

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM STUDENTS' UNION PERFORMANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

UoNSU recognises that having a high-performing staff team is fundamental to our success as a Union. How we perform individually and collectively makes a significant difference to the people we work with and to the lives of our students.

This policy explains our approach to managing performance. We intend that there should be a consistent approach to performance management across the Union. This approach is intended to facilitate and support people making their best contribution and fulfilling their potential. It also outlines the process we will follow where there is a concern about underperformance. Finally, it refers to tools and policies which we use to help us create the conditions in which people can perform at their best.

POLICY

How people perform in their role is very important. The expectations set around what we need to achieve and how we go about it are the foundation for the Union's performance overall. All staff have a contractual responsibility to perform their duties to a good standard and will be given all reasonable support and encouragement to do so.

Our approach to performance is based on both **what** is done (objectives) and **how** it is achieved (behaviours). Together they describe what a good standard for performance looks like and provide guidance so everyone behaves in a way which is consistent with our Values.

Our Values are what matters most to us. They describe what a good standard looks like and provide guidance so everyone behaves in a way which is consistent with our vision. They help create a shared understanding and feeling of connection. They are aligned to the experience we want our students and our staff to have.

This policy is subject to periodic review and may be amended from time to time or withdrawn.

1. Induction

When you join us the Students' Union, your induction includes your performance and learning objectives for your early months, and your probationary period in particular. This is set out in our [Induction Policy](#).

2. Setting Objectives

For the Union, successful performance will be based both **what** is done and **how** it is achieved. The Performance Review forms and process help support every member of staff to reach a level of **good performance** based on the **achieving outcomes** and demonstrating **positive behaviours and application of skills**.

The Performance Review Cycle will cover:

- In August each year

- Agreeing **measurable** and **assessable objectives** based on your role, your department's objectives for the year and any Union-wide shared objectives
- Agreeing learning & development needs for the year
- Holding an initial discussion on your current level of competence against each of the Values-Based Behaviours relevant to your role
- From September – June
 - Continuous Feedback Meetings with your line manager, usually monthly (see below)
- June – July annually
 - Final review and assessment of performance for the year discussed and documented

3. Good Performance

Our core belief is that our success depends upon the achievement of organisational outcomes in a way which reflects our values. **What** people achieve is important and **how** people achieve outcomes are **of equal importance**.

An individual's contribution will be demonstrated both in terms of the outcomes (or results) of work (e.g. objectives achieved to the agreed level) and the manner in which this work was completed (e.g. working flexibly and cooperatively to support the team). These two aspects are described as:

1. **Outcomes** - results/ outcomes of completion of work
2. **Behaviours & Skills**– positively meeting the relevant values-based behaviours in the Role Profile and positively applying skills and learning

To achieve 'good performance' and be eligible for the Annual Pay Award, an individual must show the criteria in both of these have been achieved.

This means that, in relation to responsibilities defined in the Role Profile and individual Objectives, individuals will demonstrate:

achievement of outcomes - The achievement of outcomes may be demonstrated by the following:

- timely achievement of agreed objectives to the targeted level
- delivery of services and outputs that produce demonstrable results

And, in relation to relevant behaviours defined in the Values-Based Behaviours Framework (see below), individuals will demonstrate:

positive behaviours and application of skills– The demonstration of positive behaviour may be achieved by:

- positive impact/attitude towards the Union's business, students and culture
- evidence of consistently living the Values-Based Behaviours defined in the Role Profile
- learning and application of new knowledge and/or skills
- support to others to achieve their objectives

4. Values-Based Behaviours

Our *Living the Values Guide* was drawn from staff input on how the Values could be brought to life in the Union. Recognising that how we do things is as important as what we do, the *Living the Values Guide* has been developed further, to become a Values-Based Behaviours Framework.

The Values-Based Behaviours Framework aims to help staff understand and give examples of the positive behaviours element of the Good Performance definition, and support staff in identifying areas for growth and development. The descriptors have been developed to be used for the full range of people applications including the performance review, personal development, staff recruitment and selection, and reinforcing our desired culture. They are designed to be:

- Observable
- Assessable
- Developable

Three key values-based behaviours are identified for each of our Values and each are described at different levels for a Team Member, Manager or Senior Leader. The behaviours for success are cumulative. While those relevant to the role level are shown in the Role Profile, the post holder is also expected to demonstrate the behaviours at the levels below.

The Framework does not intend to describe all the behaviours, instead these are core behaviours which describe how each member of staff should be carrying out their job applying the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to perform effectively.

The plan is that the Values-Based Behaviours are part of a Continuous Feedback Process so line managers and staff discuss them regularly and everyone is clear on where they are and what areas are being focused on for development.

The Values-Based Behaviours Framework is laid out in the table below.

Values-Based Behaviours Framework¹

EMPOWERING	As a team member you...	As a specialist/supervisor you...	As a line manager you...	As a senior leader you...
Empowering through DEVELOPMENT	T1 Seek out opportunities to learn more, get feedback and broaden your experience T2 Readily share your own know-how and skills with those less experienced	S1 Share specialist know-how and broaden others' experience and skills, offering training and guidance S2 Help other to explore options in new situations, and so develop their own ideas and approaches	M1 Allow space for experimentation and risk taking, treating mistakes as learning opportunities M2 Identify the level of support and stretch individual's need to develop confidence and capability	L1 Inspire others to take chances, do more and be more, bringing out the best in people L2 Identify future organisational requirements, matching these with individual's aspirations and potential
Empowering through PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING	T3 Take ownership of problems, using initiative to make decisions that move things forward T4 Research facts and interpret policies and principles to resolve problem situations	S3 Give others the information and time they need to resolve problems in their own way, respecting their decisions S4 Develop new approaches to problems, taking timely decisions or making recommendations that reflect considered analysis of options	M3 Support people in their decision-making while holding them to account for timely implementation M4 Engage others in resolving the more complex, broader problems that occur, building self-sufficiency	L3 Enable decisions to be made at the right level, removing complexity or red tape L4 Provide the strategic context as a framework for empowered problem solving
INCLUSIVE	As a team member you...	As a specialist/ supervisor you...	As a line manager you...	As a senior leader you...
Being inclusive through CUSTOMER AND STAKEHOLDER SERVICE	T5 Make sure the customer knows they're important, finding ways to add value T6 Identify ways to improve the quality or efficiency of your own service	S5 Build dialogue and mutual understanding with stakeholders/ customers S6 Investigate and implement improvements to the service offered or standards achieved	M5 Network and engage with the customer/stakeholders to build your understanding of their wider and long term needs M6 Help colleagues to understand the perspective and context of customers/ stakeholders and so enhance the service provided	L5 Make time to explore trends, new ideas and developments to improve stakeholders' experience of the Union L6 Scope new ways of working to improve the relationship/service for stakeholders and partners

¹ These behaviours are cumulative: successive levels build on the preceding descriptors. There is a progression from team member through to leader reflecting the greater requirements of the roles and the context in which the role holder operates

<p>Being inclusive Through</p> <p>TEAM WORK WITH COLLEAGUES</p>	<p>T7 Work flexibly and cooperatively to support colleagues and contacts, actively contributing to a pleasant work environment</p> <p>T8 Build positive working relationships with others, respecting difference</p>	<p>S7 Facilitate and build relationships with others outside the team, engaging others and helping to get things done</p> <p>S8 Create a harmonious working environment, addressing any interpersonal issues promptly and fairly</p>	<p>M7 Draw on the skills, aptitudes, experience and interests of team members, showing people they are valued</p> <p>M8 Make space for different professional working styles, ensuring everyone has a sense of belonging</p>	<p>L7 Act as a role model for team work with internal and external stakeholders at a leadership level</p> <p>L8 Manage group and organisational dynamics to ensure everyone can contribute to their best</p>
COLLABORATIVE	As a team member you...	As a specialist/supervisor you...	As a line manager you...	As a senior leader you...
<p>Collaborating through</p> <p>OPEN COMMUNICATION</p>	<p>T9 Identify information of relevance to others and ensure they are kept informed</p> <p>T10 Give feedback that is respectful, constructive and open, whilst showing respect for different perspectives</p>	<p>S9 Tailor communication to the audience, context and agenda to help others fully engage in discussion</p> <p>S10 Provide regular, timely recognition and feedback</p>	<p>M9 Ask questions, listen, draw out and discuss the broad range of issues, proposals and suggestions, building shared understanding and trust</p> <p>M10 Seek and provide feedback, ensuring open communication up, down and across the organisation and with stakeholders</p>	<p>L9 Demonstrate and encourage truly open communication and dialogue at all levels</p> <p>L10 Ensure issues are addressed and timely action is taken at an organisational &/or Individual level in response to feedback</p>
<p>Collaborating through</p> <p>SHARED GOALS</p>	<p>T11 Organise your time and workload, focusing effort on the priorities and doing what you say you'll do</p> <p>T12 Meet agreed standards and deadlines, so enabling others to do their part</p>	<p>S11 Plan and communicate own and/or others' contribution to the overall goals, agreeing clear targets and objectives</p> <p>S12 Handle unexpected events, helping others to reprioritise or adapt plans</p>	<p>M11 Identifies how best to deliver operational requirements and targets using the skills of team members to full effect</p> <p>M12 Coordinate a range of people and resources, clarifying conflicting priorities and reallocating resources when circumstances change</p>	<p>L11 Clarify the overall goals and vision for the future, providing direction to enable integrated operational planning</p> <p>L12 Manage the balance of skills and resources within and across teams to ensure achievement of strategic goals</p>

5. Continuous Feedback Process

The **Continuous Feedback Process** aims to give each member of staff regular two-way review discussions, focused on up-to-date relevant feedback which supports you to achieve your objectives in a way that lives our Values. It also provides an opportunity to help people focus on applying and developing their skills and behaviours in ways that makes an immediate difference.

The Continuous Feedback Process supports the Union's Learning & Development and Wellbeing Strategies. The discussions are intended to be open and two-way with the individual reflecting on their own work load and performance and the manager providing coaching, feedback and direction as appropriate. During the meeting **three types of feedback** should be provided:

- Appreciation
- Coaching
- Appraisal

The discussion should be about **up-to-date, relevant feedback** that helps people learn and grow and achieve the outcomes the Union needs.

The **frequency** of discussions would be dependent on the individual's needs and the nature of the role, for example, how much change there is in the activities the individual carries out and how frequently work needs to be supervised, reviewed or refocused. For most roles this is likely to be monthly although at times this may step up to weekly or fortnightly depending on individual needs. The minimum would be quarterly. The discussion should be focused and, as a guide, may be expected to last up to an hour.

There is an **assumption of 'good performance'** in the process. The frequency and relative immediacy of the meetings will help to identify areas where someone is falling behind and needs more support.

6. Performance and Reward

To be eligible for the annual Pay Award each member of staff will need to demonstrate achievement of a good level of performance where 'good performance' is the demonstration of an individual's contribution in terms of:

1. Outcomes - results/ outcomes of completion of work
2. Behaviours & Skills– positively meeting the relevant Values-Based Behaviours in the Role Profile and positively applying skills and learning

If an individual is absent for a prolonged period of time, for example through sickness or on maternity leave then, as long as they are not subject to the Union's formal Performance Improvement Policy, they will be eligible for the Annual Pay Award

See the [Pay Policy](#) for further information.

7. Performance and Recognition

Recognition is important so people know they are appreciated and valued, and feel engaged as a result. The Recognition Scheme includes:

- The Leadership & Management Team personally commit to improving **Personal Recognition** and encouraging a culture of personal recognition
 - **Personal Recognition** – Everyone can recognise and value the contribution of people around us by saying thank you, dropping someone an email, letting that person's line manager know how they made a difference, raising it in a team meeting – there are so many ways just to let people know their contribution has been valued.
- A Pilot Recognition Scheme (non-monetary) is owned and led by members of the staff team to recognise contribution:

- **Simple Thank you** – Any member of staff can, , recognise any other member of staff with a card, or small gift or maybe a nice hot chocolate to a maximum value of £5 and reclaim the cost via the Finance Team
- **Monthly Awards** - Any member of the Union team can submit a recognition nomination for an individual, group or team. The Monthly Award Nomination Form asks for details of who and why. Recognition Awards are reviewed by a Recognition Awards Panel each month.

8. Performance Improvement

In situations where an individual's performance is not reaching the Union's 'good performance' level, a line manager will work with an individual member of staff to identify the reasons for the gap in performance and support individuals to develop and improve their performance to the required level. Throughout the focus will be to understand the reasons for any underperformance and to provide the support or other interventions needed for performance to reach an acceptable standard as soon as possible. All reasonable efforts will be made to do this.

It is recognised that underperformance may have a number of causes including:

- Lack of aptitude, skill or experience
- Inappropriate recruitment, induction or training
- Lack of resources crucial to performance
- Changes in the nature/allocation of work, e.g. too great a workload
- Personal/family problems
- Reorganisation of structure, role or responsibilities
- Poor attendance or concentration at work related to ill health.

The procedure below is based on exploring the reasons for a gap in performance and addressing them. The process is informal at first, but moves on to outline the formal steps to be taken where poor performance is more serious, frequent or repeated.

Informal Performance Improvement Process

Where the line manager believes that an individual's performance is not reaching the Union's 'good performance' standard, they should investigate the reasons for this as soon as possible. This will take place at an informal meeting where the manager should discuss the cause for concern.

During the meeting, the line manager should:

- Explain the areas where the individual's performance is below expectations, taking care to describe the basis or the evidence for this. The clear aim of this discussion is to identify any problems or reasons for the underperformance and to resolve them. Solutions could include additional training, reviewing workload, informal guidance, extra resources, providing coaching or some other kind of ongoing support
- Give the individual the opportunity to explain their underperformance and to raise any concerns they may have about the job or the support and guidance they have been given to do it
- Ensure that the member of staff is clear about the level of performance or productivity required in relation to each part of the role where there is a concern
- Set a reasonable timeframe within which improvement is expected and arrange a further meeting at the end of this time to review the situation. When establishing a 'reasonable timescale' for improvement, line managers should consider the complexity of the tasks involved in relation to the qualifications and experience of the individual

The content and outcome of this meeting should be confirmed by the line manager in writing to the staff member. This should be in the form of a Performance Improvement Plan. It should include the type of improvement required, any additional support or training that will be provided, any other agreed actions, and the timescale for improvement and review.

It may be helpful to arrange a number of 1:1 meetings with the individual over an agreed period of time to monitor how things are going with the Performance Improvement Plan, both with the performance issue itself and the effectiveness of the support/actions offered.

It is important to clarify that the individual's performance should start to improve immediately after the issue has been drawn to their attention, and any relevant support or adjustment has been made.

Notes for Line Managers

When discussing underperformance, managers must be specific about their concerns and must be able to show evidence and/or give examples.

Managers are required to bear the following in mind:

- The provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, and in particular the obligation to make reasonable adjustments when dealing with disabled people or those with particular circumstances.
- It may be that underperformance is related to illness, in which case it's important to refer to the Sickness Absence Policy for guidance.
- The range of family friendly, flexible working, and leave and wellbeing options which are available to staff, if this has relevance to the underperformance issue. These are explained in the relevant policies.
- In situations where the individual is incapable of performing to an acceptable standard, or they feel they are 'out of their depth' or unsuited to the role, redeployment may be considered as an option.
- HR can provide further guidance and support on all of these areas.

It may be that this informal stage will bring about the changes required and no further action may be necessary.

Formal Performance Improvement Process

Where informal action hasn't resulted in the required improvement, it may be appropriate to move to a formal process which results in formal performance warnings being issued or, potentially, to dismissal.

A member of staff who is subject to a Formal Performance Improvement Process has the right to be accompanied during any formal meetings. This could be by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative.

Stage 1

If performance does not meet acceptable standards and informal action has not succeeded in addressing the problem, or the underperformance or capability is serious enough to justify formal rather than informal action in the first place, the line manager will invite the individual to discuss the issues formally.

At this first formal meeting, the individual should be reminded of any discussions that have previously taken place and the actions agreed on the Performance Improvement Plan. The exact nature of the underperformance issue should be explained clearly. There should also be an attempt to understand why previous actions have not helped.

Consideration will be given to any further training or support needed to address the issue – the focus of the conversation remains to address the causes and to bring about an improvement.

Any actions agreed should be recorded. The staff member should also be informed about the date of review and what will happen if there is no improvement.

A written performance warning may be issued from this meeting. The warning will remain on file for 6 months, but will be disregarded if performance reaches an acceptable standard in that time.

The staff member will not be eligible for the Annual Pay Award unless and until performance has improved and has been sustained for a period of 3 months. This will be from the date of the letter confirming the Performance Improvement Plan agreed following the Stage 1 meeting. The Pay Award will not be back dated.

Stage 2

If performance continues to be unsatisfactory, or in more serious cases of capability or underperformance, the manager will invite the staff member to another formal meeting (this will be the first or second formal meeting depending on the seriousness of the issue). The timescale for improvement should be clearly set out at this meeting and what will happen if there is no acceptable improvement. Further consideration should be given to any training or support and some exploration of how the individual feels this could help when earlier interventions have failed.

A final written performance warning may be issued. This will remain on file for 12 months, but disregarded if performance reaches an acceptable standard during that time.

The staff member will not be eligible for the Annual Pay Award unless and until performance has improved and has been sustained for a period of 3 months.

Stage 3

If performance continues to be unsatisfactory despite all reasonable help and support being given, the staff member may be dismissed on the grounds of capability or underperformance.

Appeal

Staff have a right to appeal the outcome of any formal performance warnings. The appeal should be made in writing within 7 days (i.e. 7 UoNSU non-closure days, including weekend days). The appeal will be heard by a more senior manager. Staff have a right to be accompanied at any appeal meetings.

The outcome of the appeal meeting will be given in writing within 7 days. There is no further right of appeal after this.

Both the informal and formal performance improvement process are non-contractual and UoNSU reserve the right to depart from the process in appropriate cases, including for example where an individual is within a probationary or trial period.