

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROCEDURE

1.0 PURPOSE

From time to time problems may arise in terms of the effectiveness of a member of staff. Where these problems can genuinely be attributed to the member of staff concerned, they could be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedures if appropriate informal interventions are unsuccessful.

However in some cases the line manager may consider the member of staff not to be performing to the best of his/her capabilities. In these cases immediate recourse to the Disciplinary Procedures is ineffective and inappropriate. The need exists therefore for an alternative procedure which is seen to be open, fair and which offers the member of staff concerned the adequate support and opportunity to achieve the required improvement in his/her performance.

2.0 SCOPE

The procedure can be applied to all staff working for the University, and is seen as an informal procedure to be used when recourse to the disciplinary procedure is deemed to be inappropriate, but nevertheless action still needs to be taken to address an issue. The following are examples of circumstances, which might justify the initiation of the procedure:

- During the course of an unsatisfactory probationary period;
- After thorough investigation of a series of student/staff complaints;
- In response to a pattern of unsatisfactory appraisal outcomes;
- After thorough investigation of a critical report from an accredited external body;
- After thorough investigation of a formal expression of concern from a Course or Subject Group Leader.

There may be other circumstances which might justify initiation. In all cases the principle will be that the Director / Head should inform the member of staff of the nature of the concerns, before conducting a thorough investigation of all relevant issues and initiating the procedure.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1** Companion: may be a fellow employee, an official employed by a trade union or a lay trade union official who may accompany the employee to meetings under this procedure. S/he does not have to accept a request to accompany an employee and cannot be pressured into doing so.

4.0 REFERENCES

- 4.1** The Disciplinary Procedure
4.2 The Grievance Procedure

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4.3 The Student Complaints Procedure

5.0 PROCEDURE

- 5.1** The decision to initiate the procedure will come as a result of an investigation, which may be by way of the University's Disciplinary Procedure (4.1), Grievance Procedure (4.2), Students Complaint Procedure (4.3) or some informal mechanism, e.g. through the line manager of the individual concerned.
- 5.2** As soon as the Dean / Director / Head forms the view that the procedure might be appropriate, sh/e will inform the member of staff concerned in writing and will advise him/her clearly of the nature of the concerns or, if this has already been done, e.g. as part of an investigation (4.1, 4.2, 4.3), the options of using the performance improvement procedure instead of progressing to the formal stages of the disciplinary procedure (disciplinary hearing).
- 5.3** The Dean / Director / Head will then convene a meeting with the member of staff and line manager to discuss the results of the investigation and take note of any representations made by the member of staff concerned. The member of staff may be represented at that meeting under normal provisions by a companion (3.1).
- 5.4** It is in the best interests of the member of staff to participate but she / he is not obliged to do so. However it must be understood that non participation could result in the initiation of the formal stages of the disciplinary procedure.
- 5.5** On completion of the meeting, the Dean / Director / Head will advise the member of staff in writing of whether it will be appropriate to pursue the procedure.
- 5.6** If the performance improvement procedure is deemed appropriate the Dean / Director / Head will meet with the member of staff concerned and his/her representative to agree the following:
- A Performance Improvement programme
 - A programme manager
 - A mentor (to be nominated by the member of staff from a standing panel proposed by the Director / Head)
- The emphasis will be on drawing upon relevant expertise to advise those who are involved in the process.
- 5.7** The Performance Improvement Programme will be documented as a written agreement between the Dean /Director / Head and the member of staff concerned. This will include the areas of focus, the

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procedures to be followed and the desired outcomes. The activities to be undertaken will vary from case to case but the following are examples of possible options:

- Assistance in preparation of lectures
- Observation of lectures
- Peer review
- Team teaching
- Pursuit of a relevant qualification/course of study
- Visits to other departments/institutions
- Counselling
- Change in timetable
- Change in function
- Change in supervision
- Shadowing

5.8 The member of staff has seven (7) calendar days in which to sign and return the written agreement to the Dean / Director / Head.

5.9 The procedure will normally last for an appropriate time as specified in the programme agreement, the minimum being three months, but may be extended if there are exceptional circumstances, e.g. an intervening illness. During that time all of the parties will meet initially on a monthly basis to review progress or otherwise, and then by agreement.

5.10 It is expected that the performance issues will have been satisfactorily addressed by the end of the period covering the programme contract. If the member of staff does not participate positively at any stage, or if at the end of the period the necessary improvements have not been achieved, the Dean /Director / Head may initiate the formal stages of the disciplinary procedure.

5.11 Given the nature of the performance improvement process, an appeal process would not be in keeping with the spirit of support and mutual co-operation required for the effective implementation of the process, and therefore is deemed inappropriate for this procedure. The procedure is not a disciplinary process, and individuals do have the choice of whether to participate in it or not. It is an option that allows the individual to address performance issues to prevent the initiation of the disciplinary procedure.

5.12 The contractual requirement for effective performance of duties must eventually be underpinned by the Disciplinary Procedure. To that extent the Performance Improvement Procedure cannot be completely divorced from the potential for disciplinary action. However the intention is that all parties will enter into the procedure with a clear,

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positive and mutual intention, namely to identify and achieve the desired improvements by providing appropriate guidance and support.