

Performance Development Review (PDR)  
Guidance Notes for Reviewees

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## Message from the Vice Chancellor

Dear Colleague

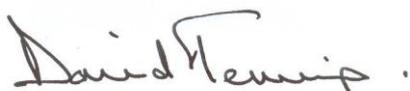
Welcome to the Guidance Notes for Performance Development Review (PDR) at York St John University. We have prepared these notes to help you understand why we have PDR, how staff can benefit from engaging with the process and how it will actually work.

Staff tell us that they value playing a full role in shaping York St John and contributing in the best ways they can to student wellbeing and organisational success.

To secure our future success, we need to continually review our institutional aims and how well we are achieving them. Your invaluable work – acknowledged through PDR plays a significant part in our accomplishments as an excellent provider of learning and teaching opportunities.

We hope that the Guidance Notes prove useful to you. If there is anything that you think we can improve on, we would welcome your feedback.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Fleming". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Professor David Fleming  
Vice Chancellor

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## **Purpose of the Guidance Notes**

### **About these Guidance Notes**

These Guidance Notes aim to help all staff prepare thoroughly for their Performance Development Review (PDR) and ensure that it is a useful and positive experience. This guide (and all other PDR documentation) is available to download from the Staff Development pages on the York St John website. These notes cover four main areas:

- Overview of the process
- Questions about the process
- Questions about the PDR
- Questions about the documentation

## Overview of the process

### Aims of PDR

The overall aim of the PDR is to:

- Provide a constructive two-way discussion of activities, achievements and areas for improvement.
- Agree objectives for the forthcoming year, in alignment with Faculty/ Departmental plans.
- Agree a development plan, addressing individual needs and aspirations, to allow staff to achieve their full potential.

### Benefits of PDR

The PDR process is a mutually beneficial one. Reviewees are given the opportunity to discuss their achievements, professional needs and areas for development in a supportive environment, whilst reviewers have the opportunity to motivate and engage their staff for the good of the University and their own immediate area.

### How it will work

All permanent staff at York St John must have a PDR. This should happen once a year, with ongoing review throughout the year to discuss progress.

A month before the PDR is due to take place, the reviewer should contact the reviewee to agree a date. The reviewee then completes the PDR Preparation Form (Form A) and gives a copy to the reviewer in good time before the meeting. The reviewer can then use the information provided to complete their own PDR Preparation Form (and share it with the reviewee). The two parties can then meet in private - for approximately 1-1½ hours depending on circumstances - to discuss the topics covered. These are likely to include: performance over the past year; what the coming year's objectives should be and what training and development might be required in order for the objectives to be met. Finally, the two parties should agree the content of the Development Plan, if applicable.

## Questions about the process

### Who is reviewed?

All permanent York St John staff are to be reviewed annually. Visiting lecturers and people who are on temporary contracts will not be reviewed, unless they specifically ask.

### When do the reviews take place?

PDRs should take place once a year. It is recommended as good practice to also have an informal mid-year review.

### Why have a PDR?

The purposes of having a PDR are:

- To provide a constructive two way discussion of activities, achievements and areas for improvement
- To agree objectives for the forthcoming year, in alignment with Faculty/ Departmental plan
- To agree a development plan, addressing individual needs and aspirations to allow staff to achieve their full potential.

The 'ideal' process looks something like this



### Who 'owns' the PDR process?

It is a two-way process and reviewees are encouraged to be proactive in collating their evidence and ensuring they gain as much as possible from the review. The final accountability for ensuring PDRs happen on an annual basis rests with the appropriate Dean of Faculty or Director of Department. Their management teams will deliver the process and the numbers completed will be monitored on a regular basis.

### **How does the PDR process relate to HR policies and procedures?**

There are separate arrangements in place for staff members who are still in their probationary period. Please refer to those policies for further information. For further guidance on what to do if you are facing either disciplinary or capability action, please see pages 9 and 10.

### **Are all staff (academic, professional, support, ancillary and managers) treated the same?**

Yes, although the paperwork is different; this is to ensure that the needs of staff are taken into account.

### **Who will review me?**

In the vast majority of cases, line managers will review their staff. This ensures that the reviewer has a good understanding of the reviewee's work.

### **What training opportunities can I access to understand the PDR process?**

PDR Briefing sessions by Staff Development will be offered to all reviewees on a regular basis.

### **What is my responsibility?**

As the reviewee, you need to:

- Understand the aims of the process.
- Read these Reviewee Guidance Notes.
- Gather evidence throughout the year and prepare for your PDR on the forms provided.
- Contribute to the discussion at the PDR meeting.
- Agree objectives with your reviewer.

You are also advised to attend a PDR Briefing session, although this is optional.

### **What is my reviewer's responsibility?**

Reviewers are expected to:

- Attend the appropriate PDR development session.
- Follow the PDR process of review, agree objectives and plan development.
- Read the Reviewer Guidance Notes.
- Prepare for the review using the forms provided.
- Ensure that any agreed training and development opportunities discussed during the PDR are communicated where appropriate to the Staff Development team.

### **If I have any further questions about the PDR process, who should I ask?**

In the first instance, you should ask your line manager. However, if you require any further assistance, please contact a member of the Staff Development team.

## Questions about the PDR

### Who should arrange the PDR meeting?

It is appropriate that the reviewer should arrange the PDR meeting; however, once this has been done, it is the reviewee's responsibility to fully prepare and give a copy of their Preparation Form (Form A) to their reviewer 2 weeks before the PDR is due to take place.

### What if my reviewer doesn't arrange my PDR?

All staff at YSJ are expected to have a PDR as part of their ongoing development and conducting PDRs is an integral part of the management role. If you are not offered a PDR, you need to request this from your manager.

### Where should the PDR take place?

It is essential that the PDR meeting is professionally conducted; it is therefore recommended that it does not take place off campus. The reviewer and reviewee will need to agree a location that they deem appropriate. This may be a room elsewhere on campus or in the reviewer's office. It is essential to ensure that both parties feel comfortable in their surroundings.

### How long will it take?

In order to discuss all that you want to cover, you should allow approximately 1-1 ½ hours.

### I've been working here for under a year. Will I have a PDR along with everyone else in my area?

There are separate procedures in place for staff who are still in their probationary period (for ancillary staff, the period is six months, for academic and professional and support staff, the period is one year). Therefore, it is not appropriate for you to have a PDR whilst you are still in your probationary period.

### I'm currently facing Disciplinary Procedure. Should the PDR still take place?

It would be appropriate for your reviewer to postpone your PDR until the Disciplinary Procedure has been resolved.

### Is it appropriate that my reviewer tells me that I am not performing as I should be within the PDR?

No, this is not the right forum. In a PDR, your reviewer should only broach issues that have already been discussed. There should be no surprises. If they have mentioned these issues before, it is only right and proper that they be discussed within the PDR. It is essential that the PDR is not used as a discussion around capability issues; there is a separate Capability Procedure to use in those circumstances.

### I am going through a Capability Procedure. Should my PDR still take place?

There is no reason why your PDR should not take place, as the Capability Procedure may be focused on one area of your work, and not look at the achievement of all your

objectives over the past 12 months (which is one of the main purposes of PDR). As part of the capability procedure, you should have an action plan to help improve future performance and it might be that the PDR incorporates future objectives from your action plan.

### **What should I do before my PDR meeting?**

You need to:

- Acquaint yourself with the strategic direction of your faculty/department by reading the relevant plan.
- Complete the PDR Preparation Form (Form A), including what you think your objectives should be for the next 12 months and if you will need any additional support, training or development in order to achieve these objectives.
- Give a copy of the PDR Preparation Form (Form A) to your reviewer two weeks before the PDR meeting so that they know what you would like to discuss.
- Read a copy of your reviewer's Preparation Form.

### **What should I do during the PDR meeting?**

- Take along your PDR Preparation Form.
- Talk honestly and constructively about your work, achievements and areas in need of development.
- Use specific examples when talking about your work.
- Be ready to talk about your future career aspirations.
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand something the reviewer says.
- Share your views and concerns, whilst also listening to the reviewer's point of view.
- Discuss honestly and openly about what support or help you need to achieve your objectives.
- Agree what your future objectives should be and when you should achieve them by.

### **What if my reviewer and I don't agree?**

This will rarely happen as a review is a compiled view of your work over the previous year; assuming ongoing review discussions have taken place with your line manager, nothing discussed at your review should be a surprise. If, however, you are really unable to agree on a way forward, it is the reviewer's responsibility to take the matter up with the next most senior manager within your faculty or department. You also have the right to take the matter forward in the same way.

### **What are the opportunities for training and development?**

There are many different opportunities available. Some of these include:

- Professional qualifications
- Reading materials
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Short courses or workshops
- Servicing a committee
- Inclusion on a working party
- Secondment opportunities
- Delegating more challenging work
- Short periods of work shadowing
- Research leave (for academic staff)
- Peer observation (for academic staff)

### **How do I access training and development opportunities?**

All YSJ staff members are entitled to access development opportunities, as long as it is relevant to their role and realistic within budget constraints. If you are interested in accessing a particular activity, speak to your reviewer about what you believe the benefits will be.

### **What do I do after the PDR?**

It is the normal expectation that the reviewer writes up the PDR. You can then add any comments and send them back to the reviewer.

### **Can I use my PDR documents as evidence when applying for promotion?**

This is entirely up to you. If you wish to, you may do so but you are in no way obliged to show your PDR Form to anyone.

### **Who – apart from my reviewer – will see a copy of my PDR Form?**

The Dean, Deputy Dean, Director, Deputy Director or Head may see a copy of the agreed Performance Development Review Form (Form B), signed by both the reviewee and reviewer. HR may also request access to this form, by agreement with the reviewer and reviewee. Staff Development will see a copy of Form B Part 3: Development Plan.

## **Questions about the documentation**

### **What is the right paperwork to use?**

There are different forms for academic staff, managers, professional and support staff and ancillary staff.

### **Where is it kept?**

All PDR documentation is stored electronically on the Staff Development pages of the YSJ website.

### **How long should I spend on the PDR Preparation Form?**

It should not take long to complete the form but you should allow enough time to ensure that you are fully prepared for your PDR meeting. A good guide is to allow at least one hour to complete the form but it may take longer to gather your evidence.

### **What should I do with the PDR Preparation Form?**

Once you have completed it, you should give it to your reviewer so that they can prepare fully for the PDR, keeping a copy for your own records and taking it copy along to the meeting.

### **How long before the PDR meeting should I give the PDR Preparation Form to my reviewer?**

You should give your Preparation Form to the reviewer two weeks before the PDR meeting is due to take place. This will ensure that they have enough time to prepare for the topics you wish to discuss.

### **Who will keep a record of my PDR Form and Summary, for how long and in what format?**

Reviewers and reviewees will each keep a paper copy of the Performance Development Review Form (Form B). This will be kept confidentially in the reviewer's office. An electronic copy of this form will also be confidentially stored by the reviewer. These documents will be kept by the reviewer for a maximum of three years.