

# Staff Authorisation Form (SAF) Guidance

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## Purpose

The Staff Authorisation Form is used to approve requests for the recruitment of new and replacement staff and also any staff requests that have impacts to the budget of the school or department.

Approval routes differ depending on the request and you can find an overview of the approval routes in **Appendix 1**.

This guidance document has been developed so as all individuals involved in either raising or approving a SAF request are aware of the principles behind the approval process and the associated responsibilities.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Each individual within the SAF process has a responsibility to understand and follow the guidance within this document and to monitor and track the progress of their own requests within the system, with each approver ensuring that they action requests in a timely manner.

In all cases the budget holder (Dean, Director or Head of Service) will be the first approver within the SAF system and they should ensure that an appropriate Business Case has been submitted and approved by ULT, then attached to the request. The next approver will be the Finance Business Partner who will review the budget implications of the role. The People Partner will then review the request against organisational design principles and any potential redeployment requests from across the University. Full approval routes for each request can be found in **Appendix 1**.

### ☑ Individuals raising a SAF

- ☑ Ensure you have sufficient details for making the request and are authorised to raise a SAF (Typically Managers/Heads of subject etc.)
- ☑ Ensure that you are aware of the University Organisational Design Principles and the additional guidance within this document
- ☑ Discuss the rationale for raising the SAF with the appropriate people (Budget holder, Finance and HR)
- ☑ Ensure that an appropriate Business Case has been submitted to and approved by ULT, and email approval attached to the SAF
- ☑ Ensure all the information entered into the SAF is complete, accurate and relevant
- ☑ Ensure that no one is engaged to carry out work until full SAF approval has taken place
- ☑ Ensure that all relevant right to work checks are completed by HR in conjunction with [UKVI regulations](#) **prior** to any work being

carried out. Right to work breaches can have seriously implications for the University and should there be cases of repetitive breaches, disciplinary action may be considered.

#### ☑ **Approvers**

- ☑ Ensure that you are aware of the University Organisational Design Principles and the additional guidance within this document
- ☑ Challenge when the request is not aligned to the principles and guidance, and consider alternative proposals
- ☑ Ensure all information is complete, accurate and that you agree with and support the request prior to approving, rejecting and giving a rationale when required
- ☑ Ensure that budget implications are taken into consideration prior to approving
- ☑ Ensure that ULT Business Case approval is attached
- ☑ Approve (where appropriate) in a timely manner

#### ☑ **People Team**

- ☑ Once SAF is approved, allocate activity to appropriate team (either Talent Acquisition or People Team Operations)
- ☑ Engage with the individual who raised the SAF on next steps, including confirming timescales for completing the request

## Organisational Design Principles

The following Organisational Design Principles should be followed when raising any staff requests. You can find an example of the types of details you should include within a SAF request in **Appendix 2**.

- All roles should have a current role profile which outlines key activities and responsibilities. The role profile will not be an exhaustive task list and it is expected that there will be activities carried out that may not be outlined in the profile, however the activities should all be in line within the HERA assessed grade of the role.
- Role titles should be consistent across grades where appropriate.
- In nearly all cases Line Managers should be of a higher grade than individuals reporting into them.
- Line Managers should aim to have a minimum of 5 direct reports and a maximum of 10, and where practical there should be no one to one reporting lines.
- Heads of Subject within schools should either be an Associate Professor or Professor.

## **Types of SAF requests**

### **Direct role replacements (Budgeted Roles)**

These roles already exist in the structure (and have become vacant) or have been budgeted for. There may be instances where a like for like replacement is needed when someone leaves a current role, however this should also be an opportunity for you to review what roles you have in your structure and determine whether or not any amendments should be made. Your People Partner can support your thinking in this area, including helping to shape role profiles if required.

### **Newly created roles (Unbudgeted Roles)**

There may be occasions when new, additional roles are required out with someone leaving the University. These roles would be deemed unbudgeted (not included in existing headcount or previously planned for). In these instances you should discuss the business case with the budget holder and Finance Business Partner prior to raising the SAF request. You can also seek support from your People Partner should a new role profile be required. The role grade may also need to be reviewed via the HERA job evaluation process, your People Partner can arrange for this to take place.

### **Fixed term Contracts**

Typically fixed term contracts should be short term in nature. They should be used to cover periods of maternity leave, research buy out, long term sickness absence and project work that has a specific duration. Fixed term contracts should not be used to temporarily fill permanent roles where it would be more appropriate to carryout permanent recruitment.

It is important that planned completion dates of fixed term contracts are monitored closely by the Line Manager, and that conversations are held with staff in these posts to ensure that are kept up to date with plans for the role ending. Please ensure you engage with and respond to requests from the People Operations Team when they contact you regarding fixed term contracts. All extensions to fixed term contracts must be approved through the SAF process before it can be processed within the HR Connect system. Fixed term contracts will end on their planned end date unless the People Operations Team are updated with sufficient notice.

Fixed term contracts should not exceed a period of 24 months, except in research roles where external funds have been allocated for a specific period of time. Any continuous contract that exceeds 24 months will be eligible for payment equivalent to a redundancy payment upon completion of the contract. The costs of which are met by the school or department, and as such any cost should be budgeted for.

Should a fixed term position become permanent, it is expected that the role will be advertised internally as a minimum. This is to ensure that all appropriate applicants have the ability to apply for a permanent position.

## Externally funded / Research roles

These roles should be fixed term in nature as they are aligned to specific external funding that has been successfully applied for. The SAF should detail what funding has been secured and the name of research grant. It should be noted that those on research contracts should only do minimal levels of teaching. This is due to the pension obligation the University has with the [Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme](#) which is different from the pension scheme that researchers are assigned to. There are generic research roles which the University recruits researchers to: Research Assistant (Grade 4), Research Fellow (Grade 5), and Senior Research Fellow (Grade 6).

## Contracted changes

A SAF is required when a staff members existing contracted hours are being increased as this will have a direct impact on the budget of the School or Department. Any requests for reductions of hours should be considered via the Flexible Working Policy.

A SAF is also required when you are requesting that someone should receive either an acting up or additional responsibility payment. You should follow the guidance in the '[Acting Up and Additional Responsibility Payment Policy](#)' and discuss the request with your People Partner to determine if this policy would be applicable and also to receive support on what a potential payment could be.

## Casual appointments

Casual appointments should be used to cover short term pieces of work up to a maximum of 12 weeks where a fixed term or permanent role is not appropriate. In most cases they should only be held within the HR Connect system for the duration of the work assignment. If it is deemed that the work that the casual would be completing would last longer than 12 weeks, a fixed term contract should be considered with a recruitment and selection process taking place.

## Redeployment opportunities

In order to mitigate redundancies, we will redeploy employees to suitable alternative roles wherever possible. We will provide all reasonable support to employees who are at risk of redundancy to identify other opportunities within the University. This will help to retain skilled and experienced employees as well as being a means to avoid redundancies.

To facilitate the redeployment process, we use a redeployment register to record the details of employees who wish to have their details placed on the register.

This may mean that roles that have been approved via the SAF process are open to those on the register and where possible we should attempt to redeploy an employee with the right skills and experience into the role, as opposed to filling the post through external recruitment.

In these instances your People Partner and the People Operations Team will have details of anyone who may be on the redeployment register.

## How to track your SAF Request

As the requester, you can refer back to any SAF you have raised so as to check where in the process it is currently sitting, and who is due to review the request within the approval chain.

To view where it is, access the Online SAF system and then click on:



Once in the log file, you will see when the SAF was raised, when someone has approved it and who is currently due to review it.

## Academic Specific Recruitment

### PhD requirements

To support the strategic and academic direction of the University, PhD qualifications are required for all Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor roles. There may however be some exceptions to this depending on specialism of role, the pathway being recruited and on occasion, market conditions where it has been found to be challenging to fill the role.

In such cases, authorisation should be obtained by the Dean from the Deputy Vice Chancellor / Vice Principal in writing. The written authorisation should be forwarded to the Talent Acquisition Consultant aligned to the vacancy, who will ensure the exception

authorisation is recorded against the role. The authorisation will remain active for a period of 12 months.

## University Tutor roles

The University Tutor role (*previously referred to as Associate Lecturer*) was introduced to support short term teaching gaps, for example due to ongoing recruitment campaigns, research buy out time, long term sickness etc.

Most University Tutor roles will by nature be fixed term, however there are some roles such as Skills Enhancement Tutors (School of Applied Science), Simulation Clinic Tutors (school of Health and Social Care), Global Online Tutors (The Business School) and Music Tutors (School of Arts and Creative Industries) that may be permanent.

Before requesting to recruit a University Tutor, you should be able to demonstrate why it is not appropriate to recruit a lecturer with a PhD who would also be active in research and or scholarly activities. Within the SAF commentary you should also provide the rationale as to why the role is fixed term (i.e. covering research buy out for a specific named person, maternity cover, sickness, recruitment etc.) This is to ensure that headcount can be tracked effectively across the School.

University Tutor roles should not have Module/programme Leadership responsibility. This activity should always be carried by a Lecturer or more senior academic.

## Leadership roles with Schools

There are a number of leadership roles within the schools, such as Head of Subject, Head of L&T, and Head of Research etc. While not a formal contractual role it is still appropriate to complete a competitive process to find the most suitable person. It should be noted that Head of Subject roles should be carried out by an Associate Professor or Professor. The only time a SAF would be required when appointing one of these roles would be when there are budget implications, such as a need to recruit externally.

## Research Post Graduate (RPG) Student Experience Contract

All RPG students studying at the university are eligible to be placed on an RPG Student Experience Contract for the durations of their studies. While all RPG students are eligible for this contract, a SAF will still be required to ensure the individual is placed onto the HR Connect system, receives a contract of employment and also a right to work check prior to any work activities being carried out.

**To ensure a swift approval process takes place all requests for this type of contract should be processed via the casual request option within the SAF system.**

This contract type allows the individual to claim for hours worked on a number of activities, including teaching support, research activity and part time demonstrating. Activities will be paid at the appropriate rate of pay. To ensure that the student completes their studies within the agreed timescales and to ensure that available work opportunities are fairly distributed amongst the RPG community, a full-time RPG student will not be permitted to carry out any more than 6 hours work per week and a part-time RPG student will be permitted to carry out no more than 10 hours per week. Any exceptions over and above this must be approved by the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC). The recruiting manager should contact Calum Neill (Associate Professor, School of Applied Science and Convenor of URDC) and secure written authorisation before any additional hours will be permitted.

## Research work activity at postgraduate level – ATAS

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) is one of the UK government's measures to prevent the spread of knowledge and skills used to develop weapons of mass destruction and associated technology.

ATAS applies to all international students and researchers (apart from exempt nationalities) who are subject to UK immigration control and are intending to study or research at postgraduate level in certain sensitive subjects. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>.

When requesting to recruit a researcher/student at postgraduate level to undertake research work activity, you must confirm this on the SAF for both external and internal candidates. This applies for formal recruitment campaigns and any roles which are not formally advertised e.g. Student Experience.

On receipt of an approved SAF, HR will contact the Hiring Manager/Director of Studies to request clarification of the work activities which are to be offered and ask the manager to complete an ATAS assessment if no nationality exemption is applicable.

If the research area is in scope for ATAS, the applicant must obtain an ATAS certificate to cover the paid research activity before the contract is issued and work can begin.

## Support

- ✔ **Information Services**
  - ✔ If you experience any system issues or errors please contact the [IS Service Desk](#)
- ✔ **People Team**
  - ✔ Your People Partner can support you with developing or updating a role profile
  - ✔ The Head of Pay & Reward can support if the grade of a role needs to be reviewed or determined via the HERA process.
  - ✔ If you need to add someone to the SAF system, or need someone to act as delegated approver due to holiday/absence or need



help using the system please contact the People Operations Team on x3344 or [humanresources@napier.ac.uk](mailto:humanresources@napier.ac.uk)

- ☑ Once a SAF is approved, a Talent Acquisition Consultant will support if recruitment is required, or the People Operations Team will support if contractual changes, extensions or updates are required
- ☑ **Finance**
- ☑ If you need to understand more about the budget implications of your request in advance of submitting your SAF request, please contact your Finance Business Partner

## Appendix 1 - Approval Routes

Below is an overview of each approval route and the order in which each approver receives the request.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ☑ <b>Direct Replacement / Fixed Term role</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Budget Holder</li> <li>☑ Finance Partner</li> <li>☑ People Partner</li> <li>☑ Applicable ULT Member</li> </ul>   |
| ☑ <b>Newly created roles not currently in budget</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Budget Holder</li> <li>☑ Finance Partner</li> <li>☑ People Partner</li> <li>☑ Applicable ULT Member</li> <li>☑ Director of People &amp; Service</li> </ul> |
| ☑ <b>Externally funded research roles</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Budget Holder</li> <li>☑ Finance Partner</li> <li>☑ People Partner</li> </ul>  |
| ☑ <b>Contract changes</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Budget Holder</li> <li>☑ Finance Partner</li> <li>☑ People Partner</li> </ul>  |
| ☑ <b>Casual Appointments</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Budget Holder</li> <li>☑ Finance Partner</li> <li>☑ People Partner</li> </ul>  |

## Appendix 2 - Details required within the SAF request

When raising a SAF there are standard fields that must be completed, these should be done so accurately otherwise the SAF may be rejected and you may be asked to resubmit with the correct information. There is also a free text area where you can include commentary as to why the request has been made. You only need to ensure there is enough information so as the approvers can understand why the request has been raised, so keep it concise and to the point. The below details what should be included.

- ☑ **Standard for all SAF Requests**

  - ☑ Ensure you choose the correct type of request (as this will influence the approval route and length of time to approve)
  - ☑ Ensure the correct department is chosen
  - ☑ Ensure the correct up to date role title is used
  - ☑ Confirm the number of roles you are making the request for
  - ☑ Ensure you update the appropriate grade of role
  - ☑ Ensure you update the correct budget folder code and % of allocation (if appropriate)
  - ☑ Allocate the appropriate number of hours (note: full time roles are 35 hours per week)
  - ☑ Ensure that approval email from ULT is attached
  
- ☑ **Direct Replacements**

  - ☑ Outline who the direct placement is for, the role they do and when they are due to leave
  - ☑ Detail in a few sentences why the role is needed
  - ☑ Include the up to date role profile
  - ☑ Highlight any prior approval discussions you may have had
  
- ☑ **Newly created roles**

  - ☑ Detail the business case for why the new role is required
  - ☑ Include the new role profile and HERA information (if appropriate)
  - ☑ Outline any prior approvals received for the new role
  
- ☑ **Fixed Term**

  - ☑ Outline why a fixed term role is needed as opposed to a permanent role
  - ☑ Detail the duration of the fixed term contract
  - ☑ If extending a current fixed term contract, detail the individual's name and why an extension is required
  
- ☑ **Externally funded research roles**

  - ☑ Outline where the funding has been secured and include the project name and Work Tribe ID
  - ☑ Include a short overview of what the role holder will be carrying out
  - ☑ Include the duration of contract and the number of hours and weeks or months required

- ☑ If a named individual has been assigned to the role, outline who they are and why they have been identified for the role. Noting that long term research roles should always follow a formal recruitment process
- ☑ **Contract Changes**
  - ☑ Highlight if it is a permanent change or fixed term change
  - ☑ Outline what the change is (increase of hours or acting up/additional responsibility allowance), who the change is for and why the change is required.
  - ☑ Detail when the changes are due to start (*and end if fixed term*)
  - ☑ For changes in hours, outline the current hours, the requested increase of hours and the new working pattern.
  - ☑ For acting up/additional responsibility allowances, outline the agreed amount and frequency of payment and also how the payment amount was determined.
- ☑ **Casual Appointments**
  - ☑ Outline the short term piece of work that is required
  - ☑ Highlight why a fixed term or permanent role is not required
  - ☑ Detail the expected duration of contract and number of hours required
  - ☑ If requesting a RPG Student Experience Contract, detail the name of the student and start and end date of their contract

### Appendix 3 – Supervision Activities

There are different types of supervision support activities across the Schools. In November 2021 the following matrix was approved by the University Leadership Team, which outlines the appropriate role appropriate for carrying out supervision activities.

Stage of Study	Qualification level & Activity	Teaching or Research	Example Activity description	Support can be carried by.
Undergraduate	Honours project/ dissertation	Teaching	Support students identify a project or dissertation title or help them understand title allocated. Guide them with project proposal, any ethic submission (reviewed and approved by trained gatekeepers) and assess & feedback. Support them with skills training, if necessary as part of project methods. Provide feedback on final report/dissertation and assess. Capstone experience consolidating learning via a period of independent study.  Assessments are double marked by an independent academic and reviewed by the external examiner.	University Tutor or above

Taught Postgraduate	MSc or MA project or dissertation	Teaching	<p>Similar support as above, however the students will have more autonomy. All staff completing this will be under the direction of the module LTA approach developed by the Module Leader (Lecturer or above). Clear assessment criteria and expectations for feedback and support will be explicit in the module handbook and assessment brief.</p> <p>Assessments are double marked by an independent academic and reviewed by the external examiner.</p>	University Tutor or above <i>(however the individual supervising must have a Masters as a minimum regardless of role)</i>
Research Postgraduate	Masters in Research	Research	Independent research not governed by LTA but by research degrees. Staff will support students to develop a research topic and provide specialist support to help with methods, ethics and study design. The student is responsible for developing a research proposal, which are assessed by a panel and checked for originality and achievability. Projects are supported by a small supervisory team, with input from an Independent Panel Chair.	Lecturer or above
Research Postgraduate	PhD	Research	Independent research not governed by LTA but by research degrees. Similar to the Masters in Research activity, however over the three-year period academic staff will develop the students critical thinking so that they become an independent researcher that is able to design, develop and defend their methods and study findings. This process requires staff involved to be experienced and proficient so as to offer the appropriate support to the student.	Lecturer or above