

College policy on the appropriate use of fixed-term contracts



The use of appropriate contracts at QMUL

It is good practice to give fixed-term staff clear, robust and well-documented explanations of the reason(s) why a fixed-term contract is thought to be appropriate. Doing so is likely to minimise unwarranted claims for permanence¹.

Ordinance C2 sets out the basic reasons for using fixed-term contracts at QMUL. An extract is in the box below (and on the next page):

Objective Justifications for Fixed-term Contracts

E1 The policy of Queen Mary is to appoint staff on appropriate contracts. This will be a “permanent” contract unless a limited-term contract can be justified for one of the reasons set out below. Fixed-term contracts of any duration, including those of under a year, are appropriate only if:

- [a] the post requires input from specialist practitioners whose expertise or experience is not part of the core competencies required within the College, department or institute. The expression “core competencies” refers to the attributes, skills, experience or capacity of the employee rather than core subject areas;
- [b] the post is appropriate to cover staff absence (e.g. parental and adoptive leave, long-term sickness, sabbatical leave or secondment);
- [c] the post is to provide interim cover while arrangements are being made to appoint on a permanent basis (e.g. the effect of an unexpected resignation, a skills shortage or a delay in making a permanent appointment can be worked around by making an interim appointment to provide short-term cover);
- [d] the contract includes a specific and finite training, developmental or educational component, such as secondment, career development opportunity, studentship, or apprenticeship, etc;

1. *If the reason for issuing a fixed-term contract falls into more than one of the categories; or if there is more than one reason, all should be cited.*

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Extract from Ordinance C2

- [e] the student or other business demand can be clearly demonstrated as particularly uncertain;
- [f] the post is to cover a peak in demand due, for example, to seasonal fluctuations or the requirements of a particular stage in a project;
- [g] there is no reasonable prospect of funding being renewed or becoming available. Where funding has already been renewed, continuing use of the fixed-term contract would need to be justified by objective reasons;
- [h] the post is one in which the College offers work to a succession of its current students on the grounds that this will offer valuable work experience; or support the student during their studies; or is convenient for the College.

