Performance Management Development System (PMDS)
for all Staff at NUI Galway
1. Introduction

The Performance and Development Review System (PMDS) for NUI Galway has its foundation in Sustaining Progress, which envisages a modernisation of the public service. In the higher education sector there has been increased pressure reflected in the growing demands on staff. In conjunction with this, there has been an increased need for performance and financial management systems to be operational. A focus on the development of a performance and development review system for NUI Galway also arises from the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, in which it was agreed that proposals for developmental review would be outlined and determined in consultation with the Partnership Steering Group. This developmental review will be applicable to all NUI Galway staff, irrespective of role, grade or location.

'It is essential that modern and appropriate performance and accountability systems are in place, at individual and organizational levels to ensure that the full potential contribution of all those who work in the public service can be realized and to ensure that resources are used effectively in line with defined national priorities. Robust performance and financial management systems are essential in this regard. Where these are not already in place, the parties agree that appropriate performance management systems will be introduced so that developed performance management systems will be fully operating in each sector of the public service by 1st January, 2005.' Sustaining Progress 20.7

The enhancement of quality, the development of staff and the embracing of responsibility are pivotal to achieving the agenda for modernisation under Sustaining Progress. This in turn requires an organisational as well as an individual response. The development of staff and the deliverance of a quality service at NUI Galway is a joint responsibility shared by individual staff members, managers and supervisors, and the institution as a whole. Therefore, it is a recognised responsibility of all managers and supervisors, the development and review of their staff. Equally, it recognises the role of the individual staff member in their own development in line with the strategic priorities of their department and university. The review process should allow self-assessment and constructive discussion within departments leading to the identification of developmental needs and supports. This will facilitate the progression and maintenance of contribution to a quality service at NUI Galway, through the strategic development of staff in line with departmental and university priorities.
For the university to make further advances towards its objective of delivering a quality service, it is necessary to both improve communication with employees and further advance staff development. It is necessary to forge even stronger links between individual contribution and the university’s strategic ambitions. A means of achieving this is through a review process of all staff members’ performance and development. It is acknowledged that each member of staff has a contribution to make in improving the service, enhancing their role and themselves in the process. It is also recognised that impediments to delivering a quality service may exist. By engagement in the process these can be identified along with ways towards overcoming them.

It is acknowledged that such a system should complement, not displace, good current practice, e.g. where department heads and supervisors regularly consult their colleagues, but to build on past achievements and support existing excellence through providing a structured review and record of that process. The following paper presents the fundamental principles upon which the system is being developed along with a proposed approach to the operation of the system.

**Four general principles underpin the development of a review system for NUI Galway namely:**

1. Self-assessment
2. Development at university, department and individual levels
3. Facilitation of staff in reaching their full potential
4. A means of enhancing quality

### 1. Self-Assessment

By review we mean a planned formal process of *self-evaluation and structured discussion* aimed at personal, professional and individual career development. It is not meant to be a judgmental process but a developmental process driven by the individual. It is an open, regular and systematic discussion of how the individual might enhance their role. The review process should be seen as providing a means by which individual contributions are recognised, to provide feedback on individual performance, to assist members of staff to develop their potential and overcome problems in agreed ways, which they have helped to
define. In doing so, individuals take responsibility for their own learning and development, and for their role in the successful operation of the university. Within such a system not all individual needs can be met, given the limited resources available, priority usually being given to clearly related strategic goals. The reviewer’s role is to help the individual staff member to assess their own performance and development regularly and fairly and help set and review objectives, placing a focus on self-review, objective setting and the extent to which objectives were achieved. Where objectives were not met possible reasons can be discussed together in a constructive manner.

2. Development at University, Department and Individual Levels

One of the main purposes of the review system is to provide a systematic means not only to review past achievements and responsibilities, but also to consider future developments at all levels within the university. At departmental level the review system can help identify, agree and plan staff development activity, which in turn can lead to improved departmental planning. It also can facilitate a better understanding of how all staff members contribute to the department’s activities. By engagement in the process a greater input from all staff can aid improved communication between all staff members. Therefore, allowing development at a departmental level through informed and structured discussion. Reflective of the review process for departmental staff, Heads of Departments will also engage in a review process to enhance their role in the university. Participation of all university staff members in the review process will allow an inclusive framework supporting continuous development by encouraging a culture of ongoing feedback, recognising achievement and promoting development and continuous learning.

Staff development at an individual level is an integral part of this process. Fundamentally, it provides a regular opportunity to talk about work, progress, achievements, and future plans. The review discussion can be an opportunity to give praise and recognition for achievements and positive initiatives at an individual level.

3. Facilitating Staff in Reaching their Full Potential
Another fundamental principle upon which the performance review system is being developed is the recognition that all staff, regardless of grade or staff category, has the ability to reach their full potential in their area of work. The university is central to enabling staff to find ways in achieving their full potential in line with the university’s strategic plan. The review is a forum in which clarification of what is expected in the job can take place. It can also bring about an improved understanding of departmental objectives and priorities and how individual work and responsibilities relate to these.

It is acknowledged, particularly in such a dynamic environment that strengths and weaknesses may exist at the individual, department and university level. The review process can allow the identification of these within a supportive framework. In order to achieve one’s full potential, a need for help, advice or training may be a way forward identified by engagement in the process. Ways of improving the service the university provides to both its staff and students, identified during the review process, can be shared within departments and across the university. Recognition of abilities and contribution can be imparted through acknowledgement and appreciation at the review. Short-term and long-term career development is crucial to ensuring continued development. The review allows an increased focus on career development and an improved understanding of the context in which the work is undertaken. It is also an opportunity to discuss work-related problems, difficulties that may be in the way of goal achievement. Possible solutions can be identified and implemented together.

4. A means of Enhancing Quality

The development of staff and the deliverance of a quality service at NUI Galway is a joint responsibility shared by individual staff members, managers and supervisors, and the institution as a whole. The review mechanism is a joint process that enables supervisors and their staff to agree together relevant objectives, which are clearly linked to the university and their department’s goals along with any associated support that is needed.

Commitment to good practice and staff development is underpinned in the University’s Strategic Plan, its HR strategy and Staff Training & Development Policy. This is seen as an on-going process of continuous improvement. However, it was recognised that all staff need to be given appropriate support and encouragement and allocated reasonable time and
resources for this purpose. Following from the benefits of the quality review process the proposed performance and development system will provide an on-going opportunity for each department and their staff members to take time to consider their contribution to the university and how this contribution could be enhanced within a developmental framework. In essence, it will help people identify for themselves how they are contributing and how they can do this better.

To ensure the on-going value and quality of the PMDS scheme, its implementation will itself be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant to the university and individual staff members.

A fundamental aspect of a review is **objective setting**. An objective is a target an individual intends to achieve through a plan. It is an undertaking that supports the department and university’s goals. No matter what type of objective that is set, it is important that it is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and that a clear time frame for accomplishment is specified.

**Relation to other Policies and Procedures**

In the spirit of a developmental approach to review, there is **no direct connection** between review and separate policies or procedures, namely: disciplinary, pay, promotion and grading procedures. The review discussion could be an appropriate forum for discussing marginal under-performance in a constructive and helpful way, but there are separate policies and procedures more appropriate to dealing with consistent under-performance – i.e. the University’s Disciplinary Procedure. In some instances the process could focus thoughts on career advancement and could inform preparation of an application for promotion.
CODE OF PRACTICE
FOR
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (PMDS)
AT NUI GALWAY
1.1 Definition

By Performance Management Development System (PMDS) we mean a formal developmental process of self-evaluation and structured discussion aimed at the personal, professional, and career development of an individual member of staff.

This should not be confused with Assessment which is a judgemental process aimed at determining the performance of an individual member of staff in order to reach a decision about that individual's future employment or reward.

1.2 Objectives

The Performance Management Development System (PMDS) is concerned with identifying and meeting the developmental needs of the individual and thereby enhancing the effectiveness of NUI Galway by improving individual effectiveness.

The PMDS discussion is intended to provide a means by which individual contributions are recognised, to provide feedback on individual performance and to assist staff to develop themselves to their full potential, overcoming any problems in agreed ways, which they themselves help to define.

2. Performance Management Development System (PMDS) Process

2.1 Frequency and Coverage

The PMDS process should take place at least once every two years. In appropriate cases, by mutual agreement, the PMDS can be carried out more frequently.

All staff with a contract for more than two years is subject to the PMDS process. Other members of staff may be included by mutual agreement. Those on shorter-term contracts
become subject to the scheme upon receiving an extension that would take the total service beyond two years.

2.2 The Process

Each Head of Department/Function/Centre is responsible for ensuring that PMDS takes place for each staff member, that they take place effectively, that any follow-up is actioned promptly and that a record, including names and dates is kept, with an annual return to the Staff Training and Development office with developmental needs.

1. The Head of Department/Function is responsible for ensuring the pairing of Reviewer and Reviewee.

2. In the case of Administrative, Library, Computing, Technician and Building staff, if the proposed pairing is unacceptable to either individual then the dispute will be resolved by reference to a third party nominated for that purpose.

3. In the case of academic staff if the proposed pairing is unacceptable to either individual, an application may be made to the Registrar to nominate an alternative reviewer. On receipt of such an application, the Registrar will consider the application, and if he(she) deems it appropriate will nominate an alternative Reviewer

4. The Registrar will appoint an appropriate Reviewer in respect of each Head of Department.

5. In situations where a Head of Department is the Reviewee, the Reviewer in conducting the review will seek the views of all staff members of the department.

6. Individuals should be reviewed by the person to whom they are immediately responsible to (i.e. their Line Manager).

7. Reviewers should know well in advance the names of those that they are to review and vice versa.

8. Some individuals from 'minority groups' may have equality concerns for example the gender of their Reviewer etc. and due regard should be given to these concerns.
The Reviewer must have been trained in the task. The PMDS process will begin at the start of each academic year and Heads of Departments/Functions and Line Managers who have not been trained will then be required to attend a training course. Departments should endeavour to ensure, wherever possible, that panels adequately reflect the diversity of backgrounds of staff, taking account of equal opportunity considerations. Ideally, no individual should be expected to conduct more than six reviews a year.

Once the pairing is agreed the Reviewer is responsible for ensuring that the rest of the process takes place promptly and effectively up to the point where the agreed documentation is sent to the Head of Department/Function. The pairs exist for the one occasion only and need not be the same pairing for later reviews.

The PMDS working group is responsible for monitoring the PMDS process and ensuring that it is conducted according to agreed rules and best practice. It should report to the Human Resources Committee on the status of the PMDS Scheme within all departments. The PMDS Scheme has been agreed with all relevant Trade Unions in the University. Departmental variations from this Code of Practice can be made but should first be agreed by the staff of the department and then submitted to the PMDS Sub-Committee. Minor changes falling within the spirit of the agreement will normally be speedily approved but major departures will require the agreement of the PMDS Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee will make periodic visits to departments to conduct audits of their PMDS procedures and practices, including follow-up.

### 2.3 Documentation

The key document - referred to as The PMDS Form is one that is produced as a result of the discussion. This document is retained only by the Head of Department/Function. With the agreement of the Reviewee, a copy of all or part of the document (for example, a note of actions to be taken) may also be kept by the Reviewer, (where the Reviewer is the direct Line Manager of the Reviewee). Prior to the PMDS discussion the Reviewee must complete the PMDS Form. The Head of Department/Function or other person in charge of PMDS within the department must notify the Staff Development & Development office of any development needs arising from the PMDS process (see also paragraph 5.2 below).

The PMDS record is a confidential document and may not be used in any grievance, discipline, promotion or other procedure.
There is no expectation that a historical file will be kept of PMDS records; they will normally be destroyed and only the current record retained by the Head of Department.

3 THE REVIEWER

3.1. The Reviewer should consult the Reviewee, well in advance of the intended event, to arrange a time and location for the review to take place. A period of approximately two hours should be allowed for the discussion, recognising that the time may exceed or be less than this. The location should be conducive to easy and private discussion and may be in the office of the Reviewee or of the Reviewer or, preferably, in some other suitable location.

3.2 The Reviewer is responsible for ensuring that there are no disruptions during the discussion times, when alarm bells are tested should be avoided and telephone calls transferred, for example a "Do Not Disturb" notice needs to be placed on the door of the room whilst the discussion is taking place.

In the Review, attention should specifically be given to:

- matters that are perceived to be done well;
- matters where it is perceived that some improvement is possible;
- constructive suggestions for development.

The agenda for the discussion should be agreed by both parties at the outset but the responsibility for leading the discussion and adhering to the agenda rests with the Reviewer.

3.3 The Reviewer is responsible for ensuring that the discussion is written up but this may be done by either party. Nothing should be placed in the record that did not form any part of the discussions. The record should seek to summarise the discussions giving fair balance to the time spent on commendations and recommendations and should not
seek to record every detail. The PMDS Record should be written within two weeks of
the discussion and passed to the other party (if it is prepared by the Reviewer, to the
Reviewee) for comment. Every attempt should be made to achieve an agreed document
but in the event that this is not possible both parties should record their views of the
discussion.

4. THE REVIEWEE

4.1 Each member of staff is to prepare a self-review document using a form prepared for
the purpose (see 2.3 above) - at least a week before the review discussion is to take
place.

4.2 The Self-Review Form

➢ At the beginning of the self-PMDS document - Part 1 of the form - an attempt
should be made to list the main aspects of the job.

For each heading the Reviewee should review - in Part 3 of the form, if used

➢ aims, objectives and targets agreed at the last review or self determined
➢ performance towards those aims, objectives or targets
➢ difficulties or problems faced in meeting those targets

The Reviewee should also take the opportunity to comment in Part 4 of the Form on
what future training and development activities might be required, what coaching is
needed and what advice appreciated; in particular, the opportunity should be taken to
review:

➢ what has been done well since the last review
➢ what aspects of the job have been of most (and least) interest
➢ what initiatives, if any, have been taken since the last review
➢ the extent to which skills have been developed, refined and consolidated
➢ what of significance has been achieved and how this can be sustained
➢ working relationships
➢ job content
the use to which any advice and training, received as a result of the last review, has been put
general difficulties and problems that have arisen and how they might be overcome
what development has been undertaken for subordinate staff
what skills, aptitudes and interests have been under-utilised, in the period since the last review

5. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Training for the Review
Staff Training and Development will run regular training sessions for Reviewers and Reviewees.

5.2 Development and Training Needs Arising from PMDS
Because of the developmental focus of the scheme and the guidance given in paragraph 4 above it will be apparent that one of the outcomes of the PMDS discussion is likely to be the identification of development needs. It should be borne in mind that development need can be met in a variety of ways, including:

- coaching by a more experienced colleague
- directed reading
- shadowing a colleague
- observing a colleague who is more experienced or proficient in that area
- changing administrative responsibilities
- visiting another department or institution
- joining a working party or task force
- career, personal or health counselling
- temporary redeployment to another areas to obtain more experience

and in many other ways, as well as by attendance at courses, seminars and workshops, both within and outside NUI Galway.

Where developmental needs are identified, care must be taken to ensure that any actions are within the remit of either the Reviewer or the Reviewee. This includes representing the needs or actions to the Head of Department/Function or other appropriate body. The
PMDS process cannot itself commit departments to administrative actions or expenditure nor Staff Development to developing or funding courses. Recommendations for training and development that would require the advice and support of staff development must be notified to the Staff Training & Development Officer - a copy of the detachable sheet in the Review form should be used for this purpose.

Some recommendations may require action by the Head of Department.

___________________________  __________________________
Signed on behalf of NUI, Galway  Signed on behalf of SIPTU

Dated: _____/_____/_____  Dated: _____/_____/_____
Performance Management Development System Form

Please refer to the Operational Guide for details of how to complete this form and the PMDS Process.

Name of Reviewee: ________________________________________________

Date of Reviewee’s Training in PMDS: ________________________________

Reviewee’s Job Title: _____________________________________________

Department/Office/Centre: __________________________________________

Staff ID Number: ________________________________________________

Date Appointed to this Post: _______________________________________

Period Covered by this Document : _________________________________

Date of Last Review if applicable: _________________________________

Date of Reviewer’s training in PMDS: ________________________________

Reviewers Job title: ______________________________________________

Date of Review: ________________________________________________
SECTION 1
(To be completed by you and passed to your Reviewer not less than 2 days before the Review meeting)

1. Describe briefly the main duties of your present job in terms of its principal components

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2. On the basis of your performance during the year, of any particular points of enjoyment or frustration, and of your objectives for the coming year, indicate areas where you feel you would welcome additional support or advice.
3. Looking back to the objectives agreed at your last review, to what extent have these been met? For those that have not been met in full, describe your progress towards the objectives and indicate any outstanding problems that might prove a barrier to achieving the objectives. *(Omit if this is your first review)*

4. What particular objectives do you hope to achieve over the coming year and in the longer term?
(To be completed by the Reviewer following the meeting. This is to be passed to you for signing and for any comments you may wish to add)

1. In the light of discussion, the Reviewer should record the agreed review of your past performance.

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2. The reviewer should record here the agreed objectives for the coming year(s), the actions to be taken and who is to undertake them.

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3. The Reviewer should record here and copy to Section 3 any staff development needs identified and forward to Staff Training & Development. Section 2 provides the Reviewers and Reviewee’s record.

Reviewers Signature:

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

Reviewee’s Statement

I have read the comments in Section 2 following our meeting.
I have nothing to add/ I wish to add the following

Signed: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
This PMDS Scheme is NOT a salary grade review - that is covered by a separate process. The objectives of the PMDS are:

1. To maximise the job satisfaction and career prospects of staff by assisting them to achieve their full potential.

2. To determine individual training needs in order to improve performance and enhance job satisfaction.

3. To improve the quality and effectiveness of NUI, Galway's performance in meeting its objectives.

4. To develop action plans relating to the above.

SECTION 3
The information on this sheet should be copied from section 2 of this form and should be sent to Staff Training & Development Office.

Reviewee Name: _______________________________________________

Reviewer Name: _______________________________________________

Department: _______________________________________________

Staff ID: _______________________________________________

Extension No.: ____________________

Date of Review: _____________________

Arising from the above named's recent PMDS Review, the following staff development needs have been identified:

ALL REPLIES ARE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

PMDS Cycle at NUI Galway