Sussex Staff Appraisal Scheme Policy
This policy document applies to all staff and sets out the overarching aim, core principles and guidelines for the University’s Staff Appraisal Scheme.

1 Overarching aim of the Appraisal Scheme

The University believes that appraisal is central to developing and supporting its staff, enabling them to make an effective contribution to the success of the organization.

2 Core principles of the Appraisal Scheme

The core principles of appraisal are:

- Appraisal is an on-going process with a formal, annual meeting to review progress.

- Appraisal is a two-way process of communication, leading to agreed outcomes related to work priorities, support and development needs.

- Appraisal should always be a fair and equal process aligned especially to the University’s Equality and Diversity and Disability Policies

- All staff* are required to take part in appraisal, as an appraisee and where appropriate an appraiser.

- The appraisal process aids effective communication and quality assurance at all levels of the University.

- Appraisal congratulates good performance and identifies ways in which to improve performance.

- Appraisees and appraisers shall invest appropriate time in all aspects of appraisal to ensure its full recognition and effectiveness.

- The effectiveness of appraisal will be monitored and evaluated at unit and university level.

* 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 the Appraisal Scheme, they should receive support and development guidance through the normal management process.
3 Core process guidelines for the Appraisal Scheme

3.1 The appraisal process as a framework

The appraisal process provides a framework to:

- Review and evaluate current performance in order to support staff to maximize their potential within, and for the University
- Identify, agree and provide positive support and development opportunity aligned to unit objectives, individual performance and career/personal development
- Agree objectives which will guide staff in their work over the following twelve months
- Provide an opportunity for staff to comment on institutional and unit operations.

3.2 The appraisal process implementation

The Vice-Chancellor or nominee (e.g., dean, head of department, division) is accountable for the appraisal process and shall ensure that appraisers and appraisees are adequately trained and equipped to carry out the appraisal process.

Each unit will devise and implement a 'local' appraisal plan which reflects the University's Appraisal Policy and which is up-dated annually. This unit plan shall identify:

- individual responsibilities for appraisal within the unit including the appraisers and who they appraise
- how appraisal outcomes will be taken forward as appropriate
- a timetable for annual appraisal meetings
- appraisal training requirements
- a system to assist in resolving any problems which might arise (see 3.7 below)
- a monitoring procedure covering all aspects of appraisal

The definition of a 'unit' should be identified by the Dean or other senior staff responsible for a key area such as SPRU, Library, IT Services and an Administration Division.

3.3 The appraiser

An appraiser will:

- be expected to have received appraiser training
- be expected to be familiar, or to familiarize themselves, with the appraisee’s work
- not be expected to appraise more than ten staff in any one year. A special case within the unit’s appraisal plan will have to be made if the number of appraisees exceeds that limit.

Normally appraisal in the Administration will be undertaken with the immediate supervisor/manager. Within schools and other academic units appraisers will in the main be appointed on a hierarchical basis.
3.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality of appraisal is respected. Certain outcomes will need to feed into unit and university planning (such as operational and staff development plans).

3.5 Appraisal and its role in rewarding and promoting staff

Individuals, with the agreement of their appraiser, may make their agreed appraisal forms available to appropriate promotions and reward committees should they wish. The longer term aim will be that staff cannot be recommended for promotion or reward without evidence of their involvement in appraisal.

3.6 Appraisal and its links to the Staff Probationary Scheme

The Staff Probationary and the Appraisal Schemes are very similar in process, both allowing timely progression from one to the other once the probationary period as been successfully completed.

3.7 Problems with appraisal

A system will be in place within units whereby staff can seek help in resolving any problems through discussion with a more senior member of staff. The unit’s appraisal plan will identify an appropriate system to meet local needs. This might be to designate a named senior staff member or to align the system more generally to the unit’s line management structure.

3.8 Monitoring and evaluating the University’s Appraisal Scheme

The University’s Appraisal Scheme will be monitored by the Human Resources Sub Committee and the Academic Policy and Standards Committee (for academic staff) on an on-going basis by means of an Annual University Appraisal Report which will focus on appraisal policy implementation and its effectiveness. Each unit will produce an annual evidence-based appraisal report to assist this overall appraisal evaluation.

3.9 Guidance on the University’s Appraisal Scheme

Appraisal training will be offered on a regular basis within the University’s in-house staff development programme and all new staff must attend an appropriate session as part of their induction.

The Human Resources Division is responsible for the supply of relevant information and documentation on the Appraisal Scheme to all staff.

3.10 Building on past experience

This appraisal policy recognizes and builds on elements of good appraisal practice operating in the University for a number of years.

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