

# Staff Personnel Manual (SPP)

## SPP 213: Reduction in Force

Effective: 7/1/1991

Revised: 6/25/2025

### Purpose

To describe the university's policy on reduction in force (RIF) resulting from budget constraints, funding reductions, and/or reorganization due to program or function changes, modification, elimination, or redirection

### Source

University policy

### Applicability

Regular [classified employees](#), including those employed in sponsored-grant-funded positions unless funding has ended.

**Note:** This policy does not apply to [university staff](#).

### Policy

#### Reduction in Force (RIF)

Budget constraints, funding reductions, and/or reorganization may necessitate a reduction in force or severance from employment of employees within a [department](#).

Prior to considering a reduction in force, designated [administrative officials](#) are expected to make every effort to identify a position within the department and/or unit for which the affected employee(s) may qualify.

Designated administrative officials shall work with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to identify the job classifications with the department specified for the RIF to determine which employees in the job classifications will be affected.

#### Reduction in Force Notice Periods

Employees shall receive advance notice of the reduction in force, based on length of continuous university employment, and retain recall and reemployment rights as defined in this policy for six months from the effective date of the elimination of their position.

Years of Service	Length of Notice
less than 3 years	1 month
3–5 years	3 months
more than 5 years	6 months

## **Procedural Review Board**

A department head shall prepare a RIF Analysis Form including current and proposed organizational charts and explanation summary. The explanation summary shall include the reason for the reduction in force and explain why the position was selected. When some but not all positions of the same job title are being eliminated, the department head shall provide a written justification as to the reason these positions were selected over the others. The explanation shall also include a summary of the employee's performance, as reflected in performance evaluations or other documents. Additionally, only 1.00 FTE employees will be compared to other 1.00 FTE employees. Benefits-eligible employees working less than 1.00 FTE will be compared to other benefits-eligible employees working at less than 100 FTE.

Before a RIF occurs, the department head must submit to the [Procedural Review Board](#) the proposed plan and completed analysis form for review to ensure compliance with this policy. In addition, final approval must be obtained from the department's dean, vice president, or designee as well as the Procedural Review Board prior to any notification to identified employees.

If a regular employee has been reclassified, career progressed, or promoted to a position within the department in the last 12 months that is now being eliminated, the employee shall be offered a noncompetitive appointment to the next lower classification within the same job family in the department or a unit of the department, provided the position exists. If the position exists, the employee must qualify for the lower classification. When an appointment is made to an employee accepting a noncompetitive appointment, the employee receives a salary rate within the salary range of the lower classification and in accordance with [SPP 403-02](#), "Establishing Rates of Pay."

This action may result in the RIF of another employee in the same career path within the department. The person who is bumped by this action will be determined by using the same criteria to choose the original affected employee.

## **Buyout Pay Option**

An employee who has received a notice of reduction in force may elect to receive [buyout pay](#) in lieu of the [reduction in force notice period](#), [reduction in force period](#), and recall/reemployment rights. Buyout pay is paid in a lump-sum payment at a rate of one week's salary per one year's service, up to a maximum of 12 weeks' salary, with partial years of service being prorated. An employee who desires buyout pay in lieu of the reduction in force must submit a written request to his or her immediate supervisor within five working days after receiving the notice of reduction in force. For an employee who accepts the buyout option the effective date of RIF is 15 working days following receipt of the notice of RIF. The employee is considered terminated from university employment as of that date.

An employee cannot combine RIF notice period or RIF period and buyout pay option.

## **Recall Rights**

Employees who have exhibited satisfactory performance and have not had any performance concerns within six months prior to the RIF and who have not received buyout pay retain recall rights to the position held at the time of the RIF. Recall rights are in effect for six months from the RIF effective date. If an employee receives buyout pay or another university regular position, he or she relinquishes all rights provided to RIF employees under this policy.

## **Reemployment Rights**

Employees who have exhibited satisfactory performance and have not received buyout pay are eligible to participate in the reemployment program and retain rights to university positions for which they qualify. Reemployment rights extend for six months from receiving the notice of the RIF or until another position is accepted, whichever occurs first.

The purpose of the reemployment rights is to give employees who have been notified or RIF's have gone through a reduction in force priority consideration for [comparable](#) university vacant positions during the RIF notice period and RIF period. The RIF employee should not expect to retain his or her current salary or current campus location. Employees

who are subjected to a RIF under this policy will be referred for comparable positions on all campuses. However, if an employee wishes to be considered only for specific campus(es), the employee must make this decision during the initial reemployment meeting with the Office of Human Resources. Once the decision is made, it **cannot** be changed. An employee who limits the campus(es) for job referrals should recognize that she or he may be reducing opportunities for reemployment. Salary offers are established in accordance with [SPP 403-02](#), "Establishing Rates of Pay," and the hiring department's funding.

Within 15 working days after receiving notice of RIF, the employee must meet with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to identify positions comparable to the employee's current percentage of employment (FTE), job classification, minimum qualifications, and salary range. Once positions and locations have been identified for the reemployment process, they cannot be modified.

An employee on the reemployment list is given priority consideration for positions that become vacant after the person is notified of the RIF and during the RIF period. These positions are identified prior to the position's being advertised. The employee shall notify Recruitment & Selection one week in advance if they are not going to be available to interview for positions. Failure to provide appropriate notice may impact an employee's participation in the reemployment program. An employee who meets the minimum qualifications and other relevant or desired qualifications listed in the job posting must be interviewed. If the employee from the reemployment list is not selected, the hiring official must submit written justification for the nonselection to Recruitment & Selection, Office of Human Resources, for approval or disapproval before advertising the position.

#### **Employee Refusal of Job Interviews/Offers**

An employee who refuses two interviews and/or job offers or a combination of an interview and a job offer for comparable positions is removed from the reemployment list as of the date of the second refusal. The Recruitment and Selection department shall notify the employee of his or her removal from the reemployment list. As a result of the two refusals, the employee forfeits all reemployment rights provided by the RIF policy.

#### **Refund of Buyout Pay if Reemployed**

Employees who received buyout pay and are rehired into any position within six months of the effective date of termination must refund the full amount of buyout pay received within 60 days of rehire or have the amount deducted through payroll deductions.

#### **Appeal Process**

An employee who receives notice of RIF may appeal if he or she believes that this policy or its procedures were not followed. The employee must submit a written request specifying the improper application of the policy or procedures to OHR within 15 working days of the occurrence of the action. Upon receipt of the request, OHR forms an

[Appeal Committee](#). The Appeal Committee reviews the procedures and provides a written recommendation to the appropriate vice provost/vice president before the RIF effective date. If the committee's recommendation differs from that of the vice provost/vice president, the committee's recommendation is submitted to the president for review and decision.

In situations involving allegations of discrimination based on race, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, and Vietnam-era veteran status, the review is conducted by the Office of University Rights and Responsibilities, which submits a recommendation to the vice provost/vice president, who makes a decision.

An employee who elects to receive buyout pay and pursue an appeal does not receive buyout pay until the appeal has concluded and the appropriate administrator has issued a decision. The employee is placed on administrative leave with pay at his or her current salary rate 15 days after receiving a notice of RIF. If the appeal is denied, the amount of buyout pay is reduced by the salary the employee has received while on paid administrative leave.

## **Decision**

The vice provost/vice president or designee provides a written determination regarding the appeal to the employee and department head within 15 days of receiving either the recommendation of the Appeal Committee or the Office of University Rights and Responsibility. The determination is final and cannot be grieved to a university grievance committee or other university hearing body. In cases in which the appeal is submitted to the president as designated in this provision, the president or designee provides a written decision to the employee, the department head, and the appropriate vice provost/vice president within 15 days of receiving the applicable recommendation.

## **Reprisal for Whistle-Blowing Activity**

If an employee who receives a RIF notice believes the action resulted from making a prior disclosure of wrongful conduct to the president, the provost of the university, a vice president, or a vice provost, the employee may file a whistle-blower complaint with the provost or vice president with oversight of the academic or administrative unit. (See the *Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual*— [ACD 204–07](#), “‘Whistle-Blowing’ and Personnel Actions.”)

## **Tuition Assistance**

Employees subjected to a RIF and those who received buyout pay and their spouses and dependents may continue to receive tuition assistance for any semester or summer session when registration for classes has occurred at least one day before the RIF effective date or when classes start during the employee’s RIF notice period.

Employees who were employed at least five consecutive years at the university immediately prior to their RIF effective date and did not have performance concerns within six months of the effective date of the RIF, along with their spouses and eligible dependent children, may continue to receive tuition assistance for a period not to exceed 12 months from the RIF effective date. This option is not available to any RIF employee who elects the buyout option.

## **Insurance Benefits**

RIF employees may continue group health insurance for up to 18 months under federal COBRA regulations at the end of their RIF Notice Period if they are not reemployed by the university (see [SPP 504–01](#), “Insurance Coverage”).

## **Vacation and Health Leave**

RIF employees do not accrue vacation or health leave during the RIF period. Health leave benefits accrued prior to RIF are retained by RIF employees during the RIF period, but may not be used during the RIF period. Affected employees are paid out for accrued vacation on the effective date of the RIF or buyout consistent with [SPP 702–01](#), “Vacation Leave Benefits.”

## **Retirement Status/Withdrawal of Employee Contributions**

Employees do not earn retirement service credits during the RIF period; Employees may elect to withdraw retirement contributions, which may include the employee and employer portion based on credited service, as of the effective day of buyout or RIF effective date without affecting reemployment rights.

Employees are encouraged to consult with OHR staff and the Arizona State Retirement Plan about the consequences of withdrawing employee contributions.

If the employee elects to withdraw retirement contributions and resume employment with the university within 24 months of the RIF effective date, the previously forfeited credited service may be repurchased by paying an amount equal to the amount of withdrawn contributions plus interest to the Arizona State Retirement Plan within 60 days of rehire date.