

APPRAISAL POLICY

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Appraisals are part of performance management. Within the School appraisal is about motivating and developing employees and supporting them in performing their roles at the highest standard possible. This is achieved through the provision of opportunities for them constructively to discuss their performance with their manager and, in particular, to identify areas for development and mutually agreed ways in which those needs can be met.

1.2 Performance management is a comprehensive, continuous and flexible approach to the management of organisations, teams and individuals and is a natural process of management. Effective performance management is essential to the ongoing success of any organisation. It includes creating a shared vision of the purpose and aims of the School and ensuring that each employee understands how they contribute to them.

1.3 In support of this, the School expects all its employees to participate in the appraisal process positively and constructively, whether they are conducting an appraisal or being appraised. All employees should receive constructive feedback on a regular basis from their managers about their achievements at work not just through the formal annual appraisal.

1.4 Appraisals should be a positive experience, although development needs and areas where performance has been less strong should also be discussed. It does not replace normal day to day feedback for work done well or where there are problems. The School expects managers to have meetings with their employees at regular intervals throughout the year to discuss how they are doing.

1.5 There is no set process for conducting appraisals within the School; each part of the School is responsible for developing and implementing its own procedures, which may also differ in respect of different groups of staff. However all appraisal procedures within the School must comply with the contents of this policy and all staff must be covered by an appraisal process.

1.6 All appraisal procedures operated by the School must comply with prevailing discrimination legislation and should include an equal opportunities statement and indicate how the implementation of the appraisal system will be reviewed and monitored.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Policy applies to all employees of the School.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 Fair and Objective Appraisal. As well as being an opportunity to discuss development, an important part of appraisals is the objective assessment of performance against specific objectives and the employee's role description. In addition it may also reflect upon on the wider contribution of the employee to the work of the relevant part of the School. Appraisals will be conducted fairly and in line with the School's Equal Opportunities Policy. No employee will be unfavourably treated on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, age or any other irrelevant ground.

3.2 Feedback to Employees. It is important that employees receive feedback on how they are doing not just during the appraisal. Regular meetings should be held throughout the year to review how the employee is doing against their objectives – this should be a normal part of management. Feedback can include input from a range of sources as well as the “line manager” and should not only be given when things are going wrong. If any concerns arise during the year about an employee's performance then appropriate support should be put in place in discussion with the employee. Where necessary, the matter should be dealt with in line with the School's capability procedures.

3.3 Formal Annual Appraisal. In addition, all employees will have an annual one-to-one appraisal. Managers and employees should reflect on critical incidents and past behaviour to identify their future development needs. Employees are responsible for their own professional development but need to feel satisfied with the support received from their manager.

3.4 Role of the Line Manager. All employees will receive an appraisal from their immediate line manager (or other appropriate person who has management responsibility over the employee). It is not acceptable to be appraised by someone of equal standing or in a lesser position than the employee, although feedback may be gathered from these people. In this context, line manager means the person who directs, manages and has a post of responsibility for the area in which the employee mainly works.

3.5 Observations. Where an appraisal procedure incorporates a system of observations of work (for example, classroom observation in the case of teaching staff) these may be undertaken by someone other than the manager. Feedback must be made based on objective criteria. The decision on how observation works will be decided by the individual parts of the School, in line with this policy and whatever is practical within that part.

3.6 Clearly understood process. Managers and employees are responsible for ensuring they fully understand the appraisal, (and where applicable pay review procedures), and are responsible for identifying any briefing or support they need to enable them to participate effectively in the appraisal process.

3.7 Training. The Chief Executive, Head teachers and Bursars of the School are responsible for ensuring that managers carry out their responsibilities in conducting

appraisals and that both they and their employees receive appropriate briefing, training and support to enable them to conduct appraisals in a timely, fair and appropriate manner.

3.8 Minimum contents of the Appraisal. The appraisal process should include:-

- reflecting on and evaluating performance within the last 12 months, thereby allowing career and professional development opportunities to be identified and new objectives to be agreed.
- discussing and agreeing objectives to achieve within the coming year, taking into account the needs of their part of the School as well as those of their own job. Objectives agreed should be specific, measurable, agreed and achievable, realistic and time bound (“SMART”).
- a range of regular, less formal, meetings or discussions between the employee and manager to determine if the agreed aims and objectives are being achieved. This allows additional interventions (such as training) to be made in order to alleviate any difficulties the employee may be experiencing during the year (see 4.1.8).

3.8 Confidentiality. All issues discussed within the appraisal are to be kept confidential by both the employee and the manager. Any failure to keep matters confidential could lead to disciplinary action. The appraisal should be kept on the employee’s file and access restricted in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

3.9 Moderation of the Process. Within the School, the Head teacher and Bursar are responsible for ensuring that appraisal policies and procedures are applied fairly and consistently and with regard to equal opportunities.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Each part of the School is responsible for designing and implementing an appraisal process that conforms to this policy for all its employees, whether academic or support staff. Within this context, different procedures may be used for various groups of staff. The following guidelines should be followed when designing and implementing an appraisal process within the School.

4.1.1 Who Should Conduct the Appraisal?

The appraisal should normally be conducted by the employee’s line manager (or other appropriate person who has management responsibility over the employee). It is not appropriate for it to be completed by a colleague of equal status or a subordinate. Employees must not nominate their own appraiser.

If appropriate and in agreement with the employee, the appraiser may seek

feedback from other people who work with the employee or for whom the employee has undertaken work in order to inform the appraisal.

4.1.2 When Should the Appraisal Take Place?

Appraisals should be conducted in line with the timetable set by the part of the School in which they work. Where they are required to support the annual salary review process they should be conducted in April or May each year, with a review of the previous year in October or November.

4.1.3 How Often Should Appraisal Occur?

Each employee will be appraised at least once every 12 months, although employees and managers can agree to have appraisals more frequently if they feel this is necessary. In any event, regular feedback meetings should take place between the manager and the employee throughout the year (see 4.1.8).

The employee will be given sufficient notice of the appraisal date therefore giving them time to prepare for the meeting. A reasonable period of notice would be no less than two weeks.

When notifying the employee of the appraisal date, the manager will provide the employee with a self-assessment form to give them the opportunity to evaluate their progress during the last 12 months.

4.1.4 What Format Should the Appraisal Take?

The annual appraisal should be conducted as a one to one meeting between the individual and their manager. By agreement, if appropriate (for example in respect of senior academic staff) an external assessor may also attend the meeting, although it will be more usual for external feedback to be collected by the manager prior to the meeting.

4.1.5 Preparation for the Appraisal Meeting

The employee is responsible for ensuring that they complete the self-assessment form prior to attending the appraisal.

Employees must also make sure that they can provide their manager with evidence of their performance and any achievements made.

4.1.6 The Appraisal Meeting

Once arranged, the manager should ensure the appraisal meeting takes place on time with no interruptions. Meetings should only be postponed for exceptional reasons and should take place as soon as possible and ideally within two weeks of the original date for the meeting.

The manager should also ensure that enough time is set aside for the meeting. As a guide this is unlikely to be less than one hour but will vary with the complexity of the appraisal.

Appraisals must take place in a private environment where any matters discussed can be kept confidential and arrangements should be made so that there will be no telephone or other interruptions during the meeting.

The format of the appraisal will depend on the process in place at the employee's work location but normally should incorporate recognition of the employee's achievements and contributions to the School and a discussion of the employee's own self assessment and any development needs. In addition, the manager and employee should review performance against the objectives they set themselves during their previous appraisal and will agree objectives for the forthcoming 12 months.

The appraisal is an opportunity for open discussion and the manager should ensure that the employee can talk freely about areas where they have not performed as expected or the reasons why they have not had the opportunity to complete some objectives as well as about the more positive aspects of their performance.

4.1.7 Written Appraisal Record

A written record of the meeting should be drawn up and signed by both the manager and employee. The employee has the right to correct any factual errors in the appraisal. If the employee disagrees with the manager's judgment they should be given the opportunity to record such comments but the manager need not change their judgment if they believe it to be fair and supportable. (See also 6 below).

The statement should include a summary of all the points covered, any action agreed and set out the objectives for the forthcoming period. It should also identify any support needed and how this will be met.

A copy of the written record should be given to the employee and a copy kept on the personal file.

4.1.8 Follow-Up to the Appraisal

Performance management is a continuous process of which the appraisal meeting is a part. The appraisal should not contain any information that should have been discussed with the employee during normal feedback throughout the year.

Managers should ensure that they put time aside for one to one discussions with their staff at regular intervals during the year to consider ongoing performance in

the role and against the objectives set during appraisal. These sessions should be held at least once and ideally twice a year in addition to the annual appraisal. Any changes, support or development needed should be agreed and put in place to ensure the employee has every opportunity to achieve their objectives.

The purpose of these meetings is to maintain contact between the employee and manager, to review performance together and to develop and build upon a trusting working relationship that will facilitate openness and honesty during the appraisal and on a day to day basis.

A brief note of any agreements made or any significant discussions should be made for future reference although there is no need to keep a formal record of the meeting.

5. EXCEPTIONS TO THE APPRAISAL PROCEDURE

5.1 For employees who have been absent for the majority of the appraisal year (maternity, sickness, sabbatical), it may not be appropriate to follow the standard appraisal procedures. When the employee returns to work the manager should hold a meeting with them to discuss what support is needed to reintroduce them to the workplace and to agree objectives. At this time previous objectives should also be considered in the context of what was reasonable for the employee to have achieved whilst they were at work. A formal appraisal will then be held as usual in the appraisal cycle.

5.2 Where an employee starts work with the School part way through a review year, objectives should be set upon joining and performance monitored in line with probation arrangements. The first appraisal will therefore take place at the end of the probation period (see separate policy on Managing Probation) and thereafter, standard annual appraisal arrangements will apply.

6. DISPUTES ARISING FROM THE APPRAISAL

6.1 If the employee feels that the feedback they have received from their manager has been unduly negative, or disputes the assessment of their performance then they should discuss their concerns further with their manager to determine the reasoning for the feedback, and if possible the employee should provide evidence for their views.

6.2 If the employee is unable to resolve their concerns in this way, they may wish to raise a grievance in line with the School's grievance policy.