Performance Review and Development (PRD)
Scheme Guidelines

HUMAN RESOURCES
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1. Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme

1.1 Introduction of a revised Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme

The Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme is designed to support excellence in employee and organisational performance. The scheme aims to promote the development of a high performance culture which is managed, supported and enhanced effectively through the development of individual objectives which are aligned with departmental goals and the University Strategic Plan.

Meeting the development needs of staff, improving performance, enhancing quality and promoting a culture of continuous improvement is central to the scheme.

1.2 Definitions

Reviewee: All staff of the University who fall within the scope of the PRD scheme will be a Reviewee.

Reviewer: The Reviewer will normally be the Head of Department or the Reviewee’s Line Manager. However, another senior member of staff with an indirect reporting relationship may be nominated. The nominated Reviewer must be in a position to adequately review the Reviewee’s work and comment on their overall performance and development.

Objectives: A set of actions and/or contributions agreed by the Reviewer with the Reviewee which are aligned to the University/Faculty/Unit Strategic Plans.

1.3 Key Principles of the Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme

The key principles which underpin the PRD Scheme at DCU are as follows:

— Support the delivery of the Strategic Plan at a University/Faculty/School/Unit level
— Enable staff to reach their full potential
— Encourage a process of Self Reflection / Self-Assessment
— Facilitate an integrated approach to professional development at a University, Departmental and Individual level
— Enhance Quality
— Promote Equality
The PRD scheme recognises that the University has a key role in ensuring the alignment of the objectives of the organisation and the development needs of staff within the following broad parameters:

— Setting of individual goals in agreement with the Reviewer
— Reviewing performance with agreed outcomes
— Identifying development needs and agreeing a development programme with the Reviewer
— Agreeing work and career objectives

Through a process of self-assessment, the PRD Scheme aims to provide a more structured mechanism for feedback between Heads of Department/Line Managers/Supervisors and staff members within a supportive framework. Through the self-assessment process, staff will participate in discussions that focus on their performance and on their personal, professional and career development, where the objectives and development needs are linked to the overall University, Faculty / Departmental objectives.

1.4 Benefits of the Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme

Some of the key benefits of PRD are as follows:

— Increased focus on the short-term and long-term career development of the individual
— Better understanding of how individual staff contribute to both departmental and university activities
— Improved overall performance to support delivery of and the University strategic plan
— Increased opportunities for organisational learning
— Improved planning at individual, departmental and university level.
— Improved communication between staff at all levels
— Improved overall performance to support delivery of and the University strategic plan
— Better communication of the university’s goals and values
— Cultivation of a culture of continuous improvement in line with other Quality Assurance initiatives
1.5 Basis of the Performance Review and Development (PRD) Scheme at DCU

Fundamental to the development of the PRD Scheme in DCU are the following principles:

a. **Objective Driven:** The PRD Scheme recognises that there must be strategic alignment between the activities of staff with the University’s Strategic Plan. This is achieved by assessing each staff member’s actual performance against previously established performance objectives and standards (which were jointly agreed by the Reviewer and Reviewee during the previous PRD cycle) having regard to departmental and university goals and objectives.

b. **Self-Review/Self-Assessment:** The PRD Scheme is a structured review process which recognises that individual staff members need to drive their own performance and development. In order for the review system to work effectively, staff need to take ownership of the process by engaging in the process of self-assessment. In the absence of this, there can be little benefit to the individual in terms of identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

c. **Two-way Feedback:** Communication is an essential element to the success of a performance and review scheme. The PRD process opens clear channels of communications and promotes ongoing two-way feedback between the Reviewer and the Reviewee.

d. **Developmental:** The PRD Scheme acknowledges the responsibility of both staff and management in the joint planning of career development. Individuals are provided with the opportunity to consider their development needs for their future career plans by establishing developmental objectives which are in line with the overall University and departmental objectives.

e. **Quality:** The process of PRD holds closely the core principles of quality assurance in that it promotes a process of continuous improvement at an individual, departmental and University level through a mechanism of self-reflection and assessment. The scheme provides an on-going opportunity for each department and staff member to reflect upon their contribution to the university and provides a means to improve upon this contribution within a developmental framework.

f. **Relationship to other University Policies and Procedures:** The overall aim of PRD is to improve performance and support the development of all staff. While it does not have a direct link with other University policies such as promotion, pay, reward or the disciplinary procedure, the implementation and conduct of the PRD Scheme process will be carried out having full regard to the University’s Equality agenda and its Policy to Promote Respect and Protect Dignity in DCU.
2. The Performance Review and Development (PRD) Process

2.1 Who should be reviewed?

The Scheme applies to all categories and levels of staff of the University who hold contracts of more than one year in duration.

Staff who are in the probationary process are not covered by this scheme. Upon completion of the probationary period, they will be included in the next PRD review cycle. A reasonable time period of approximately 6 months between completion of the probation and commencement of the PRD process should be facilitated.

Staff who are within one year of retirement are not required to participate in the scheme.

2.2 Who will conduct the Reviews?

The Review meeting will be conducted by the Head of Department or the Line Manager or a senior member of the Department nominated by the Head (in consultation with the Executive Dean where relevant). The Reviewer should have a direct or indirect reporting relationship to the Reviewee and must be in a position to adequately review the reviewee’s work and comment on their overall performance and development.

2.3 When should the Review Take Place?

2.3.1 The Annual Review Cycle

The process will normally be conducted on an annual basis between April and October. However, where this timeframe is not suitable for a particular Faculty, School or Unit, agreement should be sought from the Human Resources Department to agree a ‘band of months’ when the reviews can be conducted to suit their particular workload cycles.

2.3.2 PRD Meetings and Workload Allocation Meetings

In Academic Schools, Workload Allocation Meetings may be convened in conjunction with the PRD meetings to avoid duplication and overlap in conversations. The PRD process however, must be completed via the on-line CoreTalent system.

2.4 How is the PRD Scheme linked to University, Faculty or Unit Strategies

To support the alignment of the University’s Strategic goals to the activities and objectives of staff during the PRD process, Deans and Heads will be asked to complete a Strategic Priorities Form for their respective departments. This is a high level document which highlights the key areas of focus and/or priorities for the Faculty /Department for the next 12 months.

The completed form should be shared with both Reviewers and Reviewees in advance of the commencement of the annual review process.
2. The Performance Review and Development (PRD) Process

The Strategic Priorities form aims to:
— Support the development of objectives for staff in the PRD process
— Facilitate an appreciation by staff as to how they contribute to university and departmental strategies
— Provide a centrally recorded overview of the key strategic priorities across the university in a given year as they relate to the PRD process

3. The Annual PRD Process in DCU

There are three main stages within the PRD process:
1. Pre-Review Stage - Planning and Documentation
2. The Review Meeting
3. Post Review Meeting and Follow-up

3.1 Pre-Review Stage - Planning and Documentation

Step 1: Notification from Human Resources
In March each year, a communication will be issued by the Director of Human Resources to Heads and Deans in advance of the commencement of the annual review process. This communication will officially ‘kick-start’ the process.

Step 2: Planning the Process by Deans and Heads
Upon receipt of the notification from HR a meeting(s) should be convened between the Executive Dean with Heads of School or Heads of Department with their management teams. The aim of the meeting is to agree the overall approach for the implementation of the PRD process in their respective departments for the next review cycle by:
— Reviewing the lists provided by HR to assign Reviewers to Reviewees. (Note: This is required to enable the PRD documentation to flow correctly between the assigned Reviewers and Reviewees via CoreTalent).
— Completing the Strategic Priorities Form (See Section 2.4). The aim of this exercise is to agree broad parameters around objective setting and establish a level of consistency and fairness vis-à-vis objective setting for staff across the department within the review period.

The completed Strategic Priorities Form should be submitted to HR along with the agreed lists of ‘who will review who’.
3. The Annual PRD Process in DCU

Step 3: Preparation for Launch
Upon receipt of the completed documentation from Deans and Heads, details of the confirmed Reviewers and Reviewees will be uploaded onto CoreTalent.

Following completion of the above steps, a communication will be issued from the Director of Human Resources to all staff to formally announce the launch of the PRD scheme for next review period.

3.2 The Review Meeting

Step 4: Initiating the PRD Process
— To initiate the review process, the Reviewer should contact the Reviewee to arrange a suitably convenient date and time to convene the meeting.
— The Reviewee will then be required to complete and submit the self-assessment (Stage 1) of the PRD form to the Reviewer. The self-assessment documentation should be completed two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.
— The PRD process should be completed within four weeks of the Reviewee submitting the self-assessment form to the Reviewer.

Note: Where a Reviewee is going through the PRD process for the first time, they are still required to complete Section I of the self-assessment/review form. They should focus more generally on progress against key activities or objectives for the last 12 months and refer to any highlights or challenges that prevented progress against key deliverables.

Step 5: Considering the Documentation
The Reviewer should consider the self-assessment documentation carefully in advance of the review discussion.

Step 6: The Meeting
The review meeting should be scheduled on a mutually convenient date and time and will normally last approximately one hour. If required and if appropriate, a further follow-up meeting may be scheduled.

Note: Stages 2, 3 and 4 of the PRD form should not be completed until after the review meeting has taken place. It is therefore recommended that both the Reviewer and Reviewee make notes during the meeting to ensure their reflections, agreed actions and outcomes can be correctly captured on CoreTalent after the meeting.
3.3 Post Review Meeting and Implement the Action Plan

Step 7: Completion of the PRD Documentation
Following the meeting, the Reviewee will be required to initiate and submit Stage 2 (Agreed Future Objectives) to the Reviewer for ‘sign-off’ followed by Stage 3 (Agreed Future Learning and Development Objectives) and finally Stage 4 (Overall Assessment.) Once this has been completed in respect of all 4 stages, the PRD process is complete.

Step 8: The Follow-Through
In order for the PRD Scheme to succeed, all the parties involved must be prepared to commit to the delivery of the agreed outcomes. The Reviewee (with the support of the Reviewer and/or Line Manager) has a responsibility to follow through on the agreed objectives and associated supports.

4. CoreTalent - Implementation of PRD in DCU

CoreTalent is the on-line system that will support and drive the implementation of the PRD scheme in the University. Staff can access the system via the Core HR Portal. All eligible staff will be assigned a status as a Reviewee and/or Reviewer.

4.1 On-Line PRD Documentation
Separate online PRD forms have been developed for the following three categories of staff:
(i) Academic Staff
(ii) Researcher Staff and
(iii) Professional /Support / Technical staff.
The forms aim to facilitate a more meaningful review discussion which acknowledges and supports the different career development and progression pathways of all staff.

4.2 Stages in the Review Process
There are four Stages in the PRD Review Process:
1. Self- Assessment Stage
2. Agreed Future Objectives Stage
3. Agreed Development Objectives Stage
4. Overall Assessment Stage
Within each of the 4 stages there are between 2-4 steps to be completed:
— Each stage will be initiated by the Reviewee and submitted to the Reviewer for ‘sign-off’
— The Reviewee will complete the vast majority of the form with stages 2-4 being completed after the review meeting.
— The CoreTalent system includes a ‘send back’ functionality whereby the Reviewer can seek further information or clarification from the Reviewee.

Stage 1 – Self Assessment
This stage requires the reviewee to complete and submit their reflections of their performance and progress against objectives for the previous 12 months. They will also be required to include some preliminary thinking in relation to future objectives. The Reviewer may request additional information, but overall this stage aims to inform and support the review discussion and ensure a meaningful discussion takes place from the perspective of both the Reviewer and Reviewee.

Stage 2 – Agreed Future Objectives
This stage is initiated and submitted by the Reviewee to the Reviewer for ‘sign off’ after the PRD meeting has taken place. It is a record of the agreed future objectives which were discussed and agreed at the review meeting by both parties.

Stage 3 – Agreed Future Development Objectives
This stage is initiated and submitted by the Reviewee to the Reviewer for ‘sign off’ after the PRD meeting has taken place. It is a record of the agreed future development objectives (including compliance training) which were discussed and agreed at the review meeting by both parties. This section has a ‘book a course’ facility which is integrated with the Core Learning and Development module which requires the approval of the Head of Department. It should be noted that programmes identified through the PRD process will normally be given priority.

Stage 4 – Overall Assessment
This stage is initiated by the Reviewee and submitted to the Reviewer who will provide an overall assessment regarding the performance and development of the Reviewee. The assessment should be consistent with what was discussed at the review meeting. No new information should be included at this time which was not discussed between both parties at the review meeting.

4.3 CoreTalent Forms and GDPR
CoreTalent enables access to PRD Review Forms through the line of the Reviewer Hierarchy. This will normally be consistent with the reporting hierarchy within any department and is GDPR compliant. Full details can be viewed here.
5. Who is involved in PRD and what is their role?

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the review process:

5.1 The Reviewee

Your key responsibilities as a Reviewee in the PRD process are to:

— Contribute to the establishment of your performance objectives in co-operation with your reviewer
— Identify your learning and development needs
— Be prepared to receive relevant feedback on performance
— Act on constructive feedback given by your reviewer
— Discuss any other issues which may impact on your performance
— Reflect on your performance
— Be prepared for an open and constructive meeting
— Consider your short term and long term career aspirations

5.2 The Reviewer

Your key responsibilities as a reviewer in the PRD process are to:

— Agree clear priorities, directions and performance standards for the Reviewee
— Agree performance objectives
— Provide guidance to the Reviewee
— Evaluate performance objectives – have they been achieved?
— Provide satisfactory performance development and career development opportunities
— Provide an environment that is conducive to an open, honest and constructive discussion
5. Who is involved in PRD and what is their role?

5.3 The Head of Department / School/ Department/ Unit / Executive Dean

Your key responsibilities as a ‘head of department’ are to:
— Ensure objectives established by the Reviewee and Reviewer are in line with university and departmental goals. This will be supported by the completion of the Strategic Priorities Form as outlined in Section 2.4.
— Share the Strategic Priorities Form with both Reviewers and Reviewees in advance of the commencement of the annual review cycle
— Confirm which Reviewer has been assigned to which Reviewee with HR to ensure the correct information is posted to CoreTalent
— Oversee the Reviewer’s role in relation the scheme
— Evaluate effectiveness of scheme in their department
— Ensure that the PRD process is conducted fairly and equitably across the department
— Ensure that PRD process is conducted in accordance with and is informed by the stated key values of the University.
— Support the ongoing review of the PRD to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in conjunction with the Human Resources Department

5.4 The Human Resources Department

The key responsibilities of the department is to:
— Provide training for both the Reviewer and the Reviewee
— Provide advice to Reviewers, Reviewees and Heads/Deans in implementing the annual PRD process.
— In conjunction with Deans and Heads to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme across the University
— Ensure that the PRD process is conducted in accordance with and is informed by the stated key values of the University.
— Support the on-going management of the review process in conjunction with Heads of Department by providing the appropriate dashboard of information regarding completion rates etc.
6. Disputes

Where a dispute arises between a Reviewer and Reviewee during the PRD process eg. disagreement regarding the agreed objectives, every attempt should be made to resolve the matter informally between the two parties in the first instance.

If there is no resolution, the issue should be escalated to the next most senior manager within the reporting structure. The steps outlined below should be followed:

— If an agreement regarding the disputed issue eg. setting of objectives cannot be reached during the review meeting, the meeting should be rescheduled for a later date. This will allow both parties time out to reconsider their options regarding the objectives that should be set.

— If, following the rescheduled meeting, agreement still cannot be reached, the Reviewee should put the reason for the non-agreement in writing to the next most senior manager within the reporting structure. If the Reviewer is the Head of Department, the matter should be escalated to the next most senior member in the Faculty/Department/Unit.

— The senior manager will meet with the Reviewer to discuss the Reviewee’s concerns. Following that meeting, the senior manager will confirm details of their decision to resolve the matter. The Reviewer and Reviewee should then conclude the PRD process to reflect this outcome.

— If the disagreement remains unresolved, this should be noted for the record.

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