

# PERFORMANCE AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (PPDR)

## Guidance Notes



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Performance and Personal Development Review (PPDR), BBSRC's appraisal scheme. The scheme operates for employees up to and including Band G and this guidance describes how to make the most of a PPDR, whether you're a jobholder, line manager or co-signatory. These three key roles are explained later in this guidance, along with notes on the responsibilities of each role. There is also a section describing probation and how that process operates and the relationship to Performance Pay.

PPDR helps BBSRC to:

- learn from the past as an aid to the future
- recognise abilities and potential
- develop knowledge, skills and attitudes
- build on successes and overcome difficulties
- increase motivation and job satisfaction
- enhance relationships and develop teamworking
- discuss individuals' future aims and aspirations
- recognise individuals' personal commitments outside work and allow for work-life balance issues to be discussed during the review.

Line managers and co-signatories will have received appropriate training before taking part in an appraisal.

## **2. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE PPDR PROCESS**

Line managers and co-signatories must avoid all forms of unfair discrimination and seek to treat staff in a fair and equitable way. All employees should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their ability and to fulfil their potential within their role.

The only consideration when carrying out a PPDR is the performance of the employee and whether they fulfil the requirements of the post. No consideration should be given to other factors such as age, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or caring or parental responsibilities. Under no circumstances will changes in performance caused by pregnancy form any part of a review; the dates of any absence due to pregnancy or maternity leave should be noted.

BBSRC recognises that employees have commitments outside of work and have to juggle these with responsibilities at work. Line managers and jobholders are encouraged to use the review as an opportunity to discuss work-life balance issues and flexible working, and to assess if any adjustments need to be made.

When assessing performance it is important that line managers:-

- avoid any preconceptions or assumptions about the abilities or ambitions of particular groups or individuals
- avoid stereotyping how different people will react to different situations or their suitability to particular types of work
- ensure that assessments of performance and other comments are based solely on evidence, and are not influenced by impressions, expectations or hearsay
- include measures for performance based on outcomes and results, and not just on presence in the office and hours worked.

Line managers may want to consider equal opportunities and diversity issues as an area for employee development, for example:-

- moving from own practice to the consideration of team and organisational cultures
- demonstrating an increasing understanding of the nature and complexity of equality and diversity
- being more proactive and challenging in the promotion of equality and diversity
- increasing knowledge about the legislation, policies and procedures relating to equality and diversity.

Further information on diversity issues can be found in Section A:3 of the Employment Code (Dignity and Diversity at Work).

### **3. WHAT IS A PPDR?**

A PPDR is a planned and structured meeting that enables the line manager and jobholder to hold a workplace discussion including:-

Performance to date against targets, activities and outcomes  
Developmental or training needs  
Future plans of the organisation  
Aims and aspirations of the employee  
Future performance

PPDR is directly linked to BBSRC's performance management process. This process requires the setting of objectives which helps to make sure that all work activities are relevant to the objectives of groups and departments, and ultimately to the establishment and BBSRC. The PPDR process offers an opportunity to formally recognise achievement along with a chance to address any problem areas as they arise. Learning and career development are also considered. BBSRC values learning and development highly as it not only benefits the individual but helps to ensure that our business objectives are met.

As the measurement of performance is through the achievement of objective-based criteria, the PPDR also has a strong relationship with Performance Pay. It is important that line managers are able to set SMART objectives, a reminder of these is covered later in this guidance.

### **Open Appraisal**

BBSRC operates a system of fully open reporting, which is designed to encourage jobholders to play a full and active part in the process. Jobholders are entitled to see all sections of the completed review form. The use of self assessment is also encouraged.

### **4. WHY HAVE PPDRs?**

PPDRs ensure that jobholders are equipped with all the necessary resources to maximise their performance at work and to gain the most from it. The benefits of conducting reviews include:-

For jobholders:-

- the achievement of objectives is recognised and encouraged
- any problem areas are considered and actions agreed to support or improve performance

- consideration of work-life balance issues
- discussion of career aspirations and planning of ways to achieve them
- anything affecting work performance can be discussed
- the requirements of the job are planned and prioritised
- resources are reviewed in terms of quantity and quality
- training for the current job is considered.

For managers:-

- the opportunity to learn about employees' aspirations and concerns relating to their present job or future prospects
- a chance to clarify and reinforce important goals and priorities, and to explain where the employee's contribution fits in
- a mechanism for measuring changes in employee performance
- clarification or identification of areas of overlap or gaps between jobs
- a sound basis for considering transfer decisions among staff
- an opportunity to motivate staff by recognising achievements
- a basis for discussing and agreeing upon courses of action to develop the employee's performance and contribution to the overall work of the team/department
- an opportunity to discuss issues that could affect work performance e.g. work-life balance issues.

For BBSRC:-

- assistance with succession planning by helping to identify those employees who are, or will be at some time in the future after acquiring suitable development and experience, able to take over from others in key positions
- help with resource planning by identifying skills and competences within the organisation
- ensuring that objectives agreed for individuals harmonise with corporate objectives
- improved communications throughout the organisation
- constructive working relationships between the line manager and jobholder
- improved organisational performance.

**Uses of appraisal information**

Completed PPDRs are confidential documents. Where applicable, paper copies should be retained by the jobholder and line manager; the original should be held by the Establishment HR Department. Information about developmental needs will be copied to the Training Officer. Other sections will be copied or passed to other members of staff only where it is absolutely necessary, for example in relation to promotion, redeployment or capability action. In these circumstances, documents are used as a reference source.

**5. WHEN DO WE COMPLETE PPDRs?**

The main PPDR process is carried out annually, although line managers and their staff should keep the communication process going throughout the year. This might include regular checks that the objectives are still relevant and feasible (e.g. to reflect unexpected changes during the year), and discussion of any issues that have arisen.

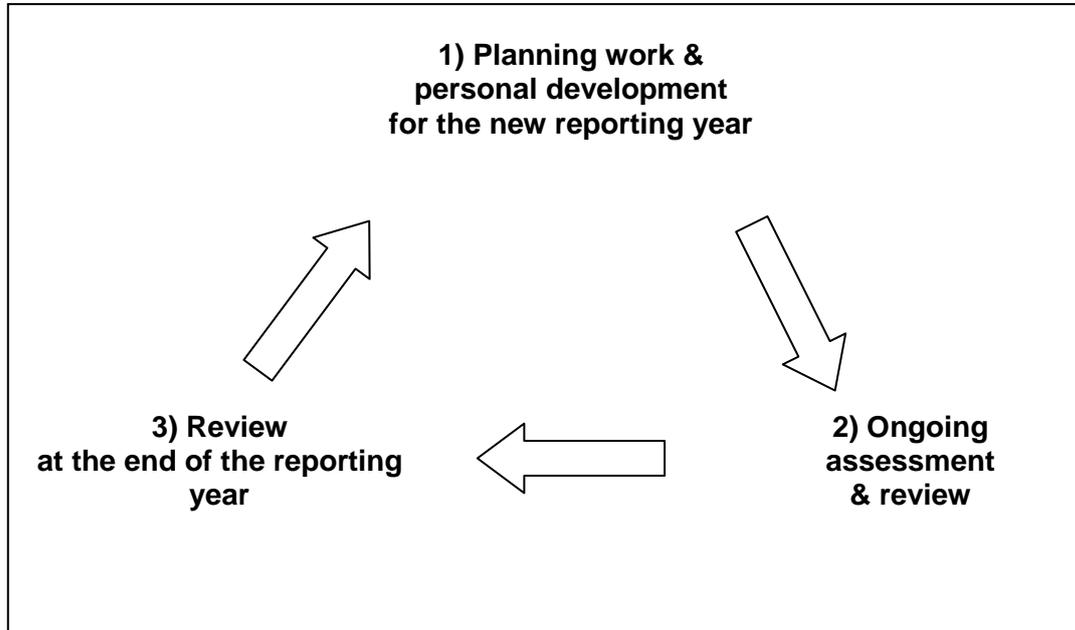
Some establishments operate PPDRs on a calendar year basis, while others follow the financial year. This is to allow those sites to fit the PPDR process in with their seasonal work demands. Please check with your line manager or HR for the PPDR timetable at your site.

Below is a calendar of events in the PPDR process.

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Jobholder</b>	<b>Line manager</b>	<b>Co-signatory</b>	<b>Senior management</b>
Ongoing/Quarterly	Jointly review and amend FJPs			
3-4 months before completion Deadline	Checks/completes personal details section			Asks line manager and co-signatories to consider standards
3 months before completion Deadline	Completes job description (section 2) and FJP, record progress for the past year (section 3)	Discuss individual cases appropriate assessment standards		
2-3 months before completion Deadline	Formal review meeting to discuss performance, potential, Learning, development, FJP			
2 months before completion deadline		Completes performance assessment (section 4); FJP (section 7); copies to jobholder		
6 weeks before completion deadline			Considers line manager's assessment, FJP etc and comments (section 5)	
One month before completion deadline	Considers written statements of line manager & co-signatory. Adds comments (section 6); seeks meeting if unhappy			
Deadline/ PPDRs completed				HR officer reviews all PPDRs. Training Officer receives training information
June-August				Consider nominations for Performance Pay

## 6. HOW DOES THE PPDR PROCESS WORK?

### The main stages of the PPDR



### Planning work and personal development for the new reporting year – ‘The Forward Job Plan’

Referred to in the PPDR system as ‘forward job planning’, this activity is vital not only to the work itself but also to the PPDR process. In PPDR, performance is assessed against objectives, set out as a Forward Job Plan (FJP). Probationers will have their initial objectives set out by their line manager. Established jobholders are expected to draft their FJP as part of their preparation for their review meeting. A new FJP would need to be agreed if the jobholder were to change job part way through the reporting year.

Setting objectives can be helpful in establishing what has to be achieved in a job, along with work standards and timescales for achievement. The planning process should be carried out jointly by line managers and jobholders, especially where team members are familiar with their role. By being involved, employees can offer their own insights on issues such as what can realistically be achieved in a given time and how work demands can be met. The line manager and jobholder should aim to reach agreement on the forward job plan and objectives, by each considering the merits of suggestions made by the other and Jobholders are generally more committed to and positive about objectives that they have helped to frame. However, ultimately it is for the line manager to determine if particular objectives and related standards are appropriate (consulting the co-signatory where necessary). The setting of objectives is also relevant when determining eligibility for performance pay.

The FJP requires key areas of activity in the job along with associated objectives to be recorded. Guidance on setting key areas and objectives follows.

## **Duties, key areas and objectives**

These features of the PPDR form help line managers and jobholders to identify what the jobholder needs to complete in order to successfully fulfil their role during the reporting period. It progresses from the realising of general requirements to the identifying of specific outcomes.

Jobs are often described very generally in terms of the duties that are involved, e.g. in a job description drafted ahead of recruitment to the role. With the duties in mind, it can be helpful for line managers and jobholders to then consider the various areas of activity that the jobholder will be involved in. These are known as 'key areas' and can help to give a clearer picture for both jobholder and line manager as to what the job entails.

As examples,

- A scientist may have a duty to support research into the causative agents of a crop disease. However, that duty may require various areas of activity for the jobholder including collecting and analysing samples, writing reports and papers, managing staff and resources, and applying for funding.
- An administrator may have a duty to progress a new policy of some kind. Key areas here could include researching relevant legislation, looking at best practice in other organizations, liaising with the trade unions and finally making staff aware of the policy.

Once key areas of activity have been realised, then they can be considered in turn with objectives noted for each key area. As stated above, objectives are intended to be specific statements of outcomes required for each key area of activity. E.g. for the scientist, to collect samples from a particular location and store within one hour, according to the agreed protocol. For the administrator, to present a one-hour awareness session about the policy for staff at a particular establishment and gain feedback.

If a large number of objectives are agreed by the line manager and jobholder, (more than 10-12), then the key objective for each of the key areas in the FJP should also be agreed. These represent essential objectives from the point of view of meeting the basic requirements of each key area. It can be helpful to list key areas in order of importance so that work priorities are clear.

Where applicable, other duties such as Training Officer or Safety Officer also need to be itemised as key areas. Trade Union activities need to be acknowledged as well. Although the line manager is not responsible for the forward planning of Trade Union activities, they need to recognise that these activities mean that less than 100% of the jobholder's time will be directed towards job objectives. Agreement needs to be reached on how much facilities time is permitted.

Learning and development needs can also be described as objectives to give them focus (although they will be placed in a different section of the form). This can help to identify what precisely needs to be learned or developed, by when, the best option for providing it (e.g. training course, work shadowing, one-to-one tuition) etc.

## **Setting objectives**

Being specific over the detail in objectives during a PPDR discussion allows the jobholder and line manager to agree objectives that have sufficient focus. This will guide the jobholder toward a successful outcome and minimise the chance of 'drift' away from completion due to ambiguity or a general lack of clarity, which can then lead to

demotivation. Motivation can also be boosted if the jobholder is allowed to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the objective-setting process as they are then more likely to 'own' those objectives.

Jobholders and line managers can more easily assess progress when objectives are clearly set out. Objective-setting can also help make clear when priorities are due in a jobholder's work. Remember to cover continuing work as well as one-off tasks and projects. Team working objectives may also be appropriate, relating to a group of employees working together.

### **Setting appropriate standards**

It is important that agreed objectives offer a challenge to the jobholder, but are also achievable in terms of the jobholder's level of knowledge and skill, the resources available, and within the normal working hours of the jobholder. Particular care therefore needs to be taken when setting objectives with part-time or job-sharing employees, to make sure that their objectives are achievable in the time worked. An on-going dialogue during the reporting year is recommended, as achievements can be noted as they happen and any problems with objectives can be dealt with as they arise. The duration of objectives may not be a full twelve months; they should be set in accordance with work needs. Jobholders and line managers are advised to regularly review and amend the FJP where necessary and by agreement, especially where objectives are shorter-term in nature.

### **'SMART' objectives and performance standards**

The setting of objectives may be more straightforward for some roles than for others. Objectives can be set in one of two ways: following the '**SMART**' acronym or expressing them in terms of '**Performance Standards**'.

### **SMART objectives**

'SMART' comprises a set of criteria that help in drafting clear objectives.

**Specific:** Each objective should state the required outcome arising from the work activity, rather than merely describe the activity itself. Through discussion, the line manager and jobholder should ensure that they share the same understanding of the outcome required and that this is clearly set out on the FJP.

**Measurable:** Wherever possible, the standard of work related to objectives should be expressed in a measurable way. An underlying question may be 'how will we know when the work has been completed to the appropriate standard?'

**Achievable:** Objectives should be set that are appropriate to the knowledge and skills of the jobholder and with necessary resources made available. The quality as well as the quantity of resources should be considered here.

**Relevant:** Objectives should be relevant to a project or the work of the group, department or organisation. They should also be within the jobholder's authority to deliver.

**Time-bound:** Any target dates, timescales or deadlines should be included.

## **Performance standards**

Performance standards can be used where a specific target date or deadline can not be set. For example, if a certain standard of work is always required, such as providing a certain level of service, then this is described in an objective as 'ongoing.' Performance Standards should still follow the 'SMART' criteria. Service providers often publish a Service Level Agreement and this can be useful in setting individual objectives. Standards could, for instance, be described in terms of success rates, improvements on existing standards or production in accordance with a given specification.

## **Learning and development objectives**

In addition to setting objectives to cover all the key areas of the job, there are likely to be learning and development objectives to consider. These may entail attending a course or some other developmental event to increase the effectiveness of a person in their job, or they may be linked to career aspirations. Learning and development objectives can help to:

- improve or sustain performance in the current post
- meet change (e.g. additional duties or responsibilities, new working practices, new technology, new objectives)
- improve the jobholder's prospects for advancement, should a suitable opportunity arise
- provide professional expertise and/or vocational qualifications
- broaden the jobholder's skill base or perspectives
- provide increased job satisfaction and motivation
- help with staff retention.

## **Learning and development opportunities**

Developmental opportunities at your site might include:

- training courses
- professional & vocational qualifications
- on-the-job learning
- coaching
- delegation
- shadowing
- conferences and workshops
- away-days
- reading, CD-rom and video material, on-line learning
- projects
- secondments
- job-sharing
- mentoring (as mentor or mentee).

Your site Training Officer will be able to advise you on developmental matters.

## **The link with performance pay**

During the year, line managers will be considering whether or not to nominate jobholders for performance pay. Although performance pay is considered as a separate issue to the PPDR, during the PPDR review jobholders should be given an indication from their line manager as to what level of performance the jobholder would have to reach in order to be considered for such a nomination.

The performance assessment criteria assume that objectives represent a commensurate level of performance. Line managers and jobholders may wish to frame more challenging objectives, or 'high-level objectives', which, if completed, could lead to a performance pay nomination. This might be achieved by identifying more challenging standards associated with objectives that are already agreed. In this case, both the standards representing 'success' as well as the more challenging standards should be agreed and recorded on the FJP. Line managers should consult the co-signatory when framing objectives in this way. Although the co-signatory may agree with the standards expressed in such objectives, it should be pointed out that the final decision as to whether their completion justifies the award of performance pay rests with the establishment Performance Pay Panel. The alternative approach is to agree standards representing successful completion of objectives at the PPDR and for the line manager to keep a careful record of above-standard performance throughout the reporting year.

To be considered for performance pay, employees are either nominated by their line manager and/or co-signatory. For more information and guidance on performance pay, see Section A7 of the Employment Code.

## **Shortened PPDR form for Band B to A**

A simplified version of the PPDR form is available for staff in Band B to A. Although it covers all the key areas outlined above, the performance assessment is based on objectives related to a number of standard criteria. The shortened form is normally used by agreement between the individual and their line manager.

## **On-going assessment and review**

Objectives should be reviewed regularly (normally on a quarterly basis) by the jobholder and line manager, to check that they are still relevant, achievable, etc; any amendments should be agreed and noted on the FJP.

The jobholder should take responsibility for initiating such reviews with their line manager, both on a routine basis and especially if the jobholder starts to encounter any difficulty in their work.

Both parties should take appropriate notes, even at these informal meetings. This will help inform discussion at the main review at the end of the reporting year.

## **Review at the end of the reporting year**

### **i) Information for jobholders**

As the subject of the PPDR, you are the most important person in the process. PPDR discussions principally involve you and your line manager and you will jointly keep a record of the discussion on the form.

The PPDR review is an opportunity to have a workplace discussion to:

- discuss any performance issues with your line manager
- look at any changes that have occurred in the last year, or that are due to take place in the future
- discuss your aims and aspirations set objectives for the coming year
- consider your own potential
- address personal development/training issues
- receive feedback from your manager discuss work-life balance issues and flexible working, and assess if any adjustments need to be made.

Section 1 of the PPDR form lists factual information about you and your employment situation for the reporting year just ending. Please complete that section or check that it is correct if it has already been filled in. Your HR department will be able to help if you have queries about this information.

In Section 2 you are asked to draft your job description, listing your general duties for the past year. Your job-description might not have changed over the year, in which case repeating last year's version is acceptable. However, most people's jobs change over time, so it's useful for you to add or omit duties as appropriate, or note any other changes such as the amount of time allocated to particular activities. The second box in Section 2 asks you to draft any changes that you anticipate. As part of the review meeting, your line manager will discuss Section 2 with you so that you can both agree a current and accurate job description that truly represents your job. The final agreed version will be noted on the form.

### **Self Assessment**

Section 3 of the form introduces self assessment. This section provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your performance at work, to consider how well you have managed to achieve your objectives as well as any other work that occurred in addition to the activities on your FJP.

In order to make time available for this reflection, your line manager is required to give you at least 3 working days notice of the review meeting (which should be set for a mutually convenient date and time). Self assessment is strongly encouraged, although it is not mandatory.

If you choose to undergo self-assessment, you might want to consider the following:

- think about what you have achieved during the reporting year
- make a note of specific examples of things that went well and areas that did not go so well
- think about anything that could help your performance in your job, e.g. additional resources, training, change of duty, better work-life balance, etc
- are there any problems that are affecting your performance? How these might be overcome? Such problems may be directly related to work, or may arise from issues outside of work, but talking to your line manager about any issues may help to provide a solution. Of course, the decision whether or not to discuss personal issues is entirely yours
- what learning and development could benefit you in your job and career?

BBSRC encourages all of its employees to take time to make such assessment in order to maximise the usefulness of the PPDR exercise. The resulting discussion in your review will therefore be more informed and you can note your thoughts in the review of progress in section 3.

In order to help you prepare for your PPDR, your line manager may adopt one of the following approaches:

- they may copy a draft of section 4 (the line manager's assessment) to you at least 3 working days before the review meeting; or
- they may invite you to draft your thoughts on section 4, while they prepare their draft. The drafts can either be exchanged at least 3 working days ahead of the review meeting or simply discussed at the meeting; or
- your line manager may suggest that you both complete section 4 jointly and by consensus at the review meeting.

Before the meeting:

- where applicable, check, complete or amend the personal information section and complete the publication record
- complete the job description (section 2), performance targets and the summary/progress report on last year's FJP (section 3). This is an important aspect of your input. You are encouraged to make full comments as part of the process of self-assessment and in the interests of effective communication
- complete section 6, where you can comment on the assessments made by your line manager and co-signatory.

During the meeting:

- remember that your contributions are very much encouraged
- feel free to take notes
- there may be an agenda set out for the meeting, but do identify for your line manager any other areas you'd like to cover in the discussion
- nothing should come as a surprise to you; your manager should have been giving you regular feedback on your performance.

During the reporting year:

- review your FJP occasionally and discuss and agree with your line manager any changes that need to be made. It is useful to do this at least quarterly.

Section 6 provides you with the opportunity to comment about the assessment you have received from your line manager as well as on your co-signatory's comments.

Section 7 is the Forward Job Plan. You may decide to draft this ahead of the review meeting for discussion with your line manager. The final draft will be completed at or after the review meeting. The FJP will become next year's 'Performance Targets' section (with any interim amendments) in section 3.

### **Learning and Development needs**

Learning and career development needs should be itemised at section 7c of the PPDR form as specific objectives. Jobholders and line managers should consider the developmental options available.

### **Mentoring for Personal Development**

You might want to consider whether acting as a mentor or being mentored could improve your job performance and satisfaction. Guidance on mentoring for personal development is available on the extranet.

### **Information for the line manager**

As well as reading this section, please also ensure that you are aware of the invitation for jobholders to undergo self-assessment (page 12).

Allow yourself time to prepare, using the jobholder's FJP for last year as a baseline. You should be checking if the jobholder achieved their objectives. Look at the year as a whole, rather than only the more recent past. In order to do this, it may help to look at notes of less formal progress reviews carried out during the reporting year.

If you feel things are going wrong then appropriate action should be taken as soon as possible. Do not wait for the formal PPDR to come round before dealing with it! As soon as problems become apparent the jobholder should be informed that their performance needs to improve to meet agreed standards. A discussion should take place in which appropriate action can be agreed. You may need to arrange extra or remedial training for them. Monitor their performance closely and discuss progress frequently; speak to the co-signatory and Human Resources if you require further advice.

The jobholder will normally complete the job description (section 2) and their self assessment and progress report on last year's FJP (section 3 a and b). They may be entirely happy in drafting those sections, but it can be helpful to offer your support in this, particularly in anticipating any changes to the job description for the coming year.

The formal position is that you complete section 4, the line manager's assessment, after the review meeting. However, to encourage self assessment and to help both parties to prepare properly, the following options are suggested:

- you complete a draft of section 4 and give this to the jobholder at least 3 working days ahead of the review meeting, or
- you and the jobholder each draft your own thoughts on section 4 and either exchange them at least 3 working days ahead of the review meeting or bring those drafts to the meeting, or
- you and the jobholder complete section 4 jointly and by consensus at the review meeting.

At the review meeting you are required to discuss the jobholder's performance, potential, career development and learning needs and agree a FJP with specific objectives for the coming year. This meeting also provides the opportunity to hold a work place discussion around where the job holder see themselves in the next few years and how they see their contribution to BBSRC. Your assessment as the line manager (section 4) should be finalised immediately after the meeting. When completing this section, ensure that the job description and FJP are current and accurate, stating the agreed objectives along with any agreed amendments made during the year.

The purposes of the review meeting are to:

- consider the performance of the jobholder during the reporting year, with discussion about what went well and anything that went not so well
- discuss any problems that are being faced and how they can be tackled, along with any improvements that could be made
- discuss potential along with learning and career development options
- discuss future plans for the team/department/organisation and how these may impact on the employee.
- agree the FJP for the coming reporting year
- discuss work-life balance issues and flexible working, and assess if any adjustments need to be made
- encourage the jobholder to put forward their views about all aspects of their appraisal.

During the meeting:

- it can be helpful to the jobholder if you briefly reiterate the purpose of the meeting and the ground to be covered
- when discussing performance, be prepared to put forward specific examples of tasks done well and any areas requiring improvement
- encourage the jobholder to contribute and put forward their thoughts on how they have performed during the year. Adopt a joint approach to identifying and overcoming any difficulties
- take notes in order to record each area discussed
- discuss the jobholder's future plans and aims and aspirations and how these could be supported through learning and development discuss the jobholder's potential, development needs and career development. Where appropriate, discuss the prospects of transfer to other work to gain wider experience or more. Agree the coming reporting year's FJP, anticipating changes where possible.
- discuss suitable standards or objectives with them, which if completed successfully may result in a nomination for performance pay. Please also see the notes on page 10 regarding performance pay and refer to Section A7 of the Employment Code.
- The FJP should be agreed at the meeting, however if more time is needed, set a date by which the FJP should be finalised
- set dates for reviewing the FJP during the year
- set review dates for other agreed actions.

After the meeting:

- complete the line manager's assessment (section 4)
- agree the FJP and arrangements for regular monitoring and feedback on progress. Arrange for both yourself and the jobholder to have a copy of the FJP but give the jobholder responsibility for updating it

- take any necessary follow-up action for which you are directly responsible. Arrange any actions required by others and make arrangements to review with the jobholder whether these actions have been carried out. If circumstances change and any action becomes impossible or inappropriate, this must be explained to the jobholder
- forward the completed PPDR form to the co-signatory for their comments
- follow up on any recommended actions to address the individual's work-life balance.

The jobholder may wish to discuss performance pay with you. Although not part of the PPDR process, you may wish to indicate to the jobholder if they are reaching a standard of performance which, if continued, may result in you nominating them for performance pay. In the interests of openness and transparency, individuals should be told during the review meeting whether they are going to be nominated.

In section 4 of the PPDR form, you are required to provide a balanced narrative comment, quoting examples in support of your assessment. Along with performance against objectives, please ensure you also comment on potential for advancement, career development needs and plans, and learning needs. You may have to make allowances for special factors such as prolonged absence or inexperience in the post. If applicable, consider the jobholder's contribution to policy issues such as technology interaction or the public understanding of science. Suitable objectives ought to have been framed to cover these areas.

If the jobholder has been engaged in activities which are not under your line management, you should consult the person who is responsible for that activity and ask for their input on performance.

During the reporting year:

- review the FJP (preferably every quarter), modifying objectives as appropriate and by agreement
- ensure that the learning identified for the jobholder is undertaken, providing any additional coaching and guidance as necessary
- provide the jobholder with feedback on the work they have done and deal with any problems as they arise
- check that the jobholder is satisfied with the level of their work-life balance.

### **Learning and Development needs**

Learning and career development needs should be itemised at section 7c of the PPDR form as specific objectives.

### **If the jobholder's performance is below the required standard**

If the jobholder is finding difficulty in completing an objective for reasons that are outside their control e.g. non-availability of resources, you should be prepared to modify the objective accordingly. It is normally the responsibility of the jobholder to bring such matters to your attention. In situations where high-level objectives have been agreed, it may be possible that if there is non- or partial achievement of certain objectives, an overall assessment of 'commensurate' can still be achieved.

You should notify jobholders who are unable to meet agreed standards in normal circumstances as soon as possible. In most cases you and the jobholder will handle issues of under performance through normal informal day to day interactions. You should explain to the jobholder how they are failing to reach the necessary standards, and jointly identify and discuss clear targets for improvement with timescales and check points, and any necessary learning. If there is no improvement after this time, then you may need to use the formal BBSRC Capability Procedure (Section A12a of the Employment Code).

If a jobholder is operating under the capability procedure at the time of their PPDR, then this fact must be noted in your assessment. In the event that sub-standard performance only comes to light at the end of the reporting year, you must immediately consult your Human Resources Manager and begin appropriate action.

### **Good practice for giving feedback**

Feedback needs to be specific, performance-related and balanced. In other words it should acknowledge positive aspects of performance as well as dealing with areas requiring improvement or further development. Feedback should not contain surprises for the jobholder; important issues should have been addressed at the time rather than waiting for the next PPDR to come round. Be constructive when dealing with issues relating to below standard performance.

Frequent 'keeping in touch' with the jobholder will be helpful to you in preparing for the annual review; you will already be aware of most issues, and will have agreed appropriate actions. You may have some useful notes from these less formal meetings to draw upon when you are reviewing the whole year for the full PPDR.

New employees should be assessed on how well they have performed, taking into account their initial lack of familiarity with their role. Objectives should be set that reflect the 'learning curve'.

The following points should help you and the jobholder have a successful PPDR review meeting:

- give them enough notice of the meeting
- ensure that you allow enough time to hold the meeting, and that it is not rushed
- consider the environment, make sure it is comfortable; create an unhurried informal atmosphere
- put the jobholder at ease: explain the procedure, make it clear that it is a joint meeting; mention that you will be taking notes
- probe and listen
- encourage the jobholder to talk; encourage self assessment
- give the jobholder praise where appropriate
- don't pre-judge; be fair and consistent in your comments and focus on performance not personality
- ensure that you sum up and agree actions; review dates and deadlines.

## Information for the co-signatory

As a co-signatory, your role is to provide comment on the assessment made by line managers on each jobholder you are co-signing for. This will provide additional comment for the jobholder and help to ensure that fair and consistent standards are applied. In order to achieve this effectively, it is important that you are aware of how the jobholder is performing during the year. If you do not have daily contact with them it is advisable to occasionally speak with jobholders and with line managers to find out more and therefore be in a better position to make an assessment.

In particular, consider the following aspects of line manager assessments:

- have positive as well as any negative aspects been covered?
- have examples been cited in support of the feedback given to make it useful and unambiguous?
- have potential, career development and learning needs been considered in support of performance?
- are each of the objectives in the FJP relevant to the project, work group and individual?
- have objectives been phrased sufficiently clearly?
- are the objectives sufficiently stretching?
- if appropriate, have higher-level objectives been identified, or are higher-level standards attached to existing objectives?
- check assessment standards – monitor for and correct any discrimination on grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic or national origin, age, religion or belief, or disability
- check whether the line manager has discussed work-life balance issues with the jobholder.

Before reviews take place it may be helpful to meet with the line managers of the staff that you have co-signatory responsibility for, in order to discuss and agree reporting standards.

If you do not share the line manager's review of a jobholder, you should discuss any disagreements with the line manager concerned. If, after discussion, agreement can still not be reached, you may opt to conduct an independent appraisal of the jobholder. Your appraisal would stand alongside that of the line manager, rather than superseding it. In this case, please indicate clearly why you have opted to do this. The jobholder should be kept fully informed and given the opportunity to comment.

In exceptional circumstances you may choose to undertake the review meeting instead of the line manager, to conduct it with the line manager or for there to be two separate meetings held with the jobholder. These arrangements could be followed in the following circumstances:

- if you have discussed a provisional assessment with the line manager and there is a significant difference of opinion
- if you are aware of serious tensions between the line manager and jobholder
- if the jobholder requests it and you consider their request to be reasonable.

## **The role of Human Resources (HR) and Training Officers in the PPDR Process**

### **HR**

- may complete the personal information section (section 1) and sometimes the publications record (if applicable)
- ensures that all PPDRs are reviewed and that any apparent inconsistencies, unresolved problems, performance issues, tensions or conflicts are taken up with the line manager and/or co-signatory.

### **Training Officer**

- reviews the learning and career development section of the form (section 7c), in order to collate learning needs at both the individual and organisational level
- liaises with BBSRC and external providers for the provision of suitable developmental activities
- assist and encourages line managers in their responsibilities for employee development and raises organisational awareness of the value of development.

### **Disputes about the PPDR process**

If the jobholder is concerned about the outcome of their PPDR, they can ask for the appraisal to be repeated with their co-signatory. Reasonable requests of this nature will normally be complied with. Alternatively, or if they are still unhappy following their review with the co-signatory, they have access to the Grievance Procedure (Section A12:c of the Employment Code).

Human Resources and Corporate Services (HRCS) in Swindon Office monitors the number of dispute cases at establishments by receiving the following information categorised in respect of gender, age, ethnicity and disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

- referrals to the Grievance Procedure
- number of grievances upheld.

## **7. PROBATION AND APPRAISAL**

Full details of the Probation Procedure are in Section A1 of the Employment Code. The 'Forward Job Plan and Probation Assessment' represents an introduction to BBSRC's appraisal process. It begins with a personal details section and a FJP. Subsequent pages deal with the assessment scheme that line managers will refer to at regular intervals during the period of probation. Each section of the form is explained below. Following successful probation, employees take part in the full PPDR process.

## **Personal Details section**

The personal details section asks for various items of information such as name, job title, institute; it also has space for two other names, those of the line manager and the co-signatory. Line managers have a specific role in relation to appraisal - this includes setting work objectives when a new starter begins, monitoring progress at regular intervals, ensuring that the individual receives appropriate support as they become familiar with their role, and addressing any work issues or problems that might arise. There is a section of the form to be completed at each of these review stages during probation. The co-signatory is usually senior to the line manager and their role is to oversee the appraisal process, ensure that it proceeds fairly and smoothly and provide comments on the job holder's performance

## **The Forward Job Plan (FJP)**

New starters should have a Forward Job Plan within one month of joining the organisation. The FJP describes the tasks and activities involved with fulfilling the role. The job description is likely to set out a general overview of the duties that make up a job. Key Areas, as noted on the form, take this a stage further. They describe areas of activity that the jobholder needs to be successful in, in order to achieve their objectives, e.g. laboratory bench work, administrative tasks, report writing, dealing with customers or managing people. Each key area can be split into separate objectives. Objectives are precise statements of the outcomes required from the key areas of activity. For example in a key area of report writing, an objective might be to deliver a report on a particular subject in a particular format by a given date.

## **Objectives**

Objectives, like key areas, are itemised on the form by the line manager. They are numbered, which can help in prioritising them. Whilst the form suggests there may be eight objectives, there can be more or less depending on the nature of the work. As time goes on more challenging objectives may be agreed to. Objectives will not always be task-related e.g. a Training course or some other developmental event may be beneficial for new starters in the early stages of their career with BBSRC. Learning and development objectives are formulated and itemised in the final box in Section A.

## **Performance assessment**

The remaining sections of the form provide an opportunity for the line manager to assess performance, and allow the jobholder to comment. The Line Manager should summarise the job holder's performance in terms of the achievement of key objectives.

The co-signatory will also have the opportunity to comment on all aspects of the jobholder's performance using the same rating scales. Both the line manager and co-signatory will assess overall performance and make any further general comments about progress so far.

If progress is rated as very good or satisfactory, then the new starter is progressing well. If some improvement is required, the line manager will discuss this and agree targets to assist in overcoming any problems. Similarly, if serious problems are identified they will be drawn to the jobholder's attention as soon as possible after they arise.

Probation may be extended for a defined period if there is a reasonable prospect that, given further time, the jobholder will meet the standard required. Extension on the grounds of performance will normally be for three months in the first instance. If after appropriate

discussion with the line manager it is considered that the jobholder is unable to reach the necessary standard of performance within the probation period, their employment can be terminated.

## **Feedback**

The line manager will give regular feedback on performance to the jobholder. The jobholder can help with this process by asking their line manager how they are doing or asking for help if they feel there is a problem.

In particular, the line manager must talk to new starters about what they are going to write on the form before they actually complete it. The new starter will then have a chance to see what the line manager and the co-signatory have actually written and have an opportunity to comment.

It is possible that the FJP and objectives may change as a result of discussion at such reviews. Some objectives may be modified, new ones added and some may disappear; hopefully completed successfully!

Sections C and D on the form are mirror images of section B to be completed at later stages of the probationary period. The one slight difference is in Section D where the line manager and co-signatory will, if performance has reached the required standard, confirm the appointment.

## **8. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Under certain circumstances it is not necessary to complete a performance review, e.g. at the end of the first reporting year for new appointees. Special arrangements apply in the following circumstances:

- **On appointment.** New employees who have served less than three months at the end of the reporting year will not have a performance review. However, they should still prepare a draft FJP for discussion at the review meeting.
- **On promotion.** Newly promoted employees will require a break report at the time of promotion. This should cover performance preceding promotion; the FJP and Training Needs Review should be completed in the higher pay band. However, in all cases jobholders and line managers must still prepare a FJP for the coming year including learning needs.
- **On transfer.** If a jobholder transfers more than six months into the reporting year (other than on promotion), a break report is required at the time of transfer and no further report is required for the rest of the reporting year. Those transferred six months or less into the reporting year will be reported on by their new line manager. In cases where a staff member has two or more posts in a reporting year, the line manager who has had the longest responsibility for that staff member will complete the review, in consultation with the other line managers. Any differences in opinion will be noted on the report.
- **Temporary promotion.** Staff who have been temporarily promoted for less than six months at the end of the reporting year will be reported on in their substantive pay band. Those temporarily promoted for longer than six months will be reported on in the temporary pay band.

- **Change of line manager.** Staff who have a change to their line management structure, should have a review meeting to discuss progress and then a break report is required at the time of transfer.
- **Overbearing.** Under the BBSRC Redundancy Agreement there are increasing numbers of redeployments involving overbearing in a junior pay band. In an overbearing situation, the jobholder retains his/her pay band, salary and other conditions on a personal basis for as long as the overbearing applies. For the purposes of reporting and appraisal, line managers should make assessments solely on the basis of the job, rather than the pay band of the job or the jobholder. Thus, staff who are overbearing must not be assessed on the basis that they are in a higher pay band than the job warrants or that they are expected to perform above normal expectations for the pay band.
- **Prolonged absence.** Prolonged absence covers instances such as sickness absence, maternity leave, sabbaticals and compassionate leave which extend beyond the normal annual leave entitlement.
  - **Absences of less than one year.** PPDRs should be based on the quality of work undertaken when actually at work, with the employee's objectives adjusted to take account of the circumstances. All employees should have a PPDR (even if they are absent when PPDRs are being completed).
  - **Absences of longer than one year.** Staff who have been absent for the whole of the reporting year will not be reviewed for the reporting year concerned. When they return, however, they must prepare a draft FJP and agree this with their line manager.
  - **Maternity leave.** Comments should be made on the jobholder's performance before and/or after the period of maternity leave, as appropriate. Job objectives should be written and/or modified to take into account the fact that the jobholder will not be available for work for the whole of the reporting year.

**Special circumstances.** Where performance deteriorates for reasons outside the direct control of the jobholder (e.g. sickness or domestic problems), supportive action should be taken to help address and/or overcome the cause as far as is reasonably possible. Situations which may be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act should be referred to HR for guidance.

In such circumstances, comments on performance should take account of the achievement of agreed objectives. In some instances, it may be appropriate to modify objectives to take account of any difficulties being experienced because of sickness or domestic problems. In others, particularly in situations where a medical referral has indicated that there is no underlying medical problem, line managers may wish to assess performance against objectives which would be set for a fully fit and effective member of staff.

If you are in any doubt about what to do, refer to the Employment Code Section A12a: If things go wrong - capability issue and consult your HR Department.

**Union representatives.** The PPDR for an accredited representative will be prepared in the normal way in respect of the proportion of time spent on official duties. The line manager will make clear the proportion of time this represents.

**New line managers.** When line managers are themselves newly appointed or have only recently assumed responsibility for the staff they manage, the following rules apply:

- **Training** - All line managers and co-signatories must receive the PPDR training before they complete performance reviews or conduct review meetings.
- **Experience** - Where a line manager or co-signatory has less than three months experience of the work of the person being reported on, the previous line manager or co-signatory (if available) in consultation with the current line manager, should complete the appraisal. If this is not possible, another appropriate manager should complete the appraisal.

## 9. EXAMPLE OBJECTIVES

Example objectives for a Band D research scientist:

1. To determine the effects of photoperiod and temperatures on leaf extension rate and dry weight gain in *T. Repens*, with data gathered from CE and field investigations throughout the year.
2. To organise, set up and monitor the above experiments, according to an agreed programme through the year.
3. To undertake routine statistical analysis of data, within one week of the completion of each experiment, using the VAX minitab package.
4. To act as signatory for the consumables budget, throughout the year, and to place orders for all consumables for the Department.
5. To effectively liaise with supply staff to ensure that all requirements are met and facilities are booked for the year's programme of experiments by the end of April.
6. To submit a report to my Line Manager, by the end of January, summarising CE experimental findings and supplying forecast estimates of dry weight gain in field conditions.
7. To have presented at least one seminar or talk on the Group's work, within the institute, by the end of February.

### Useful questions when setting objectives

When setting objectives, some of the following questions and considerations could prove useful:

1. How do we know when the work has been completed and required standards reached? What will be the indicators if this is not the case?
2. Are there any already agreed criteria or standards that we can use? E.g.
  - national or professional standards?
  - statutory requirements?
  - service level agreements?

3. What is the cost of getting it wrong? E.g.
  - re-doing the work
  - complaints received
  - on-costs to others
  - lost revenue
  - missed opportunity.
  
4. Who else can advise? E.g.
  - line manager
  - expert colleagues
  - others present at meetings, conferences etc.
  
5. Is benchmarking applicable?
  - what are the differences between performance in our organisation compared with competitors?
  - newcomer compared to experienced staff, or high level of performance compared to low level?
  
6. What do we want to see improved over the next 12 months? E.g.
  - quicker turn-around times
  - increased delegation
  - greater professionalism
  - more publications,

### **Examples of objectives and key areas for different BBSRC roles**

Issues to take into account when agreeing objectives for **research staff** might include:

- publications
- presentations or lectures
- technology interaction
- innovations, patents and designs
- income generation
- establishment of potentially or actually valuable external collaborations
- prizes and awards
- contribution to strategic corporate objectives (e.g. public understanding of science).

**Core Support Services** key areas might include:

- commercial husbandry
- experimental husbandry
- field observations
- recording of experimental data
- record keeping
- new techniques/developments
- flexibility/customer care/use of initiative
- resources and time management
- team working
- health and safety
- personal development.

Key areas for **Workshop** employees might include:

- maintenance and repair
- design and construction
- customer care

- resource management
- health and safety
- personal development.

**Workshop objectives** might include:

- ensuring that maintenance activities are planned and completed to time in accordance with the published schedule
- to give an initial response to all requests for assistance and advice within 24 hours
- ensuring that all work is carried out in accordance with site health and safety policy
- completing a job sheet for each completed piece of work within 1 working day of completion
- attending a 'flat-packs for beginners' course.

Key areas for a **PA** might include:

- secretarial support to line manager
- typing
- record keeping
- diary and meetings
- travel bookings
- correspondence
- general administration
- communication
- external bodies
- team work/flexibility
- health and safety
- personal development.

**PA** objectives might include:

- arranging meetings/booking travel
- maintaining effective and up to date filing systems on appropriate electronic drives and in paper files
- dealing with queries from external organisations within 24 hours
- attending advanced Microsoft Word course.

Examples of **Support Scientist** key areas:

- technical support
- planning and design of experiments
- resource management
- health and safety
- personal development.

**Support scientist** objectives could be:

- collate, analyse and present data at monthly team meetings
- research new approaches to VFA extraction and make recommendations re amendments to existing protocol to line manager by ...
- gain full familiarisation with site health and safety rules by ....
- ensure that stocks of laboratory consumables do not fall below agreed minima
- attend 'Basic Numeracy' course.

Examples of **Media lab** objectives:

- maintain agreed levels of standard stock media at all times
- ensure that ad hoc requests for media are completed within the agreed time scale

- maintain high standards of sterilisation and purity within media supplies, based on a 1% contamination rate
- train laboratory support staff and students in basic media preparation within 5 working days
- offer advice on non-standard media preparation, storage requirements and costs within 2 working days of request.

Examples of **Animal house** objectives:

- maintain laid-down standards of hygiene at all times (subject to occasional checks)
- maintain animal colonies within standards laid down in Home Office regulations
- maintain breeding colony mortality below 5%
- record and report abnormal events within 1 hour of their discovery
- comply with requests for assistance with handling, restraining and other support within 2 hours.

## 10. EXAMPLE FORWARD JOB PLAN (FJP)

### Research Post

**Purpose:** To undertake research on .....

**Resources:** Newly-appointed Band B technician (half share)

### Job description:

- 1) Secure funding for continuation of programme on.....
- 2) Continue agreed research lines, in accordance with DEFRA project requirements
- 3) Design new programme on....
- 4) Draft paper for submission on.....
- 5) Promote public understanding of science through links with local schools and colleges
- 6) Present findings to research community
- 7) Develop national and international collaborative links
- 8) Management and development of technical support
- 9) Keep up-to-date with related research, new methods and techniques

### Key Areas

- Financial awareness
- Project management
- Information collection & dissemination
- Personal collaboration
- Resource management
- Personal development

## Objectives

- \*Complete 95% of DEFRA objectives within agreed timescales.
- \*Prepare project proposal with full costings on.....for consideration by institute Science Committee (by Committee deadline).
- \*Give successful presentation on..... project at ..... conference on 18 November and establish productive links with key European groups in this area
- Design and initiate a successful collaborative programme with similar group from a noted UK university.
- Take part in programme of school visits/seminars and secure at least one return invitation (by 1<sup>st</sup> April).
- Design, prepare and run successful workshop in Indonesia on....., with a view to setting up collaborative programmes with ..... (by 1<sup>st</sup> April).

(\*denotes key objectives).