



University
of Glasgow | Human
Resources

Managing and Supporting Performance Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our University Strategy 2025 (World Changers Together) sets out our vision to bring inspiring people together and create a world-class environment for learning and research, empowering staff and students to discover and share knowledge that can change the world. Our strategy recognises that it is people who drive our success and that we cannot achieve our ambitions without talented, passionate and motivated staff.
- 1.2 The University holds a reasonable expectation of its employee's levels of skill, knowledge, ability and the level of application needed for the effective performance of their duties alongside an expectation that managers will support a high-performance culture by communicating realistic and achievable performance expectations and providing appropriate feedback on performance. It is recognised that managers can occasionally be faced with a situation in which a member of staff is not performing at the level expected of them.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- Identify and maximise the support provided to employees in order to assist the effective performance of their duties at work
 - Encourage communication and dialogue around performance
 - Ensure the University acts in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner when dealing with performance management issues
 - Contribute to a culture of excellence within the University
 - Provide a framework for dealing with situations where there are concerns over the performance of a member of staff

3. Context

- 3.1 The University manages performance through a number of approaches starting with the probation process, through to role clarity and effective Performance and Development Reviews. The University's Performance and Development Review (PDR) is an annual University wide process which provides the opportunity for all staff and their line managers to reflect on both performance and development over the last year and to agree objectives and development plans for the forthcoming year. The Managing Performance policy is complementary to the Performance and Review process and sets out the framework through which managers should manage any performance concerns which arise throughout the year.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all University of Glasgow employees who have passed their probation period (typically those with over 6 months service). Employees who are on probation (i.e. typically those with less than 6 months service) are covered by the University's Probation policy.

5. Principles

- 5.1 The University will act fairly and consistently when dealing with cases under this policy. The University will seek to resolve any employment issues at the lowest possible level and, where appropriate, on an informal basis.
- 5.2 The University recognises that many performance issues can be prevented or avoided through supportive day-to-day management, including the setting of clear and achievable objectives and the appropriate provision of feedback.
- 5.3 An employee may be accompanied at any formal meeting held under this policy by a work colleague or Trade Union representative. Employees may also seek advice from People and Organisational Development at any stage in the process.
- 5.4 Where an underlying medical condition or disability is affecting performance at work, the procedure outlined below should be paused in line with Section 11 below.
- 5.5 The process set out in this policy should normally be followed in order. Where there are repeat occurrences of the same underperformance despite a monitoring period having been successfully completed, circumstances may deem it appropriate to return to Formal Stage of the Performance Improvement Process. Advice must be sought from People and Organisational Development in such cases.
- 5.6 Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs) should be used as appropriate throughout the performance management process in order to guide and record constructive dialogue relating to underperformance. Performance Improvement Plans should not be retained on employee files any longer than is necessary (in line with the monitoring period or warning they are underpinning) and employees have the right, throughout the process, to record any disagreements on the PIP form itself.
- 5.7 Employees should receive a written record of any formal meeting which falls within this process. Any written records will be treated as confidential and kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

- 5.8 Different procedures apply to conduct and sickness/ill health cases. The University may commence the process using one procedure but continue the process using a different procedure if it is more appropriate and reasonable to do so. Where an employee refuses or objects to perform an aspect of their role, or refuses to follow a reasonable management instruction, consideration will be given to progressing the matter under the University's disciplinary procedures.
- 5.9 This policy recognises the principle that in their areas of academic expertise, staff engaged in teaching, the provision of learning or research will have freedom within the law to hold and express opinion, to question and test established ideas and received wisdom and to present controversial or unpopular points of view without placing in jeopardy their employment or any entitlements or privileges they enjoy.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

6.1 Employees

- 6.1.1 Employees are expected to perform their duties to the best of their ability.
- 6.1.2 Employees should engage with and contribute to objective setting processes to ensure that expectations are clear between both managers and employees
- 6.1.3 Employees should raise any concerns about matters which may impact on their performance with their manager as early as possible to ensure that support mechanisms or adjustments can be considered at the earliest opportunity. This may include raising a lack of clarity over expectations/objectives or notifying a manager of an underlying medical condition which is affecting (or may affect) performance.
- 6.1.4 Where underperformance is identified, employees are expected to take part in constructive discussions around performance improvement and to work towards any identified improvements by complying with agreed actions and/or Performance Improvement Plans.

6.2 Managers

- 6.2.1 Managers should support a high-performance culture by taking proactive steps to communicate realistic and achievable expected standards of performance and to feed back on performance progress with their employees/teams. This includes completing an annual Performance and Development Review, but also extends to routine management including the use of one-to-one or team meetings. Managers are accountable for the effective application of the Policy, including timeously addressing any identified performance concerns in line with the outlined process.

- 6.2.2 Managers are expected to approach discussions around performance concerns sensitively and confidentially.
- 6.2.3 Managers should consider any other factors which may be affecting employee performance and consider any requirements for reasonable adjustments or support to be provided. In cases where an underlying medical condition or disability is impacting upon performance, it will normally be appropriate to seek medical advice from the Occupational Health Unit following consultation with People and Organisational Development.
- 6.2.4 Managers should implement Performance Improvement Plans at the appropriate stage in cases of identified underperformance and monitor them accordingly. This is typically no earlier than at the Informal Performance Discussion stage of the process outlined below.
- 6.2.5 Managers may seek advice from People and Organisational Development at any stage but must seek advice before progressing to the formal stages.

6.3 People & Organisational Development

- 6.3.1 Local People and Organisational Development teams support line managers in an advisory capacity in the application of the policy to ensure that it is fairly and consistently applied. People and Organisational Development are also available to provide coaching and support to ensure managers have the knowledge and skills to effectively manage performance and similarly can provide procedural advice, support and guidance to employees.

6.4 Occupational Health

- 6.4.1 Occupational Health are concerned with the work related impacts of an employee's health, both in terms of how work or the workplace might impact on the employee as well as how the employees' health may impact on their work. Occupational health cannot provide a diagnosis or treatment for an employee's medical condition.
- 6.4.2 In relation to performance management, Occupational Health can provide advice across a range of areas, including (but not limited to):
- The potential impact a medical condition may have on an employee's ability to carry out their duties
 - Whether or not workplace adjustments may be appropriate
- 6.4.3 Referrals to Occupational Health are made by line managers using the [Form - Occupational Health Referral](#). Referrals should be routed via People and Organisational Development before being sent to Occupational Health. Additional

guidance on the completion of the referral form is available in the [Guidance – Occupational Health Referrals](#).

7. Supporting Strong Performance

- 7.1 Managers should take proactive steps to ensure that clear, realistic and achievable objectives are agreed with employees in order to ensure clarity over the expectations in any given role. Managers should also ensure that sufficient dialogue takes place with their employees/teams to ensure that feedback is given and such opportunities to raise concerns are available, including giving consideration to workload considerations and whether or not objectives may have shifted over time. Managers should also consider the proactive use of stress risk assessments as appropriate.
- 7.2 Many performance issues can be prevented or avoided through supportive day-to-day management. Employees who receive a strong induction, clear and measurable objectives, as well as a regular chance to discuss progress and raise any concerns are more likely to perform to a high standard.

8. Performance Improvement Process

- 8.1 Employees who are not performing to the level expected of them should be given a fair and reasonable opportunity to improve, with the full support of their manager. The performance improvement process provides an opportunity for this to take place and can advance through both informal and formal stages.
- 8.2 A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will remain with an employee throughout the duration of the process and will run in conjunction with any issued formal warnings. This plan supports both managers and employees to clearly identify and record details of the underperformance, the required level of improvement (see [Guidance – Setting SMART Objectives](#)) and any agreed support measures. An appropriate monitoring period will accompany the Performance Improvement Plan at each stage. Employees also have the opportunity to note comments on the Performance Improvement Plan.
- 8.3 Where there is evidence that performance is not improving to the required level during a monitoring period, it is not essential for managers to wait for that monitoring period to conclude before progressing to the next stage however it is important that a reasonable period of time has passed to allow observation of performance levels and for training or support measures to be implemented. This may be variable depending on the nature of the role (i.e. performance in some roles carries more immediate risks, whilst others may require longer periods to observe results or outputs). Monitoring periods should be no less than 1 month and no more than 6 months, with

a typical period being 3 months. People and Organisational Development advice should be sought in all cases where progression is being considered on this basis. Conversely, managers may decide to end the monitoring period early, where they are satisfied that the desired improvement has been met and maintained. In such cases the issued warning would lapse accordingly.

- 8.4 The [Process Diagram – Performance Improvement Process](#) provides a high-level overview of the standard process.

9. Informal Stage

- 9.1 If left unchallenged, underperformance is unlikely to change and can often worsen. Early intervention increases the chances that performance will improve to the expected levels. Informal management should be attempted in all cases, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Information on managing performance informally can be found within [Guidance – Managing Performance Informally](#).

9.2 [Routine Management](#)

An employee who is considered to be underperforming may not be aware they are doing so and a simple discussion to alert them to the fact, through routine management (e.g. a one-to-one meeting), may be enough to quickly rectify the problem. Managers should keep their own notes of such discussions for future reference if required however these will not be recorded on employee files. Where this has been attempted without success, a more structured Informal Performance Discussion should be considered as per below. There is no time limit on the duration of the 'routine management' stage and managers should consider appropriate progression on a case-by-case basis.

9.3 [Informal Performance Discussion](#)

Where routine management has failed to resolve the matter, a more structured Informal Performance Discussion should be considered to explore the issue in more depth and to implement a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

Performance related discussions can be difficult and should be carried out on a one-to-one basis in a confidential and sensitive manner, away from other colleagues.

Managers should ensure they are prepared for the discussion by gathering the necessary information/examples relating to the underperformance. This may include notes of previous discussions, the job description for the role, details of complaints or specific examples of unsatisfactory work.

The [Form – Performance Improvement Plan](#) should be used to guide and record the discussion at this stage.

During the discussion, managers should:

- Refer to the information/examples gathered in order to make the individual aware of the reasons why their current level of performance is unsatisfactory
- Reinforce the expected level of performance (including noting examples)
- Consider any underlying reasons or concerns raised by the employee which may be contributing to the underperformance. It may be appropriate to take further advice from People and Organisational Development on a case-by-case basis
- Identify any supports, adjustments or training needs which might be put in place to support an improvement
- Agree an action plan, including measurable targets or objectives and timescales for monitoring performance
- Ensure the employee is aware of any next steps, including any review meetings or possible outcomes (i.e. potential progression to the formal stages) should the underperformance continue

The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) should also confirm the details of an appropriate monitoring period. This is typically 3 months at this stage however depending on the nature of the role this may be shorter (but no less than 1 month) or longer (but no longer than 6 months).

Where an underlying medical condition or disability is identified as contributing towards the underperformance, additional advice should be taken from People and Organisational Development. A referral to the University's Occupational Health Unit will normally be appropriate in such circumstances in order to obtain further information.

Following any informal discussions, regular review meetings should take place during the monitoring period to discuss progress in relation to the Performance Improvement Plan and to make any required adjustments.

In most cases, informal discussions should lead to the required improvement. Where performance does not improve, the matter should be escalated to the formal process.

10. Formal Stages

- 10.1 If informal action does not resolve the underperformance, the formal process should be followed. Each stage of the formal process involves inviting the employee

concerned to a hearing to review the facts of the case and determine an appropriate course of action.

- 10.2 The series of formal hearings should be followed in order and where there is no improvement in performance during a monitoring period, a further hearing (at the next stage) will typically be considered.
- 10.3 Employees are obliged to attend meetings and/or hearings under this process and may be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague to any formal meetings. Support may be sought from People and Organisational Development at any stage to ensure proper application of the process.
- 10.4 The employee's immediate manager will normally carry out meetings at stages 1 and 2 of this process. The Formal Performance Hearing must be carried out by a more senior manager normally of Grade 7 or above, however where the matter involves a senior member of staff it may be practical to appoint an alternate senior manager at the same grade. A representative from People and Organisational Development should be present at all formal meetings along with an assigned note taker. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for other managers to input in circumstances where an individual works across different units or teams.

10.5 Formal Stage 1 Hearing

Where the informal stage is considered to have failed to resolve the underperformance, or where the matter is sufficiently serious that informal action is inappropriate, the employee should be invited to a Stage 1 hearing. Employees must be given reasonable notice of the hearing, and no less than 5 working days in any case.

The Stage 1 hearing will consider the facts of the case (typically based around the details recorded in the Performance Improvement Plan) and determine whether or not the case warrants the issue of a Performance Improvement Written Warning. Where there are mitigating circumstances, significant periods of absence or evidence of a partial improvement, the hearing manager may consider alternative action such as an extension to the informal stage and associated monitoring period.

When a Performance Improvement Written Warning is issued, this will typically remain active and the employee's performance monitored for a period of 3 months, however depending on the nature of the role this may be shorter (but no less than 1 month) or longer (but no longer than 6 months) in order to allow for the required improvement in performance to be achieved and sustained. The Performance Improvement Plan should be reviewed and updated at this point and will remain live throughout the duration of the warning.

Regular review meetings should take place during the monitoring period to discuss progress in relation to the Performance Improvement Plan and to make any required adjustments. These should take place once per month as a minimum, or weekly where shorter monitoring periods are implemented.

Where an employee's performance improves sufficiently during the monitoring period, a final review meeting should take place to verbally confirm this and to discuss any ongoing support requirements. The end of the monitoring period should then be confirmed in writing, noting that the issued warning has lapsed. Managers may decide to end the monitoring period early, where they are satisfied that the desired improvement has been met and maintained. In such cases the issued warning would lapse accordingly.

Where performance does not improve, the matter should progress to a Stage 2 Hearing as outlined below. Managers may progress to Stage 2 earlier where it can be evidenced that performance is not improving to the required level despite a reasonable period of time having passed. Depending on the nature of the role this may be a shorter period of time (but no less than 1 month) or a longer period of time (but no longer than 6 months), with a typical minimum period being 3 months.

Advice and support with this stage of the process is available from People and Organisational Development.

10.6 Formal Stage 2 Hearing

Where performance has not improved to the level required during the Stage 1 monitoring period, the employee should be invited to a Stage 2 Hearing. Employees must be given reasonable notice of the hearing, and no less than 5 working days in any case.

The Stage 2 hearing will consider the facts of the case (typically based around the details recorded in the Performance Improvement Plan as well as information from the Stage 1 process) and determine whether or not the case warrants the issue of a Performance Improvement Final Written Warning. Where there are mitigating circumstances, significant periods of absence or evidence of a partial improvement, the hearing manager may consider alternative action such as an extension to Performance Improvement Written Warning and associated monitoring period.

Where a Performance Improvement Final Written Warning is issued, this will typically remain active and the employee's performance monitored for a period of 3 months, however depending on the nature of the role this may be shorter (but no less than 1 month) or longer (but no longer than 6 months) in order to allow for the required improvement to performance to be achieved and sustained. The warning will state that dismissal is a potential outcome should the employee's performance fail to

improve to an acceptable level. The Performance Improvement Plan should be reviewed and updated at this point and will remain live throughout the duration of the warning.

Regular review meetings should take place during the monitoring period to discuss progress in relation to the Performance Improvement Plan and to make any required adjustments. These should take place once per month as a minimum, or weekly where shorter monitoring periods are implemented.

Where an employee's performance improves sufficiently during the monitoring period, a final review meeting should take place to verbally confirm this and to discuss any ongoing support requirements. The end of the monitoring period should then be confirmed in writing. Managers may decide to end the monitoring period early, where they are satisfied that the desired improvement has been met and maintained. In such cases the issued warning would lapse accordingly.

Where performance does not improve, the matter should progress to a Formal Performance Hearing. Managers may progress to the Formal Performance Hearing earlier where it can be evidenced that performance is not improving to the required level despite a reasonable period of time having passed. Depending on the nature of the role this may be a shorter period of time (but no less than 1 month) or a longer period of time (but no longer than 6 months), with a typical minimum period being 3 months.

Advice and support with this stage of the process is available from People and Organisational Development.

10.7 [Formal Performance Hearing](#)

Where any underperformance continues despite the warnings and monitoring periods issued at stages 1 and 2 of the formal process, the employee should be invited to a Formal Performance Hearing. This hearing should be chaired by an appropriate senior manager not previously involved in the case. People and Organisational Development advice should be sought before progressing to this stage.

Employees must be given reasonable notice of the hearing, and no less than 5 working days in any case.

A formal report summarising the case, the Performance Improvement Plans, notes from the stage 1 and 2 hearings and any other relevant information (e.g. Occupational Health reports) should be presented to the hearing by the line manager involved in stages 1 and 2. A copy of this report should be sent to the employee at the point they are invited to the hearing. The Formal Performance Hearing will review the full facts of the case based on the information presented and determine the

appropriate action to be taken. A range of outcomes are available at this stage, including dismissal (with notice). Employees must be made aware of the possible outcomes in advance of the hearing.

Where there are mitigating circumstances, significant periods of absence or evidence or a partial improvement, alternative action such as an extension of the Performance Improvement Final Written Warning and associated monitoring period may be warranted. Where this course of action is chosen, the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) should be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Hearing outcomes should be communicated verbally whenever possible, following a period of adjournment. In all cases, the decision should be confirmed in writing within 5 days of the hearing.

Advice and support with this stage of the process is available from People and Organisational Development.

11. Performance Affected By Underlying Medical Conditions

- 11.1 The University aims to take all reasonable steps in order to support staff who are affected by significant and/or ongoing medical conditions. Where an underlying medical condition or disability is affecting performance at work, advice should be sought from People and Organisational Development on appropriate action before beginning/continuing the Performance Improvement Process.
- 11.2 In such cases, managers should take all reasonable steps to discuss the employee's medical condition with them in order to understand its impact on their work and to identify any possible reasonable adjustments ([Guidance – Considering Reasonable Adjustments](#)) which should be considered in order to support the employee at work. A referral to Occupational Health should be considered as part of this process, alongside advice from People and Organisational Development.
- 11.3 Whilst every effort should be made to support employees in such circumstances, the University recognises that in some cases the nature of an illness (or its effects) can lead to a position where an employee may be unable to continue in their current role. It may not always be the case that the employee is on sick leave at this point and therefore they will not be managed under the Managing Attendance policy.
- 11.4 In such cases the University will, in conjunction with available medical advice, consider all other alternative options before progressing the case to a formal capability hearing to review the case and decide on appropriate action. Whilst still a formal hearing, this hearing will not come at the end of a series of formal warnings (as outlined in the Performance Improvement Process) as the University recognises

that such an approach would not be appropriate where a medical reason is preventing an improvement in performance.

- 11.5 The formal hearing in these circumstances would therefore mirror a Formal Performance Hearing with regards to process, but with a focus on medical advice and information received in order to determine an appropriate course of action based on the employee's level of capability to carry out their role. Dismissal with notice is a potential outcome from the formal hearing, however all available alternatives should be considered in the first instance.
- 11.6 Advice should be sought from People and Organisational Development at an early point in such cases.

12. Alternatives to Dismissal

- 12.1 Where it becomes apparent through discussion and consultation that there are mitigating circumstances or that an employee may not be capable of achieving the required level of performance, it may be appropriate to consider alternative options. These options might include transferring to another role (redeployment), potentially at a lower grade, or supporting employees to explore alternative employment outwith the University.

13. Gross Incompetence

- 13.1 Gross incompetence may arise where an employee fails to perform the duties of their role to such an extent that this causes serious harm or puts others (e.g. colleagues, students, visitors) or the reputation of the University at serious risk. Such cases would normally be managed under the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

14. Appeals

14.1 Lodging an Appeal

If an employee wishes to appeal the outcome of a decision made at any hearing held under the Managing and Supporting Performance Policy, they should submit an appeal in writing outlining their full grounds for appeal, to the appropriate College/University Services Head of Human Resources within 10 working days of receipt of the University's decision. Employees will be notified that their appeal has been received within 5 working days.

The appeal stage is not intended to be a rehearing of the original case. Hence the grounds for appeal should typically fall within one of the following:

- Procedural error
- The outcome and recommendations are unreasonable and significantly out of line with the issues considered
- New information is now available which could not have reasonably been provided when the original outcome was communicated

Where the appeal relates to new evidence there should be a clear statement provided outlining the reason why this was not available for consideration at the previous stage.

14.2 The Appeal Meeting

The University will invite the employee in writing to attend an appeal hearing, normally within 10 working days of receipt of an appeal. The employee may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

Appeals will be heard by an independent and normally more senior manager (the Appeal Manager) who will consider the hearing outcome with an open mind. Appeals in relation to dismissals will be heard by a panel of 2, the chair being a senior member of University staff (of minimum Grade 7) and the other being an appropriately trained member of staff*.

**For staff engaged in teaching, the provision of learning or research the trained member of staff will be a senior member of academic staff drawn from a grouping proposed jointly by University Management and the recognised Trade Union(s) and approved by Court.*

If the employee or their Trade Union representative is unable to attend the appeal meeting, steps will be taken to rearrange this as soon as possible. However, if the employee is persistently unable or unwilling to attend a meeting, the Appeal Manager may review the available materials and reach an outcome based on the information available to them. A decision to proceed in this way will be communicated in writing to the employee in advance.

Appropriate training/guidance will be provided to Appeal Managers and members of Appeal Panels by People and Organisational Development. Further information and

guidance on the appeal process is available from the appropriate College/University Services People and Organisational Development team.

14.3 The Appeal Outcome

Once the Appeal Manager has considered all the points raised they will normally provide a response, in writing, within 15 working days of the Appeal Meeting.

The decision of the Appeal Manager is final and there is no further right of Appeal.

15. Review

- 15.1 This non-contractual policy was developed in full consultation with the campus Trade Unions.
- 15.2 The policy will be reviewed periodically by the University and may be amended at any time following appropriate consultation.

<u>Document Control</u>	
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