

## **Implementation plans for groups within the education sector**

- **Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)**
- **Vocational Education Committees (Other than teachers and SNAs)**
- **Institutes of Technology (non-academic staff)**
- **Universities and other Higher Education Institutes (non-academic staff)**

## **Redeployment**

### **Implementation plans for groups within the education sector**

#### **Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)**

The following are the implementation actions for each aspect of section 3.3 of the Agreement which relates specifically to SNAs.

*A comprehensive review and revision of the existing employment terms and conditions to identify and remove any impediments to the provision of efficient and effective support for students.*

Elements of SNA terms and conditions have recently been revised and become operational with effect from the commencement of the 2010/11 school year. As a first step in implementing the above review, a managerial working group involving the school management bodies, employer representatives and this Department has been tasked with identifying perceived deficiencies which can be addressed and producing an achievable implementation timescale. This is due to be completed by the end of November 2010, and will be followed by a further engagement with SIPTU and IMPACT with a view to implementation.

*Flexible deployment of Special Needs Assistants within schools to respond to urgent work demands and to cover for periods of absences by SNA colleagues.*

*Where work demands arise during non-instruction days, school management will continue to have discretion to deploy staff to appropriate SNA duties.*

Implementation of these aspects of the Agreement has already been agreed by the respective Unions with their approval of the Agreement. Accordingly, a notice will issue to the relevant Management Bodies in the sector, outlining the approval of the Agreement, and detailing the aspects of the Agreement which now have automatic effect in schools from the commencement of the 2010/11 school year.

#### **Vocational Education Committees (Other than teachers and SNAs)**

The implementation actions for the components of section 3.4 of the Agreement, relating specifically to staff in the VECs other than teachers and SNAs, are set out below.

***A comprehensive review and revision of existing employment terms and conditions to harmonise them with similar grades in the public service.***

A working group involving representatives of the VECs and this Department is being established to identify harmonisation issues which need to be addressed and to produce an achievable implementation timescale. This process will be complex and will require consultation with other sectors. This process will be followed by further engagement with IMPACT to agree an implementation timescale.

***Co-operation with the restructuring and rationalisation of the VEC sector.***

Implementation will proceed in accordance with Government decisions about the proposed rationalisation and the commitments given in the Agreement.

***Co-operation with the introduction of shared services in areas such as payroll, student support, procurement and purchasing, ICT and HR management.***

*Student support*

There are currently 4 different student grant schemes administered by 66 bodies. A Government decision was taken in July 2010 to streamline this process and create one consolidated student grant scheme to be administered solely by one body. This proposal will be implemented over a 3 to 4 year transitional timeframe and is expected to deliver significant service enhancements to student grant applicants and also to deliver cost savings (amount to be quantified).

*Procurement and purchasing*

A more collaborative approach to the procurement of goods and services is being developed within the school and VEC sector. VECs are now co-operating with the National Procurement Service and the first tender has been published. Over time, it is expected that further tenders will be issued, and analysis work is being done so that other (non-VEC) schools may also take advantage of such public sector wide tender arrangements.

*Pensions*

33 Local authorities currently have responsibility for the payment of pensions and retirement gratuities to former employees of VECs and the IOTs. The Department and the VECs have now established a method of streamlining this service in line with the Government's policy in respect of shared services. In this context one central body (PMG Pensions Section, Department of Finance) will now assume responsibility for the pension and gratuity payment function. The implementation process commenced in September 2010 and is being rolled out on a phased basis over a 12-14 month period.

*Payroll*

Currently each of the 33 VECs runs its own payroll and HR system. A proposal is currently being developed whereby a number of the VECs would replace their

individual systems with a single centralised model. Benefits would be in terms of improving service effectiveness and efficiency and reducing costs by virtue of the economies of scale. This project is contingent on the availability from existing VEC resources of the funding to meet up-front implementation.

### **Institutes of Technology (non-academic staff)**

The items set out below will form the basis of the implementation action plan in IoTs. Ongoing implementation will involve a rolling programme of phased delivery timeframes commencing in December 2010 and running through until 2014.

Delivery of this action plan is contingent on co-operation between management and union representatives at a national level especially with regard to the utilisation of shared services and also in the areas of redeployment, reorganisation and rationalisation, if appropriate.

#### ***Implementation of measures arising from the review of the Higher Education strategy to include such matters as redeployment, re-organisation and rationalisation.***

Implementation will proceed in accordance with Government decisions about the recommendations in the strategy (when published) and the commitments given in the Agreement (Paragraphs 1.5 to 1.10 of the Agreement). Implementation timescales will be defined on an ongoing basis as decisions to proceed are made.

#### ***Introduction of new technology, particularly web registration and other online services and the further development of existing Institute IT systems.***

The Institutes of Technology have identified the development of new and existing IT systems, and the implementation of online services, as an important enabler of change, service effectiveness and efficiency. This will involve a programme of implementation both nationally and in individual Institutes. (Paragraphs 1.10 & 1.11 of the Agreement)

#### ***A comprehensive review and revision of existing work practices and arrangements to identify and remove any impediments to the provision of efficient and effective administrative and support services in Institutes.***

Over the lifetime of this implementation plan, Institutes will review and where necessary revise work practices and arrangements. This will address matters such as:

- improved flexibility with regard to work assignment, re-assignment and redeployment in line with the needs of the Institute;
- removal of rigidities associated with job titles and descriptions;
- review and revision of HR policies, procedures and practices for example in the areas of performance, probation, absence and time and attendance management.

This will be a rolling programme with phased actions and deadlines. (Paragraphs 1.6 through to 1.10 of the Agreement)

### ***Co-operation with the introduction of shared services***

As part of the TPS agenda arrangements were made to develop a more collaborative approach to the procurement of goods and services, in Institutes and in the wider third level sector. Institutes have already utilised this in the procurement of electricity and audit services.

Further work is ongoing into the scope for shared service arrangements in other areas such as computer services, payroll administration, exam payments, legal services as well as procurement of various equipment and other services.

In order to maximise productivity gains, processes and systems to allow for greater use of shared services and/or outsourcing of services will be developed.  
(Paragraph 1.10 of the Agreement)

### **Universities and other Higher Education Institutes (non-academic staff)**

The following are the action plans for each aspect of paragraph 3.6 of the Agreement relating to non-academic staff in universities and other Higher Education colleges.

#### ***Implementation of measures arising from the review of the Higher Education strategy to include such matters as redeployment, re-organisation and rationalisation.***

Implementation will proceed in accordance with Government decisions about the recommendations in the strategy (when published) and the commitments given in the Agreement (Paragraphs 1.5 to 1.10 of the Agreement). Implementation timescales will be defined on an ongoing basis as decisions to proceed are made.

#### ***A comprehensive review and revision of employment contracts to identify and remove any impediments to the development of an optimum teaching, learning and research environment.***

Over the lifetime of this implementation plan, universities and colleges will review contracts, work practices and arrangements, identify issues to be addressed, and will make revisions where required. These reviews will focus on:

- improved efficiency and service delivery;
- improved flexibility with regard to work assignment, re-assignment and redeployment in line with the needs of the university or college;
- removal of inflexibilities associated with job descriptions and titles;
- review and revision of HR policies, procedures and practices for example in the areas of performance, probation, absence and time and attendance management.

### ***Co-operation with the introduction of shared services***

A more collaborative approach is being developed for the procurement of goods and services in universities and colleges and in the wider third level sector. Universities have already utilised this in the areas of collaborative electricity procurement. In the area of procurement the Universities will be working with the National Procurement

Service to achieve best value for money. Further work is ongoing into the scope for shared service arrangements in other areas offering the greatest potential such as Finance, HR, and ICT in particular.  
(Paragraph 1.10 of the Agreement)

## **Redeployment**

Redeployment has been identified as having the potential to contribute to the transformation agenda in the education sector.

With this in mind, redeployment arrangements were agreed for grades represented by IMPACT, SIPTU and UNITE across the education sector (section 6.2 of the Agreement). Employers in the sector have been asked to notify the Department of potential issues involving the need to redeploy staff. Rather than trying to devise specific schemes and rules for each employer and sub-sector, the approach will be that if a redeployment issue is identified, the Department will engage with the employers and unions involved to effect redeployment in accordance with the agreed arrangements.