

Managing Poor Performance

UPR HR19, version 02.0

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 01.0 of UPR HR19, with effect from 14 January 2022.

Summary of significant changes to the previous version

The format of hearings has been clarified for consistency with other policies and to reflect practice. Templates to support the processes have been included and guidance has been moved to appendices.

Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

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1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The University expects and will enforce reasonable standards of performance from its staff and aims to ensure that there is a fair and systematic approach to the maintenance of those standards. Wherever possible, the primary purpose of this policy will be to secure a genuine and permanent improvement in staff performance.
- 1.2 The University is committed to enabling all staff to reach their full potential and to deliver a satisfactory level of performance. In the event that a member of staff is considered to be performing at a less than acceptable level, the University will offer reasonable advice, support and training in order to resolve the problem. In the majority of cases this approach will result in an improvement in performance bringing it up to the level required. Only after these approaches have been tried and there has been no improvement or even a deterioration in performance will the following policy and procedures apply.

2 Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy sets out a framework for dealing with poor performance. It is intended to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain standards of work and performance satisfactory to the University.
- 2.2 It is designed to inform staff of the likely consequences of their failure or inability to fulfil or meet their work obligations. Its aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all staff.
- 2.3 It is essential that all matters relating to the application of these procedures remain confidential to the parties concerned and those who need to know. Unnecessary disclosure could result in making a sensitive situation even more difficult.
- 2.4 Separate provisions apply in the case of probationary staff and also the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Group Director of Finance and Secretary and Registrar.

3 Suspension

The Vice-Chancellor or, in the case of Professional staff, the Secretary and Registrar, may suspend, without prejudice, from duty on full pay any employee for a performance issue that may constitute an allegation of gross misconduct and/or urgent cause relating to the University's aims and objectives, which could potentially amount to gross misconduct. Suspension will allow for an appropriate investigation of the allegations, which may be impeded should the employee remain at work. Such investigations will be conducted without avoidable delay (see APPENDIX E).

4 Dismissal

In some cases, an outcome may result in dismissal due to the build-up and escalation of live warnings on record. In such cases the formal performance procedure will have been followed and any further concern that arises during the currency of the Final Written Warning may lead to a further performance review hearing which may result in dismissal. Where a dismissal is a possible outcome, the Vice Chancellor or Secretary and Registrar may delegate their authority to a panel of three members of Chief Executive's Group. The members of this panel would have had no former involvement in the case. Such a dismissal may be with notice or pay in lieu of notice.

5 General Principles

- 5.1 The General Principles detailed make provision for all aspects of the Poor Performance Policy - at all stages and levels - relating to issues of staff poor performance.
- 5.2 No action under these procedures will be taken against any employee who is a Recognised Trade Union representative until the circumstances have been discussed with a full-time official of the Recognised Trade Union concerned.
- 5.3 The University will encourage a sensitive, constructive and timely approach to all performance matters.
- 5.4 Managers have a responsibility to bring any matters of concern to an employee's attention without delay and offer help and support (including additional training as required) before moving into the formal procedures detailed in this policy.
- 5.5 At every stage the employee will be informed in writing of the level at which the matter is being considered, advised of the nature and details of the poor performance concern and will be given the opportunity to explain, respond and/or defend their position.
- 5.6 At all formal stages the employee will have the right to be accompanied and represented by a workplace colleague employed by the University or an employee or official of a Trade Union. The role of such a representative does not permit them to answer direct questions for the employee, but they may present the employee's case and confer with the employee during formal proceedings.
- 5.7 The Chair hearing a case will have had no involvement in its preparation and will conduct the proceedings according to the outline format - see Poor Performance Hearings - Format - APPENDIX B.

- 5.8 If, for good cause, an employee is unable to attend a hearing, it will be adjourned to a suitable alternative date, which may be within a week of the original hearing date or later if appropriate. If the employee is unable to attend the re-arranged date, the Chair will decide whether the hearing should take place in their absence or exceptionally to rearrange another suitable date provided this does not unnecessarily delay the matter. If the employee is unable to attend the further re-arranged date, the hearing will proceed in their absence, but their representative will have to opportunity to present the employee's case on their behalf. Any submission by the employee in writing, or by their representative will be considered.
- 5.9 Any action taken will be limited as follows:
- i an ORAL WARNING will normally last for 6 months;
 - ii a WRITTEN WARNING will normally last for 12 months;
 - iii a FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will normally last for 24 months;
 - iv a DISMISSAL normally with notice.
- 5.10 Alternative action to dismissal, which may include demotion or re- deployment (with no automatic protection of previous salary) within the University, may be considered by the Chair of the hearing at their absolute discretion following agreement with the employee. Warnings given to an employee will be placed on their Human Resources personal file in the Human Resources Department. The warning will no longer be live after the specified period has elapsed.
- 5.11 In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the hearing may extend the length of the warning beyond the periods set out in 5.9, any such variation being notified to the individual in writing at the time the warning is issued.
- 5.12 The procedures may be initiated at any stage if the employee's alleged poor performance warrants such action.

6 Right of Appeal

- 6.1 An employee will have the right of appeal against any sanction imposed. The person(s) hearing the appeal will not have been party to any earlier decision and will follow the procedures set out in Appeals and Appeal against Dismissal APPENDIX D.
- 6.2 All Appeal hearings will review the earlier decision based on the submissions made by the member of staff and management. It will not be conducted as a total re-hearing of the evidence made when the initial decision was taken but be concerned with:
- i reviewing the application of the procedures (evidence of procedural or administrative irregularity);
 - ii whether the penalty is proportionate to the performance concern;
 - iii considering any new material evidence not reasonably available or produced at the original performance hearing.

- 6.3 No action under these procedures will be taken against any employee who is a Recognised Trade Union representative until the circumstances have been discussed with a full-time official of the Recognised Trade Union concerned.
- 6.4 Training and support will be provided to the Chair of a hearing.
- 6.5 The Director of Human Resources (or nominee) will be consulted by management at all stages of any case being considered under these procedures and will be present at all formal hearings.

7 Procedure for Managing Poor Performance

7.1 Informal

- 7.1.1 Coaching and guidance are a part of normal management practice. Much can be achieved by way of informal guidance, particularly where shortcomings are not of a serious or persistent nature. The formal procedure will not normally be implemented without there first having been a period of coaching and guidance, the aim being to encourage an employee to understand what is expected, to improve and thus meet the University's standards (See Guidance on Managing Poor Performance APPENDIX A).
- 7.1.2 However, in some circumstances it may be appropriate to initiate the formal stage of this procedure immediately if the employee's alleged poor performance warrants such action.
- 7.1.3 The individual should be aware of the concerns about their performance. Confidential advice should be provided with the aim of covering:
 - i the shortcomings in performance by giving specific examples;
 - ii encouraging the individual to adopt a problem-solving approach;
 - iii listening to suggestions and explanations as to why the problems exist;
 - iv agreeing a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) (See APPENDIX G), in conjunction with the PIP Manager's Guidance (APPENDIX H), which has clearly measurable objectives and a timescale for review;
 - v offering reasonable support and training if needed;
 - vi highlighting the consequences if the required improvement is not forthcoming.

7.2 Formal Stage 1

- 7.2.1 Where the employee has failed to reach an acceptable level of performance, despite informal advice, support and guidance and time to improve, the formal stage will be invoked.

- 7.2.2 The manager who dealt with the informal stage will submit a report, in consultation with the Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP), to the next level of management, (this may be the Senior Manager, as appropriate) identifying the alleged poor performance or shortcomings and the support provided and objectives set out. This will be considered at the formal Stage 1 hearing.
- 7.2.3 The employee will be given 10 working days' notice in writing of a Formal Stage 1 hearing. The employee will be given the details of the concerns about their alleged shortcomings or poor performance in writing in advance and informed that a formal stage is being invoked.
- 7.2.4 The meeting to discuss the alleged shortcomings and concerns will be conducted by the next level of management, in consultation with the HRBP as outlined in APPENDIX B. The senior manager will decide whether:
- i to take NO FURTHER ACTION, in which case they will confirm this outcome in writing to the employee; or
 - ii the level of performance is of concern and therefore an ORAL WARNING is appropriate – this will be confirmed in writing and the employee will be given a plan for support and development.
- 7.2.5 The Performance Improvement Plan will set out levels of acceptable performance and targets, together with appropriate support, guidance and training to be given and state the timescale within which improvement is expected.
- 7.2.6 The employee will be required to demonstrate improvement over a period of time (normally within 8 working weeks). The employee will be warned of the possible consequences of a failure to improve or in the event that further shortcomings are identified.
- 7.2.7 A review date will be set when progress can be assessed. At the end of the agreed period for improvement, the line manager will hold a further meeting with the employee to discuss progress.
- 7.2.8 If the employee's performance has improved sufficiently that they now meet the required standard, this will be confirmed in writing. The line manager will have discretion to schedule further review meetings to ensure improvement is sustained.
- 7.2.9 If, however, the employee's performance remains below the required standard, the employee will be informed that further action will be taken under Formal Stage 2 of this procedure.
- 7.2.10 The employee will be advised of their right of appeal against a Formal Stage 1 ORAL WARNING to the next level of management, outlined in APPENDIX D. The right of appeal will be outlined in the letter issuing the original warning.

7.3 Formal Stage 2

- 7.3.1 If, having completed Formal Stage 1 of this procedure the employee's performance remains unsatisfactory and below the standard that is required, or were to fall below this standard at any time during the period of the warning, the next stage of this policy may be invoked.

- 7.3.2 The employee's line manager will prepare a report on the employee's poor performance and standard of work, including the action taken under Formal Stage 1. They will take advice from the HRBP on whether to move to Formal Stage 2 of this policy.
- 7.3.3 If the decision is taken to move to Formal Stage 2, the employee will be given 10 working days' notice in writing of a meeting to discuss this and informed that Formal Stage 2 is being invoked. The letter will outline what the possible consequences of the hearing are.
- 7.3.4 The employee will have access in advance to any documents – detailing concerns in relation to poor performance, which are to be produced at the hearing.
- 7.3.5 Any written evidence to be submitted by the employee in response to the concern must be received at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing so that it can be considered by all parties.
- 7.3.6 The meeting will be chaired by a Senior Manager. They will discuss with the employee the alleged shortcomings, concerns or complaints and any further action that may be necessary to rectify the problem.
- 7.3.7 At the meeting, the employee and/or the employee's representative (see 5.6).will be given the opportunity to respond to the evidence presented and to state their position.
- 7.3.8 The Chair will then decide whether to:
- i TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION, in which case they will confirm this outcome in writing to the employee; or
 - ii ISSUE A WRITTEN WARNING, or
 - iii ISSUE A FINAL WRITTEN WARNING.
- 7.3.9 The warning will be confirmed in writing and the employee will be given a further plan for support and development.
- 7.3.10 The employee will be required to improve, and a review period set again (normally no more than 8 working weeks). The employee will be warned of the possible consequences, which may include progression to Stage 3 of this policy if failure to improve or in the event that further shortcomings are identified.
- 7.3.11 Attention - Written or Final Written Warning
- a The Warning (whether Written or Final Written) will be confirmed in writing and will set out the required level of performance and the timescale within which improvement is expected.
 - b The employee may be required to improve performance immediately or over a period of time (normally no more than 8 working weeks). The employee will be issued with a further performance and improvement plan.
 - c A review date/s will be set when progress can be assessed.

- d The employee will be warned of the possible consequences of a failure to improve or in the event that further shortcomings are identified.
- e At the end of the agreed period for improvement, the manager will hold a meeting with the employee to discuss progress.
- f If the employee's performance has improved sufficiently that they now meet the required standard, this will be confirmed in writing, and possibly a further review meeting will be arranged to check that this can be sustained.
- g If, however, the employee's performance remains below the required standard, the employee will be informed that further action will be taken under Formal Stage 3 of this procedure which may result in the employee's dismissal.
- h The employee will be advised of their rights of appeal to the next level of management, outlined in APPENDIX D.

7.4 Formal Stage 3

- 7.4.1 If, in cases of gross professional negligence or capability concern or having completed Formal Stage 2 of this procedure, the employee's performance remains below the standard required, or falls below the standard required during the review period and/or following a formal warning being issued, a formal hearing under Stage 3 of the policy may be invoked.
- 7.4.2 The employee will be provided with details of the performance concern and their right to representation. They will be notified that Stage 3 of this procedure is being invoked and that dismissal is a possible outcome and provided timings for the hearing (normally within ten (**10**) working days).
- 7.4.3 The employee will have access in advance to any documents which are to be produced at the hearing.
- 7.4.5 Any written evidence to be submitted by the employee in response to the complaint must be received at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing so that it can be considered by all parties.
- 7.4.6 The Vice Chancellor or Secretary and Registrar may delegate their authority to chair the hearing to a panel of three members of the Chief Executive Group (CEG) in accordance with the format outlined in APPENDIX B. The Chair of the panel will decide whether to:
 - i TAKE NO FURTHER ACTION, in which case they will confirm this outcome in writing to the employee, or
 - ii EXTEND THE PERIOD OF REVIEW and require further monitoring, or
 - iii CONSIDER FURTHER ACTION, or
 - iv DISMISS. This will normally be with notice.

- 7.4.7 Alternative action to dismissal, which may include demotion or re- deployment (with no automatic protection of previous salary) within the University, may be considered by the Chair of the hearing at their absolute discretion following agreement with the employee.
- 7.4.8 The employee will be informed in writing of the decision and the reasons for it and of their right of appeal. (Please see APPENDIX D).

APPENDIX A - Guidance - Managing Poor Performance

- 1 These guidelines are intended to assist staff in dealing fairly and effectively with employees whose performance is unacceptable to the University. They are an integral aspect to this “Managing Poor Performance Policy”. If an individual’s job performance is a concern, the following considerations should be made before recourse to any action outlined in the policy document.
- 2 The individual should be aware of the concerns about their performance. Confidential advice and support should be provided with the aim of covering:
 - a the shortcomings in performance by giving specific examples;
 - b encouraging the individual to adopt a problem-solving approach;
 - c listening to suggestions and explanations as to why the problems exist;
 - d agreeing a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) (APPENDIX G), in conjunction with the PIP Manager’s Guidance (APPENDIX H), which has clearly measurable objectives and a timescale for review;
 - e offering reasonable support and training if needed;
 - f highlighting the consequences if the required improvement is not forthcoming.
- 3 A written record of the meeting(s) should be made with a copy for the line manager and a copy for the member of staff.
- 4 If informal advice, support and guidance fail and if there is no improvement or if there is deterioration in performance, then formal action may be necessary.
- 5 This policy document sets out the rules, which must be followed, so as to be fair and consistent and to protect staff and the University against any legal consequences of getting things wrong.
- 6 Questions about the application of this policy should be addressed to the relevant Human Resources Business Partner.
- 7 When managing poor performance all the formal stages should normally be followed in sequence, although procedures may be initiated at any stage if the poor performance warrants such action.
- 8 Progression from one stage to the next will be determined by whether the employee reaches the required standard of performance within the agreed time frame.
- 9 Suspension from duty may be considered prior to taking action under Stage 3 of the procedure if circumstances warrant it.

APPENDIX B – Poor Performance Hearings - Format

- 1 The status of the hearing will be confirmed at the outset by the Chair of the Hearing, stating the potential outcomes before the hearing proceeds.
- 2 The Chair will outline their role (and the role of the panel if Stage 3); the role of the HR representative present; explain what will happen; introduce all parties present and check that all parties have had the documents to which reference will be made by either side.
- 3 Management will present its case - the nature of the concern and the findings. The employee and/or their representative (see 5.6) will have the opportunity to ask questions in relation to the management case. The Chair, panel members and HR representative will have the opportunity to ask questions.
- 4 The employee or their representative will put forward their case - in the presence of management, with management having the opportunity to ask questions, followed by the Chair, panel members and HR representative. The employee should answer questions directly put to them.
- 5 Witnesses will attend only to give their accounts and will be open to questioning by the other party. They may be recalled at a later stage for further questions/clarification of issues.
- 6 Both parties will be expected to sum up their case at the end of the hearing.
- 7 Both parties will withdraw, and where appropriate taking all belongings with them, and the Chair, Panel and Human Resources representative will deliberate on the proceedings and either call all parties back to announce a decision or may adjourn the hearing and communicate their decision in writing normally within 5 working days.
- 8 The employee will be advised of the Appeals process at the conclusion of the hearing.

(Note for guidance:

- a Exceptionally and by agreement the format of the hearing can be amended provided that the General Principles are adhered to.
- b Witness statements and questioning will be limited to half an hour per witness.
- c No tape recording of proceedings is permitted. Covert recordings at any stage of proceedings will be considered misconduct
- d Adjournment requests will not be unreasonably withheld.
- e Nominated notetakers will take notes of the proceedings and these will be kept for record purposes and only circulated in the event of a subsequent appeal.
- f It is therefore the responsibility of the employee and/or their representative to retain their own notes of the hearing.)

APPENDIX C – Preparing and Presenting a Case at a Formal Hearing

1 Preparing a Case for a Formal Hearing

All managers have a responsibility to be aware of the Managing Poor Performance policy. When invoking the procedures outlined in this policy, the relevant line manager must:

- i gather all relevant evidence i.e. notes of all the meetings, advice and support sessions etc;
- ii obtain all relevant personal details of the employee (e.g. length of service, past performance record etc);
- iii examine all the evidence to determine whether despite reasonable advice and support the employee's performance has fallen short of what is required;
- iv provide clear, specific examples of underperformance;
- v advise the employee that formal action on the grounds of poor performance is likely to ensue;
- vi obtain written evidence from relevant witnesses, if appropriate, always bearing in mind that confidentiality is paramount;
- vii notify the manager who will be hearing the case and submit a detailed report illustrating the shortfalls in performance;
- viii recommend the level of formal action considered to be appropriate;
- ix the Human Resources Business Partner will provide assistance to the manager in order to ensure consistency in preparing the case for the formal hearing;
- x send the employee the details of the concerns about their performance and advise the date of the formal hearing (providing at least 10 working days' notice) and their rights of representation.

2 Presenting a Case at a Formal Hearing

All managers have a responsibility to be aware of the Managing Poor Performance Policy. When invoking the procedure, the relevant line manager must:

- i be clear and objective and keep calm when presenting evidence;
- ii avoid being personal and do not take personally what may be said in response;
- iii answer questions honestly and succinctly and do not say anything that cannot be substantiated with evidence;
- iv be prepared to seek an adjournment during the meeting if a break is required or to verify facts.

Appendix D - Appeals

1 Appeals Against a Warning

- 1.1 A member of staff, against whom a warning has been issued, will have the right of appeal. The next level of Line Manager/Senior Manager will conduct the appeal hearing. Any appeal should be submitted to the Director of Human Resources. All appeals must be lodged in writing within ten (**10**) working days of receipt of written confirmation of the sanction. Appeals will be heard as soon as is reasonably practicable (see below).
- 1.2 State the reasons for appeal.
- 1.3 The Director of Human Resources (or nominee) will give the employee a minimum of ten (**10**) working days' notice of the appeal hearing stating place, date and time.
- 1.4 The Director of Human Resources (or nominee) will inform the original deciding manager that an appeal has been lodged.
- 1.5 The appeal hearing will review the earlier decision based on the submissions made at the appeal.
- 1.6 The appeal will not be a re-hearing but concerned with the application of procedures, looking at any new evidence, not reasonably available at the time of the original hearing, that may be brought forward and determining the proportionality of the sanction to the misdemeanour.
- 1.7 Both the member of staff who is appealing and the manager who made the original decision must submit all evidence or documents to which reference will be made at the hearing, including where the case for appeal relates to new evidence not reasonably available at the time of the original hearing, the names of any witnesses it is proposed to call (or witness statements where a witness is not to be called). This should be no later than 5 working days before the date set for the hearing to the Director of HR (or nominee) for simultaneous distribution to all parties. Papers not submitted by this date will not normally be eligible for consideration.
- 1.8 The employee (or their representative, see 5.6) will present their case and introduce any new witnesses.
- 1.9 All parties will be provided with the opportunity to ask questions.
- 1.10 Both parties will have the opportunity to summarise their case if they so wish. The employee being first.
- 1.11 Nominated notetakers will take notes of the proceedings and these will be kept for record purposes. It is therefore the responsibility of the employee and/or their representative to retain their own notes of the hearing.
- 1.12 The Chair of the meeting will review the appeal with the Director of Human Resources/HRBP before determining a final decision. This may be given on the day and advised to both parties or where further consideration is required will be confirmed later in writing normally within 5 working days.
- 1.13 The decision will be final.

(Note for guidance:

- a Exceptionally and by mutual agreement the format of the hearing can be amended provided that the General Principles are still followed.
- b Witness statements and questioning will be limited to half an hour per witness.
- c No tape recording of proceedings is permitted. Covert recording will be considered misconduct.
- d Requests for adjournments by either party will be at the discretion of the Chair and not unreasonably withheld.
- e A notetaker will be in attendance of the proceedings and notes will be kept for record purposes and only circulated in the event of a subsequent appeal.
- f It is therefore the responsibility of the employee and/or their representative to retain their own notes of the hearing.)

2 Appeals Against Dismissal

- 2.1 Appeals against Dismissal should be submitted, in writing, to the Director of Human Resources within ten (**10**) working days of receipt of the performance hearing outcome.
- 2.2 The Vice Chancellor or nominee will Chair an appeal hearing as soon as possible and normally within **15** working days.
- 2.3 A panel appeal hearing panel will consist of the Chair (Vice Chancellor or nominee) and 3 members of CEG. The panel members will have had no former involvement in the case.
- 2.4 The Chair will be supported by the Director of Human Resources (or nominee).
- 2.5 The hearing will review the previous decision, based on submissions made by staff and Senior Management.
- 2.6 It will not be a re-hearing of the evidence but concerned with procedural integrity and whether the outcome was fair and reasonable. It will follow the procedure as laid out above. The decision will normally be confirmed in writing within five (**5**) working days of the appeal hearing.
- 2.7 The decision will be final.

(Note for guidance:

- a It must be made clear at the outset who will be the lead in presenting the employee's case to the Appeal Hearing – either the employee or the representative.
- b If the employee has been dismissed without notice and re-instated on appeal, the re-instatement will take effect from the date of the original dismissal and no loss of earnings will be incurred.

- c No tape recording of proceedings is permitted. Covert recording will be considered misconduct.
- d Requests for adjournments by either party will be at the discretion of the Chair and not unreasonably withheld.
- e A notetaker will be in attendance of the proceedings and notes will be kept for record purposes only and may be used in response to any subsequent employment tribunal or legal action.
- f It is therefore the responsibility of the employee and/or their representative to retain their own notes of the hearing.
- g If the Branch Secretary/President of a recognised trade union objects to a specific member of an Appeal Against Dismissal Panel being on that panel, the Trade Union should, in the first instance, raise this (via the Director of Human Resources) with the Vice Chancellor and if agreement is not reached, they may raise this (again via the Director of Human Resources) with the Chair of the board of Governors.)

Appendix E – Suspension

- 1 Where there appears to be gross professional negligence or incompetence which might expose people or property to risk, a period of suspension with pay may be imposed while the case is being investigated.
- 2 Any suspension will be with pay, and any period of suspension will be as short as possible. The member of staff will be told exactly why they are being suspended, and that they will be called in for a performance hearing as soon as possible. Suspension will not be used as a sanction before the performance meeting. Suspension, in itself, is not a formal sanction.
- 3 The Vice-Chancellor or, in the case of Professional staff, the Secretary and Registrar, may suspend from duty on full pay any employee for a performance issue that may constitute an allegation of gross misconduct or for other good and urgent cause. The authority may be delegated to a member of The Chief Executive Group (CEG). The suspension will be confirmed in writing subsequently by the Director of Human Resources or nominee.
- 4 Any employee suspended from duty will be informed in writing by the Director of Human Resources (or designated nominee) of the reason for the suspension and that the suspension will be on full pay. They will also be advised as to what contact with the University will be permitted.
- 5 The suspension will be for the shortest practicable time.
- 6 During the period of suspension, the employee may request in writing permission to attend the University, specifying their reasons. Such request will be subject to the approval of the Vice-Chancellor or Secretary and Registrar and will not unreasonably be withheld.
- 7 Right of Appeal against suspension: Any employee who has been suspended for three weeks or more may appeal in writing to the Vice Chancellor against the suspension. There will be no right of appeal if the employee has had notification of a performance hearing.

(Note for guidance:

The suspension against which an appeal is made will continue to operate pending the determination of the appeal.)

Appendix F - Definitions of Terms Used

“Poor Performance”	behaviour or performance that falls below the required standard.
“Line Manager”	is the person to whom a member of staff reports or is directly responsible.
“Recognised Trade Union”	is a trade union formally recognised by the University for the purposes of collective bargaining (i.e.: The University and College Unions (UCU) and UNISON).
“Senior Manager”	is the next level of Line Manager, or a CEG member.
‘CEG’	Chief Executive’s Group.

Appendix G – Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Template

Note: Use of this template is not mandatory but has been provided for illustration purposes

Description of the underperformance:	
Aim of the Performance Improvement Plan:	
Plan Start Date:	
Plan End Date:	

Improvement Objectives	Success Criteria	Additional Support Required/dependencies	Link to Strategic Objectives	Review Schedule	Objective Outcome	Met/Partially Met/Not Met
<i>What, specifically must the individual do to improve their performance to meet expected standards?</i>	<i>Expected or required outcome/measurement. How will you know when the expected standards of performance have been met?</i>	<i>What additional development or support does the individual require in order that they are able to achieve the expected standards?</i>	<i>Link to SBU's strategic objectives to show link between their role and overall outputs</i>	<i>When will progress against the improvement objective be reviewed? How will evidence of progress be collected? Who will review progress?</i>	<i>When will the final review of the plan be undertaken and by whom? What is the final outcome? What action will be taken if expected standards are not met?</i>	<i>Manager should complete this to record what has/has not been met including any justification/narrative as to why to be discussed at the informal/formal stage</i>

Improvement Objectives <i>What, specifically must the individual do to improve their performance to meet expected standards?</i>	Success Criteria <i>Expected or required outcome/measurement. How will you know when the expected standards of performance have been met?</i>	Additional Support Required/dependencies <i>What additional development or support does the individual require in order that they are able to achieve the expected standards?</i>	Link to Strategic Objectives <i>Link to SBU's strategic objectives to show link between their role and overall outputs</i>	Review Schedule <i>When will progress against the improvement objective be reviewed? How will evidence of progress be collected? Who will review progress?</i>	Objective Outcome <i>When will the final review of the plan be undertaken and by whom? What is the final outcome? What action will be taken if expected standards are not met?</i>	Met/Partially Met/Not Met Manager should complete this to record what has/has not been met including any justification/narrative as to why to be discussed at the informal/formal stage
				Overall outcome if plan objectives are achieved / not achieved: <Enter overall outcome / consequences if the Personal Improvement Plan is / is not completed satisfactorily by the plan end date.>		

Signed/agreed by	
Line Manager:	_____
Date:	_____
Signed/Agreed by	
Staff Member:	_____
	Date: _____

APPENDIX H - Using the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – Managers’ Guidance

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Managing Poor Performance policy sets out a full structured process for addressing issues of underperformance and stresses the importance of proactive management to prevent underperformance from occurring and/or encouraging very early resolution of issues through routine or day-to-day management.
- 1.2 Where Performance levels do not improve at an early stage despite intervention, then a more structured discussion should take place guided by and recorded on the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The form can be used at an informal stage. In cases where there is no improvement, the PIP can remain with an employee for the duration of the process (including the formal stages of the Disciplinary Policy).
- 1.3 This guidance provides information on the use of the PIP form throughout the Performance Management Process.

2 The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

- 2.1 The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is intended to both guide and record performance related discussions. The form acts as a mechanism to ensure that there is full clarity on the nature of the performance issue, any support to be provided and the expectations for improvement.
- 2.2 The PIP should be used to prompt exploration of any contributory factors before encouraging dialogue around specific improvement objectives and any support required to ensure they are achieved successfully. The PIP itself is not a formal sanction but instead a constructive tool to support performance improvement. Performance Improvement Plans typically run for a set monitoring period as outlined in the Managing Poor Performance policy (HR19). During the formal stages of the Performance Improvement process, the PIP may run concurrently with a written warning.

3 When to use the PIP

3.1 Informal Stage

When a performance issue has been identified, the PIP can be used as early as the informal performance discussion. It would, however, be expected that any issues will already have been raised at least once through routine management (e.g. through a one-to-one meeting) and an employee given an early opportunity to improve their performance before reaching the informal performance discussion.

3.2 Formal Stage

Subsequent PIPs may then be issued at the formal stages of the process should the matter progress as outlined in the Managing Poor Performance policy. The form has been designed for iterative use. Should a matter progress to a formal

stage and require a further PIP to be put in place, a new form should be completed accordingly and kept as a record.

4 How to use the PIP

4.1 Summary of Performance issues

Identified performance issues should be documented in an objective manner, linking to any evidence where possible (attached separately if appropriate). Examples may include copies of documents showing repeated errors over a period of time or notes of earlier discussions in relation to underperformance alongside examples of continued failure to improve. Other relevant documents may include job descriptions or lists of objectives or targets. It is important, if an employee is expected to improve their performance, that a clear explanation is given of where they are not meeting/sustaining the expected standards.

4.2 Reasons/Contributory factors affecting performance

It is also important that a discussion takes place to establish whether there are any contributory factors which may be affecting an employee's performance. Such information will play an important part in how the employee is then supported to make the required improvements. Contributory factors might include medical, work related or domestic matters – these should be explored sensitively but openly with the individual to ensure that appropriate support is put in place. In some cases, further advice may be required (e.g. Occupational Health referral).

4.3 Improvement Objectives

When developing performance objectives as part of the PIP, managers must make the process collaborative and in conjunction with the employee's feedback. In doing so, this can help in identifying areas of confusion or misunderstanding on the employee's part and can encourage ownership of the improvement required. It is imperative that the evidence is objective, factual and specific. Objectives should be specific, measurable, accurate, relevant and time bound (SMART).

4.4 Additional Support Required

It is important that any required support/training is fully explored between managers and employees. Where relevant, effective support can be provided, this can often help the employee overcome any barriers affecting performance. Support could be wide-ranging from making adjustments in relation to any disclosed medical conditions through to providing additional training, arranging for mentoring or setting up more frequent one-to-one meetings.

4.5 Review Schedule

Target end-dates should be noted for each objective. These end dates may align with the end date of the associated monitoring period, but in some cases may be shorter (e.g. an objective may have a target date of two (2) weeks' time due to a piece of data reporting which is coming up, although the overall monitoring period may be for 3 months).

4.6 Objective Outcome

- 4.6.1 Feedback should be given and recorded in relation to each improvement objective. This should be given with specific reference to any targets/measures/standards agreed at the first 'PIP' meeting.
- 4.6.2 Depending on progress made (and other relevant factors), the next steps may vary and should be clearly recorded on the PIP. In some cases, further improvement may be required and if so, expectations should again be clearly outlined to the employee. In other cases, the required improvement may already have been made, prompting a shift in focus to maintaining performance rather than improving it.

5 Storing Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)

Performance Improvement Plans should be retained securely at a local level as they are a live document, which managers will access and refer to so long as an employee is being managed under the performance improvement process. Where the policy is invoked then a copy will also be held as part of the case in the staff file HR.

Sharon Harrison-Barker
Secretary and Registrar
Signed: **14 January 2022**

Alternative format

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at governanceservices@herts.ac.uk or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.