

Secondment Policy

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SECONDMENT POLICY

1 PURPOSE AND POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1** To provide a clear, fair and consistent policy for secondments with a system for application so that all staff must formally apply to be considered for any secondment opportunity to ensure fair consideration for all.
- 1.2** To allow the Library to draw on specialist skills both internally and externally to meet short-term demand e.g. additional skills on specific projects, and longer term succession planning which both address individual staff development needs, and the needs of the Library, by utilising particular skills that are available.
- 1.3** To secure secondments that provide an opportunity for members of staff to experience work in a different environment and develop new skills, expand knowledge and develop expertise.
- 1.4** The Library needs to ensure the effective and efficient use of internal resources and the continued effective organisational staffing covering of its services in terms of both;
 - short term business continuity (adequate and appropriate staff resources to deliver immediate service needs) and;
 - long term business continuity (ensuring continued commitment to providing opportunity for learning and development for employees).
- 1.5** One of the Library's key objectives is to develop its people and this commitment is set out clearly in Library strategy. The secondment of staff into different roles both within the Library and to external organisations offers staff the opportunity to develop new skills and / or enhance existing skills to help their career development and to enrich work experience, encourage knowledge share and flexibility as well as responding to business needs.
- 1.6** The Library thus recognises the need for a clear, fair and consistent policy for secondments that promotes one or more of the following while meeting a business need:
 - staff development,
 - the opportunity to broaden work experience across a variety of disciplines and organisations and;
 - contributes to the growth of talent and leadership development and aids succession planning
 - In addition, seconding staff into the Library can introduce new experience, skills and working practices.

2 DEFINITION

- 2.1** A secondment is a temporary assignment away from the employee's normal area of work for a specific and defined purpose, of varying time but limited duration, which is for the mutual benefit of all parties. (This should not be confused with other forms of temporary assignment see section 5)
- 2.2** There are three types of secondment,

Two involve temporary assignment of a Library employee to a vacant or new position:

- Out of the Library: in an external organisation.

- Within the Library: to a vacant position with the Library

The third involves employees of external organisations

- Into the Library: the temporary assignment of an individual with a position in an outside organisation, to a vacant position within the Library.

For this reason the policy includes seconding staff into the Library which can introduce new experience, skills and working practices

3 EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED:

- **Secondee** - an employee who is on temporary assignment under the terms of a formal secondment arrangement. These can be internal or external candidates (see 2.1 above).
- **Terms with a prefix of “Original”** refer to the employee’s position before secondment, the secondee’s employer [**Original organisation**] and manager before secondment [**Original Manager**], or in the case of internal secondments the department they were in before secondment [**Original Department**].
- **Terms with a prefix of “Host”** refer to the employee’s position during secondment in terms of their temporary employer [**Host organisation**] or manager [**Host manager**] or in the case of internal secondments the department they are seconded to [**Host department**].

4 SCOPE

- 4.1 This policy is applicable to all permanent members of staff, (with the exclusion of staff on probation), provided they meet the eligibility criteria at section 6 below.
- 4.2 Parts of this policy are applicable to external people who have been, or are being, seconded into the Library.

5 SECONDMENTS AND NON SECONDMENTS

- 5.1 **Secondments** - There are several forms of temporary assignment and this section helps clarify which assignments do not constitute a secondment and thus are not covered by this policy.

Secondments are principally;

- temporary assignments of varying duration of no less than 3 months and usually up to 12 months (unless projects or funding allow longer).
- for a specific and defined purpose
- time limited and time defined
- based on formal agreement between the originating and host department / organisation heads.

- 5.2 **Part time Secondments** - can sometimes be facilitated where a part-time secondment may form a percentage of a full time post if viable - these would usually be internal arrangements for example this could be supporting a short-term project. Access to opportunities can be generated following a personal development discussion with the line manager, which can widen a person’s skills and experience and provide exposure in a different area to the normal workplace.

- 5.3 **Other Temporary assignments** - The following types of temporary assignments do not constitute a “secondment”;

- deputising for less than 12 weeks,
- emergency cover for an absent employee nor,
- where, within a directorate staff work flexibly e.g. movement between teams to facilitate the delivery of services or training

5.4 FIXED TERM CONTRACTS (FIXED TERM STAFF)

- Sometimes posts are offered within the Library on a fixed-term basis because the work is expected to be either less than a year in duration; has time limited funding, or that the post is so specialised that it is unlikely there will be an opportunity to be redeployed at the contract end. Where a member of staff, with the agreement of their line manager, wishes to apply for this post as a secondment they will be considered in line with other candidates.
- If it is not feasible for the original line manager to allow a secondment from the original department, the member of staff may still apply for the post if it is advertised as fixed-term role. However it will not be a secondment and there will not be the right to return to their previous substantive post. In this circumstance, the Library will only ensure that they will attempt to secure a suitable post at the end of the contract period at a similar grade of post formerly occupied, in line with the redeployment procedure and it must be made clear that an automatic return cannot be guaranteed. (see section 13)

6 ELIGIBILITY

6.1 Employee eligibility for secondment depends on satisfying the following criteria:

- Being employed on a permanent contract
- Having successfully completed their probationary period
- Having a good record of attendance (i.e. be within the guidelines published in the Managing Attendance policy)
- Having a good record of performance (Strong all round performance or better on the most recent Performance Management Record)
- Not being under a formal warning for conduct in accordance with the Library's Discipline Policy
- Having their manager's and their HR Business Partner's agreement to undertake the secondment

7 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

7.1 Secondment opportunities may be suggested by a staff member or by a manager but there must be clear reasons for a work need being met by a secondment rather than by permanent recruitment and they must be appropriate for and affordable by the Library. Secondment opportunities identified will be made available to all staff as appropriate.

7.2 Secondment opportunities will not be unreasonably refused but sometimes it will be necessary to refuse e.g. if the seconded position should prove impractical or cause the Library operational difficulties. If refused the reason should be given in writing if requested.

7.3 Under the redeployment process, all internal secondment opportunities will be evaluated and checked to see if they can be identified as positions for possible redeployment for displaced staff. Consideration will be given as to whether the secondment is likely to be filled by an existing member of staff. If redeployment matching has not been successful then the process for securing internal or external secondment applications can proceed as appropriate. (See

section 8)

- 7.4** Secondment is based on a formal secondment agreement made between the original and host departments / organisations in conjunction with HR. With both internal and external secondments, it is the responsibility of the original and host manager to determine the terms of agreement which will, as a minimum, specify and define;
- The purpose; and the duration (see section 14)
 - The salary arrangements and terms (including if it is a full time or part time secondment arrangements (a part-time secondment may form a percentage of a full time post if viable).
 - Financial arrangements for transfer of costs between the host and originating organisation/ department
 - The objectives, aims and management arrangements, inclusive of the PMR processes to be used and how they equate to the BL process
 - The return arrangements (see section 13) and any provisions for extensions (see section 14)
- 7.5** Once an agreement is reached between the original and host departments / organisations a formal agreement is drawn up by HR and signed by the three parties. Any variations to this need to be formally negotiated between these parties.
- 7.6** As part of the agreement the salary, conditions and financial arrangements are addressed which will normally provide that;
- Members of staff on secondment (secondtees) can expect to receive a salary and conditions of employment which are no less favourable than those that normally apply in their current post. In some cases, the secondment post may be at a higher grade.
 - Internally, the Library's normal rules on pay on promotion will apply to a person seconded to a higher-graded post. The normal rules on pay on transfer will be applied to a person seconded to a post in the same grade.
 - During the period of internal secondment, the host directorate/responsibility centre into which the member of staff is seconded will normally be responsible for all costs associated with the secondee's salary and other employment costs
 - For employees seconded into the Library from other organisations, the original / external organisation will continue to pay their seconded member of staff and then invoice the Library on a monthly or quarterly basis for reimbursement of the costs incurred. It will thus be normal practice for the Library to provide details of all salary costs and expenses incurred by secondee for the duration of the secondment to the original organisation.
 - If a secondee receives salary and/or terms and conditions allowances pay or leave allowances that exceed those in the Library (external assignments) or those in their original post (internal) there is no automatic right to maintain this upon return to their original post from secondment
- 7.7** The agreement will normally provide that during the period of secondment the member of staff will report to the host manager who will be responsible for day to day management of the secondee. However in the case of a part time secondment, it may be more appropriate to have a joint reporting line to both the original manager and the host manager.
- 7.8** Before secondment a development plan (internal) and / or the aims and objectives of

secondment (internal / external) should be discussed between the relevant parties and, following appointment of the secondee, must be finalised and agreed between the secondee's original manager and the host manager of the receiving organisation or department.

7.9 The secondment objectives agreed as part of the career development process will take into account the personal development needs of the secondee and the needs of both the Library and the receiving organisation / department.

7.10 It is important that a secondee's performance management continues to be managed; it would be the norm that the host organisation's performance management processes are used unless other arrangements are negotiated as part of the formal arrangements that are made prior to the secondment, thus;

- Library staff on secondment internally will still be subject to the Library process.
- When Library staff are seconded externally, the host organisation will be required to report on the secondee's performance to ensure continuity of appraisal and this is most likely to be carried out under the host organisation's performance management process, unless otherwise agreed between the Library and the host organisation. It should be noted that Line Managers in host organisations are trained in their own performance management process, not the Library's, and that there may be benefit to the secondee in being evaluated against external standards or competencies.

There must be agreement between the Library, the secondee and the host organisation at the beginning of the secondment about how the host organisation's performance ratings can be equated with those of the Library so that the secondee's performance can be assessed for the Library's end of year ratings and performance pay purposes.

- When staff from external organisations are seconded into the Library the original organisation will be requested to follow Library processes but equally this will need to be negotiated as part of the formal arrangements that are made prior to the secondment (see section....).
- (refer to [PM Notes For Guidance](#))
- Both the host and originating manager have responsibilities for the Performance Management process and the handling, transition and handover of this between the organisations / departments.

7.11 The host and original manager must make it clear that on completion of the secondment, the secondee will return to their original department / organisation in their substantive post at their previous salary level (subject to pay award) and previous terms and conditions. These arrangements and terms will be confirmed in writing and on no account must they be deviated from or varied without the explicit agreement of HR.

7.12 In exceptional and reasonable circumstances the secondee or the Library may need to terminate the secondment early e.g.

- the Library may have an operational difficulty,
- there may be issues with the hosting, such as funding withdrawn, or the;
- seconded staff member may feel that the secondment has broken down. (In the circumstances that all involved deem it irrevocable, the Library will not unreasonably refuse a request from the seconded member of staff for a termination of the

secondment. If refused reasons will be given in writing if requested or appropriate in the circumstances).

In these instances the Library will attempt to return the individual to the original post but this may not be possible and the Library therefore reserves the right to place the member of staff in another post in the same grade until the end of the original secondment period.

8 SECONDMENTS WITHIN THE LIBRARY (INTERNAL BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS)

- 8.1** Managers wishing to appoint a secondee in the Library must submit a business case covering the rationale to their director which will include; the reason for proposing a secondee post and the position, the objectives, aims, duration and any costs, benefits and risks involved and any financial arrangements.
- 8.2** Any new post should be role evaluated and authorised in the usual manner and for this reason managers must refer to the Recruitment Policy.
- 8.3** When a particular secondment opportunity has been identified by and within the Library, the Library's redeployment, recruitment and selection procedures should be followed. Due to these policies, the Library reserves the right to open up a secondment opportunity to other applicants even if the secondment was identified by a member of staff. Under the redeployment process, priority consideration should first be given to all internal secondment opportunities to see if they constitute possible redeployment for displaced staff (see 7.2). Only then can the post be advertised or recruited to.
- 8.4** Once the relevant recruitment documentation has been approved, the post can be advertised. This will normally be advertised internally so that interested members of staff can then apply for consideration. (However, a host manager may identify a justifiable need to advertise externally as well as internally, as per the normal recruitment process).
- 8.5** Posts in the Library to be filled by open competition may be filled by secondments if appropriate and reference to this possibility will in such cases be included in the advertisement.
- 8.6** Staff must formally apply to be considered for any secondment opportunity to ensure fair consideration for all. This involves completing an application form which is available on the intranet or from HR. The member of staff will require the agreement of their line manager prior to making an application. The line manager must consult their HR Business Partner and appropriately with senior management in their department. This ensures that operational, contractual and other circumstantial difficulties can be assessed before a secondment application is approved and a secondment is granted. In some instances ultimately the Director will need to authorise and HR can advise on this
- 8.7** Secondment opportunities will not be unreasonably refused but sometimes it will be necessary to refuse e.g. if the seconded position should prove impractical or cause the Library operational difficulties. If refused reasons will be given in writing if requested or appropriate in the circumstances.
- 8.8** To be considered for a secondment, staff must demonstrate that they have the basic skills necessary for the post so secondment decisions will always be subject to a selection process, to ensure that applicants have the necessary basic skills and that all staff have an equal chance
- 8.9** The selected candidate will be one who shows that they can best meet the business need while demonstrating their development potential in the role.

8.10 The secondee will leave their current / original role vacant and it is the responsibility of the original manager to determine how and if the role temporarily vacated by the secondee will be covered. This may for instance involve;

- arranging to fill the “vacant” position that will be created by the secondment if required by “backfilling” with initial consideration for a second secondment or fixed term contract, or in exceptional circumstances agency;

OR

- leaving the position vacant for the duration of the secondment.

8.11 If the originating manager decides there is a need to replace the secondee temporarily they must ensure that;

- The job being filled to replace the secondee temporarily is the same as that which is being vacated by the secondee
- The redeployment, recruitment and selections policies are appropriately applied
- The terms for backfilling are made clear and that this enables the secondee to return to their substantive post and equally of the post of the person backfilling (if a secondment) is covered by the same provisions for the cover of, and the return to, their substantive role.
- No promises or assurances are given to the person filling the vacancy created by the secondment with regard to the role

8.12 At the start of the secondment, during and at the end of the secondment both the original and host Library manager have obligations with regard to the employee and the secondment which can be found in Sections 9 and 10. The principles listed here also apply to expectations of an external organisations original and host manager.

9 OBLIGATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL LIBRARY MANAGER DURING SECONDMENT (OR ORIGINAL EXTERNAL MANAGER) – (WHERE SECONDED FROM)

9.1 The original manager must consult with HR in making, sustaining or altering secondment arrangements – see section 8.6

9.2 During both internal and external secondments the secondee remains an employee of the Library so it is important that both the original manager and the secondee ensure that they keep in touch in regular intervals. This is so that the;

- original manager can keep the secondee up to date with any developments e.g. in their original department, changes in service or policy, training opportunities and access to the personal learning scheme etc; and so that the ;
- secondee can update their original manager with their professional development and other areas of common interest and can make a smooth return to their original post once the secondment is complete.

9.3 If there are any fundamental changes in the original department during the secondment, e.g. a restructuring, the secondee will be included in the consultation process in the same way as other staff in the affected department.

9.4 On return to the original area, the original manager will have a discussion with the member of staff to appraise their development during the secondment and to agree objectives and any further development needs. This will necessarily entail a discussion with the host manager.

10 OBLIGATIONS OF THE HOST LIBRARY MANAGER (OR HOST EXTERNAL MANAGER) - (WHERE SECONDED TO)

- 10.1** During the secondment, the host manager will carry out a meeting with the secondee and will conduct a final review at the end of the secondment taking into account any personal development needs i.e. the Library as host (internal) or host organisations (external) normal performance management review process will apply. The host manager and the member of staff have a joint responsibility for keeping in touch on a regular basis.
- 10.2** The Host Manager will also manage the secondee and update the original manager with any employment issues that occur during the secondment such as sick leave, annual leave, conduct etc.
- 10.3** The Host manager will also be responsible for ensuring the health and safety of any seconded employee. This will include appropriate carrying out and implementation of risk assessments, and staff attendance at health and safety training.
- 10.4** If there are any fundamental changes during the secondment, e.g. a restructuring, the secondee will be included in the consultation process in the same way as other staff in the affected area. If no suitable alternative position can be offered by the host organisation the secondee will have the right to return to the Library/ the original Service and will be dealt with in the usual way, thus no disadvantage will be faced due to the secondment itself.

11 SECONDMENTS OF LIBRARY STAFF TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

- 11.1** The general principles defined in Section 7 have application here.
- 11.2** The secondee will require the agreement of their original line manager and will need to consult with HR prior to making an application. The line manager must consult their HR Business Partner and appropriately with senior management in their department. This ensures that operational, contractual and other circumstantial difficulties can be assessed before a secondment application is approved and a secondment is granted. HR will need to be involved in the arrangements and in some instances ultimately the Director will need to authorise and HR can advise on this.
- 11.3** Staff seconded externally to other organisations will continue to remain employees of the Library and will receive their salary, costs and expenses, subject to normal tax, pension and NI deductions, from the Library. The Library will invoice the host organisation on a monthly or quarterly basis for reimbursement of all costs incurred.
- 11.4** It is important that staff seconded out of the Library are alert to any conflict of interest which may arise between the Library and the host organisation. Any such conflict must be drawn to the attention of [HR] immediately before any work duties or other action is taken. Secondees may be expected to sign a confidentiality agreement with the host organisation and /or the Library to protect against any misuse of information considered to be of a sensitive or confidential nature.
- 11.5** Although secondees will not have access to the Library's intranet site, they will still receive Office notices and Shelflife which will be sent to them by post. It is important in external secondments that both the original manager and the secondee maintain appropriate contact so that both parties are kept informed of developments within the Library, especially any which impact upon the secondee's Library role and within the secondment placement (see section 9 and 10 for original and host manager obligations)

12 SECONDMENTS OF EXTERNAL STAFF IN TO THE LIBRARY

- 12.1** When an external secondment is entered into the terms relating to the secondment will be agreed with the Library's host manager in conjunction with Human Resources and the external organisation concerned. (See 7.4 and 7.6 for the basis of these arrangements)
- 12.2** It is important that seconded staff are alerted to any conflict of interest which may arise between their original organisation and the Library. Any such conflict must be drawn to the attention of the HR Business Partner before any work duties or other action is taken since it may require the secondee to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Library to protect any misuse of information considered to be of a sensitive or confidential nature.
- 12.3** The secondee must be security checked to British Library standards. Also the host manager and the HR Business Partner must ensure with the original organisation where the employee is seconded from that they can formally confirm eligibility to work in the UK for the duration of the secondment.
- 12.4** The British Library induction processes will apply and the external secondee coming into the Library must be fully inducted in the Library's conditions, policies, standards of conduct and other requirements.
- 12.5** Training required for the secondee to fulfil their role should be provided. External training costs may need to be agreed with external organisation for whom the secondee works.
- 12.6** For other provisions with regard to day to day and performance management, objectives and aims etc see section 7, for original and host manager obligations, see section 9 and 10.

13 RIGHT TO RETURN TO THEIR SUBSTANTIVE POST

- 13.1** The department heads must make this clear and it is an explicit part of a secondment agreement that the secondee's substantive post remains within the same Directorate in the Library unaffected by the secondment itself. The secondee will return to their substantive post at the end of the secondment, and there will be no change to the original contract of employment as a result of the secondment itself.
- 13.2** If a restructure takes places during the period a member of staff is on secondment the member of staff will be managed in line with the Library's Restructure, Redeployment and Redundancy Policy and Process which can be accessed on the HR intranet site. This may result in the secondee returning to their substantive post, a suitable alternative post or being at risk of being made redundant (see section 9).

14 DURATION OF SECONDMENT (AND PROVISION FOR EXTENSION)

- 14.1** Secondments will normally be for a period of between 3 and 12 months. This ensures that the secondee achieves a satisfactory grounding and development in the secondment role and can make an appropriate contribution to the team in which they are seconded. Due to the temporary nature of secondments and the demands on the member of staff's normal area of work, it would normally be inappropriate for any secondment to continue beyond 12 months.
- 14.2** The minimum notice required for all secondments to return to the substantive post is one month prior to the end of the agreed secondment. A meeting must be arranged with the secondee and the secondee's original manager and the host manager to agree the exact date of return. Wherever possible this will be subject to the agreement of all three parties. Transitional arrangements required to ensure a smooth return must be discussed, such as

training requirements and any system, management, staff or other changes which impact upon the role to which the secondee is leaving and returning to.

- 14.3** A secondment can be extended with reasonable notice but subject to agreement. Reasons for an extension may vary from one off special projects, additional funding or further career development. There must be reasonable notice of any proposed variations which are consistent with the notice period.
- 14.4** There are impacts to organisations if the duration of the secondment and any backfill cover of the secondee's role etc are not timed or planned according to the needs of both the original and host service especially in terms of costs and role cover. This needs to be carefully planned and negotiated by the affected parties prior to secondment as do any proposed changes during secondment. (E.g. extension or curtailment of a secondment could incur dual or non cover of a role). The host and originating manager must also consult with HR and when it is a Library secondment the Directorate Finance Managers (DFM) or team for viability and approval.
- 14.5** Where there is a proposed change in the agreement with regard to the planned duration of the secondment either by extension or curtailment, the originating manager will have the final say regarding if they can release the secondee for longer or take them back early.
- 14.6** Where there are exceptional business reasons for secondments longer than 12 months, the seconding department must remember that the secondee remains part of the original service and they retain the rights detailed in section 7.
- 14.7** In exceptional circumstances the Library reserves the right to advise the secondee that they will not return to their previous position, but to another position of equivalent grade and salary within the Directorate.
- 14.8** If there is a justifiable reason for a secondment to end before an agreed end date e.g. early completion of a project, the minimum notice period would be required to be given and the secondee, host manager, HR and original manager should all be communicated with.
- 14.9** Should the secondee wish to terminate their employment with the Library at any time within the secondment period, the notice period stipulated within their contract will apply. This will need to be part of the formal secondment agreement

15 LIBRARY STAFF SECONDMENTS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- 15.1** One of the Library's key objectives is to develop its people. A potential secondee may respond to an advert as an opportunity or; a career development discussion could highlight that an internal/ external secondment could offer an opportunity to develop new or enhance existing skills that may not be easily met otherwise e.g. where specific / specialised training is not available or direct experience would be advisable. See also section 5.2 – part time secondments.
- 15.2** The secondment should be one which is likely to add skills or experience that will help the individual perform better when they return to the Library. Sometimes secondment may not be the best method of meeting development needs and staff may be asked to consider other solutions such as mentoring, coaching, training or development courses.

- 15.3** In either case at 15.1 this is a career development opportunity and every secondment will have purpose, aims and objectives but the latter may require a formal approach to a development plan. Staff interested in being seconded should look for an appropriate secondment opportunity having first discussed this with their manager and obtained their agreement in principle and whether they can be released for an agreed period.
- 15.4** The Staff member and line manager are required to complete a record of their agreement about development objectives, proposals for a secondment and how the development objectives would be met by this and arrangements for evaluating any secondment.
- 15.5** Every effort will be made to address development needs however the secondment will only take place if;
- a genuine requirement in a host department / service arises
 - the employee can be released
 - the employee has been successful through the process described in section 8.
- 15.6** If the employee is successful in the process then the original and host manager need to discuss and make clear agreement about the development objectives to be achieved and how these will be realised, which must include discussion and agreement with the seconded employee before secondment starts.
- 15.7** Arrangements to discuss the progress and evaluation of the secondment against these development objectives at the end of the secondment must be agreed. The development objective will form part of the job objectives for the secondment and progress will be evaluated in the normal way through the PMR process.
- 15.8** Whilst on secondment, the host manager sets objectives and will conduct mid secondment reviews and 1:1s where appropriate. At the end of the secondment a final review is conducted using the Library's performance management process.

16 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 16.1** The Library's Equal Opportunities policy states that recruitment, training and promotion opportunities will be open to all staff on a fair and equal basis. Thus the Library will monitor the use of the secondment policy to ensure that it is applied fairly and to ensure that members of staff are not unreasonably denied access to secondment opportunities
- 16.2** Any member of staff who considers that the Library's Equal Opportunities Policy has not been complied with in connection with a secondment / secondment opportunity, may raise a grievance in accordance with the procedure set out in the Equal Opportunities Policy.

17 RESPONSIBILITY

- 17.1** All members of staff referred to within the scope of this policy are required to adhere to its terms and conditions.
- 17.2** All line managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied within their own area whether they are the original or host manager. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed with Human Resources prior to any action being taken.
- 17.3** Human Resources has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Proposed changes to the policy will follow the process as described in [section A: Introduction: paragraph 1.1 of the Staff Handbook](#).