

Sussex Staff Appraisal Scheme - Guidelines for Professional Services Staff Appraisees and Appraisers

Main focus of appraisal

The main focus of the appraisal process is to support and develop staff, to help them make an effective contribution to the success of our University as well as their own work satisfaction. You should read the Appraisal Scheme Policy which identifies a set of core principles which underpins this focus.

Go to www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=sussex-staff-appraisal-scheme-policy.pdf&site=564 or email od@sussex.ac.uk for a 'hard' copy, or to gain clarification on any aspect of the Scheme and your involvement.

Feedback on your appraisal experiences

The Appraisal Scheme and its documentation does not stand still but is up-dated from time to time to reflect staff experiences and our evolving work environment, so do email appraisal@sussex.ac.uk with any ideas as to how the process and/or documentation might be further refined.

Appraisal expectations – key features

Who is involved? All staff on full time and proportional contracts are required to take part in appraisal, whilst hourly paid staff should be given the opportunity to join in.

How often does appraisal take place? The Appraisal Meeting is a yearly cycle but staff should be receiving on-going support all through the year. The yearly Appraisal Meeting is a good chance to 'take stock', agree and plan ahead for the next year.

Equality and diversity All aspects of the appraisal process should be conducted within the spirit of the University's Equality and Diversity policies (www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities). In addition some staff may have specific needs because of personal circumstances in relation to their working life (eg disability, health, caring responsibilities). Any such need(s) should be discussed during the Appraisal Meeting and agreement made to reflect support required.

How do staff find out about their appraisal? Each school/unit will think about, plan and circulate a unit appraisal plan each year which identifies local appraisal arrangements and needs. A key senior person in your school/unit will be responsible for initiating this appraisal plan.

Some of the things the unit appraisal plan will identify are:

- Individual responsibilities for appraisal inside the unit including the appraisers and who they appraise
- A timetable of yearly Appraisal Meetings
- How appraisal decisions will be put into practice
- Destination(s) of the completed Annual Appraisal Agreement
- How the unit will check that appraisals are fair, useful and relevant

The unit appraisal plan is therefore key in communicating local level details of appraisal to staff. Contact your School Office, or your Division/Service Director's Office if you need to gain clarification here.

The Appraisal Scheme Form

The appraisal form provides a framework to prepare for and conduct the Appraisal Meeting, and comprises 3 sections:

Section 1	Appraisee preparation
Section 2	Appraiser preparation
Section 3	Annual Appraisal Agreement

You should use the form's order and headings as a guide but don't let it constrain you; both the appraisee and the appraiser should be flexible with their responses – no two appraisals are the same!

Sections 1 and 2 give a supporting structure for the appraisee and the appraiser to **prepare** for the Appraisal Meeting. The section headings also give a 'steer' to the meeting discussion and order of focus. It is good practice for the appraisee and the appraiser to swap the completed Sections 1 and 2 before the Appraisal Meeting, but that doesn't suit all. The appraisee and appraiser should either agree this between themselves, or refer to their unit appraisal plan for guidance on what approach the school/unit may take on this.

Section 3 is the Annual Appraisal Agreement which should be completed during/after the Appraisal Meeting. See below for more guidance on the Annual Appraisal Agreement.

The form can be accessed from www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development/documents/professional-services-staff-form.doc

The Annual Appraisal Review Meeting

An appraisee should expect to be given at least 2 weeks' notice of the yearly Appraisal Meeting date. Your unit appraisal plan will have details of the unit's Appraisal Meeting timescales. It is important for both the appraisee and appraiser to spend some time on preparing for the yearly Appraisal Meeting if the experience is to be useful.

The Appraisal Meeting should be held in a suitable room without 'phones ringing and with no other interruptions. The appraisee should be made to feel comfortable and because of the preparation work, there shouldn't be any surprises. Any special needs should be thought about when organising the yearly Appraisal Meeting; these could be cultural, access, hearing or sight impairment needs.

It is difficult to say how long a yearly Appraisal Meeting should take as our needs are all so different. However, suggesting a meeting of between 1 to 2 hours might be a helpful guide.

The Annual Appraisal Agreement (Section 3 of the form)

The yearly Appraisal Meeting discussion should end with focusing on the main headings on the Annual Appraisal Agreement (section 3).

The Annual Appraisal Agreement includes:

- A record of key points aligned to the review of last year's appraisal agreement/objectives
- Work priorities and support/staff development needed for the year ahead

- A record of any other important Appraisal Meeting discussion such as recognition for a particular achievement made during the past year, suggested improvement idea(s), and/or any special arrangement(s) an individual might need eg reasonable adjustments for disabled staff

Agreeing the Agreement: Don't feel obliged to finally agree and sign the Annual Appraisal Agreement at the Appraisal Meeting. It is recommended that a least a week is given to reflect on a draft version of this Annual Appraisal Agreement, but that it should be completed/signed within 2 weeks of the Appraisal Meeting. Make sure the Agreement includes all the key aspects/outcomes discussed during the Appraisal Meeting, and any other key points referred to in the preparation Sections 1 and 2.

Try to resolve disagreements: It is recommended that the appraiser and appraisee try to resolve any disagreements between themselves, but if agreement cannot be reached in the finalisation of the Annual Appraisal Agreement please liaise with the senior staff member who will be identified in your unit appraisal plan as an arbitrator.

Being 'SMART' with your agreed objectives/priorities: It is important that these agreed priorities are expressed as being specific, measurable, agreed and realistic objectives, particularly in relation to resources and timescales. If help is needed with expressing such objectives then contact your HR Adviser.

The completed Annual Appraisal Agreement: The appraisee and appraiser should keep a copy of the completed Annual Appraisal Agreement so that it can be reviewed and perhaps adjusted from time to time during the year. It should also be used as a starting point to next year's appraisal preparation. To whom a copy of the completed Annual Appraisal Agreement should be forwarded will be identified in your unit appraisal plan. Contact your School or Director's Office if you need clarification here.

Appraisal Training

Appraisees and Appraisers should have attended an appropriate appraisal training course before embarking on the appraisal process for the first time. Such training is a required element of a new member of staff's induction, within their first year of employment. Organisational Development can organise refresher appraiser or appraisee sessions for groups/units on demand.

The appraiser might also wish to attend a number of in-house 'people management development' courses offered throughout the year. These courses help refine skills in appraising staff in an effective, supportive and fair manner. For details of all the above in-house courses please go to www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development or email od@sussex.ac.uk.

In Preparation for the Yearly Appraisal Meeting

Think about the following aspects of the appraisee's role and prepare to discuss most of them during the Appraisal Meeting:

- A current job description
- Last year's Annual Appraisal Agreement (eg main achievements and if these matched the plans/aims for the past year)
- How effective work activity has been measured (eg feedback from colleagues, students, staff development record))
- Any factors that limited effectiveness
- If any skills, knowledge and talents are not being fully used or developed What the appraisee might hope/need to do and achieve as priorities over the next year

- Any staff development needed to support those priorities (you can get a record of previous staff development, see page 4)
- Any future career ideas which might be encouraged
- An understanding of University and School/Unit priorities and/or constraints
- Any other things the individual might need to be supported with

Other discussion topics might include the appraisee's

- Contribution to colleagues, section, division priorities
- Contributions to other areas of the University (eg committees, joint projects, working parties)
- Other responsibilities such as Health and Safety Rep.

Identifying Appraisal Priorities for the Forthcoming Year

Think about the following areas to help identify the appraisee's work priorities and staff development needs:

Customer Focus – both inside and outside work

- Effectively dealing with 'customers', colleagues etc
- Handling their requests in good time
- Understanding their needs
- Keeping them informed of what's going on
- Being polite at all times and confident when dealing with them

Working with others

- Acting as a team player
- Being co-operative and supporting others
- Communicating clearly and effectively
- Making an effort to help others

Personal Qualities

- A positive approach to work
- Enthusiastic and motivated
- Committed to your job
- Others see you as reliable
- Open minded and flexible to change
- In charge of your learning and development
- Helpful/supportive to colleagues and/or the work team

Business/Organisational Focus

- Planning ahead in a structured way
- Managing time in an effective way
- Being seen as organised and efficient
- Able to adapt to changes or improvements
- Understanding how the role fits in with the wider business (Unit/University)
- Continually seeking to improve the job role and yourself

Solving Problems

- Collecting and researching required information
- Analysing information from more than one point of view before acting
- Coming up with suggestions for improving and finding new ways of doing things
- Taking effective day to day decisions based on available information

Supervision/Management

- Inducting new staff including probationary reviews

- Day to day supervision/management including regular one to one and team meetings
- Planning your team's work to reflect your unit's and the University's objectives
- Leading, supporting, motivating good staff performance and achievement throughout the year including the yearly Appraisal Meeting
- Giving constructive feedback including the identification of staff development
- Supervising/managing in the spirit of the University's Equality and Diversity policies

Skills and Knowledge

- Demonstration of the appropriate skills, knowledge, experiences and behaviours for the job. This of course varies for each job role but could include things like IT skills, H&S knowledge, keeping up-dated in your specialist knowledge/skills

Staff Development and Learning opportunities.

Accessing your current staff development record:

It might be useful during the appraisal to reflect on what staff development you have undertaken. Staff can access their existing individual staff development record from Sussex Direct. To do this you will need to logon to Sussex Direct and select 'Staff Development' from the 'Personal' section. You will see a table showing any past staff development activity recorded.

Who provides staff development in the University?

Your unit may well provide local level staff development opportunity. In addition there are a number of staff development providers on campus who organise and/or support an array of opportunities for all categories of staff, namely:

General staff development including staff development policy and planning, advice on finding staff development/training to meet your need(s), regular in-house courses, bespoke courses for specific teams, team facilitation, coaching, central SD budget, and appraisal enquiries, contact Organisational Development (OD), **Sussex House** email od@sussex.ac.uk x4806 www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development

Health and Safety training contact the **Health, Safety and Environment Office, Level 4 Bramber House.** email healthsafety@sussexstatefacilities.co.uk x 7116, www.sussex.ac.uk/hso

IT training contact **Information Technology Services (ITS), Shawcross** ITS-Training@sussex.ac.uk , x8090, www.sussex.ac.uk/its/training

Development aligned to innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment using technology contact **Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Essex House** email tel@sussex.ac.uk, x7917 www.sussex.ac.uk/tel. TEL's role is to provide specialist support to all staff whose role makes a direct contribution to the student learning experience on the effective use of technology to enhance learning, teaching, assessment and curricula delivery.

Organisational Development provide a wide range of courses in:

Leadership and Management
Equality and Diversity
Professional and personal development

Please see our website www.sussex.ac.uk/organisational-development for details or email od@sussex.ac.uk