



Teaching Intensive Research Informed

A GUIDE TO  
PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR  
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT  
EMPLOYEES

2018/19

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## Introduction

The University's strategic plan 2015 – 2020 sets out our key aims and objectives supporting our TIRI agenda. As an organisation striving for highest quality in all that we do, we will offer our students the very best learning experience. Our employees are at the heart of this.

Enabling employees to achieve high standards of performance is fundamental to deliver the University's strategic plan and enhance overall student learning experience. Therefore, it is crucial to have a system of continuous improvement that links performance to agreed objectives supported through appropriate staff development. This will also include the Talent Management and Succession process (Grade 6 & above)

The Performance Review process (PR) has been updated to reflect this and is designed to provide employees an opportunity to be clear about their contribution to University's strategic plan in their departments, how effectively they are performing but also consider relevant career plans. In essence the Professional Support Performance Review is a crucial component of the University HR strategy – to develop a culture of individual and collective performance - and provides a University wide framework for effective and positive performance management.

It is envisaged that the update process will facilitate the following; enhance organisational performance and the student experience, ensure a consistent approach across the departments, provide for a framework to supplement regularly meetings between employees and their line manager's and focus on objectives / targets aligned to achieving the University Strategy

The updated Performance Review process can only succeed if employees understand the process and participate annually. This guide is designed to assist both the Reviewer and the Reviewee to understand and get the best out of the process.



Chris McClelland – HR Director

## Principles and Key Features

- Process is owned by both the Reviewer and Reviewee and will be based on a two-way constructive and positive discussion.
- Two different forms – Professional Support (Grade 1-3) Performance Review Form and Professional Support Performance Review Form
- Grade 1-3 employees will also complete a Professional Support (Grade 1 -3) Performance Review Self-assessment form
- It will be fairly and consistently applied to all employees.
- The process will link to the University's strategic priorities and other planning processes such as service local plans.
- All employees are given the opportunity to have a PR in line with the PR policy
- All employees are entitled to a Performance Review meeting.
- The line manager (Reviewer) will store an electronic copy of the completed Performance Review form as a record of the meeting.
- The process is based on an annual, structured but informal meeting with a six month mid year progress meeting.
- The process covers a review and feedback on last year's performance against key measurable, the setting of 'SMART' objectives/targets and personal and career development plans.
- The Performance Review discussion will be evidence-based and there will be an element of self-assessment.
- Performance is assessed on the achievement of objectives.
- A summary of training and development needs will be reviewed by the Reviewer.
- University-wide timetable for Performance Review is November to December.
- The process will supplement other one-to-one meetings.
- HR to annually report to Executive Board on completion of Performance Review in Schools.
- Link to and provide information to inform the new Talent & Succession Planning process (Grade 6 & above)

## Benefits to Employees and Line Managers

Positive engagement in the Professional Support Performance Review process should bring benefits not just to the Reviewer and the Reviewee but also the Service team as a whole. However the benefits to employees and line managers are summarised below;

### *Professional Support Employee (Reviewee)*

- Understand how your contribution fits in with the local plans and the University strategy.
- Understand what is expected of you
- Feedback on your performance and setting clear objectives / targets
- Recognition for success and good performance
- Opportunity to discuss development needs and discuss career plans
- An evidence based, honest two way discussion

### *Line Manager (Reviewer)*

- Comprehensive, robust process for examining all areas of contribution linked to the TIRI agenda, the University of Bolton Strategic Plan and Department's local plan
- Two way discussion
- Helps to build relationships with employees
- Clear process for determining objectives / targets and ensuring commitment and accountability for meeting agreed objectives / targets
- An opportunity to recognise high performers and identification of talent (as part of an on-going process) and those who require further support
- An opportunity to determine overall departmental gaps and development needs.
- Provide data / information to inform the new Talent & Succession Planning process

## Roles and Responsibilities

### *Professional Support Employee (Reviewee)*

- To cooperate fully and engage with the Professional Support Performance Review process
- Prepare for the Performance Review and ensure relevant evidence obtained
- Reflect on successes last period and those areas where things could have been better
- Give thought to future objectives / targets
- Actively engage with the line manager during the process – in their discussion regarding to performance, objectives / targets, career plans and development needs
- Accept constructive feedback on performance where it is justified and objective
- Take ownership for ensuring form completed in a timely manner

### *Line Manager (Reviewer)*

- Arrange and communicate date, time and location of review and any mid year follow-up review – allow for sufficient time and appropriate venue to be used
- Communicate clearly what they expect employees to achieve and how assessed
- Provide clear and regular feedback and make Performance Review an on-going process
- Support employees in their development
- Prepare for the review
- Provide honest and objective feedback to employees based on evidence
- Support employees in achievement of their objectives
- Ask for feedback on their own performance
- Refocus objectives / targets in line with local plans
- Ensure reviews are completed and form stored electronically

## Process – Conducting the Professional Support Performance Review

### Preparation

#### **Reviewer**

To make the most of the Performance Review process the line manager (Reviewer) should agree a suitable date, time (between 1 and 1.5 hours) and location well in advance (suggest at least two weeks).

The line manager (Reviewer) should also consider how well the Reviewee has performed and any achievements since the last Performance Review (reflecting on any factors that may have affected performance both within and outside the Reviewee's control), potential objectives for the current year and also potential aspirations.

It should be noted that the form itself provides a structure for the meeting and also once completed provides a formal record of the Performance Review conversation. The line manager may wish to use the form in flexible manner.

#### **Reviewee**

The Reviewee should ensure that they have downloaded the relevant Performance Review form.

#### **Part One**

##### *Professional Support Performance Review*

The Reviewee should obtain all relevant evidence / data/information for department goals and targets and attach / embed this to the evidence section for each objective.

Reviewees should conduct a self-evaluation exercise and provide comments on progress made in the previous reporting period in the progress box for each objective.

##### *Professional Support (Grade 1 -3) Performance Review*

The Reviewee will use the Professional Support (Grade 1-3) Performance Review Self-Assessment form to help them prepare for their review.

The progress made in the previous reporting period will be captured through a tick box process under each criterion and comments should be captured in the "Comments supporting evidence box."

The Reviewee should send a copy of the Professional Support (Grade 1-3) Performance Review Self-Assessment form to their line manager (Reviewer) no later than one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

#### **Part Two**

##### *Professional Support Performance Review*

Reviewees should also consider, in light of the above, any University / Service level plans what the objectives / areas of focus should be for the current reporting period and any key development needs to achieve these objectives / areas of focus.

It should be noted that Part Two of the form is designed to capture evidence of performance but also of enhancement / development (i.e. to reflect continuous improvement).

#### *Professional Support (Grade 1 -3) Performance Review*

Reviewees should consider what training and development activities they have undertaken since their last review. Any training or development that has been highlighted in the review that needs to be undertaken in the forthcoming year should also be captured here.

Reviewees should also consider what, if any, future careers plans they may have over the next one to three years.

The Reviewee should send a copy of the part completed Performance Review form to their line manager (Reviewer) no later than one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

#### **Part Three (*not applicable if using Professional Support (Grade 1 -3) Performance Review form*)**

Reviewees should also consider what, if any, future careers plans they may have over the next one to three years.

### The Meeting

This is the heart of the Performance Review process and should be a positive and constructive experience. Therefore it is important that the meeting is held in an environment that is private and free from interruptions.

The Reviewee should do most of the talking and there should be scope for reflection and analysis by the Reviewer. Performance for the full period under review should be discussed – not just recent or specific events.

### Documentation and administration

Both the Reviewer and Reviewee should take ownership that the form is completed as a record of the meeting.

The Reviewee should ensure that he / she has provides comments in the Reviewee comments section

#### *Professional Support Performance Review*

For each objective the Reviewee and Reviewer should review past objectives and plan out new objectives to support the University's strategic and local plans. A note of any work related activity targets, measures and objectives should be captured on the form. When reviewing the previous year's objectives the Reviewer should take in account

any evidence provided and of progress made and then select the most appropriate final outcome from the drop-down menu for each objective as outlined in the table below;

<b>RATING</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b><i>Good</i></b>	Exceeds expectations of the role
<b><i>Satisfactory</i></b>	Meets the requirements of the role
<b><i>Requires Improvement</i></b>	Less than satisfactory, requires additional development
<b><i>Unsatisfactory (requires significant and urgent improvement)</i></b>	Requires significant and urgent improvement

#### *Professional Support (Grade 1 -3) Performance Review*

For each criterion the Reviewer should complete the tick box against the ratings set out in the above table to select the most appropriate final outcome.

Both the Reviewer and Reviewee should retain copies of the final Performance Review form.

#### **Mid Point Review**

The Performance Review should not just be an annual meeting. It should be part of ongoing discussions between the Reviewer and Reviewee - recognising that situations may arise that affect priorities in the department and for the Reviewee.

The Mid Point Review provides for a more informal opportunity to take stock, review progress being made, identify any issues that might be affecting progress and any adjustments / contingency plans put in place that are required.

The Performance Review form provides space for the parties to note progress and any other relevant comments during any Mid Point Review undertaken.

## Setting Objectives

As part of the Performance Review process objectives / targets are set for the academic year. These relate to the individual effort needed to create tangible results and should be readily measurable, relate to the local plans and be relevant for the individual being reviewed. Objectives should be defined to focus on the activities that represent the most important aspects of long-term, on-going performance.

The SMART acronym is a useful and effective way of getting objectives right:

*Specific* - objectives should state a desired outcome. What does the employee need to achieve? Is the objective / target clearly defined?

*Measurable* - how will the line manager and employee know when an objective has been achieved? It is clear what success is?

*Achievable* - is the objective something the employee is capable of achieving but also challenging?

*Relevant* - do objectives relate to those of the department / University? Are they important and add value?

*Time bound* - when does the objective need to be achieved?

## Career Planning

A vital component of the Professional Support Performance Review is the opportunity to have an annual consideration of your career plans. Employees are expected to be pro-active in managing their own careers and the career planning element of the process is an opportunity to have a tailored discussion according to the individual's career stage. Some may have a long-term career plan others may be satisfied with their current position

The University recognises the contributions of a diverse workforce. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so provided that they are making a full contribution to the University. The University does not have an organisational retirement age for employees however it recognises that employees will wish to consider full / partial retirement plans for a number of reasons and in good time and it is reasonable for the line manager (Reviewer) to seek to understand the working intentions of employees towards the later stages of their careers in order to facilitate workforce planning and in respect of budgeting and other administrative considerations.

There should be realistic and honest reflection on career next steps – to include potential timescale (i.e. short term – within 12 months, medium term – 1 to 3 years, long term – 3 to 5 years), milestones, extent ready for such a move and any development or other support required. The parties should note, however, that there are no guarantees with respect to potential future opportunities.

## Further Information

*Performance Review Policy*

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/HumanResources/Performance-Review/Performance-Review-Policy.pdf>

*ACAS - How to Manage Performance*

<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/m/0/How-to-manage-performance-advisory-booklet.pdf>

*Professional Support Performance Review Form*

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/HumanResources/Performance-Review/Home.aspx>

*Professional Support (Grade 1-3) Performance Review Self -Assessment Form & Professional Support (Grade 1-3) Performance Review*

<http://www.bolton.ac.uk/HumanResources/Performance-Review/Home.aspx>

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. Is the updated Professional Support Performance Review process for those employees still within their probation period?**

*A. Yes. Although employees still within their probationary period will have separate conversations with their line manager regarding progress, the updated Professional Support Performance Review process has been developed for all Professional Support employees at the University and will supplement conversations being held relating to probation.*

**Q. Does the employee have to sign the Professional Support Performance Review form?**

*A. No. Since the objective is to be helpful and constructive there is no requirement for the parties to sign the form. However, there is a requirement for agreed comments to be recorded on the form. The line manager (Reviewer) will finalise the form and email a final copy to the Reviewee. Both parties should retain an electronic copy for the records.*

**Q. Who should conduct the Professional Support Performance Review meeting?**

*A. Normally it is for the relevant Head of Service or appropriate line manager to carry out the Performance Review meeting.*

**Q. Will the outcome be confidential?**

*A. Completed Performance Reviews forms will normally be confidential between the Reviewee and Reviewer. Any development outcomes may need to be more widely disseminated however.*

**Q. How does Performance Review relate to the University's promotion arrangements?**

*A. The Performance Review process is separate from any appointment and promotion procedures the University. However, information obtained on completed forms can be used by the line manager (Reviewer) in preparing other submissions.*

**Q. How should Heads of Service/Line Manager deal with employees who may be reluctant to participate?**

*A. All employees are expected to have a Performance Review. The process is designed to be constructive, positive and a useful two way process that benefits both the Reviewee and the Reviewer. It is usual practice for HEIs to have systems to review performance, potential and identify training and career planning needs. However, the relevant HR Business Partner will provide support to the Head of Service/Line Manager where employees are hesitant - to overcome any perceived obstacles.*

**Q. Where does the updated Performance Review process fit into performance management?**

*A. Performance management is an ongoing process of communication and feedback between the Reviewer Reviewee throughout the year. The Performance Review process is designed to link employee's individual objectives, contribution and career*

*development plans to the achievement the local level annual plan but the University Strategic Plan.*

*However, if the Reviewee's contribution and performance is identified to be unsatisfactory overall and the normal coaching, counseling and training do not bring performance to an acceptable level, further action may be necessary – e.g. a formal Performance Improvement Plan may be put in place.*

**Q. Why do we have ratings attached to our objectives?**

*This has already been implemented in the Academic Performance Review and we have received positive feedback and this is to give you an indication of your performance.*