Retention and Redeployment Policy

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Version control

Version number	Revision date	Summary of changes	Author
1.0	N/A	Original Policy	People Advisory Team
2.0	07/2020	Policy Review	People Advisory Team
3.0	04/2025	Change to definition of displacement to two reasons: organisational change or health reasons Explaining terms of suitable alternative employment Inclusion and rephrasing of maternity and disability priority consideration Salary preservation for health reasons Rephrasing and clarifying the consequences of refusing a suitable post A new Management review at 6 months if a suitable alternative role has not been found. This review will explore other potential suitable roles, considering options where additional training may be beneficial, with all associated costs borne by Qualifications Scotland At the six-month point, if location has been a reason for declining roles, a review of vacant job locations will be conducted to explore the possibility of accommodating the individual's preferred location The rephrasing of several sections.	[redacted]
3.1	05/2025	Change for disabled employees that priority consideration now applies to all higher-grade roles, not just one grade up, provided the employee meets the criteria (or with reasonable training)	[redacted]

4.0	12/2025	Reference to redeployment caused by seconded staff not having a sub-post removed due to a change in the Secondment Policy where all substantive posts are retained A new 3-month interim review	[redacted]
4.1	04/2026	Rebranded to Qualifications Scotland Logo, references to SQA removed and email address updated to qualifications.gov.scot	[redacted]

Why do we need the policy?

The purpose of this policy is to show our commitment to helping you maintain security of employment if you are displaced. It is also to make sure that we make all reasonable efforts to keep skills, knowledge, and experience in the organisation.

The policy sets out to ensure that a fair, consistent and transparent redeployment process is followed. The policy also intends to make sure support is available to you throughout the redeployment process.

This policy complies with employment legislation and will be amended if needed to remain compliant with any changes to employment law.

Who is it for?

This policy only applies to permanent employees who have been displaced for particular reasons.

Employees are defined as people who work for Qualifications Scotland under a contract of employment. Any other worker, for example agency workers and inbound secondees, will be covered by their substantive employer's rules and policies. Contractors will be governed under the terms and conditions of their contract with Qualifications Scotland.

What support is available?

- Your line manager may be able to provide support.
- For Human Resources (HR) support, contact the People Operations Team at peopleoperations@qualifications.gov.scot or by calling 6060.
- Trade union representatives can provide members with advice, help and support. Information about Unite and Unison is available on the intranet under A-Z.
- The wellbeing hub offers a broad range of help for social, financial, physical and psychological wellbeing. It can be found on the intranet here.

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Part A — Policy

1 Introduction

As part of Qualifications Scotland's commitment to the Fair Work Framework, we recognise that security of employment, work and income are important foundations of a successful life. We also acknowledge and value the contribution of all our employees and are, therefore, committed to maintaining continuity of employment wherever possible.

There might, however, be circumstances when you can't stay in your post, and this will mean you are displaced. This could be because of changes in the organisation or health reasons. If this happens, we will make all reasonable efforts to offer you suitable alternative employment so that you can continue working with us and we can retain your knowledge, skills, and experience. We refer to this process as redeployment.

Qualifications Scotland is committed to equality of opportunity and to a culture that respects difference. We believe that, as an employer and public body, we can play a leading part in promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion by making them an integral part of our decision making. This policy has an EqIA completed on it at the ddevelopment stage to assess how this policy may impact on equality groups, and the findings from this are reflected in this policy.

2 Scope

This policy applies only to permanent employees who have been involuntarily displaced because of one of the two reasons listed below:

Reason displaced	Description
Organisational change	Your post is made redundant, or after a restructuring exercise, you don't have a post in the new structure.
Health reasons	Our occupational health provider has told us you are not able to carry out your post or reasonable adjustments cannot be accommodated by Qualifications Scotland so that you can continue in your post, but you may be able to do other work.

The policy does not apply to you if you are employed on a fixed-term contract.

We'll always first review all redeployment options within your directorate. If no suitable opportunities are found there, we'll then share all potential positions across the organisation with you. You'll have priority status over other staff (not in redeployment) at your redeployment grade.

We'll hold regular review meetings with you throughout the process. If, however, you're still in redeployment after three months, we'll hold an informal progress review meeting. Should you still be in redeployment at six months, a formal progress review meeting will be held. Both meetings are designed to discuss and consider additional strategies to find you a suitable new post.

At the six-month mark, if you're still in redeployment, we may also need to discuss and explore vacant roles you haven't previously been matched to, or roles previously rejected by you or the business as unsuitable, including alternative roles that might require retraining, provided such retraining is reasonable and proportionate.

While in redeployment you can still apply for any other vacancies through the normal recruitment process.

3 Responsibilities

The success of this policy depends on the support, participation, and co-operation of everyone involved. Therefore, as well as the responsibilities detailed below, everyone has a responsibility to make sure they are familiar with the policy and procedure, understand their rights and meet their obligations, ask for advice or guidance when needed, and raise concerns as soon as possible so that they can be resolved quickly.

You	**Line managers**
• Fully engage with the redeployment process — this includes being responsive and flexible when considering suitable alternative posts. • Identify any support you might need and, if required, accept support offered.	• Support the application of this policy. • Keep in regular contact with redeployees and continue to provide support throughout the redeployment process. • Ensure redeployees have meaningful work and objectives during the redeployment process. • Identify any support redeployees might need and offer it, if required.

You	Line managers
• Undertake training which might be needed for a new post.	• Ensure redeployees have reasonable time to prepare for any recruitment processes and undertake learning and development activities. • Release redeployees to undertake trial period for an alternative post. • If you are unavailable or unable to participate in this process, these responsibilities will transfer to your line manager or a designated representative.

Recruiting managers	HR
• Must fully engage with the redeployment policy and process: this includes thoroughly assessing redeployees against the minimum requirements of the post and offering posts to any redeployee that is a suitable match. • In a single-redeployee scenario, where the individual meets or can meet minimum requirements with reasonable training: must waive the requirement for a competitive interview and offer the post. • Offer and provide feedback to redeployees on their application and/or interview, when requested. • Maintain redeployees' existing flexible working arrangements wherever possible. If this is not feasible, provide a clear explanation following the Flexible Working Policy guidelines. • Review a redeployee's existing reasonable adjustments to ensure they are appropriate for the new role and take reasonable steps to avoid putting the redeployee at a substantial disadvantage. • Keep in regular contact with redeployees and offer support during a trial period.	• Support line managers in the application of this policy. • Support employees going through the redeployment process. • Provide advice and guidance to all involved on how the policy and procedure is applied. • With support from Organisational Development colleagues, facilitate completing a skills profile. • With support from Organisational Development colleagues, facilitate a structured analysis of redeployees current skills and knowledge.

4 Equalities

We will ensure throughout this procedure that we do not unfairly discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy).

For example, we will adapt procedures to accommodate you if required, or make reasonable adjustments to procedures to ensure that we do not put anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. This might mean allowing someone else to also attend a meeting, for example a support worker or someone with knowledge of your specific needs.

5 Redeployment period

If you are displaced, we will make all reasonable efforts to offer you a suitable alternative post. This process will start as soon as you have been formally informed in writing that you have been displaced.

Your redeployment period will end when you are redeployed into an alternative post following a successful trial period.

6 Redeployment grade

You will be offered suitable alternative employment in a post at your redeployment grade (that is, the same grade as the post you were displaced from) when one is available, which may mean retraining, in accordance with section 2.

7 Suitable alternative employment

Whether a post is considered suitable will depend on a range of factors:

- how similar the work is to the post you have been displaced from
- the terms of the post being offered
- required skills and qualifications (as detailed in the job description)
- the grade, hours, and location of the post

- the ability to accommodate reasonable adjustments if you have a disability
- your voluntary agreement to do security checks if the role requires it

A suitable alternative post could be:

- a similar post to the one that you have been displaced from in both content and skills required
- a different post, if you meet the minimum criteria or could develop them within a reasonable period of time
- a different role that requires the same or similar transferable skillsets as your previous role
- in any directorate or business area

If you wish to be considered for posts that are based in another location, at a lower grade, or temporary, then inform your line manager and HR.

7.1 Suitable alternative employment — priority consideration

If you are pregnant or on maternity, adoption, or shared parental leave, you will be given priority consideration for suitable alternative posts. This means you will be offered a suitable alternative post where one is available, even if it means prioritising your application over others.

If you have a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, which puts you at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled employees, we will make reasonable adjustments to support your redeployment. Your specific circumstances will be fully considered. If you have not been successfully redeployed at your grade after three months, if appropriate, we will start giving you priority consideration for posts at a higher grade if you meet the minimum requirements (or would after reasonable training).

In cases where you are displaced from your original post because of your disability, consideration for higher-graded posts may also be considered as a reasonable adjustment.

7.2 Alternative employment — employee instituted lower graded post

If you are willing to accept a post which is one grade lower than your redeployment grade, then posts at that lower grade will also then be considered as possible alternative posts for you.

In such cases, because your displacement is due to organisational change or health reasons, your basic salary will be preserved for a specific period, in accordance with sections 2 and 8.

There are no other circumstances where salary preservation will apply.

7.3 Alternative employment — temporary role

If a suitable permanent alternative post is not immediately available, you might be assigned to a temporary role after discussion and agreement with you, either in your team or in a different area, where you might undertake a temporary task, ad hoc work or support priority task arrangements.

Once arranged, your permanent employment status will be retained. You will continue to receive active redeployment support throughout your temporary assignment, ensuring you are considered for suitable permanent opportunities.

8 Pay and conditions of employment

Throughout the redeployment process, your redeployment grade, salary, and terms and conditions will apply.

When you are going through the redeployment process and you are appointed to another post, including during the trial period, the grade, salary, terms and conditions applicable to the new post will apply. This includes lower or higher graded posts.

If you were receiving allowances in your previous post, for example a market supplement, you will only continue to receive them if they are applicable to your new post. Full details are in the Pay Policy.

If you are redeployed to a post one grade lower than your redeployment grade, your basic salary will be preserved for a period of time as detailed in the Pay Policy.

9 Suitable alternative employment — offer

We will make all reasonable efforts to offer you a suitable alternative post, given your circumstances in relation to the post. Any offer will be unconditional and will be made in writing with an explanation why the post is considered to be suitable.

To ensure that you can make an informed decision about whether to accept, we will give you full details about the post and the associated conditions of employment and any allowances. You will also have a trial period in the post (see section 13). If you want, we can arrange for you to have an informal discussion with the recruiting manager so that you can find out more about the post before deciding.

10 Refusing an offer of a suitable or alternative post

Your continued employment may be at risk if a suitable alternative post is made available to you, and you unreasonably decline to be considered for it or unreasonably refuse to accept it.

Whether a refusal is reasonable will depend on whether the post could reasonably be considered a suitable alternative, in accordance with section 7.

If you unreasonably refuse an offer of suitable alternative employment, you will lose the right to a statutory redundancy payment, if applicable.

You have the right to appeal against the decision to end your employment.

Part B — Procedure

11 Support during the redeployment process

As soon as possible after your displacement is confirmed, your line manager, together with an HR colleague, will meet with you to explain the redeployment process. They'll outline the implications for you and answer any initial questions you have.

Your line manager is your primary point of contact and continues to have overall responsibility for supporting you through this period. Further meetings will take place throughout the process, arranged on a regular or occasional basis, depending on what you find most helpful. These meetings, led by your line manager, will give you the chance to ask questions, raise any concerns, and discuss what reasonable training might be beneficial. We'll also talk about progress and next steps.

If you wish, a trade union representative or work colleague can accompany you to these meetings to discuss your redeployment.

During the redeployment process:

- Your line manager will usually remain the same, and you will stay in your current business area until you have been redeployed. However, alternative arrangements may be put in place depending on business circumstances.
- HR will provide additional support and guidance throughout the process.
- You will be offered suitable alternative employment before posts are advertised and without the need for an interview, unless there are other redeployees in the same situation.
- Where operationally feasible, you may be released from your current post earlier than your expected end date to begin your new role sooner.
- We will consider your personal circumstances and make every effort to accommodate these.
- Subject to business needs, your existing flexible working arrangements will be accommodated.

- We will review any existing reasonable adjustments you have to ensure they are appropriate for the new role, and we will take reasonable steps to avoid putting you at a substantial disadvantage.
- If alternative posts aren't immediately available, you'll be provided with other meaningful work that matches your skills, knowledge, and experience (for example, short-term projects). This may involve working in another directorate or business area.
- If you want, you can apply for any other advertised posts at different grades if you're interested.
- Support measures will be available, including:
    - support to complete a skills profile form
    - a discussion about your options for development, including a structured analysis of your current skills and knowledge
    - reasonable training and development to help refresh and/or enhance your skills

12 Identifying suitable alternative posts

To allow us to consider other posts for you, you will be asked to complete a skills profile form to outline your skills, knowledge, and experience relevant to potential roles. You will also be able to share any circumstances which you would like to be taken into consideration, for example if you would like to be considered for posts in all locations.

Before any vacancies are advertised, we will consider if they might be suitable for you before they are advertised, either internally or externally.

Upon identification of a vacancy, a panel of HR colleagues will conduct an initial assessment of its suitability based on your skills profile form.

Before proceeding further, we will discuss the potential role with you to ensure a good skills match.

If the recruiting manager then confirms that you meet the minimum requirements for the post (or could meet them with reasonable training), a direct offer will be made,

taking into account business needs and, if applicable, your current flexible working arrangements and any reasonable adjustments.

You will only be required to participate in a selection process if there are other equally suitable redeployees for the same vacancy, in which case, we will implement a fair process consistent with our Recruitment and Selection Policy.

13 Trial period

If you accept another post, you will have a four-week trial so that you can decide if the post is suitable. If agreed, the trial period may be extended up to a maximum of six weeks, for example if the post is significantly different from your previous post, more time is needed for retraining, or if an extension is in line with the Reasonable Adjustments Guidance.

The duration of the trial period will be confirmed in your offer letter.

Before the trial starts, the recruiting manager will meet with you to agree a development plan. They will also meet with you regularly during the trial period to discuss your progress and what support you might need. Any concerns you might have should also be discussed so that these can be resolved where possible. A meeting will also take place at the end of the trial to confirm the outcome.

13.1 Trial period — successful

If the trial period is successful, we'll ask you to confirm this in writing — your employment in the post will then continue as normal.

13.2 Trial period — not successful

During the trial period, or at its conclusion, if the recruiting manager reasonably believes that you cannot properly carry out the new role and if it is deemed to be unsuitable following a discussion with HR, your redeployment to this role and trial period will come to an end. The reasons for this will be explained to you by the recruiting manager. HR will then resume actively seeking an alternative suitable post

for you. Until an alternative is found, you will return to your previous business area and line manager.

If during your trial period you are not meeting the performance requirements of the new role, this will be clearly communicated to you by your new line manager. This does not mean that the trial has not been successful. In such cases, you will be provided with ongoing support to help you improve. This will be managed through our standard performance management framework.

14 Reasonably refusing an offer of a suitable alternative post

If you have concerns about accepting a post — either before you start your trial, during the trial or at the end of it — you should highlight this as soon as possible so that there is an opportunity to resolve your concerns. If you decide not to accept the post, you must confirm this in writing explaining the reasons why you have come to this decision (reasons why a post is considered suitable are outlined in section 7).

If your concerns cannot be resolved and the head of HR agrees that your decision is reasonable in the circumstances, this will be confirmed, and we will continue to look for another, different suitable alternative post for you.

If your decision is considered unreasonable in the context of the situation, this will be communicated to you and confirmed in writing. In this event, section 16 of this procedure will apply.

15 Alternative post not identified after three or six months

If a suitable alternative post is not secured after three or six months, we will formally meet with you to discuss and review your redeployment.

15.1 Informal progress review meeting after three months

If you haven't secured a suitable alternative post after three months, an informal review meeting will be held. Your line manager will chair it, and an HR colleague will

attend. You're welcome to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

During the meeting, your redeployment situation will be reviewed, including:

- the circumstances leading to you becoming displaced
- the availability of alternative posts during your redeployment period
- the likelihood of alternative posts becoming available in the immediate future
- attempts made to mitigate your circumstances
- your skills profile form
- a review of any training and development you have undertaken
- any further reasonable adjustments Qualifications Scotland could explore to find you a post, if applicable

15.2 Formal Progress review meeting after six months

This meeting will be held if you haven't secured a suitable alternative post after six months. It will be chaired by either your head of service or, if appropriate, your director, your line manager and an HR colleague will also attend. You're also welcome to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

During the meeting, your redeployment situation will be reviewed, including:

- the circumstances leading to you becoming displaced
- the availability of alternative posts during your redeployment period
- the likelihood of alternative posts becoming available in the immediate future
- attempts made to mitigate your circumstances
- your skills profile form
- any further reasonable adjustments we could explore to find you a post

You will be notified of this meeting five working days in advance, and written outcomes will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting date.

15.3 Skills analysis

Additionally, the management review meeting and any subsequent meetings about your redeployment will include:

- a discussion of your current skills and knowledge to identify further potential development options
- a review of all previous training and development undertaken to enhance your skills

15.4 Skill enhancement to support broader redeployment

We may explore appointing you to a role that requires additional training, potentially leading to a qualification, even if it doesn't currently match your skills and experience.

Your skills profile form will be shared and the opportunity discussed with any prospective recruiting managers ahead of the management review meeting. They will have assessed your current skills, knowledge, and experience against the post's requirements and documented any specific skill or qualification gaps.

The options will be discussed with you, taking into account your interest, learning aptitude, existing competencies, skills, and profession.

Qualifications Scotland will cover all associated costs and expenses for such training and is not subject to our organisation's training clawback agreement.

The exploration of additional training will involve a careful assessment of factors including a maximum training timeline of 12 months, business needs, and the availability of budget to cover associated costs and expenses. Any proposed training plan will be subject to a formal business proposal and director-level approval.

15.5 Location of suitable alternative posts

We will also consider the location of vacant posts if it is the primary reason no post has been deemed a suitable alternative for you. A thorough analysis, requiring

director-level approval, will be conducted to assess the feasibility of basing a vacant post at a different site.

15.6 Ongoing support

Following the management review meeting, HR will schedule regular meetings with you and, where appropriate, your line manager to continuously review your situation and support you to progress through available options until a suitable post is identified.

16 Unreasonably refusing an offer of a suitable alternative post

If you decline to be considered for or refuse to accept an offer of a suitable alternative post, a formal meeting will be held to review the reasons for your decision. This meeting will be chaired by your head of service, or your director, together with your line manager and an HR colleague in attendance. You have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

If it is determined that your decision to decline consideration or refuse the offered suitable alternative post was unreasonable, the situation will be treated as a dismissal, and a 12 weeks' notice period will begin. You will lose the right to statutory redundancy payment because you have unreasonably refused a suitable alternative.

If you do not secure an alternative position within your notice period, your employment will end.

You will receive written confirmation of the meeting's outcome within five working days.

17 Redeployment process during notice period

If the outcome of the formal meeting is that your employment will end, your contractual notice period will begin. However, during this period, the redeployment process will continue. If you do not secure a new role by the end of your contractual notice period, your employment will automatically end.

18 Appeal

You have the right to appeal against the decision to end your employment. If you wish to appeal, you must submit a written appeal to People Operations within five working days of receiving written confirmation that your employment will end.

Your written appeal should clearly state the full reasons for your appeal and confirm whether you are appealing against:

- the decision to end your employment; and/or
- procedural issues during the redeployment process.

Please submit your appeal to the People Operations Team via one of the following methods:

- Email: peopleoperations@qualifications.gov.scot
- Post: People Operations, Qualifications Scotland, 24 Wester Shawfair, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 1FD

18.1 Appeal manager

The appeal will be managed by a head of service or a member of the Executive Management Team. Wherever reasonably possible, this individual will not have been involved in your redeployment. The appeal manager will be appointed by HR.

18.2 Appeal meeting and outcome

An appeal meeting will normally be arranged within five working days of receiving your appeal. An HR colleague will also be present at the meeting, and you have the option to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague.

The outcome of your appeal will be confirmed in writing within a reasonable period following the appeal meeting, typically within 10 working days.

18.3 Final decision

The decision of the appeal manager will be final, and there will be no further right of appeal.

19 Related Qualifications Scotland's policies and legislation

The following HR policies can be found here:

- Attendance Management Policy
- Equality, Diversion & Inclusion Policy
- Hybrid Working Guidance
- Improving Performance Policy
- Pay Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Guidance
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Restructure Policy
- Secondment Policy

Related legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- The Fair Work Framework: A Vision for Fair Work in Scotland
- Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy & Family Leave) Act 2023

Appendix 1 — Flowchart

