Progress and Development Review

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1.0 Introduction

The Progress and Development Review (PDR) is a process of reviewing individual progress, development and achievements on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The aims are to develop the individual, build on the individual’s progress, agree clear objectives for the year and effectively plan development. The PDR process supports staff to effectively deliver the College’s Mission.

A central part of the process is the formal annual PDR meeting, between a member of staff and their line manager.

2.0 Eligibility

This scheme is for all professional and support staff, plus research staff. There is a separate scheme for academic staff.

All professional and support staff and research staff, who have completed probation, are required to participate in the process. All staff with a contract of employment, including those on a fixed term contract for over a year, are required to participate in an annual PDR meeting, with their line manager, and to have completed the PDR form.

There is a separate process for staff on probation. The scheme details, at point 8.1 below, how a member of staff, on completion of probation, and their line manager initiate the PDR process and agree objectives.

3.0 Benefits of PDR

The PDR formalises the regular progress and development discussions the member of staff (reviewee) and their line manager (reviewer) will have throughout the year. The emphasis is essentially forward looking, developmental and supportive of improved performance. The scheme is intended to motivate, develop and provide clear direction for the coming year.

There are clear benefits of participating in the scheme which include:

- A set of agreed objectives to work to throughout the year, which help deliver team and College aims;
- Feedback about performance, progress and formal recognition of achievements;
An opportunity to discuss support required;
A personal development plan and opportunity to discuss career development; and
Better progress and performance for the individual, the team and the College.

4.0 The PDR process

The PDR process involves ongoing regular discussions between the reviewer and reviewee with a formal annual meeting at the end of the PDR cycle. The PDR form should be completed after this annual meeting.

The regular discussions should take place on average every three months at which progress will be discussed and any objectives, or personal development activities, can be amended on the PDR form. There is also the option to use the interim PDR form as a record.

The PDR process should not be seen as a replacement for the usual day-to-day meetings, discussions and line management. It is important that when issues arise, both for line managers and staff, they are dealt with promptly and not left until the PDR discussion. For managing performance, please see 8.2 below.

5.0 The annual PDR meeting

The annual PDR meeting can happen at any time in the year (please see section 8, specific situations). However the meeting and the PDR form need to be completed by the yearly audit, run by Learning and Organisational Development (L & OD), in February. The annual meeting takes place at a time agreed between the reviewer and reviewee; this timing may be guided by their Director’s, School Manager’s, or Principal Investigator’s plans, for the Professional Services department or School. L & OD will send a reminder in the summer term informing staff, Directors, School Managers and Principal Investigators that PDR meetings and forms should be completed by the February audit.

5.1 Purpose of the annual PDR meeting

The purpose of the annual PDR meeting is to:

- discuss progress against objectives, job requirements, and development plan; and
• agree objectives and development for the coming year.
• discuss support needs for effective working for example this may include reasonable adjustments, flexible working, new ways of working, changes in technology, technical skills or changes needed going forward.

It is also an opportunity for a free and open discussion about career aspirations. The emphasis is essentially forward looking, developmental and supportive of progress and performance.

5.2 Preparation for the annual PDR meeting

The reviewer will contact the reviewee to arrange a suitable time for the PDR meeting. It is important that both the reviewer and the reviewee allow sufficient quality time to prepare properly for the annual PDR meeting; three weeks is the recommended timescale for preparation. It is important that both the reviewer and reviewee familiarise themselves with the previous PDR form, the job description and the School/Professional Services department/Research team objectives before attending the meeting. An agenda for the discussion should be agreed between the reviewer and reviewee prior to attending the meeting.

There are two options on how preparation should take place:

1. The reviewer and reviewee bring their notes with them to the meeting and be ready to discuss their ideas/views during the review.

2. The reviewer and reviewee agree that the reviewee writes notes under each of the key headings on the PDR form and submit these to the reviewer a week before the review is due to take place.

Either way, both the reviewee and reviewer should come prepared with brief notes about progress over the last year, together with ideas about objectives and training and development, they would like to discuss for the coming year. Further guidance on how to prepare for the meeting can be found in the guidance notes of the PDR form.
5.3 Conducting the annual PDR meeting

Both the reviewer and reviewee should allow sufficient time for the annual PDR meeting and it should be at a convenient time for both parties. The discussion should be conducted in a way that is supportive and encouraging, in a calm atmosphere. It is important that there are no interruptions and that both the reviewer and reviewee are able to give their full attention to the discussion. As a guideline the meeting should follow the agreed agenda as outlined in the guidance notes in Annex A of the PDR form.

5.4 Reviewing progress and development

At the meeting the reviewer and reviewee will review and agree progress against the previous year’s objectives, the discussion should cover the following:

- How well the set objectives have been met and any particular achievements outside these objectives;
- Review progress against the job description; and
- Review any learning and development opportunities that have taken place over the PDR cycle.
- Consider the individual support needs for effective working going forward

There are guidance notes in Annex A of the PDR form about reviewing progress and additional advice is provided at the PDR training, see section 12 below.

5.5 Setting objectives and development plan

The discussion will include agreeing a set of objectives for the coming year and an outline plan for any learning and development needed to support achieving the objectives.

Further details on setting objectives and the development plan can be found in the guidance notes in Annex A of the PDR form.
6.0 The PDR form

The PDR form is used to formally record the outcomes of the meeting between the reviewer and reviewee. The form must include the agreed objectives and development plan. At the meeting the reviewer and reviewee will discuss who will complete the form and completion should be within 10 working days following the meeting. Once completed both the reviewer and then reviewee should add their comments in section 4 and sign the form before forwarding it to the Director/School Manager/Principal Investigator for signing and monitoring. The form should be returned to the reviewer for storage as detailed in 6.1 below. A copy should be given to the reviewee for their personal records.

6.1 Confidentiality and storage of the PDR forms

The completed forms are confidential and should be stored securely by the reviewer in the School, Professional Services department or Research team. The PDR form should be made accessible to the current reviewer, reviewee and the relevant Director/School Manager/Principal Investigator/Executive Dean (if required).

7.0 After the PDR

It is essential that follow-up actions identified in the PDR are carried out. Reviewers should raise significant issues with their Director/School Manager/Principal Investigator. As part of the PDR process it is recommended that the reviewer and reviewee have regular meetings to discuss progress against the objectives and review objectives, as required. An informal interim form is available to use to record the discussion. Completing the interim form is optional, however it is recommended as it consolidates follow up meetings.

8.0 Specific situations

8.1 Action to take on the completion of probation

(i) PDR objectives and the development plan should be agreed on successful completion of probation. These should cover the next twelve months (see ii below) and may be an extension/confirmation of any objectives and development agreed during probation. Sections 2 and 3 of the PDR form should be used.
(ii) The first formal PDR meeting and PDR form should normally be completed twelve months after completion of probation.

8.2 Managing Performance
Managing Performance is a continuous activity and measures how well individuals are performing in relation to the College’s standards, assessment and Progress Development Review processes. Performance is managed through the College’s existing review and support mechanisms, including PDRs, meetings/one-to-ones, learning, development, coaching and mentoring.
If performance management concerns arise, guidance is available in the Performance Management Policy and Procedure.

A link to this policy is at section 13 below.

8.3 Exceptional Contribution and the Contribution – Related Pay Awards Policy
Exceptional Contribution is defined in the Contribution Related Pay Awards Policy; a link to this policy can be found in section 13 below.

8.4 Reviewee leaves the College
The last completed PDR form should be sent to Human Resources for retention on their personnel file.

8.5 Reviewee moves to a new role within the College
PDR objectives and a personal development plan should be agreed in the 1st month of the new role and recorded in sections 2 and 3 of the PDR form.

8.6 Reviewee has multiple roles within the College
If a reviewee has multiple roles/positions, with different line managers, within the College then:
   i. The reviewee will normally have a PDR for the substantive position.
   ii. The reviewee and respective reviewer(s) may agree to have a review for other non-substantive post(s).
   iii. If there is no substantive post i.e. same number of hours in each role, then the reviewee will have a PDR for each post.
8.7 New reviewer

If there is a change in reviewer then, where possible the new reviewer should meet with the previous reviewer to discuss the reviewee's progress. The previous PDR form should be made available to the new reviewer.

The new reviewer and reviewee should meet to confirm that the objectives and development plan are still relevant and amend them as appropriate.

8.8 New Director/School Manager/Principal Investigator/Executive Dean

A new Director/School Manager/Executive Dean can have access to the PDR forms from their respective Professional Service department or School from the last round, as required.

A new Principal Investigator should have access to PDR’s for their team.

9.0 Role and Responsibilities

9.1 College Secretary/Directors/School Managers/Principal Investigator

The role of the College Secretary, Directors and School Managers is crucial in the PDR process. They are responsible for ensuring that:

- this scheme is implemented;
- all reviewers have been appropriately trained to conduct the PDR;
- each member of their staff receives a fair, thorough and high quality PDR;
- alternative reviewers are appointed if the appropriate reviewer is not available (for reasons of absence, vacancies, etc.); and
- links are created between the College’s Strategy, School/departmental plan and the reviewee’s individual objectives.

9.2 Reviewer

Reviewers are responsible for ensuring that PDR’s are carried out in accordance with this process and should:

- undertake the PDR reviewer training before starting the PDR process;
- effectively prepare for meetings, including the annual PDR meeting;
- conduct regular reviews with the reviewee;
• complete PDR forms within the time scales; and
• follow up any issues raised in the PDR discussion, this could include reasonable adjustments, flexible working or other support needs.

9.3 Reviewee

Reviewees are expected to:

• undertake the PDR reviewee training before starting the PDR process;
• effectively prepare for meetings, including the annual PDR meeting;
• actively participate in the scheme;
• complete PDR forms within the time scales; and
• follow up on any development opportunities identified.

9.4 Learning and Organisational Development

L & ODs role is to:

• Provide training and support to both the reviewer and reviewee as detailed in point 12 below;
• Monitor the scheme in accordance with 10 below; and
• Seek feedback about general learning and development needs from the Schools and Professional Services departments, to inform the Learning and Organisational Development plan.

10.0 Monitoring participation

It is the responsibility of the College Secretary, Directors and School Managers to ensure that this scheme is implemented. L & OD will audit participation in the scheme, as required, providing reports to Human Resources Strategy and Policy Committee and Audit Committee on participation rates.

11.0 Forms

11.1 The annual PDR form
The annual PDR form is the means of recording the agreed objectives, the development plan and the progress made against the set objectives.

*Link to PDR form*

*Link to Annex A of PDR form*

### 11.2 The interim PDR form

This is an optional form that can be used to record the regular PDR discussions that are carried out throughout the year.

*Link to the interim form*

### 12.0 PDR training and People Management training

L & OD offer PDR training for both reviewers and reviewees, reviewers are required to attend PDR training before carrying out a review. There are also a number of People Management events.

The courses are available through the L & OD [course directory](#).

### 13.0 Related policies

- [Probation Procedure](#)
- [Contribution Related Pay Awards Policy](#)
- [Performance Management Policy & Procedure](#)
- [Disability Matters](#)

Birkbeck reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the content of this procedure and/or introduce new procedures from time to time, subject to good practice principles of consultation where applicable, to reflect the changing needs of the College and to comply with legislation.