

FORMAL CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

ACTION PLAN

Name:

School/Discipline/Directorate:.....

Job Title:

Length of Service:

Time in Current Job:

INTRODUCTION

The effective management of performance is essential to the University meeting its objectives and to staff morale.

This pack, which should be read in conjunction with the Capability Procedure, provides Heads of Schools, Discipline Leads, Directors and managers with a fair, structured and consistent way of dealing with individuals who are underperforming. The process is endorsed by the University as the sole way in which performance issues may be addressed. On embarking on the performance improvement process Heads of Schools, Discipline Leads, Directors and managers should always involve their HR Officers.

The handling of a sensitive situation such as underperformance needs to be treated carefully to avoid alienating or lowering the morale of the individual involved. For that reason Steps 1-5 of this pack concentrates on the preparation involved prior to conducting the Performance Review meeting.

Steps 6 and 7 are documents to be used by both the member of staff and the Head of School, Discipline Lead, Director or manager, to be signed by both and copies retained by both.

Pamela Milne
Director of Human Resources

PREPARING FOR PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

Step 1 – What is/are the issue/s and the outcome for improvement?

The line manager must articulate specifically the issue/s that has led him/her to believe the member of staff is underperforming. Against each identified issue, record the outcome for improvement that is necessary. Ideally, the outcome should be evidence-based (e.g. an improvement in report writing skills) but if this is not possible it should be based on what the line manager can observe or feedback from the people to whom the individual provides a service (e.g. a student, colleague or member of the public).

Issue	Acceptable Standard of Performance

Step 2 – What background information exists?

Summarise the previous discussions that have taken place with the member of staff to address performance issues. List the dates, who attended and the details of the discussions.

What training and support has been provided to the member of staff to date?

Are there any known health, disability, personal or other mitigating circumstances that may contribute to the performance problem/s?

NB: Please refer to your HR Officer for guidance on the relevant legislation.

Step 3 – Strengths

It is important to take a balanced view of an individual's performance. What are their strengths and the tasks they have undertaken over the last 12 months that they did well?

Strengths/Achievements

You should now have a well-developed understanding of the member of staff and be able to turn your attention to the support that can be given to help them achieve an acceptable standard of performance. Continue on separate sheet if necessary.

Step 4 – Taking Action

In conjunction with your HR Officer consider the specific development needs you have discussed with the individual, and the actions that can be taken to address these.

Solutions can include a range of activities e.g. training, coaching, mentoring, 'at the desk' training, reading relevant material, access to further qualifications etc.

Development Need/s	Action/s

Step 5 – Preparing for the Performance Review Meeting

To maintain good working relationships and continue to motivate the member of staff, it is important that you plan your approach to the meeting using the following framework.

a) **Notifying the Individual**

You should advise the member of staff of the meeting, and its purpose, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. They should be informed that they have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague, and that their HR Officer will be in attendance. This should be followed up by a letter (example below) and include the documentation that has been identified as part of the 'Preparation' under the Formal Capability Procedure.

Sample letter inviting individual to attend a Performance Review Meeting.

Dear

Further to our discussion I am writing to advise you of the Performance Review Meeting to discuss aspects of your job performance about which I have concerns and wish to review with you. Details and documentation are attached.

A meeting has been arranged for us to discuss this matter at on in .

Please be reassured that this is not a disciplinary interview.

You may be accompanied by either your trade union representative or work colleague. The School/Directorate HR Officer, (name) will also be in attendance.

If it is impossible for either you or your representative to attend on the date given, please let me know so that an alternative date can be arranged at the earliest possible opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Line Manager

cc: Human Resources Officer

b) Plan the Structure of the Meeting

1. Set the context.
 - Explain the issue/s, why you are holding the meeting, that it is not a disciplinary interview, that the intention is to help and support the member of staff, and the expected output (an action plan for improvement in performance).
2. Find out how the individual sees the situation.
 - Ask them to assess their own performance. Ask questions to clarify the position from their perspective. Listen to what they have to say or to their challenge to your assessment of the situation.
3. Give your reaction and views.
 - Having listened carefully, respond as appropriate. Keep the conversation factual and focused, using the evidence you have collected in this pack and during your discussion with the member of staff.
4. Identify barriers to performance.
 - Try to discover why, if the individual is not performing at an acceptable level, they are having difficulty. Ask whether there are any mitigating circumstances that their employer should know about so they can be taken into consideration.
5. Summarise issues.
 - At this stage it will be worth pulling the content of the conversation together, restating the performance shortfall and the improvement required, if appropriate.
6. Define solutions.
 - Ask the member of staff to generate some possible solutions before outlining your solutions, as this will gain greater commitment.
7. Agree Action Plan for Improvement in Performance.
 - Having identified solutions, now document the actions to be taken by the individual to improve performance and the measures of success (see Step 6 – Action Plan for Improving Performance).

STEP 6 – ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Name:	School/Discipline/Directorate:	Job Title:
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Actions to be taken to improve performance	How will success be measured (evidence, observation, feedback)	Timescales for improvement and reviews.

From the discussion with my line manager and the content of this Action Plan, I understand the actions necessary to improve my performance to an acceptable level.

Signed Date
(Member of Staff)

Signed Date
(Line Manager)

Member of Staff to Retain Copy.

