



Policy on the Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document replaces all prior policy documents on SRDS, and follows an evaluation of SRDS and detailed discussions with University management and the campus unions.
- 1.2. Throughout this document “Head of School” also means Head of Service or Head of Institute. Where there is no equivalent, this role will be undertaken by the appropriate Dean or Senior Officer of the University.
- 1.3. This document and the SRDS form are formally agreed between the University and the campus unions and should not be altered in any way.

2. Framework for SRDS

- 2.1. The purpose of staff review is straightforward. It is to provide an opportunity, firstly to look back at the contribution that has been made by an individual, and then to look forward and make plans for the coming twelve months. SRDS aims to support and develop staff to achieve both career development objectives and performance improvements which are consistent with current and future institutional objectives and service developments.
- 2.2. SRDS should result in mutual clarity of expectations, defined and agreed objectives, balanced feedback on achievements and performance, clarity of priorities, an appropriate development plan and appropriate alignment with University, Faculty and School objectives – consistent with the principle of academic freedom.
- 2.3. SRDS helps staff achieve their full potential by providing the opportunity for 2-way review of work progress, identifying key objectives, providing constructive feedback, recognising success, achievement and providing support for improvement and identifying and planning appropriate development, as well as allowing discussion of career aspirations and aligning these with the organisation’s requirements.

- 2.4. Specific outcomes of SRDS should be:
- a mutual clarity of expectations through the agreement of realistic, achievable and prioritised objectives and a personal development plan, taking account of career aspirations, overall workload and aligned with School/Service objectives;
 - support and development so that staff can achieve both career development objectives and performance improvements;
 - staff feeling valued and engaged with the University strategy and that they can achieve their full potential.
- 2.5. The University will promote consistency of approach by ensuring that all reviewers are appropriately trained before undertaking a review. Web-based guidance is available to reviewees.
- 2.6. The principles of SRDS are underpinned by the national Framework Agreement and its associated guidance. As such, the University is committed to a process of regular impact assessment and joint monitoring and review through the joint committees with the campus unions to ensure that:
- the staff review and development process is being applied consistently across the institution, and is supporting the further enhancement of equality of opportunity;
 - equality of access is provided to training and development opportunities across the institution by grade, area of work and type of contract, and across all fields of potential discrimination;
 - resources available for staff development are applied equitably and appropriately across the institution, and in line with institutional objectives and need.
- 2.7. The University has agreed formal procedures to deal with performance and capability issues. SRDS is not a substitute for these and it is not appropriate to use SRDS to deal with matters that are more appropriately addressed by those mechanisms.

3. Key principles

- 3.1. SRDS is a mutual process designed to be owned equally by the reviewer and reviewee. In order to gain most from the experience, individuals have to be proactive in their own development and have an equal part to play at all stages of the process and in implementing and monitoring agreed outcomes.
- 3.2. The review meeting will be held annually (within the period 1 August – 31 July each year) with supporting interim discussions as required to support progress with agreed actions relating to agreed objectives and development. It is the Dean's/Head of Service's responsibility to ensure that reviews take place each 12 months. Statistical monitoring will take place at each year end.
- 3.3. SRDS should act as a summary of ongoing discussions. Progression criteria and individual development needs should be discussed at regular intervals and these arrangements should include appropriate supportive intervention where individuals are not progressing as expected within their career pathway. It should therefore not be the first time the reviewee is invited to discuss any potential problems. SRDS though should clearly identify any mutual concerns and any plan agreed to address these.
- 3.4. SRDS will apply to all staff except in the following cases:
- staff on probation* (but see last bullet point in this paragraph below) as they will have regular probationary meetings. The final meeting to 'sign off' probation is deemed to be the first SRDS meeting;

- staff who are employed for less than twelve months and will not be re-appointed for a subsequent period;
- staff who are within twelve months of agreed retirement;
- staff who have formally resigned.

For clarification, SRDS does apply in the following cases:

- staff returning from maternity leave, long term sick or sabbatical should be included in SRDS within the normal annual time-frame or within three months after their return;
- staff on secondment for more than 12 months should have their SRDS in the department where they are a secondee. If the secondment is for less than 12 months their parent department should undertake an SRDS upon their return;
- staff who are employed on repeat contracts, including term-time contracts or hourly contract - if they usually return to the University each year they should be having an SRDS;
- *University Research Fellows who are on a 5 year probation should, as part of their regular probationary meetings, have one meeting a year using SRDS.

- 3.5. The SRDS meeting will be the mechanism which brings together and synthesises information and plans on all the activities of the member of staff. The SRDS meeting will therefore ensure that priorities are agreed and competing demands managed. For academic staff for example, the data collection processes generated by the annual review of research, by student feedback from modules and through any workload model will be used to inform the SRDS meeting. All staff will be expected to discuss their responsibility for Health and Safety and all those with a leadership or management role will be expected to discuss the University's Leadership and Management Standard and reflect whether they require any training and development to support this. In this way there will be no duplication between the SRDS and other processes.
- 3.6. An outcome of SRDS should be improved communication about University/Faculty/School/Service objectives and where the individual member of staff contributes to these. Therefore each School/Service should have an open, transparent and collegial process for determining, agreeing and communicating overall academic/service direction and priorities within the context of the University Strategy. SRDS reviewers in particular should be briefed about the School/Service strategy and its relationship to the overall University strategy in advance of each annual round of review meetings. Reviewers can thus ensure that an individual's objectives are in line with agreed School/Service objectives, taking account of 3.7 below.
- 3.7. The spirit of providing guidance should be to support the individual development process in a flexible, tailored way. SRDS is an excellent opportunity to recognise the hard work that staff put in and to note successes and achievements. SRDS discussions should help the member of staff to make progress in their job and career and therefore to be geared to individual circumstances and needs. The SRDS discussion needs to reflect all the issues that affect the individual member of staff. So, for example, there may be workload model issues which need to be taken into account, and there may be individual circumstances which need to be understood and discussed. It is vital to avoid a formulaic approach and to address each individual set of circumstances in a balanced way.
- 3.8. In addition Schools and Services should consider whether there might be helpful ways of describing the typical development stages and achievements that might be appropriate to different career stages. Using this flexibly, recognising academic

diversity and making information available on School/Service objectives and targets, will make it possible to agree individual development plans in the context of the overall University mission.

4. Operation of the scheme

- 4.1. Each Faculty, School or Service will identify a team of reviewers – usually those with line management or leadership responsibilities – who will be trained in the operation of SRDS. The team of reviewers will reflect appropriate diversity factors as far as possible. The Head will allocate reviewers to reviewees. A member of staff can ask the Head to consider a different reviewer and a joint decision will be made taking into account the following factors in order to gain most from the exercise: the need for the reviewer to understand the reviewee's role, the degree of fit between the knowledge and experience of the reviewer and reviewee, their capacity to ensure appropriate support and development is provided to the reviewee on an ongoing basis, the need for consistency and the need to allocate review numbers appropriately (see 4.3 below).
- 4.2. University Senior Management (Deans/VCEG members) should be the first to have their staff review each year, in the knowledge that all staff should have had their review by 31 July each year. Assuming that overall academic/service direction and priorities have been determined, agreed and communicated in an open, transparent and collegial way within the context of the University Strategy as per 3.6 above, SRDS will help to cascade these objectives and make them meaningful to individuals throughout the School/Service.
- 4.3. Unless otherwise agreed with the Dean/Head of Service in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, a reviewer will normally have responsibility for more than 1 but not more than 8 reviewees in any one annual cycle.
- 4.4. At the SRDS, the reviewee and reviewer will review the current job description. If it is agreed that there is need for an update this should be noted in the SRDS documentation. Job descriptions will only be changed after full discussion with the role holder (including her/his representative where requested) and their line manager, and any changes will be commensurate with the grade. Reviewers cannot make promises about outcomes of any role analysis or contribution/promotions decisions.
- 4.5. For all staff, and particularly those with a leadership/management role, feedback from others will be encouraged but is not compulsory and there must be no pressure on individuals to do this. An optional template request form to assist with soliciting feedback can be found on the HR and SDDU websites. Feedback forms received by the reviewer must be destroyed after the review meeting.
- 4.6. The SRDS discussions and form will normally be confidential (except as required by law) between the reviewer, reviewee and the Head of School/Service and information about individual's objectives and development may be used by the Head to inform Faculty/School/Service planning. Where there is a formally assigned Deputy Head, and with agreement of the campus unions, processing of SRDS forms can be shared, although responsibility remains with the Head. Training and development needs will be deemed non-confidential to ensure these can be actioned, and will be recorded on a tear-off slip at the back of the SRDS form. Members of the executive team in services such as RCS, Estates and ISS are classed as equivalent to a Head for SRDS purposes.

- 4.7. Agreed summaries of recent review discussions can be used to provide evidence about suitability for promotion or the award of accelerated scale increments and discretionary increments.
- 4.8. In the event of a dispute between reviewee and reviewer, both parties can agree to refer the matter in the first instance to the Head of School/Service to mediate. If the problem cannot be solved in this way the Faculty Dean/VCEG Senior Officer in consultation with the HR Manager will be responsible for mediating the problem. In this case all involved will need access to the review paperwork, together with any campus union representative that the reviewee asks to be involved.
- 4.9. SRDS actions that are agreed should be implemented seriously and in line with agreed timescales and should be reviewed regularly by both the reviewer and the reviewee. Heads should ensure that the result of any action taken following an SRDS is reported to a reviewer so that they can in turn let the reviewee know about progress. SRDS will be subject to on-going evaluation and monitoring to ensure that follow-up action is happening.
- 4.10. In identifying development needs and plans there will be recognition that development can take many different forms, including:
- Induction and probation
 - secondments
 - coaching
 - mentoring
 - work-shadowing
 - provision of access to relevant learning media
 - projects
 - task rotation
 - training – formal and on-job
 - take up of recognised qualifications where relevant
 - attendance or participation in appropriate conferences
 - participation in the work of professional bodies or learned societies
 - sabbaticals (the issues of sabbaticals and lifelong learning are being discussed further by the University and the trade unions and additional guidance will be issued in due course)
- 4.11. Heads must ensure that details of completed reviews are entered locally onto the HR SAP system to aid monitoring.
- 4.12. Following all reviews the Head must ensure that the training and development requirements are logged in the School Training and Development Plan and a copy is sent annually (usually by the end of October each year) to SDDU to aid central as well as local planning.
- 4.13. The University and the campus unions are keen to ensure that all staff have the same opportunity to discuss their progress, career and development needs, and it is a contractual right for individuals to have an SRDS. Therefore members of staff who have not been offered the opportunity for an SRDS meeting should report this to their Head of School/Service, who will take the appropriate action to ensure that the provisions of this document are implemented. SAP monitoring will also be used to encourage full participation.

This document was formally agreed at JCUU on 29.9.08