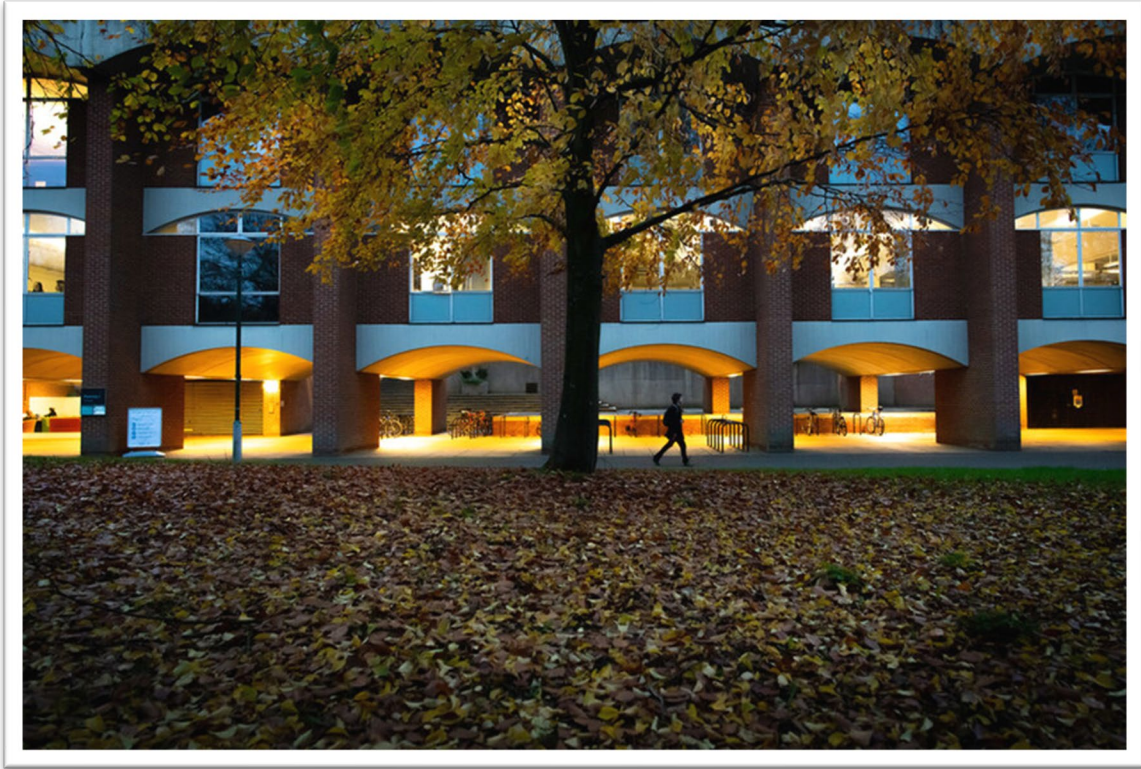


Achievement and Development Review (ADR) Guidance

FOR ACADEMIC STAFF



This guidance resource has been created to help staff get the most out of their ADR conversation. By taking the time to properly engage with the ADR process, the reviewee is taking ownership of their career and development during their time at the University of Sussex. The following pages run through how to prepare for an ADR, what to do during the conversation, and how to follow up so that the experience is genuine and has lasting impact.

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WHAT IS AN ACHIEVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW?

Achievement and Development Reviews (ADR), previously known as 'Appraisals', are a formal annual conversation between a member of staff and an appointed reviewer. This conversation is an opportunity to reflect on the past, both celebrating achievements and discussing challenges, but also to plan for the year ahead and agree objectives and to check in on wellbeing and development needs. This process is central to developing and supporting people, to define their own objectives and help them contribute to institutional objectives and to local School objectives.

You will need an Achievement and Development Review form to prepare and record the joint decisions from ADR conversations. These can be downloaded from the [Achievement and Development Reviews webpage](#). Please note that there are three different Academic ADR forms. Please use that which most closely corresponds to your academic role at the University. The ADR form is completed as part of your annual review, but this should be seen as just one part of an ongoing conversation around performance, achievements, development and wellbeing.

All academic staff are expected to complete an Achievement and Development Review with their line manager or delegated reviewer by the end of October every year. The formal meeting is the documented stage of an ongoing process and may be supported by more regular informal meetings (ideally 3-4) and ongoing professional dialogue to ensure that all our people feel they are 'on-track' and know how they are progressing (or to help devise a suitable plan to help people get back on track).

ADRs are	ADRs are not
An opportunity to recognise achievements and celebrate success	A performance management process nor a place to raise complaints about performance*
A two-way conversation to discuss challenges experienced and to agree clear achievable objectives for the year ahead	A chance for the line manager/appointed reviewer to dictate exactly what they want an employee to do over the next 12 months
A chance to discuss career aspirations and explore development opportunities	A normal 1:1 meeting where day to day tasks are discussed
A safe and supportive space to check-in on wellbeing and signpost to appropriate support where needed	An unsupportive space where the reviewee feels judged and unable to speak openly or safely

* The ADR is **not a performance management process** nor an opportunity to raise complaints regarding performance. An ADR meeting should hold no surprises for the reviewee.

Where there are performance issues, complaints or grievances, these should be raised directly by line managers with employees as issues arise. The following links provide support related to [complaints](#) and [learning and development opportunities](#) to manage performance effectively.

ADR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These are the general principles which underpin the Achievement and Development Review framework, which have been created to provide clarity and promote consistency in undertaking review conversations for all staff across the University:

1. A Line Manager or those delegated this responsibility are responsible for all 'people processes' e.g. probation oversight (with panel), ADRs, holiday approvals, sickness absence.
2. ADRs should be carried out with the Line Manager, or their delegated reviewer in the same School who will build a long-standing relationship with them and is someone who knows and cares about the individual.
3. Reviewers should have an agreed maximum number of reviewees (approx. 8) to ensure capacity and right level of attention to ensure the process is valued and is of value.
4. Reviewers are expected to undertake training and be provided with clear guidance. (Line Management is different from mentorship, there is separate clear guidance and training available for [reviewers](#), [line management](#), and for [mentors](#)).
5. ADRs include a review of the past, a preview of the future, and a focus on development and wellbeing, supported by regular ongoing conversations through the year. Consideration of how the [Sussex values](#) are embedded in the review should be part of the conversation.
6. The ADR is confidential but certain elements of the agreed outputs can be extracted and shared subject to the consent of the reviewee (e.g., development needs, agreed actions and plans that require resourcing and integrating into wider School and University strategy).
7. The output from the review should include a set of Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) annual objectives, an agreed development plan, and agreed priorities with timelines, relevant to the individual's role.
8. The ADR will involve an evaluation of progress against objectives and delivery against plans.
9. The ADR should include an invitation to discuss work-life balance, wellbeing and longer-term career ambitions and development opportunities.
10. Supporting Sussex's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech, as part of considering behaviours and values, the ADR is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and how the reviewee is both supporting freedom of speech and academic freedom in their teaching and research and their own experience of freedom of speech and academic freedom.
11. To support Sussex's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), the ADR provides a space for the reviewee to reflect on how the University's values, including EDI considerations, are demonstrated within their role on an individual, team and/or wider network level, and to discuss their own experiences, as is felt appropriate.

The review meeting is an opportunity to:

- receive and discuss feedback on performance
- chart progress and identify achievements
- consider the individual's contribution to the School and the University
- identify training and development needs and career progress in relation to academic promotion
- highlight any barriers to more effective performance.

WHO IS THE ADR FOR?

The achievement and development process for academic staff is relevant to all contracted academic staff, including those people on a fixed-term contract for 12 months or more. This process may not be relevant for those soon to leave, or those who are new to the University and undergoing our induction and probation process. If you are in any doubt, your Head of Department or School can help with any questions.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN ADR?

We are keen for the ADR to be a meaningful process that both helps set direction and charts progress, whilst also attending to future aspirations and needs. We know that for some people, annual reviews can feel overly bureaucratic. However, if done properly, conversations like this provide a valuable opportunity to discuss career aspirations and development needs, or development options to grow within their current role. It is also an opportunity to provide real clarity on agreed objectives and expectations that will set the reviewee up for the year ahead.

FOR INDIVIDUALS:

- All members of staff will benefit from regular feedback on their performance, which will include having their contributions and achievements acknowledged.
- Review meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss any problems and challenges in a supportive context.
- The meetings aim to clarify how all work is aimed at achieving school and organisational objectives and consider personal and professional interests.
- The meetings will also provide an opportunity to identify development needs, access learning and development opportunities and to discuss career planning.
- Our ADR process aims to encourage high performance in the teaching, research, administration, leadership, and financial performance of the University for the good of all our people.

FOR SCHOOLS

- The ADR process requires that good listening is critical, that views and needs are heard and that good two-way communication is in place.
- The process will provide an opportunity for sharing and discussing school and organisational objectives, and for agreeing the roles that each of us play as individuals.
- The ADR process will contribute to the school planning process, allowing opportunities for work allocation, providing a tool for training needs analysis, and keeping Heads of Schools informed about the activities, achievements and aspirations of their people.

FOR THE UNIVERSITY

- The ADR process will support the achievement of the University's aims and priorities by acting as the channel for dissemination throughout the organisation.
- The two-way flow of information generated through this process will also inform a planned and focused approach to learning and development, ensuring that our people can access the support they need to fulfil their objectives.
- This process supports our individual progress towards institutional objectives.

ADR OVERVIEW

The focus of the ADR process is a formal review meeting held with each member of staff on an annual basis. This meeting will be informed by the identified aims and priorities of the School as detailed in the School Plan, and the University strategic plan. All Reviewers will collate the successes, challenges, and development needs from the reviews they have undertaken to provide an overview to their Head of Department and/or Head of School. This includes any specific actions for individuals or groups of people that need to be undertaken.

The process is concluded by the completion of the Annual Achievement & Development Review Summary Report by each School. The summary report outlines:

- the number of ADRs undertaken
- key development themes arising within the School
- high level development needs which require a learning solution, either within the School or sourced by the Organisational Development team.

The summary form should be submitted to the Organisational Development team and will be used to inform both planning and the sourcing and/or signposting of development interventions. This exchange is critical in assuring our people that action will be taken because of the ADR process.

Personal Research Plans (PRP) and the Personal Scholarship Plans (PSP): The PRP and the PSP were previously, at least in some Schools, associated with the process of appraisal. In the new process of the ADR, there is no expected coupling with PRP/PSPs, and so matters associated with the PRP/PSPs will be decided at a School level. Therefore, if your School continues with PRP/PSPs expect separate communication on this through your Head of School.

THE REVIEW MODEL

This model for the academic annual review process is a portfolio-led model, as academic staff are already subject to a number of existing quality measures with regards to teaching and research. It provides the opportunity for individuals to draw together evidence, much of which has been generated through other processes, as the basis for a review conversation.

REVIEW MEETINGS

Heads of Schools should nominate those who will hold reviews within their Schools, ensuring they have advance notice of this and oversee the allocation of individual staff to reviewers. It is also encouraged that Heads of School check whether those holding reviews have attended the necessary training.

As part of the preparation for meetings with individual members of staff, reviewers should ensure they are both familiar with, and knowledgeable about Schools plans and feel they have enough information about the aims and priorities of the university and the school, since these will inform the review meetings. Reviewers should then hold all review meetings within the agreed School timeframe (*the deadline is the last working day of October*), and then complete the necessary paperwork after the meeting.

It is important that this process is completed in sufficient time to review and consider staff development requests and allow for the Annual Achievement & Development Review Summary Report to be produced and submitted to the Organisational Development team.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ANY RECORDS?

The written record of the review meeting is confidential between the Reviewer and the Reviewee. Records of reviews should be kept for three years in line with the academic probation period which is 3 years. When someone leaves the University their review records are destroyed unless it is anticipated that there will only be a short break in contract and that they will be returning to the same School. Schools must establish procedures for the storage of these documents to ensure confidential access in line with the [Records Management Guidance](#).

WHEN DO REVIEWS TAKE PLACE?

The Sussex ADR process requires every member of staff to have at least one formal review meeting during a 12-month period. Schools must have nominated their reviewers by the Spring term at the latest, and reviewers should undertake [Achievement and Development Review Training](#) as soon as possible after being nominated. The Organisational Development team will also offer live training throughout the year (face to face or online).

The achievement and development review period runs from May to October. All academic staff must have had a review meeting by the last working day of October. In practice, Schools may wish to have some flexibility within this annual timetable e.g. undertaking review meetings prior to May, so that reviews can be conducted at times that are least disruptive to the core teaching and research work of reviewers and reviewees.

WHO DOES WHAT?

HEADS OF SCHOOLS

Heads of Schools have ultimate responsibility within their area of control for ensuring that the ADR process is carried out each year for each member of staff within their School. This covers: identifying reviewers and allocating members of staff, ensuring that a review meeting is held with all eligible staff within the agreed timeframe, summarising individual and collective development requests, and producing and submitting an Annual Achievement and Development Review Summary Report to the Organisational Development team. It is assumed that Heads of Schools cannot review all their staff. Heads of Schools will therefore have to identify groups of reviewers, by whatever process they choose.

Staff should be reviewed by their line manager or delegated reviewer. Schools can organise this process in a way that is the most sensible use of resources. Best practice is a ratio of 8 reviews per reviewer, and the Head of School will need to consider the ratio of reviewer: reviewee to ensure that enough time can be spent preparing for and carrying out all reviews allocated in a meaningful way. It is understood that Schools may have different approaches but this ratio is best practice.

THOSE BEING REVIEWED

Once you have been allocated to a Reviewer, they will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the meeting to take place and provide you with adequate time to prepare (minimum of two weeks). If you have concerns about the Reviewer you have been allocated, you should raise this with your Head of School.

Your review is intended to be an opportunity for you to talk about your achievements, your future objectives and your professional and career development. It is your responsibility to prepare the review paperwork. Do prepare in advance and think about your progress and achievements, as well as any areas of your work that are challenging and any areas you need support with.

To help you prepare for your meeting, the Organisational Development team have created a learning pathway with short courses that can support you, [Preparing for your Achievement and Development Review \(for Reviewees\)](#). Please feel free to browse and complete anything that feels relevant to you.

At Sussex, we are committed to promoting to [academic freedom and freedom of speech](#), by providing a safe environment for the peaceful exchange of diverse viewpoints that can be scrutinised and explored with civility. As part of considering behaviours and values, the ADR is an opportunity to reflect on the past year and how the reviewee is both supporting freedom of speech and academic freedom in their teaching and research, and their own experience of freedom of speech and academic freedom. For further information, refer to the [Freedom of Speech - Code of Practice](#).

To support Sussex's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), the ADR also provides a space for the reviewee to reflect on how the University's values (inclusivity, courage, kindness, integrity, and collaboration), including EDI considerations, are demonstrated within their role on an individual, team and/or wider network level, and to discuss their own experiences, as is felt appropriate. This includes:

- A recognition that in any role and in any team, what we/others do and how we/others do it will always have an impact on people.
- This includes the role we carry out and the way in which we and others conduct ourselves.
- The importance of diversity and of understanding the needs, perspectives and experiences of people different to ourselves, enabling us to identify and address potential barriers.
- The importance of considering EDI in the delivery of teaching and learning.
- Even when working within predetermined systems and processes it is still our responsibility to identify, highlight and address inequalities.

To support conversations around EDI, both parties must have completed the mandatory training on [Diversity in the Workplace](#) and [Unconscious Bias](#) on LearnUpon.

ADR conversations are also an opportunity to discuss your mental health and wellbeing. By having an open conversation with your manager/delegated reviewer, you can identify any support needs or reasonable adjustments that will set you up to thrive for the year ahead. To help prepare for this part of the conversation, you might find it useful to look through this [Wellness Action Plan](#).

Before ending the meeting, ensure you and your Reviewer are clear about:

- who will complete any follow-up actions?
- approval required for any identified learning and development
- timelines for completing the ADR form and ensuring it is signed.

NB for Research staff: please ensure you can demonstrate that you have applied and adhered to [University of Sussex – Code of Practice for Research](#). Further information and advice can be found on the [Research Governance & Integrity website](#).

THOSE CARRYING OUT REVIEWS

All identified reviewers should attend the ADR training offered by the Organisational Development team before conducting an ADR. They deliver face to face training and have also put together a LinkedIn Learning Pathway to support you in carrying out this role: [Preparing for Achievement and Development Review conversations \(for reviewers\)](#). Please feel free to browse and complete anything that feels relevant to you.

As someone who will be holding reviews, you should ensure that you are familiar with the objectives and priorities of the school and the University and use this information as a framework for reviews with members of staff.

Once you know who you will be reviewing, it will be your responsibility to contact those individuals to arrange for the meetings to take place. Meetings should take place within the prescribed timeframe (completed by last working day of October each year), giving reviewees at least two weeks' notice so they have sufficient opportunity to prepare.

It is important that the review feels like an open and supportive space, providing psychological safety in which individuals feel comfortable in discussing their work and aspirations. The framework for the review covers three broad areas, as outlined below.

1) **A review of the past** – time to discuss and invite comments about the individual's performance and progress and contribution over the review period, based on the evidence brought to the meeting. This should include recognition of achievements, as well as a supportive discussion of any difficulties or challenges and the reasons for them.

2) **A preview of the future** – a discussion about how the individual can contribute to the achievement of the aims and priorities of the School and the University, over the coming year (identifying objectives or service standards where appropriate).

3) **An opportunity to talk about development** - discussion about identified learning and development needs and solutions which will enable the staff member to fully contribute to their role. This time is also an opportunity to discuss professional/career development including promotion, and how aspirations might be supported. It is also important to ask about **individual wellbeing**, how the individual feels about their work and work/life balance. You may not be able to solve particular issues, but it can benefit people to feel that they have been heard, and alert the School to any potential issues or duty of care.

Before ending the meeting, ensure that you and the reviewee are clear about responsibilities for any follow-up action e.g. writing up objectives for the year ahead and a timeframe for doing this. After the meeting, you should ensure that the relevant paperwork is completed, signed and saved as appropriate. You should also agree any follow up conversations that are needed, especially regarding training and development.

SKILLS FOR A GREAT ADR CONVERSATION

LISTENING

We often take it for granted, but listening with full, undivided attention is a skill that requires intention and practice. To ensure the reviewee feels valued and supported, remove anything that might distract you during the conversation. When listening, focus on what is being said rather than thinking about what you are going to say next, and ask clarifying questions to check your understanding. It can also be helpful to reflect on what you've heard, to make sure you both interpret the conversation in the same way.

COACHING

Coaching is about helping an individual find positive ways forward, by helping them explore their options and view things from different perspectives. Most importantly, coaching is non-directive, which means you aren't giving advice. Instead, you are creating the space for someone to find their own solutions, which will ultimately have much more impact than simply telling someone what they should do.

Here are some example questions:

- What options are available to you?
- What advice would you give to someone in a similar position to you?
- What would be your best-case scenario/outcome here?
- How could you achieve that?
- What's the biggest challenge here?

For further guidance and information around the skills above, visit the LinkedIn Learning pathway, [Preparing for Achievement and Development Review Conversations \(for Reviewers\)](#). There are also several [Management Essentials workshops](#) which cover the skills required for meaningful ADR conversations.

SCHOOL ANNUAL REVIEW SUMMARY REPORTS

The ADR process requires Heads of Schools to collate and submit an Annual Achievement & Development Review Summary to the Assistant Director of Culture, OD & Wellbeing on an annual basis. The Annual Achievement & Development Review Summary Form is an online form which will be sent to Schools for completion after the ADR season has concluded. Completion of this form is very important as numbers of annual reviews undertaken are a key priority for staff and are measured through the staff survey. It is the responsibility of Heads of Schools to ensure that this requirement is fulfilled, although this task may be delegated to one or more colleagues within the school.

The report serves three purposes:

1. It provides assurance that individuals are having annual achievement and development reviews.
2. It informs the School about its collective activities, achievements and development needs.
3. It provides a vital source of information to the University on the learning and development needs of its people.

The Annual Achievement & Development Review Summary Report will be based on the anonymised high level summary statements produced during review meetings of individual staff members. It should include the following:

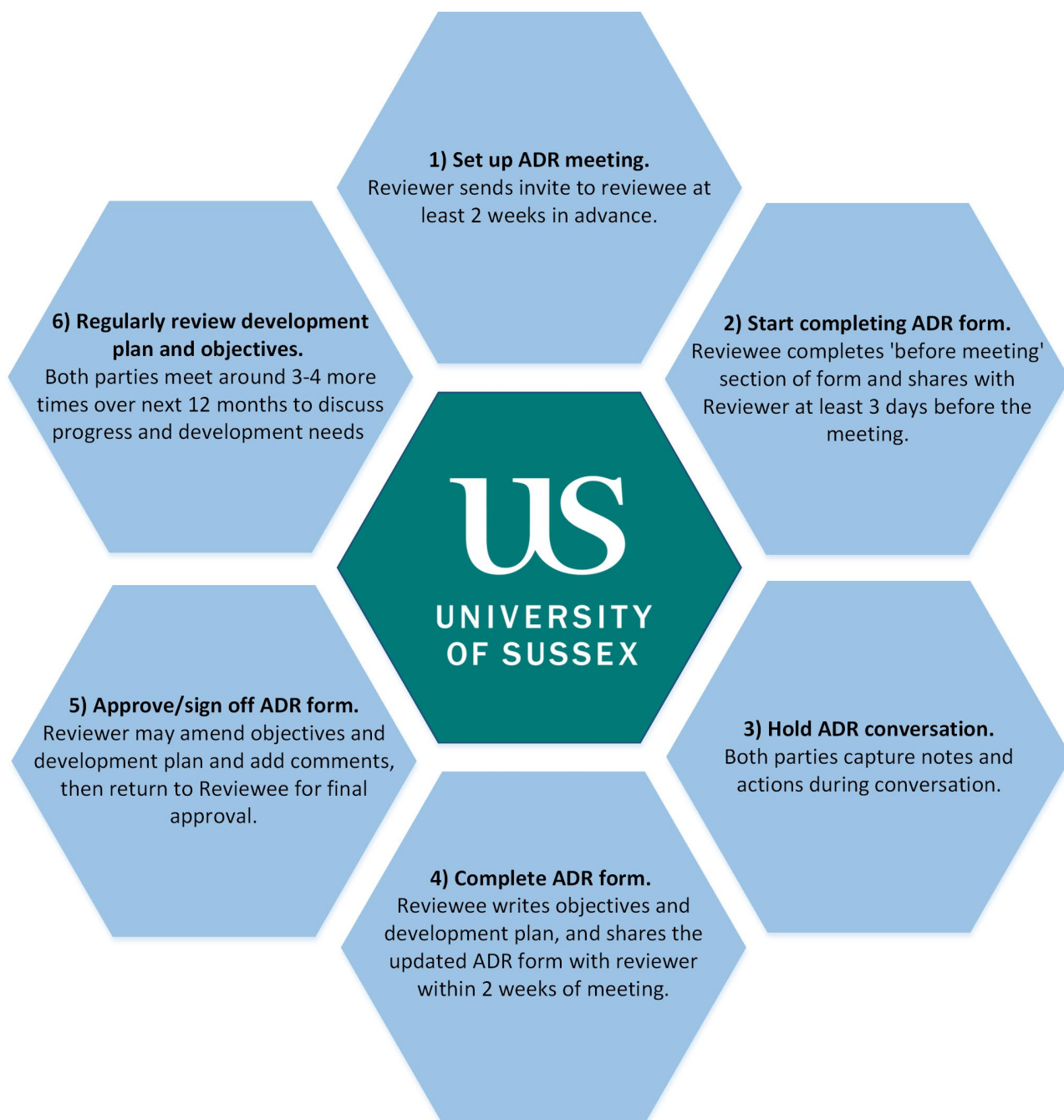
- The number and percentage of staff that have had an ADR during the review period.
- A summary of those individuals not reviewed (e.g. maternity leave, leaving the institution etc.)
- Areas identified for further support, such as further learning and development and Professional and Career Development Planning.

The report should then be returned to the Organisational Development team in time for the Autumn meeting of the People, Culture and Inclusion Committee (PCIC). From the information provided within the ADR Summary Forms, an executive summary of the university wide information will be collated and submitted for consideration by PCIC. The more detailed learning and development needs will be considered by colleagues in the Organisational Development team who will discuss learning solutions with the Head of School or other appropriate staff member. Information on the percentage of staff receiving an annual achievement and development review within each School will be reported to Council at the end of the Autumn term.

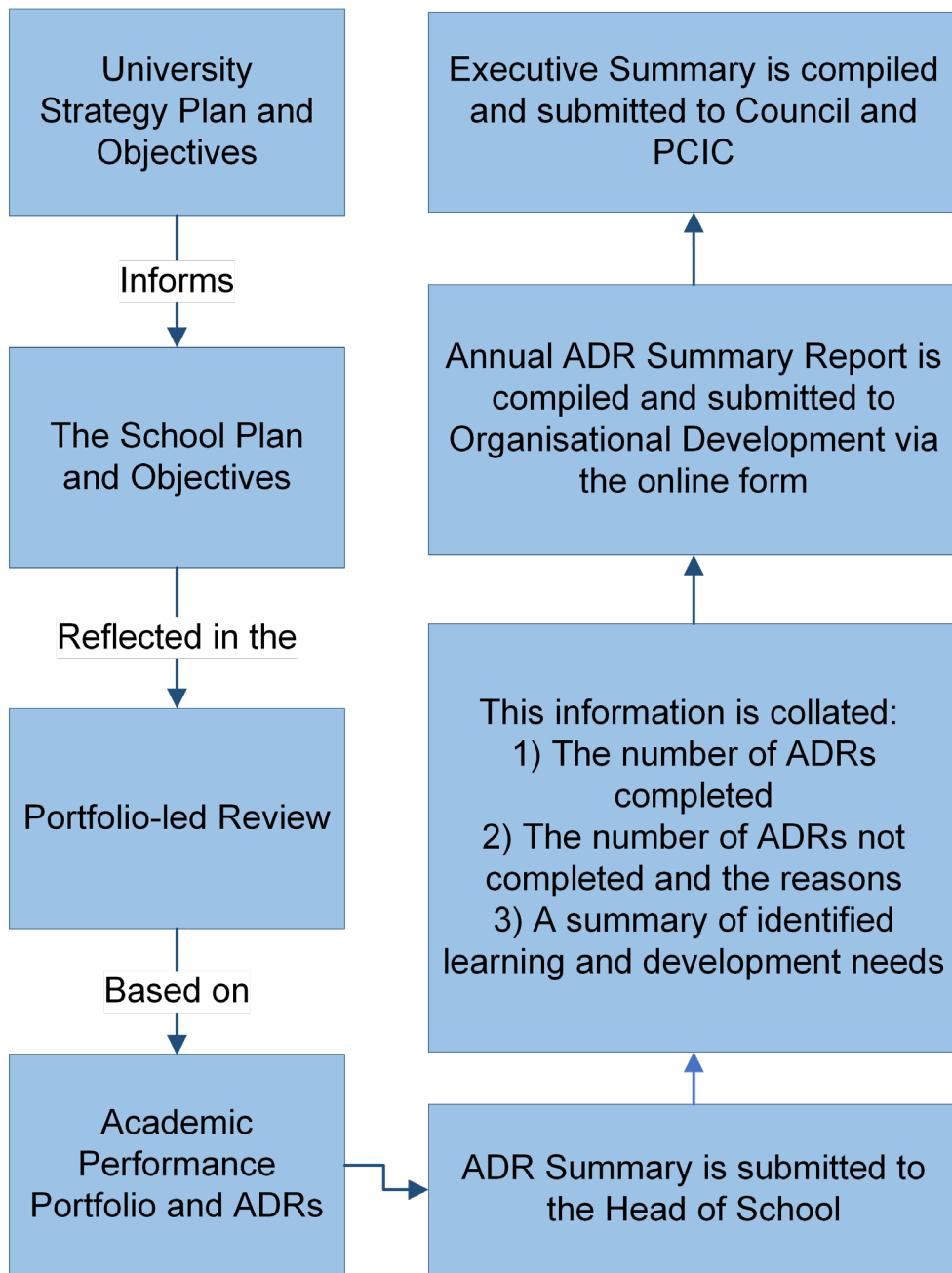
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The University of Sussex is committed to providing all staff with continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities. However, not all CPD activities involve attendance at training courses, and options such as extending the provision for mentoring, coaching or simply shadowing a colleague should be considered. If you believe you would benefit from any of these options, please do discuss this with the person holding your review. All of those holding reviews, and Heads of Schools are expected to consider any equality of opportunity issues which may arise from selecting individuals for CPD activities.

APPENDIX A: THE ADR CYCLE



APPENDIX B: ADR ORGANISATIONAL PROCESS



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