

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

### Workforce Reduction Policy

**Policy Manager: Human Resources**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

In accordance with the Board of Regents and the University System of Georgia (USG), this policy outlines the reasons a workforce reduction can be initiated and necessary steps to follow for approval of such action.

#### **REASON FOR POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the guidelines under which a reduction in workforce for employees in classified positions will be carried out.

#### **AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students  
 Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors  
 Other:

#### **DEFINITIONS**

- Reduction in Force: A reduction in force (RIF) is an action to reduce the number of employees in a department or at a University. A reduction in force may become necessary due to reduced funding, reorganization, and/or changed workload.

#### **PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

Augusta University is committed to providing stable employment but reserves the right to determine the appropriate staffing levels to meet the mission of the institution. Augusta University may, in its sole discretion, add positions or change positions where necessary to meet the mission of the institution, and it may eliminate positions that are no longer critical to the mission of the institution. Situations such as lack of funding, lack of work, or reorganization may require a reduction in the workforce. Departments making such reductions are responsible for retaining the faculty and staff necessary to preserve Augusta University's excellence as a comprehensive research university with an academic medical center. A reduction in force is generally considered as a last resort.

Generally, a reduction in workforce may be implemented for reasons that include the following:

- A budget reduction and/or funding changes
- Programmatic changes that result in the elimination of or decrease in services
- Reorganization that results in a shifting of responsibilities or elimination of certain tasks altogether

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**Executive Sponsor: Enterprise Vice President for Human Resources**

**Next Review: 4/2024**

- Business process improvements that change work to such an extent that a position(s) is no longer required
- Other organizational changes that might prompt an adjustment to staffing needs

In an effort to avoid reducing positions due to budget cuts or funding changes, Augusta University reserves the right to consider implementing a furlough or other such program to achieve the necessary budget reduction. The provisions of this policy are not to be used to remove an employee if the sole cause is substandard performance, incompetence or misconduct.

The provisions of this policy do not apply to positions created to support a particular grant or other sponsored project when such positions are ended because the grant or other sponsored project ends according to the terms of the contract or award.

Guidelines for effecting a reduction in the workforce:

1. When a Unit Manager, Department Chair, Director, Dean, or Vice President, hereafter referred to as “Administrator,” is faced with a situation that he/she believes warrants a review of the workforce with the potential for a workforce reduction, he/she will be expected to critically review his/her department or unit and the circumstances prompting the potential reduction. All efforts should be made to minimize or reduce the extent to which positions will be eliminated. When position elimination is the most appropriate method to address a budget, programmatic, reorganization or other change, the Administrator will submit in writing to his/her Supervisor or Senior Administrator, a justification for a change. When the proposed elimination involves a faculty member, the administrator will review and follow the related faculty polices, including but not limited to, USG BOR Policy 8.3.4, [USG BOR 8.3.7.9](#) and [USG BOR 8.5.2](#) and review/consider the terms and conditions of the faculty member’s contract and status, where applicable. Notice requirements may differ between faculty and staff based on contract terms of faculty.
2. The Administrator will identify all potential positions that may be affected by the change. Where possible, temporary positions and vacant regular positions should be the first to be eliminated. If positions to be eliminated are not vacant, the positions to be eliminated should be directly related to the functions or process being abolished. When, in a unit, multiple positions exist with the same title and essentially the same duties and responsibilities, documented performance appraisals should be used as the criteria for selecting the position(s) for elimination. Employees receiving the lowest performance rating should be the first outplaced. In the event that the documented performance ratings do not differentiate between employees and positions being considered for elimination, the last person hired should be the first person outplaced. For purposes of this policy, the hire date is defined as the most recent date of hire at Augusta University. If relevant positions will remain, consideration should be given to the placement of faculty impacted by a reduction in force when such faculty are qualified.

3. If the positions eliminated via this policy are reestablished within one year, the employees displaced should be notified of the reestablishment and given an opportunity to apply for the positions. The department chair or head must coordinate with Human Resources to ensure this communication occurs.

### **Process/Procedures**

All reduction in force requests must be approved by the USG and must adhere to the procedures outlined in the [Human Resources Administrative Procedures Manual Reduction in Force Policy](#) (HRAPM RIF Policy) and, in the case of faculty, also [USG BOR 8.5](#) and [USG BOR 8.3.7.9](#). The individual Administrator develops a proposal for a reduction in force and completes the Reduction in Force Plan Request Form (found in the Forms section of the [HRAPM RIF Policy](#)). Such a proposal should include:

- a justification for the change;
- a list of the employees who will be displaced by the reduction in workforce including the employee's name and job title;
- the date of the proposed position elimination; the following clarifications are provided for notice requirements:
  - A minimum notice of sixty (60) days is required for staff, as defined in the [HRAPM RIF Policy](#), section 2.A.ii. Where possible, 90 days-notice should be considered.
  - A minimum notice of sixty (60) days is required for tenured or non-tenured faculty whose normal notification requirements are greater than 60 days (see [USG BOR 8.3.4.2](#) and [8.3.4.3](#)), after adherence to procedures outlined in USG 8.5 and [USG 8.3.7.9](#).
  - For all other faculty whose minimum notification requirements are less than 60 days, the normal minimum notification requirements must be followed ([USG BOR 8.3.4.2](#) and [8.3.4.3](#)).
  - In accordance with [USG BOR 8.5.2](#) and [HRAPM RIF Policy](#), whenever possible, faculty and other employees under contract will be notified at least 90 days in advance.
- a completed Reduction In Force Checklist (found in the Forms section of the [HRAPM RIF Policy](#)) reflecting the data and objective decision criteria supporting the proposed action;
- if multiple positions exist with the same title and essentially the same duties and responsibilities in the department proposing the reduction in workforce, then copies of the two most recent performance appraisals for all the employees under the position title under consideration for elimination must be included; and
- the name and contact information of the person in the department responsible for communicating all information to those employees being displaced.

It is strongly recommended that the Administrator meet with or communicate with the Vice President of Human Resources or Director of Employee Relations at this point, to review the proposal and seek input.

The proposal must then be submitted to the appropriate Dean, Vice President or other Senior Administrator for review and approval.

If denied, the proposal is returned to the Department Head, Director or Vice President submitting the request.

If approved, the Dean, Vice President or other Senior Administrator will then forward the approved proposal with all documentation provided in the proposal submitted to him/her to the Director of Employee Relations or designee for review and approval.

If approved, the Director of Employee Relations or designee will review the request with the EEO Officer for review and approval.

If approved, the request will be submitted to the USG for review and approval.

If approved by the USG, the Director of Employee Relations or the EEO Officer will communicate the results of the review to the Dean, Vice President or other Senior Administrator.

When the proposed reduction is in response to a State or institutional budget cut, the Dean, Vice President or other Senior Administrator must notify the President of the proposed workforce reduction prior to its implementation.

If approved by all required parties, then communication with the affected employee(s) must take place and will occur as follows:

1. The Administrator will verbally inform the affected individual(s) of the decision and the reasons underlying the decision. This should be done in either a group meeting when more than one individual is affected, or in an individual meeting at the discretion of the Unit Supervisor. Outplacement packets containing information about other on-campus positions should be provided to each affected employee. A representative from Human Resources should participate in all meetings and be available to answer placement questions.
2. The Administrator will follow up in writing to the employee(s) to ensure clear communication of what was stated verbally. The Administrator will then complete a Personnel Action Request to communicate the action taking place and forward to Human Resources.

## **FORMS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- [Human Resources Administrative Procedures Manual Reduction in Force Policy](#)
  - Permanent Reduction In Force Plan Request Form (found in the Forms section of the [HRAPM RIF Policy](#))
  - Temporary Reduction in Force Plan Request Form (found in the Forms section of the [HRAPM RIF Policy](#))

- Reduction In Force Checklist (found in the Forms section of the [HRAPM RIF Policy](#))
- [BOR Policy 8.3.4 – Notice of Employment and Resignation](#)
- [BOR Faculty Policy 8.3.7.9 – Termination or Layoff of Tenured Personnel Due to Program Modification](#)
- [BOR Faculty Policy 8.5. – Financial Exigency](#)

**APPROVED BY:**

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University  
Date: 4/21/2021

President, Augusta University

Date: 4/21/2021