De Montfort University Leicester

Senior Staff

Appraisal and Development Review - MAX

Guidance Notes

Version 2

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APPENDICES

1.   Introduction

These guidelines describe the current process for the senior staff appraisal and development review (MAX) and are intended for information purposes only. The guidance and the process described do not form part of individuals' contracts of employment and may be amended by the university from time to time. Senior staff will be notified in writing of any change to the guidance or the process in advance of those changes taking effect.

Appraisal and Development reviews (ADRs) play a vital part in the running of any organisation, with research demonstrating the positive link between staff engagement and enhanced performance. Employee engagement is enhanced where individuals understand what is expected of them and have the necessary support to achieve those aims.

This appraisal and development scheme provides the framework within which managers (or appraisers) and their staff members can discuss and set clear goals and objectives at the beginning of the year, review progress at mid-year and capture learning, achievements and areas for development at the end of the year. The framework also encourages a discussion between the two staff members on development needs and career aspirations.

The information gathered as part of this process will also be used to inform salary recommendations for senior staff and to determine the extent to which a non-consolidated bonus of up to 10% of salary (in addition to the standard award) may be paid where robust and stretching targets have been discussed, set, achieved and exceeded.

In going through the process individuals and appraisers should ensure that each step of the process is constructive, with appraisers helping to set the scene and providing a safe environment for honest appraisal and development discussions to take place. When well-managed, these types of discussions can be of immense value to both the individual and appraiser. Where support for development in this area is required individuals or appraisers can contact their HR Partner or the learning and development team for further assistance.

2.   High-level timescales for annual MAX review cycle

The timescales for the completion of each stage of the performance review cycle are as follows:

- 1st June – 31st August – Discuss and agree 12 month work plan and development
- 1st February – 31st March - Mid-year review of progress against objectives and development
- 1st June – 31st August – End of year review of work plan, achievement against objectives and development.

For practical reasons appraisers may choose to combine the end of year review with the objective setting process for the following year although best practice suggests that these should be held as individual meetings where possible.

N.B. For business development managers the year end meeting may need to be timed to align with the availability of the end of year financial results. The timing of this meeting should be discussed and agreed locally and as closely aligned to the corporate timeline above as possible. If any difficulties become apparent, then please contact your HR Partner.

3.   Identifying the appraiser

An individual's appraiser will typically be their day to day line manager, although this may differ where numbers of direct reports are large or alternative review structures have been agreed within faculties or departments. If an individual is unsure who their appraiser is, they should contact their PVC Dean, Director or HR Partner for clarity. Appraisers will be pre-populated on the online MAX form. If the information is incorrect you can amend this on the system.

4.   Number or frequency of review meetings

The formal MAX review cycle is detailed above and consists of three key face-to-face meetings. It is recommended however that performance against set objectives (and generally) is reviewed on a more frequent basis and managers/appraisers are encouraged to meet at least once a month with their members of staff. This is important in order to keep the dialogue about performance on-going and to prevent any unnecessary surprises at the end of the year.

5.   Self-assessment and preparing for meetings

The success or otherwise of the MAX discussions that take place throughout the year will be greatly enhanced where preparation by both the individual and appraiser is undertaken. At each stage, the appraisal form should be completed by the individual in advance of the meeting and shared with the appraiser for use as the basis for the conversation. This should happen at each stage e.g. objective setting meeting, mid-year review and year-end review with any changes being captured as a result of the discussion. In advance of the end of year review, both the individual and appraiser should also give consideration to the appraisal rating they feel appropriately reflects the individual's performance over the year.

The venue for the discussions should be considered carefully and the date of the meetings communicated in advance to allow enough preparation time.

6.   The MAX framework

In order for DMU to achieve successfully its strategic goals, it is critical that all staff have focused targets and objectives detailing the individual's contribution to these goals. In addition it is appropriate that enabling behaviours and potential inhibitors are discussed as part of the performance dialogue, along with any development or career aspirations the individual may have.

Each senior staff member should be able to describe how during the year ahead they intend to contribute to the wider strategic goals of the university and be in a position to identify ways in which they will personally do this.

6.1   Section 1 – setting core strategic leadership objectives
This section requires individuals to discuss and agree with their appraiser their generic leadership objectives for the year ahead. The objectives should be derived from the list of core/generic objectives for all senior staff and cover the relevant areas. This is not an exhaustive list and individuals should discuss with their appraiser relevant areas of focus. It is expected that individuals will set at least one objective from each strategic area and that each objective set will follow the SMART principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound).

As the achievement of objectives directly impacts on bonus recommendations, appraisers must ensure that objectives are bonus worthy and will deliver significant benefits to the university.

The main focus for core objectives will be considered annually by the Executive Board and will provide an opportunity whereby senior staff can be directed to focus on areas of greatest significance to the university at that time.

At mid-year and year-end reviews there is space on the form to capture progress against each objective and any comments. In addition there is a section for use at mid-year should there be a need to change pre-set objectives due to circumstances beyond the individual's control.

6.2 Section 2 – setting local objectives

This section requires individuals to discuss and agree with their appraiser what their local objectives for the year ahead will be. An individual's objectives should be stretching and capable of delivering significant benefits to the institution, informed by those of their appraiser to achieve a clear line of sight between their work and the goals of the university. Best practice is for managers/appraisers to share their own objectives with members of their team. Local objectives will differ from one team to another and from one individual to another, although other colleagues (from different areas) may be working towards the same goal. The suggested number of SMART local objectives (in addition to core objectives) for the 12 month review is between 5 and 7 and should be of significant importance. (Whilst the optimum number is suggested as between 5-7, it is stressed that it is the quality and content of the objective that is most important not the quantity. Adding an extra objective for the sake of it is not encouraged.)

Once agreed the objectives should be captured in section 2 of the form and progress updated at mid-year and year-end review points. There is also the opportunity to detail any changes to objectives set at the beginning of the year as a result of circumstances beyond the individual's control.

As with the setting of core objectives, appraisers need to ensure that local objectives are SMART and are focused on key priorities for the forthcoming year. Managers/appraisers need to ensure a level of stretch within the objectives whilst maintaining fairness across the team.

The ideal scenario is for appraisers and individuals to discuss and agree objectives for the year ahead. In the unlikely event that agreement is not reached the appraiser should contact the relevant HR Partner for advice.

6.3 Section 3 – enabling behaviours and inhibitors to success

In setting objectives for the year ahead it is important to discuss what good performance will look like aside from the achievement of targets and to identify up front anything that may hinder progress. By having this discussion at the beginning of the year and again at mid-year review point there should be no surprises and individuals can seek clarification on expected behaviours e.g. work collaboratively, role model good practice in leading a particular project, seek out relevant expertise in achieving the goal etc. Managers/appraisers will also be aware of what the individual perceives potential inhibitors for the year ahead to be and can discuss with the individual how to overcome these challenges.

6.4 Section 4 – career aspirations

An important part of any ADR discussion is the ability to talk about development needs and career aspirations. **Section 4** provides the individual with an opportunity to capture their current career aspirations to enable a conversation with their appraiser. This section can also help to inform what development may be required in the future, the outcome of which can be captured in **section 5**, the Personal Development Plan.

Completion of the section on career aspiration is optional but individuals are encouraged to capture their current position with regards to readiness for a different role by selecting the most appropriate option. In the future, this data could help the institution with its talent management strategy. Where the wording does not naturally lend itself to an individual's role, the most appropriate category should be selected and full use should be made of the comments box to provide context for the category selected.

Appraisers should be mindful of individuals who may be less inclined to raise their aspirations in this way but who may appreciate it if the conversation was instigated by their appraiser.

6.5 Section 5 – Personal Development Plan (PDP)

The ambition of DMU does not stand still and as a result individuals are expected to grow and develop in their role in line with the changing expectations of the institution. It is very rare at a senior level for a job to remain the same year on year with no ability to identify areas for individual learning and growth.

As part of the MAX discussion, individuals are asked to complete their PDP taking into account their personal development requirements which will underpin their success in their role. The required behaviours, potential inhibitors and career aspiration sections of the form and discussion will also inform what should be captured on the PDP.

In completing this section individuals should clearly state the development need, the identified development method e.g. job shadowing, training course, e-learning, reading journals, the dates for completion and any comments e.g. if budget is a consideration where external training is requested. It is important to review progress against the PDP at both mid-year and year-end review meetings as a minimum.

Through the completion of personal development plans by senior staff, informed decisions regarding the allocation of resources for development can be made by the university. Colleagues are therefore strongly encouraged to participate in this element of the process.

6.6 Wrapping up

The date for the mid-year review should be set at this meeting to enable forward planning. Please note that the online MAX system is *not* linked to Outlook and therefore meeting dates will need to be entered separately.

6.7 Reviewing performance

Mid-year review - The first formal review meeting will be the mid-year review which takes place between 1st February – 31st March. Ideally one week before the review meeting, individuals should share with their appraiser their updated appraisal document showing their assessment of their mid-year progress against strategic and local objectives (sections 1 and 2), comments on behaviours and inhibitors (section 3) and progress against their personal development plan (section 5). Individuals should also complete the mid-year comments box on the review sheet. Preparing this form in advance provides staff with the opportunity to determine whether they feel their progress is exceeding, on-track or some improvement required, and can help to form the basis for the discussion.

It may also be beneficial at mid-year to consider where against the end of year rating scale the individual would be at that time; this can help to avoid any end of year surprises.

Year-end review – The last formal review meeting of the performance year takes place 1st June – 31st July. The focus of this meeting is to build on the mid-year review discussion and to finalise the overall MAX form. Some appraisers may choose to combine the end of year review meeting with the objective setting meeting for the following year, where circumstances dictate that this is the appropriate way forward for that individual. Wherever possible however, these should be held as separate meetings.

As with the other stages of the process, individuals should update their forms and share with their reviewing manager ideally one week before the year-end meeting. As part of the preparation for the year-end review it is expected that the appraiser will liaise with their own manager and other relevant stakeholders for feedback on the individual's performance and achievements to feed into the discussion.

Assessing and allocating ratings - During the year end discussion the appraiser and individual will discuss the end of year assessment against the strategic and local objectives and determine whether each one was exceeded, achieved, partially achieved or not achieved. Appraisers are also expected to add comments detailing reasons why the rating has been allocated for that particular objective. Year-end comments regarding the extent to which the required behaviours were demonstrated and potential inhibitors overcome should also be captured in section 3

The review - This should be completed with overall year-end comments by both the individual and the appraiser and during the final review meeting an overall appraisal rating should be assigned. The individual should initially determine their own overall appraisal rating and rationale and share these with their Appraiser. There are six ratings in total ranging from unsatisfactory to outstanding/outperforming and full definitions can be found in Appendix 3. Where an 'unsatisfactory' or 'improvement required' rating is allocated, managers are expected to work with the individual to put a performance improvement plan in place. The rationale for any rating given should be captured in the appraiser's end of year comments box as this will be used to inform any pay award or bonus recommendation. Where individuals could be considered against more than one appraisal rating, the rating **most** appropriate for that individual is the one which should be selected.

Appraiser's manager - Following the end of year review meeting, the form should be updated to reflect the conversation and the appraisal document should be finalised and shared with the appraiser's manager for their year-end comments which can be viewed by the individual and appraiser.

7.   Sampling the quality and confidentiality

The most important aspect of any appraisal is the quality of the conversation and feedback between appraiser and staff member and it is important to ensure that everyone has fair access to an appraisal discussion. In order to identify any gaps in the process colleagues within POD will maintain central records detailing whether or not each stage of the appraisal process has been completed.

N.B. It should be noted that records will be accessed only by relevant members of the POD team required to support this process.

8.   Support available

Support is available to both appraisers and individuals in completing this process. The POD website provides detailed advice on the completion of each section. One-to-one guidance is available from POD via HR Partners. Also at key points during the process e.g. objective setting, mid-year review and year-end review support, assistance can be provided by POD via HR Partners in the first instance.

9.   For more information

For more information on the Senior Staff Appraisal Development Review (MAX) process please refer to **www.dmu.ac/max** or contact your HR Partner within POD in the first instance.

Overview of core/generic objectives

It is expected that all senior staff will draw core objectives from the following list.

Core objective	Example areas of focus	Main links to core values
Strategic Leadership	Leadership of strategic objectives identified in DMU's strategic plan	Student Centred Embrace and Drive Change Adding Value
People Management	Effective people management practices including 100% appraisal compliance, management of grievances, disciplinary management and the recording of training.	Fair and Transparent Choice and Empowerment Adding Value Growth and Learning
Financial Management/ Income and Expenditure	Adherence to financial regulations including value for money and student centred ethos, delivering a balanced budget with savings where possible. Commercial work for income.	Adding Value Student Centred Fair and Transparent
Planning, Performance and Review/ Development of Strategic and Operational Plans	Development, implementation and management of clear strategic and faculty/departmental plans to underpin achievement of key goals: • sustainability • number of international • number of UG, PG, TandR students • Faculty objectives within research plan and to manage risk. Undertake appropriate reviews.	Embrace and Drive Change Adding Value Growth and Learning Fair and Transparent
Risk Management	The appropriate identification, management and review of risks.	Adding Value Fair and Transparent Embrace and Drive Change

Core Objective	Example Areas of Focus	Main Links to Core Value
Research Profile and Esteem	Present at conferences, key events, talks, secure individual fellowship application	Adding Value Growth and Learning
Research Income	Obtain £x research funding, recruit at least x new PhD students, submit x number of viable quality bids	Adding Value Student Centred
Research Outputs	Present research in agreed form, inform teaching and learning	Growth and Learning Adding Value Embrace and Drive Change
Research Impact	Contribution to at least X refereed research papers that are published with an impact factor, inform teaching and learning	Adding Value Growth and Learning
Support/Coach Early Year Researchers	Develop research skills of others, Take part in at least X documented supervision meetings with each PhD student	Growth and Learning Fair and Transparent Adding Value
Research Leadership	Lead a research group, initiation or effective leadership of research initiatives; make effective contributions to School/Research Group/decision making processes.	Growth and Learning Adding Value Embrace and Drive Change

It is recognised that some senior leaders will need to take a hybrid approach in the selection of their objectives drawing from each of the tables above e.g. if an individual has a senior leadership role but remains research active.

Performance Appraisal Ratings Scale

To be awarded by appraiser and considered by PVC Dean/Director in making recommendation for pay increase/bonus.

Outstanding/Outperforming	Individuals in this category demonstrated exceptional ability to exhibit DMU values. All role requirements, planned goals and objectives were achieved well above expectations having a significant impact on their work environment. Accomplishments were made in unexpected areas.
Exceeds Expectations	Individuals in this category consistently exceed expectations in most DMU values. All requirements were met and goals and objectives were achieved above the established standards delivering increased value to DMU.
Solid Performer	Individuals in this category consistently met expectations and at times exceeded them in demonstrating DMU values. The requirements of performance were met and goals and objectives were mostly achieved making a tangible contribution to the university.
Developing	Greater growth and development in the role can and are in the process of being achieved. Developmental goals and appropriate support will help this individual continue to learn and grow their capabilities. New employees or newly promoted or transferred employees tend to fall into this category along with those focused on improving performance within their existing role.
Improvement Required	Performance is somewhat below expectations for full competence, but some elements of satisfactory performance are exhibited. A rating at this level anticipates that improvement is easily achievable. Typically requires greater than expected time and attention by manager. This rating requires a performance improvement plan to be written.
Unsatisfactory	Performance is consistently below expectations. A rating at this level requires a performance improvement plan to be written to support the individual to achieve an acceptable level of performance. Requires excessive time and attention by manager.