



## **INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines some general principles and guidelines in relation to the College's appraisal scheme for non-academic staff. It does not form part of the contract of employment between a member of staff and the College, but instead represents a suggested approach that the College hopes will maximise the benefits of the process for all concerned.

Whilst the process itself need not necessarily be set in stone, it is, however, a condition of their employment that all permanent members of the College's non-academic staff participate in the appraisal scheme.

## **PRINCIPLES**

1. The purpose of the Appraisal Scheme is to encourage the development of both individual members of staff and the College through improved two-way communication. It provides opportunities for supervisors to discuss with staff ways to improve performance, increase job satisfaction, and identify training and development needs, and for staff to make honest observations on the way the College manages them and arranges their work.
2. For the scheme to be most effective, it is essential that all those involved - appraisees (members of staff) and appraisers (supervisors) - should approach it with a serious commitment to success. Whilst the scheme may highlight problems and areas where change may be necessary, it is vital that these issues are approached both positively and constructively by both appraiser and appraisee.
3. If members of staff are to undertake a thorough examination of their plans for development, they must be entirely confident about the confidentiality of the process. Any doubts about confidentiality will seriously undermine the entire scheme. These comments about confidentiality apply equally to the security of records. For these reasons, appraisees and appraisers are expected to treat interviews carried out, and records kept, on a confidential basis. All records will be securely held by the Personnel Advisor.
4. The developmental emphasis will be an essential part of the action plans generated during the appraisal interviews. It is important that participants in the appraisal process - both appraisers and appraisees - do not see the identification of scope for development as an indication of weakness or failure on anyone's part, but rather an opportunity for the College to provide more effective support to the appraisee in their role. Consequently, participants should seek to be as honest and open as possible, without fear that this honesty or openness will be detrimental to them. Additionally, it should be stressed that in drawing up action plans from the point of view of an individual member of staff, scope for development might as easily be a member of staff building on existing strengths, as taking action in areas where performance has been not as strong, as in others.
5. The College will provide training on the scheme for appraisers (supervisors) and guidance will be available for appraisees.
6. Links with discipline, except to the extent of allowing appraisees to produce appraisal material to contest disciplinary proceedings, are excluded from the scheme. This provision is important insofar as, if members of staff were to feel that there was a link with disciplinary action, the honesty expected within the scheme would be compromised. Separate disciplinary procedures exist to deal with disciplinary matters.

## **PROCESS**

### ***Frequency***

It is envisaged that each member of staff should have the opportunity to formally participate in an appraisal discussion at least once a year. In addition, it may be appropriate for interim progress meetings to take place to ensure the effective implementation of any action points (see below).

### ***Preparation for the interview***

Both the appraisee and the appraiser should spend some time preparing for the interview. The appraisee is requested to answer questions outlined on an Appraisal Preparation form, which will be distributed to them by their supervisor. This will include (1) a personal assessment of how the elements in the previous year's action plan have been addressed, (2) a review of the past year (including key successes, details of any training or development events attended during the year, and any current frustrations), and (3) discussion of the individual's goals for the coming year, and how the College can facilitate the achievement of those goals.

The questions within the appraisal preparation form will help focus attention on key issues. It is intended to allow the appraisee to identify areas where s/he may need training and development; where development activities might be needed by colleagues or the appraisee's department more widely, or where the management of a department might be improved and how.

Once the preparation form has been completed, the appraisee should give a copy to their appraiser some days before the interview and this should be read carefully by the appraiser.

### ***Setting time aside***

Appraisees and appraisers must work together to set aside an adequate amount of uninterrupted time for the interview. It is recommended that appraisers should not undertake more than two appraisal interviews in a single day. In some cases, it may be sensible to adjourn the interview - to allow the collection of further information or to confer with other staff - before arriving at an agreed action plan.

### ***During the interview***

The appraisal interview is a two-way process. Comments, positive and negative, will pass in both directions and considerable skill and sensitivity will be needed during the interview, if it is to be successful. The key objective is to agree a workable action plan that will meet the objectives of the appraisee, her/his department, and the College. This will need serious and skilful negotiation. No long-term benefit will ensue from a failure to confront differences of view. To promote best-practice and ensure consistency throughout the College, the Personnel Advisor may be present at appraisals.

### ***Following the interview – Production of an Agreed Action Plan***

Draft action plans should be formally written up by the appraiser after discussion has taken place. They should include all the shared objectives agreed during the interview, and should be completed on the standard template that will be distributed to all appraisers. The action plan should identify any training and development needs. If there are likely to be costs associated with these needs, appraisers are to consult the Home Bursar.

Once the appraiser has completed the draft action plan, it should be given to the appraisee to review. If the appraisee is happy that the plan accurately reflects what was agreed during the appraisal interview, they should add their signature to the plan, and the appraiser should then send a copy to the Personnel Advisor.

If the appraisee has any queries about the draft action plan, they should discuss them with the appraiser, until a jointly-agreed plan is achieved.

### ***Follow Up Action***

It is not sufficient to agree an action plan and then to wait until the next appraisal to discuss its implementation. All those involved should seek - through informal conversations or more structured discussions - to monitor the success of plans. For example, one method of monitoring is the

requirement for the appraisee and appraiser to hold a follow up meeting within six months of the appraisal interview. The meeting should review progress on the action plan. If either party is unhappy with the progress to date or can see obstacles in the future, the Home Bursar may be asked to attend the meeting.

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