Armstrong Atlantic State University
Reduction in Force Policy

Purpose

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

It is the practice of this University that employees are to be terminated through a reduction in force only after examining other available alternatives. Each department facing the reduction in force of an employee is expected to make an effort to place that employee in another position within the department (if possible and appropriate based on skills of the employee and needs of the department), prior to the effective date of reduction in force.

Eligibility

This process applies to all regular classified University employees who have completed their probationary periods (full-time and part-time regularly scheduled to work 20 or more hours each work week).

Temporary employees, employees with time-limited appointments, employees funded through sponsored programs, non-state funded employees, regular employees scheduled less than 20 hours per week, and probationary employees may be separated without following this policy and are not eligible for re-employment assistance.

Identification of Employees for a Reduction in Force

The decision as to which employee(s) must be separated is determined at the department level, subject to the approval of the Dean/Vice President of the affected area, the Director of Human Resources, the Vice President of Business and Finance, and the President. Assistance in implementing this process is available from Human Resources.

The Dean/Vice President of affected area, the Director of Human Resources, the Vice President of Business and Finance, and the President must approve projected separations in advance. To avoid delays in the approval process, the department head should contact the Director of Human Resources at least six weeks prior to the anticipated separation of an affected employee by the reduction in force whenever it is possible.
A reduction in force decision requires a thorough evaluation of the need for specific positions and the relative qualifications of employees so the University can provide the highest level of service possible with a smaller work force.

When identifying employees for a reduction in force, management may consider the following factors. This list is not exhaustive and other factors, which are not listed, may be considered:

- The position classification(s) affected;
- The appointment type of each employee;
- The performance of employees in affected classification(s); and
- Impact on the University’s Affirmative Action goals.

**Position Classification:**

For the purpose of determining which employee(s) will be affected by a reduction in force, comparisons will be made between employees with the same classification titles within the same department.

**Appointment Type:**

Once the relevant job classification for the reduction in force has been determined, the department head shall make a decision as to which employee(s) is (are) designated for the reduction in force. The type of appointment is the first factor to be considered. Regular employees must be retained over employees with temporary, probationary, and time-limited appointments with the same classifications.

**Performance:**

The primary component of determining the performance of employees should be the most recent two annual overall Performance Evaluation ratings, unless the employee has been employed for one (1) year or less in which case there would only be one annual performance evaluation available.

Other components of determining performance are:

- An active disciplinary action for either job performance or personal conduct;
- Documented performance difficulties communicated to the employee, but not rising to the level of disciplinary action; or
- Any other documented indicators of performance.

Management is responsible for making the reduction in force decision using the above factors, and others that may not be listed including reasons not related to performance.
Reduction in Force Process

1. The department head/director (or designee) must submit a written request for approval of a proposed reduction in force first, to the Dean/VP in his or her area, second, to the Director of Human Resources/Vice President of Business and Finance, and finally to the President. This request must be approved before any reduction in force can be implemented. The written request must contain the following information:

- The reason(s) for the reduction in force;
- Anticipated date of separation;
- Name(s) of the employee(s) to be separated and justification for the decision;
- A listing of all vacant positions in the department which are the same or closely related;
- Status of recruitment activity for vacant positions which are the same or closely related;
- What efforts the department has made within the department to avoid the reduction in force of the selected employee;
- A brief explanation why action other than a reduction in force is not possible;
- Management contact information;
- Current organizational chart of affected department; and
- Affirmative action information (i.e. race, gender, age, disability status, veteran’s status)

The Reduction in Force request form is available by clicking here.

2. After receiving approval from the Dean/VP of the area, the Director of Human Resources/Vice President of Business and Finance, and the President, the department head/director must notify the employee in writing of the reduction in force. Whenever possible, this letter should give the employee at least sixty (60) preferably ninety (90) days, before the reduction in force occurs. The letter should contain the following information:

- The reason for the reduction in force;
- The effective date of the reduction in force (whenever possible the employee should receive the notification at least sixty (60) preferably ninety (90) days prior to the effective date)
- Instructions to contact Human Resources to obtain information about:
  - Unemployment insurance eligibility;
  - The right of employees to appeal the reduction in force to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia;
  - Retirement system membership and benefit continuation options;
  - Faculty and Staff Assistance; and
  - The role of Human Resources in seeking employment within the University.
A sample notification letter, a RIF request form and the RIF checklist can be located on the Human Resources website under the forms section.

3. The last day the employee works is the effective date of the reduction in force. Prior to that time, a copy of the employee notification letter and the approved reduction in force request must be sent to Human Resources. An employee separated by a reduction in force is paid for accumulated vacation leave (as permitted by Board of Regents policy) in the same manner as other separations.

4. On the final day of employment, the employee must complete the University Clearance process and Human Resources will process all other termination business for the employee.

5. Questions about this process should be directed to Human Resources at 912-344-3455.