Sussex Staff Appraisal Scheme - Unit Appraisal Plan ‘at a glance’ guide

The Appraisal Scheme Policy, whilst setting out a clear framework and core principles for all staff, gives schools/units some flexibility as to how they implement the appraisal process at local level. It is recognised that each school/unit is unique and therefore will need to customise the appraisal process in minor ways to meet those individual needs. That’s where the unit appraisal plan comes into play. It is important that the unit appraisal plan is up-to-date each year and communicated to all staff on an annual basis in order to ‘trigger’ the process, and give them key information about local arrangements for appraisal in their school/unit.

The unit appraisal plan should include information under the following headings:

- **WHO HAS THE MAIN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNIT FOR RUNNING APPRAISAL**

  Guidance note: Ideally each school/unit should have a key person(s) responsible for the organisational issues eg communicating the unit’s appraisal plan to all staff each year, co-ordinating Appraisal Meetings timetables/monitoring whether these meetings have taken place, collecting the Annual Appraisal Agreements, collating common issues arising from the Annual Appraisal Agreements to pass on to school/unit management team and/or key central professional services, giving school/unit guidance to staff, etc.

- **A LIST OF THE APPRAISERS AND WHO THEY APPRAISE**

  Guidance note: The Appraisal Scheme Policy states that an appraiser should not appraise more than 10 people. If an appraiser is responsible for the management of more than 10 staff it is recommended that some of the appraisals are delegated to a deputy/other senior staff in the school/department/unit, taking into account that the Policy states that an appraiser is expected to be familiar, or to familiarize themselves, with the appraisee’s work.

- **A TIMETABLE OF APPRAISAL MEETINGS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR**

  Guidance note: The appraisal meeting ‘season’ is from January to end July each year. Schools/units should decide on the most appropriate timescale within which all their appraisal meetings should take place during the current year, and include this information in the unit appraisal plan. Ideally the school/unit should also have a spreadsheet recording individual appraisal meeting dates so that someone can monitor whether they have taken place, or not.

- **DESTINATION OF THE APPRAISAL FORM AND ITS SECTIONS**

  Guidance note: Staff need information on to whom to send a copy of the completed Annual Agreement Form (Section 3) for school/unit monitoring/record purposes. A school/unit might also wish to give guidance on what happens with the preparation Sections 1 and 2 of the form (see main Appraisal Guidelines for more explanation).

- **HOW APPRAISAL OUTCOMES WILL BE TAKEN FORWARD**

  Guidance note: For appraisal to succeed it is vital that the school/unit ensures there is a mechanism which deals with any common Annual Appraisal Agreement outcomes and takes these forward (eg a school/unit management team). Outcomes might need to be dealt with at the school/unit level, or passed on to a central professional service (eg SDU for a common staff development issue).

- **A SYSTEM TO RESOLVE APPRAISAL PROBLEMS**

  Guidance note: The Appraisal Scheme Policy states that a school/unit should have a system in place for staff to seek help in resolving any problems through discussion with a more senior member of staff. The unit appraisal plan should identify who that person(s) is/are.

- **HOW THE SCHOOL/UNIT MONITORS THE OVERALL QUALITY OF APPRAISAL PRACTICE**

  Guidance note: The unit appraisal plan should give a brief explanation about how the quality of appraisal practice is monitored (eg ‘SMART’ objective writing, fair and consistent appraisal behaviour, whether staff have all been appraised and if not, why). Schools/Units are expected to produce an annual appraisal evaluation report, triggered by the Human Resources Division during September/October each year.

FOR ADVICE ON COMPILING THE UNIT APPRAISAL PLAN CONTACT MOIRA BLAKE – m.blake@sussex.ac.uk x 7713