

Guide to Associate Lecturer Career Development and Staff Appraisal (AL CDSA)

This document should be read in conjunction with the CDSA Principles for Associate Lecturers document.

1. What is a CDSA?

- A look back at goals attained and standards reached
- An assessment of strengths and weaknesses with a focus on personal contribution
- A look forward at short and long term objectives
- A review and identification of agreed training and development activities.

This process operates within the wider context of regular reviews of performance and development. These enable:

- regular exchange of informal feedback
- reassessment and revision of priorities
- prompt recognition of achievements and issues to be addressed.

Together these provide the framework in which staff are supported and developed to help them fulfil their potential and optimise their contribution to the University's goals. It requires good working relationships between managers and staff and willingness on both sides to engage actively in a regular cycle of priority setting, professional development planning, ongoing reviews and the completion of a CDSA record form. It is not just about line managers setting aside time for their staff but also about individuals taking responsibility for their own performance and development.

Any potential performance issues should be raised as they occur and should not be left for discussion at CDSA - there should be no surprises for an AL at CDSA.

2. What are the benefits?

For staff it allows time for:

- reflecting on job role and purpose
- reviewing workload and priorities
- discussing needs for recognition, support and development
- giving and receiving constructive feedback
- building a good working relationship with your manager/appraiser
- looking forward to future objectives.

For managers/appraisers it provides opportunities to:

- set standards and clarify expectations
- build effective working relationships between staff by giving and receiving constructive feedback
- recognise the contribution of staff
- improve understanding of different perspectives
- motivate staff
- agree ways of improving performance

For the University, it helps to:

- recognise individuals' contributions
- align the contribution of individuals to University goals
- foster a culture where achievement and excellence are valued
- build respect for individuals and value diversity
- enhance capability for organisational learning and change
- encourage accountable management

3. Who conducts the CDSA?

CDSAs should normally be carried out by the staff member's line manager. Occasionally this may not be practical due to the number of staff reporting to an individual manager and in this situation, the line manager will agree with the Executive Dean or nominee on an alternative appraiser. The line manager will need direct input to that discussion in regard to that employee's objectives and performance and they will also need to see the final appraisal documents.

Appraisees may ask for an alternative appraiser, giving reasons for their request. The Executive Dean or nominee should give this request reasonable consideration. This request should not unreasonably be refused. The Executive Dean or nominee will decide on the alternative appraiser, if the staff member is unhappy with the alternative, they may exercise the right to request another alternative.

Where employees move to another role within the University, it is important that they share all CDSA documents with their new line manager to ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities and a clear understanding of performance history.

4. The key components of CDSA

The CDSA record form provides the structure for the preparation of the discussion and the means of summarising the discussion. There are 3 main components:

- Review of achievements and objectives. The purpose of the review is to discuss and record the employee's objectives and achievements during the review period. Both appraiser and appraisee have responsibility for collecting evidence to inform this discussion and can draw on the information provided through the AL Activities Review (ALAR) where this is relevant. The ALAR provides information about six areas, for example monitoring reports and staff development activities.

This information can provide a useful framework to help facilitate the discussion that takes place during CDSA. It can be supplemented by the AL if they wish to do so by including information/evidence/feedback from other sources or activities which are relevant to their OU role.

- **Setting Objectives.** The purpose of objective setting is to define the specific contribution expected of staff over the forthcoming review period and the tasks to be given the highest priority. This takes place within the context of university plans and priorities and resource constraints. Outcomes may be expressed as SMART objectives (see below).
- **Development Planning.** The purpose of Professional Development Planning is to provide dedicated time for managers and staff to assess learning and development needs, explore ways of meeting them within FTE capacity and time constraints and generate a commitment to undertake and support learning and growth.

The CDSA form is a supporting document that enables appraisees and appraisers to prepare for and record the CDSA discussion; it does not drive the process itself. It is important that there is a formal record of the CDSA discussion.

5. Steps towards an effective CDSA discussion

Prior to the meeting:

- The appraiser and appraisee should gather evidence of achievements and development activities undertaken during the review period.
- The appraisee should reflect on how they have met objectives set in the previous CDSA cycle, consider their draft objectives and development needs for the future and complete the CDSA record. They should then send it to their appraiser.
- The appraiser and appraisee should agree a time and format for the discussion, for example via telephone, Skype, Teams, or face to face.
- Note professional development that has taken place.

Things to consider when reviewing objectives and achievements:

- Evidence of achievement in meeting agreed objectives and other examples of excellent performance (e.g. from the Associate Lecturer Activities Review and other student feedback). Where *written* comments on an individual's job performance are obtained from other managers, (including by email), the appraisee must have access to them. Those submitting written comments should be aware that the appraisee will see their comments.
- Evidence of commitment to equality and diversity.
- Actions and priorities to be carried forward to the next review period.

Things to consider when setting objectives:

- Consistency with workload management and professional development plans to ensure that individuals are able to maximise their contribution without being overloaded.

- Recognising *what* needs to be done and *how*.
- Building in specific responsibilities for equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Making objectives SMART:
 - S**pecific – is it clear what has to be achieved?
 - M**easurable – how will outcomes be defined in terms of quantity, quality, cost?
 - A**chievable – will it stretch without causing overload?
 - R**elevant – how will it contribute to unit or University goals?
 - T**ime bound – when are outputs to be delivered?
- Making explicit links to faculty and strategic priorities.

Things to consider when development planning:

- Objectives agreed for the forthcoming review period and development needed to meet these objectives
- The AL Professional Development Framework and resources available to support AL development
- Career aspirations and potential
- The University's Valued Ways of Working framework.

It is essential that appraisers have the relevant skills and knowledge to facilitate effective appraisals and they will be required to undertake training as appropriate, which may involve attendance at a training course or other training as agreed. Appraisers who are new to the role are encouraged to complete the online CDSA module available on My Learning Centre.

Appraisers who have received similar training or gained experience of carrying out appraisals from a previous employer can refer to the CDSA guidance notes and seek coaching from their manager and/or colleagues to familiarise themselves with the approach of their faculty.

6. Confidentiality and record keeping

Only the appraiser, Executive Dean or nominee and appraisee will have a copy of the CDSA form and have a responsibility for ensuring the contents remain confidential. The Executive Dean or nominee will review an appropriate number of CDSA record forms to ensure the outcomes from CDSA are in line with the principles of CDSA.

A new line manager should have access to CDSA records completed by their predecessors for their appraisees.

Three appraisal records may be stored by appraisers, the earliest record of the three being destroyed when the latest record is agreed.

7. References

Career Development and Staff Appraisal Policy
 Associate Lecturer CDSA Record
 CDSA Principles for Associate Lecturers