

Appraisal

– Operational, Professional and Technical

This guide is intended to help prepare for the Appraisal discussion. In addition, there is [guidance on how to use the system](#), and workshops. Book on ‘*Making the most of your Appraisal:Appraisers*’ and *Making the most of your Appraisal:Appraisees*’ [here](#).

The yearly appraisal discussion is a summary of more regular conversations and gives you space to reflect and look at the big picture.

You can jump to the part of the guide you are most interested in. There is also additional guidance for Technicians [Appraisal-guidance-technicians-v4.pdf \(qmul.ac.uk\)](#) which can be read in conjunction with the guidance below.

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Summary



1. Set date | for your Appraisal discussion with your appraiser.

2. Complete form and share with appraiser | Reflect on the past year using the questions in the Appraisal form as a prompt.

- a) Agree with your appraiser if you should complete the Looking Forward objectives before or after the appraisal discussion.
- b) To consider your Looking Forward objectives, you will need to understand your School/Institute/ Department's objectives.
- c) *Share* the form with your appraiser at least 5 days before the meeting.

3. Have appraisal discussion | Have appraisal discussion(s) with your appraiser.

4. Update form content and share | Both you and your appraiser update content based on discussion, and both complete the Summary tab.

5. Finalise appraisal | This can be done by you or your appraiser, as long as you have both seen final content.

6. In 121s review and update | Update and review your form regularly. When the new Appraisal is launched, your *Looking Forward* objectives will be prepopulated into the *Looking Back* objectives of the new form. You can use this new form to add notes on progress and/or changes throughout the year.

Aims of the Appraisal discussion:

- Review progress, performance and delivery against agreed objectives.
- Agree clear objectives and priorities for the year ahead, aligned to University, Faculty/School/Directorate and team priorities.
- Celebrate successes and recognise contribution.
- Identify support, development needs and any barriers to achieving objectives.
- Discuss strengths, future contribution and career aspirations.

The Appraisal document can be updated throughout the year to include any changes to and progress of work and development objectives.

All staff should have one or more objectives that clearly align to University priorities for the appraisal year. These may be individual objectives, collective team objectives, or objectives that support collaboration across organisational boundaries.

When conducting the appraisal discussion, keep in mind the behaviours in the [Values in action](#) e.g. respecting people's different skills and knowledge; providing appropriate, well-identified challenges and

support to others.

Some parts of the form are pre-populated from the previous year's form e.g., this year's 'Looking back' objectives are pre-populated with last year's 'Looking forward' objectives. You can split the appraisal into more than one meeting to ensure discussions are focussed and that you have sufficient time.

OPD welcomes any feedback on the form so we can continually improve. However the form is just there to support; the quality of the conversation is what's important.

The form

Objectives

Preparation

As an appraisee and appraiser, consider:

- Specific achievements to celebrate – consider what went well and what you learnt from them
- Areas that haven't progressed: what have been the obstacles, and how could these be overcome/avoided?
- Challenges faced, overcome and foreseen.
- Support needed
- Enhancements in practice to support equality, diversity and inclusivity. How can you build/share this?
- What are our priorities now and in the future? What does this mean for what I should start, stop, and continue doing?

The following documents might help you prepare:

- [Strategy 2030](#), [Strategic Priorities](#) (Appendix 2) and Enabling Plans
- Department/team plans

Looking forward objectives

Why

- Ensure a shared understanding of priorities, expected contribution and measures of success.
- Align individual and team effort with University priorities.
- Support effective delivery of agreed outcomes.
- Enable constructive conversations about workload, support and development.
- That work is prioritised based on areas that are aligned to Strategy 2030, Enabling Plans, Department plans and where possible your interests and ambitions.

Types of objectives

Objectives may include:

- individual objectives;
- shared objectives held collectively by a team;
- objectives supporting delivery of Faculty, School, Directorate or University priorities;
- objectives that support collaboration across organisational boundaries; and
- objectives that contribute to the work or priorities of another team where appropriate.

How

- Objectives are expressed as outcomes and are not detailed descriptions of how work is to be done.
- Whilst a firm statement of intent, some objectives will change in the face of shifting circumstances and opportunities. Some objectives will depend on the availability of support/resources.
- They should relate to all the main areas of a person's role including both continuing work and one-off projects.

Review all objectives to check they are SMART:

Specific. The outcome is tangible and concrete.

Measurable. Describe the features of a successful outcome. Some may be quantifiable. Where it is not possible to quantify, the challenge is: has the outcome been described sufficiently clearly that both sides know what success would look like?

Achievable. Objectives should be achievable in normal working time and within the control of the individual, in the anticipated context, including the resources likely to be available.

Relevant. Objectives must be relevant to the activities and ambitions of the appraisee and the School/Institute priorities, and aligned to Strategy 2030

Time-related. Objectives have a deadline which should be appropriate to the nature of the work rather than be driven by the annual review cycle. Where longer timescales than a year are appropriate and agreed, it is helpful to discuss interim milestones.

For example objectives see [Appendix 1](#).

Citizenship

This section is about how you have contributed to the Queen Mary community; it replaces the *Additional Contribution* section.

Contributions to the community could include things like – volunteering on clearing/open days, being a champion for a University initiative, supporting work in Equality Diversity Inclusion. Consider how you can build on success, embed work that has already been started, and leverage your strengths. This section also asks you:

What Values in action do you want to focus on in delivering your objectives?

This gives you an opportunity to reflect on what behaviours it would be useful to use in order to achieve the best outcome. For example, when developing a proposal you could consider engaging with people you wouldn't normally (Inclusion) and/or consider how you could approach it in a new way (Ambitious).

How you will measure your success?

It's important to consider how you measure your success upfront, as it may require you to gain a baseline measure and/or a clearer idea of the problem you are trying to solve. These can be quite simple; for example, if you were mentoring someone you might set objectives at the beginning, then ask the mentee to describe/rate where they are at the start and end of the mentoring process.

This gives you an opportunity to reflect on the part you can play in improving awareness and reputation of Queen Mary. For example, are you making best use of the [design templates and key messages](#) provided by Marketing & Communications? You could consider whether/how you can improve the public profile of your work and what training, coaching or other support you might require to support you.

Considering both the *Objective* and *Citizenship* section, is the workload manageable? Consider whether objectives, responsibilities and priorities are realistic and achievable within available time and resources. Fewer, higher-quality objectives that focus on the most important priorities are often more effective than a larger number of competing objectives. Where there are competing priorities or barriers to delivery, these should be discussed and addressed.

Support and Engagement

Consider – how are you doing? What is working for you? What needs to change? What motivates you? Identify areas where you might say 'my job would be great/even better if...' or 'I really like my job except...'

Engage with the purpose of the job: what's important to you about it?

Career and Development

Looking back

It's worth spending time on this section, reflecting on what development you have had and how you have applied it. Often this requires some thinking and support.

Looking forward

Career and personal ambition

Discuss career ambitions. An opportunity for the appraisee to discuss and test their career ambitions. For some this may be a brief conversation insofar as they do not want to move from their current role in the foreseeable future. Focus would therefore be on how they keep themselves up-to-date in their current role. To support career conversations we have developed some guides, workshops and a tool to help you consider what you need to do to progress to the next level see our [Professional Services Career Development](#).

Your Development Objectives and Activities

- Values in action and Leading Together can help you reflect and consider your development areas. Leading Together has a self-assessment tool which also offers development tips.
- Development objectives may arise out of reflection on the previous year, supported needed for planned objectives, changes, keeping up to date, continuous improvement, and career ambitions.
- Avoid defaulting to only thinking about training; most new expertise is acquired through exposure to new situations, people, and challenges. Consider, therefore, suggesting new responsibilities to gain different experience, mentoring, guided reading and job shadowing.

Internal development

[Organisational and Professional Development](#)

[Health and Safety](#)

For Technicians there are specific guidance on the [TechNET](#) pages see particularly the Continuing Professional Development pages.

Tips for an effective Appraisal discussion



Opener questions

What is important to you in your work right now?

Which of the Strategic Priorities (see appendix 2) do you feel you make the biggest contribution to?

Which of our Values in action do you feel are your strongest? When have you demonstrated this?

How can this conversation be of most help to you?



Builder questions

Tell me more about your biggest achievement?

What challenges have you successfully overcome and how?

What small step could you take to build on this success?

How would others know that things were improving?



Delivery and Priority questions

Which University, Faculty, School, Directorate or team priorities should be reflected in your objectives for the year ahead?

Which objectives or priorities have had the greatest impact this year?

What outcomes or achievements are you most proud of delivering?

Which University priorities does your work contribute to most directly?

What evidence demonstrates successful delivery?

What barriers have affected delivery and how have they been addressed?

What should be the highest priorities for the year ahead?

Where would greater collaboration with another team improve outcomes?

Providing helpful feedback

First check - am I being a good 'critical friend' and doing this because I want to help and support?

Start with a question to prompt their self-reflection, e.g. How did you think x went? In hindsight what would you do differently? What might help you do that? They might already be aware of the issue.

If not, try the BIFF feedback model:

- **Behaviour** – be specific about the events, facts or behaviours you have seen or been
 - told about. Back this up with data – what specifically was said and done?
- **Impact** – what impact has the action had on other people or the organisation? Back this up with data – what are their and your thoughts, opinions or conclusions as a result?
 - Consider what is your shared purpose e.g. “It would be helpful to have shorter e-mails so I can more easily pick up your point” or “do x so we can complete tasks efficiently/ to a high standard.”
- **Feelings** – how do you or others feel about the situation (not about the individual)?
 - “I feel pleased ...”
 - “You made X feel proud ...” “I feel worried ...”
 - “I feel it comes across that ...”
 - “When you said this to X, they said that it made them feel...”

Evidence

Reflection [Research](#) suggest that people who reflect are more effective

Positive feedback- a number of research studies (e.g. [Budworth et al 2019](#)) suggest that providing more positive feedback (consider a ration of 3:1) results in more improved performance.

Spend as long thinking about and planning how you give positive feedback as you do about constructive feedback.

- No one can deny other people's feelings and why it is personally important to them.
- **Future** – what is the desired outcome or result of this? Be clear about the results this feedback is intending to produce? What do you want to reinforce, change, do or stop?

The BIFF model (above) is also appropriate for positive feedback.

When receiving feedback:

If the feedback is positive it can be natural to not spend time reflecting on it. However, it's important to acknowledge it (thank the person) and consider how you can build on this and use your strengths.

If the feedback is negative, it can be natural to feel defensive and justify your actions, for example by blaming the situation or other people. If you do this people are unlikely to want to give you feedback again, and you will miss out on important perspectives. Try to give yourself time:

- Ask questions and probe for more information if necessary, to ensure you have sufficient detail and understanding of the feedback.
- Take a 'time out' if needed: "That's interesting. I've not seen it like that before, can I go away and reflect?"
- You can ask others to get their perspective.
- Agree next steps, during the conversation, or at an agreed later time.

Appendix 1 – Example objectives

Example objectives

Example objective	Comments
Target new sources of income (e.g....) and prepare the following (products or services) for commercial sale with a view to raising £x. Create a plan for commercialization that takes account of the likely risks. By (date).	This objective recognises there is a clear aim to raise money through the commercialization activity. However the reference to creating a plan that acknowledges the risk reflects that the appraisee may not have complete control of the final outcome.
Lead the development and delivery of a project on (specify), involving departments/ individuals (specify), and within a budget of £ (specify) by (date).	A generic project objective. In reality, and in order to bring it more to life, it would benefit from a brief reference to why the project is being pursued/what the likely benefits would be.
(As a more senior staff member) Work with key stakeholders to develop a 5 year forward strategic plan relating to their area. Seek approval for this from the departmental senior management team. By (date).	A useful example of an objective where there are two aims: a) to create a plan and b) to get buy-in for it.
Provide a new room booking service to all Queen Mary staff with all booking requests confirmed within 24 hours. By (date).	The appraiser should ensure that the appraisee has a clear idea of the scale and volume of what they are being asked to deliver
Create a reception service for the department, welcoming visitors and introducing them to the appropriate departmental staff. Create basic standards so that the facility can be run by a range of staff. These standards should cover: phone answering, greeting, taking and giving information. By 30 September.	The appraisee is being asked to implement new processes within their department. Ensure they have sufficient support, particularly in relation to being able to influence the behaviours of others in the department.
Provide a monthly report to Heads of Department that publicises the key activities of the department, including measures for the core services (specify). The report should be no more than 3 pages, should be consistent in layout month-by-month and should be easy to generate by others when you are away. By end August.	The objective assumes the individual is competent in both data management and formatting of reports. This may be so, but the appraiser should check what support they may need in either area.
Organise and provide enhanced support to [names of] committees, including the development and distribution of agendas and minutes at least two weeks before and after the meeting. By 30 September.	This objective may have grown from a regular activity of the individual. The emphasis, however, is on enhancing the service: it should make clear what those expected enhancements are.
As an experienced staff member, mentor one designated new starter during the coming year. Spend about one hour per fortnight with him/her to ensure they: know where to get information for	A useful type of objective with very experienced staff who do not necessarily want further career progression themselves but can support others through mentoring. Ideally the objective would be

various parts of their job; they identify the skills to develop to progress.

made more specific by reference to a particular person and their specific support needs.

Operational

Example objective	Comments
Supervise the new cleaning team to achieve improved cleanliness in allocated rooms. Communicate with all staff the expectations for cleaning and carry out spotchecks with 95% meeting the standards. By (date).	Rather than simply being restatements of role descriptions, this objective (and those below) should reflect desired progress, whilst ensuring they remain within the capacity of individuals.
Carry out room set-ups for exams in XX building. All rooms will be up to the new standards already agreed in terms of furniture layout and provision of tested and working equipment. By (date).	
Establish the effective operation of the new catering facility (specify). This will include communicating clear expectations and standards (specify) to all staff and ensuring they all have relevant training plans. The facility should be achieving satisfaction ratings of x% by (date).	
Develop effective communication skills (specify) to improve working relationships within the team and enhance service delivery by (date).	Whilst this objective would need building up in the specification of the communication skills to be developed, it makes very clear the purpose for the development.

Technical

Example objective	Comments
Provide technical support to research project X (specify), supporting the research team in evaluating emerging data. Work with the project leaders to recommend, agree and develop more effective and efficient processes for the use of relevant equipment, paying particular attention to the scarcest technical resources (specify). By end June.	Whilst this is quite a lengthy objective, it has the merit, in an area where there is likely to be much technical detail, of keeping the appraiser focused on two principal aims: data evaluation and improving processes.
Review maintenance schedules on current equipment (specify) in light of new safety legislation (specify) and recommend to the management team a series of proposed revisions, together with an implementation plan (including additional resourcing, revised stock holding and training requirements) and likely cost impact. By end October.	This objective seeks to be helpful by listing in brackets some of the likely components of the implementation plan. However, care should be taken that it is not assumed that those things listed are all that would comprise a good plan.

Enhance the usefulness of the departmental website by gathering updates and new material from department managers at the start of each month, and publishing new material within one week. Review the website for out-of-date material and delete or archive. By 30 June.

This objective is perfectly acceptable, but cries out, in the surrounding conversation, for some discussion as to the value of doing this work.

Appendix 2 - Strategic priorities

To ensure we are all focused on what is important to Queen Mary your objectives should support one more of the following strategic priorities.

