

# Performance and Development Review (PDR) Scheme

## Introduction

**The Performance and Development Review is a University process which aims to encourage and support excellent performance from all colleagues through the clarity of expectations, review and evaluation of contribution, development of personal and professional skills and career development plans, which are all underpinned by an on-going management dialogue.**

Providing clarity on what is expected from each of us increases the opportunity to measure more effectively our contribution, with the ability to recognise and reward excellence through the University's Reward mechanisms.

An annual review process that is both meaningful and valuable can impact on levels of engagement, motivation, morale, productivity and innovation.

## Objectives of a Performance and Development Review

- To assess and measure the contribution of all staff in line with the goals and priorities of the University and your specific area of work.
- To recognise and acknowledge the diversity of contribution made by all staff, identifying excellence and success in all areas.
- To plan for the future and agree specific objectives to achieve those plans.
- To identify and discuss any challenges, difficulties or obstacles to personal effectiveness and assess what support is required to overcome this.
- To combine personal needs and ambitions with the priorities and objectives of the University and your work area.
- To identify learning and development needs for current and future roles.
- To feed the outputs of the PDR process into broader University planning activities.

# Underpinning principles

- The University sees the PDR as an integral part of its management and development processes, underpinned by regular dialogue between managers and staff to discuss issues of importance to the individual, the Faculty / Service / School / Function and the University.
- The University considers the opportunity of an annual Review as a right for all staff.
- An annual PDR is mandatory for all eligible staff.
- There will be a broad consistency in the way Reviews are conducted, irrespective of status or grade; however issues discussed will be relevant to the role.
- Training and guidance on the Review process will be available for all staff. Training for reviewers will be mandatory.
- The agreed outcomes of the process should be recorded, monitored and followed-up.
- The University believes that Review has a valuable contribution to make to the achievement of its Equality and Diversity policy. All staff should be provided with an equal opportunity to fulfil their talent potential irrespective of background or personal characteristics. The PDR has a key role to play in providing a platform for this.
- The resources available for staff development at the School/Function/Service and University level will be considered in the light of needs identified through Review, and any case for additional funds will be fully explored in the light of overall funding pressures prevailing at the time. The effective use of existing and additional funding will be monitored.
- An individual review should be conducted in line with the following confidentiality principles. The review discussion itself is a confidential discussion. The review form captures the key elements of that conversation. The reviewee and reviewer together agree upon what is to be recorded on the form. The completed form can be seen and used by those with management responsibilities for that individual (including the reviewer, Head of Department/School, Dean, Heads of Group/Support Service equivalent). The involvement of parties beyond this group should be with the agreement of the individual.

## Eligibility for PDR

A review discussion should be available to all staff to support and enhance their employment experience. The following table identifies the University's expectations on participation. An annual PDR is mandatory for all eligible staff.

Compulsory annual PDR	Exempt but have the opportunity to request a PDR	Exempt	PDR can be postponed until an appropriate date (tied in with transition)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff at Grade 3 and above</li> <li>• Open ended contracts</li> <li>• FTE is 0.2 or greater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero hours contracts</li> <li>• FTE less than 0.2</li> <li>• Those who have handed in their notice for any reason, including retirement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those on standard 6 month probation period, however a PDR would be done once the probation has</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff away on sabbatical leave</li> <li>• Staff on unpaid leave</li> <li>• Staff on long-term sickness absence</li> <li>• Staff on</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the fixed term appointment is for 1 year or more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff whose fixed term contract is coming to an end and this has been confirmed</li> </ul>	<p>been confirmed</p>	<p>maternity/shared parental leave</p>
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A PDR Job Chat scheme is in place for staff employed on Grades 1&2. Any extension of this to Grade 3 is at the discretion of the Head of Unit or equivalent. Staff in Grades 1 & 2 can request an PDR if they would prefer this to a Job Chat.

Staff can request additional review sessions to help them with key transitions, for example:

- staff whose role is substantially changing
- staff seeking promotion
- returning from maternity or adoption leave

## Frequency

The PDR will have an annual review cycle which runs from January to September. All Reviews will be expected to be completed by 30 September each year.

If both the staff member and line manager feel that more frequent, informal reviews would be beneficial, this can be agreed. It is advisable for Probationary Lecturers to have twice yearly reviews.

## Timing during the year

The timing of the review period will be decided by the Head for your area of work. They may be spread over the year or undertaken in a particular term or vacation period depending on local circumstances with a final deadline of 30 September in any year. Heads will email staff a timetable for the review period.

## Appointing Reviewers

The table overleaf indicates who would normally act as Reviewer for different groups of staff. The Head of Unit has ultimate responsibility for all Reviews but will be required to delegate some of the Reviews.

It is normally recommended that no one should attempt more than 8-10 Reviews in any year, but individual managers may have operational reasons for exceeding this guideline. In general it is found that the best Reviewer will have a reasonable understanding and knowledge of the work of the member of staff, along with a natural inclination to support colleagues in achieving their potential both in their role and careers more broadly. It is important to recognise that in order to develop and improve, challenging conversations have to take place.

The Head of Unit will assign reviewers to staff and write to individuals to inform them of this. Staff may request an alternative Reviewer to the person appointed in exceptional circumstances only. Discretion in such matters lies initially with the Head of Unit.

For Research Staff the national Concordat was concerned that any review process for this group of staff should not allow longer-term career management issues to be compromised by

the short-term needs of research projects. Therefore, exceptionally, the University decided that the default Reviewers for this group would not be immediate managers, but a senior colleague who is not closely associated with the project on which the member of staff is primarily employed. If a research member of staff feels strongly that they want their immediate manager to act as their Reviewer, they should make a request to the Head of School and this should normally be agreed. Such a request may only be made by contract research members of staff and not by Principal Investigators.

Generally there may be issues, objectives and development needs resulting from reviews which a Principal Investigator would find it helpful to know. As a point of good practice, it is advised that during the Review discussion, the Reviewer and research member of staff agree what information should be shared with the Principal Investigator and the best method to achieve this.

Member of staff	Usual reviewer
Clerical and Support Staff Open ended contracts	Line manager, School Administrator or Head Unit, as appropriate
Technical Staff	Senior Technician, Supervising Academic or Researcher, Head of Department or Head of School
Contract Research Staff	Experienced member of Academic Staff as allocated by the Head of School NB Principal Investigators do not normally act as Reviewers but must be consulted as part of the process
Academic or academic related staff below HoS level in academic Schools, including professorial staff	Head of School or deputy in larger Schools or any trained reviewer appointed by the Head of School
Head of School, Associate Deans	Dean of Faculty
Academic or academic related staff in Directorates	Head of Service/Office or deputy in larger units
Heads of Administrative Services/Offices	Heads of Support Services
Deans, Heads of Support Services	Deputy Vice Chancellor
Pro-Vice Chancellors	Vice Chancellor
Deputy Vice Chancellor	Vice Chancellor
Vice Chancellor	President of Council
Wardens	Director of Student Learning & Teaching Services

## Responsibilities

### Deans and Heads of Service

- Set the tone, expectations and direction for your Faculty, Group or Directorate.

### **Heads of School and equivalent**

- Set priorities for the area of work and cascade this to reviewers.
- Manage the PDR process ensuring that all eligible staff participate.
- To draw themes and matters of importance from all reviews to inform future priorities.

### **Scheme co-ordinators**

- Co-ordinate the review process
- Circulate the paperwork to all staff and handle enquiries
- Monitor the returns and chase up, using the University staff listings sent by HR systems
- Circulate returns to the relevant Heads of units, and training information to CQSD
- Report on annual uptake figures for the school liaising with the HR Partner

### **Reviewers**

- All new Reviewers must participate in a training session run by Human Resources before conducting any PDRs.
- To conduct engaging, effective and constructive review discussions in a timely way.

### **Individuals**

- To engage fully in the process.
- It is the responsibility of the Reviewer and member of staff, through the Head of School or equivalent to organise any agreed individual training needs. The Centre for Quality, Support and Development can offer advice and information.

## **Confidentiality**

An individual review should be conducted in line with the following confidentiality principles.

The review discussion itself is a confidential conversation. The review form captures the key elements of that conversation. The reviewee and reviewer together agree upon what is to be recorded on the form.

The completed form can be seen and used by those with management responsibilities for that individual (including the reviewer, Head of Department/School, Dean, Heads of Group/Support Service equivalent). The involvement of parties beyond this group should be with the agreement of the individual.

The completed PDR form should be held centrally by your School Administrator / PA, but a copy also retained by the individual and the reviewer to allow it to be a living document that can be reviewed and referred to on a regular basis. The form can be completed electronically, it does not require a hard copy signature. These groups of managers need a copy of the Review record to ensure that they are aware of any implications in terms of planning and resources. Reviewers will meet with the Head of Unit after the annual round has been completed to draw on the outcomes of these reviews. Heads should discuss and reflect on the overall results of the PDR process with senior colleagues to determine themes, priorities and future plans.

For contract research staff, PDR forms will additionally be seen by the School Director of Research, so that any common themes or needs can be acted upon in a co-ordinated way within the School.

This does not mean that a review discussion could not involve some confidential elements, but the record of the meeting should be shared. Ultimately individuals and their Reviewer decide what to record on the form.

Where a change in School headship or line management occurs, an incoming Head should, in the interests of the continuity of the review procedure, have access to previous PDR records. This right of access will also apply to other new Reviewers called upon to review a member of staff.

Copies of Review documents should be retained only by those people described above. Review documents should be kept for five years before being destroyed as confidential material.

## Dealing with difficulties

All individuals should strive to have an effective PDR discussion.

In the event that matters cannot be agreed upon, individuals should first work to try and seek a resolution between them. If however this does not result in the required outcome, alternative routes should be explored with the intention of reaching a positive outcome.

Seeking advice from a Head of Department/School, Dean, Heads of Group/Support Service equivalent is one option, alternatively HARC advisors or HR Partners are also available to support.

## Where to get help

Any queries about the administration or implementation of the Review system should be addressed in the first instance to your HR Partner.