

## **BBSRC Guidance Note on redundancy selection criteria**

### **Introduction**

These notes are intended to help you to make fair choices as to which employees may be selected for redundancy when a job or jobs are no longer required and should be read in conjunction with the Research Council Redundancy Policy Framework.

Nobody can be declared redundant unless their job or a related job is no longer required. Voluntary redundancy will always be implemented before compulsory, therefore once establishment management has identified that a redundancy situation exists and consultation with the TUS begins there may be an establishment-wide or restricted call for volunteers.

**Route A:** When it has been established that an establishment's circumstances are likely to result in a job loss or job losses and there are consequent redundancies, establishment management will normally create a pool' of employees from which the selection is to be made. This is usually determined by the area of work that is affected and should be subject to consultation with the TUS.

**Route B:** Exceptionally, where the job to be lost is regarded as a unique role (i.e. a role that is not generally interchangeable with other roles) there is no requirement to adopt a pool for selection for redundancy. The decision to treat a particular redundant post as a unique role should also be subject to consultation with the TUS.

### **Route A procedure**

Once the pool has been defined, management must define appropriate scientific, technical, professional or other redundancy selection criteria, which relate to the area of work in question. These may be similar to selection criteria used in recruitment. The criteria must also be the subject of consultation with the TUS, prior to any individuals being identified as 'at risk' of redundancy. The aim should be to reach agreement on the selection criteria wherever possible.

The selection criteria create a skills matrix. The matrix is then applied to a pool of individuals. Normally, these pools are grade-specific, but when deciding on the pool consideration should be given as to whether other groups of employees are doing similar work and whether employees' jobs are interchangeable. For example, grade specific pools may not automatically apply when innovative science roles are under consideration. In all cases the TUS should be consulted.

Selection panels will undertake the redundancy scoring and selection process. Membership of the selection panel, the method of scoring and moderation will be subject to consultation with the TUS but will consist of at least three people (normally a minimum of two managers with a moderator in attendance) and not be made solely on the opinion

of individual line managers, and should be supported by documentary evidence. For each specific selection exercise, the panel should remain the same to ensure consistency in the marking process. The panel should be broadly representative of the organisation in terms of diversity and all panel members must have received recent (in last 3 years) diversity awareness training. Where a moderator is in attendance, they can be internal for 'end of funding' redundancies but for larger scale redundancy programmes the moderator will normally be the Head of HR from another establishment/organisation or someone from BBSRC P&DG. The role of the moderator is to observe the scoring process to make sure scores or standards are being applied consistently. The moderator will intervene if they feel the marking is unfair and they will normally sign the skills matrix to confirm that the process has been undertaken fairly.

### **Route B procedure**

Where the job to be lost is regarded as a genuinely unique role (i.e. a role that is not generally interchangeable with other roles within the establishment) there is no selection pool and thus it is not necessary to draw up selection criteria or a skills matrix.

Management may issue the 'at risk' letter and begin individual consultation as soon as the consultation with the TUS is completed.

### **Selection criteria**

The broad areas which can be assessed to establish selection criteria are set out below. Not all would apply in each redundancy situation, and some might be used rarely. This list is not exhaustive. The possible criteria are:

#### **Performance**

Performance is a commonly used selection criterion. It is important that scoring is consistent with the content of APDRs/ performance nominations and employees should not be marked down unless there is clear documented evidence of poor performance.

#### **Publication record and other measures of esteem**

Criteria could be based on ability, potential, output, quality, citations etc. Care must be taken to avoid indirect discrimination. For example, absence on maternity or adoption leave/ part-time working or other flexible working arrangements/ time spent acting as a carer, and, absence due to ill-health caused by a disability could all contribute to a lower research output and inability to attend national/international meetings. In these circumstances, the scoring panel must be careful to take an individual's situation into account.

#### **Special skills (e.g. computing, technical, management, team-leading)**

Special skills must be relevant to the work in question. Employees who lack specific relevant skills would obviously be at greater risk than colleagues who possess them. This would normally be covered in a skills matrix.

### **Ability to attract funding/secure contracts**

An individual's track record in attracting funding and securing contracts is likely to be a selection criterion if scientific posts are to be made redundant. Care must be taken to avoid indirect discrimination (see under 'publication record' above).

### **Skill base**

The need to retain key skills or employees with a particular background may be important within a team or group context. For example, you may wish to retain managerial skills within a team. Again, objectivity and relevance are important.

### **Conduct/absence record**

There may be situations where it would be appropriate to consider those with poor disciplinary or attendance records when identifying redundancies. However, in the case of sick absence, care must be taken to avoid any possibility of discrimination under the Equality Act. Disability related sickness absence must not be used when scoring individuals in a redundancy selection pool. In addition absence criteria should not be used if you do not have accurate and comprehensive records covering all employees in the selection pool to back up your assessment.

### **Programme of work/location/funding source**

There will frequently be situations where redundancy is clearly linked to a geographical location, a particular programme or a funding source. However, these criteria will not be sufficient on their own; they must be associated with other criteria set out above, particularly those related to skills, performance and outputs. The only exception to this might be where a site is closing and no posts are to be redeployed to a new location.

### **Using a skills matrix in redundancy selection**

To avoid unfair selection for redundancy within the redundancy selection pool, an order of discharge needs to be established. This is achieved by using the skills matrix, which effectively scores or ranks the individuals within the pool, and identifies those who are likely to be 'at risk' of redundancy, depending on the numbers of redundancies needed in that area of expertise.

The following examples show different matrices dealing with both technical and non-technical criteria. The skills-based matrix would be most commonly used in JNCC employment but the performance based matrix, or elements thereof might also apply.

Other systems may be equally valid. The key objective is to maximise objectivity in the criteria and the scoring. To this end, it is important that the scoring panel has access to sufficient information on each individual within the selection pool, so that informed judgements are made. It will not normally be sufficient to use the APDRs for the individuals in question. The type of information to be made available will need to be discussed with the TUS, as part of the consultation process.

Once agreed for a specific redundancy situation, matrices, scoring systems and weightings cannot be changed to manipulate results.

**Example 1: Research scientist skill matrix**

(NB a similar skills matrix might be applicable for a support science, technical or professional post, albeit with modified selection criteria)

Factor	Weighting	Score Person A	Score Person B	Score Person C etc.
Publication record				
Knowledge of principal A				
Knowledge of technique B				
Knowledge of process C				
Experience of analysis method D				
Funding proposal				
Achievements				
Presentational skills/ experience				
Collaborative skills				
Reputation in the field				
Experience of Public Understanding of Science				

In example 1 the specific skill criteria will vary depending on the situation. Other relevant criteria may also be added as applicable and performance-based criteria can also be used (see example 2). Weightings may also vary from situation to situation; for example, Public Understanding of Science may be more significant in an applied research environment and may therefore require a higher weighting than in a basic science area.

**Example 2: Performance-based matrix**

NB. This model would only be used if it were not possible to create a skills-based matrix. It is important that the scoring panel is made aware of the scope for discrimination when applying criteria which may be subjective and/or open to different interpretations. Also, the criteria might lead to indirect discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability and age etc. The moderator should be consulted.

Criteria
<b>Work Performance</b>
Employee meets or exceeds the requirements of the role
Employee fails to meet requirements of the role
<b>Skills and Abilities</b>
Displays full range of required skills and is able to take on a range of different roles
Displays a range of required skills and is able to take on other roles
Displays core skills required and can provide support to others
Displays some of required skills but requires supervision/training
Has insufficient skills in the current role and cannot operate without close supervision
<b>Disciplinary record</b>
No disciplinary record
Informal disciplinary discussion
Verbal warning
First written warning
Final written warning
<b>Attendance record</b>
Excellent attendance/timekeeping, minimal instances of absence
Above average attendance, some examples of absence/lateness but less than the selection pool average
Attendance/timekeeping equivalent to the selection pool average
Below average or poor attendance/timekeeping compared with pool average

Unacceptable levels of attendance/timekeeping
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The above are illustrative only. To achieve the total score for an employee, each of the criteria may be weighted e.g. by a factor of one to three to reflect its relative importance. The weightings take into account the employer's requirements to meet its primary business needs and targets as well as the need to maintain a balanced workforce.

Having weighted the scores, a total is calculated for each employee. For example, where it is necessary to reduce the headcount in a work area from 15 to 10, a selection matrix is completed for all 15 employees and the 5 with the lowest scores will be provisionally selected for redundancy. However, to ensure that an objective and fair selection has been made, additional information to support the scores is gathered from as wide a range of sources as possible. Skill-based criteria can also be used to supplement this model (see example 1).

### **Scoring skills which have not been tested**

Where there is no evidence either way as to an individual's ability against a particular selection criterion in the skills matrix, the individual should be marked as 'not tested' and given a notional 'successful' score.

For redundancies where the skills matrix is based on the skill requirements of a remaining post, the approach should be for the panel to either assess the time frame for an individual to become competent in the skill or to indicate that the individual is not skilled in this area. The panel should decide on one approach and ensure consistency of treatment for all employees.

### **Access to skills matrix scores**

An employee who is declared redundant on the basis of selection criteria which uses a skills or performance matrix has the right to see a breakdown of their score and should be given limited information about their position on the matrix relative to other employees in the selection pool. They should not be given the specific scores of others in the selection pool, but this information would be discoverable at an employment tribunal in the case of a claim of unfair selection for redundancy.