



UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Professional Development Policy

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Contents

Section	Title	Page/s
1	Introduction	3
2	Scope	3
3	Aim and Objectives	3
4	Planning for Individual Development and Identifying Needs	3
5	Professional Development Activities – what to expect	4
6	Links to Strategy Documents and External Standards	6
7	Responsibility for Individual & Team Development	6
8	Career Pathways Framework	7
9	Access to Continuous Professional Development	7
10	Evaluation of Professional Development Activities	8
11	Funding Arrangements	8
12	Forums for Discussing Professional Development Matters at University Level	9

1. Introduction

This Professional Development Policy sets out the University's commitment to the current and future development of its employees.

The University is committed to creating an equitable, developmental and motivating working environment which values and empowers people at all levels. Professional development is seen as one of the main routes to achieving this commitment. As an educational provider the University has a unique opportunity and an important corporate responsibility to support and encourage the continuous learning and development of all colleagues.

The areas covered within this policy support the University's strategic ambition for 'Striving for Excellence'. We strive for excellence in everything we do, holding high expectations of performance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, full and part time.

Professional development includes any learning activity undertaken by colleagues either as an individual or in a group; whether on campus or off-campus; whether through direct training or through self-directed reflective activities.

3. Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the policy is to provide managers and colleagues with a framework that supports and encourages the development of all people in line with the delivery of the University of Lincoln's Strategic plan and departmental objectives as agreed during the annual planning and budgeting cycle.

4. Planning for Individual Development and Identifying Needs

Individual colleagues should recognise how their role fits into that of their School or Department and how that then contributes to their local objectives and ultimately, the wider University Strategic Plan.

All employees should actively seek to identify gaps in their own knowledge, experience or competency which affects their ability to perform at the required standard within their role. They should also identify any development needs they have in relation to their role, the need to adapt in a changing environment, and any future career aspirations and opportunities (see Career Pathways information in Section 8).

Objectives for individual colleagues are agreed through the University Appraisal conversations, (which apply once employees have satisfactorily completed their probation period) and through other career development planning. Annual objectives will be determined by the requirements of the individual's work / role and School / Departmental objectives; these will be discussed in full during the appraisal process. Objectives will also aim to support and encourage the aspirations of the individual, consistent with their growth and development.

The University recognises that individuals will be committed and motivated to achieving organisational objectives, when:

- Individual aspirations are aligned with university aspirations.
- There is appropriate support and development for learning (as groups or individuals) to improve their performance, and to be able to respond to what is required of them.

Learning and development activities offered to colleagues to meet University objectives may also be appropriate for, or targeted at other stakeholders (e.g. external examiners, people at partner institutions, our students when supporting the growth of the University).

There will be professional development implications in many of the University, School and Departmental objectives. Manager-led discussions will result in the identification of employee development needs and specific colleague development objectives. These needs and objectives may be at an individual, group or organisational level.

Many University employees are expected to undertake personal development at work as part of their membership of professional bodies. In some cases, this may be a requirement.

The extent to which a colleague request for development can be supported will depend on how it fits into one of the following three categories:

- Mandatory – Individual development / training that is required by legislation, or is a condition of employment, or is compulsory for a specific role or University activity.
- Encouraged - explicitly linked to the achievement of agreed objectives, for which resources will aim to be prioritised.
- Personal – professional development activities chosen by individuals that may take place in work time or outside and would not necessarily form a priority call on resources.

The University delivers a range of development through a central professional development programme of events and on-line resources and modules, apprenticeship and accredited programmes as well internal and external programmes. The funding for these types of development is managed at a central level. All other development opportunities, approval and funding is required at a local management level.

To check on central funding schemes open to colleagues we recommend browsing our webpage [Organisational Development – People, Performance and Culture \(lincoln.ac.uk\)](https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/organisational-development-people-performance-and-culture)

Please contact od@lincoln.ac.uk for further advice.

5. Professional Development Activities – what to expect

The needs of new colleagues to the University / new to role should be identified in accordance with the probation policy. It is the responsibility of those managing new employees to ensure that induction training takes place and that support development needs are identified and carried out throughout probation:

<https://hr-internal.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/induction-and-probation>

Professional development can be achieved through a variety of means including:

- On the job training, which may be assisted by coaching, mentoring and work shadowing
- Formal course provision within or external to the University
- Formal qualification routes
- Colleague briefings
- Team meetings or away days – to explore ideas, review, plan and evaluate progress and to disseminate good practice.
- Self-directed learning, (e.g. reading, LinkedIn Learning, podcasts, web resources, on-line learning)
- Central professional development programme and resources designed by the University for its employees
- Different methods of using technology to support a blended learning approach
- Apprenticeship programmes (at any level)

Encouraged and mandatory professional development will usually take place during work time and agreed costs will be reimbursed (where relevant). Part time colleagues will normally be able to agree time off in lieu or additional hours to cover individual development undertaken during normal working hours but outside of their usual pattern of work with the prior agreement of their line manager.

Some professional development activities, may involve study in the participant's own time, during evenings or at weekends. This must be agreed with the line manager before the individual development activity commences in line with the requirements of the department.

With regard to examinations or assessments on courses funded or part funded by the University (centrally or locally), paid leave of absence may be granted as follows:

- The half day on which any examination occurs
- The morning of any day on which there is an afternoon examination
- The afternoon immediately preceding any evening examination
- The afternoon before a morning examination

Employees should ensure they understand the course assessment requirements and discuss any individual arrangements with their line manager prior to the event. Paid leave of absence will be allowed for colleagues required to make formal presentations on courses funded by the University.

The University may also agree to make time available for colleagues to complete personal development activities that individuals undertake out of personal preference. Paid or unpaid leave for this type of development must be agreed with line managers in advance. Any agreement will depend upon satisfactory arrangements being made to cover work.

Colleagues and Managers should consider other colleagues work patterns within the department prior to agreement for time away for development.

For courses not funded by the University there is no automatic entitlement to paid or non-paid leave of absence for examinations or other related attendance requirements, and individuals may be required to use their annual leave entitlement. Arrangements must be made and approved through local management.

6. Links to Strategy Documents and External Standards

Organisational Development supports the University Strategic Plan, its vision, mission and values and is organised and delivered in a style consistent with University policies such as equality and diversity.

7. Responsibility for Professional Development

The strategic responsibility for ensuring that colleague development needs are met, lies with those responsible for managing them e.g. PVCs, Heads of Schools and Service Directors. The Organisational Development team and Department of People, Performance and Culture (PPC) will work with Heads of Schools and Service Directors to support training needs analysis and support areas to implement development plans.

It is the responsibility of each individual employee to ensure that they take an active part in the process of planning their own personal development and undertaking agreed activities. Every employee is required to engage with an annual appraisal with their manager, or relevant supervisor/reviewer, to identify their objectives and development for the forthcoming year.

It is the responsibility of the manager to support the development of their team and ensure they have the correct knowledge, skills, and behaviours to carry out their roles and meet their department/team objectives. Managers should also take responsibility for contingency and pipeline/succession planning to ensure cover during absence/leave/attrition.

The Department of PPC will (with the support of other areas of the University):

- Advise and assist those responsible for managing people
- Advise and assist individual colleagues
- Provide in-house professional development opportunities
- Monitor the allocation of training opportunities to ensure equality, fairness and the delivery of improved performance

The providers of professional development and those responsible for managing people have a joint responsibility for ensuring that colleagues are kept informed about the development opportunities open to them.

Records of all centrally provided professional development are maintained by the Organisational Development team and Department of PPC and are available to view by individuals and their managers through the University 'My View' icon:

<https://hr.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/hrselfservice/>

Records on colleagues' external development activities arranged and funded locally are the responsibility of the relevant School or Department. Each School or Department must be able to account for and show evaluation of its expenditure on this type of individual professional development.

The Organisational Development team commits to supporting the roles of our UCU/Unison Learning reps and will work in collaboration to enhance both the professional and personal development of our colleagues.

8. Career Pathways

The Career Pathways framework for Professional Services colleagues aims to highlight the generic transferable skills at each grade, giving greater awareness of career opportunities across the wider organisation. Each grade is broken down into competencies and behaviours required at this level. It provides a benchmarking development tool which can be used by colleagues and managers and supports effective 1-2-1s and appraisal conversations. The online tool then suggests a blended programme of development by grade for people to work through to demonstrate commitment to their professional and personal career journey.

<https://hr-internal.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/career-pathways/>

Academic Career Pathways support is available at the link below:

<https://hr.lincoln.ac.uk/development/academic-career-pathways/>

9. Access to Professional Development

The University believes that all employees should have access to the appropriate level of personal development. Where this is a mandatory requirement, it will be made available through the central professional development provision or by agreement at local management level.

Individual professional development that is encouraged will normally be identified between individuals and those responsible for managing them, through induction, probation and the appraisal process. It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that the appropriate resources and cover arrangements are available for colleagues' development actions to take place. Progress should be monitored, and outcomes evaluated through 121s, appraisals and Career Pathways.

The difference between professional development that is identified as strategic, oriented towards corporate objectives, and fulfilling a business requirement and that which is personal preference, must be clarified. This discussion should take place between the line manager and individual and documented through the objective setting part of the probation/appraisal process. Factors to be taken into account include:

- Whether the development activity is either relevant or aligned to the requirements of the business, or that there is sufficient justification that the development activity will benefit the individual in the execution of their role

- The amount of development that it is reasonable for any colleague to undertake in a given period
- The options available within the School or Department in terms of resources (i.e. budget, sufficient cover etc.)

Employees of the University have a statutory right to request time off for work-related training. If an employee wishes to exercise this statutory right and this is not available or appropriate through the central professional development programme, the 'Time to Train' policy may be appropriate for individuals to access:

<https://hr-internal.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures/>

In the event that an individual shows reluctance to undertake personal development activities required by or agreed with their manager, the reasons for this should be explored and investigated and alternative approaches discussed.

Where a colleague covers (with no additional payment) the work of someone undertaking a personal development activity, managers will need to ensure that, as far as is possible, arrangements are perceived as equitable by all concerned.

10. Evaluation of Professional Development Activities

All professional development activities require evaluation. Managers should, together with individuals participating in development activities, evaluate the extent to which development activities undertaken achieve the intended objectives and, where necessary, agree appropriate next steps. This may include discussion around impact of learning on performance in role, or guidance on opportunities for promotion where applicable.

The same planning process (121s or appraisals) that is used for identifying professional development needs can be used to evaluate individual development activities. The evaluation of employee development undertaken in one period can be used to help identify the development needed for the next period.

The Organisational Development team and other providers of in-house professional development activities are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of their activities.

The University is committed to continuous improvement of its employee development provision. Where improvements to professional development activities (of any kind) are identified, or where activities are not perceived to have met the needs of the individual, the Organisational Development team must be notified.

11. Funding Arrangements

Funding for employee development activities comes from:

- School or Directorate budgets
- Central Funding

In most instances, it is expected that Schools / Departments will fund costs arising through on-the-job training, developmental meetings, external courses, conferences and leave of

absence. Local budgets are the source of funding for training and development which is specific to that area of operation.

Central funding can be used to pay the costs of developmental events which are organised for the benefit of colleagues across the institution (rather than within an individual department). It is important to be aware that some programmes of learning may be subject to cost recovery should a colleague leave within a certain period.

The cost of award bearing University of Lincoln courses may be wholly or partially funded through the University Programmes of Study Scheme. Criteria and application to this can be located via the PPC website:

<https://hr-internal.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/uol-programme-funding/>

Funding for Apprenticeship programmes can be applied for through the Organisational Development team utilising the Apprenticeship Levy. Criteria and eligibility is aligned to government regulations. Please refer to Employee Apprenticeships Policy for further information.

<https://hr.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/development/apprenticeships/>

12. Forums for Discussing Professional Development Matters at University Level

The Board of Governors receives updates on central Professional Development activities, strategies and outcomes as part of the PPC report. The University conducts regular employee surveys which will include various aspects of 'Organisational and Personal Growth', providing data and views from colleagues which directly contributes to the planning and provision of development needs.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are also regularly informed and included in strategic decisions on various elements of People and Leadership Development at the University.

The University provides a forum for trade union representatives to discuss employee development matters through the Joint Consultative Committee.

Individual colleagues also have a responsibility to understand how local employee development requirements and needs are identified and met and should discuss with their manager if clarification is required.

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