



## **Appraisal Policy and Process**

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<b>Approval needed by:</b>	<b>Finance and Staffing Committee</b>

This policy applies to The Learning Alliance employees only, does not form part of an employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. However, it does set out current practice and policy and employees are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with its content.

## **Purpose**

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all employees at The Learning Alliance. It also sets out the standards expected of colleagues and the arrangements that will apply when individuals fall below those standards.

This Policy comprises two parts:

- Part A: Appraisal
- Part B: Individual Development

(Capability is now contained in a separate policy)

## **Monitoring**

Trustees will ensure that all staff, including the CEO, have their performance appraised on an annual basis. Some responsibilities are delegated to Trust Officers, Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies as set out below.

The CEO will provide the Trustees with a written report on the operation of the Trust's appraisal policy annually. The report will not contain any information which would enable any individual to be identified. The report will include:

- the operation of the appraisal policy;
- the effectiveness of the appraisal procedures;
- staff training and development needs.

## **Workload and Equality Impact Assessment**

Trustees are satisfied that the operation of this policy does not have a detrimental effect on the workload of those involved. Trustees are also satisfied that the terms of this policy will not impact adversely on members of staff who have a protected characteristic within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010.

In addition, the Trust is committed to promoting equality and will ensure that the appraisal process is fair and non-discriminatory and that monitoring data should be included in the CEO's report covering each of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010.

The CEO will also report on whether there have been any appeals or representations on an individual or collective basis on the grounds of alleged discrimination under any protected characteristics.

# Appraisal

## Key Principles

Appraisal at The Learning Alliance will be a supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and support needed to carry out their role effectively. It will help to ensure that colleagues are able to continue to improve their professional practice and to develop as individual practitioners and professionals.

This policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent assessment of the overall performance of all staff in the Trust and for supporting their development needs within the context of each school's needs and for improving educational provision and performance. Where staff are eligible for pay progression, the assessment of performance throughout the cycle will be the basis on which the recommendation is made by the appraiser and this policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Pay Policy which provides details of these arrangements.

Trustees expect that objectives set for all staff, if achieved, will improve the education of students at each school and contribute to improving each school's education provision and performance.

Teachers will be assessed against the Teachers' Standards and any other standards relating to teachers' performance as is applicable to the performance of any individual teacher.

Support Staff will be assessed against the Support Staff Standards, as commensurate with their job description.

## Performance Review and Feedback

Performance will be discussed and measured against relevant standards, observation and other evidence from the monitoring and evaluation cycle, including through scrutiny of students' work and examination and test results. The Learning Alliance believes that observations of teaching and learning for classroom practitioners, as well as observation of other responsibilities for all staff as appropriate, is an important tool to assess individual performance. This is in order to identify any particular strengths and areas for development and will inform appraisal and any future development objectives as necessary. Observation will be carried out in a professional manner and involve feedback. Any observation which has taken place in a reasonable time period may be used in assessing standards. Unless there were exceptional circumstances, such observations would normally take place in the previous 12 months.

Teachers' performance will be regularly reviewed but the amount and type of classroom observation and scrutiny will depend on the individual circumstances of the teacher and the overall needs of the school. Classroom observation will be carried out by those with QTS/QTLS. The CEO, Headteacher or other leaders may "drop in" or otherwise check on performance, at any time throughout the year in order to evaluate the standards of teaching and to check that high standards of professional performance are established and maintained. The length and frequency of "drop in" observations will vary depending on specific circumstances. Typically, classroom observations and/or 'drop-ins' will not exceed more than one a week, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any teacher whose performance is formally observed may usually expect feedback which will highlight areas of strength as well as areas that need attention.

Staff who have responsibilities outside the classroom should also expect to have their performance of those responsibilities monitored and assessed. Monitoring may be scheduled over a period of time and take place in a range of ways.

### **The Appraisal Period**

The appraisal period will run for twelve months from September, with a mid-year review in February. Members of staff who join or leave the school mid-term will experience a shorter appraisal. Equally, staff leaving to go on maternity leave will have an appraisal before the leave commences.

Individuals who are employed on a fixed term contract of less than one year will have their performance managed in accordance with the principles underpinning this policy. The length of the period will be determined by the duration of their contract.

Staff with leadership responsibilities can also expect to have their performance in this aspect of their role appraised and targets will be set accordingly.

### **Appraisers**

The CEO will be appraised by a committee of three trustees including the Chair and Vice Chair. The appointment of a suitably skilled and/or experienced external adviser to support this process is an option open to the Chair but it is not a requirement of this policy. This appraisal meeting will also include the setting of objectives.

At School level, the Headteacher has final responsibility for determining who will appraise other colleagues. Usually the relevant line manager will be responsible for appraising performance.

### **Objective Setting**

The objectives set will be rigorous, challenging, achievable, time-bound, fair and equitable in relation to staff with similar roles/responsibilities and experience, and will have regard to what can reasonably be expected of any staff member at a given point of their career progression. The Trust also recognize the desirability of staff being able to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. Objectives will take account of any relevant pay progression criteria and, where possible, the individual's professional aspirations. They will be such that, if they are achieved, they will contribute to improving the education of students at the school and the implementation of any plans of the Trustees, Local Governing Body or CEO designed to improve the school's education provision and performance.

In all cases, it is expected that the basic job role is being completed to the required level. Additional objectives will be set as soon as practicable at the beginning of the appraisal period. The appraiser and appraisee will seek to agree the objectives but where a joint determination cannot be made the appraiser will make the determination. Objectives may be revised if circumstances change and/or at the mid-year review point.

Generally, staff are likely to have:

- between 3 and 5 objectives
- staff in similar roles will not necessarily all have the same number of objectives

Though appraisal is an assessment of overall performance, objectives cannot cover the full range of an individual's roles/responsibilities. Objectives will, therefore, focus on the priorities for an individual for the cycle.

## **Reviewing Progress**

Although the formal Appraisal cycle has a specific start and end date, it is expected that line managers will review and discuss progress with individuals throughout the year. At the end of the appraisal cycle, the appraiser will draw together evidence about performance over the whole period, including by consulting:

- The 'Teachers' Standards', 'Leadership Standards' or the 'Support Staff Standards' as applicable,
- Any relevant competencies for the role,
- Any other set of standards relating to staff performance about which the individual has been notified at the beginning of the appraisal period,
- The individual's additional objectives,
- The individual's professional development needs

The appraiser will also, where relevant under the Pay Policy, make a recommendation relating to the individual's pay.

Assessment of performance against an objective will be on the basis of the performance criteria set at the beginning of the cycle. Good progress towards the achievement of a challenging objective even if not fully met, will be assessed favourably.

The appraisal cycle is annual, but on occasions it may be appropriate to set objectives that will cover a period over more than one cycle. In such cases, the basis on which the progress being made towards meeting the performance criteria for the objective will be assessed at the end of the first cycle and will be recorded in the report at the beginning of the next cycle.

Performance will be reviewed against the relevant criteria for the role. All performance will be graded as follows:

*Meeting expectation*

*Not meeting expectation*

## **Appeals**

Where a member of staff is dissatisfied with the application of the appraisal process (except for decisions on pay) they have recourse to the Trust's Grievance Procedure to pursue the matter.

Where a member of staff is dissatisfied with the recommendation or decision on pay, they have the right of appeal through the appeals mechanism of the Trust Pay Policy. (See Appendix 3 of the Pay Policy)

## Concerns

Where there are concerns about any aspects of an individual's performance at any time the appraiser will then meet the individual to implement an improvement support plan. The purpose of this is to:

- give clear feedback to the individual concerned about the nature and seriousness of the concerns;
- give the individual concerned the opportunity to comment and discuss the concerns;
- agree any support (e.g. coaching, mentoring, structured observations), that will be provided to help address those specific concerns;
- revise objectives;
- make clear how, and by when, the appraiser will review progress against revised objectives, allowing reasonable time for improvement and regular review. The amount of time is up to the line manager but should reflect the seriousness of the concerns;
- explain the implications and process if no, or insufficient, improvement is made.

In these circumstances, the appraiser and appraisee **must** meet on occasions throughout the term to discuss these concerns. It may be appropriate to revise and amend objectives to reflect significant concerns. If this does not result in improvement, the employee will be notified that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the Trust's Capability Policy, triggering commencement of the formal capability procedure.

## Judgements & Standardisation

No judgement should be confirmed until the line manager has held discussions with relevant colleagues. Provisional judgements will be discussed in faculties or support teams as appropriate and subsequent standardisation will be undertaken. The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for the quality assurance of the appraisal process across each school. This will include ensuring consistency and equality of application of the process throughout the school. The Headteacher will report annually to the Local Governing Body on any relevant issues, including those of underperformance, arising from the annual review cycle and on any action required to address those issues. The report will enable governors to receive an overall general report of the process but will not include specific details relating to individual members of staff.

Moderation of appraisal reports may be conducted by a specially convened panel comprising of the CEO, the Headteachers and the Director of Human Resources if this is felt necessary to ensure consistency across the Trust for those who have similar experience and similar levels of responsibility, and for rigour in application of the Appraisal policy and the regulations and requirements of equality legislation.

## **Appraisal Report**

On completion of the appraisal process the Appraisal Report, having been discussed and agreed between the appraisee and appraiser will be submitted to the Director of Human Resources according to published dates. If agreement cannot be reached between the appraiser and appraisee then the MAT reserves the right to decide the objective/performance grade. If at any time during the process there is discord and dispute the appraisee will have recourse to the grievance procedure.

The appraisal report will include:

- details of the appraisee's objectives for the appraisal period in question;
- an assessment of the appraisee's performance of their role and responsibilities against their previous objectives, current job description, observation where appropriate and the relevant standards;
- an assessment of the appraisee's training and development needs and identification of any action that should be taken to address them.

The Head of Faculty/Key Area will collate and inform the Director of Human Resources of any requests/needs for training for individual staff.

## **Training for Assessors**

Guidance and any training necessary will be made available on how to conduct the appraisal process to ensure consistency and standardisation.

## **Pay Progression**

Whilst the Trust is keen to reward good performance through incentives including pay, decisions regarding movement through any pay scale will be subject to good service and performance that is rated as meeting expectation. More detail as to pay is outlined in the Trust's Pay Policy. Staff will be informed about individual pay progression annually.

## **Individual Development**

As a Trust we place considerable value on providing opportunity for members of staff to develop professionally. As part of the appraisal process staff are encouraged to express their own aspirations and areas for development. The Trust will help facilitate the development of individual staff taking into account budgetary and whole school objectives. As part of their professional obligations, staff will wish to take overall responsibility for their own professional development.

Individual development will be discussed at the appraisal meeting. This is intended as an opportunity for the appraisee to express his/her ambitions and highlight particular development needs to achieve these.