

# THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

## GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

### Annual Academic Meetings (AAMs) – January 2014

#### 1. Context and purpose

- 1.1. This framework is intended to support and assist Heads of Schools\* in having an annual academic meeting (AAM) with members of academic staff to discuss contribution, achievement and needs, to agree priorities and to resolve any associated workload issues.
- 1.2. AAM's do not replace SRDS meetings. The SRDS scheme remains the primary contractual mechanism for staff development and review. AAMs can, if the member of staff agrees, provide input to SRDS discussions to facilitate more effective discussion about, job and career development. Similarly matters raised in SRDS meetings can inform AAM discussions.
- 1.3. Many Faculties/Schools have a history of undertaking annual research discussions. In line with the University's strategy map and future agenda, it is important that there is a consistent, balanced and supportive opportunity for individual academics to discuss the full range of their academic responsibilities and challenges, including research and innovation and student education, with senior academic leaders in the School.
- 1.4. In future therefore, rather than meetings which consider only research, the remit will cover the full range of academic activities. This will provide a helpful basis for transparent, clear, two-way dialogue between those present about past achievements and future aspirations. It will also provide the opportunity for a balanced discussion about workload issues and a focus for communication and feedback on a School's annual/IPE preparation and results.
- 1.5. In conducting the meetings, and in considering appropriate workload priorities and resources to support individuals, Heads of School will work within the University's values and commitment to equality.
- 1.6. In summary, the meetings will:
  - 1.6.1 consolidate feedback on contribution and support good communications and understanding of activities and priorities;
  - 1.6.2 enhance contribution by providing a focus for self evaluation, acknowledging success and identifying areas of need for change or development;

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\* "Schools" in this document refers to Schools and Institutes

- 1.6.3 facilitate a two way discussion to agree priorities and expectations which are aligned with School and Faculty strategies;
  - 1.6.4 provide an opportunity to review and update the content of job descriptions and to agree any appropriate changes;
  - 1.6.5 provide a framework within which individual concerns about workload and resources and priorities can be explained and understood, and addressed.
- 1.7 In cases where sustained and/or acute underperformance issues need to be considered, the appropriate vehicle to deal with these is through the formal procedures in Statute VII and not through academic meetings. Academic meetings are not intended to replace any aspect of the formal procedures.

## **2 Operation of the meetings**

- 2.1 In order to achieve the outcome in 1.4 above in the most effective way, the meetings will normally involve the Head of School, Director of Research and the Director of Student Education, meeting with each academic member of staff. However, if the member of staff prefers to meet with their Head of School, Director of Research or Director of Student Education on a one to one basis, then this will be possible. Where a member of staff wishes this, s/he should indicate this to their Head of School, on a confidential basis if preferred. Requests for one to one meetings will be always be agreed.
- 2.2 The meetings should be as long and in as much depth as is necessary, reflecting individual issues and circumstances. This will vary according to a variety of factors including stage of career, the need for discussion about priorities, issues which have arisen, the need to identify support and resource. Where it is mutually agreed to be appropriate, the review can be 'light touch' whilst still achieving the desired outcomes.
- 2.3 SRDS and AAM discussions should be mutually supportive, and each should inform the other. A summary of the discussion should be made to provide a record for all parties and for the individual to feed into the SRDS process if they wish. Similarly, members of staff might want to raise issues from their SRDS discussions during the academic meeting. Schools might adopt a pro forma for this purpose. The record is confidential to those taking part in the meeting and, where different, the SRDS reviewer.

## **3 Planning the meetings**

In order to implement academic reviews effectively at School level there are a number of areas to consider. These include:

- 3.1 ***Who should be involved in the meeting?*** Whilst the meeting should normally be a joint discussion between the individual member of academic staff and the Head of School/Institute, Director of Student Education and Director of Research, it may in some larger Schools be appropriate to involve a limited number of other senior staff. In making this decision the overall principle will be that those involved will be operating with the full authority of the Head of School/Institute, Director of Student Education and Director of Research in providing feedback, addressing issues, agreeing support, resources and future priorities and objectives in line with School/Institute/Faculty strategy.
- 3.2 ***What is the timescale?*** It is for each Faculty to determine implementation so that every member of academic staff has a meeting during each academic year.
- 3.3 ***Which members of academic staff should take part in the meeting?*** All members of academic T&R staff (Lecturers, Senior Lecturers/Associate Professors, Readers and Professors) will be involved. Faculties/Schools might consider whether it is appropriate to extend this to include any grade 8/9 Senior/Principal Teaching or Research Fellows.
- 3.4 ***What data is required and how should this be collected?*** A possible core data set is included as Appendix 1. This should be derived as far as possible from the data already available and brought together in academic profiles. It should be made available to those attending the meeting in advance for the purpose of promoting informal discussion during the meeting. Schools can supplement this core data set if they wish and individuals can submit additional relevant information too.
- 3.5 ***What template paperwork should be available?*** Faculties/Schools may wish to consider introducing some standard documentation. As described above, a template could be provided as a vehicle for collating information from the individual before the meeting. It is also likely to help if Schools devise a form for the Head of School/Institute (or nominee) to complete and issue to the individual after the meeting recording key actions agreed. This will improve clarity and transparency. HR Managers can advise on possible examples which are already in use.

## 4 Review

- 4.1 This Framework will be kept under review, and updated appropriately in the light of experience. The review process will explicitly consider any equality issues arising from the process.

Matthew Knight  
HR Director  
January 2014

## **Appendix 1: Possible data framework to support academic meetings**

To be considered and tailored by each School

### **Student Education**

Current teaching duties/workload information

Current project supervision

Teaching quality -student feedback, peer review, external examiner reports

Blended learning

### **Research**

Current number and quality of publications

Plans for student numbers

Information on research grant submission (for 2010 and outcome along with current applications)

Research plans for the current and next academic year

Papers to be submitted for REF

### **Knowledge Exchange/Input**

Engagement with partner organisations

Collaborative Income generated

Intellectual Disclosures and Patents

Information on Knowledge Exchange activities

### **Academic Leadership**

Current academic leadership roles (workload allowance)

Esteem indicators