Introduction

PDR at the University of Adelaide

The Planning, Development and Review (PDR) process is a key enabler for the University of Adelaide to achieve the strategies and targets set out in the Beacon of Enlightenment Strategic and Operational plans. All staff members on continuing or fixed term contracts of greater than 12 months are expected to participate in the PDR process.

Purpose of PDR

The PDR process has been designed to help staff and supervisors perform at a standard expected of a University of international standing by providing a continuous cycle of individual planning, setting of work and development objectives, two-way feedback, career planning and development, and performance review. Refer clause 5.2 of the University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement 2014 – 2017.

Managing performance of staff members is part of the role of a supervisor, and the Vice-Chancellor’s expectation is that all staff members participate in the PDR process.

An effective PDR process entails:
- Being clear about what is expected
- Ensuring a sustainable workload
- Being supported to develop skills, knowledge and abilities
- Focusing on coaching, mentoring and support
- Having the opportunity to formally review objectives, provide feedback on performance and other broader issues that impact on working life and achievement of individual goals
- Having the opportunity to discuss and explore achievements and challenges
- Acknowledging and rewarding achievements
- Having a fair and transparent framework for dealing with unsatisfactory performance

Aim of the guide

The aim of this guide is to describe the PDR process and responsibilities for staff and supervisors in each part of the process to enable and encourage active participation in the process.

An effective PDR process should encourage and recognise staff for their strengths and contributions and ensure they are able to do the best job they can. It should engage supervisors to discuss performance and development opportunities as well as implement improvement strategies through effective communication and feedback. It should also leave staff clear on how their job contributes to the objectives of the University.
Benefits of PDR

Engagement in PDR should result in benefits to the individual, the team, the student experience and the University as a whole. It can enhance motivation and job satisfaction, improve capability, provide alignment of work efforts and plans, strengthen the workforce, and support achievement through the following key elements:

- Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and accountabilities, the standards of work expected of them and the impact of their work on achieving the University’s strategic intent.
- Staff understand how their performance directly contributes to the University’s ongoing growth, innovation and excellence.
- Supervisors enable individuals to improve their performance by setting clear objectives and monitoring their progress.
- Staff receive regular feedback on their performance against appropriate objectives and targets.
- Staff and supervisors take part in honest, two-way conversations about achievements and problems so that they can remove blocks to progress and celebrate achievements.
- Supervisors and staff evaluate workload to ensure it is fair and complies with the Academic Workload Allocation Model.
- Improved performance is encouraged, recognised and rewarded.
- Development needs and career aspirations can be addressed.
- Assists in the identification of talent.

“We use PDR to focus on the importance of targeting top-in-field journals and focus on best practice in grant application preparation including peer review.”

Faculty of Health Sciences

“The PDR conversations are an opportunity to discuss and formulate development ideas with my team.”

Human Resources Branch

“The open, two-way conversation involved in PDR reviews helps me identify opportunities to be a better people manager.”

University Engagement

“There is a clear framework that makes individuals accountable for their performance within the team environment.”

Laboratory Animal Services

“Everyone in the team can now see how their work directly contributes to the broader strategic objectives.”

Office of Services & Resources

“Through the PDR process we know that the leaders in the Schools and the Faculty have agreed on professional, strategic and personal research and development goals that complement each other and that have given the Faculty new energy and direction.”

Faculty of Arts
Performance PDR Continuum

The Performance PDR Continuum is the University’s framework for managing all types of performance; the PDR process sits within this.

**Performance Planning, Development & Review**

Keeping performance on track, supporting development, providing feedback

**On-going Performance Conversations**

**Planning, Development & Review Process (PDR)**

- **Preparation by Heads/supervisors**
  - Align objectives to University strategies
  - Establish PDR reporting structures
  - Set-up PDR process for the year

- **Final Review**
  - Review achievement of work & development objectives against measures
  - Two-way feedback
  - Complete individual plan

- **Mid Term Review**
  - Review progress against work & development objectives
  - Identify any blockages/issues
  - Two-way feedback
  - Supervisor provides coaching & guidance
  - Complete individual plan

- **Objective Setting**
  - Establish & agree SMART work objectives
  - Agree development objectives
  - Two-way feedback
  - Complete individual plan

- **Continual informal conversations**

**Correction Coaching (informal)**

- Seek advice from your manager & HR

- Informal improvement plans / conversations

- Coach, counsel

**Unsatisfactory Performance Improvement Process (formal)**

- Seek assistance from your manager & HR

- First, second & third counselling session

  - Includes Performance Improvement Plan, monitor and review

- Consider option for moving forward

**Formalised Process**

- When working to get things back on track hasn’t been successful

Characterised by formal conversations which are fully documented; following policies & procedures.

**Transition Zone**

When performance is needing improvement – trying to get things back on track
Key elements of PDR

The annual PDR cycle

PDR Timelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PDR Stage</th>
<th>Conversation window*</th>
<th>SSO deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective Setting</td>
<td>January to March</td>
<td>10 April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Term Review</td>
<td>June to July</td>
<td>14 August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Review</td>
<td>November to mid-January</td>
<td>31 January (following year)</td>
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*Parts of the University undertake operational planning at different times of the year. If it is necessary for individual PDR planning to take place in an alternative window of time, please consult with your Executive Dean/Director.

Individual Plan (form)

The outcomes of PDR conversations are recorded in the Individual Plan, and there is a separate version for Academic and Professional staff. The Individual Plan can be seen as a template as it is flexible to meet the needs of each team, i.e. it can be completed electronically or on paper, during or after the meeting. Whilst documentation of the PDR conversations is important, the focus of PDR is on engagement in honest and open performance conversations.

Please refer to the PDR webpage for the Individual Plans.

Confirming your PDR

All staff are required to confirm completion of PDR meetings through Staff Services Online (SSO). This enables participation to be monitored and provides a location to store PDR documentation. Both staff members and supervisors will need to confirm completion in SSO – this process is initiated by the staff member (who can optionally upload their Individual Plan), after which the supervisor will be prompted to approve that this stage has been completed.

Please refer to the PDR webpage for the quick reference guide to uploading your PDR to SSO.
Preparation by heads/supervisors

To ensure an effective PDR process and efficient administration, both Heads of School/Branch and supervisors should prepare for the PDR process of their School/Branch and team in the following ways:

Head of School/Branch:

- Establish appropriate staff reporting relationships for the PDR process
- Engage supervisors and staff members in the PDR process as an enabler to achieving the University’s vision, strategy and targets
- Support staff members and supervisors in identifying and overcoming barriers and constraints to successful PDR engagement and implementation.

Supervisor:

- Review the goals and targets outlined in the:
  - University’s Strategic and Operational Plan
  - Faculty/Division Plans
  - School/Branch Plans
- Identify how the above Plans flow into the local work area and the objectives of the individual staff members, and seek clarification from Head of School/Branch if necessary
- Establish/review PDR reporting structures
- Set up the PDR process and administration
- Review and identify appropriate workload allocation. For academic staff, see clause 5.4 of the University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement 2014 – 2017.
Part 1: Objective Setting

At the start of the calendar year, between January and March, staff members and supervisors should meet to establish and agree on work and development objectives for the year.

If individual objective setting is to take place in an alternative window of time, consultation with your Executive Dean/Director is required.

Setting work and development objectives is central to the PDR process and sets the framework for review and feedback. Clearly formulated objectives describe what a staff member is aiming to achieve during the year and how the outcome will be measured.

Objectives should be set using the SMART principle:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>Measurable</th>
<th>Achievable</th>
<th>Relevant</th>
<th>Time-framed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the objective clearly defined?</td>
<td>Is it clear what success is and how would one know when it is achieved?</td>
<td>Is the objective realistic, yet challenging?</td>
<td>Is the objective important; does it add value?</td>
<td>What are the timeframes in which the objective should be achieved?</td>
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Supervisor:

Preparation

- Ensure familiarity with the work/role of the individual staff member
- Ensure familiarity with the staff member’s leave balances, current workload as well as knowledge of any declared Conflicts of Interest. Refer to University of Adelaide Conflict of Interest Procedure
- **Professional Staff:** Review position description
- **Academic Staff:** Review Classification Standards: Academic and Research Only Staff ([Schedule 6 of the University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement](#)), relevant [Adelaide Academic: Role Statement](#) and Individual Academic Profile
- Consider possible work objectives for the staff member
- Identify areas for development and/or improvement that need to be addressed
- Schedule a suitable PDR meeting time with the staff member with adequate notice
- Download a copy of the PDR Individual Plan template (professional or academic version).

PDR Meeting

- Communicate and translate the strategic goals of the University and local area to help staff members develop a clear line of sight between the overall goals and individual objectives
- Work with the staff member to develop well-defined (SMART) work objectives that are appropriate to their work roles, the relevant Adelaide Academic: Role Statement and aligned to the strategic priorities of the University and local area, and how achievement of these objectives will be measured
- Support staff members in identifying development objectives and opportunities.

Documentation and Administration

- Ensure the Work Objectives and Development Plan sections of the Individual Plan are completed and reflect accurately what was discussed at the PDR meeting
- Finalise the PDR Individual Plan and ensure the first section is signed
- Agree on follow-up actions, milestones and dates
- Ensure the staff member has recorded the PDR in SSO and approve.
Part 1: Objective Setting (continued)

Staff member:

Preparation

- Download a copy of the PDR Individual Plan template (professional or academic version)
- **Professional Staff:** Review your Position Description
- **Academic Staff:** Review Classification Standards: Academic and Research Only Staff (**Schedule 6 of the University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement**), relevant **Adelaide Academic: Role Statement** and Individual Academic Profile
- Consider possible work objectives
- Consider possible development objectives and activities
- If applicable, review objectives set in the previous year and your achievement of them.

PDR Meeting

- Establish work objectives and measures for the year
- Discuss workload allocation
- Agree development activities to support your objectives and career plan
- Ask for feedback from your supervisor and provide feedback to your supervisor on how they can assist you in achieving your work and development objectives
- Discuss your career development plan, your desired future career directions and career development actions
- Discuss how to maintain ongoing and regular feedback on progress towards the achievement of the work plan objectives.

Documentation and Administration

- Complete the Work Objectives and Development Plan sections of the Individual Plan
- Complete the Career Development Plan section of the Individual Plan if this has been discussed
- Finalise the Individual Plan and ensure the first section is signed
- Agree on follow-up actions, milestones and dates
- Confirm completion of this stage in SSO.
Parts 2 & 3: Mid Term and Final Review

Feedback on progress toward your work objectives is an essential part of the PDR process. This should occur regularly and informally. A Mid Term Review conversation is to be held between June and July each year, to review progress against objectives (which may sometimes need to be amended), and identify any blockages or issues that might be preventing them from being met. A Final Review conversation, to be held between November and mid-January, should review achievement and impact of objectives against the measures.

If appropriate, the final review conversation may be combined with the next year’s objective setting conversation for convenience.

The reviews are formal conversations that focus on a staff member’s progress, the support needed and changes that may need to be made to enable objectives to be achieved. Staff member and supervisor responsibilities are the same for both the Mid Term and Final Reviews.

Supervisor:

Preparation

- Review the staff member’s Individual Plan completed at the Objective Setting meeting
- Establish performance data sources and collect/collate evidence of performance during the period under review
- Identify staff member’s progress/achievement of objectives
- Identify areas for development and/or improvement that need to be addressed
- Prepare to provide feedback on progress/achievement of objectives.

PDR Meeting

- Review and discuss progress/achievement of objectives
- Review development activities undertaken
- Identify any blockages, issues and/or problems affecting progress towards objectives; this may require a shift in the timeframe of an objective or an updated workload allocation for academic staff
- Provide coaching and guidance on objectives yet to be achieved
- Discuss any new opportunities or changes in direction
- Share feedback relevant to development or progress.

Documentation and Administration

- Ensure the Mid Term Review/Final Review comments sections of the Individual Plan are completed; both staff member and supervisor may wish to add comments here
- Finalise the Individual Plan and ensure the relevant review section is signed
- Agree on follow-up actions, milestones and dates
- Ensure the staff member has recorded the PDR in SSO and approve.
Part 2 & 3: Mid Term and Final Review (continued)

Staff member:

Preparation

- Review the Individual Plan completed at the Objective Setting meeting
- Reflect on progress/achievement of objectives
- Identify examples of performance and progress/achievement of objectives
- Prepare to provide any feedback to your supervisor
- Bring along a copy of the Individual Plan to discuss at the meeting.

PDR Meeting

- Discuss performance and achievement of work and development objectives
- Review development activities undertaken
- Discuss any new opportunities or changes in direction
- Identify any blockages, issues and/or problems affecting progress towards objectives; this may require a shift in the timeframe of an objective or an updated workload allocation for academic staff
- Discuss your career development plan, your desired future career directions and review any career development actions
- Share feedback relevant to any part of the process.

Documentation and Administration

- Complete the Mid Term Review/Final Review comments sections of the Individual Plan; both staff member and supervisor may wish to add comments here
- Finalise the PDR Individual Plan and ensure the review section is signed
- Agree on follow-up actions, milestones and dates
- Confirm completion of this stage in SSO.

Further Information

Please visit the PDR webpage for:

- PDR policy, procedure and information sheets
- Information and registration for training workshops for staff and supervisors
- Downloadable resources including training workbooks and the individual plans

http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/development/performance/pdr/
For assistance in Planning, Development & Review contact the Performance & Development team within the Human Resources Branch

http://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/development/contactus/