

## **MATHEMATICAL INSTITUTE**

### **Personal Development and Review Scheme - 2011**

#### **Introduction by the Chairman**

The Mathematical Institute introduced a new “Personal Development and Review Scheme” (PDR) in 2009 based on the principles set out by the University. The scheme was introduced for support and academic-related (admin) staff in the first instance and will apply to all such staff whether on fixed-term, permanent or open-ended contracts. The University’s scheme for appraisal of academic staff remains unchanged.

I believe that the scheme brings considerable benefits to individual staff. Participating in an annual PDR discussion provides an opportunity to review the progress you have made over the last year, to discuss what additional support you might need to undertake your work over the coming year, and, where appropriate, what your further career plans are, and what support might be available from the department or the central university to help you fulfil those plans. The scheme will also enable you, where appropriate, to discuss and agree with your line manager your forthcoming objectives and to understand how those objectives fit with the Department’s strategies for retaining its position of excellence in research and teaching.

#### **Brief Description of the Scheme**

1. The intention is that the PDR scheme will build on existing staff management processes, such as one-to-one discussions and team meetings and will form part of a continuing dialogue between individuals and their line manager.
2. The scheme will integrate support for individuals with the achievement of the objectives of the Department and the Division.
3. The scheme will apply to support and academic-related (admin) staff in the Department once they have completed their probationary period.
4. The scheme will be based on a confidential annual review discussion normally conducted by an individual’s line manager. Within the Mathematical Institute many members of the support staff have an operational as well as a line manager and in some cases it may be more appropriate for the operational manager to conduct the review with input from the line manager. If the line manager does conduct the review they will ask for input from the operational manager. In exceptional circumstances, individuals will have the option of seeking another reviewer.
5. There is no direct link between the scheme and salary, promotion, or discipline, for which there are separate university procedures. If, however, an annual review indicates that performance has been exceptional, or that the job has grown

significantly, information from the discussion can be used, with the consent of the individual, to inform the separate university procedures for merit reviews (suspended in 2011) or re-grading.

6. The review discussion will include a review of the individual's performance over the past year, agreement on appropriate objectives/tasks for the forthcoming year; discussion of any support needed to achieve those objectives (including training and development); and discussion of future career plans where appropriate.

7. The process, apart from passing on information about training needs and other points requiring action by the department, will be confidential between the reviewer and reviewee.

8. All participants in the scheme, including reviewers, will be expected to take part in a short training session organised by the Oxford Learning Institute.

9. All participants will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of the process.

### The Process

PDRs are conducted on an annual cycle. In 2011 the timetable is as follows:

**By the end of November 2011:** All review discussions to have been completed.  
**By the end of December 2011:** All review discussions to have been written up by the reviewer, agreed with the reviewee, and the form C confirming that the process is complete to have been returned to the Head of Administration and Finance together with an up-to-date job description.

### The stages

#### Preparation

1. Your line manager (or other agreed reviewer) will contact you to say that the review cycle is underway and to arrange with you a suitable date for the meeting which should be at least six weeks away. (An earlier date can be fixed if it is by *mutual* agreement.)
2. You should prepare for the annual review discussion by completing Section A of the "prompt sheet" and return it to your reviewer **at least two weeks** before the date of the review meeting. This prompt sheet is available on-line at <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/notices/pdr>.
3. In order to complete the prompt sheet you will need to have a copy of Section B of the previous year's prompt sheet to hand. It may also be useful to have a copy of your current job description.

4. In completing the prompt sheet, you are invited to reflect on:
- the main duties or activities you have undertaken over the previous year and on any changes to those duties;
  - your main achievements in fulfilling those duties, including, the extent to which you have met any agreed objectives, and any difficulties or obstacles you may have encountered;
  - how your duties, activities and achievements reflect what was anticipated at the start of the period;
  - your proposed aims and objectives for the next year and any suggestions for improvements or changes to the way you work;
  - any additional support you may need, including training or development.

Where appropriate, you may also wish to discuss your future career plans and any ideas for support that the Department or University might provide to help you in achieving those plans. [N.B. you are not *required* to discuss your career plans but the opportunity is there if you want to take it up.]

Remember this is a prompt sheet to generate discussion and begin a conversation with your line management. It is not necessary to write a lot, often bullet points will be sufficient to guide the discussion.

### **The meeting**

5. You and your reviewer should agree a venue for the review meeting where you feel comfortable and where the discussion can take place in confidence. The meeting will generally last around an hour. Your reviewer should make notes during the meeting.
6. It is helpful if you and your reviewer can have a copy of your current job description with you at the meeting so any amendments can be noted as well as Section B from the previous year's prompt sheet.
7. Your reviewer will then lead the discussion based on the prompt sheet. He or she should invite you first to give your own reflections; and then give you his or her feedback.
8. Following your meeting your reviewer will draft a short note of the discussion for Section B of the form and seek your comments on this draft. The note should make clear any action points and who is responsible for following them up.
9. **Completing section C:** Section C should be completed and returned to the Head of Administration and Finance. Form C records that the PDR process has been completed. It also records any information that needs to be

“passed on” in order for progress to be made e.g. agreed training needs or where it would be helpful for the Head of Administration and Finance to know about a particular career aspiration. Once the record has been agreed and all the sections have been signed the reviewer should:

- Send an up to date job description to the Head of Administration and Finance with any changes highlighted. These changes will be reviewed and either confirmed or in certain circumstances be subject to further discussion.
- Give a copy of the whole prompt sheet (Sections A, B and C) to the reviewee.
- File the original of the prompt sheet in a secure cabinet. (If a line manager leaves the material relating to the reviews for their team will normally be passed on to their successor with the consent of the individual concerned.)

### **The follow up**

It is important that any actions arising from the meeting are clearly recorded in Section B and that it is also clear who is responsible for those actions and following them up. It is suggested that reviewees and reviewers have a brief catch-up meeting around Easter to check progress, particularly on matters that required follow-up action including those that had been notified to the Head of Administration and Finance on Section C.

Rosie Mortimer  
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