

Human Resources Policy Statement HRPS23

Staff Appraisal Scheme



Introduction

Middlesex University believes that the interests of both the individual and the University are served by a strong emphasis on learning, staff development and performance improvement. It is therefore the policy of the University that all staff complete an annual staff appraisal review which is recorded and monitored to assess overall development needs for the University. In the establishment of a staff appraisal scheme the University seeks to create an identifiable link between individual, school, service and corporate objectives.

Middlesex is fully committed to making sure that every member of staff has the knowledge, skills and experience they need to work effectively and to develop their potential. The Appraisal Scheme aims to identify the development needs of staff in order to improve the performance of individuals and of the organisation as a whole to achieve our corporate objectives.

In addition the Middlesex appraisal scheme allows us to show our commitment to “Investors in People” and to answer positively the following statements:-

- The University is committed to developing people to do their jobs
- People at all levels know how they can contribute to organisational success
- We have a process for regularly reviewing the individual training needs of each employee
- Our managers help those who work for them to meet their training and development needs.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University Policy Statement (HRSPS4 Staff Development).

Objectives

The key objectives for the University Staff Appraisal scheme are:

- To review past performance
- To develop potential and help improve current performance
- To maintain high performance
- To set performance objectives
- To assess learning and development needs
- To assist in career development planning
- To strengthen the links between individual and corporate objectives

The staff appraisal process is not part of the institution's disciplinary process, nor will it be directly considered in promotion issues.

Scope

The staff appraisal scheme is for all University staff including hourly paid staff who work more than 80 hours. Executive, Senior Managers and Professors are appraised through a separate performance appraisal scheme.

Responsibilities for Staff Appraisal

It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure that each of their direct reports receive at least one annual staff appraisal every year. 6 monthly interim reviews are optional but encouraged.

In areas where such reporting structures exceed the recommended span of appraisal (approximately 8 members of staff) the line manager may delegate responsibility for conducting staff appraisal reviews to senior colleagues who have significant knowledge of the appraisee's work.

Both appraisers and appraisees are accountable for ensuring that agreed staff appraisal outcomes are followed, monitored and reviewed. Line managers have a responsibility to audit the extent to which agreed outcomes are implemented.

Academic Peer Appraisals

Where responsibility is delegated the line manager must ensure that the appraiser is fully briefed on issues affecting the work of the team, in addition to clarifying School objectives. The staff development resources available and the level of authority that is delegated to make decisions relating to the support needs of the appraisee must also be clarified.

In the case of academic appraisals it may also be appropriate to discuss current priorities and changes in time allocation between different academic activities and how this fits in within Department and School priorities.

Delegated Appraisers and line managers should meet following the completion of all Appraisals in order to review progress and to ensure alignment with Academic Department and School Plans. It is the responsibility of both the line manager and staff with delegated authority to consult, following the completion of appraisal, to ensure that individual and team development needs are met equitably.

Both appraisers and appraisees are accountable for ensuring that agreed staff appraisal outcomes are followed, monitored and reviewed. Line managers and delegated appraisers have a responsibility to audit the extent to which agreed outcomes are implemented.

Timetable

The majority of appraisals should take place between June and October each year. This is to enable personal objectives to be linked as closely as possible to the corporate objectives and the annual operating statement of the University for the beginning of the Academic Year.

If there is a justifiable business case, it is acceptable for an alternative calendar to be used. Where this is the case the chosen dates should be communicated to all affected staff and to Staff Development.

While it is highly desirable for appraisals to cascade through the organisation, it is not always possible or necessary to do this. Gaps in the cascade should not be used as a reason for not carrying out appraisals. Interim reviews can be used as appropriate to communicate and discuss changes in policy or priorities.

The timetable of appraisals should be communicated effectively to all staff.

New Staff

All new staff should have agreed objectives as part of their probation period to clearly define expectations. They should receive an Appraisal within twelve months of starting; the second and subsequent appraisals will be part of the normal annual process.

Temporary Staff

Where temporary contracts are under six months, Appraisals discussions are optional, whereas staff employed on temporary contracts over six months would be expected to fall within the normal timetable.

Confidentiality

The process of staff development appraisal will respect confidentiality. Verbal comments made during the appraisal discussion may not be reported without the consent of the appraisee. Written comments will remain confidential to the appraisee and appraiser and the appraisee's and appraiser's line manager/s (including if the authority for staff appraisal has been delegated).

In the case of peer appraisals the comments section on the Appraisal form will allow line managers (e.g. Head of Department or Dean) to review objectives agreed and to review the extent to which agreed outcomes are implemented. Ultimately the Dean/ Head of Service are responsible for ensuring that agreed outcomes are effectively monitored.

The Appraisal Discussion

The process of staff appraisal review is intended to be one of two-way discussion on an equal basis to encourage mutual feedback of the last year and agreement of performance objectives and staff development needs for the future year. Both appraiser and appraisee are expected to prepare in advance for the discussion to ensure that the discussion is constructive and achieves positive outcomes.

The Action Plan

All the issues discussed in the review, should be seen very much as a forerunner to the second part (at least half) of the meeting. This is to set objectives for the future. Staff should leave the meeting focused precisely on what they need to do over the coming months and year.

A maximum of six objectives should be agreed depending on their size and degree of difficulty and will be recorded on the Action Plan. Objectives may be related to the key tasks within a job role as well as to the achievement of corporate /school / service objectives.

Both parties must sign the form to demonstrate that they agree with the objectives and are committed to their achievement.

The Development Plan

This is a fundamental part of the appraisal. Individuals have a particular responsibility for determining their performance and career objectives and the process of the appraisal should provide the opportunity for staff to agree the levels and types of support required for the achievement of objectives. The Appraiser should agree with the appraisee the help and support they need. Areas of self-development, professional development and training needs for career progression should all be considered.

Both parties must sign the form to demonstrate that they agree with the needs identified and are committed to their achievement.

Completed Documentation

The completion of The Appraisal Form should take place either during or immediately following the appraisal discussion. It should fairly reflect the discussion and take into account the comments of both the Appraiser and the Appraisee. Both parties should sign the completed forms to confirm that what is recorded is correct and agreed within two weeks.

Completed appraisal forms should be stored in confidential files with a copy kept by the appraiser and the appraisee. A record of learning, staff and team development needs should be collated at local level as part of the staff development planning process. A summary of school/service staff development needs should be forwarded to Staff Development who monitor the scheme and have responsibility to provide a training plan for the University as a whole.

Appraisal Training

All Managers should receive training on the Staff Appraisal Scheme before carrying out any appraisal discussions. Training will cover both the mechanics of the scheme as well as relevant interview skills. Staff should also attend a familiarisation session to ensure they can prepare for and maximise the opportunities from the appraisal discussion. Training for both staff and managers will be provided by Staff Development who will provide and advise staff on training opportunities available and respond to requests for further training. Members of staff may also consult with Staff Development if they have any queries or difficulties regarding any part of the scheme.

If at any stage staff feel unhappy with the appraisal arrangements or choice of appraiser (where delegated) they should speak to their line manager or if appropriate the appraiser's immediate manager.

Equal Opportunities

The scheme is intended to be compatible with and supportive of the University's equal opportunities policy. In particular, equality of opportunity should be a consideration in the allocation of appraisers and in the provision of resources for follow-up action and staff development.

Health and Safety

All managers and staff have a special responsibility to pay due attention to the implementation of Health and Safety policy. Consideration should be given in all appraisals to issues related to health and safety.

Review of the Appraisal Scheme

The Staff Development Appraisal scheme will be regularly monitored and reviewed by HRS to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives. Records of appraisals which are maintained within the school/service will be monitored as part of the Investors in People auditing process.

The Staff Appraisal Policy is linked with other policies and objectives of the University including:
Staff Development Policy (HRPS4)
Equal Opportunities Policy (HRPS8)