



# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

## Operating Policy and Procedure

**HSCEP OP:** 70.23, **Reduction in Force Policy**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this health science center operating policy (HSCEP OP) is to provide guidelines and procedures for implementing a reduction in force that affects non-faculty employees ("employees") of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso).

**REVIEW:** This HSCEP OP will be reviewed on September 1 of every odd-numbered year (ONY) by the assistant vice president for human resources and the managing director of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity or designees, with recommendations for revision submitted through the vice chancellor & general counsel to the president or designees by September 30.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

#### **I. Policy.**

TTUHSC El Paso may reduce the number of employees due to reorganization, anticipated decreased funding other financial reasons, reductions in services to be provided, or other purpose deemed appropriate. This policy does not apply to faculty positions, positions requiring student status as a condition of employment, and wholly grant funded positions that are modified or eliminated due to changes in grant or contract funding. Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to alter or modify the employment-at-will status of employees nor shall it apply to separations pursuant to HSCEP OP 70.31.

#### **II. Procedures.**

##### **A. Reason for Reduction**

If the reduction is to be university-wide, it shall be based upon notice from the president. The notice shall set forth the facts and circumstances identifying the financial or other reasons for a possible reduction in force. If the reduction is in (an) isolated university unit(s), it shall be based upon a request setting forth the facts and circumstances identifying the financial or other reasons for a possible reduction in force (RIF) prepared by the head administrator in the unit to be approved by the president or his/her designee prior to commencing the process set forth below.

The RIF process is not to be used to dismiss an employee if the sole cause for dismissal is either misconduct or lack of satisfactory performance.

##### **1. Methodology**

The head of each unit shall determine whether a reduction of budgeted funds should be addressed by a reduction in personnel or in non-personnel expenses or some combination thereof. If personnel reductions will be involved, this determination shall describe the estimated number of positions to be eliminated and their cost savings before individuals are identified for separation from employment by TTUHSC El Paso.

**B. Criteria for Affected Positions and Employees**

The head of the unit seeking the reduction ultimately shall be responsible for deciding which positions will be eliminated and which employees will be separated. In making that decision, existing business conditions, as well as future needs of the unit and TTUHSC El Paso, shall be considered.

Positions may be eliminated either because some existing jobs are combined or because a number of the same or substantially similar jobs are eliminated.

1. **Elimination of Similar Jobs.** When reducing the number of jobs that are the same or substantially similar, the number of positions to remain will be decided based on the needs of the unit after reductions. Criteria to use in deciding which employees will remain shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Employee work performance as evidenced by written evaluations or other documentation;
- (b) Veteran status of the employee, as required by Texas Government Code Chapter 657;
- (c) Former foster child status of the employee, as required by Texas Government Code 672;
- (d) Status as a full-time employee may be given preference unless it is in the best interest of the TTUHSC El Paso to employ part-time employees for the position in question; and
- (e) Amount of relevant experience in the field.

If two or more employees are substantially equivalent in the criteria above, the decision shall be determined by the greatest length of service in the position.

The criteria shall be applied independently to the employees in question by no less than two members of management of the unit making the decision. If there are not two members of management in the unit available to conduct the above rating and ranking, then a member of the Human Resources Department shall serve as the second person to do so.

2. **Reorganization and Combination of Jobs.** When reducing the number of employees by combining two or more existing positions, the head of the unit shall, with assistance as necessary from the Human Resources Department, determine the nature and job descriptions of the positions needed to remain in the unit after consolidation. Criteria to use in deciding which employees shall fill the positions in the reorganized unit shall be their qualifications to perform the essential functions of the new positions. If more than one person is qualified to perform the job, the criteria to be used to decide who will fill the job shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Employee work performance as evidenced by written evaluations or other documentation;
- (b) Veteran status of the employee as required by Texas Government Code Chapter 657;
- (c) Former foster child status of the employee as required by Texas

Government Code Chapter 672;

- (d) Status as a full time employee will be given preference unless it is in the interest of TTUHSC El Paso to employ part-time employees for the position in question; and
- (e) Amount of relevant experience in the field.

If in applying these criteria, two or more qualified employees have substantially equivalent qualifications, then length of service with TTUHSC El Paso may be considered in determining who is offered the position.

The criteria shall be applied independently to the employees in question by no less than two members of management of the unit making the decision. If there are not two members of management in the unit available to conduct the above rating and ranking, then a member of the Human Resources Department shall serve as the second person to do so.

### **C. Development of Report**

The decision to undertake a RIF will be based on a report prepared for the president by the unit administrator under the direction of the Office of General Counsel and with the assistance and approval of human resources and the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity. The contents of the report requesting a RIF will include supporting documentation and contain the following:

1. Factual information indicating that a need for a RIF exists. For example, a proposed reorganization would show that the reduction in force will result in a more cost effective or efficient unit;
2. A description of the functions or services supplied by the unit that will be affected by the proposed RIF, how those functions or services will be combined, altered, or eliminated, and the rationale for the combination, alteration, or elimination;
3. Identification of those jobs or positions that will be affected; and
4. Utilization of the criteria in Section C above to identify those employees who will remain and those who are to be separated, and an explanation of how and why each person was selected for separation.

### **D. Notification of Employees**

After review of the RIF report, employees identified for separation will be notified in writing. Notice will be provided at least 30 days in advance of the proposed date of separation or the end of the fiscal year if 30 day notice is not possible.

The written notice of separation shall include an explanation of the reasons for the reduction in force, an explanation of why an employee's position is to be eliminated or why a particular employee has been selected for separation, and an explanation of the employee's appeal rights.

### **E. Appeal Procedures**

Employees who are separated due to a RIF may appeal the decision by submitting a written appeal to the assistant vice president for human resources within ten (10) working days of receiving written notice of separation of employment. The reasons for appealing

shall be limited to claims that the separation decision was made for a reason that is unlawful under state or federal laws. The written appeal shall state the facts that support the employee's allegations.

Within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the appeal, a written decision will be provided to the employee by mail. This appeal shall be the employee's sole remedy for separation pursuant to this policy, and the decision rendered upon appeal shall be final.

The written appeal and all decisions or responses regarding the appeal shall be a part of the employee's file.

**F. Reinstatement, Rehire, or Reemployment**

1. Barring circumstances that would render the individual unable to perform the essential functions of the position or would have resulted in his/her ineligibility for employment or his/her separation of TTUHSC El Paso employment, an employee whose employment is separated due to a RIF or reorganization shall remain eligible for reemployment.
2. If the eliminated position formerly filled by an employee separated under this policy is reestablished within a period of twelve (12) months from the date of the written notice of separation, the individual has the right to reinstatement into that position, barring circumstances occurring in the interim that would either render the individual unable to perform the essential functions of the position or that would have resulted in his/her ineligibility for or separation from employment.
3. Reinstated employees will be paid within the salary range for the position at the time of reinstatement.
4. Special consideration for reemployment will be given to employees separated due to a RIF. If the employee is qualified for a vacancy, a hiring department that has a vacant position may consider that employee without recruiting for the position and/or interviewing other candidates. The employee must have been separated under this policy within the preceding six (6) months to utilize these re-hiring procedures. An administrator who is considering hiring an employee who has been separated because of a reduction in force within the preceding six (6) months must notify and receive approval from the Human Resources Department prior to any employment action.

**G. Nondiscrimination and Preferences in Separation and Reemployment**

All separation and reemployment decisions pursuant to this policy shall be made without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, genetic information, disability or other protected categories, classes, or characteristics. The veteran status and former foster child status of the employee will be considered in any separation or reemployment decision pursuant to this HSCEP OP as required by state and federal laws.

**III. Right to Change Policy/Conflicting Policies**

TTUHSC El Paso reserves the rights to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy, in whole or in part, at any time. This policy supersedes any conflicting TTUHSC El Paso policies regarding RIF for the reasons set forth in Section I. above.