reasonably expect and that the reason for processing the data is made known.

8.1.3.9.2 Purpose limitation

- 8.1.3.9.2.1 Any personal information will only be used for the purposes that it is intended, which has been documented. Any additional requirements for use must be made clear to employees and agreed with them.

8.1.3.9.3 Data minimisation

- 8.1.3.9.3.1 Only sufficient data that is required for the purpose should be generated (i.e. it is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the processing purpose). The data that is held will be periodically reviewed and any that is no longer needed will be discarded.

8.1.3.9.4 Storage limitation

- 8.1.3.9.4.1 UKRI knows what personal data it holds and why it needs it. UKRI has a policy with standard retention periods, where possible, in line with documentation obligations and can justify what it retains. UKRI regularly reviews its information and erases or anonymises personal data which is no longer needed. UKRI has appropriate processes in place to comply with employees' requests for erasure under 'the right to be forgotten'.

8.1.3.9.5 Accuracy

- 8.1.3.9.5.1 Only data that is accurate will be used. UKRI has appropriate processes in place to check the accuracy of the data it collects and to update it as necessary. If the data is inaccurate it will be discarded.

8.1.3.9.6 Integrity and confidentiality

- 8.1.3.9.6.1 Employee records and data can only be stored in Oracle or WorkDay or any other approved platform with restricted access. No employee data may be retained on email.

8.1.3.9.7 Accountability

- 8.1.3.9.7.1 UKRI has responsibility for what it does with employees' personal data and is able to demonstrate how it complies with the principles of GDPR.

8.1.4 Notes at formal meetings

- 8.1.4.1 Written notes will be made of the hearing; these are not meant to be verbatim but should be an accurate reflection of the points discussed and will form the official record. The manager chairing a formal hearing will ensure that an additional colleague is present in order to take notes of the proceedings as an official record.
- 8.1.4.2 Each employee will have an opportunity to comment on the notes of their hearing or meeting but this will not delay a decision being made.
- 8.1.4.3 Any disagreements will be noted and copies of the notes will be given to the employee.
- 8.1.4.4 Audio and digital recordings of hearings will not be permitted unless, exceptionally, agreed by all attendees at the hearing beforehand. If agreed, the Chair will ensure that arrangements for the recording are made and that the recording is subsequently transcribed. The transcription will form the official record of the hearing. All recordings are subject to UK Data Protection legislation.
- 8.1.4.5 Covert recording of meetings, formal reviews, assessments, appeals or hearings is explicitly prohibited. Whilst it may not normally be deemed an act of gross misconduct it may trigger disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

8.1.5 Dismissals

8.1.5.1 The decision to dismiss will only be taken after a full review of all relevant factors by the person with delegated authority to dismiss in consultation with HR including the context of the whole employment history.

8.1.5.2 The decision to dismiss an employee will be taken in accordance with the delegation framework.

9. Equality Diversity and Inclusion

9.1 Policy is governed by the following Equality, Diversity and Inclusion statement:

9.1.1 Everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be provided with opportunities to flourish and succeed in a supportive environment. Diversity of ideas, experience and cultures produces and sustains the best results and performance.

9.2 All policies are subject to an Equality Impact assessment, against the following criteria:

9.2.1 whether there is an impact on groups of employees with protected characteristics; as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

9.2.2 whether the policy has the potential to discriminate or disadvantage employees.

9.3 All policies will be subject to usability testing. Usability testing provides UKRI with valuable insight on the clarity, readability and usability of the policies.

9.4 Where a policy prescribes a process or decision tree, wherever possible, this will be illustrated at the start of the policy for ease of reference and to facilitate understanding.

10. Policy review

10.1 All policies will be reviewed when there are changes in employment law that are relevant, where there is a change in the business need or when feedback from HR, line managers or Trade Unions suggest that the policy is either out of date or unfit for purpose.

11. Consultation with Trade Unions

11.1 In establishing new or revising existing policies, UKRI will consult with Trade Unions with a view to reaching agreement on the basis of collective bargaining through its Joint Consultation framework.

12. Announcement of changes in policy

12.1 Following consultation with the Trade Union side, changes in policy will be communicated to employees.

12.2 UKRI will ensure that policies are accessible via the UKRI Hub and Council intranets and that alternative means of access are available where necessary.

13. The Appeals procedure

13.1 Where there is a right of appeal in a policy, the procedure is as follows:

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- 13.1.1 All employees have the right to appeal against an action, decision or sanction taken as the result of a formal process under the: Grievance, Harassment and Bullying, Ending Work, Managing Performance and Conduct, Probation, Recruitment and Whistleblowing policies, or the Flexible Working section of the Ways of Working Policy.
- 13.1.2 For details of who can hear an appeal, please refer to the HR Delegated Authority Framework.
- 13.1.3 Details of when an employee has a right of appeal and the person to whom the employee should appeal will be included in the outcome letter.
- 13.1.4 Appeals should be submitted in writing within seven working days of the receipt of the decision letter, clearly stating the ground(s) for appeal.

13.2 Purpose of an appeal

- 13.2.1 The purpose of an appeal is to determine whether:
 - 13.2.1.1 the action/decision/sanction was fair and reasonable; and
 - 13.2.1.2 determine whether the procedure was followed correctly.
- 13.2.2 The aim of an appeal is to:
 - 13.2.2.1 review the basis upon which the original decision was made;
 - 13.2.2.2 Allow the employee to submit new or additional relevant evidence or information; and/or:
 - 13.2.2.3 Allow the employee to raise any procedural concerns, including commenting on those matters they consider have been ignored, have received either insufficient consideration or too much consideration or have been misinterpreted.
- 13.2.3 If there are sufficient reasons to question the initial process, a more detailed approach should be taken at the appeal stage. In certain circumstances, it may be found that the only way to remedy defective initial steps is to have a total rehearing of the case. This however, should not be the norm.

13.3 Appeal Hearing Process

- 13.3.1 Appeals will normally be heard by a Senior Manager from within UKRI who, in order to avoid a conflict of interest, has had no previous involvement in the case. In exceptional cases the appeal may be heard by someone outside of UKRI.
- 13.3.2 The Senior Manager should act as Chair and decision maker. The Chair can decide how to conduct the appeal and who will call witnesses and consider evidence.
- 13.3.3 The Chair will normally be accompanied by an HR professional.
- 13.3.4 Upon receipt of an appeal, the Chair should:
 - 13.3.4.1 arrange with HR to acknowledge receipt of the appeal and send the employee details of the appeal hearing.

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- 13.3.4.2 Advise the person making the appeal of their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or represented by a Trade Union Representative of their choice. The employee should confirm that person's attendance and identity before the hearing commences.
- 13.3.4.3 Hold the appeal hearing where possible within 10 working days of receipt of the letter containing the grounds of appeal.
- 13.3.5 Employees must take all reasonable steps to attend the appeal hearing. Where an employee is unable to attend because of circumstances beyond their control, they should inform the Chair as soon as possible. The hearing should be postponed and rearranged for another more suitable date.
- 13.3.6 Should the individual the employee has chosen to accompany/represent them not be available on the proposed meeting date, the employee may suggest an alternative date and time for the meeting to be held. The alternative meeting date must be within five working days of the original date proposed.
- 13.3.7 Alternatively, in the event of the employee not being able to attend the hearing in person they may, exceptionally, give their consent and arrange for their Trade Union representative to attend and present their case on their behalf. The employee may also make a written submission in these circumstances.
- 13.3.8 Should the employee be persistently unable or unwilling to attend the appeal hearing over a period of one month, and no written submissions are made, the appeal hearing will take place in the employee's absence.

13.4 The Appeal Hearing

- 13.4.1 At the Appeal Hearing, the Chair should:
 - 13.4.1.1 introduce those present and explain their respective roles,
 - 13.4.1.2 explain the purpose and format of the Appeal Hearing, including the possible outcomes,
 - 13.4.1.3 invite the employee to explain the basis on which they are appealing, referring to documents or evidence previously submitted or any new evidence which has come to light where they believe this may support their grounds for appeal,
 - 13.4.1.4 ask all necessary questions and summarise the facts,
 - 13.4.1.5 decide on whether any further investigation/action is required.
- 13.4.2 If an employee is accompanied by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative, they may not answer any questions on an employee's behalf. They may confer and outline the employee's grounds for appeal or make statements on an employee's behalf.
- 13.4.3 An adjournment should be made to enable the chair to consider everything stated in the evidence and/or investigate matters or seek appropriate advice.
- 13.4.4 The Chair should verbally inform the employee of the decision reached and the reasons for it as soon as possible.

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- 13.4.5 Where an employee fails to attend an Appeal Hearing, the Chair should make all reasonable efforts to discover the reason for such failure to attend and another Appeal Hearing should be arranged.
- 13.4.6 Where an employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend the appeal hearing over a period of one month without valid justification, the appeal hearing will take place in the employee's absence.
- 13.4.7 In very unusual circumstances, the employee may not be able to attend a rearranged Appeal Hearing for legitimate reasons. In such cases, the employee may be allowed to make written submissions.

13.5 Appeal Outcomes

- 13.5.1 The decision of the Appeal Hearing will be confirmed in writing with reasons, normally within five working days of the Appeal Hearing concluding. This may be extended should further time be required. In such an instance, the employee will be notified of the proposed date upon which the decision is expected to be made.
- 13.5.2 Possible outcomes are as follows. The Chair may:
 - 13.5.2.1 uphold the current decision/action/sanction i.e. confirm the original outcome, thereby rejecting the employee's appeal,
 - 13.5.2.2 amend the current decision/action/sanction i.e. substitute an alternative decision/action/sanction, or
 - 13.5.2.3 overturn the current decision/action/sanction i.e. set aside the original decision, thereby upholding the employee's appeal.
- 13.5.3 The decision made at an appeal hearing is final, with no further right of internal appeal.

Appendix A – List of policies

A1. The list of policies that has been developed is as follows:

- A1.1 Attendance and Leave Policy
- A1.2 Code of Conduct
- A1.3 Ending Work Policy
- A1.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Policy Statement
- A1.5 Family Leave and Pay Policy
- A1.6 Grievance, Harassment and Bullying Policy
- A1.7 Learning and Development – Policy Statement
- A1.8 Managing Performance and Conduct Policy
- A1.9 Personal Property Policy
- A1.10 Probation Policy
- A1.11 Recruitment Policy
- A1.12 Safeguarding Policy
- A1.13 Sickness Absence Policy
- A1.14 Travel and Subsistence Policy
- A1.15 Ways of Working Policy
- A1.16 Wellbeing Policy – Policy Statement
- A1.17 Whistleblowing Policy
- A1.18 Working Location Policy