



Melbourne College of Divinity

MCD Managing Change Policy

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Principles of staff consultation
3. Notification of change
4. Consultation requirements for managing workplace change

1. INTRODUCTION

This Policy outlines approaches and obligations for consultation with staff relating to the implementation of change* in the workplace.

MCD management, that is, the Dean or Delegate, recognises that changes in technology, changes in process and changes in the market and the wider economy all present their own unique challenges, which require an ability to adapt to change.

MCD management will manage change in a proactive, transparent and constructive manner, in accordance with this Policy, in order to minimise any adverse effects on staff while ensuring that the MCD is able to adapt appropriately to changing circumstances.

MCD management commits to consult with staff to fulfil its responsibility as detailed in industrial instruments such as Staff Employment Contracts and Industrial Awards.

MCD management reserves the right not to disclose confidential information which would be contrary to MCDs interests.

2. PRINCIPLES OF STAFF CONSULTATION

MCD management is legally required to consult with staff when the introduction of major change is proposed. These requirements are contained in MCD Staff Employment Contracts.

The general principles that apply in meeting the requirement to consult are:

*The term "change" is difficult to define but is usually understood to refer to those changes that directly affect staffing levels, organisation of work, modes of employment (e.g. use of contracts, outside provision of services etc.) and changes to employee work roles and responsibilities.

- Consultation is more than exchanging information.
- Consultation is the opportunity for employees to contribute effectively to proposals, and for their views to be actively considered by MCD management.
- The levels of consultation and the steps that need to be taken may vary according to the nature and scale of the proposal.
- Other stakeholder groups may have a legitimate interest in change proposals and if so, will be given the opportunity to participate in consultation processes. However, the views of other stakeholder groups will not necessarily over-ride staff input.
- Consultation falls short of co-determination in the decision-making process. It is the Dean or Delegate who ultimately makes any final decision, regardless of whether or not staff agree with the decision. Staff may appeal an executive decision through the Employment Conditions Committee.

3. NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE

Where MCD management has made a definite decision to introduce major changes in production, program, organisation, structure or technology that are likely to have significant effects on staff it shall notify staff who may be affected by the proposed changes.

“Significant effects” include;

- Major changes in the composition, operation or size of MCDs workforce or in the skills required;
- The elimination or diminution of job opportunities, promotion opportunities or job tenure;
- The alteration of hours of work;
- The need for retraining or transfer of employees to other work or locations and the restructuring of jobs;
- Termination of employment.

Provided that where Staff Employment Contracts make provision for alteration of any of the matters referred to herein an alteration shall be deemed not to have a significant effect.

MCD management will:

- Consult the OH&S Committee on any proposed changes to the workplace, the equipment used at the workplace, the substances used, handled, processed or stored at the workplace, the work to be conducted at the workplace or the procedures for carrying out work at the workplace, where those changes might affect the health, safety or welfare of employees at the workplace;
- Consult the OH&S Committee on any proposed changes to occupational health and safety practices, procedures or policies.

4. CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGING WORKPLACE CHANGE

Formative and Formal Consultation

Formative consultation is the involvement of staff in the development of a proposal.

Formative consultation involves inviting relevant staff, and the Employment Conditions Committee if applicable, to participate in the exchange of views and the sharing of information in the development of a proposal. This occurs prior to any final decision and formal approval. Formative consultation may occur in specific contexts where there is value in understanding staff's perspective for the purpose of incorporating this in a final proposal, where the involvement of the MCD staff will assist in the implementation of an initiative.

Formative consultation will not be suited to all situations where workplace change is contemplated. Examples of such situations include:

- Where a process is subject to approval of statutory or government bodies and where confidential information or political sensitivities are associated with the proposal.
- Where the proposal contains information that is "commercial in confidence"
- Where work is of a preliminary or exploratory nature and does not represent an agreed direction, or has yet to become a formal proposal.

The involvement of employees in formative consultation does not exempt MCD management from its obligations to consult on a final proposal (formal consultation).

Formal consultation commences at the point at which the Dean or Delegate has a definite proposal that will impact upon staff.

MCD management will consult with staff to avert or mitigate the adverse effects of changes on staff and will give prompt consideration to matters raised by staff in relation to the changes.

MCD management will commence discussions with staff as early as practicable after a definite decision has been made that changes are necessary.

For the purposes of such discussion, all relevant information including the nature of the changes proposed, the expected effects of the changes on staff and any other matters likely to affect staff will be provided.

Staff will be invited to provide feedback on the proposal and will be provided with a reasonable timeframe to consider the proposed changes and consult with peers before giving feedback.

Consultation processes with staff will usually continue during the implementation and evaluation phases of the change.

This Policy is based upon material sourced from:

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www.thegeneralstaffunion.org.au/index.php/branch/.../action/.../1/ - (Accessed 20 October 2010)

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